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The Brill Dictionary of Gregory of Nyssa

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*Memoriae Andreae Spirae sacrum
viri doctissimi et humanissimi
amici Gregorii Nysseni
cultoris Dei Unius et Trini*

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PREFACE

Gregory of Nyssa's approach to truth is based on a wonder like that of children, a wonder that is born of knowledge of the inexhaustible depth of being, as expressed in the apophatic dimension of his thought. Knowledge is thus founded in marvelling, in the perception of the transcendence of the True and the Good, which come to the human being, as to Moses and the Spouse of the Canticle, only in personal encounter.

It is proper that a work titled *The Brill Dictionary of Gregory of Nyssa* begin from this premise, in order to eliminate any possible misunderstanding as to its intent and role. This work, in the original Spanish and Italian editions, as well as in the present revised and expanded English edition, does not pretend to present Gregory's thought in a complete and exhaustive manner, nor to offer an organized synthesis of the extensive bibliography of works about him. It is rather designed as an instrument to help in an encounter with the Nyssen. Nothing could be further from his mindset than the spirit of gratuitous erudition and rationalism, one reason that the term *dictionary* rather than *encyclopaedia* was chosen for the book.

This work was born in the context of various colloquia dedicated to Gregory, in particular those of Olomouc and Tübingen. The scholars present at these conferences expressed a desire to develop such an instrument, due both to the increasing number of works on the Nyssen and the growing interest in his thought,¹ at once quintessentially classic and modern, even post-modern, as is expressed in the title of the latest work of Morwenna Ludlow.² It is significant that the work is thus a fruit of the personal encounter of those who became its contributors, an encounter occasioned by a common passion for Gregory of Nyssa.

This dictionary can be placed beside the *Lexicon Gregorianum*,³ the publication of which commenced in 1999 under the direction of Friedhelm Mann, as well as the important bibliography published by this same

¹ For a recent commented bibliography, see: M. CASSIN, *Chronique bibliographique Grégoire de Nysse* (2000–2007), "Adamantius" 14 (2008) 411–419.

² Cf. M. LUDLOW, *Gregory of Nyssa: Ancient and [Post]modern*, OUP, Oxford 2007.

³ F. MANN (Ed.), *Lexicon Gregorianum: Wörterbuch zu den Schriften Gregors von Nyssa*, Brill, Leiden 1999–2008.

scholar together with Margarete Altenburger,⁴ soon to appear in a new edition. Together with the acts of the various colloquia,⁵ these texts constitute an important instrument to encounter and penetrate Gregory's thought. The present work is in this way an invitation for other scholars to join in this encounter.

There are few books that present Gregory's thought in its entirety. Among these, the modern Greek work of Elias Moutsoulas,⁶ a contributor to this dictionary, and the recent publication of Salvatore Taranto⁷ are noteworthy for their extension and depth.

If one were required to characterize Gregory according to modern academic categories, it would be hard to say whether he is a philosopher, a theologian or a philologist and exegete. The present work is composed of articles by scholars with various perspectives, tied to their own disciplines, so as to provide a symphonic vision of the studies on Gregory. For this reason, as far as possible, a specific hermeneutic approach was not dictated, but rather we have tried to provide the different results of authors with a diversity of understandings of similar themes. Thus, at the end of the dictionary a section of "Thematic Readings" has been added, in which various entries are thematically grouped in such a manner as to aid the reader in forming a more complete vision of the current state of

⁴ M. ALTENBURGER—F. MANN, *Bibliographie zu Gregor von Nyssa. Editionen-Übersetzungen-Literatur*, Brill, Leiden 1988.

⁵ The list is as follows: Chevetogne 1969 (M. HARL [Ed.], *Écriture et culture philosophique dans la pensée de Grégoire de Nysse*, Brill, Leiden 1971); Münster 1972 (H. DÖRRIE, M. ALTENBURGER, U. SCHRAMM [Eds.], *Gregor von Nyssa und die Philosophie*, Brill, Leiden 1976); Leiden 1974 (J.C.M. VAN WINDEN, A. VAN HECK [Eds.], *Colloquii Gregoriani III Leidensis Acta*, pro manuscripto); Cambridge 1978 (A. SPIRA, C. KLOCK [Eds.], *The Easter Sermons of Gregory of Nyssa*, Cambridge, Massachusetts, 1981); Mainz 1982 (A. SPIRA [Ed.], *The Biographical Works of Gregory of Nyssa*, Cambridge, Massachusetts 1984); Pamplona 1986 (L.F. MATEO SECO, J.L. BASTERO [Eds.], *El "Contra Eunomium I" en la producción literaria de Gregorio de Nisa*, Eunsas, Pamplona 1988); St. Andrews 1990 (St. G. HALL [Ed.], *Gregory of Nyssa, Homilies on Ecclesiastes. An English Version with Supporting Studies*, Walter de Gruyter, Berlin 1993); Paderborn 1998 (H.R. DROBNER, A. VICIANO [Eds.], *Gregory of Nyssa, Homilies on the Beatitudes. An English Version with Supporting Studies*, Brill, Leiden 2000); Athens 2000 (E. MOUTSOULAS [Ed.], *Jesus Christ in St. Gregory of Nyssa's Theology*, Athens 2005); Olomouc 2004 (L. KARFÍKOVÁ, S. DOUGLASS, J. ZACHHUBER [Eds.], *Gregory of Nyssa: Contra Eunomium II. An English Version with Supporting Studies Proceedings of the 10th International Colloquium on Gregory of Nyssa*, Brill, Leiden 2007) and Tübingen 2008 (V.H. DRECOLL, M. BERGHAUS [Eds.], *Gregory of Nyssa: The Minor Treatises on Trinitarian Theology and Apollinarism*, forthcoming)..

⁶ E. MOUTSOULAS, Γρηγόριος Νύσσης. Βίος, Συγγράμματα, Διδασκαλία, Athens 1997.

⁷ S. TARANTO, *Gregorio di Nissa: un contributo alla storia dell'interpretazione*, Brescia 2009.

research for a given area, through the variety of approaches found in the authors of the articles that refer to the theme to be studied.

Sacred Scripture and Gregory's works are cited according to the Latin abbreviations of the *Lexicon Gregorianum*. For the abbreviations of journals and editions, the IATG (*Internationales Abkürzungsverzeichnis für Theologie und Grenzgebiete*, 2nd ed., Walter de Gruyter, Berlin-New York, 1994) is used. These are included at the beginning of the dictionary.

It is impossible to express properly our gratitude to all those who have helped in the translation and revision of various articles. Previous editions can be referred to in part for this. For the present translation, however, we cannot omit to mention Louise Schouten for her constant encouragement and help, as well as the indispensable help of Lucian Turcescu, Johannes Zachhuber and Philip McCosker for the review of some of the more delicate translations. Last but not least, we would like to mention Matthias Gran of the Forschungsstelle Gregor von Nyssa at the Westfälische Wilhelms-Universität in Münster for his help with the bibliographies.

Since, according to Gregory, in coming to Truth "knowledge becomes love" (*An et res*, PG 46, 96, 36–38), we would like to finish this preface by dedicating this dictionary in memory of Andreas Spira. He is responsible for the critical editions in GNO of *Oratio funebris in Meletium*, *Oratio consolatoria in Pulcheriam* and *Oratio funebris in Flacillam*. He was also the soul of the International Colloquia on Gregory of Nyssa until his death, personally organizing the colloquium of Mainz and editing the acts of the colloquia of Cambridge and Mainz. Numerous Gregorian studies have flowed from his pen. From his chair at the Johannes Gutenberg University of Mainz he developed numerous vocations of scholars, some of whose contributions can be found in this dictionary.

There is yet another reason, greater and more definitive than the preceding ones, for dedicating this dictionary to him: He was a good man who knew how to love, and whose memory is blessed among his friends.

Rome and Pamplona, 17 May 2009
Giulio Maspero and Lucas Francisco Mateo-Seco

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LIST OF ENTRIES

<i>Abl</i>	Maspero	<i>Cavern</i>	Maspero
<i>Adyton</i>	Mateo-Seco	<i>Christian Initiation</i>	Maspero
<i>Agennesia</i>	Drecoll	<i>Chrism</i>	Maspero
<i>Aiskynê</i>	Mateo-Seco	<i>Christology</i>	Mateo-Seco
<i>Akolouthia</i>	Gil Tamayo	<i>Chronology</i>	Maraval
<i>Allegory</i>	Drobner	<i>Concatenation</i>	→ <i>Akolouthia</i>
<i>An et res</i>	Maturi	<i>Conspiracy</i>	→ <i>Sympnoia</i>
<i>Analogy</i>	Drobner	<i>Contemplation</i>	→ <i>Theôria</i>
<i>Analogy, Social</i>	→ <i>Social</i>	<i>Contemporary Interpretations</i>	
	<i>Analogy</i>		Ludlow
<i>Angels</i>	→ <i>Creation</i>	<i>Cosmology</i>	Tollefsen
<i>Anthropology</i>	Maspero	<i>Councils and Synods</i>	
<i>Antirrh</i>	Drecoll		Ritter
<i>Apatheia</i>	Mateo-Seco	<i>Creation</i>	Mateo-Seco
<i>Aphtharsia</i>	→ <i>Incorruptibil-</i>	<i>Cross</i>	Maspero
	<i>ity</i>	<i>Cult</i>	Krolikowski
<i>Apocatastasis</i>	Maspero	<i>Culture</i>	→ <i>Faith and</i>
<i>Apollinarius of Laodicea</i>			<i>Reason</i>
	Mateo-Seco		
<i>Apophatic Theology</i>		<i>Darkness</i>	Laird
	Ojell	<i>Death</i>	Mateo-Seco
<i>Arianism</i>	Simonetti	<i>Deification</i>	Balás
<i>Aristotle</i>	Zachhuber	<i>Deit Euag</i>	Moutsoulas
<i>Arius</i>	Moutsoulas	<i>Deit fil</i>	Dolidze
<i>Ascens</i>	Moutsoulas	<i>Desire</i>	Smith
<i>Augustine</i>	Meredith	<i>Devil</i>	Mateo-Seco
		<i>Diastêma</i>	Douglass
<i>Bapt</i>	Moutsoulas	<i>Diem lum</i>	Moutsoulas
<i>Baptism</i>	Maspero	<i>Diem nat</i>	Mateo-Seco
<i>Bas</i>	Mira	<i>Diff ess hyp</i>	Drecoll
<i>Basil</i>	Böhm	<i>Divine Names</i>	Mateo-Seco
<i>Beat</i>	Douglass	<i>Drunkenness</i>	→ <i>Sober</i>
<i>Beauty</i>	→ <i>Good-Beauty</i>		<i>Drunkenness</i>
<i>Beginning</i>	→ <i>Eschatology</i>		
<i>Benef</i>	Moutsoulas	<i>Easter</i>	→ <i>Liturgy, Trid</i>
<i>Biography</i>	Maraval		<i>spat</i>
<i>Bishop</i>	→ <i>Episkopos</i>	<i>Eccl</i>	Douglass
<i>Body</i>	Mateo-Seco	<i>Ecclesiology</i>	Drobner
		<i>Embryo</i>	Ramelli
<i>Cant</i>	Maspero	<i>End</i>	→ <i>Eschatology</i>
<i>Cappadocia</i>	Mira	<i>Energy</i>	Maspero
<i>Cast</i>	Moutsoulas	<i>Epektasis</i>	Mateo-Seco

<i>Epinoia</i>	→ <i>Philosophy of Language; Divine Names</i>	<i>Idolatry</i>	Krolikowski
		<i>Image</i>	Maspero
		<i>Imitation</i>	→ <i>Mimêsis</i>
<i>Episkopos</i>	Mateo-Seco	<i>Impassibility</i>	→ <i>Apatheia</i>
<i>Epist</i>	Mateo-Seco	<i>Incorruptibility</i>	Ruiz Aldaz
<i>Epist 38</i>	→ <i>Diff ess hyp</i>	<i>Infant</i>	Maturi
<i>Epist can</i>	Mateo-Seco	<i>Infinity</i>	Karfikova
<i>Eschatology</i>	Mateo-Seco	<i>Influence of Gregory</i>	
<i>Essence</i>	→ <i>Ousia</i>		Meredith
<i>Eternity and Time</i>	Balás	<i>Innascibility</i>	→ <i>Agennesia</i>
<i>Eucharist</i>	Mateo-Seco	<i>Inscr</i>	Dolidze
<i>Eun III</i>	Ruiz Aldaz	<i>Inst</i>	Mateo-Seco
<i>Eun I and II</i>	Hall		
<i>Eunomius</i>	Mira	<i>Jerusalem</i>	Mira
<i>Euphrosynê</i>	Mateo-Seco		
<i>Eusebeia</i>	→ <i>Cult</i>	<i>Kinêsis</i>	Douglass
<i>Eust</i>	Drecoll		
<i>Evil</i>	Mosshammer	<i>Life</i>	Maspero
<i>Exegesis</i>	Simonetti	<i>Light</i>	Ritter
		<i>Liturgy</i>	Mateo-Seco
<i>Faith and Reason</i>	Krolikowski	<i>Logophasis</i>	Laird
<i>Fasting</i>	Mateo-Seco	<i>Love</i>	Maspero
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<i>Filiation</i>	Maspero		
<i>Flacill</i>	Graham	<i>Macarius</i>	Mira
<i>Fornic</i>	Gil-Tamayo	<i>Maced</i>	Drecoll
<i>Freedom of Choice</i>	→ <i>Proairesis</i>	<i>Macr</i>	Mateo-Seco
		<i>Macrina</i>	Mateo-Seco
<i>Glory</i>	Mateo-Seco	<i>Marcellus of Ancyra</i>	
<i>Gnoseology</i>	→ <i>Philosophy of Language; Divine Names</i>		Mira
		<i>Mariology</i>	Mateo-Seco
<i>Good-Beauty</i>	Ramelli	<i>Mart Ia</i>	Leemans
<i>Grace</i>	Mateo-Seco	<i>Mart Ib</i>	Leemans
<i>Graec</i>	Drecoll	<i>Mart II</i>	Leemans
<i>Greek Mythology</i>	Ludlow	<i>Matrimony</i>	Mateo-Seco
<i>Gregory Nazianzen</i>	Lieggi	<i>Melet</i>	Graham
<i>Gregory Palamas</i>	Tollefsen	<i>Methodios</i>	Ramelli
<i>Gregory Thaumaturgus</i>		<i>Methorios</i>	Maspero
	Aptsiauri	<i>Metousia</i>	Balás
		<i>Mimêsis</i>	Mateo-Seco
		<i>Monasticism</i>	Naumowizc
<i>Hex</i>	Gil-Tamayo	<i>Mort</i>	Gil-Tamayo
<i>Historia</i>	→ <i>History</i>	<i>Movement</i>	→ <i>Kinêsis</i>
<i>History</i>	Maspero	<i>Mythology</i>	→ <i>Greek</i>
<i>Homotimia</i>	Krolikowski		<i>Mythology</i>
<i>Homousios</i>	Mateo-Seco	<i>Myron</i>	→ <i>Confirmation</i>
<i>Hypostasis</i>	Turcescu	<i>Mystery</i>	Maspero

<i>Mystical Body</i>	Mateo-Seco	<i>Purification</i>	→ <i>Otherworldly</i>
<i>Mysticism</i>	Mateo-Seco		<i>Purification</i>
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<i>Neo-Platonism</i>	Meredith	<i>Quat uni</i>	Moutsoulas
<i>Number</i>	Maspero		
<i>Nyssa</i>	Maraval	<i>Ref Eun</i>	Ruiz Aldaz
		<i>Restoration</i>	→ <i>Apocatastasis</i>
<i>Oikonomia</i>	Maspero	<i>Resurrection</i>	Mateo-Seco
<i>Op hom</i>	Maturi	<i>Rhetoric</i>	Douglass
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<i>Original Sin</i>	Hauke	<i>Salut Pasch</i>	Maspero
<i>Otherworldly Purification</i>		<i>Sanct Pasch</i>	Maspero
	Mateo-Seco	<i>Sanctuary</i>	→ <i>Adyton</i>
<i>Ousia</i>	Zachhuber	<i>Semantics</i>	→ <i>Trinitarian</i>
			<i>Semantics</i>
<i>Paideia</i>	Krolikowski	<i>Sext ps</i>	Gil-Tamayo
<i>Paradise</i>	Hauke	<i>Shame</i>	→ <i>Aiskynê</i>
<i>Parousia</i>	→ <i>Eschatology</i>	<i>Simpl</i>	Drecoll
<i>Parrêsia</i>	Mateo-Seco	<i>Sin</i>	→ <i>Original Sin</i>
<i>Participation</i>	Balás	<i>Skopos</i>	Drobner
<i>Pent</i>	Mateo-Seco	<i>Slavery</i>	Maspero
<i>Perf</i>	Mateo-Seco	<i>Sober Drunkenness</i>	Mateo-Seco
<i>Person</i>	Turcescu	<i>Social Analogy</i>	Maspero
<i>Philanthrôpia</i>	Maspero	<i>Soteriology</i>	Mateo-Seco
<i>Philanthropy</i>	→ <i>Philanthrô-</i>	<i>Soul</i>	→ <i>Psychology</i>
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<i>Philosophy of Language</i>		<i>Steph II</i>	Leemans
	La Matina	<i>Stoicism</i>	Pochoshajew
<i>Phyrama</i>	Zachhuber	<i>Substance</i>	→ <i>Ousia</i>
<i>Physis</i>	Zachhuber	<i>Symphônia</i>	→ <i>Sympnoia</i>
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<i>Plêrôma</i>	Zachhuber		
<i>Plotinus</i>	Pochoshajew	<i>Telos</i>	→ <i>Eschatology</i>
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<i>Prayer</i>	Mateo-Seco	<i>Thaum</i>	Kochlamazash-
<i>Priesthood</i>	Mateo-Seco		vili
<i>Proairesis</i>	Dal Toso	<i>Theod</i>	Leemans
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<i>Psychology</i>	Meredith	<i>Theology of History</i>	Maspero
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<i>Theôria</i>	Maspero	<i>Unity of Action</i>	Maspero
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ἀγεννησία	→ <i>Agennesia</i>	μετουσία	→ <i>Metousia</i>
ἄδυτον	→ <i>Adyton</i>	μίμησις	→ <i>Mimêsis</i>
αἰσχύνη	→ <i>Aiskynê</i>	μυστήριον	→ <i>Mystery</i>
ἀκολουθία	→ <i>Akolouthia</i>	οἰκονομία	→ <i>Oikonomia</i>
ἀπάθεια	→ <i>Apatheia</i>	ὁμοτιμία	→ <i>Homotimia</i>
ἀποκατάστασις	→ <i>Apocatastasis</i>	ὁμοούσιος	→ <i>Homousios</i>
ἀρετή	→ <i>Virtue</i>	οὐσία	→ <i>Ousia</i>
ἄρχη	→ <i>Eschatology</i>	παιδεία	→ <i>Paideia</i>
ἀφθαρσία	→ <i>Incorruptibil-</i>	παρρησία	→ <i>Parrêsia</i>
	<i>ity</i>	πλήρωμα	→ <i>Plêrôma</i>
βίος	→ <i>Life</i>	προαίρεσις	→ <i>Proairesis</i>
διάστημα	→ <i>Diastêma</i>	πρόσωπον	→ <i>Prosopon</i> ;
δόξα	→ <i>Glory</i>		<i>Person</i>
εἰκὼν	→ <i>Image</i>	σκοπός	→ <i>Skopos</i>
ἐνέργεια	→ <i>Energy</i>	σπήλαιον	→ <i>Cavern</i>
ἔρως	→ <i>Love</i>	σύμπνοια	→ <i>Sympnoia</i>
εὐσέβεια	→ <i>Cult</i>	συμφωνία	→ <i>Sympnoia</i>
εὐφροσύνη	→ <i>Euphrosynê</i>	ὑπόστασις	→ <i>Hypostasis</i> ,
ζωή	→ <i>Life</i>		<i>Person</i>
θεολογία	→ <i>Theologia</i>	φιλανθρωπία	→ <i>Philanthrôpia</i>
θεωρία	→ <i>Theôria</i>	φύραμα	→ <i>Phyrama</i>
ἱστορία	→ <i>History</i>	φῶς	→ <i>Light</i>
κίνησις	→ <i>Kinêsis</i>		

GREGORY'S WORKS

<i>Abbreviation</i>	<i>Work</i>	<i>GNO</i>	<i>PG</i>	<i>Pages</i>
<i>Abl</i>	Ad Ablabium, Quod non sint tres dei	III/1, 37–57	PG 45, col. 116–136	3
<i>An et res</i>	De anima et resurrectione	(III/3)	PG 46, col. 12–160	27
<i>Antirrh</i>	Antirrheticus adversos Apollinarium	III/1, 131–233	PG 45, col. 1124–1269	48
<i>Arium</i>	Adversos Arium et Sabellium, De Patre et Filio	III/1, 71–85	PG 45, col. 1281–1301	84
<i>Ascens</i>	In ascensionem Christi Oratio	IX, 323–327	PG 46, col. 689–693	86
<i>Bapt</i>	De iis qui baptismum differunt	X/2, 355–370	PG 46, col. 416–432	89
<i>Bas</i>	In Basilium fratrem	X/1, 109–134	PG 46, col. 788–817	93
<i>Beat</i>	De beatitudinibus	VII/2, 75–170	PG 44, col. 1193–1301	99
<i>Benef</i>	De beneficentia (<i>vulgo</i> De pauperibus amandis oratio I)	IX, 93–108	PG 46, col. 453–469	101
<i>Cant</i>	In Canticum canticorum	VI	PG 44, col. 756–1120	121
<i>Cast</i>	Adversus eos qui castigationes aegre ferunt	X/2, 321–332	PG 46, col. 308–316	129
<i>Deit Euag</i>	De deitate adversus Euagrium (<i>vulgo</i> In suam ordinationem oratio)	IX, 331–341	PG 46, col. 544–553	214
<i>Deit fil</i>	De deitate Filii et Spiritus Sancti	X/2, 115–144	PG 46, col. 553–576	216
<i>Diem lum</i>	In diem luminum (<i>vulgo</i> In baptismum Christi oratio)	IX, 221–242	PG 46, col. 577–600	229
<i>Diem nat</i>	In diem natalem	X/2, 233–269	PG, 46, col. 1128–1149	231
<i>Diff ess hyp</i>	Ad Petrum fratrem de differentia essentiae et hypostaseos		PG 32, col. 325–340	233

<i>Abbreviation</i>	<i>Work</i>	<i>GNO</i>	<i>PG</i>	<i>Pages</i>
<i>Eccl</i>	In Ecclesiasten homiliae	V, 277-442	PG 44, col. 616-753	245
<i>Epist</i>	Epistulae	VIII/2	PG 46, col. 1000-1100; vgl. PG 32, col. 1092-1093; col. 1088; PG 45, col. 237-244	271
<i>Epist can</i>	Epistula canonica ad Letoium episcopum	III/5	PG 45, col. 221-236	273
<i>Eun</i>	Contra Eunomium libri, I et II (<i>vulgo</i> 1 et XII B)	I, 22-225; 226-409	PG 45, col. 248-464; col. 909-1121	298
<i>Eun</i>	Contra Eunomium libri, III (<i>vulgo</i> III-XII)	II, 3-311	PG 45, col. 572-908	307
<i>Eust</i>	Ad Eustathium, De sancta Trinitate	III/1, 3-16	PG 32, col. 684-696	322
<i>Fat</i>	Contra fatum	III/2, 31-63	PG 45, col. 145-173	345
<i>Flacill</i>	Oratio funebris in Flacillam imperatricem	IX, 475-490	PG 46, col. 877-892	350
<i>Fornic</i>	Contra fornicarios oratio	IX, 211-217	PG 46, col. 489-496	351
<i>Graec</i>	Ad Graecos (Ex communibus notionibus)	III/1, 19-33	PG 45, col. 176-185	368
<i>Hex</i>	Apologia in Hexaameron	IV/1	PG 44, col. 61-124	387
<i>Infant</i>	De infantibus praemature abreptis	III/2, 67-97	PG 46, col, 161-192	421
<i>Inscr</i>	In inscriptiones Psalmorum	V, 24-175	PG 44, col. 432-608	429
<i>Inst</i>	De instituto Christiano	VIII/1, 40-89	PG 46, col. 288-305	432
<i>Lucif res</i>	In luciferam sanctam domini resurrectionem (<i>vulgo</i> In Christi resurrectionem oratio V)	IX, 315-319	PG 46, col. 684-689	464
<i>Maced</i>	Adversos Macedonianos, De Spiritu Sancto	III/1, 89-115	PG 45, col. 1301-1333	466
<i>Macr</i>	Vita s. Macrinae	VIII/1, 370-414	PG 46, col. 960-1000	496

<i>Abbreviation</i>	<i>Work</i>	<i>GNO</i>	<i>PG</i>	<i>Pages</i>
<i>Mart Ia</i>	In XL Martyres Ia	X/1, 137-142	PG 46, col. 749-756	483
<i>Mart Ib</i>	In XL Martyres Ib	X/1, 145-156	PG 46, col. 757-772	485
<i>Mart II</i>	In XL Martyres II	X/1, 159-169	PG 46, col. 773-788	487
<i>Melet</i>	Oratio funebris in Meletium episcopum	IX, 441-457	PG 46, col. 852-864	493
<i>Mort</i>	De mortuis oratio	IX, 28-68	PG 46, col. 497-537	509
<i>Op hom</i>	De hominis opificio	(IV/2)	PG 44, col. 125-256	544
<i>Or cat</i>	Oratio catechetica magna	III/4	PG 45, col. 9-105	546
<i>Or dom</i>	De oratione dominica	VII/2, 1-74	PG 44, col. 1120-1193	550
<i>Pent</i>	De Spiritu Sancto sive in Pentecosten	X/2, 285-292	PG 46, col. 696-701	588
<i>Perf</i>	De perfectione	VIII/1, 173-214	PG 46, col. 252-285	589
<i>Prof</i>	De professione Christiana	VIII/1, 129-142	PG 46, col. 237-249	650
<i>Pulcher</i>	Oratio consolatoria in Pulcheriam	IX, 461-472	PG 46, col. 864-877	657
<i>Python</i>	De Pythonissa	III/2, 101-108	PG 45, col. 108-113	658
<i>Quat uni</i>	In illud: Quatenus uni ex his fecistis mihi fecistis (<i>vulgo</i> De pauperibus amandis oratio II)	IX, 111-127	PG 46, col. 472-489	659
<i>Ref Eun</i>	Refutatio confessionis Eunomii (<i>vulgo</i> lib. 11)	II, 312-410	PG 45, col. 465-572	661
<i>Salut Pasch</i>	In sanctum et salutare Pascha (<i>vulgo</i> In Christi resurrectionem oratio IV)	IX, 309-311	PG 46, col. 681-684	674
<i>Sanct Pasch</i>	In sanctum Pascha (<i>vulgo</i> In Christi resurrectionem oratio III)	IX, 245-270	PG 46, col. 652-681	675
<i>Sext ps</i>	In sextum Psalmum	V, 187-193	PG 44, col. 608-616	677
<i>Simpl</i>	Ad Simplicium, De fide	III/1, 61-67	PG 45, col. 136-145	678

<i>Abbreviation</i>	<i>Work</i>	<i>GNO</i>	<i>PG</i>	<i>Pages</i>
<i>Steph I</i>	In sanctum Stephanum I	X/1, 75–94	PG 46, col. 701–721	709
<i>Steph II</i>	In sanctum Stephanum II	X/1, 97–105	PG 46, col. 721–736	711
<i>Thaum</i>	De vita Gregorii Thaumaturgi	X/1, 3–57	PG 46, col. 893–957	718
<i>Theod</i>	De sancto Theodoro	X/1, 61–71	PG 46, col. 736–748	721
<i>Theoph</i>	Ad Theophilum, Adversos Apollinaristas	III/1, 119–128	PG 45, col. 1269–1277	734
<i>Trid spat</i>	De tridui inter mortem et resurrectionem domini nostri Iesu Christi spatio (<i>vulgo</i> In Christi resurrectionem oratio I)	IX, 273–306	PG 46, col. 600–628	739
<i>Tunc et ipse</i>	In illud: Tunc et ipse	III/2, 3–28	PG 44, col. 1304–1325	766
<i>Usur</i>	Contra usurarios oratio	IX, 195–207	PG 46, col. 433–452	773
<i>Virg</i>	De virginitate	VIII/1, 247–343	PG 46, col. 317–416	774
<i>Vit Moys</i>	De vita Moysis	VII/1	PG 44, c ol. 297–429	788

Dubious and Spurious Works¹

<i>Abbreviation</i>	<i>Work</i>	<i>GNO</i>	<i>PG</i>
<i>Creat I, II</i>	Sermones de creatione hominis	Suppl. I, 2–40; 41–72	PG44, col. 257– 277; col. 277–297
<i>Parad</i>	Sermo de paradiso	Suppl. I, 75–84	PG 30, col. 61–72
<i>Ephr</i>	In sanctum Ephraim	Suppl. II	PG 46, col. 820– 849
<i>Occ dom</i>	De occursu Domini	Suppl. II	PG 46, col. 1152– 1181

¹ For these works, see: E. MOUTSOULAS, Γρηγόριος Νύσσης, Athens 1997, 330–340.

LIST OF ABBREVIATIONS

The bibliographies of the articles devoted to Gregory's works are divided into three sections: a first part dedicated to the editions is introduced by the abbreviation (Ed), a second part dedicated to the translations (Tran) and a last part dedicated to secondary literature (Lit).

As mentioned above, journal titles are abbreviated according to IATG (*Internationales Abkürzungsverzeichnis für Theologie und Grenzgebiete*, 2nd ed., Walter de Gruyter, Berlin-New York 1994). The following are used in the dictionary:

AeR	Atene e Roma (Florence, Messina)
Aevum	Aevum. Rassegna di scienze storiche, linguistiche e filologiche (Milan)
AFLF(M)	Annali della Facoltà di Lettere e Filosofia dell'Università di Macerata (Padua)
AJP	American Journal of Philology (Baltimore, MD)
Ang.	Angelicum (Rome)
ANRW	<i>Aufstieg und Niedergang der Römischen Welt</i> , H. TEMPORINI (Ed.), Berlin
ASEs	Annali di storia dell' esegesi (Bologna)
ASNSP	Annali della Scuola Normale Superiore di Pisa (Florence)
At.	Athenaeum (Pavia)
ATR	Australasian theological review (Adelaide)
Aug.	Augustinianum (Rome)
Augustinus	Augustinus (Madrid)
AUSS	Andrews University Seminary Studies (Berrien Springs)
ByZ	Byzantinische Zeitschrift (Leipzig)
Byz.	Byzantion (Brussels)
CMech	Collectanea Mechliniensia (Mechlin)
CTom	Ciencia tomista (Salamanca)
DPAC	<i>Dizionario Patristico e di Antichità Cristiane</i> , A. DI BERARDINO (Dir.), Casale Monferrato
DOP	Dumbarton Oaks Papers (Cambridge, MA)
DSp	<i>Dictionnaire de spiritualité, ascétique, et mystique, doctrine et histoire</i> , M. VILLER et al. (Dir.), Paris
DThC	<i>Dictionnaire de théologie catholique</i> , Paris
DT(P)	Divus Thomas (Piacenza)
ECR	Eastern churches review (Oxford)
EcR	Ecclesiastical Review (Washington, D.C.)
ECQ	Eastern churches quarterly (Ramsgate)
ED	Euntes docete (Rome)

EE	Estudios Eclesiásticos (Madrid)
Ekk(A)	Ekklēsia (Athens)
ErJb	Eranos-Jahrbuch (Zurich)
EstMar	Estudios marianos (Madrid)
EtCarm	Études carmélitaines (Paris)
EthL	Ephemerides theologicae Lovanienses (Louvain)
GLCP	Graecitas et Latinitas Christianorum primaeva. Supplementa (Nijmegen)
GOTR	Greek Orthodox Theological Review (Brookline, MA)
Gr.	Gregorianum (Rome)
Hermes	Hermes (Berlin, Wiesbaden)
HeyJ	Heythrop Journal (Oxford)
Hist.	Historia (Wiesbaden)
HJ	Historisches Jahrbuch (Munich)
Irén.	Irénikon (Amay-sur-Meuse, Chevetogne)
Ist.	Istina (Boulogne-sur-Seine)
IThQ	Irish Theological Quarterly (Maynooth)
JAC	Jahrbuch für Antike und Christentum (Münster)
JÖB	Jahrbuch der österreichischen Byzantinistik (Vienna)
JÖBG	Jahrbuch der österreichischen Byzantinischen Gesellschaft (Vienna)
JThS	Journal of Theological Studies (Oxford, London)
JThSNS	—, New Series (Oxford, London)
LThK	<i>Lexikon für Theologie und Kirche</i> , M. BUCHBERGER (Ed.), Freiburg
Maia	Maia (Bologna)
MCom	Miscelánea Comillas (Comillas, Santander)
MD	La Maison-Dieu (Paris)
MoTh	Modern Theology (Oxford, London)
MS	Mediaeval Studies (Toronto)
NRT	Nouvelle revue de théologie (Paris)
OrChr	Oriens Christianus (Rome)
OrChrP	Orientalia Christiana periodica (Rome)
Orph.	Orpheus (Catania)
PACPA	Proceedings of the American Catholic Philosophical Association (Washington, D.C.)
Phron.	Phronesis (Assen)
QuLi	Questions Liturgiques / Studies in Liturgy (Louvain)
RAC	<i>Reallexikon für Antike und Christentum</i> . TH. KLAUSER (Dir.), Stuttgart.
RAM	Revue d'ascétique et de mystique (Toulouse)
RAMi	Rivista di ascetica e mistica (Florence)
RAug	Revue augustinienne (Louvain, Paris)
REAug	Revue des études augustinienes (Paris)
REByz	Revue des études byzantines (Paris)
REG	Revue des études grecques (Paris)
RET	Revista española de teología (Madrid)

RevSR	Revue des sciences religieuses (Strasbourg, Paris)
RFNS	Rivista di filosofia neo-scolastica (Milan)
RHE	Revue d'histoire ecclésiastique (Louvain)
RHPhR	Revue d'histoire et de philosophie religieuses (Strasbourg)
RSPHTh	Revue des sciences philosophiques et théologiques (Paris)
RSR	Recherches de science religieuse (Paris)
RThom	Revue thomiste (Paris)
RTL	Revue théologique de Louvain (Louvain)
Sal.	Salesianum (Rome)
SC	Sources chrétiennes (Paris)
Schol.	Scholastik (Freiburg)
ScrTh	Scripta theologica (Pamplona)
ScrdeM	Scripta de Maria (Torreciudad)
SE	Sacris Erudiri (Steenbrugge)
SEAug	Studia ephemeridis 'Augustinianum' (Rome)
SIFC	Studi italiani di filologia classica (Florence)
SJTh	Scottish journal of theology (Edinburgh)
SMSR	Studi e materiali di storia delle religioni (Rome)
SSRel	Studi storico religiosi (L'Aquila)
STL	Studia theologica Lundensia (Lund)
StPat	Studia Patavina (Padua)
StPatr	Studia patristica. Papers Presented to the International Conference on Patristic Studies (Leuven)
SVTQ	St. Vladimir's theological quarterly (New York)
Theol(A)	Theologia (Athens)
ThLZ	Theologische Literaturzeitung (Leipzig)
Thom.	Thomist (Washington)
ThPh	Theologie und Philosophie (Freiburg)
ThQ	Theologische Quartalschrift (Tübingen, Stuttgart)
ThZ	Theologische Zeitschrift (Basel)
ThZS	Theologische Zeitschrift aus der Schweiz (Zurich)
TRE	<i>Theologische Realenzyklopädie</i> , G. KRAUSE—G. MÜLLER (Eds.), Berlin
TS	Theological Studies (Baltimore)
TU	Texte und Untersuchungen zur Geschichte der Christlichen Literatur (Berlin)
ThWNT	<i>Theologisches Wörterbuch zum Neuen Testament</i> , G. KITTEL (Ed.), Stuttgart
TyV	Teología y Vida (Santiago de Chile)
VetChr	Vetera Christianorum (Bari)
VigChr	Vigiliae Christianae (Amsterdam)
WissWeltb	Wissenschaft und Weltbild (Vienna)
ZAC	Zeitschrift für Antikes Christentum (Berlin)
ZKG	Zeitschrift für Kirchengeschichte (Stuttgart)
ZKTh	Zeitschrift für katholische Theologie (Innsbruck)
ZNW	Zeitschrift für die neutestamentliche Wissenschaft (Berlin)
ZWTh	Zeitschrift für wissenschaftliche Theologie (Jena)

DICTIONARY OF GREGORY OF NYSSA

ABL

Ad Ablabium, Quod non sint tres dei

The period of composition of this work is debated and difficult to resolve. The dates proposed in secondary literature range from 375 until the final years of Gregory's life (E. MOUTSOULAS, 186). Various authors situate the treatise between the death of Basil and 385, particularly associating it with the theological discussions surrounding the Council of Constantinople (G. MAY, 58–59; G.C. STEAD, 150). In recent years the tendency to attribute the work to the later years of the Nyssen's life has prevailed, placing it in proximity to *Cant* (J. ZACHHUBER, 113; G. MASPERO, 30–42). One of the major merits of the work is that it “is, in a certain way, Gregory's final word on the Trinitarian problem properly speaking” (T. ZIEGLER, 291).

The *Abl* in fact constitutes a synthesis of the theological thought of the Nyssen. The treatise responds, systematically and outside of any polemical context that might characterize other works, to a concrete question posed by a certain Ablabius to Gregory: How is it possible, in the case of three individuals such as Peter, James and John, to speak of a unique human nature in the singular and of three men in the plural, while in the case of the Father, the Son and the Holy Spirit one speaks of one unique divine nature as well, but one says that there is only one God (GNO III/1, 38, 8–18)? The question touches the roots of the relationship between the Trinity and man, since it directly refers to the same concepts of φύσις, πρόσωπον and ὑπόστασις for both God and human beings.

In order to respond, Gregory must trace the essential points of his theology, so much so that this treatise has become ever more important for understanding the totality of the Nyssen's thought (S. COAKLEY; L. AYRES; G. MASPERO), as well as in connection with understanding the analogy between Trinity and man (→ SOCIAL ANALOGY).

The point of departure for the treatise stems from the unity of θεολογία and οἰκονομία, a fundamental theological principle in the Nyssen's thought. Without such a principle, it becomes virtually impossible to understand Gregory's argumentation, one that moves from a conception of φύσις (→), which in an original manner unites in itself both an intensive aspect characteristic of οὐσία (→), that is, of that which makes every

being to be that which it is, as well as an extensive aspect, which includes every man and history itself. This connection is necessary in order to understand the surprising affirmation that opens the treatise, where it is said that it would be improper to speak of men in the plural, in as much as human nature is one (40, 5–9). The second phase of the argument is then to clarify that the name of God does not refer to nature, but only to the divine ἐνέργεια (→ ENERGY), thus leading to the note that the name of Divinity (τὴν θεότητα) is derived from vision (ἐκ τῆς θέας) (44, 7–16). The connection of θεολογία and οἰκονομία is then founded on that of ἐνέργεια and φύσις, which Gregory discusses precisely in reference to the UNITY OF ACTION (→) of the Father, Son and Holy Spirit: “The Holy Trinity does not accomplish every activity separately according to the number of the hypostases, but generates a unique movement and a unique communication from their good pleasure, which from (ἐκ) the Father through (διὰ) the Son they direct towards (πρός) the Spirit” (48, 3–5). The Nyssen’s construction permits one to fully accentuate the difference between the divine Persons and human persons (48,20–49,1); but at the same time, thanks to the Christological and eschatological references that characterize the whole of his thought, he is also able to underscore strongly the call of all of humanity to the union in the Son with the love of the Father, manifesting thus an authentic theology of filiation.

APOPHATIC THEOLOGY (→), i.e. the affirmation of the impossibility of comprehending the divine essence (52,15–53,3), is essential to Gregory’s theology. This in turn obliges him to turn his attention to the fundamental significance of the Person. The human being cannot understand the *being* of God, but thanks to the ἐνέργεια, he can know the *mode of being* of God, that is, he can pass from the nature to the person, basing himself on the unique trinitarian action as a movement of the divine nature that reveals the three Persons. Apophatism is thus not presented as a negation, but as an affirmation of the ontological depth of the divine nature, in which human beings can come to participate only through the personal union with Christ.

The end of the work, which is of particular historical relevance to the question of the *Filioque*, is exceptionally intense as Gregory must make it clear that his reasoning does not lead to a confusion of the Persons. The immutability of the divine nature does not exclude the distinction between that which is cause and that which is caused. Further, one must distinguish between that which is caused immediately and that which is caused through that which is caused immediately (GNO III/1, 55,21–56,10). The Nyssen continues to present the dynamics of the divine Per-

sons according to the ἐκ—διὰ—ἐν schema, distinguishing them according to relation (σχέσις). He starts with the monarchy of the Father and gives the mediation of the Son a central role, a mediation which guarantees that the Son remains Only Begotten, without excluding the Spirit from relation with the Father.

We come to a theological apex, as Gregory here distinguishes two levels: *that which is*, to which the argument of nature corresponds, and *how it is*, to which the argument of cause is referred. Not even in the natural realm can one know what a reality is in truth, nor can one reach its essence. Instead, one can only know how things are, and follow the reasoning of causes (56,11–57,7). But this is possible only in the perspective of faith, i.e. while continually reminding ourselves that: “It is first necessary that we believe that something is, and only then do we ask how that in which we have believed is” (56, 17–19).

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ADYTON

ἄδυτον

The term *adyton*, which originally designated the innermost, secret part of the temple, has a notable importance in Gregory's writings, particularly for the formation of his anthropological and spiritual doctrines, for his conception of the divine mystery and his theology of priesthood. Gregory takes Ex 26.33–34 and Mt 6.9 as points of departure for his theology of the ἄδυτον. On the base of these descriptions he offers a profound theology of divine transcendence and of human interiority, thus manifesting a rich conception of the sacred.

The most extensive reflection of the Nyssen on the ἄδυτον can be found in *Or dom* III. The context is clearly a priestly one; the theme confronts the entry of the O.T. Priest into the *Sancta Sanctorum*. To worthily make such an entry, the Law required him to purify himself and to dress in priestly vestments: Only thus was he dignified enough to enter into the ἄδυτον and celebrate the *secret liturgies*. In a similar manner, the Christian must penetrate into the depths of his heart, which must be a sanctuary (ἄδυτον). It is here, in the most intimate place in his heart, that the Christian must offer to God his spiritual sacrifice. In so doing, he penetrates into the heavenly sanctuaries (GNO VII/II, 30–33). We find ourselves in a mystical and priestly context (J. DANIELOU, 183). This use of the term ἄδυτον is not completely new: it can be found in Philo and in Clement of Alexandria (cfr. *Pedagogus*, 3,2). The application of the term ἄδυτον to heavenly sanctuaries and to the heart of the human being is founded in the Nyssen's conviction that the Christian is the temple of God and that God dwells in the most intimate sanctum of the human being. Thus ἄδυτον designates not only the most impenetrable part of the heavenly sanctuaries, but also the most profound part of the soul.

Gregory also uses the term of ἄδυτον to indicate the grace of divine filiation, as this grace is a penetration into the intimacy of God, with the dignity of sons. This is clear in his commentary on Mt 5.8: "Blessed are the peacemakers, for they will be called sons of God"—According to Gregory, this beatitude invites us to penetrate into the ἄδυτον, that is into that which is holier than all that is holy, since being sons of God

absolutely surpasses every gift and every hope (*Beat*, GNO VII/II, 149). In this context it is logical that ἄδυτον be used also for the highest states of spiritual life, when the soul, purified and having overcome all appearances, “penetrates into the heavenly sanctuaries” (*Inscr* 6, GNO V, 41).

This is evident with a particular clarity and coherence in *Vit Moys* and in *Cant*. Ascending Sinai, Moses penetrated “into the ἄδυτον of the divine mystagogy”, that is, he entered into contact with Him who is invisible and incomprehensible, Him who is beyond every intelligence. In his ascent of Sinai, Moses is introduced into the ἄδυτον of the mystery of God (*Vit Moys* I, 46, GNO VII/I, 22). This fact is also described as “penetrating into the invisible ἄδυτον of the *theognosis*”, that is, penetrating into the invisible sanctuary of the knowledge of God (*Vit Moys* II, GNO VII/I, 88). This is a knowledge that is beyond all human effort, and thus that God alone can introduce one to. This knowledge is authentic mystical knowledge (cfr. J. DANIÉLOU, 185–186).

Ἄδυτον is almost always used in an apophatic context and is found tied to privative words such as ἀπόρητον (unspeakable), ἄρητον (ineffable) or ἀνεπίβατον (inaccessible). Thus in Gregory the term of ἄδυτον is essentially tied to the “mysticism of the shadows”. In his ascent, itself a paradigm of the ascent of the soul towards God, Moses entered into the *shadows*, he penetrated into the *sanctuary* of the uncreated tabernacle, and there knew ineffable realities.

The term ἄδυτον designates at once the absolute transcendence of God, and at the same time connotes that there is no obstacle preventing the human being from “penetrating into the impenetrable”, that is, from ascending to the divine intimacy. Gregory, following the texts of the NT (2 Cor 12.2–4 and Acts 7.55), presents together with Moses another two personages who have penetrated into the ἄδυτον of the knowledge of God: Paul and Stephen (*Vit Moys* II, GNO VII/I, 93 and *Steph* I, GNO X/I, 87). These personages help us to understand what Gregory understands by “entry into the ἄδυτον of the heavenly sanctuaries”.

In *Cant* II Gregory underscores that this encounter with God takes place in the most profound part of the soul: transcending exterior things, the soul penetrates into the more intimate parts and there realises that, by the grace of the Spirit, it knows the depths of God and sees, in the ἄδυτον of Paradise, the invisible things of God (*Cant*, GNO VI, 40).

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AGENNESIA

ἀγεννησία

The concept of *agennesia* is found exclusively in Gregory's *Eun* and *Ref Eun*, i.e. in the Eunomian controversy. In the *Apology* of Eunomius the concept cannot be found; it however remains unclear if Eunomius used the concept in the *Apology of the Apology*, the work that Gregory refutes in *Eun*. In Gregory's citations the concept appears only in a reference to Basil (*Eun*, GNO I, 164, 3). Nevertheless, concepts employed by Eunomius such as τὸ ἀγέννητον or ἀγέννητος οὐσία are quite close to the concept of ἀγεννησία. Before Eunomius the concept can be found in Aetius (in Epiphanius, *Pan. Haer.* 76,12,32) and it is used repeatedly by Basil in the Eunomian polemic (Basil, *Adv.Eun.* I,5, 107–108 etc.).

Gregory first uses the concept to describe the essential point of Eunomius' theology, i.e. to describe God the Father as a reality without origin and not dependent on anything. For Eunomius, this is not only an affirmation regarding human thought on God, nor is it to be understood as only negation or abstraction. Rather, it is as if, as unique God, He is not generated by essence. Thus one could say: The essence of the Father is to be not generated, or, the divinity of the Father consists in being οὐσία ἀγέννητος (cfr. Eunomius, *Apol.* 8, cfr. Gregory *Eun*, GNO I, 232, 1–19). As a derived consequence it follows that the Son, as generated from the Father, regarding specifically the essence, must be subordinated, something that is itself more precisely explained through the concepts of δύναμις and energy (→ EUNOMIUS).

The diametric contrast between the Father and the Son appears to Gregory as an absurd consequence of the consideration of ἀγεννησία as a description of the divine essence. This would consequently lead to admitting that the contrary of the Father is in the Son, even for the other properties that are found in God, for example to be invisible, immortal, immutable, powerful, wise etc. (*ibidem* 174,24–175,8). In this way Eunomius holds a Manichean opposition of principles (*ibidem* 173, 25–30).

Gregory does not admit Eunomius' argumentation, viz. that from the fact that the Father is ἀγέννητος as well as absolute or simple (ἀπλοῦς), it would follow that to be not generated constitutes the essence or nature

of God. The one concept and the other, ἀγέννητος and ἄπλοῦς, both signify something different. From the first, the second does not follow necessarily, nor is the inverse true (*ibidem* 233,25–234,6). Both are only properties, and should not be confused with the οὐσία (*ibidem* 235, 10–12); for the Son is also simple (ἄπλοῦς) (*ibidem* 234, 3–4; 235, 1–2). The predicate ἀγέννητος primarily signifies nothing other than “to have existence without cause” (τὸ ἄνευ αἰτίας τὴν ὑπόστασιν ἔχειν) (*ibidem* 236, 22–23). It thus corresponds to those multiple designations of God which indicate something that God is not. Among the divine predicates one can distinguish the positive (cfr. to be just) from the negative (cfr. to be timeless) (*ibidem* 263, 26–264, 2), or affirmation from negation. All these predicates do not indicate the divinity as it subsists in its nature (*ibidem* 265, 26), which remains inexpressible and inconceivable. Human thought does give a name to that which it can understand (*ibidem* 265, 28–266, 3). Consequently the predicate ἀγέννητος must be classified in the list of negative divine predicates such as to be timeless, not malicious, not vulnerable, not bad etc. (*ibidem* 266,27–267,4). In this way the essence of God is not indicated (*ibidem* 267, 16–17), as no indication can encompass the divine nature (*ibidem* 267, 21–22). Human definitions can be reduced to human thought (ἐπίνοια), and are thus more recent than God—which does not mean that they do not indicate an aspect that must always be recognized of God, even for the time anterior to human beings (*ibidem* 272, 16–30).

With this argumentation Gregory is following the theology of his older brother Basil, who had already developed it twenty years earlier, in the *Adv.Eun.* (cfr. particularly *Adv.Eun.* I, 10–12). Specifically, the references to ἐπίνοια, to the unknowability of the οὐσία of God and the classification of ἀγέννητος in the list of analogous concepts, such as ἀφθαρσία or ἀθανασία, correspond to Basilian theology. Thus one can say that in the concept of ἀγεννησία, Gregory does not develop any further than Basil had. This comes only with the concept of the INFINITE (→), developed in *Eun.*

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AI SCHYNE

αἰσχύνη

The term αἰσχύνη assumes various meanings in Gregory which range from the modesty that accompanies virtue to the shame and remorse that follow upon sin. This last sense is the most frequent and important for his theological reflection. For Gregory, *aischyne* maintains a strict relationship with the sin of our progenitors and the subsequent clothing in TUNICS OF HIDE (→).

Αἰσχύνη appears in this manner in *Virg*. It designates the modesty of the young bride before her spouse (*Virg* 3, 7, GNO VIII/I 263); but it also, and above all, designates the sentiment of shame added to the fear of God which follows on pleasure (ἡδονή), and which prompts the first parents to hide from the presence of the Creator and to cover their own bodies with animal skins (*Virg* 12, 4, 18, GNO VIII/1 302). According to Gregory, these skins indicate the “thoughts of the flesh” which must be repelled along with “all the shameful things which are done in secret” (*Virg* 13, 1, 13–14, GNO VIII/1, 303). At times αἰσχύνη appears with reference to sexual pleasure, indecency (*Macr* 3, GNO VIII/I, 373) and animal instincts (*Vit Moys*, II, 78, GNO VII/I 56), but it is almost always in relationship to all forms of sin (*An et res*, PG 46, 92)—although particularly the sins of our first parents: The envy of the devil is at the root of their sin, of their expulsion from paradise, of their being stripped of sacred vestments and clothed in the leaves of shame (*Vit Moys* II, 256, GNO VII/I 256). Adam, through αἰσχύνη, hides from God in paradise (*Diem lum* GNO IX/I 241; *Inscr*, GNO V, 151). By the sin of Adam we are clothed in the “leaves of shame” (*Vit Moys* II, GNO VII/1, 122) and we are stripped of confident trust, of παρρησία (*Or cat* 8, GNO III/4, 26), as if Adam “lived in us”. Αἰσχύνη accompanies us too, from the time we were clothed in hides (*An et res*, PG 46, 1184).

In fact αἰσχύνη is an imprint that follows necessarily upon sin, since it is an imprint from the nature of pleasure (ἡδονή): in αἰσχύνη is manifested how shameful it is to let oneself be drawn along by animality. While peace and tranquility belong to virtue, shame follows the passions (*Inscr*, GNO V, 36). In this perspective, αἰσχύνη has an important pedagogical value. Gregory dedicates a long paragraph at the beginning of *Eccl.* 3 to

this theme: pudor or modesty (αἰδώς) and shame (αἰσχύνη) are given by God as armor against sin. Modesty protects us from sin before the event, remorse protects after, to avoid falling again. From this perspective, αἰσχύνη acts as a great pedagogue (*Eccl* 3, GNO V, 315–317). Therefore the teachings of the Church on confession (ἐξομολόγησις) of “things not properly done” (A.M. RITTER, 173) are of great importance to the Christian.

Liberation from sin carries with it liberation from αἰσχύνη (*Inscr*, GNO V, 151), that is, being clothed in liberty (ἐλευθερία) and confident trust (παρρησία) (*An et res*, PG 46, 101). Baptism, accomplishing the restoration of the human being, reintegrates him into the primitive confidence (→ *PARRÊSIA*) and frees him from the fear of God. Despite its pedagogical dimension, αἰσχύνη is an evil from which one must free oneself, since it not only prompts one to hide from God, but obfuscates the image of God in the human being. For man, created in the image of God, must dress himself in the liberty and confidence proper to the sons of God. Thus αἰσχύνη must be eliminated from the soul through repentance and purification (J. DANÉLOU, 108).

The concept of αἰσχύνη is not only contrary to *confidence* and *liberty*, it is also contrary to the concept of honor and glory. Through shame we have hidden from God, but now, through glory, we come to the tree of the Cross (*Salut Pasch*, GNO IX 310). Gregory also describes the *kenosis* of the Lord as a clothing in our αἰσχύνη.

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AKOLOUTHIA

ἀκολουθία

1. AKOLOUTHIA AND LOGIC · 2. AKOLOUTHIA AND COSMOLOGY
3. AKOLOUTHIA AND HISTORY · 4. AKOLOUTHIA AND EXEGESIS
5. PHILOSOPHICAL SOURCES.

In *Hex* Gregory seeks to determine the signification of the account of creation as it is found in Gn. His main preoccupation is to manifest and explain the ties that unite the different episodes of the narration, and thus to investigate the concatenation and succession of those facts on which one can base the unveiling of the true significance of the text and the surpassing of the apparent contradictions which can appear in a superficial reading (*Hex*, 44, 121D–124B). Our author is moved by certain scientific requirements, which are not satisfied by a ‘popular’ explanation such as that realized by Basil in his *In Hexaemeron*, where he was content with a simple exposition of the facts. It is clear that, while Gregory remains faithful to the teachings of Basil in this work, he does not cease to distinguish himself from his teacher through his continuous concern for systematics and methodological rigor, thus giving an authentically scientific character to the totality of his exegesis. One often finds here the noun *akolouthia* (connection, junction, coordination, concatenation, succession) or the adjective *akolouthon*, with which Gregory expresses the precise objective of his methodological and systematic thought, one he pursues and manifests at every moment. This is a vocabulary used frequently by the Nyssen throughout his works, rich in semantic subtleties and furnishing one of the more important keys to understand the theology of our author.

1. AKOLOUTHIA AND LOGIC. The first and most immediate signification of this term in our author is its logical sense. It indicates the necessary relationship between two propositions when one of these is the consequence of the other (*Eun*, GNO I, 404, 5; *An et res*, PG 46, 128C; *Mort*, GNO IX, 33, 24–34). *Akolouthia* (necessary consequence) is the manner of rigorously establishing the truth of a proposition on the level of a logical demonstration, that is, according to reason (*An et res*, PG 46, 109B). Another role of *akolouthia* consists in indicating the absurd con-

sequences to which a certain proposition, opposed by our author, might lead. It is a type of refutation by *reductio ad absurdum*, which is frequently employed by Gregory in controversies (*Eun*, GNO I, 101,22–102,9; II, 65). Another signification Gregory uses within this logical framework considers *akolouthia* as a series of reasonings with which a complete demonstration is constructed, beginning with the first principle and leading to the ultimate conclusions. This is a concatenation of causes which goes from the beginning to the very end (*Eun*, GNO II, 211; *An et res*, PG 46, 152D), something that is an essential quality of every methodological search which leads to a truly scientific knowledge (*An et res*, PG 46, 57B). Using this meaning, our author often unites *akolouthia* to two other terms: *taxis* (with which he underscores the ordered character) as in ἀκόλουθος τάξις (methodological order), and *theoria* (scientific investigation, systematization). *Akolouthia* is thus an investigative method with which one highlights the value of reasoning as an instrument of exploration. It is the process with which the realities to be investigated are situated in their proper context, where the reciprocal binding relationships are discovered and one achieves a level of understanding where they illuminate and clarify each other.

Gregory offers an example of this precise method in his work *Mort*. There he seeks to explain why the fate of the dead can never be feared by the Christian. The Nyssen is not content with a general argument. All his endeavor to tackle the proposed question is always methodical: what is the true good; what is that which characterizes the corporeal life; the comparison between the present goods and those that are reserved in hope (*Mort*, GNO IX, 29, 2–9). We find ourselves at the heart of Gregory's method: to continually judge particular goods in relationship to a universal and supreme good. In this way the scope of *akolouthia* is nothing other than to guarantee the scientific character of any knowledge through reference to the first principles. On the basis of certain truths, known by means of Revelation, one achieves a complete demonstration that can be considered properly philosophical. From this derives, for example, his effort to offer a demonstration of the resurrection of the dead by means of a rational "deduction" (*akolouthia*) in parallel with the testimonies offered by the Sacred Scriptures (*An et res*, PG 46, 108A). Gregory's affirmation that the thought of Eunomius is contrary not only to the affirmations of Scripture, but also to the very plausibility of rigorous affirmation (*Ref Eun*, GNO II, 201, 9), stems from this as well. This means that Gregory does "theology" in its proper sense, viz. a true systemization of the revealed sources.

2. *AKOLOUTHIA* AND COSMOLOGY. A second signification of the term *akolouthia* in Gregory indicates the necessary “succession” of natural phenomena constitutive of the order of the cosmos. Where Basil limited himself to demonstrating that the facts of creation are in accord with the account of Gn, Gregory will seek in *Hex* to show the necessary “correlation” or “tie” between those events, that is, to manifest the very law of their succession in time. It is in this that *akolouthia* properly consists, and this will be the most important semantic value given by our author to the word throughout his works. In this sense he will use it to refer to the regular movement of the stars (*Beat*, GNO VII/2, 162, 13), or to designate the cycles of biological life (*Mort*, GNO IX, 51, 24–52, 1), considering birth and death as parts of the law of nature which was constituted according to a necessary order. The problem that Gregory encounters is the valuation of these phenomena, which succeed one another according to a necessary order. Certainly, both life and death happen in a necessary manner, but this natural order is never envisioned by our author as the effect of a nefarious or blind fatalism (*Mort*, GNO IX, 49, 13–16). *Akolouthia* implies an ordered succession, a significance of things, and comes to signify progressive finality tending towards perfection—it is never a simple repetitive cycle of events that succeed in a circular manner—and it is in this that the great difference between the Nyssen and Greek philosophy can be seen. It is a succession “according to the rule of art” (*technikè*). It is in this sense that a human being can understand his own death as a step towards his final perfection and accomplishment (*Mort*, GNO IX, 49, 22). There is a progressive order established by the wisdom of the divine “Artist” which should not be seen by the human being as a simple inevitable succession of phenomena which concern him, but as an ordered movement that proceeds towards an end, which is nothing other than assimilation to God (*An et res*, PG 46, 105A). *Akolouthia* is thus seen by Gregory as a true process of the divinization of the human being.

In this signification, *akolouthia* enables our author to express one of his essential doctrines: The global creation of things regards both their origin in existence and their progressive development, in virtue of a dynamism internal to them. This “development,” fruit of divine wisdom itself, is that which Gn presents as successive creations on God’s part (*Hex*, PG 44, 72C). Gregory will apply this conception of a progressive development in virtue of an immanent law not only to the cosmos as a whole, but also to each and every human being.

We here encounter another of Gregory’s fundamental theses: the progressive development of the soul and body from the beginning, which

is a regular evolution towards the state of perfection (*Op hom*, PG 45, 236 BC). In response to the Greek drama of the unrelenting law of cyclic repetition, Gregory does not respond with the Platonic evasion of time, but with a Christian affirmation of the significance of time, to which he attributes a positive value, presenting it as a law of the divine plan (→ THEOLOGY OF HISTORY). *Akolouthia* is presented as the very law of the creature, and thus as that which distinguishes creatures essentially from God. That which is proper to creatures is *akolouthia*, temporal development, being in submission to an order fixed according to “before” and “after.” No creature can escape this *akolouthia*, as it is constitutive of their very creaturely condition. Nevertheless the totality of time has a significance: It has a beginning and an end (*Eun*, GNO I, 135, 7). All of creation follows a path through temporal spaces from a beginning to an end, by which temporal division itself permits us to designate the very succession (*akolouthia*) of created realities.

3. AKOLOUTHIA AND HISTORY. *Akolouthia* in this sense indicates the necessary and progressive succession of all that is in time, and is applied by Gregory not only to the natural order, but also to the supernatural one in his reflections on the work of salvation, since this too is constituted according to an ordered and progressive project. Some events in the history of salvation can seem extraneous to the order of nature, such as divine miracles, but they have an internal coherence, a law of succession. This is the harmonious development which Gregory observes in the globality of the history of salvation, and which he will try to illuminate and explain with his intellectual efforts. The Sacred Scriptures in fact present events which in appearance do not seem to be linked to each other, without a particular interest in centering one’s attention on the logic of the succession of such narrative proceedings. This will be the perspective in which the Nyssen will apply himself in many of his works: to find the *akolouthia* of that which is witnessed to by the Scriptures. Thus for example, he will try to give a coherent explanation to the biblical passages that speak of the human being from his very creation, and he will do this using his own proper methodology: by coordinating, placing in relationship and demonstrating the ties that exist between the various revealed truths. His theology is an exercise of the intellect which seeks to penetrate the object of faith.

As there exists an *akolouthia* of creation, understood as a regular progression towards the good, so too there exists in contrast, according to our author, another process of disintegration: the genealogy of sin and

death that has its origin in the sin of Adam. Thus the term of *akolouthia* will have an important function within Gregory's theology, helping to explain the reality of original sin and its transmission. We can observe the ambivalence of Gregory's use of *akolouthia* in his interpretation of history: this can be a process of either growth or corruption.

Sin, once introduced into humanity through Adam's transgression, develops the full "series" (*akolouthia*) of its consequences. This development has two aspects: the consequences of sin themselves, sin's effects, and the transmission of sin to all human beings. *Akolouthia* is first of all the order according to which the consequences of original sin originated and have developed (*Virg*, GNO VIII/1, 297, 14–23). Among these consequences he will strongly underscore the presence of death, and will indicate virginity, in contrast to sin, as a path that does not imply death, a path that permits us to interrupt the continuity of the propagation of sin (*Virg*, GNO VIII/1, 310–311). In this perspective, death is not so much a result of the natural condition itself, as an effect of the evil of sin. On the other hand, *akolouthia* is also the transmission of the sin of Adam, the true principle of propagation (*Inscr*, GNO V, 52), to the whole of humanity. It is this progression that Baptism has come to interrupt, in such a way that, to the order of sin, Gregory will oppose the order of grace. To the *akolouthia* of sin, initiated by Adam, God has opposed the second *akolouthia*, that which has its origin in Christ, through whom the human being rises from the mortal life to the true immortal life. *Akolouthia* is seen as the process of reintegration of the entirety of humanity in creation itself, creation accomplished with the Resurrection of Christ (*Ref Eun*, GNO II, 387, 20). The history of salvation is thus presented as a progressive invasion of the good that seeks to destroy sin; the life of Christ is seen as a succession of mysteries, and tradition as a process of transmission beginning with the Apostles. All of this is *akolouthia* according to the Nyssen. It is in this sense that *akolouthia* appears as characteristic of the restoration of human nature worked by Christ. It is only in a progressive way that grace takes hold of the human being, guiding him to the gradual union with God, in a process comparable to the growth that is realized in nature (*Infant*, GNO III/2, 83, 11). From this perspective, spiritual life takes on a dimension of organic growth, through a long path of slow divinization (*An et res*, PG 46, 105A).

4. AKOLOUTHIA AND EXEGESIS. Up to this point we have considered *akolouthia* as an expression of a necessary relation between certain facts or ideas. There is nevertheless another signification in the works of our

author, one that could be defined as literary: It is the order present in a text. This is a common meaning in Gregory: either the order of terms (*Inscr*, GNO V, 108, 9), or the unfolding of a conversation or discourse, or the disposition of parts of a work. This order can be a simple line of succession. *Akolouthia* then signifies only that which comes after, the progress in the development of a text or thought. In the realm of the Sacred Scriptures this order is at once eloquent and highly significant for our author. The Scriptures present an internal *akolouthia*, an ordered and progressive style which has its expression in the order of the narrated facts. The role of the exegete is to discover those laws of succession of narration, starting precisely with the order of facts, i.e. to realize the *theoria* of a narration by showing the *akolouthia* (*Hex*, PG 44, 117C). Thus, when presented with the Psalms, Gregory will try to show, despite the apparent disorder, the reciprocal internal ties that justify the external succession, their *akolouthia* (*Inscr*, GNO V, 24–25). The Psalms are presented in chronological disorder and do not correspond to a historical succession, but for Gregory, the Holy Spirit, the true author of the Psalms, is not preoccupied with chronology; what interested Him was conversion, which itself follows a progression, a certain order that is expressed by the Psalms—which are ordered according to their relations to the various stages of spiritual life. This does not imply a lack of respect for the historical aspect when commenting Scripture, but nevertheless underscores the fact that Scripture does not seek to establish a rigorous chronology.

5. PHILOSOPHICAL SOURCES. As we have seen, we find here one of the fundamental categories of the Nyssen's thought, one to which he attributes an unprecedented richness of meaning. Nevertheless, Gregory realized this development starting from certain anterior premises which he inherited and which can be considered as his sources. He will even at times tie the term of *akolouthia* to the name of one philosopher, Aristotle (*Eun*, GNO I, 37, 20). In one passage he presents *akolouthia* as a proper characteristic of the Aristotelian method in contrast to that of Plato (*An et res*, PG 46, 52A). This is an extremely important text, since it indicates what Gregory understands by *akolouthia*: That which shows the necessary ties that unite the propositions or realities, or that which confers a scientific character to thought. This method is that of Aristotle. Thus the desire of our author to give theology a scientific form finds in Aristotle one of its most fundamental references.

The signification of *akolouthia* as development of nature and history finds a precedent in Stoicism. Gregory, like Zeno before him, will speak

of a process of growth as the expression of an immanent force: the succession of phenomena is an intelligent and harmonious work (*Mort*, GNO IX, 49, 22). In this respect there is a clear dependence in terms both of vocabulary and of ideas, but Gregory brings about a transformation: this order is the work of a transcendent wisdom, which is never confused with creation itself.

We thus have here a key word of Gregory's theology, which is primarily employed to express the relations between all realms of reality; and in this sense Gregory's thought represents one of the most important efforts to achieve an authentic systemization of theology.

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ALLEGORY

The lexical family of ἀλληγορεῖν, ἀλληγορία and ἀλληγορικῶς is used only six times by Gregory in his works (cf. MANN, *Lexicon Gregorianum* I, 199). Paul explicitly states in Gal 4.24 that the two wives of Abraham are symbols (ἀλληγορούμενα—a *hapax legomenon* in the NT) of the two Covenants, and then interprets in an allegorical sense the entire story of the faith of Abraham (Rm 4.1–25; Gal 3.6–18; 4.22–31; Heb 11.8–19; cf. *Eun* II, 85; GNO I², 251, 22–28; *Cant* prol: GNO VI, 6, 1–3). Based upon this Gregory continues the Pauline interpretation of Hagar, and in the well that God shows her (Gn 21.19) he sees a symbol of Baptism (*Diem lum*: GNO IX 230,19–231,9). The story of Laban and Jacob (Gn 30.37–43) also alludes to Baptism. The drinking troughs into which Jacob placed white branches, thus impoverishing Laban, are a symbol of Baptism, with which Christ (Jacob) steals from the devil (Laban) all of his flock (*Diem lum*: GNO IX 232, 19). Only at the end of the *Hex* treatise does Gregory affirm that he has not “transformed anything into figured allegory” (τροπικὴ ἀλληγορία), but that he has “remained as close as possible to the immediate literal sense” (*Hex* 77: GNO IV/1, 83, 13 f.). In a similar manner he had already dispelled the possible fears of his readers that his reflection on “the text could create confusion with a metaphorical interpretation” (*Hex* 21: GNO IV/1 33, 1 f.). With an analogous moderation Gregory uses allegorization in *Hex* and in *Op hom*, in which he continues the work of his brother Basil, including his methodology (cf. Bas *Hex* II 5: SC 26bis, 162, 5–8)—without however renouncing his own independence. Furthermore, for Gregory the name of the method is irrelevant: whether one calls it “tropology”, “allegory” or in other ways, what is important is its utility (*Cant* prol: GNO VI, 5, 6–9).

While Gregory will not use the term of τροπολογία later on, he uses at one time the verb τροπολογεῖν (*Diem lum*: GNO IX, 236, 15s.), and more frequently the adjective/adverb of τροπικός/-ῶς in the sense of exegetical allegory, primarily in his commentary on the Song of Songs (cf. *Cant* II and III: GNO VI, 46, 3; 83, 6. 18; 85, 4; cf. FABRICIUS/RIDINGS, *Concordance*, s.v.). Other definitions or formulas, taken for the most part from Paul’s letters, are: to overturn the literal sense (τοὺς λόγους ἀναστρέφειν); change of expression (ἀλάσσειν τὴν φωνήν: Gal 4.20), when it is

the case of transforming a story into an argumentation (μετάγειν τὴν ἱστορίαν εἰς ἔνδειξιν); application to a superior level of consideration (ἢ διὰ τῆς ἀναγωγῆς θεωρία); typology (τυπικῶς συνέβαινεν ἐκείνοις: 1 Cor 10.11); the Law of Moses was written for us (1 Cor 9, 8–10); mirror and enigma (ἔσοπτρον καὶ αἰνίγμα: 1 Cor 13.12); the passage from that which is corporeal to that which is spiritual (ἀπὸ τῶν σωματικῶν πρὸς τὰ νοητὰ μετάστασις)—this signifies turning to the Lord and removing the veil (πρὸς κύριον ἐπιστροφή καὶ καλύμματος περιαιρέσις: 2 Cor 3.16); passage to contemplation of that which is immaterial and spiritual (μεταβαίνειν πρὸς τὴν ἄυλον τε καὶ νοητὴν θεωρίαν); the transformation into reason and intellect (πρὸς νοῦν καὶ διάνοιαν μεταβάλλειν) (*Cant* prol: GNO VI, 6,18–17,1); to see by images (τροπικὴ θεωρία); or the turning of a sense (στροφή τοῦ λόγου) (*Eun* III/1, 25: GNO II², 12, 11–21) (cf. also MOUTSOULAS, 473 f.). Thus with the word “allegory” Gregory intends every translated form of interpretation, including metaphor, typology and other figurative expressions.

In two passages, Gregory fully justifies the theoretic basis of his allegorization, in *Cant* prol (GNO VI, 3–13) and in *Eun* III/1, 1–31 (GNO II², 3–14). This is because these are the two essential contexts in which he needs them: biblical exegesis and dogmatic controversy. Some observations in *Or cat* 32, 4–5 (GNO III/4, 78,19–79,12) can be added to these. Gregory debates with the opponents of allegorical Scriptural exegesis, at the same time defining the independence of his theology vis-à-vis his predecessors and models. In *Cant* these opponents are “specific persons belonging to the ecclesiastical circle” (GNO VI, 4, 10–13), either members of his own community or exegetes of the Antiochian school such as Diodore of Tarsus or Theodore of Mopsuestia, whom Gregory had encountered at synods; Theodore had composed a commentary on the Song of Songs with a historicizing interpretation (CPG II 3837; cf. DÜNZL: FChr 16/1, 98 n. 4). In *Eun* the opponent is Eunomius of Cyzicus, whose theology is based upon the idea that the particular names of nature (ἔννοιαι φυσικαί) are given immutably by God and communicated to human beings, something which excludes a figurative interpretation, admitting only logical, direct conclusions from human concepts to the essence of God (cf. ABRAMOWSKI, *Eunomios*: RAC 6, 945 f.).

In *Or cat* Gregory refers to “those who are experts in the hidden senses of Scripture and tradition” (GNO III/4, 79, 1–2). In *Cant* he explicitly refers to the Commentary on the Song of Songs by Origen, “who had dedicated himself with commitment to this book,” but justifies a further interpretation with 1 Cor 3.8—“each will receive his rewards according

to his own works”—and considers, unlike Origen, the fact that “On my part the treatise was not composed as a display (ἐπίδειξις) of rhetorical ability” (GNO VI, 13, 3–9).

Gregory owes much to the Origenian tradition, but distinguishes himself from it by his own theory and his application of allegorization, and by his philological and practical explanations. In *Eun*, Gregory continues the endeavours of his brother Basil towards the refutation of the Eunomian conviction of the univocity of the literal sense. Basil had sought to do this by distinguishing between the οὐσία of Christ and his role in the οἰκονομία (*Eun* II, 3: SC 305, 16, 10–13); Eunomius responds by countering that in this way he split the Christ into two Χριστοί and two κύριοι (*Eun* III/3, 15–25: GNO II², 112,10–116,28).

Gregory does not refuse the literal sense (πρόχειρος κατὰ τὴν λέξιν ἔμφασις; ἡ λέξις ὡς εἴρηται), as long as it is useful (*Cant* prol: GNO VI, 3, 5; 4, 17 f.; *Eun* II, 85: GNO I², 251, 22–28). This is true for example in the direct commands and direct prescriptions as well as in affirmations about the divinity of Christ. Like Origen and Basil, Gregory does not lack philological precision. In many passages he indirectly refers to the original Hebrew, and compares the various Greek translations of the Bible (cf. VÖLKER, 167 f.). In general however, for a variety of motives, one cannot content oneself with the literal sense. Various passages of the Old Testament taken literally are not at all useful (ἀργόν), and are even dangerous. “The letter kills, the Spirit gives life” (2 Cor 3.6). The narration of the Prophet Hosea who by divine command begets children with a prostitute (Hos 1.2), or that of king David who commits adultery with Bethsabea and has her husband Uriah killed (2 Sam 11), are not at all useful for a virtuous life, and are even harmful if one does not understand them symbolically (*Cant* prol: GNO VI, 7, 1–10). Further, in the literal sense there are historical particulars and legal dispositions which are superfluous and marginal, or which are not fitting to the sublimity of divine inspiration (*Eun* II, 239: GNO I², 296, 9–15). Finally, anthropomorphic expressions of the Bible, such as speaking (Gn 1.3), sight (Gn 1.4), hearing (Ps 29.11) and smell (Gn 8.21) attributed to God, when taken literally, are not worthy of the essence of God (*Eun* II, 233: GNO I², 293,31–294,14) (cf. VÖLKER, 169).

Christ himself in his human figure reveals divine mysteries (ἀποκαλύπτοντος τὰ κεκρυμμένα μυστήρια), interpreting the Old Testament in reference to himself (μεταλαμβάνειν). He speaks with parables and metaphors, which He then explains to his disciples (cf. Mt 13.3–35 par; Mk 3.23; 12.1; Lk 8.10; Jn 16.29) in order to train their perspicacity.

Examples are the serpent in the desert (Jn 3.14), the leaven (Mt 6.6–12), the bread from heaven (Jn 6.50f.), grain and chaff (Mt 3.7–12), and many others as well. The same is true of the Old Testament: the shoot of the root of Jesse (Is 11.1), the congealed mountain (Ps 67.16) or the chariot strong like ten thousand (Ps 68.18) (GNO VI 7, 16–12, 19). The entire Gospel reflects the double natures of Christ: “words and actions unfold in a human manner, in the hidden meaning the divine presence is revealed” (*Or cat* 32, 5; GNO III/4, 79, 3–12). The incarnate Son of God is therefore the only one in whom the sound (ἦχος / αἰσθησις) of the word and content of word (κρυπτὸν νόημα) coincide. Further, νοήματα κατὰ τὸ πρόχειρον transmits only a purely exterior (προσηήματα) idea of that which can be gathered from the literal sense (τὸν ἐγκειμένον τοῖς ὁήμασι νοῦν τοῦ κατὰ τὴν φωνὴν τόνου), while the allegorical interpretation manifests the interior meaning (νοήματα κατὰ τὴν ἐν τῷ βάθει κειμένην θεωρίαν) which leads to the knowledge of the “full banquet of the virtues” (πανδαισία τῶν ἀρετῶν) (*Inscr* I, 3–4; GNO V, 34, 10–35, 1).

Gregory's description of the book of Proverbs can be taken as a definition of his allegorizing: “A word that through its more evident significations refers to something else, which remains hidden; or a word which does not immediately reveal the scope of its significance, but through allusions indirectly transmits its message” (*Eun* III/1, 23, GNO II², 11, 16–26). In Gregory the conception and practice of allegory generally take as guide and model “the great Apostle” Paul, for whom the entire Law is spiritual (πνευματικόν), while sinful man is carnal (σαρκικός) (Rm 7.14). Here, Paul also intends to include the historical books (cf. Mt 22.40, Rm 3.21) so that “All of the divinely inspired Scripture is Law, because it, not only through direct teachings, but also through historical narrations, educates intelligent listeners to know the mysteries and to make their own lives pure. He practices exegesis in the manner he holds proper, aiming at usefulness” (*Cant* prol; GNO VI, 5, 9–16).

Gregory's principles of allegorizing are an essential component of his theological system. They can be synthesized into four main points:

1. Gregory's allegorizing is based on soteriology and ethics. At the beginning, the question of the utility (ὠφέλεια) for believers is asked. The end of the human being, separated from God through original sin and imprisoned in the phenomena of the material world, is—even according to Plato (*Theaetetus* 176ab)—the return to the likeness with God (→ IMAGE). This consists in the “flight from evil,” which Gregory, principally in the *Vit Moys*, describes

as a struggle against the passions, as separation from all which is carnal and from sin, and as ascent to perfection through a virtuous life (\rightarrow VIRTUE). The usefulness of the allegorical understanding of Scripture must then consist in the incessant promotion of the ascent of the soul to God.

2. God is however infinite in his essence and therefore remains inexpressible by a finite being such as man (\rightarrow APOPHATIC THEOLOGY, INFINITY). Language certainly helps to know God, but it can never perfectly describe Him. The infinity of God does not allow for any univocal, finite name ($\delta\acute{\nu}\omicron\mu\alpha$). Every $\nu\acute{\omicron}\eta\mu\alpha$ is therefore only a $\delta\acute{\omicron}\mu\omicron\iota\omega\mu\alpha$, and thus an allegorical expression (*Cant* III: GNO VI, 86, 14 f.). Through knowledge and words we limit ourselves in our participation in the inexpressible greatness of God. Through speaking of God in this way, which is necessarily figurative and allegorical, the soul turns to God. The fundamental error of EUNOMIUS (\rightarrow) consists precisely in the fact that he stops at the naked letter of the text ($\eta\chi\omicron\varsigma$ / $\alpha\lambda\sigma\theta\eta\iota\varsigma$); he does not admit any hidden sense ($\kappa\rho\upsilon\pi\tau\acute{\omicron}\nu$ $\nu\acute{\omicron}\eta\mu\alpha$) and thus thinks he is able to affirm something true about the essence of God. Every tendency to God nevertheless always remains an incessant progressive extension of oneself towards God (\rightarrow EPEKTASIS). Even the usefulness which derives from the allegorical understanding of Scripture and virtue is transformed in a continuous and unending knowledge of God ($\pi\rho\omicron\kappa\omicron\sigma\eta$) (*Phil* 3.13: *Cant* I: GNO VI 32, 2–5; V: 159, 15 f.; 174, 13–16; VIII: 247, 11–14).
3. Language is always only a copy of realities, and is therefore allegorical by its very nature. Every word, upon closer examination, according to the linguistic usage of the time and the understanding of the interpreter, is equivocal (*Eun* I, 540: GNO I², 182,24–183,7). The knowledge of the divine $\varphi\acute{\upsilon}\varsigma\iota\varsigma$ presupposes faith ($\pi\acute{\iota}\sigma\tau\iota\varsigma$) and piety ($\epsilon\upsilon\delta\acute{\epsilon}\beta\epsilon\iota\alpha$) in the interpreter (*Eun* III/1, 24: GNO II², 12, 8–10). For this reason the interpreter needs both $\pi\rho\omicron\sigma\pi\alpha\acute{\iota}\delta\epsilon\upsilon\sigma\iota\varsigma$ through the divine $\sigma\omicron\varphi\acute{\iota}\alpha$ and the continual grace ($\chi\acute{\alpha}\rho\iota\varsigma$) of God (*Eun* III/1, 24: GNO II², 12, 8–10).
4. The divine inspiration of the Sacred Scripture and of its interpreters preserves allegorization from becoming arbitrary and subjective. The text itself is based upon the $\varphi\iota\lambda\alpha\nu\theta\rho\omega\pi\acute{\iota}\alpha$ of God, who had everything written for us in a form adapted to the instruction of the reader, to serve us as guidance ($\chi\epsilon\iota\rho\alpha\gamma\omega\gamma\acute{\iota}\alpha$) and education ($\pi\alpha\iota\delta\epsilon\acute{\iota}\alpha$) adapted to human limitedness. The rules of its interpretation can never lose sight of the origin of its end. On this basis all

that we affirm must necessarily be significant, useful and not unworthy of God—these rules had already been taught in the schools of antiquity for Homeric exegesis.

Despite this, allegorical exegesis always remains fragmentary and offers only a foretaste of the divine reality; thus Gregory describes it with images. In *Cant* he compares it to the treatment of grain to make it edible for human beings. It must be threshed, winnowed, ground and baked in an oven in order to be adapted to human consumption. Only beasts without reason devour grain which has not been worked (cf. *Virg* 21: GNO VIII/1, 330, 10–14). Scripture itself uses this same image (cf. Mt 3.7–12) (*Cant* prol: GNO VI, 12, 4–19). The literal text and the interior meaning, according to Paul, are in a reciprocal relationship like that of body and soul. Both require nutrition, but only the allegory makes the word enjoyable and useful for the soul. In *Eun* it is the plumage of the peacock which serves as analogy. It presents a completely normal external appearance. Only when it unfolds, does one see the splendor of its various colours (*Eun* II, 25–26: GNO II², 12, 10–13, 3).

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Hubertus R. Drobner

AN ET RES

De anima et resurrectione

The dialogue is regarded as the second element in a *unified project of reflection on the theme of anthropology* which begins with *OP HOM* (→) and finishes with *INFANT* (→) (G. MATURI, *Paradiso precoce*, 20–21). It constitutes the literary framework of the meeting that took place at Annesi on Pontus between the Nyssen and his sister Macrina, in December of 379. After having participated in the council of Antioch, on his return to Nyssa while still mourning the death of his brother Basil which took place in January of that year, Gregory stops in Annesi to give extreme unction to his dying sister (*An et res*, PG 46, 12A).

May (Cfr. G. MAY, 57) places the *terminus post quem* of the composition of the dialogue at the end of 379, on the basis of Macrina's death at the end of that year and on the reference to her death in *An et res* as an event that had transpired (PG 46, 129A 5–6).

Known as the “Christian *Phaedo*” (C. APOSTOLOPOULOS; G.F. BOEHRINGER, 43; R. HIRZEL, 371–372; H.M. MEISSNER, 384–394; M. PELLEGRINO, 443), the dialogue unfolds on the day before the death of Macrina, venerated by Gregory as “saint” and “mistress”, in an intentional and explicit analogy with the Socrates of the *Phaedo* who discusses the immortality of the soul before drinking the hemlock.

The reflections on the soul as intelligible essence and its nature opposed to the body (*An et res*, PG46, 36A13–14)—from which one must separate, as much as possible, in order to contemplate the Ideas (*An et res*, PG 46, 88A4, 89C9–10)—refer explicitly to Plato's *Phaedo*. The same holds for the clear rejection of the doctrine of the preexistence of souls which are born neither before nor after bodies, but contemporaneously with them (PG46, 113D1–117C8; 125C1–128A10), and of the notion of metempsychosis (PG46, 103B–121A). If the Platonic tripartite division of the soul (*Resp.* IV, 441e, *Phaedr.* 245c) into “rational”, “irascible” and “concupiscent” (*An et res*, PG46, 48C–D) is sometimes adopted, the bipartite division into *noús* and *psyché* is continually maintained. By “soul”, Gregory means the essence that gives life to the body and in which the intellectual part is found (PG46, 29B10–14). It is Stoicism on the other hand which provides the philosophical foundation

for the dogma of the resurrection (K. GRONAU, 240–241), explained on the basis of the human being as “microcosm” (LILLA, 19–21): As the Stoic *logos* is capable of regenerating the universe through periodic conflagrations (*ekpyrōseis*), so too the human soul, since it is intelligible and indivisible, is capable of recognizing and recomposing the elements of the body that it carried in life (*An et res*, PG46, 45C–48A10; 77B), a body that in the resurrection “will be woven anew with the same elements, even if it will no longer have a large and heavy consistency: the cloth that is woven will be more subtle and airlike” (PG46, 105D–108A).

This type of conception places Gregory in a middle ground between Methodius of Olympus, who maintains the total identity of risen body and earthly body (J. DANIELOU, 154–155), and Origen, to whom “he appears nevertheless to make a concession” (LILLA, 32) by speaking of a body that is “more subtle and airlike” (→ ESCHATOLOGY).

Gregory shows a firm dependence on Origen in the doctrine of the *APOCATASTASIS* (→), with which he negates the eternity of punishment and affirms a purely cathartic function (PG46, 89B, 97C–100C, 157B–D, 160C) for this. Lilla (Cfr. LILLA, 15–16) details Platonic antecedents for this position.

Mystical aspects are not lacking in the section of *An et res* dedicated to the description of the union of the soul with the First Principle (PG46, 89B–97A8).

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Giorgio Maturi

ANALOGY

Gregory uses the lexical family of ἀναλογεῖν, ἀναλογία, ἀναλογίζεσθαι, ἀναλογικῶς, ἀναλογισμός, ἀνάλογον and ἀναλόγως about 100 times in his works. Three of these passages are noteworthy, where ἀναλογία is used as a *varia lectio* of ἀλογία (Graec: GNO III/1 30,14; *Beat* 1: GNO VII/2,85, 1; *Epist* 1,19: GNO VIII/2, 9,8). The vocabulary referring to analogy is present in all the types of Gregory's works (philosophical, theological, exegetical, ascetic and homiletic), but is particularly concentrated in *Eun* (more than 30 times) and *Cant* (some 20 times) (cf. F. MANN, *Lexicon Gregorianum* I, 281–283). Its fundamental meaning denotes the operations of “consideration, reflection, and (mathematical) calculation” (*Eun* I, 470: GNO I², 162,25; *Beat* 3: GNO VII/2, 106,18; *Quat uni*: GNO IX, 115,12; *Sanct Pasch*: GNO IX, 252,25; *Mart* II: GNO X/1, 167,28); derivatively, the relations of “ratio, correspondence and (even mathematical) proportion”; and finally comparison in itself (*Tunc et ipse*, GNO III/2, 15,22; *Mort*, GNO IX, 51,7). In certain passages ἀναλογία is close to metaphor, when Gregory speaks of food of the body and of the soul (*Op hom* 19,1: 222,5 Forbes = PG 44, 196C), or when he compares the present life to the seed of grain and the future life to the ear of corn (*Pulcher*, GNO IX, 471,13).

The correspondences can certainly be based in reality itself, but recognizing this remains an operation of the human intellect based upon one's cultural and personal formation. Analogy is thus a mental category of comparison, which discovers similarities (heuristic principle) and is subject to the hermeneutical presuppositions of the scholar. Eunomius therefore refuses the analogical discourse on God as an arbitrary construction of the human mind (*Eun* II, 306: GNO I², 316,7; 309: 316,23,30; 335: 324,3; 337: 324,25–26; 363: 332,21). Gregory, however, applies the concept of analogy in all its semantic extension to various domains:

1. *Mathematics*. In *Eun* II, 428 (GNO I², 351, 18), Gregory explains the numerical system which is composed of a corresponding multiplicity of unities: tens, hundreds and thousands. In *Cant* 15 (GNO VI, 464, 22) he multiplies the six corporeal works of mercy from Mt 25.35–36 by the ten talents that the good servant of Lk 19.16 earns with the capital of his lord, thus explaining the mystical signification of Solomon's sixty wives

in Ct 6.8. Analogously, the 80 concubines mentioned there are calculated as the eighth day (the day of the Resurrection of Christ), multiplied by the tenfold fear of the Lord. The analogy thus refers to mathematical multiplication.

2. *Astronomy*. In *Fat* (GNO III/2, 36,12), Gregory explains the cause of the way in which planetary orbits appear to the observer on earth by their concentric circular orbits of various sizes and rotational speeds. Their reciprocal relationship (ἀναλογία) necessarily determines the periods of revolution of planets fixed on the orbits themselves. In this case, then, “analogy” describes the mathematical relationship between time and distance.

3. *Architecture*. In the famous letter addressed to Amphilochius of Iconium on the construction of a *martyrion*, Gregory describes the dimensions of the building in the form of a Greek Cross with a central octagon. Each arm had to be eight cubits (πῆχεις) wide and 12 cubits deep (i.e. ca. 4.6 metres), but as high “as the harmonious proportion (ἡ ἀναλογία) with the width requires”. Likewise, in the semicircular exedrae situated between the four arms of the cross, each with a radius of four cubits, the height of the terminating part in the form of a shell had to be in harmonic proportion with the width (GNO VIII/2, 80,23; 81,4; cf. STUPPERICH, *Architekturbeschreibung*; KLOCK, *Gregor als Kirchenbauer*). “Analogous” thus means here “conformed to the capacities of building technology” or else “in accordance with the architectural aesthetic conventions of the time”.

4. In *Logic* Gregory uses analogy: a) As an instrument of syllogism, in particular, for conclusions *a minore ad maius*. If what is only a drop for God is already as large as a river for men, how large is then for men what is a river for God? (*Cant* 11: GNO VI, 327,4–7; cf. *Eun* III/1, 108: GNO II², 40,10). b) The analogy can also be based on the identity of a relationship which admits a logical syllogism (συλλογισάμενος, ἀκολουθία): In the same measure that the “psychic” man surpasses the carnal man, the “pneumatic” man surpasses the “psychic” one (*Op hom* 12,6: 144,21 Forbes = PG 44, 148B). The mercy of God for the sinner corresponds to the greatness of his justice (*Or dom* 5: GNO VII/2 62,13). Between the unbegotten nature of the Father and the begotten nature of the Son there is the same distance as between Light and its rays (*Eun* III/10, 18: GNO II², 296,13). c) From opposite affirmations, logical conclusions

can be drawn *per analogiam* (*Eun* III/10, 53: GNO II², 310, 15,23). d) Likewise from symbols: As one can deduce the form of the sun from a circle, because it is delimited by the circular form, one can also deduce the power of the Father from the power of the Son (*Eun* III/4, 13: GNO II², 190,14). e) The logical principle that if one member of the same species is known, all others can be deduced from it by analogy, is also true for all the kinds of human evils (*Trid spat*, GNO IX, 296,17).

5. In Gregory's *exegesis*, two passages of Scripture are primarily relevant, forming the foundation for both his Trinitarian theology and his spiritual theology: a) Wis 13.5 "For from the greatness and beauty of created things their Creator is known by analogy" (*Eun* II, 154: GNO I², 270,8–9; 583: 396, 25–26; *Eccl* 1: GNO V, 285, 2–4). Nevertheless, Gregory emphasizes against Eunomius that this analogical knowledge of God through creation does not convey any knowledge of his essence, but only faith in Him (*Eun* II, 13: GNO I², 230, 28). This way of understanding is also reflected in a holy person. The purity of his soul is resplendent through his outwardly visible countenance (φαινόμενον) (*Mart Ib*, GNO X/I, 148, 23–26). b) Rm 12.6 "Having gifts that differ according to the grace given to us, let us use them: if prophecy, in proportion to our faith (κατὰ τὴν ἀναλογίαν τῆς πίστεως)". This passage, from Origen on, constitutes the foundation of the theology of *analogia fidei*, which has an exegetical component, a component drawn from theology of revelation, and a personal component. It considers the Old and New Testaments as a unity of reciprocal references between type and truth (→ ALLEGORY), a unity which permits deductions from one to the other. Thus, for example, one can draw an analogous conclusion from the perfume of Ct 1.12 to the perfume of Jn 12.3, interpreting the precious nard oil with which Jesus was anointed as the perfume of the Gospel, which fills the Church (*Cant* 3: GNO VI, 92,10–93,9). Certainly, the infinite God can manifest himself only in proportion to the mental capacity of the faithful. The Creator grants the human being a participation in his logic (*Eun* II, 234: GNO I², 294, 18). However, the measure of the knowledge of God, of the gifts of grace and the participation in the Holy Spirit always depends on the level of receptiveness, fervour and faith on our part (*Eun* I, 274: GNO I², 106, 16–23; *Cant* 7: GNO VI, 209,20–210,5 with 1 Cor 12.4 "different charisms, but only one Spirit"; 9: 270,6; *Epist* 3,2: GNO VIII/2, 19,11). Certainly, the vision of God fundamentally presupposes a pure heart, but one can know only as much as intelligence and strength permit (*Cant* 8: GNO VI 246,7). This analogy is also largely expressed in

biblical images: The soul is nourished by the milk of the Church (her teachings) in proportion to its faith (*Cant* 1: GNO VI, 33,14). There are many dwellings in the Father's house (Jn 14.2), corresponding to the inclination to the beautiful (*Cant* 15: GNO VI, 459,5). The remedy corresponds to the measure of interior wickedness (*An et res*: PG 46, 152B).

6. Gregory's *Spiritual Theology* is essentially based upon the *analogia fidei*. This basically regards the ascent of the soul to God, during which its desire grows ever greater in proportion to its progress (*Cant* 5: GNO VI, 159,7). However, this ascent towards happiness certainly reaches a point where neither can the intelligence (διάνοια) draw conclusions (ἀναλογί-σασθαι) through conjectures (στοχασμοῖς) and hypotheses (ὑπονοίαις), nor can logic (λόγος δι' ἀκολουθίου) deduce what lies beyond this point (*Inscr* I, 9: GNO V, 67,16). The ascent to God begins with the turning of the soul towards virtue, which establishes an idea of the good in man. From this, as from an image (εἰκόν), one can reach the archetype through analogy (ἀρχέτυπον) (*Cant* 3: GNO VI, 91,3). Through analogy, one attains participation in that which is more divine (*Tunc et ipse*: GNO III/2, 18,6–7). Nor is the corporeal existence of the human being not extraneous to this. In fact, it reflects the soul which inhabits it, so that it is possible to perceive the interior moral activities from the outward appearance (*Op hom* 29,6: Forbes 288,3–13 = PG 44, 237AB; *Eccl* 5: GNO V, 357,8; 6: 384,7). The evolution of the soul towards virtue corresponds to the phases of human life (*Cant* 1: GNO VI, 18,5; cf. H.R. DROBNER, *Archaeologia Patristica* 41–51). Analogously to the five senses of the body, one can speak of spiritual senses (*Cant* 1: GNO VI, 34,5)—an analogy which, from Origen on, is a typical *theologumenon* of the Fathers (cf. K. RAHNER, *Le début d'une doctrine des cinq sens spirituels chez Origène*: RAM 13 (1932) 113–145; M. CANÉVET, *Sens spirituel*: DSp 14 (1990) 598–617). Therefore, Paul too proportionally allots spiritual food and spiritual drink in 1 Cor 10,3–4 (*Perf* 6: GNO VIII/1, 191,3). In general, the relationship between body and soul, or between “exterior man and interior man,” is one of Gregory's favourite *topoi*, which applies even to the relationship between corporeal death and spiritual death (*Eun* III/6, 78: GNO II², 213,25; *Or cat* 8,8: GNO III/4, 31,23; *Virg* 20: GNO VIII/1, 326,19). The νοῦς, as a mirror (κάτοπτρον), is adorned by the reflection (ὁμοίωσις) of the beauty of the archetype (πρωτότυπον). It renders the body beautiful in proportion, as a mirror of the mirror (*Op hom* 12,9: 168,11–26 Forbes = PG 44, 161CD).

7. This type of analogical interpretation is based on the fundamental premise of an ontological relationship between the human-material world and the immaterial-divine world, i.e. between the visible and the invisible. This relation can be explained in Platonic language by the concepts of prototype and image. Nevertheless, for a Christian this is but the philosophical version (for the Apologists, it is even simply copied from the Old Testament) of the biblical *theology of creation*. The Creator placed his own logic (cf. n. 5) in the world, He even created the human being explicitly in his image (Gn 1.26–27). Gregory unites the two threads of tradition in the sentence: “The emanation (ἀπόρροια) from the source of wisdom realized the nature of that which exists” (*Cant* 13: GNO VI, 385,22–386,4). For this reason creation is a reflected image of its Creator (*Inscr* I, 3: GNO V, 32,27), and it is thus possible to go back inductively from the work (ἐνέργεια) to the One who acts (ἐνεργῶν—*Beat* 6: GNO VII/2, 142,2), from the φαινόμενα of the world, its beauty and wise order, to the wisdom and beauty of God (*Eun* II, 224: GNO I², 291,6; *An et res*: PG 46, 29A—cf. Wis 13.5). This is as on earth, where from the clothing one can divine the tailor, from the boat the boat maker, and from the house the architect (*An et res*, PG 44, 24A). The means to reach this end is the human intelligence (διάνοια), and the subject of knowledge is the human soul, since both, as immaterial creation, come closest to the Creator (*Cant* 11: GNO VI, 335,15). In this context. Gregory even knows certain formulations which he would certainly not (any more) dare to use against Eunomius, for instance, that one can draw conclusions about the nature of the Creator (φύσις) from visible creation (*Or cat* 15,2: GNO III/4, 43,15), or that the transcendent reality is understood by analogous comparison (κατάληψις) with known realities (*Eccl* 2: GNO V, 308,18). For God, despite all similarities, remains beyond all comprehension (λογισμοί, νοήματα, διάνοια), even beyond analogy. Analogy belongs only to those realities that manifest something, such as: exterior aspect, colour, profile, quantity, place, figure, conjecture (στοχασμός) and similarity (εἰκασμός) (*Cant* 12: GNO VI, 357,13).

8. Gregory’s *Philology and Philosophy of Language* lays the ultimate foundation of his Trinitarian theology, in which his analogical thought culminates. The theology of EUNOMIUS (→) of Cyzicus is based upon the idea that all names in creation (ἔννοιαι φυσικαί) are irrevocably given by God and communicated to human beings, something that precludes metaphorical interpretation and permits direct logical conclusions on the basis of human concepts, even regarding the essence of God (cf.

ABRAMOWSKI, *Eunomios*: RAC 6, 945 f.). Gregory, however, fundamentally starts from the fact that language by its nature and on principle is always analogical (allegorical), since it represents only a copy of the reality (→ ALLEGORY). This is particularly true when one speaks of God. The infinite nature of God cannot be understood with limited human concepts and terms, but can only be imagined *per analogiam* as if on the basis of traces and glimmers (*Cant* 1: GNO VI, 37,3). Speaking of God, language functions only as an image (εἰκόν), likeness (ἀναλογία) and reflection (ὁμοιότης) (*Eun* III/6, 15: GNO II², 191,10). Even the proclamation of God through words can be done only in an analogical manner (*Arium*: GNO III/1, 73,25). When Sacred Scripture speaks of the finger, hand, arm, eye, feet or sandals of God, these expressions are worthy of God (θεοπρεπής) only as analogies (metaphors) (*Eun* II, 234: GNO I², 294,13). The same is true for names (ὀνόματα) of God (*Eun* II, 104: GNO I², 257,3). Finally, Gregory also applies analogy to resolve purely philological problems. He explains the expression “vanity of vanities” (Qoh 1.2) by comparing it to the parallel formula of “work of works,” which clearly means the most important of all works (*Eccl* 1: GNO V, 282,10–19).

9. Gregory's analogical thought culminates, as stated above, in his *Trinitarian theology*, in what Thomistic theology will call the *analogia entis*. The infinity of God, on principle, admits only an analogical knowledge of Him (*Eust*: GNO III/1, 11,2). The true Good cannot be seen precisely (δι' ἀκριβείας ἰδεῖν) by those who are imprisoned in the body, but, transcending earthly knowledge, it is possible to reach a conjecture (στοχασμός) by means of analogy (*Mort*, GNO IX, 34,20). The power of God can never be directly contemplated, but is only manifested through examples (ὑποδείγματα) (*Tunc et ipse*, GNO III/2, 10,18). Understanding God thus becomes a progressive process which lasts all eternity (→ *EPEKTASIS*—*Cant* 8: GNO VI, 246,20). The affirmation of Eunomius of Cyzicus, the great adversary of Gregory of Nyssa and his brother Basil, of a direct knowledge of God due to the univocity of concepts, must therefore be false. There is no direct conclusion of the superior reality from an inferior reality (*Eun* I, 213: GNO I², 88,25). Even from a human being's activity, one cannot deduce his essence. Likewise, from the fact of being begotten or unbegotten one cannot attain any knowledge of the essence of the Father or the Son through analogy (*Eun* II, 19: GNO I², 2312,23). The same is true for deductions based upon their activity (*Eun* I, 392: GNO I², 141, 18; 426: 151,5).

One may not compare the essence of God (θεία οὐσία) to created nature (κτιστή φύσις) (*Eun* III/6, 80: GNO II², 214,10). God is incomprehensible (λογισμοῖς καταλαβεῖν) to limited human intelligence, and the only certain analogical deductions possible are those that refer to incomprehensibility (*Eun* III/1, 109: GNO II², 40,22). Eunomius' logical conclusion is thus false, when he states that, given that the οὐσία of the supreme Father alone is true and proper, that of the Son is proportionally (ἀναλόγως) subordinated (*Eun* I, 240: GNO I, 97,7.11). One notes here that Gregory, under pressure from the Eunomian controversy, renounces his (preceding) affirmations of a possible knowledge of God (cf. n. 7) and only admits an indirect analogical conjecture regarding his essence.

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Analogy, social → Social Analogy
Angels → Creation

ANTHROPOLOGY

1. MATTER AND SPIRIT · 2. CREATION AND IMAGE
3. DOUBLE CREATION · 4. HISTORICAL-SOCIAL DIMENSION.

Gregory's anthropology is of particular interest, so much so that the Nyssen has been called the most important author of the 4th century in this area (J. DANÉLOU, 49). He manages to harmoniously synthesize the properly biblical vision of the human being with the most interesting elements of the thought from the most important authors who precede him, such as Plato, Aristotle, Posidonius, Galen, Philo and Origen (E. MOUTSOULAS, 380). The most significant works from this perspective are *Hex*, *Op Hom* and *An et res*, all of them composed in the early years of his theological production. There are numerous allusions to Plato in them, particularly to the *Timaeus*, *Symposium* and *Phaedo*, which inspire the *An et res* in particular, written in the form of a dialogue with Gregory's sister Macrina. In fact, Gregory also begins from the affirmation of the real superiority of the intelligible and spiritual dimension; at the same time however, a great attention to the material world and scientific questions is present, in the line of Aristotle, Posidonius and Galen. This is presented in an original synthesis which, following the inspiration of the treatise on creation of man by Philo, which was the first attempt to harmonize Gn and the *Timaeus*, permits Gregory to correct Origen's anthropology, continuing the purificatory work already begun by METHODIUS OF OLYMPUS (→).

1. MATTER AND SPIRIT. Gregory replaces Plato's fundamental distinction between the material world and intelligible world with that between created reality and uncreated reality as the foundation of his own thought (→ PARTICIPATION). The trinitarian reflection itself and the confrontation with subordinationism require him to identify the divine and eternal sphere with the three Persons of the Trinity alone. The human being belongs to the created world instead, marked by the distinction between the material and the spiritual, and, as a unity of body and soul, belongs to them in a unique manner, since he reunites these two realms in his own nature, as μεθόριος (→). For Gregory, however, the material world is characterized by limitedness, while God is INFINITE (→). The created

spirit is nevertheless infinite by participation, infinite in that it is capable of turning to God. In fact the essential principle of the Nyssen's anthropology is: "The spirit is defined as capacity for the divine, understood in a dynamic sense, in so far as the capacity is eternally enlarged each time that it is filled, so that there can be in it at the same time satiety and desire, repose and movement" (J. DANÉLOU, 53). The human being, since he is spirit, is in an infinite and perpetual progress, and can be himself only in turning towards God, the Infinite in act. If the human being turns with his liberty towards matter, letting it take precedence over the spiritual dimension, he is attracted and crushed by limitedness, but if he continues to look towards God, the first cause of beings, he is guarded in the good and, in a certain manner, is continually created, being transformed continually in that which is more elevated, without there ever being an upper limit in his growth towards the good (*Cant*, GNO VI 174, 5–11). This is the doctrine of the ἐπέκτασις (→), essential to the Nyssen's thought and anthropology. The human being, created spirit, becomes himself in the continual turning towards God and in receiving always more from Him as a pure gift, in so far as God himself is essentially Gift. Liberty permits him to receive this gift in running towards the Lord, going always beyond oneself and becoming always greater in proportion to the ascent towards the Good (*ibidem*, 246, 18–20), so that the reward for continual search is nothing other than the search itself (*Eccl*, GNO V, 400,21–401,2). The human being can be thus only by accepting to become always more human, in the turning towards God to satisfy that desire for the infinite which constitutes his being itself. The human being, in his spiritual dimension, is thus defined by the very concept of dynamic progress, in such a way that the cyclical vision which characterizes nature, typical of the Greeks, is replaced by an authentic historical conception, since the distinctive property of the created spirit (J. DANÉLOU, 53) is a specifically human characteristic. Becoming is thus led back to creatureliness and not materiality, in an anti-dualistic vision (CL. DESALVO, 77–83), since "the double nature of man does not appear in any way the result of a degradation, as is the case for the Platonists and for Origen" (J. DANÉLOU, 55).

Gregory denies the preexistence of the soul, affirming that its principle and that of the body is the same (μία ἀμφοτέρων ἀρχήν: *Op hom*, PG 44, 236B), thus leading to practical consequences regarding the human EMBRYO (→) as well. The human being is essentially constituted of soul and body (*Antirrh*, GNO III/1, 133, 26–28; 186, 9 and 223, 25;

Sanct Pasch, GNO IX, 266, 20; *Ref Eun*, GNO II, 386, 19; *Eccl*, GNO V, 281, 1 and 389, 8), which have their beginning in the same moment (*Op hom*, PG 44, 282B; 276B).

The human being is thus integrally part of both the sensible and the intelligible creation, so as to assume a unique position in creation, manifested by the fact that God gave existence to human life at the last (*Op hom*, PG 44, 140A, 142B; 144B; *An et res*, PG 46, 60A; *Eun II*, GNO I, 272, 23; *Antirr*, GNO III/1, 134, 13), as a final synthesis of his creative work. The human being is thus the lord and goal of creation (*Sanct Pasch*, GNO IX, 253, 19; *Op hom*, PG 44, 122AB). J. Daniélou shows how considering the world as oriented towards the human being presupposes a providential finality and an optimistic vision of creation, a theme which is dear to Stoicism (J. DANIELOU, 57).

The superiority of the human being to the cosmos is thus founded on liberty (→ *PROAIRESIS*), that is, on the ontological transcendence of the human spirit, which is not subject to the law of necessity. In this sense, the Stoic theme of the microcosm receives a radically new interpretation by Gregory. The human being is considered a microcosm (*An et res*, PG 46, 28AB; *Inscr*, GNO V, 30, 26; *Op hom*, PG 44, 194B), but not because he is composed of the same elements as the universe. Following Gn 1.26 instead, the Nyssen writes: "The greatness of the human being does not consist in carrying a likeness (ὁμοιότητι) to the created universe in himself, but in being in the image (κατ' εἰκόνα) of the nature of Him who made him" (*Op hom*, PG 44, 180A).

The human being is not aware of his greatness, and forgets that he is the only reality of the material world created by God in his image, unlike the heavens, the moon and the sun. Instead, He, in whose palm is contained the entire heavens and in whose fist is contained the earth and the sea, has made man capable of Him, so much so that He dwells in man's very interiority (*Cant*, GNO VI, 68, 1–19). Gregory therefore admonishes: "How can you admire the heavens, O man, when, looking at yourself, you are more stable than them? They, in fact are passing, while you will remain in eternity together with Him who always Is" (*ibidem*, 68, 19–69, 3).

Man is seen by Gregory as the house of God due to the vastness of his spirit. For this reason J. Daniélou can say that the two currents of ancient Christianity meet and are synthesized in Gregory's thought—Irenaeus' optimism of a Stoic nature and the pessimism of Origen of a Platonic origin (J. DANIELOU, 58).

2. CREATION AND IMAGE. This greatness of the human being is founded on the creative act: God, in fact, did not create the human being by necessity (οὐκ ἀνάγκη τινὶ), but by excess of love (ἀλλ' ἀγάπης περισουσία: *Or cat*, GNO III/4, 17, 2; cfr. also *Beat*, GNO VII/2, 141, 13; *Op hom*, PG 44, 202B). The human being is thus willed by God through love, and this divine love is manifested in the creation according to the divine image (κατ' εἰκόνα θεοῦ) of Gn 1.26, a text which summarizes all of Gregory's anthropology in itself (R. LEYS, 60). The very dignity of the human being is based precisely upon this image impressed in his being (*Infant*, GNO III/2, 77, 15–22 and 79, 23; *Op hom*, PG 44, 198B; 200AC; 206AB; *Cant*, GNO VI, 458, 7; *Eun I*, GNO I, 82, 21; *Virg*, GNO VIII/1, 297, 24), and the theological principle is affirmed with such vigor as to imply the explicit exclusion of the morality of SLAVERY (→) on the practical level.

Gregory does not distinguish between image and likeness, without thereby confusing the supernatural and natural dimensions (J. DANIELOU, 64). The content of this image includes impassibility (→ *APATHEIA*), incorruptibility (→ *APHTHARSIA*) and beatitude (μακαριότης)—properties that associate the human being with God (*Beat*, GNO VII/2, 105)—together with purity (καθαρότης) and the confidence (→ *PARRÊSIA*) before God, who is contemplated face to face (*Cant*, GNO VI, 272, 18 and *Or cat*, GNO III/4, 25, 16–17).

The content of the image naturally also includes intelligence, according to the beautiful expression of the Nyssen: “If [one is] not reasonable, than neither [is one] a human being” (εἰ γὰρ οὐ λογικός, οὐδὲ ἀνθρώπος: *Maced*, GNO III/1, 93, 22–23). The human being is created by God as λογικὸν ζῷον (*Sanct Pasch*, GNO IX, 257, 27), inasmuch as he is endowed with intellective capacity (τῶν τῇ λογικῇ δυνάμει παρὰ τοῦ θεοῦ τιμηθέντων: *Eun II*, GNO I, 272, 20).

It is this capacity itself that is the basis of the most beautiful and most precious (καλλίστου τε καὶ τιμιωτάτου) of all of the gifts given to the human being in his original state: the gift of liberty and the capacity to choose (τῆς κατὰ τὸ ἀδέσποτον καὶ αὐτεξούσιον χάριτος: *Or cat*, GNO III/4, 20, 4), essential to the determination of the content of the εἰκόν (R. LEYS, 73). The theme is fundamental in the Nyssen's thought and is typically expressed through the term προαίρεσις (→). This concept is at the base of the synergistic aspect of Gregory's theology as well, which sees in the capacity to choose the gift which permits the Christian to appreciate the divine grace in the struggle to preserve it (*Cant*, GNO VI, 55).

The poor use of liberty was the cause of the fall and the origin of EVIL (→). Being and GOOD (→) are identified, in fact, in God—and the human being has the immense power to choose *non-being* over *being*: “For to exist in evil is not properly to exist. Since evil does not exist in itself, but the nonexistence of goods becomes evil” (*Inscr*, GNO V, 63, 2–4). Evil was thus not willed by God, but by man, who, with ORIGINAL SIN (→), lost that prelapsarian state which the Nyssen describes: “There was no death then, sickness was absent, *mine* and *yours*, these bad words were banished from the lives of the first human beings. As, in fact, the sun was common and the air was common, and the grace and benediction of God were common to all, so too in an equal measure the participation in every good was liberally available, and the sickness of avarice was unknown” (*Eccl*, GNO V, 386, 9–14). The TUNICS OF HIDE (→) are a sign of the later ontological degradation, which will make the human being similar to beasts and dull to the relation with his like.

The human being has in fact the terrible power to renounce his own being and his own humanity, breaking the communion with God and others and literally becoming a beast, as can be understood from the reference to the *dogs* in the Nyssen’s commentary on Ps 58.15 (*Inscr*, GNO V, 173, 19.26). If one removes one’s regard from God and turns towards matter, one loses this capacity to raise oneself to the heights of the spirit, losing that which is the true human nature. In Ct 6.5 [LXX], the bride asks the Spouse to take his eyes from her, since these had given her back her wings (ἀνεπτέρωσαν). In his commentary, Gregory reports the various Scriptural references to wings; in Ps 16.8, Ps 90.4, Dt 32.11 and the words of Christ in Mt 23.37, pronounced over Jerusalem, whose children He wished to gather as a hen gathers her chicks under her wings. He interprets them as affirmations that human nature had wings originally, like the divine nature, in whose image and likeness man has been created (*Cant*, GNO VI, 448, 2–5). Wings are interpreted as symbols of divine power, beatitude and incorruptibility, which man has lost with original sin, and which he can recover only with the grace of God, through sanctity (δι’ ὁσιότητος) and justice (*ibidem*, 448, 5–16). The human being, as the bride of the Song, can return to his original state, because God regards him with his eyes full of love (τοῖς τῆς φιλανθρωπίας ὀφθαλμοῖς). He recovers these lost wings (ἀνεπτέρωθημεν) (*ibidem*, 449, 1–3), the very wings that characterize the dove, in such a manner as to be able to return to flying and to repose in that very repose in which God had reposed after the six days of creation (*ibidem*, 449, 19–450, 3).

It is to be noted that H. von Balthasar, beginning with the beautiful association of νοῦς, λόγος and ἀγάπη in *Op hom*, PG 44, 137C (Νοῦς καὶ λόγος ἡ θεϊότης ἐστίν . . . Ἀγάπη πάλιν ὁ Θεὸς, καὶ ἀγάπης πηγὴ), has seen the elements of the Augustinian *imago Trinitatis* in the content of this image (H.U. VON BALTHASAR, 139), even if his interpretation has been criticized both theologically and philologically (R. LEYS, 93–97).

One can say that the authentic image of the human being is only seen in the initial ἀρχή and the final τέλος, extremes which, nevertheless, do not correspond automatically except in Christ. This becomes more obvious in the final years of the Nyssen's production, when the anti-Apollinarian polemic obliged him to deepen Christological themes. The Nyssen, who unlike the Alexandrian tradition does not limit the content of the κατ' εἰκόνα to reason alone, but also extends it to the virtues (E. MOUTSOULAS, 388), presents the true image of the human being beginning from Christ (συμμεμορφῶσθαι λέγει τῷ Χριστῷ: *Cant*, GNO VI, 439, 17–20). He affirms that Christians are like the apprentices of a great artist, from whom they are learning the art of painting. They attempt to imitate the work of the master, and, if they were to succeed in their attempts, the canvases of all would reproduce the beauty of the proposed model. Thus, each one is the painter of his life (τῆς ἰδίας ἑκαστος ζωῆς ἐστὶ ζωγράφος), in which free will is like the artist of the work and the virtues are like the colors which serve to form the image (*Perf*, GNO VIII/1, 195, 14–196, 9). For this reason it is necessary for the colors to be pure, so as not to paint the incredible painting of the Lord as a face rendered ugly by the filth of vice: "But it is necessary that, as far as possible, the colors of virtue be pure, amalgamated according to an artistic combination one with another to receive the imitation of beauty, so that we become an image of the Image, reproducing the beauty of the model, thanks to the most active participation possible" (*ibidem*, 196, 9–14). This at once Trinitarian and Christological definition of the human being as the *image of the Image* is the summit of the Nyssen's anthropology, and is to be understood in the light of the essentially active sense of the term IMAGE (→), and not simply the Platonic sense. The Platonic themes undergo an essential evolution, which marks an important difference between Gregory and Origen, in so far as the eschatological state of the risen human being is not *sic et simpliciter* identified with the initial state to which it corresponds. The Nyssen specifies: "Adam, the first man, was in fact the first ear. But, afterwards nature was shattered into a multitude by the rise of evil. As the fruit develops in the ear, so too we individuals, stripped of the form of that ear and mixed with earth, are reborn in the resurrec-

tion according to the original beauty, having become, instead of the that unique first ear, an infinite myriad of harvest" (*An et res*, PG 46, 157B). The radical originality is that the multiplicity introduced through sin has become a positive principle.

Thus, every human being becomes himself in freely imitating Christ, in such a way that the true man is the holy man, as can be seen in the references to Peter, James and John (*Eun III*, GNO II, 63, 8; *Abl*, GNO III/1, 38, 9), or to Peter, Paul and Barnabas (*Graec*, GNO III/1, 25, 18–23) as examples of ἀνθρώπος.

3. DOUBLE CREATION. The relationship between the ἀρχή and the τέλος is tied to the theme of creation. Gregory distinguishes the two creations narrated in the first chapters of Gn: "When the text of Scripture says that God made man with an indeterminate designation, it indicates the entire human race. In fact, the creature is not now called *Adam*, as the narration states later. But the name [given] to created man is not that particular one, but that of the whole (οὐχ ὁ τις, ἀλλ' ὁ καθόλου). Therefore, from the universal denomination of nature (τῇ καθολικῇ τῆς φύσεως κλήσει) we are led to retain that the entire humanity is included in the first creation by divine prescience and power (τῇ θεῷ προγνώσει τε καὶ δυνάμει). For, there is nothing indefinite (ἀόριστον) for God in that which has its origin from Him. But each of the beings has a certain limit and a certain measure, defined by the wisdom of Him who created them. As, then, the individual human being is circumscribed by a certain corporeal quantity, and the measure of his concrete individuality is his dimension which corresponds exactly to the external appearance of the body, so do I think that the entire *pleroma* of humanity was enclosed as in one body by the prescient power of the God of the Universe, and that this is taught to us by the text [of Scripture], saying both that God created man, and that He made him in the image of God" (*Op hom*, PG 44, 185 BC).

The first creation of the human PLEROMA (→) is thus distinct from the creation of the historical Adam, in which the distinction of the sexes is found, without however sin being present, since this was before the fall, and grace preserved the first parents. The influence of both Philo (*Legum allegoriarum*, I, 31: L. COHN, I, 68–69; *De opificio mundi*, 134: L. COHN, I, 46) and Origen (*In Genesim homilia I*, PG 12, 155C–157D) is obvious. It must however be noted that, in Gregory, the first creation does not refer to the real preexistence of an archetypal human being in the world of ideas, but indicates the intentional preexistence of the totality of human beings in the divine mind (J. DANIELOU, 62). In the

same way, the Nyssen explicitly excludes the idea that the two creations can be understood in the Origenian sense of the preexistence of souls (*An et res*, PG 46, 113 BC). Instead, the reference to the divine prescience and power (τῇ θεῷ προγνώσει τε καὶ δυνάμει) is essential to Gregory's thought, eliminating every possibility of interpreting the text in the sense of a chronological precedence. The reference to prescience in some way suggests that God somehow anticipates in his creative act that which will unfold little by little in history. This observation is confirmed by the amplitude of the concept of NATURE (→), which unites in one term both the totality of individual men and that which makes each of them a man. The first creation, then, "should not be considered as having happened *before time*, but as *outside* of the temporal dimension" (E. MOUTSOULAS, 386). Gregory had to deepen the concept of eternity in an anti-Arian role, in order to characterize the three Persons of the Trinity with it, and to exclude all subordinationism. This led him to purify the divine eternity of any residual chronological dimension. E. Corsini affirms: "The creation of the pleroma of humanity is to be explained neither as the creation of a Platonic idea, nor as the creation of a Stoical καθόλον: It is a manner of expressing the atemporal and instantaneous character of the divine creative act" (E. CORSINI, 123).

4. HISTORICAL-SOCIAL DIMENSION. The human being thus has a historical dimension for the Nyssen, based on the first creative act. This historical dimension is a consequence of the essentially social character of his anthropology, founded on a concept of nature which is at one intensive and extensive, so as to include the totality of men of all times. Human nature is, for him, a unique nature which develops, extending and spreading through time and history (D.L. BALÁS).

Such a conception is founded on the affirmation of the Trinitarian dimension of creation and the image: "He who said *Let us make man in our image*, with the plural manifesting the Holy Trinity, would not have referred to the image in the singular if the models had been different (ἀνομοίως) one from the other. For it would not be possible to indicate a unique image of beings that do not coincide with each other. But if the natures had been different, He would certainly have given a beginning to different images, creating the image that corresponds to each [nature]" (*Op hom*, PG 44, 140 BC). Gregory is perfectly aware of the difference between the unity of the divine nature, for which the intensive and extensive aspects perfectly coincide, and the unity of humanity, subject to the laws of DIASTÊMA (→) and extension of space and time. Human beings

naturally have distinct wills and activities, unlike the divine Persons (*Abl*, GNO III/1, 48, 3–5), and yet the theology of the image, which moves from above to below, seeks to find the human being's authentic realization in Christ and in his Body, understood by the Nyssen in the Pauline sense. In the imitation of the First Fruit, human beings can be liberated from evil. All of human nature can unite itself to the First Fruit to become one Body (*Tunc et ipse*, GNO III/2, 16, 13–16). They can go beyond their own nature, to become, from mortals, immortal; from transitory, incorruptible; from ephemeral, eternal—that is divine. For him who receives the honor to become a son of God receives in himself the dignity of the Father as well, together with all of his goods (*Beat*, GNO VII/2, 151, 15–20). Humanity was thus created to be one, and to reach this unity in Christ, which itself wells forth from the Trinitarian immanence. The description of eschatological union thus assumes a moving tone: “Proclaim the incredible marvel, that is, how the people of a myriad of men, so tightly united as to remind us of the sea, was united in the union of one body” (*Melet*, GNO IX, 456, 5–7).

The relationship between the unity of human nature and the divine unity is expressed by Gregory with surprising audacity: “Since, then, we believe that the divine nature (τὸ θεῖον) is simple (ἀπλοῦν), free of composition (ἀσύνθετον) and impossible to represent (ἀσχημάτιστον), when human nature (τὸ ἀνθρώπινον) too, by the work of peace is freed from the double composition and perfectly returns to the good, having become simple and impossible to represent, and truly as one (ὡς ἀληθῶς ἓν γενόμενον), so that what appears is the same as that which is hidden, and that which is hidden is the same as that which appears, then beatitude is truly brought to fulfillment and such men are properly called sons of God, proclaimed blessed by our Lord Jesus Christ, *to whom be the glory forever. Amen* (Gal 1.5, Heb 13.21 and 2 Tim 4.18)” (*Beat*, GNO VII/2, 160,21–161,5). Human nature reveals its authentic reality in the eschatological unity through certain attributes that are proper to the divine nature, such as being simple and impossible to represent, or to be *as one*. This unity is realized by the love itself of the Father, who sees in the body of his Son, his Son himself, loving and receiving it in the intimacy that characterizes the intra-trinitarian love (*Tunc et ipse*, GNO III/2, 22,22–23,14).

Therefore, this eschatological vision is an essential element of the Nyssen's anthropology, in so far as “Restoration and access to the Trinitarian perichoresis are possible in the human nature of Christ, through which unity and simplicity are diffused to all human beings, whose

nature is the same as Christ's, permitting an analogous human perichoresis" (G. MASPERO, 174).

This social dimension has as a correlate on the individual level of the historical character of the being of every human being, as can be seen in Gregory's soteriology. There are in fact four times of every man's life: Conception, birth, death and resurrection. With a regard which remains too human, one sees only birth and death. The two extreme moments are however the most important, since they place the human being more intimately in contact with God. In the words of B. Pottier: "Christ is conceived, is born, dies and rises again: these are thus the four essential moments of the Incarnation of the Son, who comes from God and who returns to God in a type of *exitus-reditus* that shows, at the heart of the economy, the complete movement of temporal creation freely willed by the eternal God, and which returns freely to Him" (B. POTTIER, 260). Gregory writes: "And since human life has two limits, that from which we have our beginning and that in which we have our end, He who heals our entire life necessarily embraces us through the two extremes, holding both our beginning and our end, to raise, from the two, him who has fallen" (*Epist* 3, GNO VIII/2, 25, 16–21). The entire historical dimension of the human being is assumed by Christ since this constitutes the very humanity of the individual. The human being is conceived in his integrity, and every moment of his existence is important. His nature is essentially dynamic, and cannot be understood only statically. The fundamental importance of this aspect of humanity is revealed in the Incarnation itself: "For [God] united himself to humanity through these things—that is, passing by all of the stages of nature: generation, nutrition and growth, arriving even to the experience of death" (*Or cat*, GNO III/4, 67, 15–18).

The human being *is* therefore his life, historically and ontologically understood thanks to the concept of nature, in the unique body of the sons of God in Christ. Gregory's anthropology thus manifests all its richness in the foundation on the theology of the image and the theology of filiation. The elements that derive from Trinitarian theology come together, in it, with the specific contributions of the Christological domain, which can be seen in the movement from the theology of the Logos to that of natures. This passage permitted the Nyssen to go beyond Origen's reflections, which are still deprived of a notion of human nature that is truly autonomous from the notion of the angelic nature, to move from a Logocentric to an authentically Christocentric conception in the context of an anthropological thought which is at once extremely original and broad.

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ANTIRRH

Antirrheticus adversus Apollinarium

The writing transmitted with the title “Reply (*Antirrhētikos*) to Apollinarius” refutes a writing of Apollinarius titled “Demonstration (*Apodeixis*) of the Divine Incarnation in Human Likeness”. Gregory methodologically adheres to the classical technique of a confutation, which, following the example of his brother Basil, he had already used in the controversy with Eunomius: he quotes the adversary, polemicizes against the irrationality and heresy of the author quoted, and then formulates more or less particular contrary arguments or demonstrates the absurdity of the quoted affirmation. Unfortunately Gregory does not quote the *Apodeixis* completely, but only partially. He sometimes refers only with his own formulations to an idea that Apollinarius develops in more detail. It is also not known if the order of quotations and ideas always corresponds to that of Apollinarius. Nevertheless the citations of the *Apodeixis* are the best source for the knowledge of Apollinarius’s theology, whose writings are otherwise conserved in versions for which a re-elaboration on the part of Apollinarians in the beginning of the 5th century cannot be excluded (for Apollinarius’s theology in more detail, see → APOLLINARIUS OF LAODICEA).

Gregory criticizes the conception of the divine incarnation (θεία σάρκωσις) as an innovation which appears to describe a change in God. He instead describes the incarnation as a union (ἔνωσις) of God with a man composed of a body and a soul. Thus the very formula of the title will be rejected, i.e. that the incarnation happened in the likeness of man. If in the man assumed by the Logos one admits a soul, it must then be a human soul which contains the intellectual function as well (*Antirrh*, GNO III/I, 140, 23–141, 6; 144, 27). It is in this function that Gregory sees the gift of the divine image (146, 23–25). Against Apollinarius’ hypothesis according to which the man assumed by Christ had his origin before all times, Gregory notes that this would then have to be true of Mary as well (148, 14–22), something that poorly fits with the growth of Christ as an embryo and a baby (149, 17–150, 6). It also transfers to the divine nature the level of that which is materially composed (150, 12–17). From the soteriological (→ SOTERIOLOGY) perspective as well, it is of critical

importance to admit that the soul in the man was a soul which belongs to the human nature (and did not have a heavenly condition somehow formed before the world began), since only thus can the significance of Christ's death for the universal redemption of the nature (φύσις) of the human being be expressed (153, 11–14). Thus one must presuppose that the divine nature, which is simple, remains simple in Him who became incarnate, since only in this way could redemption be operative (uniting body and soul in the resurrection) (153, 26–154, 6). The elevation of man is conceivable only through the idea of the incarnation as self-lowering, as the assumption of the form of a servant (160, 13–29; 161, 9–13).

Apollinarius' effort to conceive the unity of Him who became incarnate by admitting that the dominating center of the soul, the place of the intellect (νοῦς), is occupied by the Logos (185, 10–11; 186, 8–13), leads him, against his will, to no longer consider there to be a complete man in the incarnate (163, 7–28). Thus in the end the human element in the incarnate is only an appearance. Apollinarius' theology is therefore fundamentally a type of Docetism (165, 14–22). Understanding the incarnate as νοῦς ἐνσαρκος ([divine] intellect in the flesh) leads fundamentally to consider Him, not as man, but as something that is like man (187, 2–3). Apollinarius' effort to describe the incarnate in such a manner as to not treat Him as two different realities has the fatal consequence of erroneously understanding the divine element as well: Since Christ, as imprint of the *hypostasis* of the Father (cfr. Heb 1.3) (157, 18–22) and as *homoousios* indicates that which the Father is, the Father also would have to be carnal (157, 31–158, 5; 200, 15–20).

Apollinarius charges that if we conceive that a perfect man and perfect God had simply met up in Him who became incarnate, a Tetrads instead of a Trinity results, and the incarnate should be understood as “man God” (214, 19–21). Gregory replies with the accusation that both the natures in the incarnate continue to subsist as two aspects, while it is from Apollinarius' theology that a promiscuous being derives (216, 1–4). Since the element of human σάρξ did not exist before the world nor will it exist after the world, but is limited to the time of the economy, in admitting a complete man endowed with reason, one does not disturb the conception of the Trinity (222, 25–29).

The writing has been written after the controversy with Eunomius, given the many references to him. Unlike the controversy with Eunomius however, in the controversy with Apollinarius Gregory could refer to the theology of his brother in only a few places (Basil had refused

to discuss the Christology of Apollinarius, cfr. *Ep.* 258, 2, or expressed himself only briefly and summarily on this point, cfr. *Ep.* 261, 262, *Ep.* 263, 4). In the *Antirrh* Gregory thus shows himself to be quite an independent thinker who formulates the fundamental problems of Christology long before the Christological controversy of the fifth century defines them more exactly in their content through determined concepts, reciprocally circumscribing them (→ CHRISTOLOGY). It is nevertheless surprising that Gregory speaks of a ἔνωσις that exists between the Logos—the μονογενὴς θεός—and the assumed man, while on the other hand seeking to maintain the autonomy of the φύσις of both God and man. The concept of person is however little developed in the controversy with Apollinarius, but one finds elements of an argumentation in reference to the unity of will between the Father and the Son. *Antirrh* is thus an important contribution to the Christology of the 4th century, rather undervalued by scholars at this point. One cannot forget at the same time that some arguments presented by Gregory are offered without discussing the problematic consequences that they entail. Thus the idea of a redemption of the whole φύσις begs the question of the importance of that which regards human decision: Gregory here seems to admit a fundamental role for human decision even as regards the act of salvation (cfr. 177, 1–5). The question of whether Christ after the Ascension should be considered a “man” is simply resolved in the negative by Gregory (cfr. 222, 26–29), without any discussion of the personal identification of Him who became incarnate and Him who judges the universe.

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Volker Henning Drecoll

APÁTHEIA

ἀπάθεια

By its very philological structure, the term *a-pátheia*, impassibility, is in direct relation to the concept of *páthos*, suffering or passion. It is its contrary, signifying thus the absence of suffering, and in the ethical context, freedom from passions or absence of passions. By the time it reaches Gregory, the term *apátheia* already has a long and rich history. It was frequently used by the Stoics with a signification close to *impartiality*, and even *ataraxy*: the true wise man is he who reaches an imperturbable calm. A similar sense is found in Plotinus. In this context, *apátheia* is presented as the supreme ideal that the sage must reach. In the Fathers, *apátheia* acquires a new dimension in conformity with Christology and Christian anthropology. The Fathers are quite aware that Christ, though God, underwent sufferings and even experienced human passions, such as the passion of anger (cfr. Mt 21.12–14) or of sadness (cfr. Mt 26.38). For this reason, the evaluation of *apátheia* that the Fathers make, among them Gregory, is extremely specific. Without doubt, one cannot place Gregory among those who maintain firmly that the passions must be “exterminated” or “annihilated” (J. DANÍELOU 1944, 94).

Gregory does not classify all sufferings or all passions as evils. Suffering and dying on the Cross was not unworthy of the divine dignity of Christ; nor was the experience of anxiety or crying unworthy of Him (*Or Cat*, 9 and 16, GNO III/4, 35–36 and 45–49). It is good for the human being to *suffer* the thirst of God, since it is “a blessed passion of the soul” (*Beat* 4, GNO VII/2, 121). The same can be said of the *desire* of God that has so much importance for Gregory’s ascetic doctrine (*Virg* 5,6,8, GNO VIII/1, 277, 280, 284). According to his conception of *EPEKTASIS* (→), the desire of God will always increase in the soul; for the better one knows Him, the more one desires Him. Gregory speaks of the “beautiful passion of insatiability” (*Mort*, GNO IX, 61), since the human being will never be satisfied with his taste of God. Gregory specifies that only that which is contrary to the *apátheia* that accompanies virtue can *properly* be called passion, that is, in rigorous terms one only calls disordered passion *páthos*, which is a *sickness* of the soul. In this perspective, *apátheia* is the healer of the soul and conquerer

of peace through the domination of disordered movements, but not through the annihilation of any sort of passion whatsoever. This means that one is beyond the random movements of carnal passions thanks to the passionate force of the love of God. Gregory will go so far as to use the expression of *páthos apathés*, imperturbable or impassible passion, to signify the love of God in the highest states of the spiritual life (*Cant* 1, GNO VI, 23).

This is a folly of love that, by its very strength, is beyond any change; it is an “impassible love”, a “sober drunkenness”, that is, an “ecstatic love” (J. DANÉLOU, DSp II, 1180–1182).

The Nyssen's conception of *apátheia* is therefore quite rich and variegated. *Apátheia*, understood as impassibility, that is a state beyond every pain and every change, is an exclusive attribute of the divinity (*Or Cat*, 15, GNO III/4, 43). In this sense *apátheia* is inseparable from the divine immortality and incorruptibility. It is also linked to purity (καθαρότης). God is purity and impassibility (*Beat* 6, GNO VII/II, 144). *Apátheia* expresses the incorruptible felicity of the divine life (*Or Cat* 35, GNO III/4, 86–92). Before Eunomius, Gregory insists in affirming that the Father generates the Son in *apátheia*, without any sort of passion or change (*Eun* III, GNO II, 121). *Apátheia*, in itself, is also a proper attribute of Christ in as much as God (*Eun* 12, GNO II, 321), while *passibility* is proper to Christ in as much as man (*Eun* III, GNO II, 139).

In a lesser order, but close to the divinity, is *apátheia* considered as a characteristic of the angelic life. Macrina was not bound to the earthly life and therefore “appeared as an angel” (*Macr* 22, GNO VIII/1, 396). This is a superhuman life that attracts the aspirations of man towards happiness and peace. With *apátheia* the soul becomes equal to the angels (ἰσάγγελος) (*Cant* 1, GNO VI, 30), imitating their purity (*Cant* 4, GNO VI, 135).

Apátheia is one of the aspects of paradise in which it is manifested with more clarity that the human being is the “image of God”: it is participation by the soul in the divine life. For this reason, in Gregory *apátheia* has an eminently positive character and cannot be confused with the annihilation of the passions: it is a reflection in the soul of the fullness of life that exists in God. The Christian receives *apátheia* as a gift from Christ. Gregory affirms that divine purity and *apátheia* are in Christ, and that the soul receives them from Him as from their source (*Perf*, GNO VIII/1, 212).

Apátheia is a characteristic of the divinity, which is found in Christ as in its fullness and in its source. He communicates it to the soul, which

thus becomes an “image of the divinity”. In its *apátheia*, the soul reflects, like a mirror, the felicity of the divine life (*Cant* 3, GNO VI, 90).

The Nyssen’s concept of *apátheia* cannot be confused with the hesychastic concept of “interior quiet” (J. DANÉLOU 1944, 94). Gregory’s *apátheia* is participation in the divine life, restoration of the image that was lost in the human being through sin, imitation of Christ who converts us into the “image of the Image”; in following Christ we imitate “the *apátheia* and immortality of the Mediator” (*Perf*, GNO VIII/1, 206).

This Nyssen’s concept of *apátheia* is essentially tied to Christ, to the *suffering* Christ and to the *glorious* Christ. In other words, even if it has its antecedents in Greek thought, the concept of *apátheia* receives a new meaning in Gregory, one that is typically Christian. *Apátheia* is imitation of Christ as he appeared in the mystery of the Transfiguration. This thought is explicitly found in baptismal theology: Those who have removed the old man and are clothed in the purity of life as in splendid vestments, are clothed in Christ and transformed “in the image of his *apátheia*” (*Cant* 1, GNO VI, 15). J. DANÉLOU (1944, 103) is right to observe that, for Gregory, *apátheia* is nothing other than the life of Christ in which the Christian is sacramentally clothed in Baptism, and ascetically clothed in the constant effort to imitate Him.

The loss of the original *apátheia* hurts all of human nature, and is related to the original fall of man. Gregory systematically treats the theme in *Or Cat* (5, 8 and 35, GNO III/4, 16–20; 29–36; 86–92): The human being was created in the image and likeness of God, and this likeness included *apátheia*. Through the sin of the first parents, we clothe ourselves in the TUNICS OF HIDE (→), that is sensuality, and consequently we lose the original happiness, that is *apátheia*. Through Baptism, on the other hand, we strip off the old clothes and we are clothed in Christ, and thus doing, we set off towards that which is proper to Christ: happiness and *apátheia*.

The theme of *apátheia* is already present in Gregory’s first work. In *Virg*, he reminds us that the fall of man brought with it the obfuscation of the image of God impressed on the soul, and that the Christian ascetic has the freedom of newly purifying this image: the human being must struggle to “strip off the tunics of hide” (the desires of the flesh) (*Virg*, 13, GNO VIII/1, 303) and purify himself of every “passional inclination”, because carnal inclination obscures the vision of the soul (*Virg* 10, GNO VIII/1, 288–289). The passions dull the mirror of the soul, since they are an extraneous element of which we must free ourselves so that the soul may return to “that which is proper and natural”: *apátheia*. The

Nyssen's *apátheia* cannot be confused at any moment with coldness of heart (*Virg* 7, GNO VIII/1, 283). Rather, Gregory counsels us to use the passions in the ascetic struggle, but reordering them, reorienting them, elevating them. *Apátheia* is a triumph of purity, because it is a triumph of love (M. AUBINEAU, in *G. de N.: Traité de la virginité*, SC 119, 168).

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Lucas Francisco Mateo-Seco

Aphtharsia → Incorruptibility

APOCATASTASIS

ἀποκατάστασις

1. OVERVIEW · 2. UNIVERSAL SALVATION
3. SYSTEMATIC DISCUSSION · 4. HISTORICAL OBSERVATIONS
5. UNIVERSAL RESURRECTION · 6. LIBERTY · 7. FINAL SYNTHESIS.

Apocatastasis represents one of the most delicate and most frequently discussed themes of Gregory's thought. The interpretations can be grouped around the two fundamental concepts of universal salvation and universal resurrection. A simple *overview* (1) is enough to understand the reading in line with *universal salvation* (2), understood as the impossibility of eternal condemnation. The *systematic discussion* (3) of the principal arguments in its favor along with certain *historical observations* (4) will permit the appreciation also of the plausibility of the position which sees only the affirmation of a universal *resurrection* in the Nyssen. This follows with the importance of *liberty* (6) in Gregory's thought, and is concluded with a *final synthesis* (7).

1. OVERVIEW. In Gregory's writings the term ἀποκατάστασις and the verb ἀποκαθίστημι appear in forty passages (F. MANN, 473–475). Looking them over, one immediately notes the proximity of the Nyssen's uses to the terminology of the LXX (around forty occurrences) and of the New Testament. These express in the Old Testament, for example, the return of the people to the land promised to their fathers, as announced by Jeremiah (cfr. Jr 16.15, 50.19); or the restoration to the initial state, with which the story of Job culminates (cfr. Job 8.6; 33.25). The most immediate reference is clearly to the only two New Testament occurrences, that is, Mt 17.11–12, where the restoration that Elijah must accomplish is spoken of, and Acts 3.20–21, where it is the restoration as announced by the prophets which is cited, that is, the definitive establishment of the Kingdom.

The other background to the use of the terms linked to ἀποκατάστασις is the domain of natural sciences, dear to the Nyssen: This is the case of the planetary orbits (*Fat*, GNO III/2, 35, 9 and *Eun* II, GNO I, 247, 18–19), the return of the sick to health (*Or Dom*, 44, 20–21) or the cyclical

return of water to the earth (*Hex*, PG 44 113A). In what is already a more properly theological sphere, Gregory uses this terminology to indicate the return of the heretic or the sinner to full ecclesial communion (*Eun* I, GNO I, 23, 24–25; *Epist can*, PG 45, 232C).

The most frequent use, both qualitatively and quantitatively, is relative to the restoration of man in the original state of image and likeness, the fulfillment of the *reditus* which awaits man at the end of history (*Mort*, GNO IX, 51, 16–18), and the return to the divine image (*Virg*, 12, 4, 2–3; SC 119, 417) accomplished by the resurrection. The connection with the resurrection is the most obvious element in the analysis of the passages in question, so much so that Gregory will define the resurrection in terms of ἡ εἰς τὸ ἀρχαῖον ἀποκατάστασις (*Eccl*, GNO V, 296, 16–18; 305, 10; *An et res*, PG 46, 148A), as a return of the human being to paradise (*Op hom*, PG 44, 188CD; *Beat*, GNO VII/2, 161–162) which is obtained for him by Christ, and the ultimate reason for his earthly life (*Eun* III, GNO I, 21, 18–19). In order to understand this thought of the Nyssen, the awareness of the body as partaking in the final ἀποκατάστασις and being destined to paradise (*Or dom*, GNO VII/2, 49, 4–8) is fundamental. This aspect differentiates Gregory's eschatological thought from that of Origen, indicating the essential and irreplaceable originality brought to the issue by history (→ ESCHATOLOGY).

2. UNIVERSAL SALVATION. In this context, there are two important passages. They seem to imply a reading in the sense of universal salvation, that is, as the negation of the possibility of the eternal damnation of human beings. In *Vit Moys*, Gregory writes that the darkness that left the Egyptians after three days (cfr. Ex 10.22) can, *perhaps* (τάχα), be interpreted as a reference to the final restoration which awaits even those who are condemned to γέεννα (*Vit Moys*, II, 82, 1–5; SC 1bis, 155). Its authenticity has been definitively established (J. DANIELOU 1940). The second passage is found in a sacramental context, since Gregory is affirming the impossibility of the resurrection for human beings, other than by Baptismal regeneration (*Or cat*, 35, 113–115; GNO III/4, 91). The Nyssen immediately clarifies that he is not referring to the *natural and necessary* resurrection of the human composite, which awaits every human being, but to the restoration of human beings to the blessed and divine state (*ibidem*, 35, 115–121; GNO III/4, 91), in which only those who let themselves be guided by baptismal purification will take part. This is based upon the principle that like tends to like (*ibidem*, 35, 125–127; GNO III/4, 92). Those however, who leave themselves to the winds of

passion will need to be purified by fire in order to enter, only after much time (μακροῖς ὕστερον αἰῶσι), into the blessed life (*ibidem*, 35, 129–131: GNO III/4, 92).

Numerous scholars have concluded from the passages where Gregory refers to the ἀποκατάστασις that he was sure of the salvation of every human being, guaranteed by the simple fact of being a man (e.g. H.U. VON BALTHASAR, 40; S. LILLA, 31; J. GAÏTH, 187–195; M. PELLEGRINO; M. LUDLOW; G. MATURI). Other authors propose a diametrically opposed reading (M. AZKOUL, 141–148).

Both the passage of the *Vit Moys* and that of the *Or cat* have been read in the sense of intermediate eschatology as well as references to purgatory, since the γέεννα of the *Vit Moys* is a term which by the 2nd century had already acquired the sense of state of intermediate purification, while ἄδης and χάσμα would be the terms with which Gregory would designate hell itself (S. TARANTO, 580–581). Further, the purification by fire in the passage of *Or cat* would refer only to those who had received Baptism, but had not lived in conformity with it, since otherwise Gregory would contradict the immediately preceding affirmation that it is not possible to rise again to eternal life without Baptism (*ibidem*, 573–574).

In any case, both the advocates of universal salvation and those who oppose it must have recourse to the entirety of Gregory's thought, as the texts do not permit a direct conclusion, making it necessary to read them within the context of the whole of the corpus of the Nyssen (M. LUDLOW, 77).

3. SYSTEMATIC DISCUSSION. In favor of a reading in the direction of universal salvation, two elements of the Nyssen's theology are noteworthy in particular: a) *Evil* is considered by Gregory as non-being, thus limited and finite, which would be the reason why its effect is destined to disappear in eternity, consumed by purifying fire (*ibidem*, 86–89). b) The Nyssen's conception of *universal nature* would see the reason for salvation in the very belonging to human nature (*ibidem*, 89–95).

Other elements of Gregory's thought however seem to suggest an opposite reading, as is the case with the importance he attributes to life—to βίος (→ LIFE)—that is, to the biography of the person, in so far as it offers to human beings a path, as it were, to imitate the life of the Lord and thus reach divinization. Μίμησις, the life of Christ, virtue and the sacraments, the fundamental principle of ἀκολουθία itself would lose all their importance if we accept the reading of universal salvation. Above

all, the perfect harmony between nature and person that Gregory reaches would be a mere illusion, since, in the end—that is, in eternity—only nature would count. In the light of these observations, the roles of the conceptions of *evil* (a) and of *universal nature* (b) can be discussed in order to understand the Nyssen's ἀποκατάστασις.

a. At the end of history, evil will certainly disappear, and the Kingdom of the Father will be established. It is for this reason that Gregory theologically ties ἀποκατάστασις to the finiteness of evil, but this does not necessarily imply the salvation of every human being. The categories of the static and the dynamic are essential in understanding the Nyssen's thought. Since God alone is infinite, divinization, i.e. the union which constitutes beatitude, is conceived as a movement without end in participation in the intimate Trinitarian life (→ *EPEKTASIS*). This dynamic is mirrored in Gregory's *ANTHROPOLOGY* (→), where man himself is practically identified with his liberty (→ *PROAIRESIS*). This however implies that the human being, precisely *qua* human being, has the capacity to reject his being human, i.e. to deny his liberty by directing it against God. In even this erroneous use of his liberty, the human being would reveal the divine work as a work of love. For the possibility to choose the static over the dynamic serves unknowingly the design of God in manifesting its greatness, and thus glorifying the Lord. This can be reformulated in terms of filiation, one of the central axes of Gregory's theology (→ *TRINITY*). The entire discussion with Eunomius is focused precisely on his impossibility to recognize the Son's liberty to serve the plan of the Father as a manifestation of the divine power (→ *CROSS*). The Son, as Image of the Father, is free, and freely gives all of himself back to the Father, thanks to that liberty which characterizes the eternal generation itself. The human being, then, as *image of the Image* (*Perf*, GNO VIII/1, 196, 12), becomes a son exactly by conforming freely, during his earthly life, his will to the will of the Father, something made possible by Christ and realizable by means of the sacramental μύησις.

This can explain why fire is not always understood by Gregory as purifying and medicinal. He often states that it is purificatory only in so far as the fear of it dislodges men from sin in this life, as in *Beat*, where he speaks of Gehenna, the unquenchable fire, the worms that never die and perpetual suffering—understood as medicines that press one to change his life because of the certitude that they await the sinner (*Beat*, GNO VII/2, 100, 26–28 and 100,1–101,9). It does not seem that such affirmations can be understood as mere rhetorical constructions. In particular, at the end of 5th homily of *Beat*, Gregory, after having

spoken of the rich man who does not find mercy at the moment of his individual judgment—since he himself did not have mercy on the poor—affirms that in the final judgment, when the King of creation will reveal himself to human nature, he will have before him, on one hand, the ineffable Kingdom, and on the other terrible punishments. All that was hidden will be revealed, and the lack of mercy will be discovered. He who did not have mercy will not receive mercy, he who passes the afflicted by, will be passed by while he *perishes* (Περειῖδες θλιβόμενον, περιοφθήσῃ ἀπολλύμενος). For no one can make the darkness shine, nor extinguish the flame, nor calm the worm that knows no end (*ibidem*, 136, 17–19). Gregory affirms that not even God, who freely called men to freedom from the slavery that they were in, could enslave human nature (*Eccl*, GNO V, 336, 16–18). He underscores that liberty is the connection between this life and the future life, and this in the context of the very passages where the terminology tied to ἀποκατάστασις appears.

b. As for the social conception of human nature, which would seem to imply a necessary and physical propagation of salvation to every man, Zachhuber has shown how Gregory uses the concept of universal nature in his theology of creation, but not in his soteriology. It emerges again in eschatology, and above all in the doctrine of ἀποκατάστασις: “The *apokatastasis* of our *physis* in its original form would thus refer exclusively to the restoration of man’s original state of communion with God with no universal implications whatever” (J. ZACHHUBER, 203). For this reason, Gregory’s conception is radically different from that of Origen, in so far as it is a return of man to the perfect original state, but a return in which the number of men would itself be *constituted*, not *restored* (*ibidem*, 242). The role of universal nature would thus be understood only as an explanation of the *mode* of transmission of salvation, but not as the *cause* and *foundation* of salvation itself, since history is a source of authentic originality, unlike in the thought of Origen.

4. HISTORICAL OBSERVATIONS. Further, any interpretive position must deal with the historical fact of the absence of any condemnation of Gregory’s doctrine, unlike what happens with Origen. Authoritative ancient witnesses defend the Nyssen, such as Germanus of Constantinople in the 8th century (PHOTIUS, *Myriobiblon sive bibliotheca*, PG 103, 1105B–1108D), and above all Maximus the Confessor in the 7th century, whose opinion is particularly pertinent in this context due to his proximity to Gregory in matters of soteriology and Christology. Defending Gregory’s conception of ἀποκατάστασις, after Origen’s own doctrine had

been condemned in the Synod of Constantinople of 543, Maximus distinguishes the knowledge of goods from the participation in them. At the end of time, all will have access to the knowledge of the divine goods, since all will be unveiled and God will be All in all, but, he who will not be found worthy of the Kingdom of God will not have a place with Him, and it is precisely in this that his condemnation and damnation will consist—in knowing without participating (MAXIMUS THE CONFESSOR, *Quaestiones, interrogationes et responsiones* q. 19, I, 13: CChr.SG 10, 17–18). The conception of the spiritual life (→ MYSTICISM, SPIRITUAL THEOLOGY) and the relationship with God in Gregory's thought are in fact based upon the superiority of union over knowledge alone, of being over knowing (*Beat*, GNO VII/2, 141,28–142,10). God himself cannot be known except in his activities, and yet the human being is called to unite himself to Him in divinization. For the Nyssen, being blessed does not consist in knowing God, but in having God in oneself (*ibidem*, 142, 13–15), in living the Trinitarian life in such a way that *knowledge becomes love* (*An et res*, PG 46, 96C).

This difference from Origen points to reading Gregory's notion of ἀποκατάστασις from other perspectives than that of Origenian influence alone. The analysis of the use by the Fathers of the first two centuries, and Irenaeus in particular (O. SINISCALCO), offers numerous elements from a historical perspective which lead to the recognition of affinity with various other authors. In particular, one cannot overlook in this context the influence of Irenaeus, who shares with Gregory a particular attention to the value of time and history, so much so as to constitute with him a specifically Asiatic tradition (J. DANIÉLOU 1970, vii). These are the values of the human being's time and his liberty in history, which are the values involved in the interpretation of ἀποκατάστασις.

To this the requirement of not only a synchronic, but also a diachronic study of the Nyssen's work must be added (A.A. MOSSHAMMER 1991, 70), in which an evolution that leads Gregory from positions closer to Origen in his early works to an always greater autonomy and originality can be found (J. DANIÉLOU 1966). Offering himself and his own interpretive course as an example of the value of this observation, J. Daniélou in 1940 called Gregory's thought on universal salvation limited and fluctuating, due to the simultaneous presence of the affirmation of the eternity of hell and the assertion that it is enough to belong to humanity to reach beatitude (J. DANIÉLOU 1940, 346–347). In 1970 on the other hand, thirty years later, he wrote of the Nyssen: "One cannot say that he maintains the thesis of universal salvation. The personal contribution of Gregory

to the Pauline doctrine of the apocatastasis consists in affirming the eschatological συμφωνία of all creatures in the confession of the glory of God—and thus the disappearance of evil” (J. DANÉLOU 1970, 224).

5. UNIVERSAL RESURRECTION. In order to read the texts in which the terminology relative to ἀποκατάστασις is present, it can be useful to begin with the observation that in Gregory’s mature thought, the restoration in the definitive state indicates universal resurrection, and, thus, the disappearance of death and evil, which are nothing other than the possibility of distancing oneself from God, and thus from Being. Once the end of history is reached however, God will be All in all, and human beings, in Christ, will have access to the divine life, while those who have rejected the plan of the Father in Christ will have at the same time rejected their own humanity and liberty. This cannot be understood as an evil, because those who will have rejected filiation will affirm, despite themselves, the liberty and love of the divine plan. This, along with the development of the Nyssen’s thought, can shed some light on the question of the conversion of the DEVIL (→).

In particular, the distinction between resurrection accompanied by the disappearance of evil and the communion with the Father is essential in reading Gregory’s commentary on Ps 58 (59), which appears to explicitly contradict a reading of ἀποκατάστασις in the sense of universal salvation (R.E. HEINE, 62). Gregory affirms that sinners will not be destroyed so that the work of God may not be rendered vain, but that sin alone will be eliminated, when God will be absolute sovereign of everything, and all will know that He is the Lord (Ps 59.14). Therefore, commenting verse 15, which takes up verse 7 again, in reference to those who *return at night* and move about the city, hungry like dogs, he writes: “I think that in repeating the expression it reveals that men, even after this life, will be in one state and the other, that is, in the same good and evil in which they now find themselves. For he who moves about outside now and does not live in the city will conserve the human character of his life, but, having willfully made themselves beasts and having become dogs, those then too, thrown out of the heavenly city, will be punished with the hunger for goods. The victor of the adversaries will instead, advancing *from beginning to beginning*—as the Psalmist says in another passage (Ps 83.7)—and passing from victory to victory, say: *But I will sing your power, in the morning I will exalt your grace*” (*Inscr*, GNO V, 175, 12–23). The text undoubtedly refers to the final victory of Christ, to the *Parousia*, and not to intermediate eschatology. The heavenly city is

understood as authentic humanity, and the rejection of the divine image is read as dehumanization. The hermeneutic of the passage is facilitated by the contrast which can be seen between the two *movements* in life after the final victory: Those who have chosen to be like dogs will continue to roam about gripped with hunger for goods, while he who has overcome temptations will advance, immersing himself ever more in the divine intimacy. The expression of *from beginning to beginning* in fact recalls the Nyssen's ἐπέκτασις (→). The *cyclical* movement of the damned is thus referred to that condition which will follow upon the final judgment, when evil will have already been eliminated.

The connection between φύσις (→) and ἐνέργεια (→) is manifested in this text: each one will be that which he has done, each one will be as he has acted. Thus, if a man has imitated Christ through the sacramental and moral imitation of his human activity, his virtues and sentiments, he will be able to participate in the divine life. If however a human being has chosen to live as a beast, he will be eternally that which he has chosen, since one who has rejected Him who is the model of man will not be able to be a human being himself. In fact, the context of the passage requires us to read it in the sense of eternity of the condemnation, due to the opposite character of the destiny reserved to those who do not convert as compared to those who have access to the ἐπέκτασις. This specific idea is present in other works of Gregory, such as in *Cant*, where the Nyssen draws a contrast between divinization and the lot reserved for those who have recourse to idols: From men, they become stones (*Cant*, GNO VI, 147, 11–14), since it is only in Baptism that one has access to authentic humanity. The very terms that Gregory uses to describe the state of the damned confirms this reading, e.g. διαιωνίζουσα in reference to the punishment of fire (*Benef*, GNO IX, 100, 5), a verb that is used intransitively to signify only the extension which, through and beyond all time, reaches the dimension of eternity, and ἄληκτον ὁδυρμόν, lamentation *without end* (*Cast*, GNO X/2, 328, 16). This final adjective is quite important, since ἄληκτος is considered to be equivalent to ἄδιος and ἀτέλεστον for Gregory, which themselves mean nothing other than the most absolute eternity (*Beat*, GNO VII/2, 138, 17–22; *Deit Euag*, GNO IX, 341, 3–4).

6. LIBERTY. To this, it is necessary to add that ἀποκατάστασις has a sacramental dimension as well, to which A.A. Mosshammer has drawn attention in his analysis of *Or cat*. In this work Gregory speaks of two kinds of ἀποκατάστασις, or better, of two aspects of the unique ἀποκατάστα-

σις realized by the work of Christ. For, after having spoken of the εἰς τὸ ἀρχαῖον ἀποκατάστασις (*Or cat.*, 26, 73–74: GNO III/4, 67), the Nyssen makes explicit the sacramental dimension (*ibidem*, 35, 121: GNO III/4, 91), clearly affirming that the restoration awaits all human beings, but that the future state will be divided according to how they have lived. If they have chosen to participate in the sacraments, in Baptism and in the life of grace, they will then proceed to the blessed life (*ibidem*, 35, 78–131: GNO III/4, 89–92). There is thus an ἀποκατάστασις which “is guaranteed through the sacraments to the individual Christian, and which constitutes the process through which universal ἀποκατάστασις is reached”. This is in such a manner that “The ἀποκατάστασις of the eighth day is no longer something which occurs as an isolated event in that indivisible moment at the boundary of time. It is rather the sum of all the individual ἀποκατάστασις that occur within time” (A.A. MOSSHAMMER 1991, 88).

This observation is particularly important, since it manifests the connection between the earthly life of the human being and eternal life. In fact, the understanding of ἀποκατάστασις depends upon the relationship of humanity to liberty: when we look at the reading as universal salvation the objection naturally arises that a salvation against human liberty cannot be a true salvation, since liberty constitutes the very being of the human being as image. One is thus constrained either to choose the possibility of damnation, in which human liberty would reach the extreme of rejecting Christ, the model of the human being, and thus of rejecting one’s very being as human, or to choose universal salvation, thus redefining authentic liberty as only the capacity of choosing God (M. LUDLOW, 97). This makes human liberty in history completely equivocal in respect to the authentic liberty, which would be only eschatological. The life of the human person would thus be deprived of any authentic value, along with his capacity to love; and history, i.e. the space between ἀρχή and τέλος, would be superfluous or insignificant.

7. FINAL SYNTHESIS. The Nyssen’s corpus contains explicit affirmations of the eternity of hell. At the same time, Gregory’s ἀποκατάστασις appears to tend in the direction of universal salvation. In order to resolve the dilemma, it is necessary to refer to the entirety of his thought. It is certainly necessary to bear in mind the distinction between universal salvation on one hand and the disappearance of evil and death, and thus the universal resurrection, on the other. At the same time, the importance of the theology of the image, of sacramental μίμησις, of the conception of liberty and of the theology of filiation—which characterize the Nyssen’s

thought—cannot be left in the shadows. Whatever conclusion is reached, it cannot be forgotten that nowhere does Gregory affirm that the human being will necessarily and automatically participate in the divine intimacy, i.e. in beatitude properly speaking. As Matteo-Seco has written: “I think that the most personal characteristic of the Nyssen’s apocatastasis consists in this: Not in the question of whether all will be saved or not, but in the perfection with which man is reinstated—restored—to the original plan, to the primitive grace, to the first creation, to immortality” (L.F. MATEO-SECO, 200). The final word of J. Daniélou on the question goes in precisely the same direction, interpreting ἀποκατάστασις as the restoration of the human being in his natural state, i.e. in that state willed by God, in such a way as to see in it nothing less than a synonym for final resurrection (J. DANIELÉLOU 1970, 224–225).

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APOLLINARIUS OF LAODICEA (THE YOUNGER)

Apollinarius was born in Laodicea around 315 (E. MÜHLENBERG, CH. KANNENGIESSER), or perhaps between 300 and 310 (R. AIGRAIN, E. CAVALCANTI). His father (Apollinarius the Elder) was a grammarian by profession, having taught first at Berytus (Beirut) and then at Laodicea in Syria (Latakieh). During the episcopate of Theodotus (332–335), the father was a priest and the son a lector in the church at Laodicea. Both were dedicated to the classical disciplines: the father to grammar, the son to rhetoric. Apollinarius is often praised as a learned scholar of classic literature and as a great scholar of dialects (ST EPIPHANIUS, *Haer.*, 77, PG 42, 676). Theodotus excommunicated him for having attended the declamations of the pagan rhetor Epiphanius (SOCRATES, *Historia Ecclesiastica*, 2, 46, PG 67, 361–364; SOZOMEN, *Historia Ecclesiastica*, 6, 25, PG 67, 1630–1631). According to Sozomen, the excommunication was due to the scandal caused by his not having left the assembly when Epiphanius, before reciting a hymn to Bacchus, pronounced the habitual formula that summoned the “non-initiated” to leave the meeting. Theodotus’ successor, George of Laodicea, an Arian, excommunicated father and son again, this time for their firm adherence to the Nicene faith. This at least is Sozomen’s interpretation (*ibid.*). In reality, both were good friends of Athanasius, whom the father and son had received in their house in 346, on his return from exile. They were also friends of Serapion of Thmuis, who was likewise close to Athanasius. Apollinarius enjoyed a great prestige not only as one well versed in classical literature, but also as a scholar of the Hebrew language, philosophy and theology (BASIL, *Epist.* 268, 4, PG 32, 980). VINCENT OF LERINS describes him as esteemed for his acute ingenuity and the manner in which he had refuted the enemies of the faith (*Commonitorium*, 11, PL 50, 653).

Apollinarius was elected Bishop around 360. In 363 he presented to John, the official of Julius, his profession of faith in perfect order along with the other Bishops of the region. In this profession of faith the Christological problems typical of Apollinarius are already visible, in particular the manner of conceiving the Hypostatic Union and the Incarnation. Apollinarius’ position in Trinitarian theology remains correct.

He strongly defends the divinity of the Word. He seeks however to defend the unity in Christ of the two natures, the divine and the human,

by mixing the two natures. According to Apollinarius, the unity of person in Christ exists because, in the Incarnation, the Word unites himself to the flesh of Christ taking the place of the intellectual soul (*nous*). Consequently, Christ would be deprived of a properly human soul with human decision and liberty. In other words, Apollinarius understands the Mystery of Christ as an “incarnation” of the Word in a restrictive sense, but he does not accept that the “incarnation” of the Word is also an “inhumanization”. According to Apollinarius, the Humanity of Christ is incomplete since it lacks a soul, and the two natures of Christ are united to form only one nature. It is in this clearly *avant la lettre* Monophysite context that the famous Apollinarian formula of *Mia physis tou Theou Logou sesarkomenê* needs to be understood: one nature of the incarnated Word of God (LIETZMANN 206, 28, 251, 1). Cyril of Alexandria used this formula, erroneously thinking that it was from Athanasius. It is obvious that he gives it a proper signification as can be seen in his second letter to Nestorius (in which the formula signifies that the unity of Christ is *physical* and not only *moral*—a unity of will). This did favor the Monophysitism of some of his followers.

Pope DAMASUS condemned in 375 all who affirmed that the Word in Christ takes the place of the soul (*Epist. ad episcopos Orientales*, PL 13, 356, DS 148). Returning to the argument in 378, he condemned all who denied that Christ has a complete human nature (*Epist.*, PL 13, 369, DS 149). Apollinarianism was condemned at Rome in 377, as well as by the First Council of Constantinople (381). The Apollinarians had organized synods in their favor at Antioch in 379 and at Nazianzus in 382, where they even managed to obtain a Bishop (GREGORY NAZIANZEN, *Epist.* 101 and 125, PG 37, 176–193 and 217–220). Gregory became familiar with Apollinarianism in his voyage to Jerusalem (382), writing a refutation on his return to Cappadocia in two works dedicated to the subject: *Theoph* (387) and *Antirr*h (392). In the first he asks Theophilus to defend the Catholics against the accusation of affirming two sons (that is two subjects) in Christ; the second is a vigorous refutation of Apollinarius’ book, *Demonstration of the Incarnation of God in the Image of Man*, in which the only surviving passages of this book are found.

Apollinarius died before 382. The community of Apollinarists of Antioch reunited with Orthodoxy only in 425 (TEODORET, *H.E.* 5, 38, 2).

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Lucas Francisco Mateo-Seco

APOPHATIC THEOLOGY

In his balanced study of the origins of the Christian mystical tradition, A. Louth has rightly placed Gregory in the apophatic tradition together with Philo and Pseudo-Dionysius (A. LOUTH, 159; 180–181). That Gregory's thought must be characterised as apophatic is clear from the fact that it performs what D. Carabine has called "the three-fold manifesto of apophasis": that God is ineffable, unnameable and unknowable (D. CARABINE, 9, 249). Raoul Mortley, who also confirms that Gregory "arrives at the postulate of negative theology," concludes however that there "is no science of negation in Gregory" (R. MORTLEY, 144, 191).

The theology of G. is *apophatic* in the sense that *apophasis* is a systematic device in his works, as a part of a speculative system that he has sought to construct in coherent manner in order to support the Trinitarian confession.

It is universally agreed that Gregory's thought manifests negative theology, but it is harder to define what *exactly* is referred to when the concept of *apophasis* is attached to his thought.

When one starts to examine *apophatic theology* in Gregory, two notions arise. First, although Gregory is familiar with the use of *alpha privative* as a linguistic or epistemological technique (*Eun* II GNO I 142 266,27–267,4; 594 400,4–11 and *An et res*, PG 46, 40) and certainly favours negative language when referring to God by abstractions (*Eun* I, GNO I, 435 153,9–14; 683 222,15–26; *Eun* II, GNO I, 142 267,1–4), he does not develop or get involved with any *linguistic method* formally known as *apophasis* (R. MORTLEY, 171–191). This will be a later contribution of Pseudo-Dionysius the Areopagite to the Christian world. The linguistic method of *apophasis* thus cannot be conceived as a "constitutive element" of his apophatic system. Second, *apophasis* as a systematic device in Gregory seems to function as a comprehensive theoretical principle, one that stands on an exegetical basis, but also has the Trinitarian debates as an important context of further systematic development. The principle is effective in the scientific method used, viz. Gregory's standard method of scientific reasoning, known as *AKOLOUTHIA* (→)—or, mentally, *epinoia*—to which the principle is attached as a certain epistemological "directive". The incomprehensibility of God's nature also rep-

resents one of the dogmatic principles to be taken into account when examining the Trinitarian doctrine and the logical constitution of this (*Eun* II, GNO I, 12 230,15–26).

Fundamentally, Gregory presents as a biblical premise that the essential nature of God cannot be known—it is a theological truth discovered by theologians like Abraham, David, Moses, Paul and John (*Eun* I, GNO I, 314 120,1–12; *Eun* II, GNO I, 84–102 251,15–256,25; 119–124 267,1–4). Gregory's practical task is to show, by employing scientific method, *how* the more immediately evident and common principles of thought (*koinai ennoiai*) support the Scriptural testimonies (*graphikais martyriais*) concerning the unknowability of God's essence (*Eun* II, GNO I, 11–12 229,29–230,26; *Eun* I, GNO I, 217–221 90,1–91,9). This process of giving scientific evidence of God's essential unknowability—employed later in order to scientifically ground Trinitarian argumentation—actually produces what can be called the “constitutive elements of the apophatic system” of Gregory of Nyssa.

The argumentative system arranged according to the apophatic axiom has *to on*—including both *being* (*ousia*) and “*is-ness*” (*einai*)—as its inescapable category, since God, according to his self-revelation, is Real-being for Gregory; God, He who is (*Ex* 3, 14), as conceived by Gregory, is not *beyond being* but beyond all *created being*—He *is* the ultimate reality of being. To discuss the being of God, then, is to discuss the *reality and existence* of a transcendent *dynamic nature*—not just of some abstract essence that would exist separately in respect to its power, through the exercise of which its existence is known. This can be seen in *Eun* I, GNO I, 373–375 137,1–19, where divine *physis* and uncreated *dynamis* are treated as two equivalent terms in connection to the question concerning God's incomprehensibility as an “unspoken principle” (*aphraston logon*) or “first principle” (*arche*). Accordingly, one can find two major lines of argumentation in Gregory's apophatic system, intimately related but distinguishable; one primarily addressing God's *physis*, or *ousia*, and another his *dynamis* (cf. *Eun* II, GNO I, 15 231,8–21). Further, one also finds two mediating argumentative settings that comment both of the two major lines, connect them with the practical context of created human existence and give the system its common validity.

There are then altogether four speculative elements constituting Gregory's apophatic system. The first element is an ontological argument concerning the division between created and uncreated (*Eun* I, GNO I, 270–271 105,19–106,6; 295 113,25–114,9; 365–375 134,27–137,19; *Eun* II, GNO I, 69–70 246,7–247,4), by which he argues for a fundamental

ontological difference between the human being and God, with significant epistemological implications (A.A. MOSSHAMMER). According to Gregory, the whole created order is bound in separation, difference, intervals, limitations and discontinuity in respect to time and space, that is, in *DIASTÊMA* (→)—or it is *diastêma* itself (*Eccl*, GNO V 412 14), and always in a state of becoming. On the contrary, there is no *diastêma* or becoming in God; nor does space or time apply to the Creator of space and time. Man is *ktiston* and *diastêmatikon*, created and diastematic being, a mixed nature of intelligible and sensible, of spirit and corporeality, living according to his finite limits; God is *aktiston* and *adiastaton*, uncreated and undiastematic Being, a wholly spiritual, intelligible nature to which there is no limit. Human reason, which works according to its own diastematic constitution and conceives only things that are like itself, cannot comprehend divine being and nature where there are no spatial or temporal extensions or limitations whatsoever—a nature which is to be understood in all respects as *apeiron*, infinite.

The second element attaches directly to the first and leads to the third; it is Gregory's theory of language (→ PHILOSOPHY OF LANGUAGE, TRINITARIAN SEMANTICS), i.e. the linguistic argument. Language is an inescapable category for all theological discourse (*Eun* I, GNO I, 620–627 204,29–207,14; *Eun* II, GNO I, 241–246 296,25–298,19; 255 300,27–301,7), and can never be avoided by any all theological speculation. It is a necessary medium through which the thoughts are expressed and communicated (*Eun* II, GNO I, 47 239,21–25). The expression of Christian faith, the Trinitarian confession, is as bound to language as any verbal or literal form of communication. It is thus absolutely necessary to define the actual indicative powers and limits of language in order to supply proper conceptions of the divine. It is basically to this question that Gregory dedicates the second book of *Contra Eunomium*.

According to Gregory, language belongs to the created, diastematic order. Language, conceived as conventional rather than ontic by Gregory (*Eun* II, GNO I, 125 262,16–28; 174 275,18–24; 252–261 299,28–302,29; 282–288 309,16–311,17; 395–402 341,22–344,3; 543–553 385,1–388,24), is not a God-given gift as such, with given concepts—but it is based on a God-given gift, *epinoia*, the faculty of abstract conception (*Eun* II, GNO I, 181–186 277,7–278,26). Language is essentially a human device, and a man-made product; as the human being himself is a mixture of intellectual and corporeal nature, language is fit to work as a medium in such mixed reality, since it has its own natural constitution in corporeality. God, who is undiastematic, totally spiritual, intelligible and incorpo-

real nature, does not need language; nor can He be circumscribed according to his essential nature by the means of language (*Eun II*, GNO I, 207–210 287,13–286,23; 390–393; 340,9–341,16; 553 388,14–24); the divine nature is utterly unnameable, indicated properly only by saying that it is above every name (*Eun I*, GNO I, 683 222,15–27).

The names and attributes we apply to God must have another point of reference, as they are still validly conceived when speaking of the divine. What we actually express by words, according to Gregory, are the thoughts which in turn are mental constructions of experience (see *Eun II* 168 273,26–274,5; 400–401 343,7–25, 572–580 393,14–395,29 and A.A. MOSSHAMMER, 102). What gives us experience of God's being is his operation, an exercise of his power, that meets us (*Eun II*, GNO I, 102 256,15–25; 149 268,25–269,2). What human beings have named by using *epinoia* according to their shared experiences are the various energies of God (*Eun II*, GNO I, 304 315,19–29; 583–587 396,16–397,31) that constitute, sustain and govern all created existence, make manifest God's power and the *existence* of the powerful, operative divine nature beyond creation. These things mark the actual limits of the indicative powers of language.

The third element of Gregory's apophatic system, then, is its *ousia-energeia distinction* (→ ENERGY), used as an epistemological argument that provides the basic dynamics for the whole system. In this way, it is shown how *ousia* and *energeia* of God are epistemologically related in their distinction, and what kind of knowledge of God is possible. According to Gregory, the *ousia* and *energeia* of God co-exist (*Eun I*, GNO I, 207–211 87,3–88,17). Hence, from the operation that we know, we can infer that there exists an operative essence; but we cannot infer from this what that essence is, as essence (*Eun II*, GNO I, 71 247,4–248,3; *Eun III*, GNO II, 4, 8 188,11–26). In any case, when we speculate about God, this occurs in the tension of these two "poles" of God's *is-ness* in relation to our life and all created existence (*Eun II*, GNO I, 148–154 268,18–270,13).

When one begins to speculate, especially about the issues concerning the doctrine of the Church, one has to become aware of the apophatic principle that necessarily conditions the speculations. This principle is not immediately obvious, but one learns it from the saints of the Bible, according to which the essence of God is beyond the reach of human reason and cannot be spoken of (*Eun II*, GNO I, 97–105 255,1–257,25). But when the focus is right, there remains a lot to learn about God, things that constitute proper knowledge and appropriate ways of speaking about

Him, without illusions of having God's essence as the direct point of reference. The *energeiai* of God, according to which God is known, also make manifest his *wisdom, goodness and power* (*Eun* II, GNO I, 78–81 249,26–250,28; 102–105 256,15–257,25). These are the things we are invited to explore with our mental faculties.

The fourth element of Gregory's apophatic system is an argument concerning the goodness and power of God. This argument from value makes a match with the ontological argument by concluding with the concept of INFINITY (\rightarrow). Goodness and power often make a pair—or are discussed on the same occasion—in Gregory's argumentation (see, for example, the description of Abraham's assent in *Eun* II, GNO I, 89 252,24–253,17). Evidently, good can be conceived as a comprehensive attribute of all the energies of God that make manifest God's (good) power. It is equally true that God is to be conceived as good and powerful *by nature* (*Eun* I, GNO I, 233–235 95,5–25; 276 107,4–10, 334–339 126,8–127,26; *Eun* III, GNO II, IX 6 265,32–266,9): The essence of God's power and goodness is nothing else than the essence of God. Thus, although the ontological argument for the unknowability of God's nature is quite categorical in Gregory, this view *can*, however, *be challenged* by arguing that one can come to a knowledge of God's essence by contemplating his goodness and power—since, in Gregory, these are understood as connatural and co-conceivable.

Gregory faces this challenge in the first book of *Contra Eunomium* by pointing out that the goodness and power of God must be perfect and perfectly possessed by God. They thus cannot be limited by any internal or external opposite force—but are altogether unlimited, *aoriston*, and thus *apeiron*, infinite (*Eun* I, GNO I, 167–170 77,1–26). Because they are infinite, they cannot ever be circumscribed, and therefore conclusively comprehended, by discursive reason (*Eun* I, GNO I, 365–369 134,27–136,7). One can advance in the knowledge of God by the way of contemplation as much as one participates in the perfection of God—but as much as one learns, one always discovers that it is infinitely less than what one desires to know (*Eun* I, GNO I, 288–291 111,17–112,20); it brings the contemplative mind no closer to any real comprehension of the essence of God, as Abraham experienced (*Eun* II, GNO I, 89 252,24–253,17, see also *Eun* I, GNO I, 364 134,16–26). In the last resort, the human being remains unable to define what God is according to his essential nature—and must fall silent (*Eun* I, GNO I, 314 120,1–12; *Eun* II, GNO I, 105 257,14–25). In other words: man must turn *away from speech*—which is the precise meaning of the word '*apophasis*'. This is not a purely negative

conclusion, because, simply by accepting his incapacity, the human being discovers personal union with God (G. MASPERO, 138–147), as Gregory clearly shows in his spiritual and mystical theology (→ SPIRITUAL THEOLOGY, MYSTICISM).

In conclusion, these four, (1) the division between created and uncreated, (2) the theory of language, (3) the ousia-energeia distinction and (4) the argument concerning the goodness and power of God, are the elements that constitute a system that is to be called *apophatic*. Philosophically, it is to be called *apophatic* because it depends on an axiom according to which the essential nature of God cannot be known; it is called a system in the scientific sense, because the axiom is surrounded by scientific, universal and connected arguments that demonstrate how it is so; and it is an *apophatic system*, because it produces conceptions which manifest Gregory's apophaticism. Finally, this apophatic system is essentially a theological one thanks to its motivation: It intends to establish the basic starting points for understanding the inherent logic of the Trinitarian confession which must be accepted by faith—which alone, according to Gregory, is able to guide reason to proper conceptions of the divine.

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Ari Ojell

ARIANISM

When, around the 320's, the venerable and authoritative Alexandrian presbyter Arius began to spread his Trinitarian doctrine, the problem of the reconciliation of the *theologumenon*, inherited from Judaism, of a unique God with that, specifically Christian, of the divinity of Christ had been discussed in the Church for more than a century and a half. At the beginning of the fourth century two doctrinal orientations were prominent: the doctrine of the Logos, and the Monarchian. The first considered Christ, as the subsistent Wisdom and Logos (= Reason and Word) of God, as a divine entity generated (= emanated, brought forth) from Him in view of the creation and governance of the world. He was the unique intermediary between God and creation, who in the fullness of time became incarnate in the man Jesus for the redemption of humanity, fallen because of sin. This doctrine, already proposed by Justin in the middle of the second century, was perfected and expanded in a Trinitarian manner by Origen with the affirmation of the three hypostases (= personal entities, substantially subsisting) of God the Father, of the Logos Son and of the Holy Spirit, disposed in an order of descending dignity. The unity of God was conceived dynamically, as the accord (*symphonia*) of the three divine hypostases in will and operation. This doctrine, in so far as it seemed to weaken the concept of unicity (= monarchy) of God, for a time aroused an opposition from those who maintained that such a concept needed to be affirmed with much greater clarity, hence the name of Monarchianism, with which modern scholars label this tendency. It was concretized in two forms, quite distinct from each other, modalism and adoptionism. Modalism, in its most developed form (= Sabellianism, from Sabellius, its principal proponent in the first half of the third century), contrasted with the doctrine of the Logos by affirming one divine entity alone (= hypostasis, person) which manifested itself to the world under various aspects: in creation as Father, in Redemption as Son, and in sanctification as Holy Spirit. Adoptionism, in the elaboration of Paul of Samosata (second half of the third century), considered Christ as a divinely inspired man, in whom the divine Logos had taken up dwelling, understood not as a personal entity, but only as energy, divine activity, thanks to which the man Jesus became the Son of God. At the beginning of the fourth century, the doctrine of the Logos was dominant in Egypt

and widespread in Palestine, Syria and even in Asia Minor. In these last regions it was however contrasted with the Monarchian doctrines, which, while being above all adoptionist, were defined by their opponents globally as Sabellian. In the West, the doctrinal reflection, which in the first half of the third century had been developed according to the schemas of the doctrine of the Logos by Tertullian in Africa and by Novatian in Rome, had assumed a major aspect of moderate Monarchianism, in so far as it was contrary to the doctrine of the three hypostases, which was considered heretical. It should be noted that at the end of the third century doctrinal reflection in the West was quite behind that of the Orient.

In the context of the doctrine of the Logos, Arius professed a radical version, in so far as he accentuated the structural subordinationism to such an extent that he considered the divine Logos as of a different substance (= nature) from that of God the Father, not co-eternal with Him, but created directly by Him to provide for the creation of all other beings, and therefore god, but at a level far inferior to that of God the Father. This radical subordinationism was considered excessive in Alexandria, and the local Bishop Alexander condemned Arius through a local council. Arius however found help and protection from certain Bishops of Syria and Asia Minor, above all Eusebius of Nicomedia, who recognized their own position in his teaching. Eusebius of Caesarea too, the most important theologian of the time, as an inheritor of the Origenist doctrine of the three hypostases, while not approving *in toto* the doctrine of Arius, leaned in his favor. The clash between the defenders and adversaries of Arius troubled the Oriental Church to such a point that Constantine, henceforth the only ruler of the empire as well as head of the Church, which had been reconciled by him to the empire in both law and fact, decided to intervene. The first attempts at mediation having failed, Constantine convoked, for May of 325, an ecumenical council, i.e. of the entire Church, for the celebration of which around 250 participants, almost all Oriental Bishops, gathered at Nicaea in Asia Minor. In order to overcome the opposition of the defenders of Arius, Alexander won over to himself the few conciliar Fathers who were of the Monarchian observance as well. Among these Eustathius, Bishop of Antioch, with moderate tendencies, stood out, as well as Marcellus, Bishop of Ancyra, with radical tendencies. This Monarchian component strongly influenced the composition of the Creed, that is, the formulation of faith with an anti-Arian tone, which the Council approved under the heavy influence of Constantine. For the Nicene Creed, in affirming, in opposition to Arius, the full divinity of Christ, defined Him as *homoousios* with God the Father, that

is, participant of the same *ousia* (= substance, essence), and the concluding part identifies *ousia* and hypostasis in God. In this sense, the council not only excluded the radical doctrine of Arius, but more generally, by affirming, even if only implicitly, only one hypostasis in God, it also excluded the doctrine of the three hypostases, a position which was quite widespread in the Orient. The authority of Constantine, present *in loco*, bowed almost the entirety of the conciliar Fathers to the confirmation of the formula, but from this pressure, a widespread anti-Nicene attitude arose in the Orient, above all at the episcopal level. This concretized itself in a pro-Arian reaction, to the deficit of his adversaries, which Constantine, seeking a general pacification based upon a compromise solution after the condemnation of the Arian doctrine, openly favored, while however not permitting the questioning of the validity of the Nicene Creed. Among the many who bore the brunt of this reaction, through accusations of various types, were Athanasius, who had succeeded Alexander in 327 to the See of Alexandria, Eustathius of Antioch and Marcellus of Ancyra who were condemned, deposed and exiled.

At Constantine's death (337), the division of the empire between his son Constans in the Occident and Constantius in the Orient permitted the See of Rome, up to this point external to the conflicts, to intervene in favor of Athanasius and Marcellus of Ancyra. For the doctrinal position of the Church of Rome, since it was hostile to the doctrine of the three hypostases, was ideologically anti-Arian. This attitude was reinforced by Athanasius and Marcellus, who, exiled to Rome, easily convinced Pope Julius, little informed about the precise elements of the current polemic, that all the Orientals who were hostile to the Nicene Creed were *ipso facto* Arius' supporters. In reality, on Arius' death in 335, the Orientals, under the guidance of Eusebius of Nicomedia, were seeking a doctrinal solution to the conflict along the path of a middle road of the tradition of Origen and Eusebius of Caesarea, far from Monarchism in so far as it affirmed the doctrine of the three Trinitarian hypostases, and far too from the radicalism of Arius, in so far as it professed the full divinity of Christ, the authentic Son of God. The affirmation of this doctrine (Council of Antioch, 341) initiated a long and confused period of conflict between Orient and Occident, continuing into the forties and fifties. While the Occident entrenched itself in the affirmation of one Trinitarian *ousia* and one hypostasis (Council of Sardica [present day Sophia, Bulgaria], 343), in the Orient, first Aetius and then Eunomius returned to proposing the radical doctrine of Arius, while, behind the solicitations of Basil of Ancyra and George of Laodicea the doctrine

labeled homoiousian was elaborated, a doctrine which affirmed that God the Father and the Logos Son are not *homoousioi* (= of the same substance) as the Nicene Creed would have it, but *homoioi kat'ousian* (= similar according to substance). In this manner, against Arius was affirmed the perfect divinity of Christ, Son of God, and against the Monarchians was affirmed his distinction according to hypostasis from God the Father. The only remaining emperor from 350 (due to the death of his brother Constans), Constantius, seeking a compromise solution, after various partial councils which only served to make the situation even more confused, convoked, in 359, a great ecumenical council which took place at two sees, in Rimini for the Occident and Seleucia of Caria (Asia Minor) for the Orient. The strong pressure of Constantius imposed the approval of a formula of faith according to which Christ is similar to the Father according to the Scriptures, a generic affirmation capable of moderately Arian interpretation, on the largely Nicene council of Rimini. At Seleucia the pressure of Constantius had less of an effect, but the immediately following Council of Constantinople (360) approved and sanctioned in all the empire the validity of the formula of Rimini, which, despite its generic character, was viewed as a victory for Arianism in both Orient and Occident.

The death of Constantius (361) and the ascent to the throne of his cousin Julian, of pagan faith, favored the reigniting of the struggle. In the Occident this entailed the rapid propagation of anti-Arian Orthodoxy. In the Orient the situation was much more animated and complex, both because of the further fractioning of the various parties in conflict through the extension to the doctrinal contestation about the Holy Spirit, and because the emperor Valens, enthroned in 364, sought to re-propose the initiatives of Constantius, favoring the moderate Arians. Around the seventies, at the time of Gregory's entry into the struggle, one can synthesize in the following terms the panorama of the various parties of conflict with each other in the Orient:

The Arians, largely a minority, were split into radical Arians, led by Eunomius, and moderate Arians, under the leadership of Eudoxius, Bishop of Constantinople. The radicals had resurrected the doctrine of Arius, insisting on the heterogeneity of the Logos Son, in as much as generated (i.e. directly created by God the Father) in respect to the Father, the only unengendered and therefore the only true God. The Holy Spirit, in so far as a creature, was extraneous to the divine world. The moderate Arians preferred to remain with the generic formula of Rimini, affirming the Son to be similar to the Father, according to the Scriptures,

from which stems their appellation of *Homoians* by modern scholars. As for the Holy Spirit, these too considered Him to be a creature. The anti-Arians were even more fractured, above all due to the emergence of the question on the Holy Spirit. We distinguish: 1) Nicenes, in so far as, following Hilary of Poitiers and Athanasius, they had accepted the formula of Nicaea of 325; however, some accepted it literally, affirming one *ousia* and one hypostasis of the Trinity, for which they are called vetero-Nicenes in modern terms. These were prominent only in Egypt; in Antioch they constituted a minority community apart, led by Paulinus. Others instead, led by Meletius, Bishop of the majority community of Antioch, accepted the Nicene *homoousios*, but interpreted it in a homoiousian manner (*homoios kat'ousian*). Both groups affirmed the divinity of the Holy Spirit. 2) Homoiousians, who did not accept the *homoousios* and clung to the archaic formula of Antioch from 341. As for the Holy Spirit, some considered Him a creature and therefore did not recognize his divinity (Pneumatomachians, Macedonians), while others preferred to not determine the question, given the lack of Scriptural information on this argument.

When Basil, elected metropolitan Bishop of Caesarea in Cappadocia (370), began the intense activity of consolidating the dispersed Oriental episcopate in an anti-Arian sense, given that he came from the ranks of the Homoiousians, he aimed to politically reinforce the leadership of Meletius as well as to doctrinally seek such a formula so as to make the Nicene *homoousios* and the doctrine of the three Trinitarian hypostases, mediately Origenist but recently appropriated by the Homoiousians, compatible with each other. In this sense he gradually elaborated a formula of compromise, affirming one divine *ousia* (substance), as the Nicene Creed professed, articulated in three subsisting hypostases, as the Origenian tradition would have it. This doctrinal position, in so far as it accepted the Nicene *homoousios* while interpreting it, distinguishing, in God, the unique *ousia* from the triune hypostases, is defined, in modern terms, as neo-Nicene. On the political front, Basil parted company decidedly with the vetero-Nicenes, whom he accused of being influenced by the Monarchianism of Marcellus of Ancyra, and attempted to reach a consensus among the Homoiousians. This was a politic made up of small steps, including various painful setbacks for Basil, above all due to the *volte-face* of his friend Eustathius of Sebaste, who renounced the previously confirmed accord of 373 and adopted a Pneumatomachian-style position which placed him close to the moderate Arians. In a context characterized by local quarrels and personal

ambitions, it was important for Basil to assure allies through attempts to establish persons completely faithful to him in the vacant episcopal sees. In such a perspective he intended to give his brother Gregory a place too, despite the fact that he had many reservations about Gregory's political capabilities. Basil recommended him for election as Bishop of Nyssa, a small city of Asia Minor. Basil's reservations were not without reason: Gregory did not make a good impression, and his adversaries, accusing him of misappropriation of funds, even had him arrested by the governor Demosthenes. Basil had him flee and placed him in a secure place which has not been possible to identify. Gregory was later accused in an Arian council held in Ancyra, as well as deposed in another council held in Nyssa, which gave him an Arian successor. Around this time, Gregory offered himself for a mission to Rome, in an effort to better the bad relationships between the local Bishop Damasus and Basil, but Basil considered his brother ill suited for the task. When Valens, the protector of the Arians, died in 378 while fighting the Goths, Gregory was able to return to Nyssa, and was received triumphantly by the local community.

When Basil passed away in 379, the politics he had pursued began to bear fruit: When Meletius summoned a council in Antioch during 379 in order to seek an agreement with Rome to resolve the litigation with Paulinus which divided the anti-Arian community of Antioch (schism of Antioch), a good 150 Bishops came together around him. Among them was Gregory, who together with Gregory Nazianzen and Amphilochius of Iconium, had gathered Basil's heritage and represented his doctrinal perspective. In the political sphere, the Nyssens, now free of the paralyzing conditioning that his older brother had exercised on him and considering the possibility to extend the anti-Arian front in the direction of the Homoiousians, thought to gain some ground in the opposite sense, favoring the admission into the communion of the Oriental Churches of the remaining followers of Marcellus of Ancyra, something that Basil had opposed for political and doctrinal reasons. In *Epist* 5, Gregory defends himself from the accusation he received in that occasion, of having received the Marcellians into the ecclesiastic community without having interrogated them as to their faith, negating the validity of the accusation. Some time later, having come to Sebaste to regulate the succession after the death of Eustathius, he himself was elected Bishop, a task he carried out for a period, irregularly however as he was already Bishop of Nyssa. He then renounced this role to assure the succession of his brother Peter. Sebaste was an extremely important city, which explains Gregory's attempt to insure there the election of a fully neo-Nicene Bishop. Later,

in 381, he had a primary role in the Council of Constantinople, first at the side of Meletius, and then, after the sudden death of this leader, and in conflict with Gregory Nazianzen, in favoring the election of the Antiochian priest Flavian as the successor to the deceased bishop of the see of Antioch. The triumph of Basilian politics in the Council of Constantinople contributed to the growth of Gregory's prestige: In an edict dated July 30th 381, with which the emperor Theodosius approved the decisions of the Council, Gregory's name appears along with other Bishops, as guarantor of neo-Nicene orthodoxy.

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Manlio Simonetti

ARISTOTLE

One must distinguish between (1) Gregory's explicit references to the name and philosophy of Aristotle and (2) pointers to the influence of Aristotelian philosophy in his works.

1. *Gregory's Citations and Knowledge of Aristotle and his Writings*: The name of Aristotle is rarely cited by the Nyssen. Including the adjectival derivation "Aristotelian," it appears seven times in the manuscripts, though one passage is probably inauthentic (*Eun* I 55, GNO I, 41, 4). One passage, in which the reference to Aristotle is evident though unattributed, may be added to this list.

All of these references, with one exception, are found in *Eun*, where they have a clearly negative connotation. Gregory accuses EUNOMIUS (→) of using the philosophy of Aristotle for his heretical quibbling. Aristotle is presented as the master of philosophical subtlety, whose devices (τεχνολογία: *Eun* III/5, 6, 7, GNO II, 162, 11) are employed by Eunomius for his heretical ends. This "Aristotelian weapon" becomes a metaphor for the logical and dialectical skill of the Anomoean (*Eun* II 620, GNO I, 407, 25), with which he opposes orthodox truth. Eunomius had himself reproached Basil by claiming that his theory of language led, as in Aristotle, to the denial of universal providence (*Eun* II 411, GNO I, 346). It is thus clear that Eunomius did not consider or present himself as a disciple of Aristotle.

Only once does Gregory express himself in a more differentiated manner. In *An et res*, he introduces Aristotle as the disciple of Plato (literally, "the philosopher after" Plato) and describes him as someone who studied the phenomena with formal precision (PG 46, 52A). Gregory knows that there exists a treatise by Aristotle on the soul, and that Aristotle describes the soul as "mortal." In this point as well, Gregory leaves no doubt as to his rejection of Aristotle's doctrine.

Nothing certain about Gregory's knowledge of Aristotle's writings can be deduced from these passages. His polemical treatment of Aristotle corresponds exactly to what we know from other Fathers. A.J. Festugière and D. Runia have shown in detail that the name of Aristotle was rarely used until the fifth century, and if at all, then generally in a dismissive manner (A.J. FESTUGIÈRE, 221–263; D.T. RUNIA). All Gregory's relevant

statements reproduce these stereotypes. The passage in *An et res*, in its generality, permits no direct conclusion about Gregory's reading of the *De Anima*, even if other reasons would indicate familiarity with the text (see below).

Gregory's writings thus do not contain any compelling evidence that he read any of Aristotle's works. We know from various sources, however, that in the second half of the fourth century, knowledge of the logical writings of Aristotle (the so-called *Organon*) and the relevant commentaries by philosophers such as Alexander of Aphrodisias or Porphyry was required of educated persons (i.e., JEROME, *Ep.* 50, 1, 2–3). Given Gregory's interest in philosophical questions and his differentiated philosophical argumentation, such an education on his part seems likely. In one passage, he seems to allude to a formulation taken from the *Categories* (*Eun* I, 180–181, GNO I, 79,28–80,3).

2. *Philosophical Influence.* All in all, one must not overestimate the importance of Aristotle for the Nyssen. Central themes of Aristotelian metaphysics, physics or ethics are either unknown to him, or in any case play no role in his thought. Conversely, points of contact are relatively few and—in relation to Aristotle's works—marginal. We can nevertheless indicate two areas that are relevant for Gregory's thought and in which his is indebted to Aristotelian impulses.

a. *Trinitarian Doctrine:* As for Basil before him, the application of logical principles derived from Aristotle's *Categories* to Trinitarian theology is very important for Gregory (→ TRINITY). At the beginning of his work, Aristotle distinguishes between things that share only a name ("homonyms") and those that share name and definition (λόγος τῆς οὐσίας) ("synonyms"; ARISTOTLE, *Categoriae*, 1a 1–12). In a later passage of the same work, he states that substantiality has no degrees: substances do not admit of "more and less" (3b 33 s.).

In accordance with the philosophical tradition, Gregory summarizes these two statements by saying that two things that have the same definition must have the same ontological order. Superiority or subordination is therefore impossible. His most common example is that of men: Though David and Abraham lived in different epochs, the definition 'man' applies to both in the same way. Thus, one is not more man than the other (*Eun* I, 173, GNO I, 78). The predicates that are affirmed of both of them, in so far as they are men, have exactly the same signification in both cases. They indicate the same nature, which exists identically in both human individuals (→ PHYSIS). The same is true of the Trinity. The

fact that Scripture itself uses the same terms (Light, God) for the Father and for the Son should be understood as an expression of their essential equality. The same predicates are attributed to the trinitarian Persons with the same signification and thus indicate their one common essence (\rightarrow *OUSIA*). Gregory thus opposes the radical subordinationism of Eunomius and defends the Nicene profession of the trinitarian *homoousia*. At the same time, however, he revises the conception, common since Origen and also maintained by followers of Nicaea such as Athanasius, that the divinity of the Son is derived from that of the Father and in this sense secondary (ZACHHUBER, 94–101).

b. *Doctrine of the Soul*: In his effort to develop a Christian conception of the soul (\rightarrow *PSYCHOLOGY*) and *RESURRECTION* (\rightarrow), Gregory is largely influenced by Platonic precedents. For him, the soul is a spiritual essence, and as such the seat of the divine image and immortal. Gregory's interest in a theory of corporeal resurrection nevertheless leads him to conceive of the soul as more closely tied to the body and dependent upon it for its action than is the case for the Platonists. Gregory therefore defines the soul as follows: "The soul is an engendered substance, living, rational, and of itself communicates to an organic and sensible body the capacity to live and to grasp the objects of perception, as long as the nature that perceives them subsists" (*An et res*, PG 46, 29B). This clear emphasis on the interdependence of body and soul, and the functionality of the soul for a particular body corresponds to arguments which Aristotle adduces against dualistic conceptualizations of body and soul in his *De Anima* (*De Anima* A 3, 407 12–26), and which are predominant in his own theory (*De Anima* B 1, 412a 26–27). Gregory, who expressly mentions Aristotle's work on psychology, could be indebted to him on this point. The impossibility of the soul's survival of the body, which Aristotle derives from this doctrine is, of course, decisively rejected by Gregory.

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Johannes Zachhuber

ARIUM

Adversos Arium et Sabellium

This work is published in the W. Jaeger edition with the Nyssen's minor dogmatic works in the critical edition edited by F. Müller (GNO III/1, 71–85), but its Gregorian authenticity is doubted today.

In this short work the diametrically opposed teachings of Arius and Sabellius are both combated, and “the middle path, straight and narrow, that leads to life” is placed in evidence (GNO III/1, 71, 10–11). The author of the work, following the corresponding teaching of Athanasius the Great, underscores that “our Savior Jesus Christ is and is called Son of God, and while not being a creature He is called along with us Son, yet has no beginning and is eternal; therefore also in the infinite ages in his proper hypostasis He will reign with the Father” (71,24–72,4). The fact that the Son is “the power and wisdom” of the Father leads to the conclusion that his generation differs from that of creatures, inasmuch as it is “eternal” and “without beginning” (72, 18–23). The author uses the image of light and rays, which do not differ chronologically from the lamp and the sun respectively (74, 9–15). The author does not hesitate to refer to passages used by the Arians, such as “The Lord created me in the beginning of his ways” (Pr 8.22). While giving an orthodox interpretation He does not interpret the term ἀρχή in a chronological sense, but in reference to “commanding” and “superintending” (75, 6–10). “The term ἀρχή is not said in a temporal sense, but in the sense of dominion” (75, 24–25). “The Son” is consequently “generated and at the same time without principle ...”, “thus He will be forever and will never cease to reign, for neither does He have a beginning” (76, 3. 7–9).

The author then refutes both Arians and Sabellians, underscoring the identity of essence but also the difference in hypostasis of the Son. In this vein he proposes the passage of John: “I and the Father are One” (79, 26–29).

With precise attention, while studying the passages of Scripture he notes that the verb “was” in the passage “In the beginning was the Word,” “being in the imperfect tense, has the signification of eternity” (81, 5–6). Like Athanasius the Great, the author attributes to the Incarnation

the passages used by the Arians to negate the divinity of the Word. He observes: "It was in fact necessary that He, becoming incarnate, with humble words manifested his own greatness" (81,31–82,1).

Despite the affirmation of authenticity on the part of J. DANÉLOU, the arguments of R.M. HÜBNER, building on those of K. HOLL, lead us to the opposite conclusion. R.M. HÜBNER draws particular attention to the interpretation of 1 Cor 15.28, and observes that the doctrine of Gregory on the submission of the Son to the Father as an expression of the submission of his body, i.e. the Church, is not found in this work. Again, Hübner notes a strong opposition to the concepts of Marcellus of Ancyra in this work, something not found in the Nyssen's corpus (R.M. HÜBNER, 211–212).

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Elias Moutsoulas

ASCENS

In ascensionem Christi oratio

This homily is probably the most ancient witness to the feast of the Ascension (J. BERNARDI, 287). Rather strangely, there is no reference in it to the event of the Ascension as this is described in the Acts of the Apostles.

The entire homily consists of a brief commentary on Psalms 22 and 23, the content of which can be placed in direct relationship with the event of the Ascension inasmuch as they refer to the return of Christ to the Father.

Gregory speaks to those who have been recently baptized, and invites them to become “a flock guided to pasture by God, not lacking in any good” (GNO IX, 323, 21–22).

Following the Psalm and transferring that which is written there to the life of the baptized, the Nyssen next speaks *inter alia* of the “mystical meal,” the “meal of the Spirit, the anointing with oil (“anoint your head with the oil of the Spirit), of “wine that gladdens the heart ... and produces in the soul a sober drunkenness” (GNO IX, 324, 12–18). All these things guide the soul to the life “without end” (GNO IX, 324, 21).

From the following 23rd Psalm, it becomes clear that all the aforementioned realities were attained in virtue of the coming of the Lord on earth, and in virtue of the victory He obtained. Following the words of the Psalmist, Gregory notes that “from the ascent” of the Lord, the “recompense is benediction” and that “the generation of those who seek the Lord” is “of those who through virtue ascend to a summit and seek the face of the God of Jacob” (GNO IX, 325, 15–18). Next, the prophet “surpassing himself ... and uniting himself with the supra-worldly powers expounds to us their voices ... *Lift up, O princes, your gates, and raise up eternal gates, and the King of Glory will enter*” (Ps 23.7) (GNO IX, 325, 22–326, 2).

Still following the Psalm, Gregory emphasizes that the Lord, as he became man for men, also became angel for the angels. In answering the question of the angels: “Who is this King of Glory?”, He answers: “the Lord of powers”—clothed in the dominion of the universe, who has recapitulated all things in himself, who has primacy among all, who has restored all things in the first creation—“He is the King of Glory”

(GNO IX, 326,26–327,4). Finally the great Father invites all to imitate the prophet “in love towards God, in the sweetness of life, in magnanimity towards those who hate” (GNO IX, 327, 6–9).

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Elias Moutsoulas

AUGUSTINE

It is probably true that Augustine was aware of some of the writings of Gregory Nazianzen, thanks to the translation of nine of his sermons by Rufinus. Augustine's self-confessed though perhaps exaggerated depreciation of his knowledge of Greek at *Confessions* 1,xiii,20 makes it extremely unlikely that he had read any of Gregory of Nyssa, Latin translations of whose works did not exist during Augustine's lifetime. This makes any attempt to assess the influence of Gregory on him very conjectural. In the realm of spirituality there is a strong similarity between Gregory's teaching on *EPEKTASIS* (→) in *Vit Moys* II,225 and Augustine's understanding of growing desire at *Tract Iohn* 63,1. However in two major areas, the unity of the Trinity and the nature of grace, there is a marked difference:

- i. Gregory, following the lead of BASIL (→) used language at *Eun* I, 227 which led to the accusation of tritheism, which he endeavoured to rebut in his *Abl*. If Gregory was accused of tritheism, Augustine is liable to be accused of Modalism, as at *De Trinitate* viii,1,1.
- ii. On the subject of grace, Gregory's language has been thought to be synergistic, grace working with rather than before nature as at *Vit Moys* II,49 and 97, and very clearly at *Inst GNO* VIII/1, 46,5. Augustine by contrast lays far more stress on the absolute necessity of grace, which crowns our labours as at *Enchiridion* 30, where grace frees us from the necessity of sinning.

Anthony Meredith

BAPT

Adversus eos qui baptismum differunt

This homily was pronounced by Gregory in the feast of the Epiphany 381, a solemn date, along with Easter, for the celebration of baptisms in the Orient. The references to the Baptism of Christ in the Jordan, i.e. the theme of Epiphany, are continuous. Gregory attempts with great zeal to dissuade the catechumens from delaying their Baptism, for fear they should die in sin. From the beginning Gregory confronts the catechumens with the reality of what they are to receive: he thus defines the day of Baptism as “the day of salvation” in which “the adoption of foreign sons” is attained, “the participation in grace by those who are miserable and the purification of sins by those who are contaminated” (GNO X/2, 357). Baptism guarantees salvation. Therefore, while the names of the neophytes are written in “books accessible to the senses,” God himself inscribes them “on incorruptible tables, writing them with his own finger, as he did at one time with the law” (GNO X/2, 358). The Nyssen goes on to describe the present condition of the catechumen: He finds himself outside Paradise, exiled like his progenitor Adam. He must therefore take care to enter into Paradise, so that death does not surprise him and hinder his entrance there. The catechumen is sent to abandon the desert and sin, and to cross the Jordan; he must open his own soul, so that on it the perfect teaching may remain imprinted, a teaching that is imparted with Baptism.

According to Gregory, it is preferable to sin after Baptism than to die deprived of its grace. In disdaining it, one disdains Him who gives us such a great gift. Consequently, the ease with which one may fall into sin can never be a justification for delaying Baptism. Those who receive it only at the last moment of their life cannot have the same reward as the just; they find themselves in an intermediate situation between the just and sinners.

BIBL.: (Ed) PG 46, 416–432; H. POLACK in GNO X/2, 357–390; (Lit) J. BERNARDI, *La prédication des Pères Cappadociens*, Paris 1968, 273; J. DANÉLOU, *La chronologie des sermons de Grégoire de Nysse*, RevSR 29 (1955) 346–372; E. MOUTSOULAS, Γρηγόριος ὁ Νύσσης, Athens 1997, 209–211.

BAPTISM

Gregory's sacramental theology is part of his attention to the anthropological dimension of the *image and likeness* of Gn 1.26. The THEOLOGY OF NAME (→) and the THEOLOGY OF IMAGE (→) are its fundamental axes.

For Gregory, Baptism is a new creation which passes through the imitation (μίμησις) of the *acta et passa Christi*. Μίμησις is the term used to designate Baptism in this period (J. DANIÉLOU 1951, 65). All of Christian life is for Gregory an authentic *imitatio Christi*, which one approaches through the sacraments which gradually restore the primordial image in the human being.

One of the principal passages for the study of Christian initiation in the Nyssen's thought is certainly the *Or cat*. At the end of ch. 32, Gregory, who is presenting the Christian οἰκονομία, affirms that the time has come to speak of ἡ κατὰ τὸ λουτρὸν οἰκονομία—the economy according to the purifying water, that is, Baptism (βάπτισμα), or illumination (φώτισμα), or regeneration (παλιγγενεσία) following the names with which he designates it, which are equivalent to each other (*Or cat*, 33, 2–9; GNO III/4, 82).

Ch. 33 is then dedicated to a parallel between generation in the flesh and baptismal regeneration. In the first place the sacramental effect is presented. As the human being has received mortal life through a first generation, so another generation is necessary to introduce him into immortal life (*ibidem*). Baptism thus consists in the prayer of invocation (ἐπίκλησις) of heavenly grace, in the water and in faith, through which the mystery (μυστήριον) of regeneration is accomplished (*ibidem*, 33, 11–13; 82).

To those who remain perplexed before the greatness of the sacramental effect, one must respond that in truth, they do not know how to explain the mystery of their fleshly generation either, the mystery of human generation. Therefore, as the divine power can form a man from nothing in the womb of his mother, so too can he transform that which is mortal into something immortal.

If they ask for proof of the presence of God when He is invoked in the baptismal rite, the same parallel to human generation offers an evident proof. In fact, in ch. 34, Gregory recalls that Christ promised to be always present whenever He is invoked. Thus, if the divine power intervenes in

human generation giving form and life to the embryo, even if the parents have not invoked the Lord, how much more will He intervene, according to his promise, when He is invoked.

The Nyssen proceeds to explain the rite and the possibility of this divine presence in Baptism. The central category for him is the imitation of the life of Christ: "The descent in the water is the triple immersion in it of the human being, containing another mystery (μυστήριον). For the form of our salvation was rendered effective not so much by the guide of teaching as by that which He who submitted himself to communion (κοινωνία) with man did, being the operative cause of life, so that by the flesh assumed and at the same time deified by Him, all which is connatural and in affinity to it would be saved together. For this reason it was necessary to contrive a manner in which to realize a connaturality and likeness in the events of the one who follows in respect to Him who opens the path" (*ibidem*, 35, 1-11; 86, 6-16). Baptism is therefore based on the events of the life of Christ, on his acts whose virtuosity is re-actualized in the μυστήριον of Baptism. It is in the sacraments, and in Baptism first of all, that the *sequela Christi* is founded. For this reason, "it is necessary that those who have the same desire for the Good follow through imitation (διὰ μιμήσεως) Him who without a doubt is the guide to our salvation, enacting (εἰς ἔργον) that which was shown by Him in an exemplary manner. For it is not possible to reach the same end if the same paths are not followed" (*ibidem*, 35, 19-23; 87, 1-4).

The essence of Christianity is in question here, since the Christian must be worthy of the name he bears, imitating Christ not only in the sacramental rite, but also in the coherence of his own life. It is necessary to follow the footsteps of Christ, imitating in our life that which He did, to reach the end of eternal life. It is necessary to follow in the footsteps of Christ as one would in a labyrinth (λαβύρινθος), if one walked with someone who knew the exit. The labyrinth is death (cfr. *ibidem*, 35, 1-33; 86-87). Thus Gregory does not limit himself to interpreting the three baptismal immersions in a Trinitarian sense, as one could expect due to the centrality of the Trinitarian doctrine for his thought, and the invocation of the Persons of the Trinity which accompanies immersion (J. DANÉLOU 1968, 194), but also proposes a Christological interpretation: There are three immersions, as there were three days spent by Christ in the sepulchre (*Or cat*, 35, 47-52; 88). The imitation leads to the breaking of the power of evil through repentance by the sinner and the imitation of the death of Christ (cfr. *ibidem*, 35, 74-75; 89). Thus Baptism gives access to eternal life, actualizing in time the same

effects as the Resurrection of Christ. Therefore “our satisfaction through being baptized with water is the same as that of re-emerging from death” (*ibidem*, 35, 102–103; 90). Baptism thus has an essentially eschatological dimension (cfr. *ibidem*, 35, 110–115; 91).

Gregory’s theology of Baptism thus presents two inseparable dimensions: on one hand the sacrament is seen as the beginning of a new life, in as much as recreation. On the other hand, he underscores forcefully the process of continual identification with Christ, which extends to the entire life of the Christian and is expressed in the necessary and intimate connection between Baptism and Eucharist, in a profoundly unifying vision of all of CHRISTIAN INITIATION (→).

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Giulio Maspero

BAS

In Basilium fratrem

This sermon was preached in the year 381, since Gregory states that he already celebrates Basil's feast for the second time. The Nyssen underscores the opportunity to celebrate the feast at that date, so close to Christmas, referring to the words of the Apostle Paul according to which one must put in the first place the Apostles and Prophets, and immediately after them, the pastors and doctors—explaining that Basil was an exemplary pastor. He then maintains that Basil has a greatness equal to the greatest saints of the Old and New Testaments, and that chronological posteriority does not lessen this extraordinary greatness. He explains that God provides in every age saints who block the action of the devil: Abraham was the instrument of God against the astral superstitions of the Chaldeans, Moses liberated the people from the Egyptian incantations, Samuel gave order and unity back to the Israelite tribes, Elijah defeated the idolatry that king Ahab had introduced, John broke the chains of sin that bound the Israelites, and finally Paul freed himself of his carnal Judaism in order to ascend to the Christian spiritual truths which he then brought to the peoples he generated to faith. Basil, in this line, is the instrument desired by God to defeat Arianism, which is a new kind of idolatry, because it affirms that Christ is a creature whom we must adore. At this point, Gregory injects some anecdotes to show the heroism with which Basil struggled, but clearly accentuates the fact that his greatness came from his perfect charity. The Nyssen then explains that the virtues and works of his brother were no less than those of the great saints sketched beforehand: like John, he lived in a modest manner and had spoken clearly against the powerful; like Elijah, he gave food to the people when there was need, and caused the fire of the Holy Spirit to burn; like Samuel, he received his life through the supplication of his parents; like Moses, he was educated in the science of God and of men; he left the human science, he abandoned the world and found God, and was charged to save the people through water and manna. Gregory takes this last argument from Basil's liturgical celebration, and explains finally that the praise of Basil should not regard his country, family or his goods, but should regard his virtue, and affirms that in reality, the only proper praise

is to imitate his virtue in one's own life, since it would be absurd to praise a pastor and then show with one's bad life that this pastor had not known how to teach to live well. Gregory structures the discourse in a clear circularity, since the personages of the Old Testament referred to in the first part are repeated in inverted order after the description of Basil, thus placing him in the middle of a beautiful rhetorical construction. CAIMI DANELLI demonstrates that the discourse belongs to the demonstrative genus, since Gregory wishes to reach a practical end, i.e. to establish the date of Basil's feast, something that marks this *genus*. BERNARDI explains that this discourse is more impersonal than that of Gregory Nazianzen, and envisions Basil more as a model of sanctity than as model of a Bishop (the central idea of his friend's *oratio*).

BIBL.: (Ed) PG 46, 788–817; O. LENDLE in GNO X/1, 109–134; (Lit) J. BERNARDI, *La prédication des pères cappadociens*, Paris 1968, 313–315; A. CAIMI DANELLI, *Sul genere letterario delle orazioni funebri di Gregorio di Nissa*, *Aevum* 53 (1979) 140–161; E. MOUTSOULAS, Γρηγόριος Νύσσης, Athens 1997, 299–301.

Manuel Mira

BASIL (OF CAESAREA)

Basil (B.), born presumably in 329–330, was the oldest son of a wealthy Cappadocian family who owned enormous tracts of land. Together with his nine siblings, B. received his early religious education from his grandmother Macrina senior, who in turn had received her theological training from Gregory Thaumaturgus. B.'s education continued under the direction of his father, Basil senior, a rhetor and lawyer, and later at a school in Caesarea. He went on to study in Constantinople (348–349) with, among others, Libanius and then moved to Athens, where he met and became a close friend of Gregory Nazianzen. Returning to Caesarea, B. worked as a teacher of rhetoric. Under the influence of his sister Macrina, he turned towards Christianity and was baptized by Bishop Dianius, becoming a lector. Around 357 B. retired from active life and withdrew into a contemplative routine and extensive biblical studies. He had contacts to Eustathius of Sebaste and the radical circles to which Eustathius was linked. He also travelled to Egypt and Syria, where he visited and became acquainted with several centres of monastic life. It is during that time that his *Regulae morales*, a thematically structured collection of quotations from the New Testament, were composed. The *Regulae* propose that it is the Holy Bible which provides the exclusive model of a Christian life. Another work composed around that time, the *Philokalia* (358–359), is an anthology of the works of Origen that discusses such issues as the correct interpretation of the Scriptures or the question of human self-determination. Whether that work was actually co-authored by B. and Gregory Nazianzen has recently come under scrutiny. B.'s first involvement in the theological controversies with the Neo-Arians (esp. with Eunomius of Cyzicus) is usually presumed to have occurred at the end of 359 during his attendance at the Synod in Constantinople with Bishop Dianius. It is, however, unlikely that he intervened in the debates and negotiations at Constantinople in the early months of 360.

In 364 B. was ordained Presbyter and at first dedicated himself to the assistance of the poor and the ordering of the liturgy. He also distinguished himself as a gifted preacher. In 364 B., at the urging of the homoiousion bishops, travelled to the Synod of Lampsacus and at the synod presented his first two books of *Adversus Eunomium* (Book III

was probably written after 364), attacking the neo-Arian theology. In his arguments against Eunomius B. emphasizes that God's essence cannot be determined on the basis of his *not* having been generated (*non genitum*), while "being generated" cannot be the essential defining feature of the Son. The criterion of generation cannot therefore be argued to constitute a substantial differential quality distinguishing the Father from the Son. By contrast, B. resorts to a dissociation of *ousia* and *hypostasis* which had probably been introduced shortly before by Apollinarius of Laodicea (Ps. Basil, *Adv. Eunomium* IV–V). According to this thesis, *ousia* refers to the ontological substrate only, while *hypostasis* exclusively characterizes its mode of realization. As a consequence, the criterion of generation may only be interpreted as referring to the mode of realization and cannot be taken to qualify the divine essence. Yet at that time (around 364) it was not possible philosophically to specify the ontological character of *ousia* and of *hypostasis* any further or to distinguish them clearly by a philosophical method.

B. is likely to have written other works before his ordination as bishop of Caesarea in 370. The *Little Asceticon*, a first draft of the *Regulae Fusius Tractatae* and the *Regulae Brevis Tractatae*, has come down to us only in Latin translation and in a Syrian version. The *Little Asceticon* mainly deals with the question of how to organise the ascetic and monastic life, but the work is not a monastic rule in the strict sense of the word. The *Asceticon Magnum* contains longer and shorter rules. The work is difficult to date (after 373?) and was apparently revised later. *On Baptism*, which has only recently been acknowledged as an authentic text, also belongs to that period. It deals with the relationship between baptism and Christian life, and between faith and everyday life. B. also wrote numerous homilies on Psalms, the Trinity and various social aspects of Christian life.

During his Cappadocian episcopate, B. attended to the structuring of the liturgical year and the liturgical calendar and to the monastic Liturgy of the Hours. He also cared for social issues and founded *Basileias*, a town for the poor, which secured him the support of the Homoian emperor Valens. Moreover B. was very much interested in issues of ecclesiastical politics such as bringing the Antiochian schism to an end. He also had a stake in strengthening the Nicæan party. This became obvious in the years after 372 when B. visited the Armenian communities, tried to settle the disputes over the re-organisation of the Cappadocian province and became involved in the controversy with the Pneumatomachians under the leadership of Eustathius of Sebaste. B's aim was to convince Eustathius to renounce the claim that the Holy Spirit was "created." The

results of this controversy are reflected in the main chapters (10–27) of *De spiritu sancto* (374–375). After his definite break with Eustathius B. had to face fierce attacks from the Eustathians. He was accused of following the ideas of Apollinarius and of proposing a Sabellian trinitarian theology. His attempts to establish a league against the Pneumatomachians in 375 and his negotiations with the West were influenced by B.'s intention to strengthen the Nicaean party. He succeeded in Asia Minor, but his negotiations with the Roman bishop Damasus failed.

Among his later works are the homilies on the *Hexaemeron*, in which B. turns against the excessive use of allegorical interpretation. Instead he interprets the *Hexaemeron* against the background of the contemporary knowledge about natural philosophy. His *Address to Young Men on the Right Use of Greek Literature* is difficult to date. It probably addresses B.'s nephews and instructs them on the right use of classical pagan authors. According to B., anything in accordance with Christian faith can be considered useful by helping the reader towards the exegesis of the Holy Scripture. Finally, there is B.'s correspondence, which covers his whole creative period (357–378). His letters deal with organisational issues, mainly concerning the church of Asia Minor, as well as with dogmatic matters such as the monastic life and the relationship between Christians and pagans. B. probably died in late 378 although his date of death is often given as January 1, 379.

B.'s significance is not limited to his impact on Eastern monasticism. He also had great influence on fourth-century theological debates (such as the controversy between Eunomius and Gregory of Nyssa or the soteriological debate about the divinity of the Holy Spirit on the Council of Constantinople in 381), the controversy over the *filioque* and the *energeiai* doctrine of Gregory Palamas. His interpretation of the *Hexaemeron* is equally important. It influenced Ambrose and was widely read and commented on in the early modern period, as were his commentaries on hellenistic education. His *Address to Young Men* was one of the central works for the humanists, in particular for Erasmus of Rotterdam.

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B., in: *Festschrift E. Iserloh*, Paderborn 1980, 35–49; P. MARAVAL, *La date de la mort de B.*, in: *REAug* 34 (1988) 25–38; R. POUCHET, *B. le Grand et son univers d'amis d'après sa correspondance*, Rome 1992; PH. ROUSSEAU, *B. of Caesarea*, Berkeley 1994.

Thomas Böhm

BEAT

De beatitudinibus

Gregory's eight sermons on the Beatitudes (Matt 5:3–11) exhorted believers to experience Christian "happiness" by participating in an upward journey toward God. Such a concern for "happiness" was commonplace in ancient philosophy, "happiness" being the ultimate goal of human life (see Aristotle's *Ethica Nicomachaea* and Seneca's *De beata vita*). In the first homily, he defined happiness as "something which includes every concept of goodness and from which nothing answering to good desire is missing" (GNO VII/2, 79,26–80,1). By connecting the pursuit of happiness with the pursuit of "the good," Gregory, following Aristotle, associated true happiness with the life of virtue. For Gregory, though, any concept of "the good" must be based in the divine person of Christ. As a result, the desire for happiness is ultimately the desire for Christ.

Reflecting a larger Platonic framework of desire and ascent, Gregory structured his reading of the Beatitudes around four general principles. (1) He saw in them a rhetorical structure of ascent. Each Beatitude was like "a rung in a ladder" (GNO VII/2, 90,4–5). (2) This rhetorical structure of ascent reflected the Christian's spiritual ascent. As a result, each homily addressed the aspect of imitating Christ which was in view, how this related to the specific promise of reward and how each of these fitted into a hierarchical structure. Gregory's commitment to such a reading frequently required exegetical ingenuity when, for example, the promise of "inheriting the earth" came after the promise of "the kingdom of heaven" or the promise of the final Beatitude repeated that of the first. (3) A proper spiritual reading (and a method to approach such seeming contradictions) required a hermeneutic of deeper symbolic meaning, frequently negotiated via the practice of connecting various passages of Scriptures as the unified thoughts of a single divine author. (4) Each of the Beatitudes ultimately refers to Christ. He is, for example, the "justice" of Beatitudes 4 and 8, the one who became poor (Beatitude 1), etc. Christ, therefore, is both the object and the reward of desire.

Although Gregory's sermons are the earliest extant extended treatment of the Beatitudes, there are two noteworthy readings of them prior to Gregory. Clement of Alexandria had discussed the Beatitudes in

general and select Beatitudes in detail in *Stromata* iv.6 in respect to the larger themes of martyrdom and the *perfect man*. Although there is little evidence of Clement's direct influence on Gregory's reading of the Beatitudes, he also understood the Beatitudes within a Platonic framework of ascent. Not surprisingly, Origen wrote an extensive commentary on Matthew (25 volumes) with which one assumes Gregory would have been familiar. But the first 9 volumes, which include his treatment of the Sermon on the Mount, have been lost.

The evidence does not allow the identification of a specific date or occasion for Gregory's preaching of these sermons, but there is general consensus that he did so sometime in the mid- to late 370's. This would be early in his writing career and relatively soon after he was appointed bishop of Nyssa.

By far the most helpful single reference work regarding these sermons is the commentary upon them and associated collection of essays that came out of the Gregory Congress in Paderborn, 1998 (DROBNER-VICIANO, 2000).

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Scot Douglass

Beauty → Good-Beauty
Beginning → Eschatology

BENEF

De Beneficentia

This homily was preached by Gregory shortly after *Fornic* (GNO IX/1, 93, 18), probably in Lent 382, the date assigned by DANÉLOU. On the other hand, CAVALCANTI sees in it a clear witness to the economic, social and political crises that marked the final years of the emperor Valens, who died in 378.

The Nyssen begins by referring to the teachings of the pastors of the Church as a true spiritual food for the faithful, and teaching that as a corporeal fast is necessary, so too should there be a spiritual fast; something that Gregory sees represented by charity (GNO IX/1, 94, 12–14). This is a charity that should be poured out upon the many poor who live during his time: undressed, homeless, prisoners, miserable, sick, etc.—people whom the Christian has a duty to assist. The “judgment of God” itself, as it is presented in the Gospel, tends to accentuate “the goodness of beneficence” (GNO IX/1, 100, 6–8), defined by Gregory as “mother of the poor, mistress of the rich, good nurse of children, help of the elderly, treasure of the needy, common harbor of the miserable” (GNO IX/1, 100, 13–17). God himself is the first inventor of beneficence, and the human being is called to imitate his Lord and Creator in practicing it. Thus the divinization of the human being is realized through the imitation of the good, of mercy and of beneficence; it follows that in his interior “subsists the image of the first and immaculate substance, which transcends every mind” (GNO IX/1, 103, 8–12). Beneficence grants hope and joy to the human being in the present life, while it opens the door to an everlasting happiness in the future life at the same time.

Gregory therefore invites all to enjoy with moderation the goods of this world, to bear in mind that “at the door lie many Lazaruses” who cannot be disdained (GNO IX/1, 105, 10), to be conscious of the fleetingness of life and the inconstancy of all things destined for corruption. The only thing that matters is to leave this world with the integrity that makes us worthy to be “citizens of the other life” (GNO IX/1, 108, 10–11).

di Nissa, *Servire i poveri gioiosamente*, Turin 1971, 109; (Lit) J. BERNARDI, *La prédication des Pères Cappadociens*, Paris 1968, 273; E. CAVALCANTI, *I due discorsi "De pauperibus amandis" di Gregorio di Nissa*, OCP 44 (1978) 170–180; J. DANÉLOU, *La chronologie des sermons de Grégoire de Nysse*, RevSR 29 (1955) 346–372; L. DATTRINO, *Aspetti della predicazione quaresimale di Gregorio Nisseno*, Mélanges U. Fasola, I, Vatican City, 1989, 185–198; E. MOUTSOULAS, Γρηγόριος ὁ Νύσσης, Athens 1997, 253–255; F. QUÉRE-JAULMES, *L'aumône chez Grégoire de Nysse et Grégoire de Nazianze*, StPatr 8 = TU 93, Berlin 1966, 449–455; B. SALMONA, *Le due orazioni "De pauperibus amandis" nell'opera di Gregorio Nisseno*, Aug 17 (1977) 201–207.

Elias Moutsoulas

BIOGRAPHY OF GREGORY OF NYSSA

1. GREGORY'S FAMILY · 2. CHILDHOOD AND FORMATION (335–355)
3. LIFE BEFORE THE EPISCOPATE (355–372) · 4. BISHOP OF NYSSA (372–AFTER 390) · 4.1. *Election* (372) · 4.2. *Early Years* (372–375)
- 4.3. *Deposition and Exile* (376–378) · 4.4. *The Years 378–381*
- 4.5. *The Council of Constantinople of 381* · 4.6. *Mission to Arabia*
- 4.7. *Voyage to Jerusalem* · 4.8. *Final Years* (382–after 394)
- 4.9. *Pastor of Nyssa*.

1. GREGORY'S FAMILY. Gregory's paternal grandparents lived in the province of Pontus. They were aristocrats by birth, wealthy (*Macr* 2; 20; 21, GNO VIII/1, 371, 393, 394), and Christian. The maternal grandmother, Macrina, who had received the traditions of Gregory Thaumaturgus, the evangelizer of the city of Neocaesarea (Basil, *Epist.* 204, 6), had confessed her faith numerous times during the persecution of Diocletian (*Macr* 2), and, along with her family, had to seek refuge for seven years in the forests of Pontus (Gregory Nazianzen, *Or.* 43, 5–8). The maternal family, from Cappadocia, was also aristocratic, and had many riches and honors (*ibidem*, 3). The grandfather was put to death “for having provoked the anger of the emperor” (*Macr* 20, GNO VIII/1, 393) (nevertheless, he would not be considered a martyr, as the family never claimed him as such). The father, Gregory, was a rhetorician, most likely at Neocaesarea (*Macr* 21 GNO VIII/1, 394). The mother, Emmelia (whose name is known from Gregory Nazianzen, *Epigr.* 161 and 164), an orphan, wanted to consecrate herself to virginity but eventually married Gregory for fear of kidnapping, something quite common in that region (*Macr* 2, GNO VIII/1, 372). The couple had nine children: “four boys and five girls” (*Macr* 5, GNO VIII/1, 376; *Suda*'s statement that there were ten is based on an overly literal interpretation of *Macr* 13, GNO VIII/1, 385, where the last son is symbolically presented as the mother's “tithe”, whereas the eldest is presented as her the “firstfruits”; cfr. MARAVAL 1980). Only the name of the eldest daughter, Macrina, is known with certainty; she chose monastic life and Gregory wrote her biography. Another daughter was probably named Theosebeia (Gregory Nazianzen, *Epigr.* 164; cfr. DEVOS 1983), while another daughter is accused of having left the ascetic life (cfr. Basil, *Epist.* 24, a letter which is probably Gregory's; cfr. POUCHET 1992, 583–

589). The four sons are: Basil, who became the bishop of Caesarea, Naucratus, who chose ascetic life in the mountains of Pontus, Gregory, who became the bishop of Nyssa, and Peter, who became the bishop of Sebaste. Some of the women had children: Basil addresses the treatise *To Youth on the Manner of Profiting from Greek Letters* to his nephews. Basil's nieces gave to Gaudentius of Brescia, who was passing through Caesarea, relics of the Forty Martyrs of Sebaste (*Tractatus* 17, 15).

2. CHILDHOOD AND FORMATION (335–355). The exact year of Gregory's birth is hard to determine. Since Basil's birth is generally dated to 329, Gregory's birth, which follows that of Naucratus, cannot be dated before 331. Yet, if one considers the respectful attitude that Gregory continually showed towards his older brother, Basil, and the protective, even condescending, attitude of the latter towards his younger brother, one can argue that the age difference between the two brothers is greater than two years, and that Gregory was born rather around 335 (G. MAY 1971, 53 proposes between 335 and 340). It is probable that Gregory was born in Pontus in Neocaesarea, where his father exercised his profession, or at the family estate which was close to that city. He received the name of the evangelizer of the city, Gregory. His first education took place in the family, under the direction of his mother, but also certainly under that of his older sister, Macrina, whom Gregory will refer to as the "teacher (*didaskalos*)" (*Epist* 19, 6, GNO VIII/2, 64). It is worth noting, however, that Gregory's education was not entirely Macrina's doing, as was the case with his younger brother Peter (*Macr* 12, GNO VIII/1, 383–384), which presupposes a significant age difference between the two brothers.

We know little of his studies. He certainly followed, like his two older brothers, the usual cycle of ancient *paideia*; but Gregory himself stated that he cannot boast, as did his brother Basil, of having had illustrious teachers, other than Basil himself of course, at the school which he attended "for a short time" (*Epist* 13, 4, GNO VIII/2, 45). This probably took place when Basil returned from Athens in 355, when Basil declared that he "sacrificed a little to the world and its theater" (Gregory Nazianzen, *Or.* 43, 25) in giving some lessons.

Gregory, however, shows himself to be no less knowledgeable of classical literature, when occasionally citing Homer and other ancient authors. He also mastered rhetorics perfectly. His works show that he was particularly influenced by the Second Sophistics. He acquired a vast philosophical learning, having read Plato, Aristotle, the Stoics, Plotinus, Posidonius of Apamea and others. It is also possible that he studied medicine in a

fairly in-depth manner, since his knowledge in this field is quite solid. He received this formation in part at Neocaesarea: Gregory refers in *Mart II* to the forced visit he paid, while still a student, to the sanctuary of the Forty Martyrs, which was close to the family estate (GNO X/1, 167). The family's ties with Cappadocia make it likely that he continued his studies in Caesarea, "an eloquent city" (Gregory Nazianzen, *Or.* 43, 13). It is known that, after the death of his father (shortly after 341), a maternal uncle, a bishop in Cappadocia with whom Gregory had good relations, showed much solicitude towards the children of the family, probably carrying out the role of tutor (Basil, *Epist.* 59, 1).

3. LIFE BEFORE THE EPISCOPATE (355–372). When Gregory completed his studies, his sister Macrina embraced a "philosophical and immaterial" lifestyle (*Macr* 11, GNO VIII/1, 381), which she practised at the family estate at Annisa, about 30km west of Neocaesarea, having her mother and the family servants also join in. This lifestyle can be referred to as monastic. Naucratus also renounced a career that promised to be brilliant in order to live as a hermit in the neighboring forests, a lifestyle which was close to the exalted asceticism of Eustathius of Sebaste, whose ties with the family are known (*Macr* 8, GNO VIII/1, 378–379; Basil, *Epist.* 225, 5). After some months, Basil himself joined them in pursuit of a similar lifestyle. Was Gregory ever tempted to follow Basil? It is hard to imagine that he was not incited to this by his family. A letter of Basil to Gregory Nazianzen (*Epist.* 14, 1) speaks of a missed meeting with his brother after which Basil left for Pontus. The letter also contains a lyric description of Basil's hermitage and the invitation for Nazianzen to join. We cannot exclude the possibility, without being able to state it with certainty on the basis of this letter alone, that Basil desired to have the two Gregories with him. His brother did not join, however, choosing instead the profession of rhetorician. A letter sent to him by Gregory Nazianzen (*Epist.* 11) accuses Gregory of Nyssa of having abandoned the holy books which he had at one time read to the people in favor of teaching rhetoric, but this letter must be read for what it is in the first place: one of the numerous manifestos from the pen of Nazianzen which, in rhetorical terms, intends to condemn rhetoric, or at least relegate it to the second place, after Christian books. In reality, the letter informs us that Gregory carried out the function of Reader in the Church, and that he had become a rhetorician. The two functions were not incompatible, since readership was not a clerical position excluding all other profane occupations (during the same period, Apollinarius the father was both

priest and *grammatistês*). The same would not have been possible for an ecclesiastical career. The abandonment of holy books of which Gregory is accused is undoubtedly purely metaphorical. The function of Reader did not exclude marriage either, and Gregory did marry (*Virg* 3, 1, GNO VIII/1, 325, clearly witnesses to it: Gregory expresses there his own sorrow at being “separated by some sort of abyss from that title of glory that is virginity”). The name of his wife is known to us from Gregory Nazianzen: her name was Theosebeia, like one of Gregory’s sisters (Gregory Nazianzen, *Epigr.* 197: cfr. P. DEVOS 1983). Nothing is known of any children of the couple: it is improbable that the Cynegius spoken of in *Epist* 13, 3 (GNO VIII/2, 45) is anything other than a spiritual son.

The married rhetor did not lose contact with his family and the monastic environments. Various passages of *Virg* seem to reflect personal memories of visits to his brother and sister, while others demonstrate that Gregory knew the monastic environments well. It appears that during this time, he also acquired a genuine theological culture, reading not only the Bible, but also Philo, Origen and other theologians.

He was also interested in church matters. Given these interests, one can even ask whether or not he pursued his career as a clergyman. Shortly after Basil’s election as a bishop to the see of Caesarea in September 370, when their uncle bishop Gregory refused to vote for his own nephew, Gregory of Nyssa clumsily attempted to reconcile the two bishops by sending two letters to his brother, apparently from his uncle, but in reality his own forgeries. Basil will later reproach this forgery to Gregory in a letter (*Epist* 58) in which he calls him *diakonos anaxiopistos*, a phrase rendered by translators as “minister unworthy of faith.” Yet, might the term *diakonos* also be taken in the sense that perhaps Gregory was a deacon at that time? Whatever the case, the letter also invites Gregory to take part in Basil’s ecclesiastical matters. This invitation will be headed, as around this time Gregory begins to write his first great treatise, at the request of his “most pious Bishop and father” (*Virg* prol. 2, GNO VIII/1, 250).

4. BISHOP OF NYSSA (372-AFTER 390).

4.1. *Election* (372). In 371–372, for administrative reasons (nothing here indicates a will of the emperor to harass Basil, as many authors have thought), Cappadocia is divided into two provinces, First Cappadocia and Second Cappadocia. Caesarea remained the capital of the First, with

Tyana becoming the capital of the Second. This civil administrative division had an effect on the ecclesial level. Since the Bishop of Tyana immediately claimed the title of Metropolitan in his province, Basil, who had lost a large part of his suffragan bishops, created a number of bishoprics in First Cappadocia, among them Nyssa. It is in this context that Gregory will become its bishop. There is little direct information on this appointment, in which the role of the Metropolitan appeared to have been quite important, even crucial, although election by the people remained the rule. Basil must have been the main player in the election of his brother, and this would explain why one of the reasons for Gregory's deposition in 376 was that of an irregular election. The inhabitants of the small city of Nyssa, if consulted, would likely have agreed to the choice of the Metropolitan's brother, also a famous rhetorician and member of an aristocratic family who had many properties in the area. As for Gregory, he had to submit, Basil himself says (but in a letter to the vicar of Pontus in defense of his brother, undoubtedly embellishing reality) that he was "totally constrained" (*Epist.* 225). Basil added, when he defended his brother, that "no canonical rite, be it of little or much importance, was omitted during the episcopal installation" (*ibidem*).

4.2. *Early Years (372–375)*. Little is known of the first years of Gregory's episcopate. He was elected in a period in which the emperor Valens still left Basil in peace, since he needed him for his political relations with the kingdom of Greater Armenia. Thus, Gregory did not immediately have to suffer from the religious politics of Valens, who was favorable to the Homoians. Gregory then attempted to play a role in the Trinitarian debates, but not always as his Metropolitan would have liked: in a letter of August 372 (*Epist.* 100), Basil complains that his brother "gathers synods in Ancyra and does not miss any opportunity to give us trouble". G. MAY (1966, 107–109) thinks that Gregory, in Galatia, attempted to reach agreement with the followers of Marcellus of Ancyra. This attitude, however, contrasted with that of Basil, who wanted "to dispel the heresy of Marcellus as troublesome, noxious and contrary to healthy faith" (*Epist.* 69, 2). Gregory also risked compromising Basil's efforts at reconciliation with Eustathius of Sebaste, who was opposed to any confession of the Nicene faith that did not eliminate Sabellian interpretations. A little later, troubles arose in the Church at Nyssa (it is unknown if they concerned doctrine or episcopal administration). Basil sent Amphilochius of Iconium to reestablish order. At the end of 374 or the beginning of 375, a

letter of Basil to Amphilochius (*Epist.* 190) states that “things are improving” at Nyssa, but notes that some inhabitants had gone to complain to the court, which shows the persistence of a plot against Gregory.

4.3. *Deposition and Exile* (376–378). It is thus not surprising that shortly afterwards, the vicar of Pontus, Demosthenes, takes aim at Gregory. The vicar gathered a synod of Homoian bishops at Ancyra, probably at the beginning of 375 (the date is debated). Gregory was called to appear before this tribunal under the double accusation of embezzlement of ecclesiastic funds and irregular episcopal ordination. Arrested by soldiers in the middle of winter, Gregory managed to flee and to take refuge in a safe place despite their vigilance. Basil justifies him before the vicar by invoking his brother’s illness—a pleurisy complicated by nephritis—and by requesting that the controversy be settled according to ecclesiastic law, not by a foreign synod such as the one at Ancyra, but by a provincial synod of First Cappadocia (*Epist.* 225; cfr. also 237, 2). In the spring of 376, Demosthenes convoked a synod of “Galatians and Pontians” at Nyssa which deposed Gregory and named his successor (*Epist.* 239, 1). Based upon this decision, the magistrate condemned Gregory to exile (*Epist.* 232).

The place where Gregory took refuge is unknown: Basil states that he was “outside the borders” (*Epist.* 231) of Cappadocia. It is known at least that he did not go to his family’s estate in Pontus, as in 379 he declares that he has not seen his sister for eight years (*Macr* 15, GNO VIII/1, 387). Basil did know his hiding place, as in 376 he thought of sending Gregory on a mission to Pope Damasus, accompanied by the priest Dorotheus, despite “[Gregory’s] total lack of experience in matters of the Church” and his proud character, which would have prevented him from flattering the arrogant and snobbish Damasus (*Epist.* 215). Nevertheless, Gregory’s removal from his see did not last long. The provisions of exile under Valens were revoked either by Valens himself upon his leaving Antioch at the end of 377 or by Gratian, upon the death of Valens in 378. Gregory then returned to Nyssa: *Epist.* 6 recounts the warm welcome he received from his people after a long absence, allowing us to think that this letter describes his return from exile (GNO VIII/2, 34–36). It is, however, not impossible that this letter refers to his return after the failed election at Sebaste.

4.4. *The Years 378–381*. The return to Nyssa marked the beginning of a new stage in Gregory’s life, the exile having made him a “confessor.” Basil

would die in September 378 (Pouchet, RHE 1992, Maraval 2004), and Gregory, who assisted at his brother's funeral (Gregory Nazianzen, *Epist.* 76, 2, states his sorrow at being unable to come embrace Basil's remains), continued the work of his brother in many areas, by intervening in the life of the churches of Pontus, as well as by writing dogmatic or spiritual works that defended, continued or deepened the works of his brother. Although composing original works, Gregory will not cease to refer to Basil, continually speaking of him with the greatest respect, while calling him "the great Basil," "great among the saints" or "man of universal fame". At the same time he is aware of his own value: although the bishop of a small city, Gregory is aware of belonging to a highly aristocratic circle and possessing an exceptional culture (cfr. *Epist* 1, 32–34, GNO VIII/2, 12), being thus unable to content himself with this modest area of action.

In April 379, Gregory participated in the council gathered at Antioch of the Nicene bishops who had been exiled by Valens (*Macr* 15, GNO VIII/1, 386–387). It is known that this council adopted a confession of faith which proclaimed the unique divinity of the Father, the Son and the Holy Spirit, and that it had subscribed to certain documents of Roman origin. One can see here the final fruits of the efforts of Basil, who had sent Dorotheus and Sanctissimus to Rome shortly before his death. The council also attempted to bring together the Old Nicenes, led by Paulinus, and the Neo-Nicenes, led by Meletius. It seems probable that Gregory would have played an important role here, as he had previous contacts with the other Old Nicenes, the Marcellians; and his first writings attempted to remove the difficulties that separated those who regarded Nicaea as their reference point. The council in fact entrusted him with the mission of reconciling the two parties (*Epist* 5, 2, GNO VIII/2, 31–32). It is also known that Gregory gained certain friendships at Antioch, probably in the monastic milieu (cfr. *Epist* 19, 4 and 20, GNO VIII/2, 64, 68). He also met the celebrated rhetor Libanius in this city (*Epist* 13, 2, GNO VIII/2, 44).

Upon his return to Nyssa, Gregory received the news, in the first days of the month of July 379, of his sister Macrina's illness. He thus set out to Annisa, which he would reach after ten days of travel, on the eve of his sister's death. He had conversations with her on the day of his arrival and the following day, of which certain parts are recorded in the biography of his sister (*Macr* 17–18, 20–21, GNO VIII/1, 39–391, 392–392), but which are then later amply transformed and developed in *De anima et resurrectione*. Macrina died on the evening of July 19 (the date, which is based on the text itself, is that of the Synaxaries, Menologia, and a

good number of the manuscripts of *Macr*, including the most ancient ones). Gregory presided at her funeral, placing the body of his sister in the *martyrium* of the Forty Martyrs, which his mother had erected on the family estate, and in which she and her husband were also buried (*Macr* 34, GNO VIII/1, 408).

Returning to his Church at the beginning of August, Gregory encountered difficulties there. The nearby Galatians, he writes, "having secretly spread throughout various parts of my Church their habitual sickness, that of heresies, provoked a not so minor conflict, so that only with effort and with the help of God did I have the strength to get out of this situation" (*Epist* 19, 11, GNO VIII/2, 65–66).

This conflict was perhaps caused by the reconciliation that he had achieved with "those who at first gathered at Ancyra under Marcellus" (*Epist* 5, 1, GNO VIII/2, 31), a mission confided to him by his colleagues during the council at Antioch. He stood accused of having received them "without judgment or examination into the catholic Church," which he counters by invoking the agreement between his colleagues "on what was done" (*Epist* 5, 2, GNO VIII/2, 32).

It is also possible that he had difficulties with the Homoians who had deposed him in 376 and who had not surrendered, but benefited from the general tolerance accorded by Emperor Gratian to the various parties after the death of Valens. It is hard to say how much time was required for him to calm these conflicts.

After this, other problems arose for him. First, he received a message from the small city of Ibora in Helenopontus, whose bishop Araxius had just died. They asked him to come and oversee the election of a new bishop, making sure that the new bishop would come from the Nicene party (*Epist* 19, 12, GNO VIII/1, 66). Such a request is not surprising at all, given the fact that Ibora was close to the village of Annisa, where the monastic communities founded by Macrina and Basil were located, and which a few years later Gregory will declare as belonging to him (*Mart* II, GNO X/1, 166). There were thus family ties, or at least patron-client relations, between the inhabitants of Ibora and Gregory, the *patronus* of a nearby village. Further, in responding to this request, Gregory continued the line of activity of Basil, who had often traveled to favor the election of bishops from his party. The bishop elect, Pansophius (to whom Gregory Nazianzen addresses two letters, *Epist.* 228 and 229), is the only known representative of Helenopontus at the council of Constantinople in 381.

Having just returned to Nyssa, Gregory receives a new request, this time from the inhabitants of Sebaste, a city of First Armenia, where

the situation looked far more delicate. The two preceding bishops had both been anti-Nicene, Eulalius and then his son Eustathius, who had gathered the party of the Pneumatomachians, and therefore in direct opposition to Basil. Eustathius had just died (although Gregory does not state this explicitly), and it was necessary “to anticipate the attack of the heretics”, that is, to install a pro-Nicene bishop. Upon his arrival in Sebaste, Gregory had the bad surprise of finding himself immediately elected bishop of this Church, probably by those whom Basil had previously supported against Eustathius. Yet the opposing party remained strong and caused immense difficulties to the newly elected bishop: in his *Epist* 19, 15–18 (GNO VIII/2, 66–67), Gregory recounts his stay in a dramatic tone, accusing the inhabitants of duplicity and malice, even criticizing the rudeness of their behavior (a sign that the province of Armenia was less Hellenized than Cappadocia). He complains about the conditions in which he lived: lodging, climate, and continual investigations. His orthodoxy was suspected and he had to justify himself, by writing and speech (*Epist* 5, title, GNO VIII/2, 31). The length of this difficult stay is unknown: F. DIEKAMP (1908) calculated two to three months at minimum. *Epist* 22 (GNO VIII/2, 92) seems to indicate that Gregory waited there for his liberation by an assembly of bishops. It is not certain that the substitute he would provide was his brother Peter: Gregory writes to him shortly afterwards without using a title that is appropriate to a bishop, while Peter responds to him using such titles (*Epist* 29 and 30). Further, Peter does not appear among the bishops present at Constantinople in 381. It is thus possible that the party favorable to Eustathius provisionally won, and that Gregory’s immediate successor was from that party. Peter would have replaced him after the Council.

Gregory was of course eventually free and returned to Nyssa. It is known that he then wrote the first two books of his *Against Eunomius*, despite the flood of visitors (cfr. *Epist* 29, 1–3, GNO VIII/2, 87).

4.5. *The Council of Constantinople of 381.* Gregory participated in this council, and was certainly an important actor, since the Trinitarian theology of the Cappadocians inspired the debates. It is possible that Gregory pronounced the sermon *In suam ordinationem* (→ CHRONOLOGY, DEIT EVAG) before the council. It is certain that he delivered the funeral oration for Meletius, who died during this council (*Melet*). At the end of the council, an edict of Theodosius I (*Cod. Theod.* XVI, 1, 3) imposed adherence to the council and contained a list of select bishops with whom

one had to be in communion in order to be considered orthodox. The list contained the name of Gregory for the (civil) diocese of Pontus, as well as those of his Metropolitan Helladius of Caesarea and his friend Otreius of Melitene (the addressee of *Epist* 10 and 18).

4.6. *The Mission to Arabia*. The council of 381 also entrusted Gregory with a mission: He was sent to the province of Arabia to “reestablish order” (*diorthoseôs eneken*) in a Church of this province (TILLEMONT thought that this mission was given to him by the council of Antioch in 379, but he wrote before *Epist* 19 was known, which no longer permits the defense of that hypothesis). Gregory unfortunately gives no detailed information on the object of his mission. TILLEMONT (IX, 581) thought that he was sent to struggle against the Colliridians and the Antidicomarianites, known through Epiphanius (*Panarion*, 78, 1, 1) and believed to be widespread in Arabia. The Council of Constantinople, however, which provides several paradigmatic cases for the reconciliation of heretics in Canon 7, mentions neither of these two groups. E. HONIGMANN (1961, 10) conjectured that Gregory was to be the arbitrator of the conflict in the see of Bostra between two rival bishops, Agapius and Badagius. The council of Constantinople in 394 will again try to resolve this problem, and this means that if Honigmann’s hypothesis is accurate, Gregory did not succeed in his mission.

4.7. *The Voyage to Jerusalem*. The mission to Arabia was followed by a trip to Jerusalem, undertaken at the request “of the heads (*proestôsi*) of the holy churches of Jerusalem”, as the situation there was also in turmoil and required the intervention of a mediator (*Epist* 2, 12, GNO VIII/2, 17). The curious formula employed by Gregory—the heads, not the head, while Bishop Cyril of Jerusalem was at the council with Gregory—is perhaps the proof that the turmoil in the holy city was tied to the contestation of its bishop by some of the clergy. Cyril, ordained by the Homoian Acacius of Caesarea, remained suspect in the eyes of the Nicenes for a long period and it was necessary for the council of Constantinople of 382 to reaffirm his legitimacy. Whatever Gregory’s mediation might have been, it ended in a fiasco. Instead of calming the local disputes, he provoked new ones, as he himself was accused of heterodoxy. The interpretation of the letter that relates his difficulties remains a matter of debate: some have thought that he was accused of Apollinarianism, others that the accusers were Apollinarians, or Judeo-Christians, or adversaries of the Theotokos, or some who accused him of speaking of two sons (cfr. MARAVAL 1987, 74–

75). It was certainly Gregory's Christology that was called into question. This is the Christology of the Word-man, which insists on the reality of the humanity of Christ, endowed with a body and soul. In the eyes of the followers of the Christology of the Word-flesh, this appeared to endanger the immutability of the Word, whose soul would thus be influenced by passions which are incompatible with it. Therefore, in *Epist* 3 (GNO VIII/2, 19–27), Gregory denies injuring this immutability, while affirming the full humanity of Christ. Gregory does not name any of his accusers or defenders, but it seems obvious that if the bishop of Jerusalem belonged to the latter, he would have been mentioned. In any case, he left Jerusalem quite disheartened (“with a sad face,” *Epist* 3, 4) and in bitterness of spirit because of the bearing of the Christians of the city, something which will be reflected in his judgment in *Epist* 2 about his pilgrimage to Jerusalem (→ PILGRIMAGES).

4.8. *Final Years (382–after 394)*. These years are marked by Gregory's intense literary activity, but thanks to his correspondence in particular, some of his activities or his misadventures are known as well. One letter relates his difficulties with his Metropolitan Helladius, who received him in a humiliating manner at one meeting, offending him many times (*Epist* 1, 3–12, GNO VIII/2, 3–6). It is probable that the edict of Theodosius, which named Gregory along with his metropolitan among the guarantors of orthodoxy in Pontus, had made him feel as if he was an equal with Helladius, something that the latter could not accept. Another letter, addressed to the priests of Nicomedia after the death of their bishop, gives them advice on the choice of a successor (*Epist* 17, GNO VIII/2, 51–58). Nicomedia, the capital of the province of Bithynia, was part of the diocese of Pontus. Gregory thus intervenes there on the authority of the charge of oversight that the edict had granted him, while also reminding the addressees of the ties made by a preceding bishop between the Church of Nicomedia and that of Nyssa. His letter, either advocating one candidate or warning against the other, appears to have been ineffective, since the one elected—Gerontius, a poorly qualified candidate—was ordained by Helladius of Caesarea, contrary to his suffragan bishop in this matter, too.

Gregory, nevertheless, remains a famous character, without being one of the important actors of ecclesial politics of his period. It is possible, although uncertain, that he participated in the council of Constantinople of 382 (according to Theodoret, *Hist. Eccl.* V, 8, 10, this council reunited the majority of those from 381). It is, however, certain that he was present

at the council of Constantinople of 383, since he delivered his discourse on the divinity of the Son and the Holy Spirit (*Deit fil*) on that occasion. He delivered the funeral oration for the little princess Pulcheria, the daughter of Theodosius I, at Constantinople in 385, and shortly afterwards, that of her mother, Theodosius's first wife, Aelia Flacilla Augusta (GNO IX, 461–472, 476–490). During one of his stays in Constantinople he had a conversation on destiny with a local philosopher, unless this is purely a literary device (*Fat* I, 2: GNO III/2, 32). He also met the celebrated deaconess Olympias, to whom he addressed the homilies on the Song of Songs (GNO VI, 3). The letters to Libanius also belong to this period (*Epist* 13 and 14).

He can be found one last time at Constantinople in 394, on the occasion of a synod which returned to the question of the two competing bishops of Bostra. The exact date of his death remains unknown.

4.9. *Pastor of Nyssa.* Gregory, although becoming a bishop unwillingly, conscientiously took up the pastoral tasks of a local Church. Some of his writings testify to his preaching, an essential episcopal task. In them he is attentive to the concrete problems of his community. His sermons on love for the poor (*Benef, Quat uni*), in a period and region where the *latifundia* never ceased to grow, underscore forcefully the duties of the rich. In one of his homilies on Qoheleth, he writes against slavery what is probably the most violent diatribe of all patristics (*Eccl* 4, 1: GNO V, 335–338). His sermons against usury, against the fornicators, or against those who poorly support being reprimanded (*Usur, Fornic, Cast*) show him to be a demanding, even austere pastor. Other sermons were pronounced for liturgical feasts: Easter, Ascension, Pentecost, Christmas, the feasts of Saint Stephen, the Apostles, and the Epiphany. Others, such as the homilies on the Beatitudes or those on the Our Father, could have been delivered in the context of baptismal preparations. Gregory shows himself to be attentive here, as in other works, in responding to the doctrinal objections of his listeners.

Gregory was also an organizer of the cultic life of his diocese. He had a *martyrium* built at Nyssa, the characteristics of which he describes in detail in *Epist* 25. He also promoted the cult of the martyrs (→ PILGRIMAGES). Many of his sermons demonstrate that he instituted, or at least introduced in his Church, new liturgical feasts: Ascension, Christmas and the feasts of Saint Stephen and of the Apostles. His canonical letter to Letoius (*Epist can*), which minutely describes the penitential practice of his Church, is also a witness to his personal pastoral practice, since he

underscores that the application of the extremely strict rules that he sets forth is to be made with indulgence—in this, he witnesses to the principle of economy which is so dear to the Easterners.

Another characteristic of his episcopal activity is the help he gave to his faithful, and even to pagans. Many of his letters show him to be active in this domain: classic letters of intervention with a highly placed person, so that the latter take under his care the person recommended by the bishop (*Epist* 7 and 8) or responses to various demands, such as that made to him by a pagan rhetor (*Epist* 26 and 27). These last two letters, like those to Libanius (*Epist* 13, 14) or *Epist* 9, also addressed to a pagan rhetor, or *Epist* 14, addressed to two students of Libanius, reveal Gregory's taste, shared with other bishops of this period, for exchanges with the educated circles of the times. It is surprising to find that Gregory wishes his work against Eunomius to be presented to the famous rhetor (*Epist* 14, 4, GNO VIII/2, 49)—certainly for its style more than for the dogmatic content, which is unlikely to have interested the rhetor.

A final aspect of Gregory's pastoral activity is the role he played in the monastic communities of his city (described in *Epist* 6, 10; 18, 5 and 21, 2; there is no reason to attribute the direction of a monastery to him). It is with these communities in mind that he wrote his great spiritual treatises, and it is probably before them that he pronounced his homilies on the Psalms, Qoheleth (Eccl), and the Song of Songs. In doing this, Gregory also addresses all the monastic fraternities that Basil had founded and advised, here too continuing the work of his brother.

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BODY

The Nyssen's theology of the body is situated between the following coordinates: the conception of the human being as a microcosm, i.e. as the point in which the spirit and matter are united; faith in the Incarnation of the Word, i.e. faith in the fact that He took upon Himself, making it his own, a true human body; the Resurrection of the Lord and, consequently, faith in the resurrection of the flesh with the transformation of the human body into a "spiritual body" which this resurrection includes; the mystery of the Eucharist, mystery of the body and blood of the Lord who gives his "immortal" body as food and his blood as drink. While considering Gregory's theology of the body, one must also bear in mind what he affirms about the human being as IMAGE (→) of God, of human sexuality and the consequences that derive from original sin, as well as Gregory's image of clothing in the TUNICS OF HIDE (→), that is, in animality and mortality.

Parting company with Origen on the question of the preexistence of souls, Gregory affirms that the human being was directly willed by God in his body and in his soul, so that he would have an "affinity" with the intelligible world and with the sensible world (*Op hom* 2, PG 44, 133AB). The original plan of God for the human being included corporeality, because simultaneous belonging to both worlds, that of matter and that of the spirit, permits the human being to give, in himself, unity to the universe: Through the human being, that which is earthly is elevated to that which is divine, and the divine approaches the material (*Or cat* 6, GNO III/4, 21–22). In being a "microcosm," the human being follows the path by which he restores the world, which has fallen into the hands of the DEVIL (→), to God (R. GILLET, 64). With this perspective Gregory opposes both dualism and Manichaeism: everything created is good; all that exists, even the human body, was made by the love of God. According to Gregory, one should not disdain the body, since neither the body nor matter is the cause of evil: evil has its source only in the free choice of the human will (F. ALTERMATH, 187).

The human being is a microcosm which reproduces in itself all the harmony of the world (*Inscr* 3, GNO V, 32–33). From this derives the importance of his corporeality. This is also true in the realm of his sexuality, independently of the hypothesis of the double CREATION (→):

Human sexuality and corporeality are directly willed by God. Speaking of the Incarnation of the Word, virginally conceived by a virgin but with a true human generation, Gregory maintains that the entire edifice of the body is good, and one cannot consider those organs by which the human being in a certain manner reaches immortality through generation of new men as lacking something (*Or cat* 28, GNO III/4, 72).

For this reason Gregory maintains firmly that the body essentially belongs to human nature. The human being is the union of an intelligent soul with a body through the creative power of God (*Antirrh*, GNO III/1, 133, 25–26). Thus the power of the Most High formed the “New Man”, Christ, in an immaculate body ἀμάντῳ σώματι (*Antirrh*, GNO III/1, 223, 25–30). The dignity of the human body was irreversibly confirmed by the fact that the Word, in becoming incarnate, united Himself to a human body and soul. This union is for all eternity, since even if death consists in the separation of the body and soul (*Or cat* 35, GNO III/4, 88), the Word in his death was never separated from either one (*Antirrh*, GNO III/1, 224, 25–28).

There is a strict relationship between protology and eschatology in Gregory’s thought; they illuminate each other reciprocally. The dignity of the human body is to be understood not only because of its creation, but also because of the resurrection, since the resurrection of the flesh is the restitution or restoration of the human being according to the original plan of God. This plan, which is nothing other than the development in the human being of all the virtualities contained in his vocation of “image” (*Mort*, GNO IX, 56; *Eccl*, 1, 9, GNO V, 294; *Op hom*, 16, PG 44, 188; *An et res*, PG 46, 148A), also includes the glory of the body (*Or cat*, 16, 7, GNO III/4, 48; *Sanct Pasch*, GNO IX, 266; *Op hom*, 27, PG 44, 226–229).

This “restoration” would be impossible without the resurrection of Christ. The resurrection of Christ is the explanatory principle and structuring element of *Or cat* (R. WINLING). This observation can be extended to the Nyssen’s theology of the body as a whole, which depends entirely on the resurrection of Christ and the influence of his risen body on all of humanity. The theology of the two Adams is the presupposition of this conviction of Gregory: In the same way that death came by one man alone, so too the resurrection comes to us (*Or cat* 16, GNO III/4, 48–49). Gregory uses the term of μεθόριος (→) in this case, applying it to Christ. This is a concept of particular importance in the Nyssen’s theology: the human being is the meeting point between the spiritual world and the material world. Christ, with his assumption of human nature, transforms

Himself into the meeting point between life and death. Defeating death with his own death and Resurrection, He transforms himself into the principle of new life for all human beings, with whom He is united by virtue of his humanity (J. DANIELOU).

This is evident with particular clarity in Gregory's doctrine of the EUCHARIST (→). Salvation, Gregory maintains, comes to us from our union with Christ, since to be in communion with Him is to be "in communion with life". The salvation of our body is found in the body of Christ, who, in his rising, showed Himself to be stronger than death, and who by means of the Eucharist sows himself in the bodies of the faithful as a seed of immortality, as the leaven that ferments the whole loaf. Gregory calls the body of Christ the "immortal body", thus indicating the dignity of the human body (*Or cat* 37, GNO III/4, 93).

The resurrection of the body and its similarity to the body of Christ lead Gregory not only to honor the human body, but to consider it as an element of the dignity that the human being possesses through having been created "in the image and likeness of God". It is debated whether, according to Gregory, the divine image in the human being has its roots in the soul alone or also in the body. Even for those who limit the iconic character of the human being to the soul alone, it is clear that the body participates in the "image of God", at least in so far as it is an instrument of the soul (R. LEYS, 65).

Gregory situates his consideration of the human body in the context of the history of salvation, and gives great importance to the damage caused by original sin. In this light, his statement about the TUNICS OF HIDE (→), in which the first parents were clothed after the fall, has a strong symbolism. These tunics signify being clothed in mortality, animality and the passions (J. DANIELOU 1967), but do not signify that the body cannot be redeemed. In order to explain this, Gregory uses the well known image of the pottery vase: the body is broken up in death to be remade anew in the resurrection. God acts as a potter who breaks a vase to which lead had been mixed and remakes it, this time without lead (*Or cat* 8, GNO III/4, 31).

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CANT

In canticum canticorum

Is one of Gregory's longest exegetical works, consisting of a prologue and fifteen homilies dedicated to the interpretation of the first half of the Song, up to Ct 6.9. The Nyssen hoped to be able to finish the commentary of the last half of Ct, but this was not possible for him. J. DANÉLOU maintained that the work was composed in the last period of the Nyssen's life for the meetings of a group of Christian ladies at Constantinople, in the house of a noble lady, the widow Olympiada, a high-profile figure of the period of Theodosius and to whom the homilies themselves are dedicated. It would thus be a writing addressed to persons with an elevated spiritual life. J.B. CAHILL, on the other hand, has demonstrated that they were delivered in Nyssa, Gregory's episcopal see, during a Lent between 391 and 394, then re-elaborated at a later time to be sent to Olympiada who had requested the composition.

The work was therefore composed from the notes taken during Gregory's preaching, with the explicit goal of showing the profound sense of the Song, as requested because of the difficulties of approaching the text from a strictly literal perspective. The Nyssen thus presents his exegetical position in the prologue, criticizing those who limit themselves to a literal position and do not know how to grasp the spiritual and allegorical sense of the sacred text—itsself willed by God, as is evident also from the fact that Christ spoke through parables and symbols. Gregory refers explicitly to Origen's commentary, in respect to which however he feels particularly free, introducing important theological differences and modifying certain concepts in an essential manner (F. DÜNZL 1993, 109).

In the first homily, he states that he wishes to offer a mystical interpretation of Ct (15, 12), systematically presenting the ascent to that which is perfect (17, 11). He then takes over the subdivision of spiritual progress in three stages from the Alexandrian, to each of which one of the books of Sacred Scripture attributed to Solomon is dedicated: The first stage corresponds to childhood, to which the book of Proverbs is dedicated; the second phase of interior life is constituted by youth, connected to Qoheleth (Eccl); finally, the maturity of the soul is placed in relationship to Ct. This last work corresponds to the properly contemplative element. Gregory

adopts this scheme, while changing its content (J. DANIELOU 1944, 18). For he inserts this subdivision of Origen into the context of the mysticism of shadows (→ DARKNESS): At the summit of the spiritual life one understands that God infinitely transcends all that one can know of Him, one understands that He is incomprehensible and that to find Him means to seek Him without ceasing. At every moment the capacity of the soul is filled and enlarged, continually proceeding from beginning to beginning, in participation and in union. One thus surpasses the logic of the possession of God: It is no longer only God who is present in the soul, but also the soul itself is present in God. Contemplation that is accomplished in the union and intellectualizing spirituality, of Origenian character, makes way to an ecstatic spirituality of love in an admirable fusion of possession and desire, of stability and movement. From the first homily on it is thus clear that apophatism (→ APOPHATIC THEOLOGY) and *EPEKTASIS* (→) are fundamental keys for Gregory's reading in his explanation of Ct.

Between the second and the fifth homilies, Gregory introduces a third fundamental element, explaining the most properly typological aspect of his exegesis through the constant leading back of the text to a Christological and Soteriological perspective. Asceticism is presented by Gregory in terms of union with the Spouse, who wishes to beautify the soul, initially blackened by sin, through communion with himself (49, 17). Evil is nothing else, in fact, than a lack of the good and distance from that which is better (56, 8–10), a distancing that blackens and renders the soul opaque, incapable of aspiring to asceticism and enslaved to earthly desires. The purification of the soul and life according to virtue are read from this perspective, as an assimilation to Christ. The shaded bed of Ct 1.16 is interpreted as a reference to the Incarnation: It would have been in fact impossible for human nature, mortal and ephemeral, to spousally unite itself to the pure and inaccessible nature of God, unless, for those who live in darkness, the shadows of the body were not intertwined with light (GNO VI, 108, 7–10). The paradox of the Nyssen's conception of contemplation could not be stronger: the shadow reveals, flesh and history are the only path to union with God. All of this moves in the context of presence and transcendence, conjoined beyond any opposition to the theological conception of participation, in an exegesis that is profoundly original in respect to that of Origen.

Starting with the seventh homily, Gregory develops the Christological and Ecclesiological interpretations in parallel, interpreting the figure of the bride as both the soul and the Church. Later, he widens the consideration to include the cosmological dimension of salvation. In the tenth

homily, the sacramental dimension becomes particularly evident, something that characterizes all of the Nyssen's exegesis. The three stages of spiritual life are, in fact, placed by Gregory in relation to the three sacraments of Christian initiation, in an admirable synthesis which is characterized by attention to the historical dimension and spiritual dynamics. For this reason, the culmination of mysticism is found in the EUCHARIST (→ CHRISTIAN INITIATION), which the Nyssen associates with SOBER DRUNKENNESS (→).

This book of the Old Testament was particularly associated with Christian initiation by the Fathers, as an image of the union of God with the soul and with his whole people. Baptism was usually administered in the Easter vigil. Ct was read in the Paschal season, even in the Jewish liturgy, and this had a direct influence on the early Christian liturgy (J. DANÉLOU 1951, 261). Indications of this are found in the references to Ps 22, which was sung during the Easter Vigil by the newly baptized, in the solemn procession which led from the baptistery to the church, where they were to receive their first communion. The Psalm appears in both the second (61, 4–13) and the twelfth homilies, where the blows received by the spouse (Ct 5.7) serve Gregory to explicitly manifest the relationship between sacraments and mysticism: "Thanks to them [the blows], in fact, the divine meal is prepared for him [David], as well as that which is included in the rest of the Psalm: the oil on the head, the pure wine of the chalice which produces sober drunkenness and the mercy that justly follows, together with long life in the Father's house" (362, 9–14). As J. Daniélou says: "Sacramental life is truly conceived as a *mystagogy*, as a progressive initiation which leads the soul to the summit of the mystical life, to *sober drunkenness*" (J. DANÉLOU 1944, 26).

In the tenth homily, this conception finds its finest formulation. Commenting on *Eat, my friends, and drink, inebriate yourselves, my brothers* of Ct 5.1, Gregory makes the sacramental discourse explicit, leading the mystical element back to the Last Supper and revealing the nucleus of his own exegetical method: "After having said this to the Bride, the Word offers the mysteries of the Gospel to his friends, saying *Eat, my friends, and drink, inebriate yourselves, my brothers*. For, to him who knows the mystical words of the Gospel there will not seem to be any difference between these words and the *mystagogy* that was imparted to the disciples there, since, both there and here, the Word says in the same way *eat and drink* (Mt 26.26–27). To many this could appear to be an exhortation to drunkenness (μέθην), offered here by the Word to his brothers; it contains something more than the Gospel. But if one should examine

attentively, one would find that even this accords with the Gospel narration. For that which the Word here orders to his friends, He there realizes with actions, since every drunkenness tends to produce ecstasy (ἔκστασις) of the mind for those who have been overcome with wine. Thus, there is here an exhortation to that very reality that then is realized in every time through the divine eating and drinking, since together with the eating and drinking, transformation and ecstasy [in the elevation] from lesser realities to the better ones is realized" (308,5–309,2). The conception of the Eucharist as the mystical culmination of Christian life is the exegetical key which permits Gregory to compare the content of the Canticle to that of the Gospel. The language is clearly sacramental, and the relationship between Eucharist, drunkenness and ecstasy is presented through the parallel between the invitation of the Spouse of the Canticle and the moment of the Last Supper. It was precisely in that night, in fact, that Christ opened to man the possibility of *ekstasis* from the fallen state to that which is more divine, abandoning his life to the sleep of death, so as then to rise again. The institution of the Eucharist thus becomes the foundation and apex of the spiritual life itself, inasmuch as the Lord offers himself as food and drink to the disciples. This offer is also present at every time, procuring ecstasy for him who participates in it.

The Nyssen's exegesis of the Canticle can unite Eucharist and contemplation because it is radically founded in the life of Christ. The final homilies underscore this aspect in particular: "The Christology contained in these homilies is truly important in their understanding, since all of the mystical doctrine of union with Christ rests on his character as Mediator, and the nature of this mediation is found to be in strict, radical dependence on the fact that in Christ are united two abysses—that of created reality and of uncreated reality—in so far as He is consubstantial with the Father as God and consubstantial with the bride as man" (L.F. MATEO-SECO, 189).

The following phrase could thus be considered the synthesis of the entire commentary of the Nyssen: "*I am in my beloved and my beloved is in me* (Ct 6.3) constitutes the canon and definition of perfection according to virtue" (439, 4–5). Gregory reads these words in the sense that the perfect man should not be concerned with anything except with God, and his regard should be completely for Him, in such a manner as to be the completed image of the archetypal beauty, thanks to the imitation of the model. In this way "he who says "*I am in my beloved and my beloved is in me*" (Ct 6.3) says that he has been conformed to Christ, having received the beauty that is proper to Him" (439, 16–18),

that is, the first, true and unique beauty which characterized the original beatitude of human nature in the creation according to the image and likeness of God (439, 3–20).

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CAPPADOCIA

Cappadocia is located at a high elevation with a continental climate, in the heart of Asia Minor. Its borders changed on many occasions in the period studied here, it extended north to Pontus, with borders with Armenia to the east and Galatia and Liconius to the west. Its large and arid plains are suited to the raising of horses.

Following various political situations, after Trajan's reform it is governed by a consular legate. In 372, Valentinian divides Cappadocia into two provinces, tracing below Caesarea a line that crosses from east to west. The emperor sought to gather new taxes, while also to attenuate Basil's position as the Metropolitan of Cappadocia, who was opposed to his politics. Caesarea continued to be the capital of the northern province, which had no other large urban centers. The territory was largely made up of terrains belonging to the emperor, and a few families of proprietors, including that of Gregory of Nyssa (*Macr*, GNO VIII/1, 376, 19–20). The population was made up of settlers, concentrated in villages.

The southern province contained other cities, such as Nazianze and Tyana, which was made the capital. This division displeased the population of Caesarea, as it diminished its importance and entailed the relocation of functionaries to insignificant localities.

The region belonged to the Iranian cultural world, with Semitic roots. The Greek culture had not penetrated this inhospitable land during the Hellenistic period; it did however after the Roman conquest. It was important militarily, and there were accordingly various legions situated in the territory, such as the famous *Legio XII Fulminata*, and various roads were built. The vast imperial possessions provided horses and the vile trading of slaves. This explains how some cities began slowly to appear. A formerly rural and uncultured region slowly developed an intellectual life. Although it was necessary to travel to the ancient centers such as Antioch or Athens in order to receive an education, various local schools of rhetoric sprang up. Certain great Christian writers are Cappadocian, writers who embellished the Second Sophistic Age. In this period of splendor, Aramaic continued to be the common language of the people in many places.

In the 4th century, the population was largely Christian. The Christianization of the region must have been gradual, but the first informa-

tion we have is certainly late: At the time of L. Claudius Hermianus (180–196) a persecution of Christians broke out. The first known Bishop was a certain Alexander, who went on pilgrimage to Jerusalem around the year 200. The diffusion of the faith is witnessed to by the fact that in 362, the emperor Julian imposed various sanctions on the city because of the destruction of pagan temples. He attempted to rebuild a temple dedicated to the goddess *Fortuna*, but immediately after his death, it was dedicated to the martyrs he himself had created. Basil's help to the needy on the occasion of the famine of Cappadocia in 368 increased the prestige of the Church.

The distribution of the population explains the institution of rural Bishops, or *chorepiscopoi*, who were in dependence on the Bishop of Caesarea and helped him in his mission. In Basil's time there were roughly 50 of them. Certain Arian Bishops also came from Caesarea, such as Julius of Alexandria. After the division of Cappadocia, Gregory was ordained a bishop by his brother Basil, who also appointed Gregory Nazianzen the Bishop of Sasime. ALLARD holds that both Sees were in Cappadocia I, and that Basil sought to maintain the number of Bishops in dependence on Caesarea with these ordinations; but DI BERARDINO places them in Cappadocia II and explains these ordinations as a maneuver to have faithful allies on whom he could count in this new region. After Basil's death, Heladius was elected Bishop of Caesarea. Gregory did not have good relations with him (*Epist* 1, GNO VIII/2, 1–12). It appears that Cappadocian priests balanced their pastoral responsibility with a private profession as well.

It is certain that the Christian population was afflicted with some vices, such as the arrogance of the powerful, alcoholism, recourse to loans in order to maintain an extravagant lifestyle, or the habit of delaying Baptism. On the other hand, the monastic ideal expanded quite rapidly and the faithful came in large numbers to the preaching of their pastors. Light and dark points came together in their veneration of the martyrs: Multitudes came together in the *martyria* to celebrate the annual feasts, listening to the stories of the martyrs expounded by the Bishop in his homily, but also to engage in a lively festivity that at times provoked disorder. The Forty Martyrs of Sebaste received a particular veneration (a chapel in Gregory of Nyssa's family sepulchre was dedicated to them), as did St George, whose cult seems to come from Persia, and Euppsychius, who was celebrated with a feast that included a provincial synod around the Bishop at Caesarea. Gregory had a great devotion to Gregory Thaumaturgus, Origen's disciple who evangelized Pontus.

There were a few sects to be found in Cappadocia. A group of Arians managed to depose Gregory and replace him with one of their representatives at Nyssa. The Encratites carried the disdain of material creation to extremes, even rejecting matrimony. There were also groups of Mes-salians.

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Manuel Mira

CAST

Adversus eos qui castigationes aegre ferunt

At the beginning of this work the superiority of the human being over the rest of creation is exalted. Nevertheless, “this living being, who is wise, active, operating, of strong memory, who is here and sees elsewhere, due to the distraction of the various pleasures and diverse passions, neglects but one thing: the true life and his own salvation” (PG 46, 309A). Gregory continues: “You do not practice justice, you learn no virtues, you neglect prayer . . . while having intellect and reason, you do not provide for that which is fitting and useful nor do you take the necessary care for your own immortality” (309B).

Right after this, referring to the argument to take on the castigations imposed by ecclesiastical pastors, he uses the first person plural. Among other things he writes: “And if a reprimand comes along, we are indignant; if we hear a word that is too harsh, we tolerate it poorly; and if the doors of the Church remain closed to us through excommunication, we blaspheme” (309CD).

Gregory invites those who have been driven out of the Church to penance (312BC). Exalting the pedagogical character of castigations, he observes: “It is for this that with liberal censures we hurt you who err, not striking at the body, but afflicting the soul” (313C). He continues: “Instructive discourse together with education to virtue is difficult to use, and requires a variegated regulation in direction, to be adapted to the character of the governed.” Fear of how his flock may react should not make the ecclesiastical head hesitate to confirm the truth.

As a model for the pastor the great Moses is cited, he who “was insulted as harmful, was calumniated like those who rob and defraud, was defamed as an incompetent commander” (316AB).

Gregory then refers to Isaiah, Jeremiah, Zechariah, the Apostles Peter and Paul, and above all to the Lord himself as models of immolation for the truth. He concludes by underscoring that as “ministers of the Crucified” we must be ready to become, for the truth, objects of complaint (316D).

BIBL.: (Ed) PG 46, 308–316; M. ALTENBURGER in GNO X/2, 321–332; (Lit) J. BERNARDI, *La prédication des Pères Cappadociens*, Paris 1968, 288; J. DANIELÉLOU, *La chronologie des sermons de G. de N.*, RevSR 29 (1955) 371; E.D. MOUTSOULAS, Γρηγόριος Νύσσης, Athens 1997, 242–243.

Elias Moutsoulas

CAVERN

σπήλαιον

One of the Platonic themes taken up and reinterpreted by Gregory is that of the myth of the cavern presented in Book VII of the Republic. W. Blum has demonstrated that this aspect of the Nyssen's thought is also influenced by the Aristotelian reformulation of the myth.

The myth appears in *Mort* (GNO IX, 37–38), *Inscr* (GNO V, 151–154) and *Beat* (GNO VII/2, 102–105), where the image is used to indicate the present life, from which one must be liberated. J. Daniélou has shown the fundamental difference of the Nyssen's thought from that of the Platonic inheritance: For Gregory it is no longer the body or the earthly life itself that is a prison or a tomb, as in Plotinus or Porphyry. Rather, the obscure cavern is constituted by the degraded human condition after original sin (J. DANIELOU 1970, 165). The theme is similar to that of the TUNICS OF HIDE (→). This approach also recalls the soteriological aspect, which will become even more explicit after 382, following Gregory's voyage to Jerusalem, under the influence of the impression of the grotto of Bethlehem on him: The Word descended into the cavern of fallen humanity to save the human being, the Light has shone into the shadows according to the perspective of the Prologue of John (Jn 1.5): this structures the entire theology of the Nyssen.

The change is clear in writings such as *Diem nat* (GNO X/2, 256–258), *Epist* 3 (GNO VIII/2, 20), *Steph I* (GNO X/1, 75) and *Antirr*, all later than 382. In the final work mentioned he states: “For we affirm that God, who by essence is immaterial, invisible and incorporeal, by a disposition of love for men (οἰκονομία τινὶ φιλανθρωπῶ), towards the end of the accomplishment of the universe when evil had already grown to its maximum, just then united himself to the human nature to destroy sin, as a sun that penetrates in an obscure cavern (ἐν γνοφώδει σπηλαίῳ) and with its presence, by means of the light disperses the shadows” (*Antirr*, GNO III/1, 171, 11–17). This inversion of movement, which from the flight of man from the cavern of his body becomes the descent of the Son of God in the grotto of Bethlehem to disperse the shadows to which humanity was enslaved because of original sin, can be considered an iconic example of the rereading of Platonism in a Christian key that is at work in the Nyssen's texts.

In *Virg*, in *Mort* as in *Beat* and *Inscr* or *Or Dom*, human life is seen as an exile, while “later Gregory will develop another anthropology according to which the presence of the spirit on earth—and therefore its union with the human body—is the result of a harmonious design, since God does not wish that any of the parts of the cosmos be deprived of the presence of the spirit” (J. DANIELÉLOU 1966, 161). In *Cant*, where a brief allusion to the cavern of life of Platonic influence (τῷ σπηλαίῳ τοῦ βίου) can be found, Gregory highlights at the same time the fundamental importance of the humanity of Christ, of his time and the places of his life, which, in the context of the unique divine plan, assume an infinite value in so far as they reveal in the finite the Infinite itself. Therefore “The mystery of the grotto (τὸ κατὰ τὸ σπήλαιον μυστήριον), of the swaddling cloths or the manger had to happen at Bethlehem of David through the economy of the generation in the flesh” (GNO VI, 433, 8–9). The theme of the cavern becomes an essential element of the οἰκονομία, since it is precisely in the grotto of Bethlehem that the inseparable union of time and Eternity is revealed.

BIBL.: W. BLUM, *Eine Verbindung der zwei Höhlengleichnisse der heidnischen Antike bei Gregor von Nyssa*, VigChr 28 (1974) 43–49; J. DANIELÉLOU, *La chronologie des oeuvres de Grégoire de Nysse*, StPatr 7 (1966) 159–169; IDEM, *L’Être et le Temps chez Grégoire de Nysse*, Leiden 1970, 165–174; IDEM, *Le Symbole de la caverne chez Grégoire de Nysse*, in A. STUIBER—A. HERMANN, *Mullus. Festschrift Theodor Klauser*, Münster 1964, 43–51.

Giulio Maspero

CHRISTIAN INITIATION

The fourth century is marked by various political and social transformations. The migrations caused by the barbarian invasions led to a certain osmosis between the religions of various peoples. The Oriental cults begin to propagate in the imperial Roman territory, and religion ceases to be a national characteristic. The demographic development of Christianity, legally permitted since the end of the persecutions, requires a serious increase in, and efficient organization of the catechetical effort. Thus the catechetical dimension becomes a fundamental element in the writings of Cyril of Jerusalem and Theodore of Mopsuestia, John Chrysostom, Ambrose of Milan, Augustine and Gregory of Nyssa.

The liturgical life unfolds around two axes: The Incarnation and the Paschal Mystery of the Lord. The sacraments are administered in a context of intense catechism, inseparable from mystagogy. The center of the Christian message is the history of salvation: The sacraments are presented with an abundant typology, from both Old and New Testaments. Thus, not only is the unity of Christian life in its totality underscored, but also the unity of the liturgy and of all the sacraments.

This leads to a unified and dynamic conception of Christian initiation itself. The interior life is conceived by the Nyssens in a dynamic manner: Becoming a saint means constantly growing in the participation in the divine life. Not only is development of the interior life understood as progress of the soul, but the very goal is understood as stability in movement, an eternal immersion in the divine intimacy. Mysticism is understood in continuity with eschatological glory, in what is perhaps Gregory's most original concept: ἐπέκτασις (→).

Gregory posits three steps in spiritual progress (→ MYSTICISM), in relationship to the three sacraments of Christian initiation. This is an admirable synthesis which is characterized by attention to the historical dimension and to the spiritual dynamic. The first path, principally illuminative, corresponds to Baptism, thanks to which one is liberated from the old man and becomes like a newborn baby. The second phase of spiritual growth is linked to the sacrament of Confirmation, while the culmination of perfection is reached with the Eucharist. As the height of mysticism consists in continually uniting oneself more intimately with God in an

infinite movement that eternally extends in glory, so too the Eucharist, unlike Baptism and Confirmation, is a sacrament that is repeated and realizes this union in what is already an essentially eschatological dimension.

This is particularly clear in the Nyssen's commentary on Ps XXII. This Psalm, due to its references to the fresh waters, to oil poured on the head and to the chalice, easily lent itself to a sacramental mystagogy. Various Fathers had used it, and it was sung during the procession that led the catechumens from the Baptistry to the Altar. Gregory comments on it in *Ascens*, where he presents BAPTISM (→) as the first step of Christian initiation which opens the path to the anointing with CHRISM (→) and to the EUCHARIST (→), true culmination of the sacramental and spiritual life: "It is first of all necessary that you become a sheep of the Good Pastor led by good catechesis to the divine pastures and the divine sources of doctrine to be buried with Him through Baptism in death, and to not be afraid of such a death. For this is not a death, but [only] shadow and figure of death. It is thus as *If I had to walk in the shadow of death, I would fear no evil, for You are with me* (Ps 22(23).4). Therefore, after having comforted with the staff of the Spirit—because the Spirit is the Consoler—He prepares the mystical Meal, in opposition to the meal of the demons. For these are those who oppressed the life of men with idolatry. The meal of the Spirit [is] in opposition to them. Therefore anoint your head with the anointing of the Spirit, and, offering with this the wine which gives joy to the heart, infuse into the soul the sober drunkenness in elevating your thoughts from fleeting things to eternal realities. For he who enjoys such a drunkenness exchanges a short life with immortality, to continue in the duration of days the walk of life in the house of the Father" (*Ascens*, GNO IX, 324, 3–22). G. Celada comments: "Eucharist and Baptism form a whole in the contribution that they offer to the integral salvation of human nature" (G. CELADA 1976, 154). The three sacraments of Christian initiation are conceived as a unique path that leads in spiritual progress to the summit of mysticism, which is accomplished in the Eucharistic union.

The Nyssen takes up the Philonian theme of sober drunkenness, manifesting the unity of the sacramental and spiritual life. "It is for this reason that in the *Commentary on the Canticle*, the social (and theological) perspective of the union of the Word and the Church, and the individual (and mystical) perspective of the union of the Word and the soul ceaselessly refer to each other. The Spouse is at times the soul and at times the Church" (J. DANIELLOU 1944, 25).

It is in this sense that Gregory's optimistic affirmations on the participation of the human being in the work of his own salvation are to be understood, affirmations that have raised in some authors fears of a implicit Pelagianism. For example, when he affirms that God wished that we "have our mutability as collaborator in our ascent to Heaven" (*Cant*, GNO VI, 252, 12–13), this is the law of synergy, by which God wishes to save us in liberty, offering us the capacity to clothe our personal history in eternity through the sacraments.

For this reason J. Daniélou optimistically writes: "But at the same time, the entire spiritual life is represented as immersed in the sacramental life that nourishes it. We have already underscored the parallelism between the three paths and the three principal sacraments; Baptism corresponds to the first path under its double aspect of purification (κάθαρσις) and illumination (φωτισμός), Chrism corresponds to the second by its double aspect of obscuring of the visible world (νεφέλη) and elevation towards the invisible world (περιστερά), finally, the Eucharist is in relationship with the mystical life both as union (ἀνάγκρασις) and as exit from the world and self (ἔκστασις). Sacramental life is truly conceived as a *mystagogy*, a progressive initiation that leads the soul to the summits of mystical life, all the way to *sober drunkenness*" (J. DANIELÉLOU 1944, 25–26).

The unitary dimension of Christian initiation is thus strictly bound to the centrality of human history, which Gregory accentuates by exegetically linking the exodus from Egypt to Baptism (*Vit Moys*, II, 120, 1–121, 11; 178–180; *Diem lum*, GNO IX, 233, 8–9; see also J. DANIELÉLOU 1950, 164), and Baptism to the return to paradise, a return tied to the liberation from the tunics of hide (*Vit Moys*, II, 22, 4–5; 118): ἀρχή and τέλος coincide and give an infinite value to history, which separates and unites them. Thus, "The entire spiritual life will be nothing other than the realization, through the mortification of the old man and the vivification of the new man, of the initial grace of Baptism" (J. DANIELÉLOU 1944, 34).

One can observe that the entire structure of the Nyssen's thought underscores the unity of initiation: everything flows from the historical life of Christ, from his *acta et passa*, in which the human being can participate through the sacramental mediation. The sacraments themselves are thus seen as an authentic extension of the Incarnation (J.H. SRAWLEY, xxxiv). In this manner, the human being is opened to eternal life: βίος becomes, in the μίμησις of Christ, in the *sequela Christi*, the path to ζωή.

Spiritual growth is inseparable from the sacramental life, and mysticism opens up every human being in the Eucharistic dimension of his existence. Human activity then assumes an infinite value, because the Christian must show fidelity to the name he bears in all of his works, fidelity to the divine image reestablished by the baptismal washing, fidelity to this divine image which is the very definition of the human being.

So, "the sacramental actions are converted into the center of human history" (G. CELADA 1974, 590) because it is precisely them which lead the human being to the true and real state of his nature. In the concept of *μυστήριον* is reflected the profundity of *φύσις* (→), which is at once historical and ontological. All of the Nyssen's thought moves towards a marvelous and profound THEOLOGY OF HISTORY (→).

BIBL.: B. BOTTE, *Le vocabulaire ancien de la confirmation*, MD 54 (1958) 5–22; G. CELADA, *La catequesis sacramental y bautismal de Gregorio de Nisa*, CTom 101 (1974) 565–665; IDEM, *Unidad de los sacramentos de la iniciación cristiana*, Nic. 4 (1976) 139–174; J. DANÉLOU, *Bible et liturgie: la théologie biblique des sacrements et des fêtes d'après les Pères de l'Eglise*, Paris 1951; IDEM, *La catéchèse aux premiers siècles*, Paris 1968; IDEM, *Platonisme et théologie mystique. Doctrine spirituelle de saint Grégoire de Nysse*, Paris 1944; IDEM, *Sacramentum futuri*, Paris 1950; L.F. MATEO-SECO, *Sacerdocio de los fieles y sacerdocio ministerial en San Gregorio de Nisa*, in *Teología del Sacerdocio*, II, Burgos 1970, 40–92; J.H. SRAWLEY, *The catechetical oration of Gregory of Nyssa*, Cambridge 1956.

Giulio Maspero

CHRISM

In *Ascens* Gregory presents an overview of Christian initiation, placing between baptism and the Eucharist the rite of Anointing with the oil of the Spirit: *Anoint* (μυρρίζει) *your head with the oil of the Spirit* (*Ascens*, GNO IX, 324, 16–17). Cyril of Jerusalem had already explained the Anointing that follows Baptism in reference to the Holy Spirit: it has the effect of conferring the name of Christian according to the fullness of its signification (Cyril of Jerusalem, *Catechesis mystagogica* III, PG 33, 1088–1093). One of the principal names of the Sacrament of Chrism was that of μύρον (cfr. B. BOTTE, 14–15), a name employed by Gregory with reference to the perfumed oil. This can be immediately situated in terms of the *bonus odor Christi* of 2 Cor 2.15.

The Nyssen's witness is particularly interesting since it is precisely at the end of the fourth century that the Chrismal Anointing begins to spread throughout Syria and Cappadocia (J. DANÉLOU 1968, 199). Gregory presents the unction with μύρον as a perfecting of the spiritual life: “similarly, the perfume of the divine anointing is not a perfume for the nostrils, but it is [the perfume] of a spiritual and immaterial power that, through the attraction of the Spirit, draws with itself the good odor of Christ” (*Cant*, GNO VI, 34, 15–18). Gregory goes on to make explicit the connection between growth in the sacramental life and that in the spiritual life. It is only through the reception of the divine oil and the participation in the Eucharist that one can truly grow in the virtues and become perfect (cfr. *ibidem*, 34,18–36,11). Thus, “In the same way that Baptism is the sacrament of regeneration, so too, we can say that Chrism is the sacrament of the perfecting of the Christian condition” (G. CELADA 1976, 159). In the context of the defense of the divinity of the Holy Spirit, Gregory intimately connects the Spirit and the oil of anointing: “For how can he who does not recognize the Chrism along with him who has been chrismated confess the Christ? It is written: He has been anointed by God the Father in the Holy Spirit” (*Maced*, GNO III/1, 102, 14–16). The context is Trinitarian: Gregory affirms that the Father is King, The Only Begotten is King, and the Holy Spirit is the Kingdom (cfr. *ibidem*, 102, 29–30), and therefore there is absolutely no separation between the Son and the Spirit: “For if the senses do not perceive anything intermediary between the surfaces of the body and the anointing (χρίσεως) with oil,

so the union of the Holy Spirit with the Son is inseparable; so that he who wishes to be anointed by Him through the faith must necessarily first enter into a relationship by means of the contact with the holy oil" (*ibidem*, 103, 1–6).

Thus Gregory's theology highlights the profound connection that exists between the development of the Trinitarian doctrine, particularly in the area of Pneumatology (→ TRINITY), and the theological understanding of the sacraments.

BIBL.: B. BOTTE, *Le vocabulaire ancien de la confirmation*, MD 54 (1958) 5–22; G. CELADA, *La catequesis sacramental y bautismal de Gregorio de Nisa*, CTom 101 (1974) 565–665; IDEM, *Unidad de los sacramentos de la iniciación cristiana*, Nic. 4 (1976) 139–174; J. DANÉLOU, *Bible et liturgie: la théologie biblique des sacrements et des fêtes d'après les Pères de l'Eglise*, Paris 1951; IDEM, *La catéchèse aux premiers siècles*, Paris 1968; IDEM, *Platonisme et théologie mystique. Doctrine spirituelle de saint Grégoire de Nysse*, Paris 1944; IDEM, *Sacramentum futuri*, Paris 1950.

Giulio Maspero

CHRISTOLOGY

1. THE ORATIO CATECHETICA MAGNA · 2. WRITINGS AGAINST APOLLINARIUS OF LAODICEA · 3. WRITINGS AGAINST ARIUS AND EUNOMIUS · 4. ASCETIC AND MYSTICAL WRITINGS · 5. HOMILIES IN FEASTS OF THE LORD · 6. “INCARNATION” AND “HUMANIZATION”.

Christ occupies the central position in Gregory’s theology and spirituality: Both are radically and completely Christocentric. In reality, for Gregory, Christ is not only the Savior, but also the salvation of humanity, and this is accomplished through our filial adoption *in* Christ. The divine filiation *in* Christ recapitulates the entire salvific plan of God in itself (MOUTSOULAS 1979, 427).

Salvation consists in an authentic “divinization” of the human being, in body and in soul (→ SOTERIOLOGY). This great work of God is accomplished in Christ first of all, in the mystery of the Incarnation, by which the Word “takes upon Himself,” “unites to Himself” and “assumes” the humanity of the Lord, attaining an extremely close union with it. On the Word’s part, this is a profound *kenosis* and a *synkatabasis*, by which the Son of God approaches the human being to the point of making him his. On the human side, this is an elevation. This *synkatabasis* primarily implies a “divinization” of all that is human in Christ, without its ceasing to be human, and united to the Word in the unity of person. It is *by* Christ and *in* Christ that all are “divinized” and participate in the divine life and the incorruptibility of God.

According to Gregory, all goods, even the incorruptibility of the body, come from Christ and reach us through Christ. Even the resurrection reaches us through the risen body of Christ (*Or cat* 37, GNO III/4, 93–94). In Gregory’s thought, Incarnation and Redemption are united in an inseparable manner, according to the doctrine which was at this point common in the great Oriental Tradition. Consequently, for Gregory, Christology is Soteriology, and vice versa: Soteriology is Christology.

Gregory dedicates a large space to Christology and Soteriology in *Or cat* (particularly chapters 9–37), where he develops it in an ordered and systematic way. He defends the true humanity of the Savior in his writings against Apollinarius in particular (*Antirrh*, *Teoph*), defending his perfect divinity against Arius and Eunomius (*Eun*, *Ref Eun*, *Arium*).

He contemplates the mysteries of the life of Christ, their historical reality and their salvific dimension in the homilies for the feasts of the Lord in particular (*Tunc et ipse, Diem lum, Sanct Pasch, Trid spat, Salut Pasch, Lucif res, Ascens, Diem nat*), while presenting Christ as the foundation of the entire spiritual life in his ascetic and mystical writings (*Virg, Eccl, Cant, Vit Moys, Or dom, Beat, Inst, Prof, Perf*). In all of these writings, whatever the perspective may be in which he considers the Person of the Savior, Gregory manifests a great degree of clarity and firmness of thought on the essential lines of Christology, even if he uses a terminology which is not yet absolutely finalized (BOUCHET 1968, 580–583).

1. THE ORATIO CATECHETICA MAGNA. The *Or cat* is perhaps the most beautiful and complete of Gregory's systematic works (GRILLMEIER, 586) on Christian teaching, and Christology in particular, which occupies a central major position (chs. 9–22). The treatment of the Incarnation that Gregory presents here clearly depends on Irenaeus, Origen, Methodius and Athanasius (SRAWLEY, xxvii). Particularly as regards the mysteries of the life of Christ, the presence of Athanasius's *De Incarnatione Verbi* is almost continuous, not only in the quantity of correlates which exist between them, but also in the extent of the existing correlations (MATEO-SECO 2003, 187–189). In this sense, it is useful to read chapter 32 of the *Or cat* in parallel with chapters 23–25 of Athanasius's *De Incarnatione Verbi*: in both of them the same objections against the Incarnation of the Word are to be found, with the responses coinciding as well.

There are three principal objections to the Incarnation by the pagans: that it came so late, that Christ shared the *entire* life of man, from birth till death, and that he suffered such an infamous death as that of the death in Cross. Against the first objection, Gregory maintains that the Incarnation was accomplished so late because it was fitting that evil reach the fullness of its manifestation in order to be better removed (DANIÉLOU 1970, 186–204; M. CANÉVET, 92–95; J. R. BOUCHET 3, 631–644), thus aiming at a personalistic theology of history. To the second objection, which is nothing other than the scandal caused by the Word suffering the *pathos* of man, Gregory responds by distinguishing a double level in the concept of *pathos*: Only the *pathos* of sin is unworthy of God, the *pathos* that entails birth, growth or death has nothing sinful in it, and, consequently, has nothing in it unworthy of God. He responds to the third objection by stating that Christ's life was slow, as the life of all human beings is slow, but God submitted himself to the long process of being engendered, born,

growing and dying because the logic of the Incarnation requires not only that the Word assume a human body and soul, but also that he share in human beings' history. This is realized by sharing life with them, from birth to death (ch. 27). In reality, for Gregory, a true Incarnation not only implies the assumption of a perfect humanity, but also means assuming the life and history of human beings.

In what manner, however, can the Infinite unite to that which is wretched and circumscribed? Gregory observes that the union of the Word with that which is human cannot be conceived as if the divine nature was *circumscribed* by the flesh, but as a mysterious union (ἔνωσις) (ch. 10). This is so intimate that it can be compared to the union of the body and the soul, in virtue of which one being is constituted—a human being—without the two elements thereby becoming confused (ch. 11). This comparison is dear to Gregory, since, given his anthropological convictions, it permits him to speak of two distinct elements united to form one being, without their being mixed or confused.

Christ is a perfect man, composed of soul and body. His death consists, as with other human beings, in the separation of the body and soul (ch. 26). The resurrection consists in the fact that the two elements return to be united (ch. 35). The Word united himself to both elements—body and soul—intimately and inseparably. This union is not interrupted, not even at the moment of death: during the sacred Triduum, body and soul remained united to the Word (ch. 16). This is a conviction that Gregory expresses in many of his works (L.R. WICKHAM, “*Soul and Body: Christ's Omnipresence*”, in A. SPIRA-C. KLOCK, (Eds.), *The Easter Sermons of Gregory of Nyssa*, 279–292; H. DROBNER, *Three Days and Three Nights in the Heart of the Earth. The Calculation of the Triduum mortis According to G. of N.*, *ibid.*, 263–278). Jesus Christ is also true God: Gregory situates the Christological chapters after the theme of the Trinity in chapters 1–4. In them he decisively defends the divinity of the Logos: The Word is all powerful and Creator of man, therefore it is to Him that salvation is fitting (ch. 8).

How is this intimate union between the human and divine realized in Christ? At this point Gregory, who defends the reality of the human and the reality of the divine in Christ with a position that has been called “clearly diphysite” (GRILLMEIER, 589), prefers not to enter into this question, which he considers to be the heart of the mystery. It is enough for him to affirm that the mode of union remains unreachable for the human mind. It is nevertheless clear that this union of the two natures is so intimate that it permits us to attribute the human and the divine to one

unique subject. Gregory frequently practices, e.g. in the *Or cat*, a correct application of the *communicatio idiomatum*. It is evident, for example, in the force with which he professes that God is born in the flesh, and that the miracles performed by Jesus confirm this (ch 11). Among these miracles, Gregory underscores the virginal birth and the incorruptibility in death and Resurrection (ch. 13).

The events of the life of Christ are important in the *Or cat*. Gregory has a dynamic vision of the Incarnation (WINLING, 60) and considers these events as the development of the Incarnation itself, and as one of its most important consequences: A true Incarnation requires that one share not only human nature, but also human life. Further, these events, particularly the death and Resurrection, are decisive for the salvation of the human being (→ SOTERIOLOGY), as he is saved by entering into communion with these events through the sacraments (chs. 33–37). In the perspective of the salvific relevance of the events of the life of Christ, it is necessary to remember that the Resurrection of the Lord is the focal point towards which all of the *Or cat* converges.

2. WRITINGS AGAINST APOLLINARIUS OF LAODICEA. Gregory's Christological language is particularly "diphysite" in the refutation of the *Apodeixis* of APOLLINARIUS OF LAODICEA (→), because the key point in the dispute with Apollinarius is the defense of the perfect humanity of the Lord. The human element of Christ appears here described as a proper nature, in order to combat the Apollinarian doctrine of the unique nature of God the Word incarnate (*Antirrh* 18–19, GNO III/1, 154–158). For this reason, Gregory speaks of Christ as a "man assumed by the Word". He speaks of the Incarnation as a "humanization" and insists on the importance of Christ's soul as a real principle of Redemption (*ibidem*, 32 and 24, GNO III/1, 180–182 and 166–168). Gregory also insists on the fact that the cause of Christ's death on the Cross is the separation of the soul and the body, and not the separation of the divinity, which, during the sacred Triduum, remains united to both the body and the soul (*ibidem*, 30, GNO III/1, 179; *ibidem*, 55, GNO III/1, 226). In this way he opposed the Apollinarian imposition, according to which the Word must have given life to the body of Christ, filling the role of the soul in it. In the defense of the perfect humanity of the Lord, Gregory uses formulas which appear close to those that Nestorius later would have used (*ibidem*, 58, GNO III/1, 231, 12–14; GRILLMEIER, 590). Gregory protests at the malicious manner in which his enemies interpret his teaching when they say that he maintains that there are "two sons" in Christ, that is, two filiations

(*Theoph*, GNO III/1, 120 and 127). At other times Gregory's language is close to monophysitism due to the use of terms that indicate "mixture" in order to designate the union that exists between the human and the divine in Christ (*Antirrh*, GNO III/1, 161, 171, 2, 225).

In these writings as well, the conviction that the human nature of Christ, in being "assumed" by the Word, has been "divinized", appears (*Antirrh* 25, GNO III/1, 169–170). It is here that we find the celebrated comparisons of the hypostatic union to "the drop of vinegar" absorbed by the sea (*Theoph*, GNO III/1, 126–127) to signify what happens to the humanity of the Lord in the Incarnation (BOUCHET 1967) (*Antirrh* 42, GNO III/1, 201; *Theoph* GNO III/1, 126; *Eun* III, GNO III, 150).

This image, naturally, can lead to the conception of the hypostatic union as an absorption of the human by the divine. This could be due, not only to the fact that the Christological language is not yet specified, but also to the fact that Gregory is using an audacious language in order to manifest that our "divinization" is fruit of the "divinization" of Christ. Gregory therefore underscores that the glory of the risen body of Christ derives from the glory of the Word who reaches it, "divinizing" it. In reality, for Gregory, salvation leads the human being beyond pure simple human nature. Gregory is persuaded that the flesh of Christ, "mixed" with the divinity of the Word, is elevated above its natural capacities, so that, in a certain way, it "participates" in the divine attributes (*Antirrh* 42 and 53, GNO III/1, 201 and 222). Consistent with what was said in the Christological analysis of the *Or cat*, here too, the communication of the divine attributes to the humanity of the Lord—as far as possible—is progressive: It begins with the conception of Christ in the womb of the Virgin, and reaches its fullness with the exaltation in which Christ receives the name which is above every name, that is, the name proper to the divinity alone (Phil 2.9) (*Antirrh* 21, GNO III/1, 161–162).

These texts and their parallels are a nice demonstration of the exactitude and temerity with which Gregory applies the *communicatio idiomatum* to the mystery of the Incarnation: In Christ the divine receives a human name, and the human receives a name which is above every name, i.e. it receives the divine name (e.g. *Antirrh* 21). In the discourse of *Antirrh*, Gregory not only uses certain decidedly "diphysite" expressions, but uses almost all of the adverbs that the Council of Chalcedon will later use to prevent the Hypostatic union from being understood in a Nestorian or Monophysite manner ("without confusion, without change, without division, without separation", Symbol of Chalcedon, DS 302).

Gregory's use of such expressions shows that a Nestorian or Monophysite interpretation does not do justice to Gregory's rich and balanced Christology. In fact, in the *Antirrh*, Gregory affirms that in the union there is no confusion of the attributes linked to the human and those which are linked to the divine in Christ (*Antirrh* 50, GNO III/1, 216–217). In reality, the Word becomes man without change. And this is achieved in an irreversible manner. After the union, the Word does not separate, not even in death, from either the soul or body of Jesus (οὐθ' ἐτέρου χωρίζεται) (*Antirrh* 17, GNO III/1, 152–153).

Perhaps the best manner to approach the Christological position of Gregory's anti-Apollinarian writings consists in reading them from the perspective of chapters 20–21 of *Antirrh*, which constitute a complete commentary on the hymn of Phil 2.5–11 (L.F. MATEO-SECO 1971), manifesting a structured Christological reality almost like that of the *Or cat*, even if they naturally follow the Pauline text: preexistence, *kénosis* (= humanization), exaltation (GNO III/1, 158–162). In this perspective, Gregory considers the Incarnation in the context of the history of salvation, and, consequently, returns to underscore what WINLING (2, 60) calls a “dynamic vision of the Incarnation”. The dynamic, like that of the *Or cat*, is oriented towards the exaltation and glorification of Christ, since in them the foundation and cause of our “divinization” is found.

3. WRITINGS AGAINST ARIUS AND EUNOMIUS. The controversy against ARIUS and EUNOMIUS (→) has the divinity of the Word as its central question, i.e. Trinitarian theology. Christological questions also appear frequently in these writings, often as background arguments for the constant defense that Gregory makes of the divinity of the Word. In fact, the question of the divinity of the Logos directly involves the question “Who is Christ?”. For Gregory, it is clear that the affirmation that Christ is God and that, for this reason, He is Mediator and King of the universe, belongs to the essential nucleus of Christian faith. He is the glory and splendor of the Father. Further, Gregory's entire mystical theology vigorously reacts to Eunomius. In Gregory's spiritual doctrine, Christ is the ideal to follow, the center of the desires and love of the soul. He must be loved with a supreme love. Of course, only if He is true God is He really worthy of the human being's adoration and supreme love.

It follows that, in a context in which he underscores the essential difference between created and uncreated, Gregory accentuates the divine attributes of the Word: eternity, power, life, truth, light and wisdom (*Eun*

III/I, GNO II, 21). Gregory frequently cites Jn 1.1–18, underscoring the equality of the Word with the Father and the reality of the Incarnation: The Word became flesh and manifested himself to human beings precisely in the flesh (*Eun* III/I, GNO II, 59). The Word could become man because He is all powerful. In this way, Life could taste death and then rise again (*Eun* III/III, GNO II, 120). In this context, Gregory pays particular attention to the title *Firstborn* (Col 1.13–20). Christ is the Firstborn of those who rise again from the dead since He was victorious over death with his own death. He is the Firstborn among many brothers because He let them be born anew through Baptism (*Eun* III/III, GNO II, 70). Christ is the Only Begotten as God, Firstborn insofar as He has many brothers; Only Begotten as uncreated, Firstborn as created (*Eun* III/II, GNO, 70–71). Yet we do not say that there are two Christs, but only one Christ; we do not say that there are two sons, but only one Son, since He who manifested himself in the flesh is the same who was God from all eternity (*Eun* III/III, GNO II, 129–130).

4. ASCETIC AND MYSTICAL WRITINGS. Gregory's spirituality can be defined as a spirituality of the *sequela Christi*. Certain treatises (*Prof*, *Perf*) are even structured around the signification of the name of Christ. When the Lord allows us to be called Christians, Gregory maintains, it is because he causes us to participate in his own being, correctly indicated by the name of Christ. It follows that the perfection of Christian life consists in realizing the signification of the name of Christ in one's own life. Now, in the name of Christ all the other names are recapitulated, including those that are applied to his Divinity. In this sense, Gregory proposes the adoration and imitation of names like "Splendor of the divine glory", "Power and Wisdom of God", "Firstborn from among the dead" and "Priest, Propitiation and Passover". In proposing names that belong to both the Divinity and Humanity of the Lord, Gregory is demonstrating that the life of the human being in Christ is not only sequela, but also "divinization". For Gregory, these two affirmations are equivalent: Being Christian signifies following Christ, and, Being Christian signifies imitating the divine nature. These affirmations are equivalent because the human being, uniting himself to Christ, is also united to the divinity. Christ is the perfect and eternal Image of the Father. Human beings, made in the image and likeness of God, find salvation precisely in the union with Him who is the perfect Image of the Father. In the light of this, one understands the coherence in Gregory's commentary on the Song of Songs, centered on the nuptials of Christ and the soul. These

nuptials are, at the same time, a description of the ascent of the soul to union with the divinity. It is in the encounter with Christ that the human being encounters God.

In *Perf*, Gregory underscores that Christ is the Mediator because He unites that which is human with God, in Himself (GNO VIII/1, 204). Gregory thus does not conceive the mediation of Christ as that of an intermediary being between God and man as Arius does, but as the mediation of Him in whose personal unity the human and divine are united. Consequently, all those who are united to Him are united to God. This union with Christ is a divine work, proper to the Holy Spirit, since it concludes in the “divinization” of the human being. This is particularly clear in the *Inst*. This “divinization” is nothing other than “Christification” (GNO VIII/1, 178).

In *Vit Moys* as well, Gregory identifies the following of God and the following of Christ. This is clear, for example, in the insistence with which the thought of Christ appears in the three theophanies that structure the book. In the first, the burning bush represents the two natures of Christ, i.e. the light of God which manifested itself through the flesh and the mystery of the virginal maternity (II, GNO VII/1, 39). According to Gregory, the tables of the Law, engraved by the Finger of God, signify the flesh “that contains God”, since the flesh of Jesus was sculpted by the finger of God, i.e. by the Holy Spirit (II, GNO VII/1, 108–109). Christ is the tent not constructed by the hand of man (Heb 9.11), constructed among us, that is, in our flesh (II, GNO VII/1, 91 n. 174). For this reason, it is *in* Christ that the soul is united to God through the sacramental life and faith, and then in the mystical path. The mediation that Christ works is not that of an intermediary being, on which the soul would base itself to approach God like a stair that leads us to the higher level in the measure that we climb and overcome it; rather, this mediation is accomplished *in* Christ, since it is *in* Christ that the soul encounters God.

The *Homilies on the Song of Songs (Cant)* delineate the spousal love between Christ and the soul. For this reason Gregory underscores the “consanguinity”—the consubstantiality—of the Humanity of Christ with other human beings. The Incarnation itself is described as a marriage of Christ with humanity. Jesus takes humanity on his shoulders, as the Good Shepherd takes up the lost sheep. Gregory here underscores that in clothing herself in Christ, the bride is elevated, divinized in a communion with the Divinity, which occurs in an infinitely progressive progression. In Christ the soul encounters God, because God made himself available in “veiling” his divinity with the humility of the flesh. The entire mystical

doctrine of the union with Christ is founded on his character of Mediator, and the nature of this mediation is the intimate dependence of the truth and radicality with which the two abysses—the created and the uncreated—are united in Christ in a most intimate personal union.

In *Cant*, Gregory repeatedly summarizes the fundamental lines of Christology on which his mystical doctrine is founded: the Word, the Good Shepherd, the Good Samaritan, the new Solomon, descended from heaven through love for man and took the lost sheep—all of humanity—upon his shoulders, placing the wounded on his pack animal, as the Good Samaritan did. Born virginally, as true God and true man, He united in Himself, with an indissoluble unity, the human and the divine: He is beautiful, further, He is Beauty itself. He has an impassioned name which is at the same time a divine name: *philanthropos*, *he who loves man* (MATEO-SECO 2003).

5. HOMILIES ON THE FEASTS OF THE LORD. These homilies too contain a rich Christology and a suggestive consideration of the mysteries of the life of the Lord. In them are manifested the power of the Lord over time and history, the indissolubleness of the hypostatic union and the soteriological power of the events of the life of the Lord—in particular his birth, his death, descent to the dead and Resurrection. Gregory shows a highly balanced discourse on the paradoxical aspect of the mysteries of the life of Christ. On the one hand, he insists on the fact that Christ shared the various stages of life with man, and on the other hand, that in these very events, certain signs and prodigies were accomplished which verify that He is God. These signs are an invitation to recognize in Christ the God who, without ceasing to be God, experiences our own limitations. Gregory accentuates two signs above all the others: the incorruptibility of his Mother in Christ's conception and the incorruptibility of his body in the sepulcher.

Gregory not only openly maintains the faith in the *Theotokos*, but explicitly declares his faith in the virginity of Mary. For him, in the virginal generation of Christ, the virginity with which the Word is eternally engendered by the Father is reflected (GORDILLO, 129–142). The same is true of the incorruptibility of Christ in the sepulcher. In *Trid spat*, Gregory manifests his firm conviction that, during the Triduum of his death, the Word remained united to his body, conferring incorruptibility on it.

In *Diem nat*, Gregory compares the feast of Christmas to the feast of Tents, tying the Johannine expression of the Word who pitches his

tent among us (Jn 1.14) to it. The birth of the Lord is considered an authentic theophany by Gregory. Here too, the Resurrection appears as the end towards which the Incarnation tends: In the Resurrection the full manifestation of light will occur, which has begun now to manifest itself (GNO X/2, 245–246). The birth is already a salvific act, since God visited humanity by clothing himself in it. The birth of Christ is in a relationship of unity with the death and Resurrection. In his homilies, Gregory often presents the entire history of salvation: The texts dedicated to the parallels of Christ-Adam and Mary-Eve are almost identical to those he uses in *Trid spat*. The Nativity carries the entire dynamism of the Paschal feast in it. Gregory takes up the same objections that we already saw resolved in *Or cat*: It is undignified for God to share the life of men, in particular their birth and death. Gregory explains the divine immutability in the Incarnation: Absolute purity took our limitations upon Himself, but our limitations did not contaminate Him.—The light shines in the darkness, but the darkness does not overwhelm it, rather, it disappears through the power of the light. The sun is not darkened because it is among shadows. It was thus not unworthy of God to come close to man to the point of taking the *pathos* of man on Himself.

The fact that the Lord remained in the kingdom of the dead for three days has a particular importance to the Nyssen's thought. Jesus had to truly rise again, and, through his risen body, spread the resurrection to all of humanity. It follows that He had to die and descend to the kingdom of the dead in order to be able to truly arise. On this point, what Gregory affirms on the two Adams and the unity that exists among all men has a decisive value.

The Resurrection of the Lord is constantly present in Gregory's work, being the focal point of his entire theology and in a particular way of his Christology, Soteriology and Anthropology. The homilies of *Sanct Pasch*, *Trid spat* and *Lucif res* are particularly interesting in this regard. Gregory analyses, in the *Trid spat* above all, the signification of the death of Christ, the *anticipation* of his death in the Last Supper because He offers himself as the immolated Lamb; the descent to the dead, the calculation of the three days (DROBNER, 79–114) and extant witnesses to the Resurrection of the Lord. Gregory defends a “realist” conception of the Resurrection of the Lord: that which fell itself rises up. The brief homily of Gregory on the Ascension is the first extant witness to the celebration of the Ascension of the Lord as an independent feast in Cappadocia (→ LITURGY). Christ is here presented as the King of the universe and the recapitulator of all things.

6. "INCARNATION" AND "HUMANIZATION". In order to refer to the Incarnation of the Word, Gregory uses both *sarkosis* and *enanthropesis*. Even in *Antirrh*, despite the fact that it was written directly against Apollinarius and his conception of *sarkosis*, the use of the term *sarkosis* is far more frequent than that of *enanthropesis*, perhaps because the expression of Jn 1.14 (The Word became flesh) has a decisive weight in the Nyssen's conception of the Incarnation, as it would in Cyril of Alexandria's thought later on. In reality, one can write a fairly complete summary of Gregory's Christological thought by following his comments on Jn 1.14 and Phil 2.5–11, which are frequently interrelated in his writings.

As can be easily seen from H. DROBNER's *Bibelindex*, the Prologue of Saint John is ever-present in Gregory's corpus. It is perhaps the most cited of all of sacred scripture, if the entire hymn is considered. The key verse, "The Word became flesh", is cited almost thirty times. Its citations are concentrated in *Eun*, *Antirrh* and *Cant*. This is an eloquent concentration: Gregory uses the text particularly in the anti-Arian polemic, in the Apollinarian polemic and in the most important nucleus of his mystical writings.

In *Eun* III/I (GNO II, 20), he insists on the attributes of the Word that make Him equal to the Father: He has nothing created in his nature, He is the Son born of the Father, the Word who was in the beginning in God, the Wisdom of God. If this Wisdom had been created, Gregory continues, there would be a moment in which God was deprived of Wisdom. The Word is eternally in God and inseparable from God (*Eun* III/I, GNO II, 59). Gregory maintains that the divinity of the Word is the reason for the possibility of the Incarnation, since only an infinite power could have united realities which are so different from each other. In reality, the nucleus of the mystery of the Incarnation is founded on the fact that God manifested himself in the flesh, and has experienced death (*Eun* III/III, GNO II, 120). Christ is the Firstborn from among the dead because He conquered death with his *own* death, He is the firstborn among many brothers because He caused them to be born anew through Baptism. All of this is based upon the fact that the Word is God and that He has truly become one of us, Gregory affirms, reading Jn 1.1–18, Phil 2.5–11 and Col 1.13–20 together (*Eun* III/II, GNO II, 70). The doctrine of the true piety teaches that He who manifested himself in the flesh is the same as He who was with God (*Eun* III/III, GNO II, 129). According to Gregory, the preexistence of the Logos constitutes an essential part of the mystery of the Incarnation.

Commenting on Jn 1.1–14, Gregory defines the Incarnation as a *kénosis*. This *kénosis* consists above all in being engendered in his humanity, receiving in this way something of creation. This generation was, however, unavoidable for the economy of salvation, for if the Word had not become flesh (Jn 1.14), God would not have been manifested in the flesh. Now, Gregory observes, this *kénosis* of the Word leads to the exaltation of the flesh, which the Word united to Himself (*Eun* III/IV, GNO II, 152). In this glorification of the flesh of Christ, the glory of the Father manifests itself (*Eun*, III/X, GNO II, 300). Gregory cites Jn 1.14, *inter alia* in order to accentuate the fact that the *Incarnation* is an authentic *humanization*. Christ not only has flesh, but also a soul, since the Scripture states that Christ desires, fears and is hungry. Now, Gregory continues, neither can the divinity undergo these things, nor can a body be deprived of a soul: Only animated matter can experience these things (*Ref Eun*, GNO II, 388–389). Saint Paul states that the fullness of the divinity is found in Christ (Col 2.9). This is the same thing that Saint John teaches when he states that the Word became flesh (Jn 1.14). Saint John, Gregory says, began the Prologue in speaking of the preexistent Word, and went on to speak of the Word become flesh, clearly manifesting the unicity of the subject (*Antirr*h 27, GNO III/I, 173).

The Christological doctrine of Jn 1.1–18 and Phil 2.5–11 is clear to Gregory, marking his entire thought: Both texts begin by speaking of the Logos preexisting in all eternity, and then affirm that this Word became man. Gregory underscores the initiative of the Word in the Incarnation: In both passages the active subject is the Logos, “He who preexists in the form of God”. The Incarnation consists in such an intimate union with the human that it justifies a most intimate *communicatio idiomatum*, since divine attributes and human attributes can be applied to the same Person. Gregory, fond of beautiful literature and paradox, uses this *communicatio idiomatum* with singular mastery in commenting on the close of the hymn of Phil: In Christ, He who is beyond all names receives a human name, and in Him, the human receives a name “that is above every name”. For this reason, Christ must be adored in his human element as well, i.e. in his flesh and in his blood. God can be called by a human name, because the divine nature and the human nature have become one through the union (ἐν δὲ τὰ δύο διὰ τῆς ἀνακράσεως γέγονε) (*Antirr*h 21, GNO III/1, 160–161). We find ourselves at a time predating the Christological controversies and the language is still imprecise. As GRILLMEIER observes, Gregory’s formulas encounter some difficulty because, as can be seen in the phrase quoted above, he seems to seek the unity of Christ

in the relation of one nature with another, and not in the relation of each nature with the Person (GRILLMEIER, 590). This unity is however so intimate that the elements, united without confusion among each other, form one being. Applying the *communicatio idiomatum* quite accurately, Gregory underscores the unity that exists in Christ, thus balancing the clearly “diphysite” characteristics of his Christology. For this reason, the Incarnation is presented some times as *kénosis* and other times as *epiphany*, as a *theophany* of God in the flesh (*Cant* 5, GNO VI, 163–164).

The radicality with which Gregory causes the salvation of the human being to depend upon the truth that Christ is God and man is important: The Word, in becoming incarnate, takes all of the human—body and soul—upon Himself, “divinizing” it. The humanity that the Word assumed is considered as “the First Fruit of the entire human mass” (ἀπαρχὴ τοῦ κοινοῦ φύσματος), through which “sanctification” and “divinization” reach all of humanity (*Cant* 13, GNO VI, 390–391). The humanity of Christ is “First Fruit” precisely because He is of our nature, or better, because as the Good Shepherd He has taken the lost sheep upon himself, i.e. humanity (*Antirrh* 16, GNO III/1, 151–152). He is the First Fruit of the resurrected dead, but, further, this is because He is not a common man (οὐ κοινὸς ἄνθρωπος), but He is also God, as the signs that accompanied his birth and his Resurrection manifest (*Antirrh* 21, GNO III/I, 160).

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CHRONOLOGY OF WORKS

The chronology of Gregory's works has been the object of numerous works in the last decades, but remains far from being perfectly established. In certain works one can find references to contemporary events and sometimes there are clear clues to the circumstances of their redaction, but quite often scholars are constrained to base themselves on internal stylistic or other criteria, with notably different evaluations as a result. This article attempts to present the current status of the question, without always deciding between the various proposed hypotheses.

As it is not possible to establish an absolute chronology, nor even a certain relative chronology, we have chosen to present the works in categories, adopting the order in which Gregory's works are presented in *Gregorii Nysseni Opera* (whether or not the volumes have been published).

GNO I and II

Contra Eunomium

Books I and II were written, according to Gregory's own testimony, upon his return from Sebaste, i.e. during the year 380, in 17 days (*Epist* 29, 2). Jerome heard them read at Constantinople in 381 (*De viris illustribus*, 128). Book III was composed between 381 and 383.

The *Refutatio confessionis Eunomii* is at the earliest from the second half of 383 (the Confession of Eunomius was presented by him at the time of the Council of Constantinople of 383).

GNO III/1: Opera dogmatica minora, pars I

Ad Eustathium de sancta Trinitate

DANIÉLOU (1966, 162) dated this work to 375 (date of Basil's *De Spiritu Sancto*); MAY (1971, 57–58) dates it instead around Gregory's stay at

Sebaste in 380, basing himself on the fact that Gregory is on the defensive against the Pneumatomachians in this text, who gave him trouble during this period. STEAD (150) thinks that it is a later work

Ad Graecos (Ex communibus notionibus)

This small work is doubtless from just before the council of 381 (MAY, 59; HÜBNER, 490). ZACHHUBER (482) considers that the work must be situated among the efforts to end the schism of Antioch, thinking that it could be the corrected transcript of an actual debate. VOGT (216) maintains that it could be posterior to the council of 381, or better yet, to the synodal letter of the council of 382.

Ad Ablabium quod non sint tres dei

This small work is certainly to be dated to the months preceding the council of 381 (MAY, 59). STEAD judges it to be later: Gregory presents himself as being older (something that is frequent in his writings), while undeniably the divinity of the Holy Spirit is openly affirmed. This agrees better with the situation after the council. MASPERO (41), who has dedicated a particular study to this work, dates it between 386 and 394.

Ad Simplicium de fide

This small work is certainly to be placed in the months preceding the council of 381 (MAY, 59).

Adversus Arium et Sabellium de Patre et Filio

DANIÉLOU (1966, 61) assigns this work to 374–375, but its Gregorian authenticity is rejected by HOLL (*Gesamm. Aufsätze*. II, 298–309) and HÜBNER (1971, 211–212).

Adversus Macedonianos de Spiritu Sancto

DANIÉLOU (1966, 163) dates this work to spring 380; MAY (59) assigns it to the period of the council of 381, after Gregory's discussions with the Pneumatomachians.

Ad Theophilum adversus Apolinaristas

This letter to Theophilus of Alexandria, who was enthroned in 385, is slightly later than this date (Gregory still appears relatively poorly informed about Apollinarianism).

Adversus Apolinarium

DANIÉLOU (1966, 163) dates this to 382–383, MAY (197), rightly, and in agreement with LIETZMANN and MÜHLENBERG, places it at the earliest in 387: Gregory Nazianzen knew at this date only the work of Apollinarius that Gregory of Nyssa refutes here (*On the Divine Incarnation*).

GNO III/2: *Opera dogmatica minora, pars II*

In illud: Tunc et ipse Filius

DANIÉLOU (1966, 167) proposes a date after 385 for this treatise. DOWNING (GNO III, 2, XLIV–L) indicates the similarities between this treatise, the *Contra Eunomium I* and the *Refutatio confessionis Eunomii*, concluding that it must have been written in the same period as the *Refutatio*.

Contra fatum

TILLEMONT (IX, 586–587) dated this work, which he presents as the transcript of a discussion that Gregory would have had at Constantinople with a pagan philosopher, to the years 381–383. DANIÉLOU (1955, 365–366) proposed winter 386–387, on the basis of the allusion to a recent sack of Thrace (52, 2–5), which would have occurred at the beginning of 386 (but one could also think of 378), the date of *Epist* 4 (387?) and the identity of the addressee of the letter to a certain Eusebius mentioned at the beginning of the text. BANDINI (2003, 32–34), starting from (largely stylistic) similarities with other works, assigns it to 379–384.

De infantibus praemature abreptis

DANIÉLOU (1966, 167) considers that in this work Gregory “masters the most important themes of his thought” and judges it posterior to 386.

De Pythonissa

SIMONETTI (1989, 35, note 45) thinks that this work should be dated no earlier than 380: it is in fact Gregory's response to the response by a bishop, and this presupposes that Gregory was already enjoying a certain fame.

GNO III/3

De anima et resurrectione

This treatise, necessarily later than Macrina's death (July 379), is assigned by DANIÉLOU (1955, 356) to spring 381, and again by DANIÉLOU (1966, 163) to autumn 380. MAY (57) underscores that 379 is simply a *terminus post quem*, and that the treatise could have been written many years later than this. For TERRIEUX (12), "it is between the end of 381 (or 383 at the latest) and 383 that the redaction of this text must be placed".

GNO III/4

Oratio catechetica

The date of this work has been particularly debated: 386–387 (DANIÉLOU 1955; BARBEL, 14), some years after 381 (MAY 1971, 60–61). WINLING (126–130), bringing numerous arguments in favor of a re-examination, indicates that it is anterior, at least in its essentials, to *Contra Eunomium* (it is possible that the final two chapters were added later). He thus maintains that it must be dated before 381, and that it is from roughly the same period as *An et res* and *Op hom*. In favor of a date before 381, he notes that Gregory, speaking of Jerusalem, states that "of this illustrious city only ruins remain", and that "the Temple is not even known on the basis of its remains" (18, GNO III/4, 52), something he could not have written after his voyage to Jerusalem.

Epistula canonica

The addressee of this letter is Letoius, successor to Otreius of Melitine, who was present at the council of 381. It is thus from a few years after the

council; greater precision is not possible. DANIELOU (intr. to the *Vie de Moïse*, 13) dates it around Easter 383.

GNO IV/1

Apologia in Hexaameron

This treatise was composed shortly after *Op hom*: for DANIELOU (1966, 162–163), “during the summer of 379”. Nevertheless, as Gregory was traveling for extended periods during that summer, the early months of 379 are more likely. RISCH (15) proposes situating it between 378 and 381, before *Eun II*.

GNO IV/2

De hominis opificio

This treatise was offered by Gregory to his brother Peter (who was not yet the Bishop of Sebaste) for Easter 379. It was thus composed between the death of Basil (September 378) and April 379. Cfr. DANIELOU 1966, 162; MAY 1971, 57.

GNO V

In inscriptiones Psalmorum, In sextum Psalmum

Numerous specialists agree in dating these two works to the period of Gregory’s exile, between 376 and 378 (DANIELOU 1966, 160–162; MAY 1971, 56; CANÉVET 1983, 9–10; HEINE 1995, 8–11). REYNARD (2002, 14–15) however, noting that many themes link this treatise, even in its use of the similar expressions, to works from Gregory’s later years, defends a later date, “at the beginning or middle of the 380’s.” The absence of any explicit mention of the divinity of the Holy Spirit in this writing, however, appears to me to exclude any date later than 381.

In Ecclesiasten Homiliae

MAY (1971, 56–57), following JAEGER (cfr. GNO V, 382,15 and notes), assigns these homilies to a period in which “the impiety of some (*tinôn apistia*)” reigns, that is, before the council of 381. CANÉVET (1983, 50–51) thinks they are prior to the *Contra Eunomium*. F. VINEL (1996, 17–18), noting that “many passages of these homilies seem to be allusions to the difficulties that the Church experienced during that time”, proposes dating them between the deaths of Basil and of Meletius. Since VINEL relies on the earlier hypothesis I proposed of Basil’s death taking place in September 377, she proposes the years 378–379; since then, I think Basil’s death must be dated rather to September 378 (BIOGRAPHY), and therefore one can date the present work to the years 379–380. MOSSHAMMER (362–365) notes the affinity of themes with the *Or dom*.

GNO VI

In Canticum Canticorum

There is a consensus to date these homilies, dedicated to the deaconess Olympias, to Gregory’s final years, that is, after 390 (cf. DANÉLOU 1966, 168, who maintains that they are anterior to the *Vit Moys*). CAHILL places 391 as the *terminus post quem*, 394 as the *terminus ante quem* (“as late as 394”) and thinks they are later than the *Vit Moys*. DÜNZL (30–33) also holds them to be later than the *Vit Moys* and sees in them one of Gregory’s last works: he dates them “certainly after 391, perhaps even after 394” (32).

GNO VII/1

De vita Moysis

This treatise is considered one of Gregory’s last works by DANÉLOU (intr. to *Vie de Moïse*, 15), who dates it “around 392”. SIMONETTI (1984, XIX–XX) dates it around 390. HEINE (1975, 15) thinks it is from the mid-380’s.

GNO VII/2

De oratione dominica

DANIÉLOU (1966, 160–162) assigns these homilies to 374–376, particularly because of the lack of reaction against Origenism which he notes in the writings of this period. MAY (56) proposes the period of Gregory's exile (376–378). In a compromise, RORDORF (199), who notes a different argument than that of Origen, prefers to date it to Gregory's second period of activity, "in 381 or shortly thereafter", all the more so since the references to luxury would rather aim at the aristocracy of the capital. CALDARELLI (17) proposes the date of 385, MOSSHAMMER (364–365) maintains in the same way a date posterior to 381; both argue on the basis of the parallels which can be established with the arguments, and even vocabulary, of works such as *Vit Moys* (CALDARELLI) or *Eccl* (MOSSHAMMER).

De beatitudinibus

DANIÉLOU (1966, 160–162) dates these homilies to before 379, probably around 378 (for reasons similar to those invoked by him for *Or dom*). MAY (56) proposes the period of Gregory's exile (376–378).

GNO VIII/1: *Opera ascetica*

De instituto Christiano

This work, whose complete text was found and published by JAEGER, has been dated by him to the final years of Gregory's life, after 390. DANIÉLOU (1966, 168) agrees with this date. For CANÉVET (1969, 423), "the thesis of Gregorian authorship ... encounters numerous obstacles".

De professione Christiana

DANIÉLOU (1966, 168) (following JAEGER) thinks this work can be dated to Gregory's final years. Gregory's mention of the "old cither" to which he compares himself (130, 11) points in this direction.

De perfectione

This writing in which Gregory's spiritual doctrine reaches a perfect mastery, presenting perfection as a constant progress, is dated by DANIELLOU (1966, 168) to the Nyssen's final years. MAY (56) places it in the period 370–378.

De virginitate

This treatise is Gregory's first, written by request from his brother Basil, at a time when the latter was not yet a bishop: it is dated to 371 (AUBINEAU, 31; DANIELLOU 1966, 160). GRIBOMONT has nevertheless indicated that this date is not certain, and that it should be dated to sometime between 370 and 378 (cfr. MAY 1971, 55). STAATS (1985) dates it to between 375 and 378: the references to Messalianism lead him to situate it chronologically close to *Inst* and *Deit fil*.

Vita S. Macrinae

This work is posterior to a conversation which Gregory had in Antioch upon his return from Jerusalem (381), and which is evoked at the beginning of the work (370,6–371,6). However, Gregory certainly did not delay long to respond to the question which was asked of him at that time. It can be dated at the earliest to the final months of 381, and at the latest to 382–383 (MARAVAL 1971, 67).

GNO VIII/2

Epistulae

All the letters belong to the period of Gregory's episcopate. It also appears that none is prior to Basil's death. They are distributed, in my opinion, over quite a brief period, ten years at most (MARAVAL 1990, 17–18; more details: SILVAS 2007, 71–72).

GNO IX: Sermones, pars prior

De mortuis oratio

DANIÉLOU (1966, 160) places this work before 379 (contacts with *Virg*, differences on the theme of the resurrection with *Op hom* [379] and other later treatises). ALEXANDRE holds that it is anterior, but only slightly, to the treatises *Op hom* and *An et res*. LOZZA (1991, 7) considers the “dating around 380” probable, some years after *Virg* and close to *Op hom*, *An et res* and *Trid spat*.

De beneficentia (= De pauperibus amandis I)

This sermon was pronounced shortly after *Fornic* (93, 18). DANIÉLOU (1955, 360–361) dates it to Lent 382, due to common themes with *Castig*. CAVALCANTI considers that these two discourses witness to the economic, social and political crisis which marks Valens’ final years. DATTRINO places the same crisis in the first years of Theodosius I.

In illud Quatenus uni ex his fecistis (= De pauperibus amandis II)

According to DANIÉLOU (1955, 364): “Lent 384 appears to be indicated”. BERNARDI (280) thinks it was pronounced some days after *Benef*, whose theme is taken up and completed.

Contra usurarios

DANIÉLOU (1955, 347–349) dates this sermon to Lent 384, as it was pronounced shortly after Basil’s death, whose sermon on the same subject is evoked at the beginning (195, 20–23) and end (207, 4–7) of the text, an indicator that the sermon was pronounced in Caesarea. BERNARDI (265) accepts this date as “highly probable”. DATTRINO dates it to the same period as the two previously mentioned sermons (*Benef*, *Quat uni*).

Contra fornicarios

DANIÉLOU (1955, 356–357) dated this sermon to Lent 381, due to the final mention of “fights for piety” (217, 16) that Gregory must confront. Daniélou saw this as an allusion to the upcoming council of 381. Later, Daniélou (1965, 38) proposed instead September 379, before Gregory’s

departure to the council of Antioch. BERNARDI (269) prefers March 381, and notes that the content is appropriate for a Lenten sermon. DATTRINO dates it to the same period as the three previously mentioned sermons (*Benef, Quat uni, Usur*).

In diem luminum (= In baptismum Christi)

DANIÉLOU (1955, 362 [followed by BERNARDI, 290]; 1966, 164) dates this discourse to 6 January 383, since Gregory notes at the beginning that the faithful abandoned themselves to pagan amusements the preceding Sunday—amusements of January 1, which was a Sunday in 383.

In sanctum Pascha (= In Christi resurrectionem III)

DANIÉLOU (1955, 350–351), followed by BERNARDI (285), dates this sermon to 21 April 379, Easter day, because it takes up themes from *Op hom*, which is from this period. MISAGO, who finds elements close to *An res* in it, places it in 382.

De tridui inter mortem et resurrectionem Domini nostri Iesu Christi spatio (= In Christi resurrectionem I)

DANIÉLOU (1955, 361–362), followed by BERNARDI (285), dates it to 17 April 382, since he judges it to be contemporary with *Antirrh* (which he erroneously assigns to that year). DROBNER (171), who dedicated a particular study to it, dates it to a paschal vigil between 386 and 394.

In sanctum et salutare Pascha (= In Christi resurrectionem IV)

DANIÉLOU (1955, 369–370), followed by BERNARDI (285), dates it to 9 April 388. DROBNER (168–170) considers this discourse the conclusion to the preceding one, pronounced during the same Paschal celebration.

In luciferam sanctam Domini resurrectionem (= In Christi resurrectionem V)

The Gregorian authenticity of this work is generally rejected. It is to be attributed to Amphilochius of Iconium.

In ascensionem Christi

This sermon was dated (by DANIELLOU 1955, 370–371) to 18 May 388, and then (DANIELLOU 1970, 666) to slightly before the redaction of *Cant* (15 May 391?).

De deitate adversus Evagrium (= In suam ordinationem)

This discourse was pronounced by Gregory in Constantinople, in the church of the Holy Apostles (DANIELLOU 1955, 357–358; RITTER; MAY 1969; 1971, 59) in May 381. It contains a reference to the lack of success in the negotiations with the Pneumatomachians (333, 11 f.) and to the awaited arrival of the Egyptians (341, 8). STAATS (1969, after TILLEMONT, 566) nevertheless assigns it to 394.

Oratio funebris in Meletium episcopum

Meletius died during the Council of Constantinople of 381, at the end of May. This discourse was pronounced by Gregory in the church of the Holy Apostles (DANIELLOU 1955, 358–359), probably before Meletius' earthly remains were brought by ship to Antioch, and certainly before the end of June 381 (GANTZ, 20–21).

Oratio consolatoria in Pulcheriam

DANIELLOU (1955, 364, followed by BERNARDI, 319) places this discourse on 25 August 385 due to Gregory's mention of an earthquake whose anniversary had been remembered the day before. GANTZ (19, 58) doubts that one can identify this earthquake with certainty and speaks against the possibility of dating the text with any precision.

Oratio funebris in Flacillam imperatricem

BERNARDI (319) dates this discourse to 14 October 385, thirty days after the death of the empress (September 14 according to the Menaion), but she actually died in 386. GANTZ (20) thinks that this discourse, requested of Gregory by Nectarius, was not pronounced on the same day as the burial, but upon the return of the remains from the place of death, the thermal baths of Skotumis in Thrace.

GNO X/1: Sermones, pars II

De vita Gregorii Thaumaturgi

This work, the ideal portrait of a bishop, is difficult to date. It could be contemporary to *Epist* 17, and thus situated in 380. BERNARDI (308) favors this year, during which Gregory travels much. A sketch of *Vit Moys* is already found here. MITCHELL (115) dates it to 17 November (the saint's feast day) 379: Gregory, at Neocaesarea, would have sought to convince the clergy of this city, long hostile to the three hypostases, doing this on the occasion of the saint's feast, which would have gathered the bishops of the region. *Epist* 19, however, which describes in detail his activities in the second half of 379 (stay in Ibora, in Sebaste) mentions no visit to Neocaesarea.

De sancto Theodoro

DANIÉLOU (1955, 355–356) dates this discourse, pronounced in the *martyrium* of Euchaita, to 7 February 381. The Scythians and the war waged against them are mentioned; this had ended the year before (61, 16–18), at the time of Theodosius' ascent to the throne.

In sanctum Stephanum I and II

DANIÉLOU (1955, 365–367, followed by BERNARDI, 290) dates the first of these two discourses to 26 December 386, the second to 27 December 386. This discourse occurred on a Sunday, 27 December 386 (in which the memorial of the saints mentioned in the discourse falls on a Sunday). DANIÉLOU (1966, 164), however, places *Steph* I earlier, in 383, due to its continuity with *Antirr*, which he dates to 382–383. It should be noted, however, that this date is unacceptable, and thus that the dating of these homilies to 386, as proposed by BARDENHEWER, remains acceptable.

In Basilium fratrem

DANIÉLOU (1955, 352–353) dates this text “surely” to January 1 381, at Caesarea (BERNARDI [313] follows him, but with a “probably”). Gregory evokes here however the lack that existed “in the very city where he (Basil) resided” (GNO X/1, 124, 15), something which points to

him preaching in a city other than Caesarea. The discourse is certainly pronounced a January 1, but it does not seem possible to specify the date.

In XL Martyres Ia and Ib

These two homilies, according to DANÉLOU (1955, 362–363, followed by BERNARDI, 303–304), were pronounced at Sebaste on 9–10 March 383 (feast of the Forty). LEEMANS recently proposed another date: According to him, these homilies were pronounced before *Inscr*, since Gregory declares that he will explain elsewhere the enigmatic titles of the Psalms. As LEEMANS is in agreement with DANÉLOU on the dating of *Inscr*, he proposes a date around 375, even in the period of exile, which Gregory could have spent at Sebaste. I disagree with Leemans for two reasons: On the one hand, a stay of Gregory with Eustathius of Sebaste, at this point an adversary of Basil's, is more than improbable. On the other hand, an allusion to the beginning of *Mart Ia* (137, 8–12) seems to indicate that Gregory speaks in the presence of his brother Peter, at this point already the bishop of Sebaste. The date of 383 is thus preferable.

In XL Martyres II

DANÉLOU (1955, 347–349) dates this homily, which was not pronounced at Sebaste but, undoubtedly, at Caesarea, to 9 March 379.

GNO X/2: Sermones, pars III

De Deitate filii et spiritus sancti et in Abraham

This discourse was pronounced at Constantinople during the council of June 383 (TILLEMONT, 586): Gregory declares here that there are four emperors at this point, including whom a father and a son: These are Theodosius, the young Arcadius (Augustus as of January), Gratianus (who would be assassinated on 25 July) and Valentinian II.

In diem natalem

DANIÉLOU (1955, 365, followed by BERNARDI, 290) dates this sermon to 25 December 386, due to the thematic affinities it has with *Steph I* and *Steph II* (the latter is well dated). Later, however, DANIÉLOU (1966, 164), preferred to date it to Christmas 382.

In sanctam Pentecosten

DANIÉLOU (1955, 371–372) opined that this sermon was pronounced ten days after that of the Ascension, on 23 May 388.

Adversus eos qui castigationes aegre ferunt

DANIÉLOU (1966, 359–360, followed by BERNARDI, 270–271), dates with certainty this sermon to 2 January 382, since Gregory alludes here to the festivals of the end of the year; however, these allusions remain vague. One could think of a date anterior to the exile, as Gregory concludes: “We have not yet been struck for the truth, we have not yet had our flesh endangered” (GNO X/2, 332).

Adversus eos qui baptismum differunt

DANIÉLOU (1955, 353–355) dates this sermon to 7 January 381 due to an allusion to a recent invasion of the Scythians into the region of Comana (364, 12 f.) and some similarities with *Op hom.* BERNARDI (290) preferred the day of Epiphany itself, January 6, or the following Sunday, the 10th.

Supplement

To this list one can add a work found among Basil’s letters (*Epist.* 38), but which has now been attributed to Gregory, *De differentia ousiae et hypostaseos* (*Diff ess hyp*): MAY (57) dates it to 379, HÜBNER (1972, 490) to 379–380.

Two more of Basil’s letters have been attributed to Gregory by POUCHET: *Epist.* 124, dated by him “either around 391, or—yet more probably—around 393 (after the *Life of Moses*)” (POUCHET 1988, 39), and *Epist.* 46 (POUCHET 1992, 583–589).

HANRIOT-COUSTET has proposed attributing to Gregory of Nyssa or one of his imitators Gregory Nazianzen's *Oratio* 35, which his latest editor, CL. MORESCHINI (SC 318, 39) considers spurious, following Sinko.

UTHEMANN has proposed seeing in the dubious work of Gregory Thaumaturgus, *De deitate et tribus personis*, an extract of Gregory of Nyssa's *apora*.

From this synthesis certain observations can be made. On the one hand, there remains a high degree of uncertainty regarding numerous works. On the other hand, there is an unlikely accumulation of writings for certain years, such as from 378–383, years which required extensive travels and participation in many councils. Gregory certainly writes (or dictates) quickly: Only 17 days for *Eun* I and II (*Epist* 29, 1–2). Nevertheless, one can legitimately ask whether, because of arguments based on similarities of content and style, too many writings end up being attributed to certain periods of his life. It is, however, probable that an absolute chronology will never be established, and, for certain works, not even a relative chronology is possible. The final publication of Gregory's Lexicon should nevertheless allow us to make some progress in this area.

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Pierre Maraval

Concatenation → *Akolouthia*

Conspiracy → *Sympnoia*

Contemplation → *Theôria*

CONTEMPORARY INTERPRETATIONS

In 1942 BALTHASAR began his study of Gregory of Nyssa: 'Only a very small number of initiates have read and are aware of Gregory of Nyssa, and they have jealously guarded their secret'. In the twenty-first century, it would be impossible to make this claim. This change is due partly to the work of Balthasar himself and to the other theologians of the mid-twentieth century *ressourcement*, such as DANÉLOU, who stressed the theological richness of Gregory's thought, particularly the idea of the soul's ascent to God. This emphasis—which went with a positive estimation of the Platonic influence on Gregory's theology—was in contrast to earlier studies which were largely dogmatic and had tended to side-line Gregory of Nyssa by comparison with Basil and Gregory Nazianzen. The most critical of these followed Harnack in condemning the Greek fathers to the extent that they used 'Greek philosophy'. The interest of classicists in the church fathers, especially the application of German philological expertise, increasingly undermined this estimate of Gregory's worth, however, and enabled a more accurate estimate of the extent to which Gregory was opposing Platonism. By mid-century, German scholars were publishing studies focused on the 'mystical' and 'philosophical' as well as the 'dogmatic' Gregory (VÖLKER 1955; MÜHLENBERG 1966). CANÉVET and others studied Gregory's complex but rich biblical exegesis. Scholarship was facilitated by the *Gregorii Nysseni Opera* series and by an increasingly well-connected network meeting and publishing as the International Colloquium on Gregory of Nyssa.

In the latter half of the twentieth century most studies of Gregory tried to take into account both his 'dogmatic' and his 'spiritual' writings, although most treated these as different categories and had their own favourite perspective. In the English-speaking world, scholars such as LOUTH (1981) and WILLIAMS (1979) sought to understand Gregory as part of a long-standing tradition of Christian mysticism; STEAD (1976) and MEREDITH (1999) paid more attention to his philosophy, especially his ontology (the latter with more sympathy than the former). Gregory attracted the attention of some Anglophone Classicists (most originally, MACLEOD 1983).

Towards the end of the century, however, attention turned again to Gregory as a dogmatician: the increasingly well-rounded understand-

ing of Gregory's works had highlighted the danger of regarding Gregory as 'just' a mystical writer. Some Protestant systematicians, such as TORRANCE (1996), still followed Harnack's elevation of Gregory Nazianzen above the other two Cappadocians because of their alleged enslavement to classical ontology. Others, such as ZIZIOULAS (1985) and JENSON (1982), argued that Gregory of Nyssa rejected, or transformed, the categories of Greek philosophy. Zizioulas' interpretation of the Cappadocians has been enormously influential in the English-speaking world, particularly among Protestants, and is partly responsible for the common tendency to see Gregory of Nyssa's thought as a resource for opposing what was deemed wrong in Augustinian and later Western Christian theology.

It was exactly these oppositions between classical philosophy and Christian theology, between East and West, and between Gregory of Nyssa and Augustine, that were rejected by a group of American-based scholars writing in Sarah COAKLEY's volume *Re-Thinking Gregory of Nyssa* (2003). In particular, Lewis Ayres, Michel Barnes and Coakley herself sought (*inter alia*) to show broad commonalities between the Nyssen's and Augustine's trinitarian theologies. This method, Coakley argued, was a better basis for fruitful ecumenism than a search for a pre-Augustinian state of supposed doctrinal harmony. All three writers developed their readings of Gregory of Nyssa in further works. Ayres and Barnes have been a particular influence on John Milbank, who himself sets Gregory of Nyssa in a positive tradition of early Christian Platonism alongside Augustine. Both Ayres and Barnes work from a detailed study of Gregory's texts, Ayres examining in particular Gregory's trinitarian theology (2003; 2004), and Barnes analysing such terms as *dunamis* (1999) and various psychological categories in Gregory's concept of personhood (2003). These studies exhibit a keen sense of the way in which Gregory has been read in the past, particularly with regard to how he has been given a particular historiographical role in accounts of the development of Christian doctrine—a role which, they claim, distorts the understanding both of Gregory and of fourth-century Christian theology as a whole.

One notable aspect of debates over readings of Gregory especially in the past twenty years has been the involvement of scholars from the Eastern Orthodox churches. Zizioulas' particular interpretation of the Cappadocians is atypical of Orthodox theology, but his desire to engage with Gregory as a theologian who can speak to all Christian theological traditions is shared by other Orthodox scholars such as Nonna Verna HARRISON and David Bentley HART. While Harrison is primarily a patristic

scholar (albeit one with a profound awareness of the theological potential of her subject-matter) Hart has drawn his studies of the fathers into a highly-acclaimed systematic theology (HART 2003). In this he grapples with the implications of Gregory's concept of the divine as the infinite; he challenges the interpretations of MÜHLENBERG (1966) and HEINE (1975), highlighting the role of the erotic and the aesthetic in the soul's rise to God and emphasizing the way in which Gregory's eschatology is the key to understanding his metaphysical system. Hart's interpretation of Gregory is clearly influenced by von Balthasar, whilst bringing Gregory into dialogue with a host of new theological and philosophical conversation-partners and writing clearly from within the Orthodox tradition.

Nonna Verna HARRISON has greatly contributed to the understanding of gender in Gregory's writings, through a series of careful studies (e.g. 1990, 1992) which subtly challenge various traditional interpretations. Building on these readings, but taking them in a more radical direction, Sarah COAKLEY has emphasized the way in which Gregory's writing consistently strives to upset conventional distinctions—including those between male and female. She points especially to the extreme fluidity of gendered language (describing not only the human soul, but also God) as exemplified in *Cant.* By using this work as a key to her understanding of Gregory, Coakley has rejected the distinction between his 'spiritual' works and 'dogmatic' works, recognizing, for example, the profoundly trinitarian aspects of some of its imagery. Her analysis of Gregory's use of analogies has proved very fruitful, particularly in dialogue with insights from feminist theology; her work is informed too by the Anglican patristic tradition and also by her innovative adaptation of some of the techniques of analytic philosophy. (Gregory has proved a surprisingly popular source for philosophers from the analytic tradition: e.g. BROWN 1985.) More radical still is Virginia BURRUS: like Coakley, she brings from feminist theology insights into the nature and use of language, especially as it pertains to gender and sexuality (BURRUS, 2000). She is more skeptical than Coakley about Gregory's control of his own images and she reads them more suspiciously to uncover, she argues, disturbing ambivalences in Gregory's theology about human (and specifically male) existence.

To different degrees and in very different ways, Burrus, Coakley, Milbank and Hart all grapple with the challenges of various kinds of post-modern thought. Some recent commentators have specifically suggested that Gregory's ontology and his philosophy of language make his thought particularly ripe for comparison with Heidegger and post-Heideggerian thinkers such as Derrida and Marion (DOUGLASS & MOSSHAMMER). The

further implications of such encounters between Gregory and contemporary philosophy are still to be followed. Another fruitful future direction for contemporary interpretations of Gregory is the use of his thought to reflect on ecological questions. Commentators (particularly those in the Orthodox tradition) have long noticed his fascination with the natural world and the way in which he brings it into his account of salvation-history, but again the implications of this need to be worked out in detail.

One feature of many of the readings surveyed above is that it is difficult to situate them clearly as either pieces of historical or theological writing. Does the work of Rowan GREER (2001), for example, start with patristic scholarship and end with the application of its lessons? Or does it start with a contemporary issue and seek its resolution in the wisdom of a thinker of the past? Neither is an appropriate description of the method of any of the writers discussed here—a subtlety of approach which, one suspects, would appeal to Gregory of Nyssa himself.

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COSMOLOGY

It seems to be a common understanding among Christian thinkers in the fourth century to distinguish sharply between the sphere of the created and that of the uncreated. The difference between the theological parties was constituted by disagreement over what belonged on each side of the divide. The problem is at the root of the Trinitarian controversies. Gregory perceived clearly the immense difference between the sphere of the uncreated Trinity of Father, Son and Holy Spirit, and the sphere of the created cosmos. His doctrine of CREATION (→) has three important characteristics: (1) The cosmos has a beginning of its temporal duration. (2) It is created out of nothing. (3) It is created by God's will.

1. According to Gregory, extension (→ *DIASTÊMA*) is a basic feature of created otherness ("that which is other than God"). Extension, as "standing out in relation to one another," is primarily of two kinds, in time and in space. Without this, there is no created substance. Extension, therefore, is the ontological mark of createdness. (Cf. *Eun* II, GNO 1, p. 206; *Eccl* VII, GNO 5, p. 412.) Time (or the "age," αἰών) is a limited extension, i.e. limited because it has a beginning and an end, and created being begins and ends with time, both with regard to each individual and to the whole cosmos. (Cf. *Eun* I, GNO 1, p. 133 ff., *Op hom* 23.1, PG 44, 209b.)

2. An interesting feature of Gregory's doctrine is that he speaks interchangeably about "out of nothing" (ἐκ τοῦ μὴ ὄντος) and "out of God" (ἐκ τοῦ Θεοῦ). (Cf. *Op hom* 23.) There is no doubt that he denies the existence of pre-existent matter, so in that regard creatures are from nothing. The "from God," on the other hand, points to his rather special *doctrine of matter*. This doctrine is found in three interesting passages (*Hex*, PG 44, 69b–c, *An et res*, PG 46, 124b–d, *Op hom* 24, PG 44, 212–213). The starting point is what he considers a philosophical challenge: If matter is extended, with sensible qualities like colour, figure, size and resistance, how are we to explain the creation of matter from the immaterial, the extended from the unextended? Should we not rather hold the co-eternity of matter with God? (Cf. e.g. *Op hom* 23.) The answer is no, because none of the qualities we perceive in matter is, each taken by

itself, matter. In the *An et res* he mentions light, heavy, dense, rare, soft, resistant, fluid, dry, cold, hot, colour, shape, outline, extension. These are thoughts (ἐννοίαι), concepts (νοήματα) or *logoi* in the divine mind, “but when they combine with each other, they become matter” (ἀλλὰ συνδραμόντα πρὸς ἄλληλα, ὕλη γίνεται, *Hex* 69c). The point is *not* that intelligible qualities emanate from the divine mind, enter combination and become the material world. If that were the case, matter would be of divine character. Gregory’s point is rather that these divine conceptions, by the creative will of God, are the patterns for creating intelligible qualities from nothing. When the last ones combine, what we understand as ‘matter’ comes forth and is perceived. Even though he mentions a substratum, it is not considered to be a conceivable ‘something’ by itself. Matter, then, is a *combination of qualities*, not a combination in any previously existing subject, but this combination as such. It would be tempting to term this doctrine an “idealistic theory of matter”. On the other hand, Gregory’s theory is obviously different from the doctrine of the much later empiricist Berkeley. I think Gregory would have found the *esse est percipi* rather odd. Gregory has no doubts as to the ‘objective’ existence of the combinations of qualities. He has no intention of reducing matter to the act of perception. (Cf. R. SORABJI, *Time Creation and the Continuum*, London 1983, ch. 18, with interesting discussions of Gregory’s ‘idealism.’)

3. As we have seen, God established by his will the intelligible patterns of qualities as conditions on which the material world was to be created. There is, however, still another doctrine of divine ideas in Gregory’s thought. In his *Hex*, he brings the concepts of divine will, wisdom, power and activity into connection with each other. (Cf. *Hex*, PG 44, 68d ff.) Will and Power (βούλησις and δύναμις) coincide in the divine nature, and the Will (θέλημα) is the measure of the Power, i.e. God can do what He wills. The Will is even the Wisdom of God, Gregory says. It is obvious that all these identifications serve the idea of the simplicity of the divine essence. In itself the essence of God admits of no differences. The introduction of divine Wisdom into the picture immediately leads to the doctrine of divine ideas: In his Wisdom God knew the things He would make, i.e. He possessed the plans or ideas for all creation. By his will He sets his Power to bring these ideas into actuality (εἰς ἐνέργειαν). It is quite easy to see that the creation of the world as an ordered system follows from God’s eternal Wisdom and Will. That the world exists is no coincidence. On the other hand, this doctrine, which connects power, will and wisdom so closely, invites us to ask if God is constrained to make the world. We could

argue that what God knows in his eternal goodness, He wills, and that what He wills, He immediately accomplishes. However, a fundamental feature of Gregory's thought is to stress the freedom of intellectual beings. In *Or cat* (ch. 5, PG 45, 21b) he denies that the creation of man is by necessity, and obviously Gregory would generally deny that God was under any kind of constraint when creating. He distinguishes between acknowledging *that* (ὅτι) the cosmos is created by God, and *how* (πῶς) it is made. (Cf. *An et res* PG 46, 121a ff., *Op hom* 23.2.) The question of the "how" surely includes the question how an eternal and perfect internal act of wisdom, will and power can be modified to accomplish temporal acts *ad extra*. The thing to be kept in mind is, according to Gregory, that "the impulse of divine intention, when it wills, becomes a fact" (ἡ ὁρμὴ τῆς θείας προαιρέσεως, ὅταν ἐθέλει, πρᾶγμα γίνεται: *An et res* 124b).—"When it wills." Gregory is philosopher enough to perceive this as the core of the problem. God is not subject to extension in any aspect of his being. There will be no "before" or "after," no temporal "when" in the Godhead. In the *An et res* (PG 46, 28a), Gregory says the divine Power remains in itself and revolves around itself (ἐν ἑαυτῷ μένον καὶ περὶ ἑαυτὸ κινούμενον). God, in other words, is internally active, resting in Himself, in his own perfect and intransitive condition. As far as I can see, Gregory believes that God, who does not admit the extension of time in his being, eternally contemplated the creation of something that would move and evolve from a starting-point according to the scheme of before and after. The divine will accommodated the eternal activity of God's essence to perform the transitive act of causing otherness, and *qua* related to "what is other" the activity may be said to be external. Gregory describes this as that which is "around God" (περὶ αὐτόν). All the basic qualities in accordance with which things exist are divine gifts, established in beings by God's activities (ἐνεργεῖαι) in the created realm. In the *Vit Moys* (2.25, SC 1) he says that all beings have their being by PARTICIPATION (→) in God. When Gregory speaks of God in almost pantheistic terms, it is reasonable to suppose that what he has in mind is this fact of participation: All things depend on God, and there is nothing that does not have its being in God, he says. All things are in God and He is in all things (*Or cat* ch. 25). Gregory nowhere defines his concept of participation, but there are reasons to believe that his idea of participation is not naive. He does not think that the divine being comes down to be divided and distributed, analogous to the division of bread among those who partake in it. His insistence on divine simplicity precludes such an idea. The point is rather that God, through his activities, is

omnipresent as the necessary and sufficient condition for the world with regard to being, goodness, beauty, life etc. (*Vit Moys* 2.25; *Or cat* 6; *Eun* III/4, GNO 2, p. 74). The activities are diverse manifestations of an overwhelming divine Power. Without the presence of this Power nothing would exist. There is no doctrine of pantheism, then. What Gregory wants to emphasize is the fact that for created being to exist, the permanent presence of divine activity is necessary. Gregory views the cosmos as characterized by an established harmony in the tension between the rapidly moving celestial sphere and an immobile centre. (For what follows, cf. *Op hom* 1.) There is a balance between what is at rest and what is in perpetual movement. The heavy bodies, earth and water, were made to be situated at the centre, while the fiery substance that is the limit of the created world encircles this middle of the All. Each being within the cosmos is ordained to its proper station (θέσις). The divine power and skill (τέχνη) is the bond and stability of the cosmos, implanted in the nature of things. In this way God guides all things by the double activity of motion and rest. By this tension God preserves things in their proper place, the encircling substance compresses the body of the earth, the fixed substance of earth augments (ἐπιτείνοντος) the encircling movement of the heavens. All things are the offspring of κίνησις (→ KINÊSIS) and στάσις. The cosmic sequence in which the elements occur works in accordance with this. Next to the rapidly moving fiery sphere one finds air that partakes of both movement (relative to the heavens) and rest (relative to the water next to it). The same is true of the heavier element of water, which partakes of movement (relative to air) and rest (relative to earth). According to the arrangement of Providence, even the extremes partake of the opposite activities. Earth partakes of change and the heavens partake of the unchangeable. This world-view is a variant of the typical ancient world-view. There is one and only one cosmos, the inhabited globe is situated in the middle, and all heavenly bodies move around the centre. The world as Gregory views it is hierarchically arranged. This, at least, is an obvious way to interpret his divisions of being. In *Op hom* 8 being is divided into intelligible and sensible being. Sensible being is further divided into lifeless and living being. Living being is divided into non-sentient and sentient being and finally, sentient being is divided into irrational and rational being. This “Porphyrian tree” or taxonomic system seems to establish what we could call levels of being or successive regions in the cosmic building. Within the cosmos of heaven and earth, the created world is filled with specifically diverse beings according to the ideas contained in God’s Wisdom. As we have seen, God does not relate

to the world in accordance with a causality of temporal succession. In the *Hex* (cf. 72a–b and 77d) we find that there is an *all at once* (ἅθροός) establishing (καταβολή) of the totality of being. The essence of each of those beings that will occur throughout the history of the cosmos came together (συνέδραμεν) in the first movement of the divine Will. The Gregorian teaching is that what is eternally conceived in the divine ideas is made all at once, invested as potentialities for development within the newly created cosmos. The further development, the coming forth of the heavens, ether, stars, fire, air, ocean, earth, animals and plants, follow from the seeds implanted by God, and the orderly and hierarchical world emerges because of the immanent activity of God in his creation.

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Torstein Tollefsen

COUNCILS AND SYNODS

The concepts of synods and councils, not always clearly delimited and distinguished in the ancient Church, attained precise profiles only in the late western medieval period (e.g. with the Conciliarist of Basle, John of Ragusa). “The assemblies at higher levels of province or nation” are preferably called “Council”, while the assembly of a Bishop with his clergy is preferably called “synod”. However, for the highest level, the terms of “Council” and “Synod” are also employed (H.J. SIEBEN, 108). In the Greek linguistic area, a similar distinction cannot be found, and is not found in the Nyssen at all, not even in allusions. Consequently, that which follows exclusively refers to the use of the concept of σύνοδος in his works.

The concept covers an ample semantic spectrum; it can be used for the “conjunction” of stellar movements (e.g. *Eun* II, GNO I, 247, 16; *Fat*, GNO III/2, 35, 4; 40, 20; 47, 8; 52, 12; *An et res*, PG 46, 28A), for sexual relations (*Eun* III, GNO II, 225, 7; *An et res*, PG 46, 117A), but also for the “inexpressible mixture and union” (μίξις καὶ σύνοδος) of divinity and humanity in the incarnated One (*Eun* III, GNO II, 158, 26 f.), or in general of contraries (*Cant* X, GNO VI, 311, 17; cfr. *Virg*, GNO VIII/1, 332, 1), for the singing of the Psalms as a good “travel companion” (*Macr*, GNO VIII/1, 374, 4 f.), for the (re)unification (according to 1 Cor 15:35–49) in the resurrection of the corporeal elements separated in death (*An et res*, PG 46, 132B; 153A), for an *ad hoc* “assembly” of Bishops (*Epist* 2, GNO VIII/2, 5, 26), as for a liturgical “assembly” with the same sense as that of σύλλογος (*Thaum*, GNO X/1, 3, 5s). Gregory naturally speaks of the official synodal realities of his time as well, in which he was himself periodically involved.

While speaking of a synod (Nyssa, spring of 376), Gregory speaks only of the intrigues of “the heads (ἐπιστατοῦντες) of heresy” who had obtained his exile for years from his Episcopal See and his native province of Cappadocia (*Macr*, GNO VIII/1, 387, 5 f.). On the other hand, while considering the great assembly of Oriental Nicenes (Meletians) in autumn of 379 in Antioch, in which he himself participated, he speaks clearly of a “synod of Bishops” (σύνοδος ἐπισκόπων) (*Macr*, GNO VIII/1, 386, 22–24), and speaks of it in such a way that for him the validity of a synod or of its decisions should not be derived only from for-

mal criteria, but depends on the recognition of its Orthodoxy. From May to June of 381 he took part in the synod later recognized as the Second Ecumenical Council of Constantinople. On this occasion he delivered the funeral eulogy of Meletius (*Melet*, GNO IX, 441–457), the first president of the Council, on the third day after his death and immediately before the transfer of his body to Antioch. With some probability, during the celebration of the enthronement of Gregory Nazianzen, he delivered the discourse which was to receive the erroneous title of *In suam ordinationem* (E. Gebhardt, the editor in the GNO, wishes to rename it without a convincing motive *De deitate adversus Evagrium* [GNO IX, 331–341]; cf. A.M. RITTER 1993). By the same Council, towards the end, he was named, along with others, “normative Bishop” for the diocese of Pontus, a decision that the Emperor in the same month of July 381 made his own with his edict *Episcopis tradi* (Cod. Theod. XVI, 1, 3). Gregory speaks of this in his first letter (certainly written shortly afterwards, at least between 381 and 394) addressed to Bishop Flavian of Antioch (*Epist* 1, GNO VIII/2, 3–12), in which he laments the behavior of his Metropolitan Helladius of Caesarea, all the more offensive in so far as he “was given from the Synod the same privilege, or rather the same solicitude, to reestablish the general [ecclesiastic] order (εἰ κατὰ τὴν ἱερωσύνην τὸ ἀξίωμα κρίνοιντο, ἴση παρὰ τῆς συνόδου καὶ μία γέγονεν ἀμφοτέροις ἢ προνομία, μᾶλλον δὲ ἢ φροντίς τῶν κοινῶν διορθώσεως), so that henceforth they possessed the same dignity” (*ibidem*, 11s). “From this one can conclude that the law of *Episcopis tradi*, which named Gregory together with Helladius and Otreius *normative Bishops* for the diocese of Pontus, can be traced to a decision of the Council of Constantinople of 381” (A.M. RITTER 1965, 130, n. 2). It could have been this same Synod which sent him to Arabia and Jerusalem on a type of inspection (cfr. *Epist* 28, GNO VIII/2, 86, 17 ff.) (G. MAY, 59 f. and the intervention of P. Maraval on pp. 66 f.).

Gregory’s participation in the Synod of Constantinople of 382 can only be indirectly surmised from the observation of the ecclesiastical historian Theodore that the majority of the Bishops united there the preceding year in the Imperial City were reunited again (Theodoret, H.E. V 8, 10). It is certain on the other hand for the Synod (or perhaps better “Religious Convention”) of 383, since Gregory delivered his discourse “On the divinity of the Son and of the Holy Spirit” (*Deit fil*, GNO X/2, 117–144) on that occasion. It contains the relevant criticism/auto-criticisms of the current dogmatic controversy (*ibidem*, 60, reference to Tillemont). A final witness to Gregory’s participation in a Council can be found

in the list of the participants in the Synod of Constantinople of 394 (E. HONIGMANN, 12).

The authority of synods is treated only in the *Antirrhetikos* against Apollinarius (*Antirrh*, GNO III 1, 131–233), probably written in 387. According to this, it is important to verify if a doctrine “is extraneous to authoritative synods . . .” (ἄλλότριον τῶν συνόδων) (*ibidem*, 138, 14). This is certainly a citation of the *Apodeixis* of Apollinarius, which undergoes an in-depth analysis in the *Antirrhetikos*. Gregory does not however contradict himself, as can be seen shortly after, when he authenticates one of Apollinarius’ affirmations on the basis the doctrinal decisions of the Synod of Antioch against Paul of Samosata of 268 (*ibidem*, 143, 5), and shortly after again on the basis of the δόγματα of the Council of Nicaea, particularly on the basis of the Credo, on its πίστις (*ibidem*, 143 5 ff.), on its “pronouncement” (τῆς συνόδου φωνή: *ibidem*, 143, 24 f.), on its doctrinal decree, on its exposition of the faith (τῆς συνόδου λόγος: *ibidem*, 144, 1). In a subsequent passage of the same treatise “the Nicene dogma in which the general Synod of the Fathers proclaimed consubstantiality in all clarity” (τοῦ κατὰ Νίκαιαν . . . δόγματος, ἐν ᾧ τὸ ὁμοούσιον ἡ κοινὴ τῶν πατέρων ἐξεφώνησε σύνοδος: *ibidem*, 157, 27 f.) is evoked with emphasis. He certainly refers to this also when at the end the valid norms are concisely summarized. These are: The law (νόμος) (Old Testament), the Prophets, the Divinely Inspired Word (Bible or New Testament) (θεόπνευστος λόγος) and the Dogma of a Synod (συνόδου δόγμα: *ibidem*, 184, 20–22).

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CREATION

Gregory has been called the most speculative of the three Cappadocians. The convergences and divergences regarding Platonic and Philonian ideas on the world and creation are more clearly manifest in him than in the other two. We also can find numerous Stoic and Ciceronian themes (E. IVÁNKA, 127–172; J. LAPLACE, 19–35). Nevertheless, all of these elements are means in Gregory's theology, serving the understanding of ideas contained in Christian revelation. This Tradition is expressed quite clearly in the creed of the Council of Constantinople I (381), to which Gregory is closely linked: God is Creator of all things, visible and invisible. J. DANÉLOU has shown the influence that the creed of Constantinople had on Gregory, e.g. in the distinction of the cosmic and hyper-cosmic worlds. Everything is the work of the Word, that which is visible, i.e. the *cosmos* and all that is in it; and that which is invisible, i.e. the *hypercosmos* (*Ref Eun*, GNO II, 381–382).

The faith proclaimed at the Council of Nicaea in the Divinity of the Son offers a direct path for Gregory to speak of the action of the Logos in creation: The Word is the Creator of the universe, He is present in all things and his governance extends to all that exists. On the other hand the formulas of the creed of Constantinople and the struggle against the Pneumatomachians influence the accent that Gregory places on the creative role of the Spirit, who is “Lord and Life Giver”. Gregory attributes creation to the Three of the Trinity: All of creation receives its existence from the Father, from the Son and from the Holy Spirit (*Ref Eun*, GNO II, 354). Gregory thus situates himself in the current of thought which flows from Irenaeus (*Epideixis* 6 and 7, SC 62, 39–42) to Basil (*De Spiritu Sancto*, 16, 37–38, SC 17 bis, 374–378), one which accentuates the Trinitarian dimension of the history of salvation. The thought remains always the same: The Father is the principal cause of creation, the Son is the cause that realizes it, the Holy Spirit is the cause that brings it to its perfection.

Gregory firmly maintains that no creature is “part” of the divine nature, nor does any proceed from it by emanation or degeneration. In God no emanation can exist, since He is infinitely simple. That God has created everything *in principio* (ἐν ἀρχῇ) means that all things have received their being by the free decision of the divine will. In this regard,

Gregory's phrases, which underscore that things are the fruit of the divine liberty, are strong and clear (*An et res*, PG 46, 124B).

In *Or cat* 1, 6 and 39 the major lines of Gregory's thought on the creation of the world and man can be found enunciated in an ordered and synthetic form (GNO III/4, 10, 21–23, 101). Gregory does not hide his admiration for the wisdom found in all creatures, even in the material world. All that exists is good, because it was created by God. The beauty and harmony of the world are an eloquent refutation of atheism, since in them a power and goodness superior to the entire universe are manifested (*Or cat*, prol., GNO III/4, 6). The contemplation of creation leads to recognizing the existence of God. This affirmation, according to the Nyssen, finds its foundation in Scripture itself (e.g., Gn 1.31, Ps 18.2, Wis 13.1 and 3). It is found in the previous patristic tradition (e.g., Athanasius *Contra gentes*, 39, SC 18 bis, 185–186), and taken up by Gregory in numerous works (*Cant* 11; *Eccl* 1, 1; *Hex*, PG 44, 73B; *Vit Moys*, SC 1bis, 77–78); it belongs to the essential nucleus of his thought.

The world is good, and all that exists in it has been made with wisdom and art (σοφῶς καὶ τεχνικῶς), since it is the work of the living and subsisting Logos of God. Gregory specifies that he is not speaking of a generic wisdom, but of the Logos of God, who is subsisting, endowed with life, liberty and omnipotence. The world is the fruit of a free decision of the Logos. Gregory underscores this liberty with which the Logos works, affirming that, in creating, He *chooses* that which is good. From this perspective Gregory refutes Manichaeism which he refers to as an “absurd and impious” conception. He also thus rejects any position which would make the existence of the world depend upon a necessary emanation from the Divinity, such as in the Gnostics (*Or cat* 1, GNO III/4, 10–11).

Creation also implies the governance of the Logos, so that all the order which exists in the world depends upon Him (*Or cat* 5, GNO III/4, 16). This means that *SYMPNOIA* (→) too, that convergence with which the various elements that compose the cosmos cooperate symphonically for the good of the whole, is a work of the Logos. This unity of contrary elements granted by the Logos to the universe reaches its culminating point in the creation of man, composed of spirit and matter. In this Gregory decidedly distances himself from the Origenian conception regarding the body of the human being: According to Gregory, the human being was willed by God in all of his complexity, as a being in which the intelligible world and the sensible world come together. Human corporeality, then, is not the fruit of an anterior sin or degradation, but is directly willed by the Logos.

As with the world, the human being too was created freely. Gregory goes further, affirming that man was created through the superabundance of love (ἀγάπης περιουσία) of the Logos. Above the goodness of creation, the goodness of the human being, and the importance of his vocation, appear. This vocation is in fact that of being witness in the material world to the glory and light of God, of being someone who participates in and enjoys the divine goodness (*Or cat* 5, GNO III/4, 17).

The notion of participation is fundamental in Gregory's theology, as a consequence of his reflection on creation: All things, and the human being in particular, participate in the divine perfections. If the world is the effect and reflection of the wisdom and goodness of God, man nevertheless participates in the divine goodness in a far superior manner. In his very constitution itself, he has a certain "affinity of kinship" with the divinity, having been created to "participate" in the divine goodness. He has been endowed with intelligence, will, and all of the goodness of which the divinity is worthy, so that each one of these privileges makes him desire that which is similar to him, that to which he has a certain kinship. Among these goods, liberty and immortality stand out. All of this, Gregory comments, is contained in the biblical affirmation of the human being as created in the image and likeness of God (Gn 1.27). He has been created in the image and likeness of God so that, beginning with this likeness, he can see Him who is similar to him (*Infant*, GNO III, 2, 79).

In the beginning, Gregory concludes, our nature was good and surrounded with goods (*Or cat* 5, GNO III/4, 18). This thought is central to the Nyssen's ANTHROPOLOGY (→).

The first consequence to derive from creation is the clear distinction between uncreated Being and created beings: God infinitely transcends all of creation. In Gregory, the affirmations about creation and the divine transcendence and ineffability are intimately united and reinforce each other reciprocally. As R. WINLING (35) notes, Gregory frequently distinguishes, as do the Platonists, between the intelligible world and the sensible world (*Or cat* 6, GNO III/4, 21–22). When however, his reasoning requires a more precise language, the fundamental distinction is that which exists between created being and uncreated being (*Or cat* 39, GNO III/4, 99–103).

Gregory establishes a "more radical and systematic" distinction between the created and uncreated than any of his predecessors. There is nothing in the Greek philosophical tradition that corresponds to the Nyssen's distinction between created and uncreated (MOSSHAMMER,

353–376). This is an irreducible antithesis, one already manifest in his first works, which reaches its full force and fecundity in the controversy against Eunomius and the affirmation of the divine ineffability. God is above all words and thoughts. He does not participate in being, but is Being. Gregory is a resolute defender of apophatism (→ APOPHATIC THEOLOGY), but one should not confuse this apophatism with any form of equivocity. Creation is above all that of the human being, who carries the impressed imprint of the divine activity, which serves as an indicator to know Him, and to be able to affirm something about Him.

One of the most decisive differences between God and all creation is rooted precisely in the possibility or impossibility of change. In created beings, including the human being, the capacity of change is essential, since he has his origins in movement, in the passage from non-being to being. Thus, κίνησις and διάστημα are inherent to the created being. On the other hand, God is above all movement. He is *He who always is*. Things are maintained in being only by the power of Him who is above all movement. For Gregory, as for Origen, immutability belongs only to uncreated being. Mutability, on the other hand, is essential to every created being, since this mutability is nothing other than an extension of the first movement, which consists in the passage from non-being to being. Κίνησις and διάστημα are inseparable from created being (*Eccl*, GNO V, 411–412), while both are absent from God. The same can be verified with regard to the concepts of eternity and time: Creatureliness, which brings with itself participation in being, is the foundation of temporality (BALÁS, 2, 150). J. DANIELOU (115) has underscored that, precisely because movement and change belong to the essence of created being, Gregory denies that any movement is bad, and judges that the capacity of unlimited movement towards the good is part of the spirit's perfection.

The concept of participation also helps Gregory to demonstrate the limits of created being. Created being, in fact, “participates” in the divine goodness, but does not possess these good attributes as its own in any manner, nor does it possess them in an infinite manner. This is the same thought contained in the affirmation that man was created in the image and likeness of God (WINLING, 35–37).

The theology of creation is the foundation on which Gregory speaks of the unity and harmony of the universe. This harmony is a work of the Logos. His omnipotence permits Him to maintain united elements of creation which are opposed to each other. The Stoics underscored the harmony of the universe, but such a harmony is formulated in a highly

personalized manner in Gregory. This harmony comes from the fact that God conserves all things in being and “penetrates” all of them. The Word created the world and is diffused in it, penetrating it entirely and giving it consistency and unity. A good example of this is Gregory’s theology of the geometric figure of the CROSS (→). This unity and harmony are manifested fully at the end of time, when God will be All in all things (1 Cor 15.28), that is, when the new heavens and new earth will be manifested (*Tunc et ipse*, GNO III/2, 3–28).

Gregory treats the theme of creation in two exegetical works, *Op hom* and *Hex*, written to defend and develop the thought expounded by Saint Basil in his homilies on the *Hexaemeron*. We will not enter into the questions proper to ANTHROPOLOGY (→) here, but rather those which refer directly to the theology of creation. Both works were written with little time in between, the *Op hom* first and then the *Hex*, the two completing each other. Gregory manifests the anthropocentricity of his theology of creation: The human being alone is the image of God, the universe being created in view of the human being. This is a reflection which fundamentally comes directly from the consideration of Scripture, distancing him decidedly from Greek thought: The human being is not only an element of the universe, but the key element and that which gives sense to it, precisely due to his character of image of God.

Gregory maintains that Gn 1 has the goal of showing how God prepared the material world for man. The human being is the final element appearing in a gradual process, which goes from least to greatest. Moses expresses the order (ἀκολουθία, τάξις) that nature followed to reach perfection in narrative form with the “six days”. This is an ascending order, as if nature itself accomplished an ascent towards the most perfect being (*Hex*, PG 44, 72B; 145B). This is an evolution in which there is continuity and discontinuity: Nature follows an order (τάξις), while proceeding by progressive steps (διὰ βαθμῶν). As J. LAPLACE (37) observes, the vision of the human being as the converging point between spirit and matter, as well as his character of image of God, implies the conviction that the human being is not enclosed in the universe, but open to intimacy with God. If the human being bears the elements of the universe in himself, this is in order to exercise his role as mediator, to lead the entire universe to God. This is an expression of a general law of the creative plan: Matter tends towards the spirit.

Gregory speaks of a double creation. As LAPLACE (48–54) observes, Gregory presents this theory modestly, as a pure hypothesis. He distinguishes between *in principio* (ἐν ἀρχῇ) creation and the creation of

six days: The first corresponds to the eternal and indivisible moment in which God embraces the entire universe in its totality; the second creation, of six days, is the ordered development in time of the plan of God (cfr. *Hex*, PG 44, 72). Does Gregory think that this first really existed?

It appears evident that this first moment that Gregory speaks of is before history, both in the creation of the world and in the creation of man, and it refers to the eternity of God. H.U. v. BALTHASAR (p. 52, n. 5) studied the precise meaning of this *in principio* (ἐν ἀρχῇ) for the creation of man. The division that he establishes between the first and second creation of man is a good reference point for understanding what Gregory intends by the first and second creation of matter. The first creation is the divine plan existing in the eternal divine choice, the second creation is the execution of this plan.

Even if the principal and decisive division of being is based, for Gregory, on the distinction between uncreated being and created beings, the division between sensible realities and intelligible realities also remains quite important (*Or cat* 6, 2, GNO III/4, 23–24; *Eccl* 6, GNO V, 373–374; *Cant* 6, GNO VI, 173–174). Stated in another way, this is the division between corporeal and spiritual realities (*An et res*, PG 46, 60). This distinction is tied to the ancient conception of the “third heaven”, which Saint Paul speaks of (2 Cor 12.2), as the highest point of stability for the sensible world, where the fixed stars are located. Above this heaven is found “the stable and intelligent nature” (*Hex*, PG 44, 121), i.e. the angelic nature (J. DANIELOU, *Platonisme et théologie mystique*, Paris, 1944, 151–160). When he speaks in this manner, Gregory is logically thinking, more than of the Platonic conception of the world, of the biblical teaching on angels.

As VÖLKER (41) observes, the most profound motivation of Gregory’s interest in angels is to be found in his SPIRITUAL THEOLOGY (→): They are luminous models for man, who longs for perfection. Gregory proposes as an ideal for virgins “to live in the flesh, but imitating the angelic life” (*Virg* 4, GNO VIII/1, 276). For the angels are free of all passion, and their blessed existence is not perturbed by sin (*Or dom* 4, GNO VII/2, 49–50). They unceasingly see “the Father of immortality”, and this vision continually transforms them in the imitation of the beauty that they contemplate in the archetype (*Virg* 4, GNO VIII/1, 276).

According to Gregory, the “angelic and incorporeal [nature] was created before ours” (*Or cat* 6, GNO III/4, 23; *Vit Moys* II, 209, GNO VII/1, 106). The fact that the angel was created before the human being is not

a scriptural affirmation, but is a frequent opinion among the theologians of Gregory's times. This is, for example, what Basil thought (*In Hex*, 1, 5, PG 29, 13) as did Gregory Nazianzen (*Or* 38, 9, PG 36, 320–321).

Man has a certain proximity to the angels due to his spirituality, and, through virtue, he can become their equal. Thus, for example, the vision of Moses was purified like that of the angels (VÖLKER, 183). Macrina leads an “angelic life” at Anessi, and when she reaches the end of life, she “appears as an angel” due to the absence of passions (*Macr*, GNO VIII/1, 396, 2).

While human beings know through the senses, angels know in a different manner. This is a more elevated form of knowledge than human knowledge, itself completed by the senses. The perfection of angelic knowledge is derived from being independent from sensation and concentrated in God (VÖLKER, 183). Gregory is convinced that there is an intimate contact between the angels and the men who have reached perfection. Without a doubt, there is a true analogy between the one and the other. Thus, for example, Gregory describes Saint Stephen's ecstasy at the moment of his death (Acts 7.56) by saying that he was transformed “in angelic grace” (*Steph* I, GNO X/1, 87). Gregory recalls that the life promised by the Lord to the just after the resurrection is “equal to that of the angels” (Lk 20.36).

Virgins, with their purity, already imitate “the characteristics of the angelic life”, since they imitate “the purity of the spiritual beings” (*Virg* 14). The life of monastic communities constitutes a certain return to Paradise, as this life represents the angelic life on earth, since in it man is freed from the tyranny of the passions (C. MORESCHINI, *Opere di Gregorio di Nissa*, Turin 1992, 359 n. 33).

The contemplation of God does not hinder the angels from serving men with their care and protection. There is a doctrine “worthy of belief which comes to us for the tradition of the Fathers”, Gregory states, which teaches us that, even after the fall, Providence does not abandon us but “places next to each one, in order to help him, an angel of incorporeal nature” (*Vit Moys* II, 45 and 180, GNO VII/1, 45–46 and 93). With this conviction Gregory situates himself in the Christian Tradition about the “ministerial” angels that help men to reach their salvation (*Vit Moys* II, GNO VII/1, 93–94; *Cant* 3, GNO VI, 87–88; also, Gregory Nazianzen, *Or* 38, PG 36, 320C). The traditions that Gregory reflects in *Macr* on the angels who, after our death, lead souls to paradise, are interesting: “place the luminous angel next to me, Macrina said in her final moments, to lead me by hand to the place of comfort” (*Macr* 24, GNO VIII/2, 397). This is

the *psychopomp* or *psychagogus* angel, who leads the souls of the just to heaven. The theme is already known from Judeo-Christian theology (J. DANIELOU, *Théologie du judéochristianisme*, Tournai 1958, 145 and 149–151). Macrina also asks that the “envious one”, that is the devil, not appear on her path (*Macr* 24, *ibid.*, 398).

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CROSS

In Gregory's theology the Cross occupies a central position: The formulation of the Trinitarian doctrine, based upon the identification of God with the unique Eternal One and on the consequent distinction between created and uncreated world, and the passage from a Christology of the Logos to a Christology of two natures, place flesh and history at the center of the Nyssen's thought. The defense of the divinity of the Son is founded precisely on the value of the Cross.

For the Neo-Arians the economy of the Cross was in fact a motive to affirm that the second Person does not have the same glory as the Father. Gregory, basing himself on the liturgy and the importance granted to the Cross from the beginning of the fourth century with the feast of the *inventio crucis* for the dedication of the Constantinian Basilicas of the Holy Sepulchre and of Calvary in 325 (cfr. F. MÉAN; V. GROSSI), states exactly the opposite. For the Nyssen, the Incarnation, death and Resurrection are historical events, confirmed by eye witnesses and passed on through the Tradition, which demonstrate the divinity of the Son, who will return to judge every man on the basis of the actions of his life (*Eun*, GNO II, 120, 11–23). One must honor the Son beyond all measure, since his *kenosis* was an act of power and force by which He demonstrates his divinity, rather than being weakness, as Eunomius would have it (*Eun*, GNO II, 120, 25–29). The recognition of the ontological, i.e. real priority of θεολογία (→) over οἰκονομία (→) in so far as this last emerges from the Trinity and is conformed to Trinitarian love and intra-Trinitarian relations, permits Gregory to invert the process on the gnoseological level and re-ascend from the οἰκονομία to the θεολογία.

Gregory follows the Pauline line, which reads the Cross as the power of God (1 Cor 1.18) and a motive for boasting (Gal 6.14). This perspective explains the importance in the Nyssen's thought of the cosmic Cross, as appears in the commentary on Eph 3.18–19: "And [Paul] with the figure of the Cross describes to the Ephesians the power that governs and maintains all things, and wills them to be elevated to the knowledge of the preeminent glory of this power, calling it *height, breadth, depth and length* (Eph 3.18) and referring himself with appropriate names to each of the arms that can be observed in the figure of the Cross. Thus he says *height* of the superior part, *depth* of the part which is found under the crossing

of the arms, and indicates with the name of *length* and *breadth* each of the transversal arms, so that with this the great mystery be manifested, that is, the fact that all heavenly and otherworldly realities and all the extremes of all that exists are governed and maintained together by Him who in the figure of the Cross manifested this great and ineffable power" (*Eun*, GNO II, 121,21–122,5). Gregory recognizes in the Cross itself the sign and proof of the divinity of Christ: The great mystery of the presence of the divine power in history is manifested by the worst instrument of torture of the time. With Christ the Cross is inscribed at the center of history and the world.

This theme is dear to the Nyssen, who proposes it in *Or cat* and *Trid spat* as well. C. Moreschini notes that the appearance of this teaching in a catechetical work indicates that Gregory held that it was particularly important, i.e. that it had for him *a profound significance* (C. MORESCHINI, 565). In *Trid spat*, Gregory asks how it is that the Lord, who had the power to choose the instrument of his own Passion, chose death by a Cross, i.e. why it was specifically by means of the Cross that the Passion was realized when there were myriads of manners in which the salvific plan of God could have been accomplished (*Trid spat*, GNO IX/1, 298,20–299,3). The Son was free to choose any type of death He wished, and if He chose the Cross for himself there must be a reason. It is clear how this principle is the basis of the value of the historical event, which can no longer be reduced to a simple spiritual allegory. For Gregory, the Cross is an ontological sign, a reality in which the signified and the signifier are inseparably united by the divine power. The event is mystery (→ MYSTERY) in the most ontologically profound sense of the term.

Gregory observes, on the exegetical level, that Lk 9.22 and Mk 8.31 say "The Son of Man *must* suffer", not "The Son of Man will suffer". The reason for the Cross is contained in the very meaning of this *must*. His reasoning once again is inspired by the interpretation of the *breadth and length and height and depth* of Eph 3.18: "[Paul] sees in fact, that this figure of the Cross, divided into four arms that stretch out from the central intersection, signifies the power and providence which pervade all things, from Him who appeared on them. And for this reason Paul designates each arm with a specific name, saying *depth* of that which is below the center and *height* that which is above, *breadth* and *length* those which extend on the flanks on one side and the other from the intersection. And it seems to me that with these expressions the discourse clearly manifests that there does not exist any being which is not completely under the divine power: not above the heavens, under the earth or to the extreme

horizontal limits of all that exists" (*Trid spat*, 300, 8 – 301,1). The example of what occurs when one wanders the universe with the mind explains how it is necessary to think of the form of the Cross in order to embrace the entire sphere of that which exists. This is why the text of Ps 138.7–9 is read in the same sense as well: "Do you see how he designs the figure of the Cross with his words? He says: You are He who permeates all things, making yourself the bond of all things and containing in yourself every extreme limit: You are above, You are present below, at one extreme is your hand and at the other your right [hand] rules" (*Trid spat*, 301,17–302,2). The Cross unites all of the universe and history, revealing the divinity of the Crucified. Gregory also places the Cross and the *iota* of Mt 5.28 in relation: "In my opinion this is also the *iota* which is considered together with the arm, which is more fixed than the heavens and more stable than the earth and more enduring than any structure of things. The heaven and earth will pass, and the entire scene of the world will pass, but the *iota* of the Law and the arm will never pass away. The vertical line which descends from above towards below is called *iota*, and that which traces the horizontal laterally is called arm, as can be learned from seamen as well: for these call arm, a name based upon the form, the wood placed sideways on which they stretch the sail" (*Trid spat*, 302,11–303,2). It is extremely interesting to underscore that the vertical axis which holds up the Cross and unites earth and heaven is traced from above to below, and not from below to above. The Cross reveals the divinity of the Son, it reveals his *being Son*. The Cross, the historical event of the Cross inserted into the unity of the death and Resurrection, shows, in history (ἱστορία) and through the economy (οἰκονομία), theology (θεολογία) itself—in so far as it is a revelation of the Trinitarian immanence, of the divine filiation of Christ.

H.R. Drobner has made an accurate analysis of the three texts of *Trid spat* where Gregory treats the theme of the Cosmic Cross. Drobner particularly underscores the use of mysteric terminology (H.R. DROBNER, 150–151). The theme is fundamentally Judeo-Christian (J. DANÉLOU 1958, 303–315): In Ez 9.4 ff. the *tau* on the forehead is a symbol of life. One may recall that the Hebrew *tau* is written as T, as +, or as χ—and that in the Roman military lists, T indicated that the soldier was alive, Θ that he had fallen (cfr. H. RAHNER, 412 f.). J. Daniélou observes that one of the most frequently found symbols on the ossuaries of the Synagogue of Nazareth and of the *Dominus Flevit* on the Mount of Olives is the boat with a cross shaped mast. It is almost certain that the symbolism reached Gregory through the mediation of Irenaeus, who affirms that the Cross

was chosen by Christ to announce the divinity of the Son and his universal power (Irenaeus, *Demonstratio* 34, PO 773). There is a total consensus on Gregory's direct dependence on Irenaeus here (D.L. BALÁS; G.B. LADNER). H.R. Drobner also underscores Origen's contribution (H.R. DROBNER, 155). In Plato already, the strange image of the cross inscribed on the cosmos appears. Represented by the Greek letter *chi*, it is composed of the intersection of the earthly orbit with the elliptical orbit of the great circle which surrounds the earthly sphere and on which the apparent traversal of the sun moves: this is a symbol of the divinity of the Demiurge and of the boundary between the world of planets and that of the stars. The Gnostics saw in it the boundary between the world of the Demiurge and that of the pleroma. J. Daniélou saw in Irenaeus's *Demonstratio* itself a citation of *Timaeus* 36bc (J. DANIELOU 1958, 310). Justin also takes up this passage of Plato and interprets it as a sign of the divine power of the Son of God, linking it to the pericope of the bronze serpent of Jn 3.14 (Justin, *Apologia prima* 55, 1–6: TH. EQUES DE OTTO, 150). Athanasius will then link the figure of the Cross as revelation of the divinity and power of Christ to Jn 12.32 (Athanasius, *De incarnatione* 25: SC 199 254–255). Thus, in synthesis one can say that “here, once again, Gregory echoes an ancient Judeo-Christian symbolism, which he transposes to a Greek mindset” (J. DANIELOU 1963, 35). Together with the theme of the cosmic Cross, the essence of the Nyssen's theology of the Cross is represented by the following passage: “Therefore, it seems to me, that the divine voice of the Gospel aims to proclaim the existence of Him in whom all things were constituted, who is more eternal than that which is included under his power, and who, through the figure of the Cross, indicates as in an enigma and in a mirror his own power which preserves all things. It is for this reason that He says that it was necessary that the Son of Man not simply die, but that He be crucified, so that for the more perspicacious the Cross would become “theologian” (θεολόγος), in so far as it proclaims in its form the all powerful dominion of He who was stretched forth on it, and who is All in all” (*Trid spat*, GNO IX, 303, 2–12). The reason for the Cross is for it to become θεολόγος, i.e. that it should proclaim the divinity of Christ as the second Person of the Trinity and Son of the Father. It is the Cross itself, then, as σύνδεσμος and θεολόγος, which reveals the divinity of the Son, manifesting the inseparability of economy and theology. For Gregory in fact, Trinitarian doctrine, Christology and soteriology represent an inseparable unity, which only as such can fully illuminate the meaning of existence, the meaning of the personal history of each human being.

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Giulio Maspero

CULT

Eusebeia

Cult is a complex reality for Gregory, concerning the veneration of God, including the divine activity and the movement of the soul in the sphere of the Church, while unifying the communication of God and the growing participation in Him on the believer's part. The fundamental reference point for the understanding of cult is his anthropology, in which THEOLOGIA (→) and OIKONOMIA (→) converge, reaching its summit in the vision of the human being as the image and likeness of God (→ THEOLOGY OF IMAGE). The correspondence between human reality and divine archetype is not only valid on the substantial level, but has a dynamic consequence for the very relationship of the human being to God. Thanks to this "kinship" with God, there arises in the human being the desire to approach Him whom he resembles. On the other hand, the divine economy in its various dimensions, above all the ecclesial one (→ ECCLESIOLOGY), actualizes this reaching out to Him (→ EPEKTASIS), particularly manifest in the virtuous life (→ VIRTUE).

In this general vision, it is necessary to note the various dimensions of cult in the Nyssen. *Eusebeia*, since it indicates the relation of man with God, is originally closely tied to the dispensation of salvation and to its reception through faith. In this sense it has a general signification even if it refers to the new realities of which God is author and in which the human being participates. It thus shows a clear reference to the notion of *pistis*. Referring to the Old Testament, Gregory interprets cult as faith and the totality of ritual practices in their salvific dimension (cfr. *Inscr*, GNO V, 92). In reference to the New Testament as well, *eusebeia* has a semantic value parallel to that of "faith". This interchangeability of concepts is repeated many times (*Ref Eun*, GNO II, 355). It can be seen, for example, in the significant affirmation of the equivalence of "defender of *eusebeia*" and "defender of the faith" (*Thaum*, GNO X/1, 44, 15–18).

Cult, even if entrusted to the human being and expressed by him, intrinsically belongs to the divine economy, insofar as it has its proper origin in it (cfr. *Eun* III, GNO II, 296–297; 301; 369–370). It is rooted in the "Apostolic Tradition," i.e. in the communication of God which is principally confirmed by the Bible, and then by the pastors and Doc-

tors of the Church. Its critical moment is constituted by the Incarnation of the Logos, who—as a fulfillment of the divine economy—also reveals the “mystery of piety” (1 Tim 3.16). For Gregory, this mystery is tightly bonded to the Trinitarian Mystery (→ TRINITY) which is its origin and constitutes its end, manifesting itself in faith and in the liturgy of the Church (→ CHRISTIAN INITIATION). The Logos, based upon the specificity of this revelation, is the “Master of Piety”. In Him, the economy is summarized and unfolded, and then confirmed by the Holy Spirit in the Church. All the witnesses posterior to the Logos are assured of the aid of the Holy Spirit. The Church is particularly assured of this in her pastors, as transmitters of the revelation of the Logos (cfr. A. DE NICOLA).

With the Logos, the “mystery of piety” is manifested and unfolded to the highest degree. This Pauline formula occurs frequently in the Nyssen, and he reflects on its context at various points. In *Inscr* he writes: “Given this, he again listens to him who manifests the great mystery of religion through which the punishment of the true enemies comes from the Lord. It is not otherwise possible for the mass of adversaries be purified, except after the Lord rose again for us” (GNO V, 112,23–113,2). As an effect of this mystery, Gregory accentuates its relationship with the purifying justice of God, which acts for the human being by destroying the shadows of impiety and illuminating them with the light of truth, by which we can participate in the light of the glory of God. Further, Jesus manifests himself thus as mercy in person, offered to the human being for his salvation and the fulfillment of his life (cfr. *Cant*, GNO VI, 432–433).

The magisterial function of the Lord is summarized thus in the transmission of this mystery to his disciples, constituting the foundation of their faith and its salvific force. Gregory sums up this idea when he writes: “We confess that the doctrine of the Lord that He expounded to the disciples, transmitting the mystery of piety to them, is the foundation and root of rectified and salutary faith, and we believe that there are no other more respectable nor more sure foundations than this tradition” (*Epist*, GNO VIII/2, 32, 10–15).

Cult, as has been noted already, is situated in the realm of the relations of the human being with God, and more concretely, with God who reveals himself in Jesus Christ. This fact is sufficient to justify the equivalence between *eusebeia* and orthodox faith. The analysis of the Nyssen’s texts demonstrates the importance of the human element in the cultic realm, since it must penetrate the being of man and all of his actions. Gregory therefore seeks to determine the various functions and capacities of the human being in reference to the divine cult, beginning with the principle

that since everything has been created by God, the human being must render Him homage in conformity with his nature. In order to investigate this argument, he places cult in a particular relationship with the human mind (*nous*).

The Nyssen considers—on one hand—the active function of the *nous* in the cultic realm, accentuating the concept of *dianoia*. He then develops the indicators that concern mental activity, above all the intelligence (→ FAITH AND REASON). From this, it follows that the end to which *dianoia* must tend in the cultic realm is that of conforming the intelligence to faith. It contributes in a particular manner to the elaboration of adequate formulas for the content of revelation (cfr. *Eun* III, GNO II, 302; 349). In other cases, the Nyssen considers the passive roles of the mind. He commonly refers to the general sphere of “idea/concept” as the fruit of learning and in its intimate ties with words, understood nevertheless as distinct realities. The mind’s potential for entering into cult is rooted in the concept, and through the concept, which is expressed in terms or concrete separated words: the mind truly participates in cult (cfr. *Or cat*, GNO III/4, 7,11–8,9; *Eun* I, GNO I, 176).

There is thus a clear interaction between cult and *nous* in Gregory. Faith finds an indispensable manner of approaching God in the concepts of Him. This interaction is manifested in the ties of cult with the TRUTH (→), of which Gregory affirms the “primacy” in the realm of faith (*Vit Moys*, SC 1, 36), since it “is a sure understanding of that which truly is” (*Vit Moys*, SC 1, 38). At various points truth is simply identified with cult or with faith (*Maced*, GNO III/1, 101; *Deit fil*, GNO X/1, 121, 20–22; *Thaum*, GNO X/1 17, 10–13).

In our context, truth is seen by the Nyssen as the object of revelation, to which one can take positive or negative attitudes. The first defines the Christian, who can display them in a superficial or dynamic manner. In this second manner the full and perfect realization of rectified faith is found (*Eun* I, GNO I, 216). The negative attitude, in various forms and degrees, even to the point of IDOLATRY (→), consists in the rejection of revealed truth (*Inscr*, GNO V, 39; *Diem lum*, GNO IX, 231). The end of cult is thus the identification and interchangeability with truth. Cult, using the *nous* in an appropriate manner and collaborating with it, nourishes itself on truth and produces fruits of truth (*Eun* III, GNO II, 300; 310; *An et res*, PG 46, 25A). In this sense it is linked to the intellectual activity of the soul (→ PSYCHOLOGY), expressing itself in the sphere of the mind, in relationship with its capacity to formulate concepts, but also in relationship to the sensible exteriorization through signs and symbols

that form the signification. Particular attention should be paid to the concept of *dogma* here, which indicates the effect of the elaboration of the truth by the *nous* in the realm of faith. This primarily means “that which appears good,” and in classical literature expresses the idea of “philosophical doctrine” or “doctrine” in general. It nevertheless receives a new semantic value in various texts of Gregory, indicating “orthodox doctrine” (*logos didaskei*) (*Eun* I, GNO I, 127; *Eun* III, GNO II, 24) or becoming the verbal expression of a “body of ideas” that can be found precisely in cult (*Eun* I, GNO I, 200; *Eun* III, GNO II, 325). In this sense, it indicates the coherence of doctrine and cult.

The identification of faith, cult and orthodox doctrine is certainly one of the specific points of the Nyssen’s theology, as a noteworthy number of texts witness to (*Maced*, GNO III/1, 89; *Or cat*, GNO III/4, 51,5–52,1; *Cant*, GNO VI, 405–406). This problem is present in a particular way in *Contra Eunomium*, constituting the theological principle according to which Gregory organizes his argument. Further, one notes the convergence of the doctrine on God in general, Christology and Pneumatology, as well as dogmatic formulas, living Tradition and mystical symbolism. Cult thus becomes synonymous with orthodoxy. Gregory expresses this identification in a paradigmatic manner in the following text: “One for us is the life that comes to us through faith in the Holy Trinity, flows from the God of the universe, proceeds through the Son, accomplishes its work in the Holy Spirit. Thus, with this conviction we are baptized as we were ordered, we believe in conformity with Baptism, faith and thought are at once in the Father, the Son and the Holy Spirit” (*Epist*, GNO VIII/2, 33, 12–22) (→ *HOMOTIMIA*).

We thus find the principle according to which cult is the norm of belief in the Nyssen (*legem credendi statuat lex supplicandi*). Cult is a *locus theologicus*, since, placing the Christian mystery into action, it commands all of life and guides the religious thought of the faithful. It is a privileged witness to doctrine and is a school of Christian behavior. In this sense it constitutes the central expression and actuation of the fundamental relation that unites the human being to God, in which Christian faith is unfolded, and which is manifested both interiorly and exteriorly. This principle unites the interior and exterior facets of religion, as well as the objective and personal ones, founding this unification on the faith in the revealed mystery which is transmitted by the Bible and the Tradition of the Church.

In his vision of cult, Gregory is quite conscious of the fact that it is not to be reduced to intellectual doctrine. He underscores that such a vision

is characteristic of the Greeks (*Eun* III, GNO II, 271). He attributes the defect of introducing a dichotomy between the divine realities expressed in the concept of *eusebeia* and the reception of them in ethical behavior to the Hellenistic world. For the Nyssen, Christian cult is a reality which is integrally inserted into human life in its ethical aspect. It thus constitutes the supreme norm for behavior. In this sense, it implies an existential response which should be manifested in the life in accordance with Christ (cfr. L.F. MATEO-SECO). Gregory directly specifies the fulfillment of cult as a life conformed to the requirements of Christ (*Inst*, GNO VIII/1, 63). Christian life thus acquires a priestly dimension, becoming an agreeable offering to God.

Cult, as a vital reality, is also a dynamic reality, undergoing evolution and maturation, with sanctity always remaining its end. Gregory thus affirms: "The fruit of *eusebeia* is sanctity" (*Theod*, GNO X/1, 1, 7-8). In a more dynamic sense, he explains in *Cant*, referring to Tit 2.12: "Since, therefore, man too possessed such qualities, to the point of being in everything like God, while the inclination to evil later removed the possession of those wings—we, in fact, having left the protection of the wings of God were stripped of our own—for this reason was the grace of God that illuminates us revealed, so that, the impiety and the desires of the world deposed, we again take up the wings through sanctity and justice" (GNO VI, 448). Christian cult is thus placed on the level of sanctity and justice.

In Gregory's vision of cult, it is also necessary to accentuate that it is in no way a "disembodied" reality, but refers to the concrete manner in which the human being lives his life. It includes an existential activity that is referred to God and to everything that proceeds from Him. The Nyssen expresses this clearly in the following text: "Thus, since virtue founded in religion is divided into two parts, the doctrine of God and the correction of habits (in fact, the purification of life is part of religion), Moses first learned what is necessary to know God, that is, to know Him means to have no knowledge of Him that is had according to human understanding, and then learns the second aspect of virtue, learning the behavior with which the virtuous life is led to a good end" (*Vit Moys*, SC 1, 82).

Cult thus develops in two directions, the vertical and horizontal, but both of these constitute an integral whole. The reality of cult has a primarily divine character due to its origin and end, while at the same time embracing a profoundly human dimension. Only together do they constitute the integral cult which permits the Christian to construct the

perfect life. This vision can be traced to the Bible, where its content and its modality of actuation are found. Its central point is the involvement of the whole human being in his ascent towards God, since the whole human being was created by Him and all is called to salvation. The ascent thus follows the logic of the faith which was manifested in the divine economy.

Explaining the meaning of cult and its characteristics according to the Nyssen requires one to underscore that in the end, this explanation unfolds in an essentially ecclesiastical perspective. Like all the Fathers, Gregory too sees the subject of Christian cult as the complete Body of Christ, i.e. Christ the high priest and the Church, his Bride as his "pure mirror" (*Cant*, GNO VI, 257, 1–5). Further, for this reason, the Church is the true place in which cult can be offered to Him. The individual believer offers a cult to God in so far as he integrally participates in ecclesial life. Gregory writes: "He who regards the Church regards Christ, who builds himself up and grows by means of the addition of those who are saved" (*Cant*, GNO VI, 383, 3–6). In a more significant and integral reference, Gregory demonstrates this ecclesial dimension of cult, with a particular reference to the sacraments of CHRISTIAN INITIATION (→) in the *Homilies on the Canticle of Canticles*, so that one could properly identify this work as an "itinerary of ecclesial life," not only of "baptismal life," as A. Cortesi does. The cultic life of the Church is thus the life of the Christian: "We should not (...) remove ourselves from the milk of the Church who nourishes us. By milk I mean the precepts and practices of the Church, from which the soul is nourished and grows, taking from here the impulsion for the ascent" (*Vit Moys*, SC 1, 35). The eschatological perspective of the life of the Church and its cult, in which Gregory's theological thought is strongly situated, is particularly emphasized in *Tunc et ipse* (GNO III/2, 3–28).

It is necessary to underscore that these ecclesial aspects of cult in their practical application are emphasized in the homilies dedicated to the saints, particularly MACRINA (→), who personifies the Church-Bride, being at the same time the example of Christian cult founded in the ecclesial cult.

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Janusz Krolikowski

Culture → Faith and Reason

DARKNESS

Gregory has been identified more than any other patristic author with the mysticism of darkness (PUECH, 136; DANÉLOU, 7). While Gregory did not invent this theme (CROUZEL; VÖLKER), the “luminous darkness,” “divine night,” and other such expressions feature among his signature themes. The theme of darkness is indeed a major trajectory of his apophatic theology, but it must be balanced with another trajectory that sees darkness give way to divinization in light (LAIRD, 174–204).

One should not presume that Gregory intends the divine darkness whenever he speaks of darkness. The language of darkness very often means the darkness of sin or ignorance that gives way to light. The so-called mystical darkness, despite its fame, appears relatively infrequently. Which type of darkness Gregory has in mind is largely determined by the scriptural text Gregory is interpreting.

Like so much of Gregory’s theology, the divine darkness is exegetically grounded. Perhaps the most famous passage occurs in *The Life of Moses* II. Here Gregory’s theology is grounded in the exegesis of Ex 20.21 (“Moses entered the cloud where God was”) and Ps 17 (18).¹² (“God made the darkness his hiding place”). Taking these verses as points of departure, Gregory asks, “What does it mean that Moses entered the darkness and then saw God in it?” (GNO VII/I, *Vit Moys*, II, 86, 11–12; MALHERBE, 94). In contrast to the first theophany, where God was beheld in light, “he is now seen in darkness” (GNO VII/I, *Vit Moys*, II, 86, 13–14; MALHERBE, 95). By taking the experience of Moses as a model for the journey of the mind (*nous*) to God, Gregory continues an already established exegetical tradition. What follows is an apophatic ascent that begins with the language of letting go (*aphairesis*) and culminates in oxymoron. The mind lets go of everything it comprehends and keeps going deeper until it enters the incomprehensible and there sees God. Gregory makes the paradoxical assertion that “this is the seeing that is a not seeing,” and likens the mind’s ascent to John, “who penetrated into the luminous darkness and says, ‘No one has ever seen God’ (Jn 1.18) thus asserting by this negation (*apophasei*) that knowledge of the divine essence is unattainable . . .” (GNO VII/I, 87, 7–13; MALHERBE, 95, trans. altered). This passage typifies Gregory’s treatment of the divine

darkness. Using Scripture as a point of departure he gives darkness the epistemological task of safeguarding the unknowability of God, while at the same time emphasizing an intimate encounter with God beyond what the discursive mind can comprehend. Gregorian darkness marks the culmination of the mind's journey to God, expressed in metaphors that begin in light and end in darkness.

Another well-known text is found in Homily 11 from *Homilies on the Song of Songs*. Again Gregory grounds in Scripture his exaltation of the divine darkness. Here, too, Moses' experience is the model of the spiritual life. His journey begins with an experience of light of (Ex 19.18); he then approaches the cloud (Ex 20.21); and finally enters the cloud where God is (Ex 24.18). For Gregory Moses' journey marks the three phases of the spiritual life. 1) From the darkness of deceptive ideas of God to light. 2) From "an understanding of hidden things" to God's "hidden nature which is symbolized by a cloud." 3) Finally the soul is led into the cloud. "Forsaking what human nature can attain, the soul enters within the sanctuary of divine knowledge where she is hemmed in on all sides by the divine darkness" (*Cant*, GNO VI, 322,9–323,4; MCCAMBLEY, 202). The darkness not only serves to safeguard the unknowability of the divine essence, but also indicates a divine encounter of considerable depth. Like Moses, the bride enters the darkness, where "she is now embraced by a divine night where the bridegroom comes near but does not appear." Gregory sees in this an important indication of the nature of spiritual experience. While the divine cannot be comprehended, the bridegroom "bestows upon the soul a perception of his presence, although a clear apprehension escapes it since his invisible nature lies hidden" (*Cant*, GNO VI, 324, 8–12; see MCCAMBLEY, 203). For Gregory the divine darkness implies two things at once: the unknowability of God's essence and the intimacy of God's presence to the soul embraced by what she cannot comprehend. Interestingly Gregory does seem to suggest that in this divine night, God can be grasped by faith (*Cant* VI, GNO VI, 183; LAIRD, 85–91).

Based on Gregory's interpretation of key verses in Exodus and Ps 17 (18), the spiritual journey, exemplified by Moses, begins in light and moves into increasing darkness, a luminous darkness, a divine darkness. This divine darkness is seen in Gregory's interpretation of other texts, such as *Cant* 3.1; 5.2; 5.5–6. In all these cases, Gregorian darkness is epistemological darkness safeguarding a key feature of Gregory's apophatic theology that emphasizes both the unknowability of the divine essence (*ousia*) and the depth of the encounter with God. Gregory's darkness

should be distinguished from that darkness developed by St. John of the Cross in his description of the nights of the senses and of the soul.

While the divine darkness has an undisputed place in Gregory's theology of the human encounter with God, it needs to be balanced with his likewise characteristic descriptions of the divinization of the soul in light and beauty. In this regard too Gregory often takes his theological cue from the biblical text he is interpreting, such as Cant 1.15–16; 2.10,13; 4.6,9; 6.3. It should be emphasized that this exegetical line differs from the light-cloud-darkness sequence described above. The light in which the soul is divinized does not give way to darkness. This is in no small part due to the fact that the scriptural texts he is working with lend themselves to interpretation along the lines of the divinization of virtue in light, often through the working of the Holy Spirit.

Perhaps the text that best reveals Gregory's balancing of the mysticism of both light and dark occurs in the less cited Homily 12 on the Song of Songs. Here Moses enters the darkness where God is, but at the same time Moses becomes radiant as the sun, unable to be approached by others due to the light beaming from his face (Ex 34.29–30). This transformation in light occurs while Moses is in the darkness of unknowing. Here light is not subordinated to darkness, just as virtue for Gregory is not subordinated to knowledge. Moses moves ever deeper into unknowing but grows ever more radiant (LAIRD, 204).

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Martin Laird

DEATH

Gregory deals with death in quite diverse texts and contexts. The most ample and global consideration is found in *Or cat*, in which he fundamentally presents the position that death occupies in the economy of salvation.

In *Or cat*, Gregory almost always uses the word death (θάνατος) to refer to corporeal death. He uses it only once to refer to the death of the soul, and this because there is a clear analogy between the two deaths: In the flesh we call death “the separation of the sensible life”; in the soul we call death “the separation of the true life” (*Or cat* 8, GNO III/4, 31–32). Corporeal death is described as the separation of the elements that constitute the human being, body and soul. After this first corruption, the body continues to dissolve into the simple elements that compose it. Gregory specifies that death is a dissolution (διάλυσις), not an annihilation. Neither soul nor body returns to nothing (ἀφανισμός) (*Or cat* 8, GNO III/4, 30).

Logically, death is opposed to the immortality in which man was clothed in the beginning as the image of God. Death enters history because of man’s sin, but the mortal condition continues to be something extrinsic to the human being and, naturally, thus contrary to the original plans of God for him. Gregory underscores this in *Or cat* 8 with an image that is dear to him: the TUNICS OF HIDE (→) in which God clothed Adam and Eve after the first sin (Gn 3.21). This image, which already appears in his first work (*Virg* 12, GNO VIII/1, 302), is referred to in *Or cat*, *inter alia* in order to indicate the origin of human death and the relationship of man to mortality: in the first place there is God who clothes man with tunics of hide (with mortality) with the intention of healing him; in the second place the tunics are something “external” to man (ἐξωθεν). This demonstrates that mortality (νεκρώτης) was “added” to a nature created for immortality, “attaching itself only to the exterior”.

Gregory uses the comparison of “clay vessels” to clearly explain that death is a bitter remedy given to man by God to remake him anew through the resurrection. Here is the *iter idearum*: because of the free choice of evil man was “transformed” into evil (*Or cat* 8, GNO III/4, 29), God acts with man in the same manner as a potter who has made a clay vessel, to which by treachery liquid lead was mixed in, which in

cooling, hardened and became one with the clay. The potter breaks the vessel and remakes it again, free of lead. In the mud of our vessel vice was introduced, with death the vessel is broken and returns to be remade in the resurrection.

Gregory's thought can be synthesized in two propositions: Death must be understood in the light of the resurrection, and death is a wise divine disposition to restore the human being to immortality after the resurrection (R. WINLING, SC 453, 189–191).

In *Or cat* Gregory also speaks extensively of the death of Christ. His reflections help to understand his thanatology. He poses a double question: Why did God choose the economy of the death of Christ for man's salvation? How did Christ overcome death with his own death?

Gregory responds to the first question on the basis of the concept of human solidarity or "conspiracy" (→ *SYMPNOIA*). It was appropriate, Gregory states, for God to free man from death using "the natural nexus" that exist in creation. In our body, the operation of one member has repercussions on all of the body; thus too is it realized in humanity, which is like an animated being: the resurrection of Christ, who is a member of humanity, extends to the totality of the whole. The health of one member influences the health of all the others; the mightiest member of humanity, Christ, transmits to all of humanity, "through the natural nexus", the power of his Resurrection. In this perspective as well, the Resurrection is the key to understanding the death of Christ: He is born in order to be able to die (*Or cat* 32, GNO III/4, 77–78), since it was necessary to call human beings back from death. The Lord extends his hand to the one who had fallen, and Christ came so close to death as to clothe himself in mortality and grant to humanity, with his own body, the principle of the resurrection (*ibidem*, 78). Gregory crowns his catechesis by explaining that the communion with the resurrected body of Christ in the EUCHARIST (→) is the cause of the resurrection of the body (*Or cat* 37, GNO III/4, 93–94).

Gregory responds to the second question by proffering an argument already traditional in his time: Jesus Christ with his death destroys the power of death as light destroys the shadows; dying, the Life came so close to death that it was destroyed, as fire purifies gold in dissolving all that is extraneous to it. On the basis of this argument, there is, obviously, the conviction that mortality, like the tunics of hide, is something extraneous to humanity (*Or cat* 26, GNO III/4, 66).

The "economy according to death" has its significance, then, in the fact that man can participate in the death and Resurrection of Jesus

Christ. Gregory's considerations on Baptism and the Eucharist are very clear on this point. The curative power of God becomes efficacious (ἐνεργός) in the purification that comes by means of the water (*Or cat* 36, GNO III/4, 92). BAPTISM (→), given that it is a participation in the death and Resurrection of Christ, is the source, not only of the life of the soul, but also of the resurrected body. In Baptism an efficacious imitation is realized (→ *MIMESIS*), a participation in the death and Resurrection of Christ: In the triple immersion "we imitate" the grace of the Resurrection on the third day (*Or cat* 35, GNO III/4, 89). This sacramental mystery reaches its zenith in the communion with the immortal body of Christ, which "transforms into its own nature", that is, into its immortality, anyone who receives it (*Or cat* 37, GNO III/4, 93–94).

Thus the mortal condition, even if it is from one perspective contrary to human nature (which was created for immortality), is good from another perspective, since it comes from the hands of God; God imposed it in order to free the human being from the maliciousness to which he found himself so closely united. In Gregory's mind, death is a magisterial move of the "economy of salvation"; the reality of death is tied to both protology and eschatology: sin and resurrection are the keys to understanding its significance

Gregory will also speak of "spiritual death", the "good death" and "death at the opportune time". The most ample passage is in a commentary on the phrase "There is a time to give birth and a time to die" (Qoh 3.2). In reality, both these events are involuntary: the woman does not choose the moment of birth, nor does the dying man choose the moment of death. They are thus objects of neither virtue nor vice. When the Scripture speaks of the "opportune time" of birth or death, it refers to another type of birth or death; it is speaking of dying to sin and birth to new life: "Death at the opportune time (εὐκαιρος θάνατος) is that one which is the cause of a true life" (*Eccl* 6, GNO V, 379/381). Consequently, earthly life is of extreme importance: it is the "opportune" time for the "good death" and birth to the true life.

This "good death" can even happen in the very moment of corporeal death. Gregory describes this with vigor. The most explicit and beautiful passages can be found in the description of the death of Moses and in that of the death of Macrina (*Vit Moys* I, 76 and II, 313–314, GNO VII/1, 32–33 and 140–142; *Macr*, GNO VIII/1, 395–400). Both deaths are immersed in the peace of an accomplished life that opens onto a new birth.

BIBL.: M. HAUKE, *Heilsverlust in Adam*, Paderborn 1993, 637–642; L.F. MATEO-SECO, *La teología de la muerte en la “Oratio Catechetica Magna” de G. de N.*, *ScrTh* 1 (1969) 453–473; IDEM, *La muerte y su más allá en el “diálogo sobre el alma y la resurrección de G. de N.”*, *ScrTh* 3 (1971) 75–107; IDEM, *El cristiano ante la vida y ante la muerte (Estudio del Panegírico de Gregorio de Nisa sobre Gregorio Taumaturgo)* in *The biographical works of Gregory of Nyssa. Proceedings of the Fifth International Colloquium on Gregory of Nyssa*, Philadelphia 1984, 197–221; IDEM, *‘Ο εὐκαιρος θάνατος. Eukairos thanatos. Consideraciones en torno a la muerte en las homilias al Ecclesiastés de Gregorio de Nisa*, in ST.G. HALL (Ed.) *Gregory of Nyssa Homilies on Ecclesiastes. An English Version with Supporting Studies. Proceedings of the Seventh International Colloquium on Gregory of Nyssa*, Berlin-New York, 1993, 277–297; E. MOUTSOULAS, *Γρηγόριος Νύσσης*, Athens 1997, 424–427.

Lucas Francisco Mateo-Seco

DEIFICATION

One must say that Gregory is rather cautious in speaking of “deification”. The word *theopoieô* occurs once in his earliest work, *De Virginitate*. Understanding virginity as making one without blemish and holy (see Eph 5.27), attributes belonging properly and primarily to God, what greater praise could be given to her (i.e. virginity)—asks Gregory—than that she “deifies, somehow (*theopiousan tropon tina*) those who have partaken (*meteschekotas*) of her pure mysteries making them participants (*koinonous*) in the glory of God, who alone is truly holy and blameless?” (*Virg* 1, GNO VIII/1, 4–10)

Two recurring elements are worth noting in this text: one, that deification is connected with participation in some perfections of God, and, second, that it is qualified by “in a way” or “somehow” (*tropon tina*).

We find also in several other works, written probably before his controversy with Eunomius, relatively extended texts on deification. So in his fifth homily *On the Lord’s Prayer*, commenting on “Forgive us our debts as we forgive our debtors,” Gregory says that this shows to what peak of virtue the human being should rise in order to approach God, for such a one “is shown almost no longer in terms of human nature, but through virtue is likened to God himself, so that he seems to be another [god] (*allon ekeinon*), by doing what God alone can do [namely to forgive sins]. Therefore if someone imitates in his own life the characteristics of the Divine Nature, he becomes somehow (*tropon tina*) that which he imitates” (*Or dom*, GNO VII/2, 59, 4–12). This thought returns on the next page of the same homily: “If a man is free from everything that comes under the concept of evil, he becomes somehow (*tropon tina*) a god, accomplishing in himself what reason sees concerning the Divine Nature.” And two lines later: Do you see then how the Lord “transforms somehow (*tropon tina*) the human nature into something more divine (*pros to theioteron*), legislating that those who approach God [in this manner] become gods (*theous genesthai*)” (*ibidem*, 60, 14–21).

A similar teaching is found in Gregory’s homilies on the Beatitudes. Already in the introduction the general principle is affirmed that since God alone is truly blessed, our blessedness is possible only by participation in Him (→ PARTICIPATION). This is further developed in terms of deification in the fifth homily (“Blessed are the merciful, for they shall

obtain mercy”): “Participation (*metousia*) in the beatitudes is nothing else than communion with Godhead (*theotêtos esti koinônia*) ... Therefore He seems to me in the following “beatitude” (*makarismos*) to deify, in a way, (*theopoiein tropon tina*) the one who hears and understands the message” (*Beat* 5, GNO VII/2, 124, 13–18).

Gregory similarly praises the gift indicated in the seventh beatitude, “Blessed are the peace-makers, for they will be called sons of God.” Gregory comments on this text, “The human being leaves his own nature, becoming imperishable from perishable, eternal from temporal, and wholly God from human being (*theos ex anthropou*).” But Gregory also insists in the text which follows that only those who possess peace in themselves can be “peacemakers,” and that peace is a grace due to the love (*philanthropia*) of God (*Beat* 7, GNO VII/2.).

The homily *De Beneficentia* shows a parallelism with the texts above in saying that mercy and beneficence are divine attributes, and therefore, if found in the human being, deify him (*theousin auton*) (*Benef*, GNO IX, 103.10). It is worth noting that whereas his older contemporary Gregory Nazianzen uses the verb *theoô* and its derivatives relatively frequently and almost exclusively for deification, Gregory uses the verb *theoô* only in this text.

In contrast to these rather exuberant uses of *theopoieô*, in his *Maced*, where Gregory argues for the divinity of the Holy Spirit, the verb occurs only once. The spirit deifies by leading, or bringing, human beings to God (*theopoiei theôi prosagon*) (GNO III/1, 113.16).

Gregory uses the term in a pejorative sense, as when he speaks of those who misuse passions and divinize them (*theopoieisthai ta pathê*) (*Eccl*, GNO V 438.11–12, see also 18).

In his works against Eunomius, *theopoieô* is used several times, but only in a pejorative sense. Gregory accuses Eunomius especially of deifying the term *agennêsia* by equating it with the very essence of God (e.g. *Eun* II, GNO I, 256.3–7) and thus rejecting the Divinity of the Son, since he is generated.

An important positive use of deification (but without using the words *theopoieô* or *theoô*) occurs in connection with Christ’s humanity or—as Gregory often puts it—the assumed man—which by union or “commingling” (*anakrasis*) with the Divinity is made divine (see e.g. *Perf*, VIII/1, 205.8–9).

Gregory uses the rare word *sunapothéoô* in some very important senses in the *Oratio Catechetica* and the *Adversus Apollinarim*. (Under this heading Lampe gives references only to these texts and to one other

text from Eusebius.) In both cases, Gregory speaks of the deification of Christ's humanity as its exaltation into divine glory by the resurrection and ascension, and he observes as a consequence that the whole of humanity (not all traits or all elements of human nature but all the individuals partaking of human nature) is somehow condivinized: *hina dia tês analêphtheisês par' autou kai sunapothêôtheisês sarkos hapan sundiasôthêi to suggenes autêi kai homophulon* (*Or cat*, GNO III/4 86.11–13) and even more clearly in the chapter on the Eucharist: *ho de phanêrôtheis theos dia touto katemixen heauton têi epikêrôi phusei, hina têtês theotêtos koinôniai sunapothêôthêi to anthrôpinon* (*ibidem*, GNO III/4, 97.23–98.1). The context in the *Oratio catechetica* makes it clear that this is not an automatic process, for it is accomplished by participation in the Eucharist and certainly presupposes a corresponding Christian life. The deification of the whole of humanity by Christ's glorified humanity is fully expressed in a parallel text of the *Antirrheticus adversus Apollinarium*: the Logos *dia touto tôi anthrôpôi anakratheis kai pasan en heautôi tèn hêmeteran phusin dexamenos, hina têtê pros ton theion anakrasei sunapothêôthêi to anthrôpinon dia tês aparchês ekeinês pantos sunagiazomenou tou tês phuseôs hêmôn phuramatos* (*Antirrh*, GNO III/1, 151.17–20).

That Gregory, starting with his controversy with Eunomius, avoids the terminology of the deification of the human being—except for the texts, treated in the last paragraph, on the condivinization of humanity with the glorified Christ—can be easily understood: he wanted to keep clear of anything that could have obscured the fundamental division between creatures and the Triune God.

He expressed, however, the human being's communion with God using even more abundantly the terminology of participation (→ PARTICIPATION). This is evident especially in his latest two major works, *De vita Moysis* and *In Canticum canticorum*, both stressing humanity's calling for endlessly progressive participation in God. It would be easy to show how these and other similar doctrines imply more or less clearly the deification of human beings; the present article, however, limits itself consciously to the explicit teaching on this topic.

Note: Deification is not affirmed directly of the material world, but through the human being it too is included in the *theian koinônian* (e.g. *Or cat*, GNO III/4, 22.8–10). This is one of the few texts where Gregory alludes to 1 Pt 2.14, but Gregory never quotes it fully, perhaps to avoid the misconception of creatures participating in God's nature.

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David L. Balás

DEIT EUAG

De deitate adversus Evagrium

The discourse was delivered, according to most scholars, in 381 during the second Ecumenical Council at Constantinople. The hypothesis that this discourse was given at the council assembled again at Constantinople in the year 394, i.e. a few years before Gregory's death, has also been proposed. There is no strong argument in favor of this opinion, given that the content regarding the Holy Spirit would have quite fittingly been pronounced in the Council of 381 (→ CHRONOLOGY).

The title "For his Own Ordination" creates a certain difficulty, since there is no mention of an ordination, and thus of course not that of the speaker. There have been different explanations formulated on this point, but these are unpersuasive.

With the humility that distinguishes him, Gregory defines his own words as "of lead" in comparison to the words "of gold" of those who have spoken before him (GNO IX, 332, 10–11); while the president of the council, probably Meletius, calls him "a good and rich lord of the banquet" (331, 13).

Referring next to the Holy Spirit, Gregory defines him as "divine by nature" and denies that his divinity might be "acquired" (333, 16–17). The Nyssen then expresses his sadness at the ecclesiastical situation. As the heretical Bishops were largely from the bordering region of Thrace, Gregory expresses his joy at the arrival of the Bishops from distant countries, in particular from Mesopotamia, the land of Abraham (337, 18–19). The presence of the Bishops attests to the presence of the Holy Spirit.

Gregory does not fail to refer also to those who negate the divinity of the Son, nor to underscore that "that which is without quantity is not measured, that which is invisible is not examined, that which is incorporeal is not weighed, that which is infinite is not confronted" (339, 10–12).

He finally returns to the Holy Spirit and in particular to the goods which are granted by Him: he cites the "incorruptibility of the soul" and the "eternity of life, the kingdom of heaven and joy without end" (341, 3–4).

BIBL.: (Ed) PG 46, 544–553; E. GEBHARDT in GNO IX, 331–341; (Tran) L. NISSEN, *Sacerdoce des baptisés, sacerdoce des prêtres*, PDF 46, Paris 1991, 53–61; (Lit) J. BERNARDI, *La prédication des Pères Cappadociens*, Paris 1968, 324; E. GEBHARDT, *Titel und Zeit der Rede G. von N. "in suam ordinationem"*, "Hermes" 89 (1961) 503–507; G. MAY, *Die Datierung der Rede "in suam ordinationem" des G. von N. und die Verhandlungen mit den Pneumatomachen auf dem Konzil von Konstantinopel 381*, VigChr 23 (1969) 38–57; E.D. MOUTSOULAS, Γρηγόριος Νύσσης, Athens 1997, 262–263; A.M. RITTER, G. von N. "in suam ordinationem". Eine Quelle für die Geschichte des Konzils von Konstantinopel 381?, ZKG 79 (1968) 308–328; R. STAATS, *Die Datierung von "in suam ordinationem"*, Vig Chr 21 (1967) 156–179.

Elias Moutsoulas

DEIT FIL

De Deitate Filii et Spiritus Sancti et in Abraham

This discourse was composed at Constantinople in June 383, on the occasion of the “Religious Colloquium” under the patronage of Theodosius, to which the heads of the Arians, Eunomians and Macedonians were also invited (A.M. RITTER, 227). Gregory preaches his homily before the assembled people (GNO X/2, 118, 13; 120, 1; 127,1; 131, 1; 134, 1), and with a harsh criticism of those who oppose the dogma of the equal nature of the divine Persons, he wishes to confirm in the faith of the Great Church the doubtful listeners. The homily adheres to the highly artistic prose, whose incisive and structured language is enriched with many metaphors.

He opens the predication with an analogy of the honey-bee in a flowered garden, added to Pr 6.8a–c, with which he refers to the relationship between theological reflection and the Bible: before the incomprehensible and inexpressible Wisdom of the Scripture we must behave like the honey-bee in a flowered garden. Even if the honey-bee is too weak to gather flowers, it can nevertheless transform the minuscule part which it collects into delicious honey. In the *Pratum Spirituale* of the Scripture Gregory chooses as a *leitmotiv* of his sermon the Gospel metaphor of “new wine in old skins” (Mt 9.17; Mk 2.22; Lk 5.37). This proclaims, according to Gregory, the relationship between the Holy Spirit and the human soul. “The old skins” are the Arians and the Pneumatomachians, who through their unbelief cannot receive the divine teaching. Gregory describes with bitter irony the situation in Constantinople, where the Arian heresy continued to be tenaciously affirmed “in the streets”. In its confusion, according to Gregory, it had surpassed the error of the pagans whom Paul encountered in Athens, since these at least recognized the incomprehensibility of God (Acts 17, 21–23), while the Arians pretend to be able to understand God in his nature (cf. *Eun* I, GNO I, 174, 15). In their backward mentality, Arians and Eunomians, according to Gregory, are similar to the Stoics and the Epicureans: for example, when they declare that the Son is created, they declare at the same time that he is material. Further, if they reject the Son, they reject likewise the Father and God, and thus fall into Epicurean impiety. Terms which are in rela-

tion to each other and are not logically separable, such as “Radiance of Glory” and “Imprint of his Substance” (Heb 1.3), “Power of God and Wisdom of God” (1 Cor 1.24), indicate the relation between God and the Son (*Eun* III/6, GNO II, 202, 20). The hierarchy expressed with antithetical concepts such as “lesser and greater”, and the Arian objection that the Father is He who sends, the Son He who is sent, are refuted with the words: “He who has sent Me is with Me” (Jn 8.29). This refutation is confirmed with dogmatic formulas such as: “He is sent but not separated”, “sent through love for men, not separated in the indivisible nature” (125, 12), “the fullness of God has emptied itself in the form of the slave” (128, 11). Gregory presents further arguments from the perspective of biblical hermeneutics. He divides the contrary dictions of the New Testament into those that refer to his divine nature and those that refer to his human nature.

Thus, on one hand the words “The Father is greater than Me” (Jn 14.28) or “He who has sent Me” (Jn 8.29) are pronounced in reference to the human nature, on the other hand, “that I am in the Father and the Father in Me” (Jn 14.10) or “equal to God” (Phil 2.6) refer to the divine nature. Thus, when the Scripture states that the Father is “greater” and when it states that the Son is “equal” to the Father, both are exact dictions (127,2–130,11).

The theme of the equality of the Father and Son offers Gregory the opportunity to narrate extensively the story of Abraham, with particular attention to the sacrifice of Isaac, concluding by the words of the angel of God at the occasion of the sacrifice of Isaac (“I have sworn by Myself,” Gn 22.16) that the angel (sent) by God is equal to God (131,3–140,18; cf. *Eun* III/10, GNO II 273, 24f.). The following presentation, suggestive of the drama of sacrifice, has in fact a larger function. Gregory continually returns to Abraham when he speaks of faith as the supreme form of knowledge of God. In this passage the figure of Abraham is a symbol of the surpassing of sensual nature out of love for God, something that must be presupposed, if one is to attain to the true sense of Sacred Scripture.

Gregory exhorts his audience to be proper receptacles in order to conserve in themselves, through the teaching of the Church, the “trepidation” of the Holy Spirit.

In the final refutation, thoroughly described by Gregory, of the wretched position of the Macedonians—the Holy Spirit is not God because the Bible does not designate Him as God—Gregory responds with the principle of philosophy of language which is common to the Cappadocians: All that is said of God is not a definition of his nature, which remains

inexpressible in itself (142,3). The name “God” (θεός) indicates a visual faculty (in Greek θεάομαι) as a confirmation of the words of the serpent: “your eyes will open and you will become like gods” (Gn 3.5). That this designation refers also to the Holy Spirit can be discerned from the words spoken to Ananias by Peter, who, thanks to the Holy Spirit, sees the lie and says that Ananias has lied to the Holy Spirit ... God (Acts 5.3–4; *Abl*, GNO III/1, 44,17). The words “Holy Spirit” and “God” are in the same reciprocal relationship as “man” and “living being” (cf. *Graec*, GNO III/1, 29, 9). They refer to the third Person of the Trinity, through whom the truth becomes visible even to human beings.

There are manuscripts in which this homily is transmitted along with a panegyric on St. Abram under the name of Ephrem of Syria. Both of the texts coincide literally in part. S.I. Mercati, the editor of the panegyric in question, contested the authenticity of the Nyssen’s homily. Nevertheless, P. MAAS, through a linguistic analysis of the text of the S.I. MERCATI edition, has persuasively demonstrated that Gregory’s narration is the original text, and was used by the Pseudo-Ephrem for his panegyric (cf. S. HAIDACHER; F. MANN in GNO X/2, 110).

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Tina Dolidze

DESIRE

ἐπιθυμία

1. DESIRE · 2. PASSIONS AND VIRTUE
3. *EPEKTASIS* AND RESURRECTION.

1. DESIRE. Desire (*epithymia*), alternately translated “longing”, is one of the two principal emotions (*pathe*) of the sentient soul that are the source of both virtuous and sinful emotions. The significance of *epithymia* in the Nyssen’s accounts of sin and the soul’s ascent to God lies in its pivotal role in the dynamics of his trichotymous soul. In the death-bed dialogue with his sister, Macrina, *On the Soul and Resurrection*, the Nyssen explains the soul’s development with the body. In the womb and at birth, the soul is a vegetative soul with only the functions for the inner functioning of the organism, e.g. respiration, ingestion, elimination, reproduction. Like plants, however, it has no awareness of the external world. Sometime after birth, the soul develops the faculties of the sentient soul which can perceive the world around it. Along with the development of the faculties of sense perception by which we experience external phenomena as pleasant or unpleasant, comes the appetitive or desiring faculty (*epithymetikon*) and the spirited faculty (*thymoeides*). The desiring faculty produces two emotional responses: in the case of pleasant stimuli, desire, or with unpleasant stimuli, dislike. This is the principle of attraction. The spirited faculty is the principle of gumption. It is the drive to act to attain a desirable object or to resist an unpleasant object. Together, the appetitive and spirited faculties are the cause of movement in the soul. In time, the soul develops the rational faculty (*logistikon*) with its capacities for contemplation and calculation. Reason is capable of apprehending the immaterial, intelligible realities which are not apprehended by the bodily senses. Specifically, the rational faculties’ perception of the intelligible goods of God allow the soul to know and participate in God. By this participation, in the form either of contemplation or of moral imitation, the Christian comes to share the moral likeness with God and mirror God’s virtues. Even as the perception of sensible goods arouses sensual desires, the rational soul’s perception of the intelligible goods of God evokes desire for God which he calls godly love or *agape*. Thus the

character of one's desire is determined by the soul's perception. Once a good is perceived, the desire orients the spirited faculty to pursue the good. When the intellectual faculty arouses the love of God by its vision of the goodness and beauty of God, this love evokes the drive to seek God. In other words, love of God's goodness inspires the courage and fortitude necessary to overcome adversities in order to attain the divine goodness that the Christian desires. This dynamic relation of the intellectual perception of God's goodness (in God's *energeia*), the desire or love of God, and the courage to seek to know and experience God's goodness is the central dynamic of the soul's ascent to God.

2. PASSIONS AND VIRTUE. The Nyssen's presentation of desire in *An et res* changes over the course of the dialogue. Initially, Macrina argues that, because *epithymia* and *thymos* are proper to the sentient, non-rational faculties of the soul, the passions are alien to the *imago Dei* which is rational. They are, therefore, not essential to human nature since the essence of a thing is that which is distinctive (*idia*) of it. Because the passions are non-rational, and thus contrary to the rational nature that is proper to the divine image, Macrina deems them varts that are external to human nature. When Gregory counters with examples of emotions of desire and anger among Old Testament patriarchs and prophets, Macrina offers a refined view of desire and passion. They are not intrinsically bad, but morally neutral. If desire and its related passions are directed uncritically by the senses, they are vice. If they are directed by reason to God, they are virtue. Moreover, although desire is not inherent to the rational faculty of contemplation, she says that it is a faculty lying upon the margins of the rational soul and is necessary for the soul's movement toward the good. Under the control of reason and directed to God, *epithymia* is love and *thymos* is courage which drive the soul toward God and enable it to overcome the temptations of other lesser goods or impediments, such as fear of death, that would divert it from its proper goal. Thus these non-rational impulses can become the allies of reason. Indeed, without desire, Macrina says, the soul could not ascend to God. Yet because *epithymia* and *thymos* are proper to the non-rational, sentient soul, which developed before the faculties of the rational soul, human desires are habitually oriented toward sensual, rather than intelligible, goods. These sensual desires, by force of habit, act as glue that attaches the soul to the material world. It is because habitual desire for the sensual, temporal goods is like nails that fix the mind upon this world, that we experience the pain of grief at death that separates the soul from the

things it loves. Commenting on Mt. 5:6, "Blessed are those who hunger and thirst after righteousness" in his 4th homily on the Beatitudes, the Nyssen says that when we fulfill our desire with the goods of this world, our desire becomes sated, so that we do not desire God. If, therefore, the soul is to unite with God, rather than the transitory goods of life, ascetic disciplines are needed whereby the soul, in this life, begins the process of separating its desires from sensual goods and reorienting them towards God.

3. *EPEKTASIS* AND RESURRECTION. One of the questions that Gregory raises in *An et res* is whether the purification of human nature in the resurrection eliminates desire, since it is alien to the *imago Dei*. If so, he presses, how can the saint make progress to God without love as the soul's principle of movement? Macrina counters that there are other forms of movement that in the resurrection will allow participation in God. In the resurrection, when God is "all and in all", there will be no separation of the soul from God. Since desire is an erotic longing for that which is absent, the God who is ubiquitously present to us as the "all in all" cannot be the object of desire. Instead, Macrina says, he is the object of enjoyment (*apolausis*) which is a form of intellectual movement. Thus in the resurrection, enjoyment replaces desire as the way in which we experience God. In the Nyssen's later works, such as *Life of Moses* and *Commentary on the Song of Songs*, he reverses this view arguing instead that desire is inherent to the dynamics of the soul's participation in God. This theory of participation is called *EPEKTASIS* (→). Coming from Phil 3.14 where Paul says that he has not yet attained perfection but is straining forward (*epektainomenos*) to the prize that lies ahead, *epektasis*, as coined by Jean Daniélou, refers to the Nyssen's view of perfection, not as rest in God (as in an Aristotelian or Augustinian view of perfection), but as the soul's eternal movement into God's infinite being. Because God is infinite in goodness and virtue, the soul will never be satiated in its contemplation of God or of its imitation of God's virtues. Therefore the soul will never stop growing in its knowledge of God and in its conformity with God's virtues. The Nyssen's account of perfection in *Vit Moys* as unending growth into the likeness of God presupposes participation in God through the dialectic of the illumination of the intellect and the purification of desire. The more a Christian's desire is purified by her separation from the sensual goods, the greater the illumination her mind is able to receive and with it a clearer vision of God's beauty and goodness. The more clearly she sees God's goodness and

beauty the greater and more pure her desire for God. Similarly, in *Cant* the Nyssen interprets the Bride's unending pursuit of the Bridegroom who is ever running away from the Bride to describe the soul's unceasing search for God. Because God is infinite, the soul's vision of God is never complete. Therefore, even in the resurrection the soul's incomplete vision of the divine beauty will arouse desire to see more of God's yet unrevealed beauty. This view of desire reflects the ontological difference between God and humanity. While God is eternal, humanity as a creature who came into being from nothing is inherently changing. God is infinite Being; creatures inhabit the realm of becoming. Since there is always a gap (*diastêma*) between God's Being and our becoming, there will always be something of God the soul loves that eludes its grasp even in the resurrection. Therefore, God will always be the object of the soul's *epithymia* that is ever straining forward to glimpse more of the God whose infinite goodness exceeds our grasp.

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J. Warren Smith

DEVIL

The devil belongs to the intelligible world, i.e. to the *hypercosmos*, and he existed before the creation of man. He belongs to the sphere of the “angelic powers” and was created good, as is true of all things created by God. The devil is a spirit without a body (πνεῦμα ἀσώματον), who through his own malice fell from on high (*Benef*, GNO IX, 94). The devil is the evil one, the prince of this world from whom we ask to be liberated in the Our Father (*Or dom* 5, GNO VII/2, 72–73).

The devil received from God the responsibility for organizing the cosmos. With this idea, Gregory places himself in a tradition that is clearly found in Irenaeus (*Epideixis* 11 and 16, SC 62, 46), Origen (*Contra Celsum* 5, 30, SC 147) and Methodius of Olympus (*Res* 1, 37, CSG 278). J. DANÉLOU traces its origins back to Judaic apocalyptic literature (*Théologie du judéo-christianisme*, Tournai 1958).

Gregory calls him angel of the earth, because he had received the power to govern the earthly sphere. This angel, when he saw that man was formed of earth in the image and likeness of God, was *envious* of him: it seemed intolerable to him that one who comes from the earth could be made in the image of God. In *Or cat* 6 (GNO III/4, 23–26), Gregory interprets this *envy* towards man as the reason for the fall of the angel of the earth and for the temptation with which he seduces man. This is a constant concept in Gregory: Envy chased man from paradise, since it “becomes a serpent” to seduce Eve (*Vit Moys* II, 256, GNO VIII/2, 122). In this conception as well, Gregory follows Irenaeus, according to whom the angel, seeing the favors that God had given to man, fills himself with envy, ruining himself, and convinces man to disobey the order of God (*Epideixis*, 16, SC 62, 55).

This elicits a serious question in Gregory: How could a hypercosmic creature fall into the passion of envy? He responds by basing himself on the radical distinction between Creator and creature—God alone is above movement and therefore God alone cannot sin. The devil was created, and therefore, despite his perfection, carried in himself the capacity to change, and thus the possibility to choose evil with his liberty. This is what we can call the *ontological* reason. In *Or cat* 6 Gregory adds a reason that could be called psychological, and which is extremely important for his concept of contemplation and for his entire spiritual theology.

Gregory insists: How could a creature that is so perfect choose evil instead of choosing the good? His response: Because he closed his eyes before the good, that is, he pulled himself away from the contemplation of the good. The same thing happened to him as happens to a human being who closes his eyes before the light. He sees nothing other than darkness (GNO III/4, 24).

The angel of the earth, once corrupted by envy, tempts man, pulling him into his fall, and falling in turn even further. Gregory uses the image of the stone that falls from a mountain, carrying many other things with it in its fall. Gregory's passages here have a great force both in reflection on man's liberty and on the consequences of sin: The devil convinces man "to kill himself with his own hands" as he could not violate his liberty, since it "was protected by the benediction of God" (*Or cat* 6, GNO III/4, 25). From the perspective of the human being, sin is suicide since it means not only abandoning oneself to the passions, but also to death. The diabolical temptation was thus largely a beguilement, a fraud. The devil does not present man with evil as it is in its nature, but, as a charlatan, he fools him with an apparent pleasure of the senses (*Op hom* 20, PG 44 200D). It was only through this beguilement that the devil could conquer man. Gregory obviously has Gn 3.1–6 in mind, and as R. WINLING (181, n. 2) observes, he insists on the machinations of the Tempter, in order to prepare for the presentation of the theory of the "beguilement of the beguiler" or of the "rights of the devil".

This theory is extensively developed in chapters 19–26 of *Or Cat*. The theory of the "rights of the devil" has as a background the fact that Christ liberates us from the power of the devil, and that this liberation was accomplished through justice on Christ's part. Gregory's reasoning can be resumed in the following manner. With sin, man sold himself as a slave to the devil. In this manner, with sin man purchased a certain kinship with the devil, so that the Lord can call the Jews "sons of the devil" (Jn 8.44). This is particularly evident in idolatry, which is an expression of the dominion of the devil on man: by adoring the devil we are transformed in a certain manner into his slaves (*Or cat* 18, GNO III/4, 50–51). The liberation of the human being therefore necessitated snatching away his adorers from the devil, and justice required that God not do this in a "tyrannical" manner, but in a certain way pay a price for his liberation, as one pays a price to free a slave. In a certain sense this would consist of paying the devil certain "rights" in order to liberate human beings.

The mode that Christ chose to liberate man demonstrated his justice, even towards the devil. This mode consists of paying to the devil his

“rights” through a beguilement. The devil, seeing the miracles and the power of the Lord, allows himself to be dragged along by cupidity and the desire to possess Him, more than all other human beings, in death. The Lord in turn keeps his divinity veiled under the humility of the flesh, so that the devil approaches him without knowing his infinite power. The devil had fooled man with the vanity of pleasure, but Christ fools the devil with the humility of his flesh.

Gregory’s position can be defined as purely speculative: He takes the theory of the rights of the devil to the limits, something that is, paradoxically, his end. Once again, the line of thought that passes from Irenaeus to Origen is present. Irenaeus too spoke of the “rights of the devil”, a theme he applied in various ways; the enemy, he says, would not have been overcome through justice “if he who overcame him had not been a man born of a woman”. The Word of God, who is just, wishes to snatch from the devil his property in a just fashion (e.g., *Adv. Haer.* 5, 1, SC 153, 16–22). Similar affirmations can be found in Origen (MATEO-SECO, 142–143). Basil maintains that the devil releases man only through a ransom, a theory he continually maintains quite firmly: No man, he says, is capable of convincing the devil to let free anyone who has fallen even once into his power (*Hom in Psalm* 48, 3, PG 29, 437).

Gregory Nazianzen on the other hand completely rejects this theory, which he considers *injurious* to God (*Or* 45, 22, PG 36, 653). This reflection of Nazianzen is not without sense: The theory as it stands is unacceptable. But, if we wish to be fair to Gregory, it is necessary to bear in mind that his theory is situated in a historical development which mitigates it in a certain manner. Further, not even he states that a ransom as such was paid to the devil. Gregory presents this theory in the *Or Cat* alone, and does not present it as an important part of his SOTERIOLOGY (→), but rather as a response to the objections of the pagans to the reasons why God did not free man by using his power, but delivered himself up to death.

The Nyssen’s theory of the rights of the devil implies a final question: What did Gregory think of the final liberation of the devil? This question is part of his conception of the APOCATASTASIS (→). In *Or cat* 26, Gregory states that the “beguilement” of the devil did not serve only to save man, but also to save the devil himself (GNO III/4, 66). This affirmation again recalls Origen, who, citing 1 Cor 15.14–28, states that the destruction of the “last enemy” means that God will cause wickedness to disappear from him (*De Princ.* III, 6, SC 268, 245 and SC 269, 138). H. Crouzel and M. Simonetti recommend prudence while reading this text of Origen,

seeing in this affirmation more of a hypothesis than a firm conviction (SC 269, 138–140). The same should be said of Gregory of Nyssa, who returned to this notion in *An et res* (PG 46, 104) and *Tunc et ipse* (GNO III/2, 15).

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Lucas Francisco Mateo-Seco

DIASTÊMA

Διάστημα

Ever since the publication in 1942 of von Balthasar's *Présence et pensée*, the importance of the concept of *diastêma* (διάστημα) in the thought of Gregory has received considerable attention. The word itself refers to "an interval or a gap" and, in its more conceptual register, to "the inescapable horizontal extensions of both space and time." To Gregory, it was the very fabric of the created order. Along with *KINÊSIS* (→), its presence indelibly marked creation as having been created and therefore constituted what Balthasar aptly called the "irréductible opposition entre Dieu et la créature." Gregory observed: "For the gap is great and impassable by which the uncreated nature is hindered from the created essence ... the one is stretched out by a certain dimensional extension (*diastématikê*), being enclosed by time and space, the other transcends every notion of dimension (*diastêmatos*) ..." (GNO I, 246, 14–21) Creation has *diastêma*; God does not. Creation is "enclosed by time and space;" God is not.

The implications of this fundamental distinction and its relationship to *diastêma* permeated all of Gregory's theological thinking (*diastêma* and its cognates appear in 23 of his works). On an epistemological level, the implications of *diastêma* concerned the restricted scope of any human knowledge of God: "Thus the whole created order is unable to get out of itself through a comprehensive vision, but remains continually enclosed within itself, and whatever it beholds, it is looking at itself ... One may struggle to surpass or transcend *diastématikên* conception ... but he does not transcend. For in every object it conceptually discovers, it always comprehends the *diastêma* inherent in the being of the apprehended object, for *diastêma* is nothing other than creation itself" (GNO V, 412, 6–14). Every human perception and conception begins and ends with *diastêma*: it can be neither transcended nor escaped. Humanity's desire, therefore, to understand a God who transcends every notion of *diastêma* must constantly negotiate the self-referential inability to conceive or comprehend anything but *diastêma*.

Language itself is one of the by-products of this negotiation. Gregory established the following ratios: *diastêma*, language; no *diastêma* (presence), no language (GNO I, 287, 26–29). In other words, language is

needed only when there is a “gap” to be overcome. “But to God all things are present ... What need, then, in his case, for parts of speech ...” (GNO I, 309, 14 ff.).

Another implication of *diastêma* concerns creation’s relationship to time (→ ETERNITY AND TIME). “In this life we apprehend a beginning and an end for all beings, but the Blessedness who is above creation admits neither beginning nor end ... not passing from one point to another by means of intervals (*diastêmatikos*).” (GNO I, 246 22 ff.) In contrast to God, humanity experiences a trans-finite infinity based in an infinite series of “intervals.”

On an ontological level, the significance of *diastêma* has been strongly debated. Although there is consensus that Gregory believed in spiritual progress, transformation [*theosis*] and intimacy with God, there is disagreement whether his understanding of spiritual ascent [*epektasis*] allowed for union with God (Yes: DANÉLOU, BALTHASAR, V. HARRISON; No: MÜHLENBERG, MOSSHAMMER, DOUGLASS).

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Scot Douglass

DIEM LUM

In diem luminum

This homily was preached on 6 January 383, and is principally addressed to those who have just received baptism, but also to those who are not yet baptized. It does not make concrete reference to the baptism of the Lord by John, but to the spiritual regeneration of Christians which is achieved through Holy Baptism. This regeneration is reached through the Holy Spirit, but presupposes the “restoration” and the “salvation” of man by Him who sanctified “the first fruits of every action” (GNO IX, 223,12–224,2).

Baptism is, for Gregory, the “purification of sins, remission of faults, cause of renovation and regeneration” (224, 4–5). The Nyssen refers to various symbolic images taken from the Old Testament which principally manifest the renewing power of water.

Referring in particular to the significance of the three immersions, Gregory links this both to the entombment during three days and the Resurrection, as well as to the three Persons of the Most Holy Trinity.

Underscoring that there does not exist any difference in relationship to the act of sanctification among the Persons of the Holy Trinity, he accuses those “who divide the three hypostases into different natures and into three different operating gods” (229, 13–17).

Gregory next speaks in detail of various prefigurations of Baptism in the Old Testament. The greater part of these are contained in the historical books, but they are taken also from the Psalms and the prophetic books. Gregory speaks of “personages loving the beautiful and the good” (230, 16–17) or of the “witnesses of the divine Scriptures” (237, 19–20); he begins with Hagar, Abraham’s slave, and continues with Isaac, Jacob, Moses, Elias etc.

After this extensive historical evocation, Gregory invites those who have been adorned “with the gift of regeneration” to demonstrate “after the mystical grace, a change of habits” (237, 23–26).

A brief prayer follows to Him who is “loving of men and dispenser of so many graces, the Lord Christ.” The homily closes with an invocation addressed by Gregory to his audience to sing “a hymn of glory to God”

and with a doxology to the head of the spouse, Christ, who is, who was, and will be (241,21–242,3).

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Elias Moutsoulas

DIEM NAT

In diem natalem

Diem nat is a sermon on the birth of Christ preached on December 25th 386. It is extremely important for the study of the history of this feast, which people had begun to celebrate a short time before in Cappadocia, and which had received the name of *Theophanía* (MOSSAY 1965, 1, 21–22).

Gregory underscores the joyous character of the day, following Is 9.6: a child has been given to us. Remembering Jn 1.14 (“He has placed his tent among us”), he associates the feast of birth with the feast of tabernacles, since it is now that the Lord has set up his “human tent” among us. On the time chosen by God for the birth of the Lord, Gregory offers a consideration that is usual for him: the Lord is born when the night is longest, that is when evil has reached its height (BOUCHET, 621–625).

This sermon is also important for MARIOLOGY (→). Gregory highlights the miracle of the virgin mother, on the basis of Mt 1.23 and Ex 3.3. The virgin birth is compared to the mystery of the bush that burns without being consumed. It is the same exegesis as that found in *Vit Moys* II, 19–22, GNO VII/1, 39–40. Gregory follows the Protevangelium of James, which he expressly notes as apocryphal, when he must speak of the life of the virgin before the Annunciation, her education in the temple of Jerusalem and her betrothal.

Gregory refutes those who do not understand “the principle of the economy” and say that it was not fitting for the Lord to be corporeally born. These are obviously Docetists. Finally, Gregory highlights the existing ties between the feast of Christmas and the feast of Easter.

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Lucas Francisco Mateo-Seco

DIFF ESS HYP

Epistula 38 or Ad Petrum fratrem

The writing has been transmitted in Basil's epistolary corpus (now counted as *Epist.* 38), with Gregory himself as the addressee, but also as a short treatise under Gregory's authorship, addressed to his younger brother Peter. The writing does not possess the typical characteristics of a letter, but presents the appearance of a short treatise that explains the difference between *ousia* and *hypostasis*. It is born of the controversy with those theologians who hold *ousia* and *hypostasis* as equivalent. Gregory's opponents censure Neo-Nicene theology for affirming a difference of *hypostasis*. In their eyes, Gregory by doing this affirms even a difference of nature, (thus being close to Eunomius's theology). Since there is an extensive commentary on Heb 1.3 at the end of the writing, it is possible that this passage had already been used by the adversaries as a biblical proof.

The writing begins with the distinction between concepts that indicate the common (*koinon*) and those that indicate the specific and individual (*idion*) (*Diff ess hyp* 2, 1–5). In the case of many men, such as Peter, Andrew, John and James, “man” is the designation of the common and applies to each in the same way (they are thus *homoousiai*). Names are added only to distinguish the specific or individual. This always presupposes a common base: whoever says “Paul” implicitly presupposes that that which is indicated belongs to the nature of “man”, and names a characteristic for the sake of completeness (in this case his name). This last is on the level of the *hypostasis*, while the sphere of the common is that of *ousia* (2,5–3,6). If this is applied to God, it follows that, in that which refers to the common definitions (such as uncreated, incomprehensible etc.), Father, Son and Holy Spirit are without differences (and belong to a unique *ousia*), while the distinction of the specific is defined by the concept of *hypostasis* (3, 25–39). The close connection between Father, Son and Holy Spirit is confirmed by the consideration of the gifts given by God. For even grace and spiritual gifts are unthinkable without the Son, who in his turn is not thinkable without the Father (4, 1–18). Further, one must presuppose such an intimate union in the Trinity (and it is this which is affirmed in order to distinguish the coexistence

of three persons) that no distance is thinkable: whoever thinks of the Holy Spirit thinks automatically at the same time Christ and the Father as well (4, 18–23, 32–65). The distinction of the *hypostases* and the commonness of the substance are thus directly tied to each other (4, 70–73).

This reality is then expressed through the example of the rainbow. In a rainbow, the sun's ray refracts and reflects into different colors: These colors are intimately connected between each other, and cannot be separated. They can however be distinguished. At the same time, there is no doubt that there is one unique ray of light that is refracted. The example is designed to show that it is not absurd to contemporaneously affirm the commonness of substance and the characteristics of the *hypostases* (5, 1–40).

The biblical passage of Heb 1.3, in which the Son is defined as “imprint of the existence (*hypostasis*)” of the Father, should not be considered as a witness affirming that the Father and the Son are a unique *hypostasis*, but refers to the close relationship between the Father and the Son (6, 1–10). This is already indicated by the expression that immediately precedes Heb 1.3, “emanation of the glory”: the Son is inseparable from the Father, as the splendor that emanates from a flame is inseparable from the flame itself. The expression “imprint of existence” refers analogously to the fact that whoever considers the Son immediately thinks also of the existence of the Father. The existence of the Father is recognized in the Son (as a person in the reflected image) (7, 1–8, 25).

The authorship of this writing is contested among scholars. In 1972 HÜBNER maintained the thesis that the concept of *ousia* in *Diff ess hyp* is similar to an Aristotelian-Porphyrion conception, rather than the Stoic conception of *ousia* found in the certainly authentic writings of Basil (particularly in *Adversus Eunomium*), thus eliminating Basilian authorship for *Diff ess hyp*. This solution to the problem of authenticity, based upon the content, had as consequence a widespread attribution of *Diff ess hyp* to Gregory, even if doubts on Hübner's argumentation were continually expressed. (e.g. by FEDWICK, HAMMERSTAEDT or HAUSCHILD).

In 1996 DRECOLL showed that Basil's conception of *ousia* is not as Stoic as Hübner presented it. The decision on the authenticity should also not be founded solely on the situation of a concept in the history of philosophy, even if a central one. There are various aspects to be considered: a) External tradition (in them *Diff ess hyp* is strongly attributed to Basil, while the tradition that assigns it to Gregory is partially interpolated and is somewhat inferior overall, but not so much as

to completely exclude Gregory as the author); b) Analysis of Linguistic usage (here it is necessary to underscore that *Diff ess hyp*'s adherence to Basil's linguistic usage is worthy of consideration); c) Writing style (the writing is somewhat closer to Gregory's style, but not so much as to exclude Basil as author, all the more so due to Basil's stylistic variations); and finally d) Content itself. From this perspective in particular, there is a strikingly close proximity to Basil's theological development in the 370's. This is true for example of the elaboration of the difference between *ousia* and *hypostasis* based upon the difference between the *koinon* and *idion*, as well as other particulars (the comparison of various men to explain the common substance, insistence on the unknowability of the *ousia*). *Diff ess hyp* fits well into the context of the elaboration of the difference between *ousia* and *hypostasis* found in some of Basil's other writings (*Epist.* 125; *Epist.* 51; *Epist.* 214,4; *Epist.* 236,6). If one wishes to insist on Gregory's authorship of the text, it is necessary to underscore the Nyssen's strong dependence in both language and content on Basil. J. ZACHHUBER recently defended anew Gregory's authorship, showing in *Diff ess hyp* a series of lexicographical particularities which in his judgment weigh in favor of Gregory's authorship rather than Basil's.

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Volker Henning Drecoll

DIVINE NAMES

1. HUMAN LANGUAGE · 2. THE EXISTENCE OF GOD · 3. PROPER
USAGE OF THE DIVINE NAMES · 4. THE ANALOGICAL VALUE OF NAMES
5. LANGUAGE AT THE SERVICE OF CONCEPTS · 6. MULTIPLICITY OF
NAMES AND DIVINE SIMPLICITY.

Gregory is one of the theologians who is most impressed by the divine infinity and the transcendence of God. This is a transcendence in being, on which a transcendence over all knowledge and all language follows. Gregory develops this thought often, with deep repercussions on his theology and his spirituality (→ *EPEKTASIS*). The true knowledge of God, Gregory asserts, “consists in seeing in not seeing” because God “transcends all knowledge, totally enclosed in incomprehensibility as by a shadow” (*Vit Moys* II, 163).

“Seeing in not seeing”. This conviction, maintained consistently throughout his whole life, poses a serious problem for Gregory: Can one then say something of God? Can one attribute any name to Him? This problem of the language on God is treated with particular attention in *Eun* II. This work is intellectually vigorous and highly precise. In the whole of Gregory’s writings against Eunomius, it occupies a place dedicated to the philosophy of language, according to the schema offered by POTTIER: *Eun* I: *Metaphysics and Trinity*; *Eun* II: *Philosophy of Language*; *Eun* III: *Christology* (POTTIER, 23).

1. HUMAN LANGUAGE. From the first controversy with Saint Basil, Eunomius had deepened the question of the origin of human language. He stated that the name ἀγέννητος perfectly designates the divine essence, and that the other names predicated of God, precisely because He is simple, must be understood as synonyms to this first name. To found his thesis, Eunomius, who logically does not find this name attributed to God in Sacred Scripture, clings to the affirmation that the names we use have a divine origin.

In responding to Eunomius, Gregory observes that on this question, Eunomius depends on Cratylus (he is probably referring to 390 D–E), and adopts a “realist” position, refusing to attribute to God the immediate origin of names (*Eun* II, 404, GNO II, 344). He therefore has recourse

to arguments that go from the multiplicity of languages existing in the world to the affirmation that it was Adam who imposed the names on animals (Gn 2.18–20: *Eun* I, GNO I, 343–344). It is precisely because language is our invention, our words are limited and do not manage to perfectly express the *ousia* of things, and much less the divine *ousia*, that it is ineffable. Consequently, although God is absolutely simple and transcendent, we need to use many names to refer to Him, because of the imperfection of our language. These names, nevertheless, are not *synonyms*, but rather each one says something different about God, and despite their multiplicity and their diversity, they are compatible with the infinite divine simplicity.

2. THE EXISTENCE OF GOD. Gregory places what can certainly be defined as a Trinitarian profession of faith as the reference point for the whole of the *Eun* II. In it there are two fundamental affirmations: a) The being of God (his οὐσία) escapes all of the efforts of our mind and curiosity. b) The knowledge of his existence reaches us through the beauty and greatness of creatures, according to a certain analogy (κατά τινα ἀναλογίαν, Wis 13.5) to the things that are known (*Eun* II, 12/13, GNO I, 230, 18–31).

The explicit citation of Wis 13.5 is a decided position regarding the knowability of the existence of God, a position that we must account for when we examine his affirmation that God is above all knowledge and all words. We can know that God exists, since his operations let us perceive it. Gregory intimates something that is a matter of common sense. It is not possible to know that something exists if we are completely ignorant of all of its characteristics. Therefore, together with the affirmation of the noetic transcendence of God, we find the affirmation that created things tell us something of Him, since they speak to us of his existence.

3. PROPER USAGE OF THE DIVINE NAMES. Gregory then presents a synthesis of Eunomius' thought which serves him above all to better express his own thought, confronting it with that of Eunomius. Eunomius affirms that God is called Unengendered, and that, being totally simple, this name is the name of his nature. According to Eunomius, there is a name that perfectly designates the divine essence (ἀγέννητος), and, given that God is absolutely simple, all the other names have the same meaning as this name. Gregory responds that, because two names refer to the same subject, this does not make them interchangeable, since each has its own noetic content, its own specific and proper signification (*Eun* II, 24–25, GNO I, 233).

Gregory naturally firmly believes in the divine simplicity. The only thing he states here is that this simplicity cannot be used as an argument to affirm that the different concepts with which we structure our knowledge of God are all identical. These various concepts are not interchangeable, since each of them expresses a distinct nuance of the divine perfection. "We affirm", Gregory observes, "that in each of the names is contained its own proper signification" (*Eun* II 28, GNO I, 234). A little further on, recalling that the divine essence is simple, he adds: "Even in this case, each of the names has its own proper signification (ἰδίαν ἔμφασιν)" (*ibidem*, 30, GNO I, 235).

This proper ἔμφασις confers an unmistakable "personality" on each word, which must be respected. The term ἔμφασις is here understood as the "signification of the word" (MORESCHINI, 318, n. 18). This is an argument to which Gregory already paid attention in *Eun* I. The term ἔμφασις logically invokes the verb ἐμφαίνω with its meanings of manifestation and exposition. In fact, ἔμφασις could be translated as that which each name reflects or manifests, as the natural and proper signification of words (KOBUSCH, 259–266). In *Eun* II, Gregory insists twenty-six times on the importance of the word's ἔμφασις. Thus, for example, the heretics overlook the natural ἔμφασις of words, assigning them a different noetic content (*Eun* II, 19, GNO I, 232). We, on the other hand, Gregory says, know that the meanings of words should not be interchanged (*Eun* II, 25, GNO I, 233), since each ἔμφασις has its own specific signification (*Eun* II, 30, GNO I, 235). For this reason, all the words that the Sacred Scripture uses to praise God indicate one of the characteristics that we know of Him, since each has its own proper ἔμφασις (*Eun* II, 105, GNO I, 257), as can be seen from the names of just and incorruptible (*Eun* II, 131, GNO I, 263).

Gregory insists on one hand on the human origin of words, which are born from our intelligence, in this sense "demythologizing" Eunomius' position, while on the other hand he assigns a great value to words in so far as they reveal being, and therefore he requires delicate respect for them. We have invented words in order to know, and their correct usage leads us to express some aspect of the reality of things.

Given the infinite perfection of God, there are numerous names that indicate a notion which is applicable to the divinity, notions which are not interchangeable with the notions manifested by other names. At the same time, given the divine infinity, no name will express the being of God perfectly. He is above every name and every concept.

4. THE ANALOGICAL VALUE OF NAMES. Gregory underscores the analogical value of names that we attribute to God, affirming that: 1) The names that we attribute to God have as their starting point the signification that we use among us, that is, their human signification. 2) As occurs among us, these names indicate qualities, not the essence, which remains beyond words (*Eun* II, 104, GNO I, 257). Gregory illustrates what he is saying with an example. If one does not know someone, we indicate that person to him through signs, for example, saying how tall he is, what his lineage is, how old he is, etc. Yet with these signs we do not reveal his very essence. The same occurs with God: What we affirm of Him are signs that lead us towards knowledge of Him, but his essence remains beyond all of our expressions (*Eun* II, 105, GNO I, 257).

We can only say something about what God is like by deducing it from his actions towards us. This something is true, but, while we are using names and words that are found on the level of created reality, what we affirm of God is quite far from expressing what He is like, and does not at all capture his essence. We human beings have a confused experience even of ourselves (*Eun* II, 106, GNO I, 257–258). In other words: we know beings through their manifestation, with which they say something to us of themselves. We do not know them in the depth of their essence, in their concrete singularity. For this reason Gregory asserts with conviction, “He who does not know himself, how will he know something of that which is above him?” (*Eun* II, 117, GNO I, 260).

In *Eun* II, Gregory develops his thought on the language of God in extensive and dense passages. In synthesis: Our knowledge of God is meager, modest and remote, but precious and true, since “whatever the limits of our misery, we reach a sufficient knowledge through those names that are fully affirmed of Him. We say also that these names do not possess the same specific signification (ἐμφασις) or the same mode of signification, but some indicate the things that are in God, and others the things that are not in Him. Thus, when we say that God is just and incorruptible, with the term “just” we say that justice is present in Him, and with the term “incorruptible” we say that corruption does not exist in Him”.

Names can be applied to God that are appropriate to his nature, as well as names that are not fitting in any way. In reality, given that justice is opposed to injustice and eternity is contrary to corruption, it is possible, regarding God, to use opposing modes of signification without error: To say that God always exists and that He is not unjust is the same as saying that He is not corruptible and that He is just. In fact, it is the same thing

to say of God that He is incapable of doing evil and to call Him good, to proclaim Him to be immortal or say that He lives always. We find no difference in the signification, but express the same reality with our discourse, even if one name seems to express an affirmation and the other a negation (*Eun* II, 130–134, GNO I, 263–264, 24).

According to Gregory, not only does each name have a proper signification, but each can also be used in various manners, negative or affirmative. Combining both forms, one can affirm something that is befitting God, as long as language is used wisely. We should not, then, limit ourselves to only one name, as if it managed to express the divine essence. Besides this, each name not only possesses a signification that distinguishes it from the others, but can be used in a *different manner of signification*. One can affirm that God always lives or that He never dies. The two modes of signification are different, yet they express the same concept.

5. LANGUAGE AT THE SERVICE OF CONCEPTS. The important point here is that the word is at the service of the concept. The concept is far superior to the word, since the concept corresponds to the reality of things, and words are invented by us human beings to serve concepts. Gregory observes that there are innumerable words—it is enough to think of the number of existing languages—to express the same concept. Gregory is consistent with his position regarding the origin of language. Language naturally, like all things, comes from God, but does not have its origin, as Eunomius would have it, in a gift from God to men, but rather from the intelligence which God gave to men so that they work, *inter alia*, at the invention of language and naming things.

Consequently, not only can various names be applied to God, but they can also be applied with various modes of signification. These lead to another conclusion: Since there is no name capable of encapsulating the divine nature, we speak of the divinity with various names, according to the various notions that we can attribute to Him (*Eun* II, 145, GNO I, 267). In reality, we do not speak of God according to his essence, which escapes us, but according to his action in creation and in ourselves.

These are then names that are derived from considerations of the relationship of God with creation because of his activity, of his ἐνέργεια. Gregory here demonstrates his radicality: “Through words we know what God is not, but these same words do not have the capacity to tell us what He is” (*Eun* II, 143, GNO I, 267). As C. MORESCHINI (324, n. 95) notes, we see here one of the most explicit affirmations of Gregory’s apophatic

theology. In reality, our words are at the same level as our nature, and our word, in comparison to the true Word, is nothing (*Eun* II, 233–238, GNO I, 294–296).

The words we give to God thus derive from the consideration of his relationship to creation. Therefore, in a certain sense our knowledge of God begins with that which is last in time: The words invented by men to express the concepts of things. In reality, Gregory eloquently states, words are like the shadows (*σκιαι*) of things (e.g. *Eun* II, 148–151, GNO I, 268–269).

Consistently with this, Gregory goes on to observe that the relative names, such as merciful, are not said of the essence, but of the divine activity, and are thus attributed to God because of his action in our regard (*ibidem*, 152, GNO I, 269). It is the operation of God (or better, its trace) that procures some knowledge of Him for us.

6. MULTIPLICITY OF NAMES AND DIVINE SIMPLICITY. Scripture, Gregory maintains, attributes various names to God, each with its own meaning. We call God judge, just, strong, magnanimous, truthful, merciful and many other things. These concepts cannot be synonyms, as it would be pointless to use so many names to affirm the same thing, and the Scripture does not say useless things. Perhaps it is the case that God is not infinitely simple? Why is it that one name is not enough to refer to Him?

Speaking of God, Gregory responds, all these names are necessary, and, further, their multiplicity is compatible with the divine simplicity, since this multiplicity exists only in our way of knowing and speaking. Who cannot know that the nature of God is unique and simple, and that in no way can it be considered to be composed of various elements? The truth is that our soul is enclosed in this earthly life, and, given that it cannot clearly see that which it is seeking, in many ways and by various paths it approaches the ineffable nature and for this reason is unable to express itself with only one word (*Eun* II, 475–476, GNO I, 364–365).

According to Gregory, the diversity of names is not incompatible with the divine simplicity, since we affirm a perfection of God which is found in our minds only in the manner that we think and express ourselves (*ibidem*, 477–479; 365–366). Eunomius had accused Gregory of offending the simplicity of God by using so many names to speak of Him (*ibidem*, 499; 371–372). Gregory rejects this accusation as a “calumny”. We do not offend the divine simplicity by using so many

names, he affirms, because we know that this multiplicity is due to our limited mode of knowledge, not to the divine reality. Further, and this is truly important, we know that this multiplicity *only exists in our mind*.

This means that, even though we say something true of God, that which we state is infinitely distant from the reality of the divine essence. We actually speak of God in conformity with our manner of understanding and speaking, which is complex. Nevertheless, this mode of speaking is coherent with our limited mode of being, and is not unworthy of the greatness of the divinity (*ibidem*, 501; 372).

To speak of God with many names is compatible with his infinite simplicity, not only because in speaking in this way we are conscious that this is our manner of understanding and speaking, but because the attribution of these names to God neither implies that He possesses them “cumulatively”, as something is quantitatively accumulated, nor that He “participates” in them. The infinite perfection of God cannot be considered as an accumulation of various perfections, but as an infinite and simple perfection which both includes and transcends all perfections. It is we who refer to this unique perfection by means of distinct concepts: “One concept (νόημα) regards the divine life, and that it is devoid of cause (...); another concept regards the divine life and that it is unlimited and without end” (*ibidem*, 513; 376). We are however conscious that these various concepts say something of the same and unique perfection.

In his spiritual writings, Gregory offers a highly interesting theology of the name (→ *PERF*); in *Eun* II, he deepens logic and the philosophy of language, entering into the same sphere as Eunomius. Regarding the divine names, Gregory maintains an enviable equilibrium. On one hand, he is a firm defender of apophatism (→ *APOPHATIC THEOLOGY*), while on the other he does not confuse this apophatism with equivocity, since he is convinced that God infinitely transcends his creation, but nevertheless He cannot be considered as “that which is other”, i.e. totally different, since creation, and man above all, carry the traces of the divine activity, which serve as signs to know Him and say something of Him. Our concepts and our words are nevertheless only this, *signs*, which refer us to God.

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Lucas Francisco Mateo-Seco

Drunkenness → Sober Drunkenness

Easter → Liturgy, Trid spat

ECCL

In Ecclesiastem

Following Origen, Gregory understood the book of Ecclesiastes to be a transitional text between the wise observations of Proverbs and the sublime ascent figured in the Song of Songs—both in its placement in the canon and in the development of the Christian's soul. Based in his reading of the text's opening and oft-repeated phrase regarding "futility," Gregory framed his eight-sermon exposition of the first three chapters of Ecclesiastes around the Platonic distinctions of the "seen" and the "unseen," between that which is truly real (the "holy of holies") and that which is ultimately non-existent (the "futility of futilities"). The life of Christian virtue was presented as the movement away from the "futility" and "emptiness" of a life committed to sensual pleasures "under the heavens" toward the meaningful life found in Christ. This practical orientation to his reading is summarized at the beginning of homily 6: "It remains to learn how one may live virtuously, by obtaining from the text some art and method, so to speak, of successful living" (GNO V, 373, 11–13). It is in the final three homilies, devoted to the verses related to the phrase "For all things the time, and a moment for every activity under the heaven" (*Eccl* 3:1–13, GNO V, 372, 21–442, 4), that Gregory developed the life of virtue as a movement involving the moment-by-moment choosing of Christ: the integration of the concepts of free will, created being's existence in time and the subsequent reality of all things within creation being "measured." Christian virtue, therefore, is the process of constant Christian becoming, the turning of one's soul "to nothing here on earth" (GNO V, 379, 11–13) by choosing God according to what is most "timely" and "measured" in each and every "moment." Gregory concludes: "Therefore, I know through these sayings the very necessity of seeking, whose discovery is, itself, a perpetual seeking. For seeking is not one thing and discovering another, but the gain which comes from seeking is the seeking itself" (GNO V, 400, 20–401, 2). There is in all of this a recuperation of the goodness of creation and the subsequent role of the will to either redeem, moment by moment, created existence by choosing the good, which is Christ, or contribute to creation's further devolution toward non-being, the absence of good, by choosing the "nothingness" of earthly pleasures.

Following Plato (see *Republic* 7, 532b ff), Gregory understood such a commitment to the virtuous life to be an intellectual struggle and labor. Other specific themes addressed in these homilies are slavery, usury, the defilement and restoration of creation, the dangers associated with the passions, and (directly dependent upon Aristotle's thinking on "the mean") the proper roles of modesty and shame in the life of virtue.

On *Ecclesiastes* is also something of a transitional text in Gregory's thinking. Written between 378 and 381 just prior to the Council of Constantinople, Gregory's sermons on *Ecclesiastes* (especially the final three) reflect traces of his growing involvement with Eunomius and the complex problems surrounding the Trinitarian controversy. As a result, Gregory begins to integrate larger theoretical concerns regarding the possibility of the knowledge of God, the nature of time-bound creation and the potentiality/limitations of created being that will be formally introduced in the *EUM I* (written in 380) as arguments against Eunomius and in support of a pro-Nicene trinitarianism.

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Scot Douglass

ECCLESIOLOGY

Ecclesiology in the scholastic sense of a systematic theological treatise does not exist among the Fathers. Under this entry one can only await an ordered compilation of their various reflections on the Church, which resist systemization since this does not correspond to their intention. Their Ecclesiology is motivated by the topical questions of the times and their practical problems. It is usually employed for the teaching of the faith and spiritual instruction of the community rather than as an exposition of theological discussions. In particular, the Oriental Fathers loved to employ a great variety of images, largely inspired from the Bible, which are more comprehensive and expressive than the pure theological concept. Because of this, by their very nature they do not generate any system.

Gregory uses the term ἐκκλησία in its usual double signification (cf. MANN, *Lexicon Gregorianum* III 108–117): the community (of believers) and, derivatively, the place where they gather, the ecclesial building (*Op hom* 10, 4: PG 44, 152D = Forbes 152, 27; *Epist* 2, 13: GNO VIII/2, 17, 14; *Thaum*: GNO X/1, 25, 24; *Mart* Ib: GNO X/1, 145, 6). Among the buildings, Gregory explicitly mentions the churches of Nyssa (*Epist* 6, 10: GNO VIII/2, 36, 3.5) and of the monastic foundation at Annesi (*Macr* 16; 22; 34: GNO VIII/1, 388, 12; 395, 5; 409, 7). In the famous letter 25, addressed to Bishop Amphilochius of Iconium, he also presents a detailed project for the construction of a *martyrion*, the location of which is however unknown (GNO VIII/2, 79–83; cf. STUPPERICH, *Architekturbeschreibung*; KLOCK, *Gregor als Kirchenbauer*). In the signification of community, ἐκκλησία can indicate a popular assembly or reunion of any kind, such as that of the Israelites (*Abl*, GNO III/1, 41, 8; *Vit Mos* I, 23: GNO VII/1, 10, 20 on Ex 4.24—cf. Dt 4.10; 9.10, etc.; *Or cat* 30, 4: GNO III/4, 75, 21—cf. Acts 2.41 and 19.32; SRAWLEY 112 n. 17), but also, in particular, the (festive) community assembly or a synod (*Epist* 1, 8: GNO VIII/2, 5, 13.17; *Thaum*: GNO X/1, 40, 4; *Mart* Ib: GNO X/1, 145, 16). Finally, the concept is also used in the sense of the unique Church of Christ, of which one part still lives on earth, while the other is already perfect in Christ, and thus also for the (eschatological) communion of saints (*Mort* 1, GNO IX, 39, 1).

Gregory's Ecclesiology refers to two domains: (A) The constitution and organization of the visible structure of the Church, and, (B) The

theological and mystico-spiritual interpretation of the Church as institution of salvation.

A. The visible Church on earth began on the feast of Pentecost at Jerusalem with the conversion of its first 3,000 members by the Prince of the Apostles, Peter (*Steph* I, GNO X/1, 78, 10–12 on Acts 2.41), and according to its vocation through the teaching of the faith (*Or cat* prol 1: GNO III/4, 5, 3), spread throughout the world (οἰκονομένη) (*Thaum*, GNO X/1, 45, 1–3). It is by its nature a universal Church (*Epist* 17, 15: GNO VIII/2, 55, 6 *et al.*). This mark of its catholicity manifests it as the only true Church of Christ, unlike all the heretical communities, such as that of Marcellus of Ancyra (*Epist* 5, 1: GNO VIII/2, 31, 13–16 = 92, 15–17) or of Eunomius (*Eun* III/9, 7: GNO II, 266, 20 *et al.*).

The Church is formed by the particular Churches under the guidance of their Bishops, among which Gregory mentions all the principal centres of the Oriental Church or of his own area: Alexandria (*Eun* I, 48: GNO I, 38, 13), Amaseia (*Thaum*, GNO X/1, 15, 6), Antioch (*Melet*, GNO IX, 449, 11 *et al.*), Arabia (*Epist* 2, 12: GNO VIII/2, 17, 5), Caesarea in Capadocia (*Macr* 13: GNO VIII/1, 385, 16 f. *et al.*), Jerusalem (*Epist* 2, 12: GNO VIII/2, 17, 8), Comana (*Thaum*, GNO X/1, 36, 15), Constantinople (*Flacill*, GNO IX, 475, 10 and others), Neo-Caesarea (*Thaum*, GNO X/1, 20, 9 *et al.*), Nicomedia (*Epist* 17, 8: GNO VIII/2, 53, 13 f.), Nyssa (*Epist* 1, 5: GNO VIII/2, 4, 16 *et al.*), Pontus (*Epist* 19, 13: GNO VIII/2, 66, 11 f.) and Sebaste (*Epist* 29, 10: GNO VIII/2, 89, 14).

The Church is derived from two roots. On one hand, there is the Synagogue, but without stopping at its provisional and fragmentary knowledge of God. Gregory therefore reproaches Eunomius that in refuting the Only-Begotten Son of God he does nothing more than transfer the doctrines of the Synagogue to the Church (*Eun* III/9, 36: GNO II, 19–22). It would thus be better for him to return to Judaism (*Eun* I, 179: GNO I, 79, 21–26). The essential originality of the Church consists in the union of Law and Grace (*Cast*, GNO X/2, 329, 5–7). On the other hand, the Church was constituted by abandoning the idolatry of pagan peoples (εἰδωλολατρεία τῶν ἐθνῶν), through faith (πίστις, εὐσέβεια) in the true God (*Eun* I, 219: GNO I, 90, 23; III/1, 3: GNO II, 4, 14; *Cant* 7: GNO VI, 205, 6–9).

Even if Christ is the head and invisible guide of the Church (see below), there are “pillars” (στυλοὶ) of the Church on earth according to Gal 2.9: Peter, James and John (*Cant* 14: GNO VI, 415, 20; 416, 13–15), and in imitation of them, all those who through their exemplary life sustain the

Church (*Vit Moys* II, 184–185: GNO VII/1, 95, 10–20; *Cant* 14: GNO VI, 417, 3–5). Gregory thus praises the Empress Flacilla after her death as a “pillar of the Church” (*Flacill*, GNO IX, 480, 21). The guides of the Church (ἡγεμόνες, καθηγεμόνες, οἰκονομοῦντες, πρόεδροι—cf. *Benef*, GNO IX, 93, 3.14; *Bapt*, GNO X/2 357, 7f.; *Epist can* 5: PG 45B) are also her teachers (διδάσκαλοι—cf. *Benef*: GNO IX, 93, 4; *Or cat* prol, 1: GNO III/4, 5, 3–4) and models (*Vit Moys* II, 160–161: GNO VII/1, 85,16–86,10), since they are based on the foundation (θεμέλιον) of the Church, the truth, Jesus Christ (*Cant* 14: GNO VI, 417,11–14 with citations of 1 Cor 3.11 and Jn 14.6; *Steph* II, GNO X/1, 104, 24f. with 1 Tim 3.15).

The true Church visible on earth is constituted by Peter, as Head of the Apostles, and by the other members of the Church (*Steph* II, GNO X/1, 104, 29–31 *et al.*); this accentuates the unique and undeniable role of Peter and his successors. The members, if necessary, can be excluded and received anew through ecclesiastic penitential procedure (cf. below) (*Epist can* 5–6: PG 45, 232AC; 235C). Those who are outside the Church are opposing them (*Vit Mos* II, 115: GNO VII/1, 68, 13 ff.), so that the Church must debate with the political lay powers and the heretics, in particular with Eunomius and (neo-)Arianism (*Eun* I, 131–143: GNO I, 66,18–70,10 *et al.*).

From the beginning, the Church, basing itself on the Gospel and the Apostolic preaching, has guarded the Tradition (παράδοσις) of the true doctrine (*Ref Eun* 21: GNO II, 321,2 ff.; *Eun* I, 158: GNO I, 74, 18 ff.; III/2, 99: GNO II, 85, 4–10 *et al.*): δόγματα (τῆς εὐσεβείας) (*Ref Eun* 38: GNO II, 327, 12 ff. *et al.*), μυστήρια (*Eun* I, 494: GNO I, 169, 11 *et al.*), φιλοσοφία (*Inscr* 1, 3: GNO V, 30, 13 ff.), κήρυγμα (*Sanct Pasch*, GNO IX, 250, 15 ff.). This essential tie between “Church” and “true doctrine” is also reflected in certain *variae lectiones* of ἐκκλησία: ἀλήθεια (*Cant* 14: GNO VI, 416, 18; 419, 13.15; *Vit Moys* II, 185: GNO VII/1, 96, 1), δόξα (*Cant* 11: GNO VI, 318, 15) and εὐσέβεια (*Fornic*, GNO IX, 214, 4; *Steph* II: GNO X/1, 97, 5). Gregory explicitly recognizes the following truths of faith, differentiating them from that which is not the doctrine of the Church (*Eun* I, 401: GNO I, 167, 16; *Theoph*: GNO III/1, 121, 9 f. *et al.*): (1) Regarding theology (a) The unity of the divine οὐσία (*Eun* I, 229: GNO I, 94, 1–4), (b) That the Son (according to the Council of Nicaea) is true God from true God (*Eun* III/2, 94: GNO II, 83, 21–29; *Ref Eun* 55: GNO II, 334, 25–27) and (c) Both the Son and the Holy Spirit are not creatures (*Simpl*, GNO III/1, 65,27–66,1); (2) regarding anthropology/soteriology (a) The composition of the soul and body of

the human being (*Op hom* 28, 1: PG 44, 229B = Forbes 276, 5–7), (b) Consequently, the necessity of earthly death, in order to reach eternal life (*Cant* 12: GNO VI, 345, 5–11—cfr. 1 Cor 15.36 ff.), (c) The resurrection (*An et res*: PG 44, 13 A) and (d) The spiritual rule that the beginning of virtue consists in the separation from evil (*Eccl* 5: GNO V, 353, 17–354, 1).

Among the concrete expressions of the life of the Church (ἐκκλησία) Gregory mentions the sign of the Cross (σφραγίς), prayer (προσευχή), Baptism (βάπτισμα) and the confession of sins (ἡ τῶν ἁμαρτιῶν ἐξαγόρευσις) along with the aim of leading a correct life, healthy and virtuous according to the Commandments, and to tend towards justice (*Eun* III/9, 58: GNO II, 285, 28–286, 4).

B. Gregory's theology starts, as always, with the witness of Sacred Scripture, not according to any sort of subjective interpretation, but only according to the interpretations universally accepted by the Church (*Inscr* 2, 8: GNO V, 93, 10–15) and consecrated by the liturgy (*Ref Eun* 110: GNO II, 358, 17–20 on Pr 8, 22). For the four Gospels irrigate the Church like the rivers of paradise (cf. Gn 2, 10) (*Salut Pasch*: GNO IX, 310, 28–311, 1; cf. further: the Church as paradise).

The first points of reference are those offered by the passages that speak of ἐκκλησία: Ps 67.27 (*Vit Moys* II, 134: GNO VII/1, 75, 23 ff.; *Inscr* 2, 14: GNO V, 147, 20 ff.; *Ref Eun* 113: GNO II, 24 ff.), Ps 106.32 (*Inscr* 1, 8: GNO V, 60, 20–28), 1 Cor 14.19 (*Pent*, GNO X/2, 289, 20), 1 Cor 14.34 (*Eccl* 7: GNO V, 409, 20 ff.), Eph 3.10 (*Cant* 8: GNO VI, 254, 20–255, 4.19; 256, 7), Eph 5.27 (*Inst*, GNO VIII/1, 61, 14 ff.). Gregory also offers many references to the Church in the Old and the New Testaments (*Cant* 5: GNO VI, 148, 7–149, 4; *Inscr* 2, 14: GNO V, 147, 13–24): Isaiah (49, 22; 60, 4; 66, 12.22) prophesied of the foundation of the Church (*Cant* 2: GNO VI, 52, 6–10); Rachel with her flock at the watering hole (Gn 29.9 ff.) symbolizes the mystery of the Church and her living waters (*Diem lum*, GNO IX, 232, 14–16); the flocks of Job also (1, 3.14–16) refer to the Church (*Melet*, GNO IX, 446, 6–8) (For the Church as flock and Baptism, see below.)

There are two books in the Old Testament that have particular ecclesiological significance for Gregory: Qoheleth and the Song of Songs. Like many Fathers of the Church, he holds that they were composed, along with Proverbs, by king Solomon as a trilogy of guides that follow each other, rising ever closer to God (*Eccl* 1: GNO V, 277, 4–278, 1; *Cant* 1: GNO VI, 22, 5–17; DROBNER, *Verwendung und Bedeutung des*

Buches Ecclesiastes, in HALL (Ed.), *Homilies on Ecclesiastes* 367–370). Although the entire Scripture is an ecclesial book and is read in the Church, the book of Qoheleth (Ecclesiastes) carries this special title, because all the other books have a highly varied content, while only the book of Qoheleth teaches the Church the proper bearing (ἐκκλησιαστική πολιτεία) to reach the virtuous life. Further, it refers to the Head (καθηγεμών) of the Church in the following of Christ. For Christ in person speaks in it as the true guide of the Church (ὁ μέγας καθηγεμών, ὁ ἀληθινὸς ἐκκλησιαστής) to the members of his Church (τοῖς ἐκκλησιαζουσιν) (*Eccl* 1: GNO V, 279,4–281,2; 2: 299,3–9). Gregory explains “I am the Ecclesiastes (Qoh 1.12 LXX)” on the basis of the affirmations of “I am” of Jesus in the New Testament—among which there is the ecclesologically important passage of Jn 10.11–16: “I am the Good Shepherd” of the unique flock (Jn 10.11–16) (*Ascens*, GNO IX, 324,1–7)—affirming that in the book of Qoheleth Christ himself is the great mystagogue who leads to God (*Eccl* 5, GNO V, 353,11f.), who unites all the dispersed human beings into one Church and one flock (*Eccl* 2: GNO V, 298, 5–9).

The Spouse and bride of the Song have received two fundamental interpretations in the history of its exegesis: Christ and the human soul, or Christ and the Church (cf. CAVALLERA: DSp II 93–101; MELONI: DPAC I 580–584). Gregory, like Origen, joins the two interpretative lines, on ecclesiological foundations: The Church in its whole and the spiritual life of her single members, continually identified by Gregory in the great models from both the Old and New Testaments (Prophets, Apostles) as examples worthy of imitation. For the Church, according to the witness of Paul, is united to Christ as in a marriage (Eph 5.22–33—*Cant* 4: GNO VI, 108,14–18; 122,6–8). Christ is the head (*Cant* 13: GNO VI, 390,21 ff. *et al.*), and the Church his body with many members (1 Cor 12.12 ff.; Rm 12.4–5; Eph 1.22; 4.11–15; 5.23; Col 1.18.24–25—principal passages: *Cant* 13: GNO VI, 381,21–383,3; *Tunc et ipse*, GNO III/2, 18,19–19,12; *Vit Moys* II, 184: GNO VII/1, 95,11–13). From this it soteriologically follows that the head conforms its body (*Cant* 8: GNO VI, 256,13–20) to itself, and each individual member specifically, according to its singular characteristics (ἀρετή) (*Cant* 7: GNO VI, 230,5–10). Referring to Rm 11.16 (with Rm 5.12–22 and 1 Cor 15.21–22), Gregory even considers the head of the Church as the first fruit (ἀπαρχή) and root that sanctifies the entire loaf (φύραμα) and all the branches by an almost physical reaction (*Cant* 13: GNO VI, 391,11–15; cf. HÜBNER, *Die Einheit des Leibes Christi*).

Gregory develops the image of the body of Christ on the basis of the praise of the members of the bride of the Song, endowed with beauty (κάλλος), glory (δόξα) and grace (χάρις) (*Cant* 8: GNO VI, 261,1 ff.), with a particular richness of detail (cf. DROBNER, *Archaeologia Patristica* 51–67).

1. Her *eyes* are the prophets—Samuel (1 Sam 9.9 ff.), Ezechiel (Ez 3.17; 33.7), Micah (Am 7.12), Moses (Ex 7.1)—whom God sent as seers and sentinels to indicate the path for the people. They represent those members of the Church who steadfastly look at the sun of justice (Mal 3.20), abstain from all works of darkness, and guide the Church on the paths of God (*Cant* 7: GNO VI, 217,5–218,10). The eyes of the Church limpidly regard the Being that truly is (τὸ ὄντως ὄν) (*Cant* 13: GNO VI, 396,16–397,1), since it has purified them with the waters of the virtues (*ibidem* 395,9–16).
2. The martyrs are the *mouth* of the Church which teaches prudence for the mortification of the passions (*Cant* 14: GNO VI, 405,1–406,6). Her *teeth* are the teachers of the Church, who break up the divine mysteries, i.e. make them accessible to all, and thus nourish the Church. They speak through the mouth of the Church and through concord in what is good, contribute to the beauty of her lips. Ct 4.3 compares these lips to a scarlet ribbon. Since a ribbon is composed of many threads, they symbolize the unity of the Church, the scarlet symbolizing the colour of Christ. The Church must then continually have the confession of Redemption on her lips. The scarlet ribbon is also the “faith that works through charity” (Gal 5.6) and as a rule grants just measure to discourse (*Cant* 7: GNO VI, 226,18–229,20; 14: 454,5–455,9).
3. According to 1 Cor 11.15, *hair* is the “ornament/glory (δόξα) of woman” and her veil. According to 1 Tim 2.9–10 (“women should adorn themselves in modesty and good judgment”), hair thus signifies moral modesty and reserve. For if the soul does not possess these virtues, “it dishonours its own head” (1 Cor 11.5). The fact that the hair is compared to the flocks of goats of Gad indicates the pagan peoples, who have followed the Good Shepherd and now adorn the Church. The fact that the hair is insensible teaches the members of the Church the necessity to be insensible before the things of the world (*Cant* 7: GNO VI, 220,4–223,9; 14: 451,4–454,5). The Church receives glory both by those who, like hair, have become insensible to the world to the point of suffering martyrdom with patience

- (*Cant* 15: GNO VI, 451,12–452,7), and by those who follow the example of Elijah's outspokenness (*ibidem* 454,2–4). The martyrs are the ornament of the Church (*Mart* II: GNO X/1, 159,14; 168,6), their great guide and example being Bishop Firmilian of Caesarea (*Thaum*, GNO X/1, 13,6 ff.) and all those who like the prophet Elijah live in abstinence and according to the virtues (*Cant* 7: GNO VI, 222,18 ff.).
4. Ct 4.4 compares the *neck* of the bride of Christ to the tower of David. After a detailed and precise physiological description of the form and function of the neck, Gregory interprets it in all of its particulars. It carries the head (Christ), inhales the Spirit who heats the heart, and through the voice serves reason. It brings nourishment to the body, while the vertebral column, held together with muscles and tendons from many parts, symbolizes the unity of Christians in the bond of peace. The neck can bend towards the humble and also lift itself towards God, or turn in all directions, avoiding the ploys of the demon. Paul was such an exemplary "neck" (*Cant* 7: GNO VI, 232,10–237,7).
 5. Paul even became a *breast*, since he nourished the Church with the milk of his words (1 Cor 3.1–2). The teachings of the Church are her milk (*Vit Moys* II, 12: GNO VII/1, 37,5 ff.; *Bas*, GNO X/1, 126,8 ff.), the words of grace that rise from the heart (*Cant* 7: GNO VI, 241,16–242,13—see below—the Church as mother and nourisher).
 6. Gregory interprets the golden *hands* of the Church in parallel with the head of gold (Ct 5.11). Gold signifies being pure from sin in both cases, i.e. the Church must live and act according to the commandments of God (*Cant* 14: GNO VI, 406,22–409,11).
 7. The *womb* (stomach) of the Church is on the one hand the maternal womb (cf. Ps 57.4) which in Baptism regenerates the believers anew (*Deit fil*: GNO X/2, 141,8–10—cf. below, the Church as *new creation*). On the other hand, it is the pure heart that receives the commandments and laws and looks only to the heavenly realities (*Cant* 14: GNO VI, 412,7–415,12).

The Church is the creation of a new cosmos. The new heavens (Is 65.17) are the firmament of faith in Christ (Col 2.5), the new earth drinks of the rain which falls upon it (Heb 6.7) and the new man is formed with the birth from above in the image of Him who created him (Jn 3.4–9, Col 3.10). The believers are the lights of heaven (Mt 5.14; Phil 2.15), stars in the firmament of the faith which are numbered by God and called by

names (Ps 146.4) that are written in the heavens (Lk 10.20). They are like many suns, with which the rays of good works illuminate the world (Mt 5.16, 13.43) (*Cant* 13: GNO VI, 384,21–385,22). He who is All in all is contemplated in this new cosmos (1 Cor 15.28; Col 3.11) (*ibidem* 386,4–6). In this new creation of man, the Church is both mother and nourisher. She engenders through faith, gives birth in Baptism, and feeds with ecclesial teachings, the bread of heaven (*Trid spat*, GNO IX, 278,4–11).

Other metaphors for the Church, almost always founded on the Bible, are: (1) *House of God* (Ps 91.13/ 1 Tim 3.15—*Cant* 14: GNO VI, 415,20–22; 423,7–9 *et al.*) and its *living stones* (1 Pt 2.5—*Cant* 7: GNO VI, 202,5; 214,6 f.); (2) These living stones, as precious stones, also adorn the *crown of God* (*Cant* 7: GNO VI, 214,6 s. 12–14; 215,12); (3) *City of God* (Ap 21.10 ff.), whose walls of faith are surrounded by the war machines of heresy (*Eun* II, 8: GNO I, 228,12–15); (4) *Heavenly Jerusalem* (*Gal* 4.26—*Eun* III/8, 20: GNO II, 246 5 f.); (5) *Heaven*, in which the newly baptized are resplendent (on Gn 15.5—*Trid spat*, GNO IX, 274,6); (6) *Tent of God* (Vit Moys II, 116: GNO VII/1, 69,3; 187: 97,1); (7) As *mirror of God* the Church reflects the sun of justice (Mal 3.20—*Cant* 8: GNO VI, 237,3–5); (8) Paul caused the *garden of paradise* of the Church to flourish with his teaching (*Cant* 9: GNO VI, 292,5–7); its *living trees* emit the good odour of Christ (2 Cor 2.15—*Cant* 10: GNO VI, 302,4–16) and bear fruit (Jn 15.2–16—*Steph* II: GNO X/1, 97,5); (9) The Church as *living ship* awaits with her crew an incredible richness of knowledge from her navigations on the vast sea of contemplation (*Cant* 12: GNO VI, 341,15–19); the *garment* of the Church according to Qoh 3.7 (“there is a time to tear, and a time to sow”) reminds Gregory of the necessity to eliminate evils and heresies from the Church (1 Cor 5.13 with Dt 17.7), since even the smallest evil acts as a leaven and corrupts the entire loaf of the prayer of the Church (1 Cor 5.6). Lest those who are separated are abandoned to despair (cf. 2 Cor 2.7), there is one moment to tear from the garment of the Church the spoiled part (Jude 1.23), and another moment to sow it again, if it has been washed with penitence (cf. above). If the Church is separated from heresy, her garment is intact (*Eccl* 7: GNO V, 407,17–409,2). The garment of Jesus, woven from one piece from top to bottom (Jn 19.23–34), so beloved by other Fathers of the Church as a metaphor of the unity of the Church, is mentioned by Gregory only in *Epist* 3,10 (GNO VIII/2, 22–23) and *Ref Eun* 43–44 (GNO II, 329,26–329,15)—he does not however refer it to the garment of the Church undivided by heresies, but to the unity of nature, honour and power of the three divine Persons.

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EMBRYO

According to Gregory, the embryo is formed of soul and body, which are constitutive of human identity from its very beginning (→ PSYCHOLOGY; BODY). The question of the animation of the embryo is situated in a long classical and Christian tradition. The former, which has as a backdrop the division between the Empedoclian theory of conception by means of imagination, in which the feminine role is primary in embryogenesis, and the Aristotelian theory, in which the masculine is predominant (cfr. CURLETT). This is represented for example in Galen, *An animal sit quod in utero est* (cfr. LONGO), or by Porphyry's *Ad Gaurum*, which reflects on how the embryo receives the soul. In I 1–2 he asks if it should be considered a living being in act or in potency. In Christian circles, Clement of Alexandria maintained that every human being is endowed with a soul, beginning with embryonic life (cfr. RIZZERIO, 390–392).

In *An et res*, PG 46, 125C–128A, Gregory affirms the contemporaneous engenderment of soul and body (→ ANTHROPOLOGY), a theme which reappears a little later in *Infant*, written in 384, or 381 according to Maturi. There are, however, many places in which Gregory touches on the theme, maintaining a coherent vision: *Op hom* (PG 44, 125A–256C), cc. 15; 29–30; *Mort*, GNO IX, 51,5–52,1; less extensively, *Or cat*; *Maced*, GNO III/1, 101, 9–25; *Cant*, VII; a passage of *Eun*, II which treats questions *de anima*; *Eccl*, VII, GNO V, 419, 16–23. Thus, sensation exists in the human being from the beginning, while the intellectual faculties develop with age.

In fact, parting company both with the Origenist opinion of the pre-existence of souls (→ ORIGEN) and with the view of Methodius of Olympus, Gregory maintains that the soul is created at the same time as the body, with the creation of the human being as an ontological whole. Soul and body must have one and the same origin, without a temporal distinction between them, otherwise the power of the Creator would be imperfect, since he would be incapable of creating a whole human being “at once” (*Op hom*, c. 29). Body and soul have common food: “Purity, perfume and all things of this kind, from which the virtues bear abundant fruit” (*Cant*, VII, GNO VI, 241, 6–7).

Gregory excludes the possibility of the soul being infused into the body at a second moment, because the embryo would be incapable of moving

itself and growing (*An et res*, 124B): The birth of the corporeal human being and the spiritual one is “like that of two twins” who come into the world at the same time (*Cant*, VII, 240,20–241,8). Therefore the division of the soul from the body with death is temporary: Their unity will be re-established in the resurrection, the end being the restoration into the primordial state as image of God (*Mort*, PG 46, 520C–521A).

Taking up and Christianizing the Stoic thesis of the progressive development of human animation, Gregory theorizes a simultaneous growth in the child of both soul and body, during which the soul slowly develops superior faculties, finally reaching that of the intellect. It is a natural process which, as a whole, reveals the operating presence of the transcendent Creator from the beginning, when God transforms the generative substance into a human being (cfr. HARL; CANÉVET).

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Ilaria Ramelli

End → Eschatology

ENERGY

ἐνέργεια

Gregory's discussion with Eunomius fundamentally focuses on the possibility of understanding the divine essence and of speaking of God. In this context the term *ἐνέργεια* is quite important: the majority of men maintain that the words with which the Divinity is named indicate the nature, as is the case for the sky, the sun and other elements of the world. The divine nature is however ineffable (ἄφραστον), and no name can encapsulate (περιέχειν) the signification of the nature itself (*Abl*, GNO III/1, 42,13–43,2). The divine names are not thus useless, given for mere human convenience, as occurs on the creaturely level through the necessity to distinguish various realities. Instead, every name of either biblical origin or human provenance indicates a certain aspect of the mystery and is not deprived of meaning, but makes something regarding the divine nature (τι τῶν περὶ αὐτὴν: *ibidem*, 43, 14–15) manifest, without however indicating what it is by essence (κατ' οὐσίαν: *ibidem*, 43, 20; also *Beat*, GNO VII/2, 140, 15–17). Thus, the divine names are either negative, indicating that which cannot be predicated of the nature of God, e.g. the term *incorruptible*, or they indicate an activity, e.g. the term *vivifying*, but without thereby making known the very nature of Him who acts (*Abl*, 43,22–44,6). The term which indicates this activity is *ἐνέργεια*: “Therefore, considering the varied activities (ἐνεργείας) of the supreme power, we adapt the appellatives from each of the activities known by us. And we say that one of the activities of God is even the activity of observing or watching, and, so to speak, that by which *He sees all from above* and scrutinizes all, seeing the thoughts and penetrating with the power of his regard to the invisible things. Thus we think that the Divinity (τὴν θεότηα) has received its name from *vision* (ἐκ τῆς θεάς), and that He who has his regard on us (τόν θεωρόν) is called *God* (θεόν) by both custom and the teaching of the Scriptures” (*ibidem*, 44,7–44,16). The very name of God is thus described for Gregory, following Aristotelian tradition, from the action of seeing (cfr. also *Eun* II, GNO I, 268,30–269,2 and 397, 15–16; *An et res*, PG 46, 89B; *Deit fil*, GNO X/2, 143).

The discourse on *ἐνέργεια* is thus linked, for Gregory, to apophatism (→ APOPHATIC THEOLOGY), which in turn is at the service of the correct

formulation of the Trinitarian doctrine (→ TRINITY): If every nature is in itself unknowable (*Eun* II, GNO I, 247,4–248,3), this is true in a pre-eminent manner of the divine nature, which is above the unsurpassable division between created and uncreated (*ibidem*, GNO I, 246, 14–16). Man is a limited being who lives in time and space, in the *DIASTĒMA* (→), and this is why he can know only that which is dynamic and manifests itself in time. Thus, from the activity of the Creator and the beauty of the created he can ascend to God, who however remains incomprehensible in his metaphysical depth. For this reason, contrary to what is claimed by Eunomius, the only proper divine name is that of being *above every name*, according to the Pauline affirmation, since *God transcends every intellectual movement* (*ibidem*, 397, 28–29). Providence and activity take the place of a name instead (*ibidem*, 314, 17–18 and 315, 24–26).

Thus there is no contradiction between the Pauline affirmation that no one has ever seen God or can see Him (cfr. 1 Tim 6.16) and the Gospel promise that the pure of heart will see God (Mt 5.8): “For he who is invisible in [his] nature (τῇ φύσει ἀόρατος) becomes visible in his activities (ἐνεργείας), inasmuch as he is contemplated in certain properties [which are] in connection with Him (ἐν τισι τοῖς περὶ αὐτὸν καθορώμενοις)” (*Beat*, GNO VII/2, 141, 25–27).

Here we find the theme of ἐνεργεῖα with the use of περὶ and the accusative, which is something specific to Gregory and present in both the theological and the spiritual writings (B. KRIVOCHINE, 399). This expression would be the basis for the distinction between essence and energies, taken up later by GREGORY PALAMAS (→), but present already in Gregory (E.D. MOUTSOULAS, A. TORRANCE). For the Nyssen, the divine sphere coincides with that which is eternal and infinite, therefore, *all that is considered in connection with it* (πᾶν τὸ περὶ αὐτὸ θεωρούμενον) remains always unchanged (*Eun* III, GNO II, 186, 12–15). The ἐνεργεῖαι are thus characterized by the same immutability of the divine nature and are not separable from the latter, contrary to the Porphyrian philosophical conception (E. MÜHLENBERG, 241). Examples of what Gregory intends when he connects the ἐνεργεῖαι and περὶ with the accusative are *light* and *glory*, terms which in the Nyssen's theology unite the immanent sphere with the economic one (→ TRINITY).

The use of περὶ with the accusative in Gregory is different from that of περὶ with the genitive: the first would witness to the intrinsic connection between the ontological and gnoseological levels, between the internal and the external of the object, while the second would be generic and merely extrinsic, approaching the realities to which it refers from the

exterior. This distinction would be the basis for the technical use of the same expression in the context of Palamitic theology (B. KRIVOCHINE, 403 and E.D. MOUTSOULAS, 521–522).

Ἐνέργεια, in the discussion between Eunomius and Gregory, is not limited simply to the gnoseological level, since the Nyssen must confront the definition of Christ as the image and seal of the activity of the Omnipotent (εἰκὼν καὶ σφραγὶς τῆς τοῦ παντοκράτορος ἐνεργείας): “In fact, every activity is observed in him who strives to reach that which he seeks, but, once that which is sought is reached, it does not exist any longer in him. Thus, in the activity of the runner, which is a movement of the feet, once the movement has ceased, there is no longer any activity in him” (*Ref Eun*, GNO II, 379, 26–30). The fundamental idea is that activity has no proper subsistence, it depends completely on the nature of which it is the expression. If it is a human activity, it will have the temporal characteristics of humanity, while if it is divine it will carry the signs of divine eternity, since ἐνέργεια is properly a *movement of nature* (φύσεως κίνησις; *Eun* I, GNO I, 88, 15). This is a true and proper definition, particularly well formulated since it clearly manifests that activity does not have a proper consistency, that it is not an essence, and not a hypostasis. It is instead a “movement of nature”, a movement which corresponds to the nature or essence from which it comes. For this reason ἐνέργεια is unique as nature is, and for this reason there are two energies and two wills, as there are two natures in Christ. The definition appears to be traceable to Aristotle (*De generatione animalium*, 734b19–735a2: Drossaart Lulofs, 55), and is taken up again, after Gregory, by John Damascene (*Expositio fidei*, 37, 29 and 59, 8: Kotter, 94 and 144). The Aristotelian origin is suggested by other occurrences as well, such as that in the commentary on the *Metaphysics* of Aristotle by Alexander of Alexandria (*In Aristotelis metaphysica commentaria*: M. Hayduck, 706, 35–36) and Syrianus (*In Aristotelis metaphysica commentaria*: W. Kroll, 37, 34–35). Certainly, another source for Gregory is the field of the natural sciences and medicine (cfr. GALENUS, *De diebus decretoriis*: C.G. Kühn, IX, 822, 18; 826, 5 and 844, 8).

In the context of the definition of ἐνέργεια as φύσεως κίνησις, the conclusions drawn by M.R. Barnes, who has made explicit the connection of activity with δύναμις, are particularly important—showing how the ontologization of this latter term is fundamental for the Nyssen’s theology, engaged in responding to the subordinationist interpretation of 1 Cor 1.24 as maintained by Eunomius. Gregory’s response is based on the clarification of the relationship between φύσις, δύναμις and ἐνέρ-

γεια (M.R. BARNES, 296), this last not understood as any sort of activity, since there are different beings with similar activities, such as the activity of carrying by a wagon or by a horse. It rather refers to those activities which are characteristic of a nature, as is the case with creation for God (*ibidem*, 301–302).

The passage is fundamental to rebuff Eunomius, who had maintained that the Son was the product of an *energeia* of the Father. The very principle that ἐνέργεια follows nature permits Gregory to interpret those passages of Scripture where it is affirmed that the Son and the Spirit accomplish actions proper to God alone as proof of the divinity of their unique nature. The three Persons have a unique activity, as can be deduced from the biblical texts: a particularly significant example, for Gregory, is vision, predicated of God (Ps 83.10), of the Son (Mt 9.4), and of the Holy Spirit (Acts 5.3) (*Abl*, GNO III/1, 44,19–46,2). In this manner ἐνέργεια itself becomes the point of encounter between the immanent dimension and the economic one, safeguarding the infinite ontological profundity of God, without compromising the possibility of knowledge and participation.

The Nyssen's conception of ἐνέργεια also shows its properly mystical and spiritual side in *Cant*, where Gregory manifests the essentially personal dynamic of it. Developing the theme of the unknowability of God, he affirms: "When [the soul] ascends from the realities of below to the knowledge of the superior ones, even if she understands the marvels of his [God's] activity, she cannot proceed further, for now, in an agitated curious search, she but admires and adores Him of whom the existence alone is known through that which He does" (*Cant*, GNO VI, 334,15–335,1). The reference to the hand of the Spouse in Ct 5.4 is then a symbol of the activity (ἐνέργεια) of Him who is ineffable but who manifests himself in existing realities. Activity itself is understood as the limit of knowledge of Him who is unknowable by nature, but to whom one can be united in the mystical and sacramental encounter mediated by the humanity of Christ (*ibidem*, 336, 10–12). For this reason the hand also symbolizes the power of miracles which manifested the divinity of Jesus (*ibidem*, 338, 17–21).

In synthesis, ἐνέργεια is a key concept of the Nyssen's theological grammar which does not have a role of cognitive limit alone. It is rather the manifestation of the divine richness which is poured out in the Trinitarian *exitus*, and which can be followed back in the *reditus* which became accessible in Christ, uniting the divine immanence to the economy in the dynamic of personal participation which is the basis of divinization itself.

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Giulio Maspero

EPEKTASIS

ἐπέκτασις

Gregory uses the term *epektasis* in reference to Phil 3.13 to indicate that the ascent of the human being towards God, as Paul says of himself in this passage of Philippians, is a perpetual forgetting of that which is behind in order to continue ahead. For Gregory, the tension of the soul towards God develops in a continual *crescendo* (*Cant* 6, GNO VI, 174–175). This ascension towards God is an unlimited progress which will continue in heaven itself.

Many ideas of Gregory's theology and spiritual doctrine converge in this conception: The consideration of the divine infinity and ineffability, which render God completely transcendent and at the same time completely present to the human being; the consideration of the human being as image of God, thus reflecting in himself the divine infinity in his capacity of infinite progress; as a logical consequence, the conviction that love and desire have no limits in their capacity to grow; and, finally, the thought that in the human ascent towards God, stability and progress build on each other and actuate each other. Every acquisition of the soul, every new progress in love, immediately turns into a new starting point towards a greater desire and greater love. *Epektasis* is so intimately tied to the essence of Gregory's thought that J. DANÉLOU (1953, 291–292) presents it as “the synthesis of Gregorian spirituality in its central theme” in so far as “it belongs to the very essence of the spiritual life to be a continual progress, so that, however paradoxical it might seem, perfection consists in a continual progress”. With this conception of the human person as infinitely perfectible and therefore capable of perpetual growth, Gregory parts company with Greek thought, which considers human perfection as accomplishment and immobility, i.e. as the reaching of a term (τέλος). Instead, Gregory considers it as a perpetual progress.

In *Perf* already, written before his great mystical works of *Cant* and *Vit Moys* (→ CHRONOLOGY), he presents a noteworthy defense of the capacity of change, starting from that which is essential to man. How is it possible, he asks, for an unstable nature to reach stability in the good? He responds: the most beautiful characteristic of this capacity of change consists in the possibility of growing in the good, always progressing

from that which is already good towards something which is even more divine. That which seemed fearful (the fact that human nature is mutable) procures wings for man with which he flies ever towards always greater realities. Nobody should think he has reached the summit of perfection, since perfection consists “in never stopping to grow towards the better” (*Perf*, GNO VIII/1, 214).

Gregory maintains this conviction throughout his entire work. Mutability is good for man, since it permits him a constant growth in the participation in the infinite Good. This recalls the radical difference that Gregory posits between created being and uncreated Being: the one is mutable, the other immutable (→ CREATION). Infinite perfection consists in immutability; in man’s case, perfection consists in stability which is given precisely through the stability of a constant progress in growth. The most important texts on this theme are found in *Cant* 8 (GNO VI, 245–246) and *Vit Moys* II (GNO VII/1, 110–120).

In *Cant* 1 (GNO VI, 132), Gregory already observes that the soul cannot tire of the divine beauty, since in the measure in which he reaches it, in the same measure a new desire is born in him. It is quite important to keep present that, in speaking of *epektasis*, Gregory does not think of man’s ascetic effort, but of the “attraction” that the Word exercises on the soul: As soon as a level on the stairway of love is reached, the Word attracts again, as if one were still at the beginnings of the spiritual life. The Word calls the soul from time to time, giving it strength for a new ascent (*Cant* 5, GNO VI, 158–159). Gregory describes this constant progress of the soul with well known images of spiritual literature: a stairway, the climbing of a mountain, a race. The soul, participating in the divine goods, becomes “each time readier to receive greater goods” and “rises to such a greatness that there is no limit to its growth” (*An et res*, PG 46, 105). Gregory’s formulas have great clarity: the point of arrival (πέρας) is transformed into a beginning (ἀρχή), closer to that which is further ahead (*Cant* 6, GNO VI, 177–178). There is no point of arrival which does not immediately change into a point of departure.

Gregory has Paul’s words in Phil 3.13 on the manner of living the ascetic life as an ideal. One is always in tension towards that which lies ahead. Thus he imitates him at the beginning of *Cant* 8, which is perhaps the longest and most important passage on *epektasis*. Paul, Gregory maintains, while being in the third heaven, never ceases to ascend, “judging that the attained good can never be the term of desire”, since, given the nature of the divine goodness, that which remains to be reached is always greater than that which has been reached. This occurs

for all eternity: there is always an increase in the participation in these good things (*Cant* 8, GNO VI, 245–246). In the light of this text it is clear that *epektasis* cannot be understood as a vacuum or as a negation of true participation in the Good, but as an affirmation. For the increase in participation is possible because one already participates in a real manner in this good; an infinite growth is possible because this good is inexhaustable.

We find an identical thought in *Vit Moys*, in the preface, where Gregory offers “the essence of his spiritual teaching” (MACLEOD, 183). The preface begins with the comparison between the struggle for virtue and a horse race. Gregory returns to use this comparison in a culminating passage of his presentation, in the description of Moses’ ascent as a movement to infinity which is at the same time a perfect immobility—since it finds its stability precisely in being a constant growth (*Vit Moys*, II, GNO VII/1, 117–119). Here too he cites Phil 3.13, using it as a proof-text of the truth that that perfection consists in a perpetual moving forward (*Vit Moys*, II, GNO VII/1, 112–113).

Perfection in virtue is beyond words, because the perfect life is beyond all definition. It is thus, Gregory maintains, because the Good is unlimited, and consequently, the desire of one who searches to participate in this Good has no limits, one never stops. Neither perfection nor virtue is limited by any limit: the only limit to virtue is the unlimited (*Vit Moys*, I, GNO VII/1, 4). This does not mean that one cannot reach virtue, but that one can always grow in it. The doctrine of *epektasis* is not an exaltation of the equivocity between God and man, but an exaltation of the infinity and transcendence of God. For this reason “the perfection of human nature consists in being always disposed to reach a greater good” (*Vit Moys*, I, GNO VII/1, 4–5). It is not that God is “unreachable”, but that, even if possessed, He always surpasses the one who possesses Him already.

Apophatic theology is not a theology of distancing or discouragement, but a song to the infinity of the Life and the Good. In *Beat* 4 (GNO VII/2, 122–123), Gregory explains this paradox by linking Gal 2.20 with Phil 3.13: Paul recognizes that Christ lives in him (Gal 2.20) and nevertheless he is continually moving forward towards that which he has before him (Phil 3.13). For this reason, the only definition that Gregory offers of virtue is that “it is free of limits” (FERGUSON, 1976, 308).

Following the history of Moses, Gregory meditates on the three theophanies which are narrated in Exodus: that of the burning bush (Ex 3.1–15), that of Mount Sinai (Ex 19.16–25) and that of the splitting of the rock

(Ex 34.6–9). This third theophany constitutes the culminating moment of the book. Despite the preceding theophanies, Moses asks to see God again. Gregory always indicates the same reason: “The Good attracts to itself those who look on it”, and in the measure in which it is contemplated, it causes a new attraction to spring up in the heart. The more one reaches it, the more one desires it. The desire for God brings with it the joyous paradox of reaching that which is desired, thus amplifying the capacity of a new desire (*Vit Moys*, II, GNO VII/1, 112–113).

Gregory specifies that God grants the satisfaction of Moses’ desire to see Him at the same time that He refuses it to him—He concedes it in refusing it. This is because God would not have given to Moses the satisfaction of his desire if He had given it to him, since seeing God has the consequence that he who sees Him “never ceases to desire Him”. For this reason Moses still thirsts for that with which he has been satiated, and implores God to see Him again, not in the form of which he is capable, but as He is (*Vit Moys*, II, GNO VII/1, 114–115). This is therefore a paradoxical request.

The exegesis of the third theophany, at the culminating point of the book, turns into an exhortation to the following of God and of Christ. The essence of the virtuous life, Gregory states, is the following of Christ (*Vit Moys*, II, GNO VII/1, 120–121). The importance that Gregory attributes to Christ and to following Him in the commentary on this theophany demonstrates that he does not consider it a simple repetition of the preceding ones, but judges that it differs essentially from them (FERGUSON, 1976, 309–310). The Christocentricity of the *Vit Moys* finds its greatest expression here. God tells Moses to place himself on the rock (Ex 33.21). This rock is Christ (1 Cor 10.4). Gregory comments that this means that the race of man towards God is immobility in so far as it finds stability in Christ (*Vit Moys* II: GNO VII/I, 118).

Perfection in virtue implies immobility and progress. Here is the paradox, the solution to which is Christ, on whom the entire spiritual life must be founded. In order to express his thought, Gregory uses the image of the instability of a mountain of sand placed against the stability of the rock. Those who climb a mountain of sand, even if they exert effort in their movement, do not advance since their feet sink in the sand. However, inasmuch as he who places his feet on the rock becomes solid and immovable in the good, so does he advance more swiftly in his race: In his climb towards the height, the heart serves him as wings for his stability in the good. Thus, God, promising stability on the rock to Moses, indicates to him the manner to run (*Vit Moys*, II, GNO VII/1, 118).

Perfection does not consist in reaching an end, but in running without end. The human being can imitate the absolute divine immobility only through stability in interior growth.

This progress towards the infinite will continue in heaven as well. The fundamental reasons that Gregory invokes are universal, and valid for the blessed life above all: The participation in God augments the capacity of the soul and at the same time constitutes a new call to a higher participation. In *Cant* 8, Gregory states literally that this lasts “for all eternity” (GNO VI, 245–246).

There is possibly another fundamental reason for this affirmation, as R. HEINE (71–97) suggests: the polemic with Origen. With the argument of *epektasis*, Gregory perhaps seeks to resolve the problem posed by the affirmation of the first fall of the spirits, which took place according to Origen in heaven, due to the *satiety* or *boredom* (κόρος) of heaven. The affirmation of a desire for God which grows with the increase of participation in the divine goods obviously eliminates any similarity to Origen’s hypothesis.

M. HARL has carefully analyzed the relationship between *perpetual progress* and the theme of *satiety* (κόρος). This is an important theme, one with which many authors are preoccupied. The issue is a *satiety* which could be caused by an eternity contemplating always the same reality. Therefore, all affirm that there is a happiness without fatigue and without satiety, a happiness that satisfies without tiring. Gregory clarifies this point well while commenting Mt 5.6 (*Blessed are those who hunger and thirst for justice, for they will be satisfied*) in *Beat* 4: The satiety of which the beatitude speaks does not produce nausea, as material satiety does, but a greater desire. It is a fullness which does not produce satiety (GNO VII/2, 121).

Despite the fact that *epektasis* results in a magnificent argument to confront this theoretical satiety, and consequently, the possible fall of the spirits from heaven, in none of Gregory’s key texts on *epektasis* does he allude to the problem of satiety. Gregory based *epektasis* on the infinite nature of God, on the unavoidable human limitedness and on the possibility of infinite growth. This is the foundation on which Gregory bases himself to speak of *epektasis*.

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Lucas Francisco Mateo-Seco

Epinoia → Philosophy of Language; Divine Names

ΕΠΙΣΚΟΠΟΣ

ἐπίσκοπος

Gregory possesses a rich theology of PRIESTHOOD (→), in which his theology of the episcopate and figure of the Bishop is obviously situated. The benediction of the priest has the power to sanctify things and people, since he himself has received a blessing which transformed him into someone “august, sacred, holy and honorable” (*Diem lum*, GNO IX, 225–226). Gregory delineates the figure of the ideal Bishop in *Bas* (GNO X/1), *Melet* (GNO IX, 441–451), *Thaum* (GNO X/1, 1–57) and in *Epist* 17 (GNO VIII/2, 51–58), addressed to the priests of Nicodemia.

J. DANÉLOU (89–92) notes that, even in this letter, Gregory rarely uses the term ἐπίσκοπος, while he frequently uses the term ἱερεὺς. The titles of “president, master and mystagogue” that he applies to Bishops are also used by him to designate the functions of the priest in general and not only those of the episcopate. Nevertheless, the episcopal figure remains sufficiently delineated from what Gregory says: the Bishop is he “who has the presidency of the priesthood”, “who guides the people”, “who presides in the Church”, is the “good helmsman”, or the “gardener capable of channeling the waters of peace, and to offer to the Church the fullness of beauty”. He must above all care for unity, so that “those who have separated return to the harmony of the only Body and the peace of the Church may flower”.

P. MARAVAL (220–230) notes that the first quality of the ideal Bishop is that of being an ideal Christian; the second is the total dedication of himself to the good of the Church—in particular above partial interests. Among the items required in order to be elected, one must also have exemplary conduct. Gregory indicates that he who is to be elected Bishop must also have experience in the guidance of souls.

In the *synkrisis* of *Bas*, Gregory compares his brother to Paul in the love of God and the solicitude for distant Christians. He compares him to John the Baptist for his penitential life and his strength and liberty of expression before the powerful of the earth, he compares him to Elijah for his ascetic life, zeal for the faith and defense of the priesthood. The primary comparison is, however, to Moses. In the tradition prior to Gregory, Moses was presented as the guide of the people, the

legislator, the high priest and the prophet. Applying these characteristics to the figure of the Bishop, Gregory is conscious of the necessities of an epoch in which the Church enjoys civil peace, but is afflicted by heresies and internal divisions. He accordingly praises Basil's vast formation, comparing it to that of Moses, who was instructed in the Egyptian sciences and Israelite wisdom. Such a culture is indispensable for one who, in his magisterium, must provide arguments in favor of Christianity, not only to the pagans, but also for Christians who have been seduced by heresy.

Gregory uses the figure of Moses to praise Monk-Bishops: Basil retired to the desert, as Moses had. This is a solitary phase necessary for a profound encounter with God, one which should precede the practice of the priesthood. Gregory also praises the separation from earthly goods, indispensable for the liberty with which a Bishop must proclaim the truth. The extolling of the Bishop's word is constant: Basil guides the faithful with his word as a "lamp, as a column of fire"; the mouth of the Bishop is like the rock from which Moses caused water to spring forth, and which is an image of Christ (Ex 17.6; 1 Cor 10.4), because from it flows the water that gives life to the people. The witness to the truth on the part of the Bishop is similar to the witness of the martyrs. Like Moses, the Bishop must be a great contemplative, since his eyes are "the eyes of the Church" (*Cant*, GNO VI, 217). The Bishop must be the "singer of the Holy Spirit", Gregory says, alluding to the struggle with the Pneumatomachians. The Bishop must vigilantly supervise the liturgical celebrations; one of Basil's characteristics is the use of the Trinitarian formula, both in Baptism and in the Eucharistic Epiklesis (HARL, 96–97).

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Lucas Francisco Mateo-Seco

EPIST

Epistulae

Gregory's epistolary corpus is not particularly large: 28 letters, all belonging to his episcopal period, and perhaps all postdating the death of Basil (→ CHRONOLOGY). Some of these letters are simple notes (*Epist* 9, 11, 12 and 28), others are letters of presentation or intercession for various people (*Epist* 7 e 8), while still others discuss theological questions (*Epist* 5 and 24). It is regarded as certain that Basil's *Epist* 38 (→ *DIFFESS HYP*), identical to the one which appears directed from Gregory to his brother Peter, is actually Gregory's, even if the Council of Chalcedon (451) attributes it to Basil. *Epist* 4 is dedicated to the explanation of the feast of the Nativity; *Epist* 2 and 3 are dedicated to pilgrimages and the situation of the Holy Land, referring to the experience of his voyage there. These two letters appear to have been written in 388. *Epist* 25, written to Amphilocheus of Iconium, is quite important for the history of Christian art and architecture.

MARAVAL's (sp. 43–52) study of the Nyssen's epistolary corpus is extremely interesting. Gregory's literary figure emerges strongly from this study, a figure who enjoys the beauty of words and metaphors, and whose art and techniques of rhetoric remain lively. MARAVAL (43) even proposes the idea that these letters may have been chosen, by Gregory or by his ancient editors, among other reasons for their literary beauty. The letters are, without a doubt, an elegant witness to the positive vision that Gregory has of the culture of his times (→ *PAIDEIA*). This is evident, for example, in *Epist* 13 and 14 directed to the rhetor Libanius, or in the brief letters written to Stagirus, a sophist of Cappadocia (one with an invitation for him to come to Nyssa (9), the other in response to a request for help from the sophist (27)).

The lamentations that Gregory expresses to Libanius (*Epist* 14) in reference to the young people who prefer Latin (logically, since it was much more economically beneficial, as it opened the way to positions in the public administration) to Greek, which is a "more cultured" language, and his entreaty that he should continue to apply himself diligently in the teaching of rhetoric, inevitably raise a smile.

In the light of this correspondence, Gregory appears as a man endowed with sensitivity and eloquence, strongly committed to membership of the cultured society of his time, and aware of his position.

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Lucas Francisco Mateo-Seco

Epist 38 → Diff ess hyp

EPIST CAN

Epistula canonica

This letter is written to Letoius, the successor to Otreius of Melitene. Letoius was present at the Council of Constantinople I (381). The letter appears to have been written a few years later, for the Easter of 383 (→ CHRONOLOGY). It is a precious document, as it contains important information on the ecclesiastical discipline in vigor during that time in Asia Minor. It is also a clear witness to the preponderant role that Gregory played in questions of ecclesiastic affairs during this period.

Written for Easter, the letter is divided into eight canons. Gregory begins by speaking of the importance of Easter, “universal feast of creation” and of the resurrection of souls. It is a feast, not only of the new life that flows from Baptism, but also of the life that flows from conversion and penance (PG 45, 221).

Gregory distinguishes different classes of sin, regarding both the matter and the gravity, and proposes, as was already traditional, a penance adequate to the healing of each sin, above all of public sins. He also distinguishes between the sins of weakness and of malice. He reminds his reader that the Fathers had always thought it necessary to act with greater kindness towards those who are weaker. At the end, Gregory commends himself to the prayers of the recipient (*ibid.*, 236).

BIBL.: (Ed) PG 45, 221–236; E. MÜHLENBERG, in GNO III/5; (Tran) PER.-P. JOANNOU, *Fonti (Serie 1). Fascicolo IX. Discipline générale antique*, II, Rome 1963, 203–226; (Lit) J. JANINI CUESTA, *La penitencia medicinal desde la Didascalia Apostolorum a S.G. de N.*, RET 7 (1947) 337–362.

Lucas Francisco Mateo-Seco

ESCHATOLOGY

1. ESCHATOLOGY AND PASCHAL MYSTERY · 2. THE FULL REALIZATION OF THE KINGDOM OF GOD · 3. THE IMPORTANCE OF 1 COR 15.28
4. THE PRAYER FOR UNITY OF JN 17.21–23 · 5. THE ACCOMPLISHMENT OF THE CREATIVE PLAN · 6. OTHERWORLDLY PURIFICATION AND THE APOCATASTASIS · 7. FINITENESS OF EVIL · 8. THE PRESENTATION OF THE FINAL STATE · 9. THE DEATH OF CHILDREN THAT DIE PREMATURELY · 10. ESCHATOLOGY AND PROTOLOGY
11. HEAVEN, RECOVERED LIBERTY · 12. VISION OF GOD
13. ETERNAL LIFE AND JOY.

1. ESCHATOLOGY AND PASCHAL MYSTERY. In his studies on *Or cat*, R. WINLING observes that the Resurrection of Christ is the explanatory principle and structuring element of his catechetical discourse. The same is true of Gregory's eschatology, which is completely based upon the Resurrection of Jesus Christ. Gregory underscores the fact that Christ is the New Adam and carries it to extreme theological consequences (*Or cat* 16, GNO III/4, 45–49; *Antirrh* 21, GNO III/1, 160–161 and *Tunc et ipse*, GNO III/2, 16–18). This is because Christ's Resurrection is the cause and starting point for the resurrection of human beings. The mystery of the divine economy is this: God did not hinder the death of the human being, because He foresaw his RESURRECTION (→). The economy of the Incarnation has as its center the death and Resurrection of Christ, because this Resurrection is the starting point and cause of the resurrection of human beings. In other words, in the Paschal mystery, Christ destroyed the power of death in himself, transforming it into a source and principle of new life for human beings (*Or cat* 16, GNO III/4, 48–49).

2. THE FULL REALIZATION OF THE KINGDOM OF GOD. Gregory's eschatological vision is optimistic and luminous: good triumphs over evil definitively. This is the fullness of the realization of the Kingdom of God. This is clear, for example, in his commentary on the question "Thy Kingdom Come" of Mt 6.10. We ask, Gregory states, to be completely distanced from corruption, to be freed from death, to be broken free from the shackles of sin, that the body no longer be the enemy of the soul, that neither death, nor the demon, nor any vice ever have power over us again,

rather, that all of these evils be reduced to nothing, as smoke dissolves in the air or the shadows dissolve before the light. When the "Kingdom of God" will appear, every pain, sadness and suffering will disappear, and in their place there will be life, peace and joy (*Or dom* 3, GNO VII/2, 37).

3. THE IMPORTANCE OF 1 COR 15.28. The text of 1 Cor 15.28 decisively influences this optimistic eschatological vision of Gregory. He dedicated a treatise to its exegesis (→ *TUNC ET IPSE*). It also influences his conviction that evil is limited and parasitic, and, thus, that it cannot last eternally. Evil has no consistency in itself, and God will totally annihilate it.

1 Cor 15.28 poses a fundamental problem for Gregory: that of the equality between the Father and the Son. For it affirms that the Son will "submit" himself to the Father, when all things will be submitted to Him. Gregory's original intention in *Tunc et Ipse* is to demonstrate that this "submission" of the Son to the Father is not opposed to the equality that exists between them. In demonstrating this however, he has given us one of the best syntheses of his eschatological vision, describing how he conceives such a "submission" of the universe to God, and, in a certain sense, how he conceives the Parousia.

"Submission" to God, Gregory maintains, consists in the total and absolute removal of evil. Thus, when, like He who is "our First Fruit", i.e. Christ, (1 Cor 15.20), and having become one body with Him, we unite ourselves to God, in us and through us this "submission" of the Son to the Father will take place. The "submission" is not accomplished in the Person of the Word, but is accomplished "in his body". One says that the Son "submits" because that which is affirmed of "his body" is affirmed of Him, and further, because is it He who works this grace in us (*Tunc et ipse*, GNO III/2, 13–15). The intention of Gregory's exegesis is clear: to demonstrate that the Word "submits" to the Father "in his body" alone, which is what we are. This argument immediately follows certain passages dedicated to expounding in detail the theological signification of the parallel of Christ-Adam (*ibidem*, 11–15): Christ is so united to us, Gregory concludes, that our "submission" is described by Paul as "submission" of the Son to the Father.

"Submission" is nothing other than the "union with God". From this perspective, "submission" consists in such a union with God that He will be "All in all". This Pauline affirmation leads Gregory to think that, given that all things will be united to God, evil will be totally destroyed, as the shadows are destroyed by light.

4. THE PRAYER FOR UNITY OF JN 17.21–23. Gregory confirms the application he makes of 1 Cor 15.28 by basing himself on Jn 17.21–23, that is, on the prayer of Christ for the unity of the disciples. Gregory cites this passage on numerous occasions, and dedicates extended reflections on it in three writings: at the end of *Cant* 15 (GNO VI, 468–469), in *Mort* (GNO IX, 66) and in the central part of *Tunc et ipse* (GNO III/2, 14–15 and 22–23). Gregory maintains that the prayer of Christ will receive its final accomplishment in heaven.

The perfect unity of all creation in God is, thus, another manner of presenting the glorious vision of Gregory's proper final eschatology: *God will be All in all*, because everything will be united to Him. The Son restores the unity lost through sin to all things, particularly to the human race, in "submitting" it to the Father in the Holy Spirit. In the dense texts of *Cant* and *Tunc et ipse*, Gregory affirms that the Trinitarian unity spreads to all human beings through Christ by the action of the Holy Spirit, who is the Glory of God. In *Mort*, he lifts his eyes to the unity accomplished in heaven by the Holy Spirit, who is the "glory" of which Christ speaks in Jn 17.5: *Glorify Me, Father, next to You with the "glory" that I had with You before the world was*.

In *Cant* 15, the soul has left all fear far from itself, and lives in perfect *PARRÊSIA* (→), having reached unity with all those who are saved through their union with the only Good. Gregory's mental itinerary is clear: The Good is unique, and unifies all those who participate in it. Ascending towards the Good, man also ascends towards unity with all others.

These phrases of Gregory remind of Plato (CANÉVET, 203), but his thought is decidedly Christian and radically Christocentric (MATEO-SECO, 188–189). For Gregory is speaking of union with a personal God, whose Son became man and is the Mediator in whom the union of men with the Good is accomplished. In its ascent, the soul becomes beautiful and resplendent, because it approaches Beauty and the true Light (*Virg* 11, GNO VIII/1, 296–297). It also is united to all the disciples of the Lord through the unifying action of the Holy Spirit (*Cant* 15, GNO VI, 466–467). The Holy Spirit is the bond of unity (τὸ συνδεδειγμένον) of human beings with God, and with one another (*ibidem*, 467).

All of this is accomplished in a never ending ascent (→ *EPEKTASIS*). *Cant* concludes in the dynamic and happy vision of a never ending ascent. Joy, far from producing satisfaction in the style of sensible pleasures, produces an ever stronger desire. In this ascent, which is at once personal and communitarian, all souls seek the same thing: that no evil remain in anyone, and that *God be All in all* (*ibidem*, 468–469).

Similar arguments can be found in *Tunc et ipse*, in the passages dedicated to the description of the manner in which Christ exercises his mediation. In the Lord, Gregory states, the submission of “his body” to the Father is accomplished (1 Cor 15.28). Gregory specifies that this body “is the entire human nature” to which the Word united himself in the Incarnation. His expressions are unequivocal: He who is in the Father realizes our union to the Father by uniting us to himself. This mediation is actuated in the Holy Spirit. This is the Spirit of the Word, whom He already possessed before the existence of the world, who has glorified his flesh, and who will glorify our flesh as well. In this context, Jn 17.22 is read in its Trinitarian dimension. It is possible for all to be one, if they are united to Christ and in Christ are in union with the Father, since He who loves his own Son “loves the body of his Son as his Son himself” (*Tunc et ipse*, GNO III/2, 22–23).

J. DANIELOU has observed that Gregory was interested in 1 Cor 15.18 above all towards the end of his life. The treatise of *Tunc et ipse* belongs to this period. This is the treatise, DANIELOU (202) writes, in which Gregory “expounds his theology of the growth of Christ’s grace in humanity, from the Incarnation”. This growth of grace includes a total exclusion of evil. Gregory thus considers the complete restoration of all things in Christ as the achievement of a profound and universal unity. The presence of God in all this is total and universal. The prayer for unity of Jn 17.21–23 is thus transformed for Gregory into the request for the perfect unity of all creation, and particularly of spiritual creatures, in eschatological fullness.

5. THE ACCOMPLISHMENT OF THE CREATIVE PLAN. This unity realizes the fullness of the original plan of God on creation, and for man in particular. Gregory’s vision regarding Christ and the history of salvation is quite close to Col 1.15–20: Everything was created by Him and for Him, He is the Firstborn of all creation, God reconciles all things in Him, and in Him will the unity of all things be accomplished. For this reason, He accomplishes an eternal and perfect Mediation.

In *Mort*, the vision of eschatological unity is full of the light of beatitude, as is fitting for a writing of consolation. Once death, which is “the final enemy of God” (1 Cor 15.26), has been destroyed, and evil completely eliminated, Gregory says, the divine beauty, in whose image we were created in the beginning, will shine as one in all. It will thus be shown that we are sons of the Light. There will be a happiness “in communion”, because all will enjoy the splendor of the others, “when, by the prayer of God the Word, all will be perfect in unity and all will have the

same sentiment, so that the same unique grace will shine in them, so that each one will make his neighbor happy. Because, each seeing the beauty of the others, they will be filled with reciprocal joy, without any stain transforming such a beauty into any sort of deformation" (*Mort*, GNO IX, 66).

6. OTHERWORLDLY PURIFICATION AND THE APOCATASTASIS. It is obvious that Gregory thinks that there will be an OTHERWORLDLY PURIFICATION (\rightarrow). Without it, this absolute luminosity would not be possible. At the same time, Gregory considers the salvation of humanity to be an authentic APOCATASTASIS (\rightarrow), as a true restoration of humanity to its original state, or, better, to the state that it should have according to the original plan of God when He created man. The restoration of unity, as CANÉVET (1003–1005) observes, includes the reestablishing of the internal unity of the human being, damaged by sin and the passions, and the unity of human beings with one another, as well as the unity of men and angels. That is, the apocatastasis primarily signifies that the original plan of God is accomplished, and thus that the unity of all creatures will be achieved, particularly the unity of spiritual creatures. There was a time, Gregory says, in which the entire spiritual nature formed a choir that sang in unison, but sin tore man from his unity with the angels (*Inscr*, II, 6, GNO V, 86). This harmony is reestablished by Christ, who leads to unity, not only the Church, but the entire spiritual creation (*Cant* 8, GNO VI, 254).

It is necessary to specify that the unity of "all of spiritual creation" of which Gregory is speaking does not mean that he interprets the resurrection of the body metaphorically. It is clear that Gregory is close to Methodius of Olympus on this question, in a position contrary to that of Origen. Daniélou even manages to call Gregory's position a genuine "liquidation of Origenism regarding the pure spirituality of man" (DANIÉLOU, 206).

For Gregory rejects the preexistence of souls, having another conception of human corporeality and of the place that the human being has in the creative plan of God as a "microcosm", that is, as the point of union of the spirit and matter (\rightarrow ANTHROPOLOGY). Gregory clearly affirms the material identity that exists between the risen body and the earthly body, as well as the transformation of the risen body in conformity to the glory of the risen body of Christ. This transformation assimilates the human being to the angels and makes it possible for humans and angels to form one choir in the praise of God (\rightarrow RESURRECTION).

This is the most important aspect of the apocatastasis as Gregory understands it: the perfect restoration of all things, and man in particular, in Christ. In this restoration, the resurrection of the flesh has a most important position, in so far as it is the accomplishment of God's original plan for the human being (DANIÉLOU, 221). Nevertheless, this is not the only aspect: The apocatastasis also includes the restoration of all things, which Acts 3.21 speaks of, i.e. it also includes the material universe.

Gregory has Phil 2.10 particularly in mind. The Pauline affirmation that even under the earth every knee will bend leads Gregory to the conviction that none will remain definitively excluded from union with God.

Origen had already reached this conclusion, interpreting that this *bending of the knee* must be understood as an authentic adoration and voluntary homage (M. SIMONETTI, *I principi di Origene*, Turin 1968, pp. 159, 189 and 202). Gregory also unites this text to 1 Cor 15.28 in a long and highly instructive passage of *Ref Eun*. The line of the argument is as follows: In 1 Cor 15.28, Saint Paul defines "submission" of the Son to the Father as the submission of all human beings to God, when he writes of a unanimous adoration of the Son by all, in the heavens, on earth and under the earth. For this reason, Saint Paul affirms that the son, who is in all, through the submission of all of those in whom He is, submits himself to the Father. The passage concludes with a clear affirmation: "The submission of men to God is salvation for those who have submitted" (*Ref Eun*, GNO III, 396–397). On the basis of this perspective, it seems natural to conclude that for Gregory, salvation will reach everyone.

7. FINITENESS OF EVIL. To this it must be added that Gregory has the conviction that evil is inconsistent, that it did not always exist, and consequently, that it cannot be eternal. He affirms: "that which has not always existed will not exist always either" (*Inscr*, II, 8, GNO V, 100). Gregory manifests this conviction in numerous passages: "God will destroy the evil of sinners, but not their being [. . .]. This means that, when sin will no longer exist, nobody will carry its form any more" (*ibidem*, II, 8, GNO V, 101–102). And in another passage: "Human beings will not be destroyed, so that the work [of creation] does not turn out vain in being reduced to nothing. Instead, sin will be destroyed and reduced to nothing" (*ibidem*, II, 16, GNO V, 175). In *An et res*: "It is necessary that evil be totally and universally eradicated from being, and that which in truth does not exist,

absolutely not exist. And, given that evil only exists in the will, and that every will will be in God, it will completely disappear, because it will have no place in which to subsist" (PG 46, 101A).

It is possible, as DANIÉLOU (182) observes, that this radicality of Gregory's in his affirmation of the lack of consistency and annihilation of evil is related to his polemic against the Manicheans, who conceived evil as an eternal principle. Without a doubt, however, all of the basilar positions, whether exegetical or philosophical, lead him to conceive the total disappearance of evil ones, not through their annihilation, but through their conversion.

8. THE PRESENTATION OF THE FINAL STATE. There are texts in which Gregory speaks of the final state in a sense in which he seems to accept an eternal hell. Among these the end of *Or cat* stands out: There are no words capable of expressing the goods that God has reserved for those who have led a good life (1 Cor 2.9). On the other hand, the painful life that sinners will endure in the other life is not comparable to any sufferings here on earth either. This is true of the fire, for example: that of the other life cannot be quenched, and it is thus quite different from that of earth. The same thing is true when one speaks of the worms that never die: The worm of the other life is quite different from the animal that we know, as it is an eternal worm (*Or cat* 40, GNO III/4, 106). Gregory concludes this passage speaking of the just judgment of God (τὴν δικαίαν τοῦ Θεοῦ κρίσιν), the different states of the otherworld, and of the necessity to establish the foundations of our salvation during this passing life.

Given Gregory's fundamental positions, it is necessary to read these passages with prudence as WINLING (336–339) warns, *inter alia* because in the same *Or cat* 26 (GNO III/4, 64–66) he speaks of universal reconciliation, including that of the devil. This end to the *Or cat* nevertheless has its importance, precisely because it presents the totality of all the final states: WINLING asks if we are confronted by a contradiction on Gregory's part, or if he is simply attempting to attenuate a thought which could be interpreted in an overly audacious sense. DANIÉLOU (1940, 346) has proposed another solution: that Gregory is speaking of the totality of humanity, in which there could be some tragic exceptions. This would be consistent with the enormous importance that Gregory places on liberty, but it is undoubtedly incoherent with the manner in which he understands the finiteness of evil, incapable of eternal duration precisely due to its finiteness.

It is nevertheless clear that Gregory speaks of an efficacious OTHER-WORLDLY PURIFICATION (→) which in principle would be offered to all, even to the devil. On this argument, as has been seen, his language does not permit any doubt. Sin will be annihilated precisely because, after death, purification is possible. Already, DEATH (→) itself has been chosen by God as an efficacious path of purification. Gregory eloquently presents this thought, developing its similarity with clay vases (*Or cat*, 8, GNO III/4, 31–32). He affirms it explicitly in *Tunc et ipse* as well: The power of evil will be totally annihilated—those who were called enemies of God because of their disobedience will be friends though their submission. When all that is contrary to the good has been destroyed, being assumed by obedience to God, the Lord will present his Kingdom to the Father, having all things in itself. “To hand over” the Kingdom to the Father, Gregory says, is the same thing as leading all human beings to God (GNO III/2, 27–28).

9. THE DEATH OF CHILDREN THAT DIE PREMATURELY. Gregory dedicates an entire treatise, *De inf*, to the problem of babies that die immaturity, either before birth (ἄωρος) or just after (ἄρτίτοκος). DANIELLOU (1966, 181) and MARAVAL (→ CHRONOLOGY) assign this work to Gregory’s full maturity, in the years 385–386, i.e. when Gregory is in full possession of his theological wisdom. The writing has the aim of responding to certain demands of Ierius, who had in fact synthesized the more important questions that had preoccupied philosophers, and to which Clement of Alexandria, Methodius of Olympus, Athenagoras and Gregory Nazianzen had already responded with fairly concrete answers (DANIELLOU 1966, 164–170).

Ierius has two questions: Why would God permit the death of these children? (some die violently in their mother’s womb), and how will their resurrection and eternal life unfold? The first question regards divine providence, i.e. the reasons that can explain the fact that God permits these deaths and in this condition. The second directly involves eschatology. We will concentrate on Gregory’s response to this latter question.

In *An et res*, Gregory had responded to questions on how we will rise again, affirming that we will all rise again as adults, in a form like that of Adam in Paradise. For judgment, God will take the mortal situation of the dead into account (PG 46, 148–149). Gregory already takes children into consideration here. The fullness of our nature, he states, will reach its perfection through individuals: Some, already purified in this life; others,

having been healed afterwards, during a fitting period, by fire; others finally, not having known the experience of good and evil in this life. God proposes the participation in his goods to all. The difference between the virtuous life and the sinful one will be manifested in the future life, principally in the speed with which the hoped-for beatitude is reached (*ibidem*). The fundamental problem is based upon the conception of future life as retribution, and the fact that the babies in question have done nothing worthy of retribution.

They will clearly not finish in nothingness. Gregory offers a highly important axiom for this question: "He who has begun to live must absolutely continue to live" (*ibidem*), even babies who have died prematurely.

Gregory responds to this problem in *Infant* (GNO III/2, 81–82) affirming that the good that we hope for according to nature is connatural (οὐκ ἐξ ἑαυτοῦ) to human nature, and that "from a certain perspective" it can be called "retribution", but that this is only a manner of speaking. It is not however the most essential one: The fundamental principle is that human beings were created by God for the beatific vision and for union with Him. Everyone, due to the fact of being human, is in the image of God, and carries in himself the vocation to the contemplation of God. Now, children, created for this vision, have died without any spiritual sickness having damaged the eyes of their soul. They will thus see God without any need of purification.

This does not mean that these children have a better or worse condition than other mortals, in Gregory's view. It is true that children are not adults, Gregory's reasoning continues, and that they have not progressed in the labor of virtue. Those that pass from this life to God after having won in the struggle for virtue will receive the divine joy in proportion to each one's capacity. Those who die without having practiced virtue, instead, will participate in the knowledge and union with God according to their own capacities at first, "until they, having grown through the contemplation of being as through an appropriate food, will become capable of a new, enlarged and enriched participation in the Being that truly is (τοῦ ὄντως ὄντος)", that is, in God (*Infant*, GNO III/2, 83–84).

We are before the question of *epektasis* again, one of the most important questions of the Nyssen's theology. As DANÉLOU (1966, 176) observes, this perpetual progress consists in the fact that "the soul is always filled according to its capacity, but this capacity continually grows". This idea permits Gregory to affirm that these babies will be in heaven in a

manner analogous to that in which Adam was in Paradise. It is clear that there will be neither beings that have not reached their perfection, nor frustrated lives.

There is a text of Methodius of Olympus (*Conv* II, 6, 45–46) that Gregory probably knows, and which is in the background of his thought on the growth of children's lives in heaven. These babies, even those born from adultery, Methodius states, are entrusted to their guardian angels in order to be raised with gentleness and care. "Certainly," Methodius concludes, "they could become, without fear or scruple, the accusers of their parents, calling them to the tribunal of Christ to declare: You, Lord have not refused us this light which shines upon us, while they exposed us to death, despising your Commandment".

Gregory's position regarding prematurely dead babies leads him to conceive this glorious eschatology of which we are speaking as founded on three principles: The first is the plan of the Creator for the human being, in creating him in his image and likeness. The second, inseparable from the first, is human nature itself, created for conversation with God. The third is retribution, which, obviously, occupies the third position (DANIÉLOU 1966, 169).

10. ESCHATOLOGY AND PROTOLOGY. Eschatology is in intimate relation to protology. Gregory frequently describes the entry into eternal rest as the return of the human being to the Paradise from which he was expelled. This idea seems to be linked to baptismal theology. Thus, for example, Meletius removed the "tunics of hide" with his death. He who lives in Paradise has no more need of them. He is clothed in another tunic, woven with the virtuous life (*Mel*, GNO IX, 454). Identical associations to baptismal themes can be found in *Flacill* (GNO IX, 489–499). In *Op hom* 26, Gregory affirms that, once we have overcome the limits of vice, we will return to our life in light: "Once again we will know Paradise, once again we will know the Tree of Life, the beauty of the image and of our first dignity" (PG 44, 201–204).

As ALEXANDRE (126–128) has demonstrated, Gregory depends on Origen in this, as well as for the affirmation that the end is always like the beginning (Origen, *De principiis*, I, 6, 2). Gregory takes not only the axiom of the identity of *arché* and *telos*, of beginning and end, from Origen, but also the idea that the knowledge of the *end* is illuminated by the *beginning*. This is particularly important in the question of the resurrection of bodies: The grace of the resurrection was promised to us as a restoration (ἀποκατάστασις) of those who have fallen, as a return to

the life that we lead in Paradise, before man was chased from it (*Op hom* 26, PG 44, 188B), so that the restoration that we await, the resurrection of the body, is a proof that we were like the angels before the fall (*Op hom* 27, PG 44, 189B). Definitively, we will recover the splendor of the likeness to God (*Op hom*, PG 44, 256C).

This return to the primordial state constitutes the heart of the Nyssen's eschatological thought. This is true, whether one considers man in his strict individuality or in the totality of humanity. It is in this context that one must situate that which is affirmed on the total disappearance of evil, the purification of sinners, the unity of humanity and the unity of all intelligent beings, angels and men, "submitted" by Christ to the Father. It is clear why Gregory devoted so much attention to 1 Cor 15.28. The same is true of Gregory's exegesis of the parable of the lost sheep (Lk 15.4-7): The Word descends by means of the Incarnation in search of the lost sheep, and takes all of human nature on his shoulders, restoring the hundred sheep to the joy of the choir of angels (*Eccl*, 2 GNO V, 304-305; *Cant* 2, GNO VI, 61; *Antirrh* 17, GNO III/1, 151-152). Gregory thus adheres to an exegesis that has precedents in Irenaeus and Origen (HÜBNER, 125-129).

For Gregory, final eschatology is thus conceived as an eternal Easter, in which all will be united to Christ in the praise of the Lord (*Sanct Pasch*, GNO IX, 254-257).

11. HEAVEN, RECOVERED LIBERTY. This theme can be considered from another no less suggestive perspective, that of liberty—as Gaïth does in the last two chapters of his book. For Gregory, eschatology presupposes the recovery of the liberty and integrity of humanity. This is the most essential signification of the Nyssen's conception of apocatastasis. This concept "confers to his polemic against the Manicheans all of its metaphysical, moral and religious value" (GAÏTH, 187). Gregory could not admit that the original unity of spiritual creatures was definitively fractured by certain erroneous choices of created liberty. The apocatastasis is thus transformed into the final step in the experience of evil (the liberation of the liberty enslaved by sin and the passions), and into the starting point for a new form of life in a blissful eternity.

This blissful eternity consists, above all, in the supreme union with God, something that implies the vision of God. Gregory discussed this argument on numerous occasions, many times commenting on the "face to face" vision that Saint Paul speaks of in 1 Cor 13.12 (DROBNER, 101). He uses it frequently in *Cant*, in *Ref Eun* and in *Melet*. He also uses it

in a particularly important passage, at the culminating moment of *Vit moys* (II, 219, GNO VII/1, 110), speaking precisely of the infinity of God and, consequently, affirming the existence of an infinite progress in his contemplation.

12. VISION OF GOD. Already at the end of *Melet*, Gregory compares Meletius to Moses and describes his priestly activity in heaven: He is not removed from his faithful, but is among them. He is acting as priest in the sanctuary, he no longer serves “the shadow of heavenly things”, but contemplates the authentic image of things, he does not intercede for us as if through a glass darkly (1 Cor 13.12), but *face to face*, before God. He has abandoned Egypt and entered the Promised Land, in order to “philosophize” *face to face* with God (GNO IX, 454–455).

Gregory’s words are an authentic Christian *consolatio*, in which he has recourse to faith, so that its truths can console beyond what words can do. The essence of these consolatory words is found in the presence of the Pastor to his Church, because Meletius continues to live. Further, he continues to exercise his role as pastor with more force than here on earth, because he intercedes before God, speaking to Him without any veil, but *face to face*. The text describes the fullness of life in which Meletius now finds himself, and the fullness with which he now exercises his priesthood: he intercedes *face to face*, philosophizing with God as Moses spoke on Mount Sinai. In one way or another, Meletius, in heaven, no longer contemplates beauty as it is reflected in things, but contemplates the authentic reality, of which things are reflections.

In *Vit Moys* we find the *face to face* of 1 Cor 13.12 cited, precisely in reference to the divine ineffability (→ APOPHATIC THEOLOGY). Moses feels a growing desire to see God always more intimately. For this reason he audaciously asks Him to “enjoy beauty not through *mirrors* and reflections, but *face to face* (1 Cor 13.12)”. The manner in which God grants him this request is quite eloquent: He grants this in denying it. God promises to Moses to satisfy his desire to see Him, but promises no rest in this desire. In fact, he who sees God “is never satiated in his desire” (*Vit Moys* II, 231–233, GNO VII/1, 114).

Therefore, the seeing of God *face to face* of 1 Cor 13.12, as opposed to seeing through a glass darkly, is equivalent to a knowledge in which God manifests himself, but cannot be captured once and for all.

To see God *face to face* consists in clearly understanding that He is above every knowledge. One must observe that *face to face*, for Gregory, points to the experience of Moses on Sinai (Ex 33.18–20).

In *Cant* 11 (GNO VI, 336), Gregory cites 1 Cor 13.12, contrasting the two types of knowledge: The knowledge of the earth as *in a mirror* and the knowledge of heaven *face to face*. “In the future age,” when we will have passed to that life which surpasses all that is seen, we will no longer see partially, “through created things, as happens now,” but the image of eternal happiness will be realized in a distinct manner, and “the mode of joy will be quite different, whose nature cannot be now conceived by the heart of man”.

In this passage Gregory unites 1 Cor 2.9 and 1 Cor 13.12 in order to describe what is meant by *face to face*. Gregory’s thought is consistent with his entire negative theology: To see *face to face* does not mean that one comes to a limit in the knowledge of God, and yet it is a knowledge that is so high that it is not even imaginable by the human heart. It is significant that Gregory, even in citing 1 Cor 13.12, does not dare to describe how “this seeing face to face” might be. This is a sight that is above all that the eye sees, and above all that can enter into the human heart (1 Cor 2.9). The rest is adoration, joy and silence. As GAÏTH (200–206) says, it is the experience of the infinite. It is also an infinite progress (→ *EPEKTASIS*). According to Gregory, the nature of the angels and souls has no limit, and nothing hinders their progress in infinity. This means that Gregory conceives the spiritual creature as a perpetually growing dynamism, and heaven as a constant advancement in contemplation and love.

Gregory offers a synthesis of his thought on this argument at the beginning of *Cant* 8. Even after having been to the third heaven, Saint Paul says that he has not completely reached it, thus teaching that it is a great thing to reach the infinite Good, but that, given its infinity, that which is left to be reached is always greater than that which has been obtained, and this is true “in all the eternity of the ages”. In fact, those who are pure of heart, according to the word of the Lord (Mt 5.8), “always see God according to the measure of their strength, receiving in the knowledge of their soul as much as it can understand”. For that which is proper to the divinity “is infinite and remains above every understanding of the mind”. God is always “above” those who have been glorified. I think, Gregory says modestly, that what the Apostle says when speaking of the good that eye has not seen and ear has not heard (1 Cor 2.9) signifies that one does not see how great God is in himself, but as much as one’s capacity permits one to see, “even if one sees always” (*Cant* 8, GNO VI, 245–246).

Gregory does not further specify the nature of the *vision* of which he is speaking. On one hand, it is an intellectual operation which is an

authentic vision, as can be seen from the final phrase of the passage we are commenting, but on the other hand, it is clear that Gregory is saying that “what is infinite remains ineffable”, therefore seeming to lead to the conclusion that God is not accessible to vision. It is necessary to remember that we are still at the beginning of the discussion of this question, so central to apophatic theology and the distinction of “essence” and “energies” in God (→ GREGORY PALAMAS, ENERGY). It is in any case an intimate and ineffable relationship of friendship between man and the Trinity.

13. ETERNAL LIFE AND JOY. Referring to the conception that Gregory has of life in heaven, CANÉVET (1004–1005) summarizes it in two essential aspects. The principal aspect of this life will be similar to the joy that we now have in prayer, in the measure in which this unites us mystically to God through the grace of the Holy Spirit, as Gregory writes in *Inst* (GNO VIII/1, 78): “Prayer is like an image, a first fruit and a sample of eternal grace, of which the souls of the just will taste in the future age”. The other characteristic aspect of life in heaven is that heavenly felicity will produce an absolute firmness in the good, because the passions will have disappeared. Further, the constant growth will hinder any “boredom” so characteristic to human beings, who tire of everything, in eternal life—something that preoccupied Origen when he spoke of eternity (HARL, 403–406).

The continual progress in the ascent of the soul is at once satiety and desire. One cannot understand Gregory’s philosophical thought as a philosophy of sadness and despair, but as a theology of perpetual youth in continual growth. Life in heaven, then, is paradoxical: Desire is insatiable, and yet always satisfied. Gaïth rightly opposes the interpretation of this insatiable desire that is offered by VON BALTHASAR (76–99). For he “affirms many times that Gregory’s philosophy is a philosophy of dissatisfaction and even despair”, but, “a more in-depth study of the dialectic of divine infinity reveals to us that the word *desire* does not have the same meaning for us as it does for the Nyssen. For him, *desire* is nothing other than the adequate expression of *nature*, since nature is nothing but tension towards the origin” (GAÏTH, 203–204).

Gregory conceives of eternal life as perpetual joy and luminous communion. Here is how he describes it at the end of *Mort*: Once death is vanquished (1 Cor 15.26) and evil annihilated, “the divine beauty will shine in all, in whose image we have been formed”. It will be seen “that all are children of the Light”. “One same grace will shine in all” and “they will

have the same sentiments, the same and unique shining in them. So that in seeing the beauty of the others, they will be filled with joy”—without there being between them the shadow of even the smallest evil (*Mort*, GNO IX, 65–66).

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Essence → Ousia

ETERNITY AND TIME

Both God's eternity and the human being's temporal existence and future state are treated by Gregory in almost all his works and in a variety of approaches.

In his early works (before the books *Contra Eunomium*), Gregory is especially interested in the contrast between the present stream of time (*chronos*) and the future age (*aiôn*). The length of "time" is determined by the fulfillment of the *PLÊRÔMA* (→) of humanity, that is, the full number of human beings, foreseen by God. At that moment the rushing stream of time will come to an end, humanity is going to be transformed into something "eternal" (*aidion*), and the future age will begin (*Op hom*, PG 45, 205C). The same idea is found repeatedly in his *In Inscriptioes Psalmorum*, where the "eighth day" serves as an indication for speaking of the future age (*aion*), which is beyond the cyclic repetition of the week by the stream of time (see, e.g. GNO V, 83,25–28; 84,3–5; 121,3–5, etc.). This contrast is expressed in the *An et res* also psychologically: whereas at present our life is split into memory and hope—memory becoming shame if we did something sinful—in the future age, we will have only love (see Paul, 1 Cor 13), for also God's life is love (See I John, 4: 8.16) for "God knows himself" and, since he is the fullness of goodness and beauty, "this knowledge becomes love" "*hê de gnôsis agapê ginetai*." (*An et res*, PG 46, 96C).

In *An et res*, *Eccl* and *Inscr*, one finds also the teaching that the final state after the resurrection is going to be the restoration (→ *APOCATASTASIS*) of the original condition (e.g. *An et res*, GNO IV, 148, 1–2). This, however, has to be understood properly: the original condition of humanity is not the historical condition of Adam and Eve, for the very division of humanity into the sexes is a result of God's foresight of the Fall, so the return to the beginning is rather a return to the original divine idea of humanity. The same must be said of the texts which speak of a restoration of the lost unity of the whole rational nature (e.g. *Inscr*, GNO V, 68,7–69,4), for Gregory argues at length against the pre-existence of the human souls. One must, therefore, be cautious in affirming that Gregory's conception of history is simply or primarily that of a cycle (→ *THEOLOGY OF HISTORY*).

Already in these early works, however, there are indications of the idea

of that endless progress which will be so pervasive in Gregory's later works. Thus in *An et res* Macrina practically quotes a text of Irenaeus *Adv. Haer.* (IV, 11,2) that speaks of the human being as a free and ever-growing receptacle of God's beneficence; since God does not cease to enrich the human being, and the human being does not cease to receive his goodness, with his growth there grows also his desire to receive more, so that endless growth is implied (*De An. et Res.*, PG 46, 105 A–B). A key text for such an understanding of human existence is Philippians 3:12–13, where Paul speaks of forgetting what is behind and stretching himself (*epekteinomene*) out into what is ahead (→ *EPEKTASIS*).

Perhaps surprisingly, the term *aiôn*, which, as we have seen above, had in several of Gregory's works designated the "future age" as opposed to the present time, and akin to God's eternity, has another fundamental meaning. "The *aiôn*, being a word designating [some kind of] extension, signifies by itself all that has been created in it" (*Ho de aiôn diastêmatikon ti noëma ôn pasan di' heautou sêmainei tēn ktisin tēn en autōi genomenēn: Eccl*, GNO V, 440,3–50).

Aiôn here includes all creation, especially as temporally extended, contrasted to the eternity of God which absolutely transcends any aspect of time (→ *DIASTÊMA*). The following text is perhaps the best expression of these teachings, which are repeated throughout the books *Contra Eunomium*: "All with any insight, however moderate, into beings, know that the creator of all (*ho tōn holōn dêmiourgōs*) laid out (*prokatabalomenos*: pre-established) the aions and the place contained in them (*tous aiōnas kai ton en toutois topon*) as if it were a receptacle (*chôrêma dektikon*) for things that would come to be and created everything within these. For it is not possible that everything which came or comes into existence by creation be not either in place (*topōi*) or in time (*chronōi*). The nature, on the contrary, which is self-sufficient, eternal (*aidios*) and contains all beings (*tōn ontōn emperiektikê*) is neither in place nor in time, but being before these and above these in an ineffable manner, *autê eph' heautês* can be contemplated only by faith, not measured either by aions or by time, but remains by itself (*eph' heautês hestōsa*) resting in itself (*en heautêi kathidrumenê*) not divided into past or future, for nothing of it is outside of it (*oude gar esti ti par' autēn exō autês*), the passing of which (*hou parodeuontos*) could make something past and something future. These (i.e. past and future) are *ta pathê* proper to those (beings) within creation, whose life is split into hope and memory according to the division of time, whereas that transcendent and blessed power, to whom everything is always equally present as if it were now (*hêi panta kata to*

enestos aei parestin episês), is seen as comprehending by its all-encircling power (*tês periektikês tôn pantôn dunameôs*) both past and future" (*Eun* I, GNO I, 136, 8, 27).

In Gregory's last two great works, the *De Vita Moysis* and the *In Canticum Canticorum*, it is again the continuous and endless progress in participation which dominates the topics of time and eternity. We can see, however, a deeper elaboration of both the personal and the metaphysical aspects of this participation.

To limit ourselves to the *In Canticum Canticorum*, the personal aspect is emphasized by the fact that it is the bridegroom's call that both invites and enables the bride continuously to get up and go (e.g. *Cant*, GNO VI, 70.22–71,8 and 253,8–18).

For the metaphysical dimension, see e.g. Gregory's affirmation that the created intelligible nature too is in a sense infinite (*apeiron*), for it is preserved in goodness by an endless participation (\rightarrow *METOUSIA*) in God, who is infinite goodness. "Thus in a certain sense it is constantly being created, ever changing for the better in its growth in perfection, so that here, too, no limit can be found, nor can its progressive growth be limited by any term ..." (*Cant*, GNO VI, 174, 8–13).

It is to be noted that, though several of these texts offer some parallelism with Neo-Platonic texts, e.g. Plotinus *Ennead* III.7 *Peri aiônos kai chronou* (which was almost certainly known to Gregory), the differences are very great. *Aiôn* for Gregory is not the word for the eternity of God, but either for the future age or for the comprehensive receptacle for all creation. Strict eternity, for which Gregory does not have a technical term, is consistently and clearly affirmed of God alone—not the second hypostasis, but the Triune God. On the other hand, time is not the fallen state of the soul, but a divine provision for the formation of humankind and the present life within which one can and should start the endless progress which continues after death *en pasê te tôn aionôn aidiotêti* (*Cant*, GNO VI, 246,3–4).

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EUCCHARIST

Chapter 37 of *Or cat* (GNO III/4, 93–98) is important for the Eucharistic doctrine of the Nyssen. It is situated after the chapters dedicated to Baptism in the explanation of the way in which the sacraments render the salvation of Christ active in the human being. In this perspective, what Gregory says about the Eucharist must be considered complementary to what he states about Baptism: the two sacraments complement each other in the goal of the union of the Christian with Christ, and to make him a participant in the mysteries of Christ's life. Baptism and Eucharist constitute thus such an intimate unity as to be inseparable. The Eucharist carries what was started in Baptism to completion: The Eucharist, sacrament of the body of the Lord, causes even our body to participate in the life of the risen Christ. The Eucharist is part of the rites of CHRISTIAN INITIATION (→) as the fulfillment of these rites: After crossing the Jordan, the faithful are nourished with the body and blood of Christ—his body is the food which strengthens the soul and his blood is the drink which rejoices the heart (*Bapt*, GNO X/2, 362; *Ascens*, GNO IX, 324).

Referring to Jn 6.48–58, Gregory attributes the resurrection of the body to the Eucharist, using a “realistic” language for both the resurrection as such and the presence of the body and blood of the Lord: Through communion, the vivifying and resurrecting power of the body of Christ reaches our bodies. Gregory's reasoning is tightly linked to his theology of DEATH (→): Through sin, man drank a poison which penetrated to the deepest part and led him to death; he needs an antidote which penetrates his vital organs, and enters into contact with them with the same depth as this poison. This antidote is nothing other than the body of Christ, who vanquished death and transformed Himself for us into a source of life. This is a frequent thought in the theological tradition preceding Gregory. Ignatius of Antioch calls the Eucharist “medicine of immortality” and “antidote against death” (*Ef.* 20, 2, SC 10, 77). Irenaeus affirms that the bodies that receive the Eucharist “possess the hope of the resurrection” (*Adv. Haer.* 4, 17, SC 100, 613).

One must read Gregory in this context when he states, for example, that the Eucharistic body of Christ is a seed of immortality sown in the bodies of the faithful, or when he states that it is “a leaven” which

transforms the whole loaf into itself, i.e. all our being—including the body.

Gregory uses the verb μεταποιέω to indicate the profound transformation that the body of Christ received in the Incarnation and in the Resurrection, as well as the profound transformation that this body produces in our own bodies. R. WINLING has highlighted the importance that the Resurrection of Christ has as a structuring principle of the Nyssen's SOTERIOLOGY (→): the risen body of Christ is the path whereby the resurrection reaches all human beings. The affirmation in *Or cat* 37 is in perfect harmony with the fundamental lines of Gregory's thought: here, he establishes a parallel between the Incarnation of the Word and the presence of the body of Christ in the Eucharist: As through the Incarnation, the body of Christ was transformed into a divine dignity, so now the bread sanctified by the Word has been transformed into the body of the Word. This body, more powerful than our own, transforms them in communicating his risen life to them and making them participants in his incorruptibility.

Gregory's constant reference to the Eucharistic bread as ἀθάνατον σῶμα implies a presence which is more than merely symbolic. Gregory's repeated phrases do not leave room for doubt: the one who receives the bread communicates with the "immortal body" of Christ. The verbs used to express the change produced in the bread suggest a profound transformation: μεταποιέω, μετατίθημι and principally μεταστοιχειόω, which can be respectively translated as "to alter", "to transform" and "to change the nature of the elements" (G.W.H. LAMPE, *A Patristic Greek Lexicon*, Oxford 1961, 859–862), with the recommendation of understanding this change in the sense of an objective transformation which produces a real presence. This is what Gregory's thought as a whole indicates as well, in considering the Eucharist to be an important piece in the realization of the ultimate purpose of the Incarnation: namely the divinization of the human being, in which the incorruptibility of the body and the triumph over death play an essential part. This occurs through identification with Christ and transformation into Him.

Gregory refers to the elements that serve as food and drink as a likeness which helps us to understand his teaching on the change of the elements in the Eucharistic action: In the same way that Christ, during his earthly life, ate and drank, and transformed the bread and wine into his flesh and his blood, so now, with his power, He can transform them into his body and his blood. Gregory immediately specifies that this current transformation takes place because the bread "is sanctified

by the Logos of God and prayer”, that is, by the words of consecration “repeating what the Lord said, *This is my body*” (Mt 26.26).

This “realism” of Gregory cannot be understood as a caricature: Gregory speaks of the Eucharist as a “divinized bread” (VÖLKER, 242), as a bread that contains the glorious body of the Lord and causes the incorruptibility of our body, as a bread that divinizes us. Communion is a spiritual food of the “deified” body of Christ which already unites the divine and human on earth (MOUTSOULAS, 125).

The presence of the body of Christ is due to the efficacy of the priestly “benediction”. The citation of Mt 26.26 presented by Gregory in *Or cat* 37, is situated in a more adequate context in *Diem lum*, where he exalts the efficacy of Baptism, specifically basing himself on the efficacy of the priestly benediction: the bread too is, in the beginning, ordinary (κοινός) bread, but when the mystery has consecrated it “it is called and truly is the body of Christ (σῶμα χριστοῦ)”. Gregory specifies that this priestly benediction is a “sanctification of the Holy Spirit”, to show the profound reason for the transformations (of water, of the altar, of bread, of oil, of the priest himself) of which he is speaking (GNO IX, 225).

This realism regarding the body of Christ who gives himself to us as bread, and of the sacrificial dimension that it presupposes, leads Gregory to ask himself how it is that Christ could offer himself as food and drink to his disciples in the Last Supper, when He had not yet been immolated on the Cross. The response to this question is instructive as to the seriousness with which Gregory’s realistic expressions, in reference to both the presence of Christ in the Eucharist and the sacrificial dimension of the Holy Mass, must be understood. In order to respond to this question he bases himself on Jn 10.18: *I have the power to offer my life and to take it up again*, a text he interprets in a *realistic* manner. According to Gregory, with these words the Lord revealed his power over his own life and his own death, so that his death did not happen “through necessity of nature”, but in his dispensation of salvation he precedes the Jews and Pilate, offering Himself “as Offering and Victim, as Priest and Lamb” (*Diem lum*, GNO IX, 286–288). This takes place in the Last Supper, when Christ offered his body to his disciples to be eaten. This clearly manifests, Gregory states, that the sacrifice of the Lamb was already accomplished, since it would have been absurd to offer a body not yet immolated to be eaten.

In this passage, Gregory is not speaking directly of the Eucharist, but of the calculation of the three days which pass between the death and the Resurrection of Christ. Despite this, or better, precisely for this reason,

he has left a clear witness to his Eucharistic faith: i.e. of the realism with which he understands that in the Eucharist the body and blood of Christ are contained, and that each of them are offered to the believers inasmuch as they are already sacrificed—in the Last Supper the body had already been sacrificed according to the dispensation of the mystery. This is so true that Gregory begins counting the three days from death starting with the Last Supper, because in that night that “Sacred and Holy Body” was eaten (DROBNER, 103–114). The “realist” signification of these phrases is underscored again by the manner in which Gregory establishes his thought on the Lord’s dominion over time: He who had the power to offer his life and take it up again also had the power “as the Author of all time, to render time in conformity with his works without being slave of time in the accomplishment of his works” (*Diem lum*, GNO IX, 290).

On this point, Augustine’s thought converges completely with that of Gregory, precisely in the exegesis of Jn 10.18: The hour at which Christ dies is not an hour at which He was constrained to die, but the hour at which He let himself die, since He who had the power to offer his own life could not be tyrannized by the necessity of destiny (S. AGUSTINE, *Tract. in Ioh.*, 47, 7).

In his spiritual writings, Gregory applies this conviction that the Christian really communicates with the body and blood of Christ. He writes in *Perf* that for a licit communion, purity of soul is indispensable. The Word nourishes the soul, filling it with consolation. He is also food and drink in the proper (καθώς) sense. For this reason, in conformity to 1 Cor 11.28, the participation in this food should not take place without examination and prudence. Gregory interprets the gesture of Joseph of Arimathea, who wraps the dead body of the Lord in an “immaculate and pure” linen and buries Him in a “new and pure” sepulcher, as a figure of the purity of the soul with which one must communicate (GNO VIII/1, 191–192).

Gregory attaches great spiritual importance to communion. In *Eccl* 8, he observes that we are transformed into that which we eat; the goodness of the Word will transform us into his own goodness, because his flesh is true food (Jn 6.55). This will make the path towards Christian perfection sweet, since the flesh of the Word is sweet for those who taste it, and agreeable for those who desire it (GNO V, 423).

In *Cant* 10 Gregory links communion to one of his most eloquent descriptions of the mystical life: SOBER DRUNKENNESS (→). “Eat and drink, my friends” (Ct 5.2). According to Gregory, these words are equivalent to those that Jesus pronounced in the Last Supper: “Eat and drink” (Mt 26.26) are an exhortation to drunkenness, since this divine food and

drink realize a transformation and a transcendence in the human being, purifying and elevating the soul to God, causing him to come forth from himself and unite to the Word. For this reason only those who accomplish the will of the Word come worthily to this food, and this is why He calls them brothers: Mt 12.50 (*Cant* 10, GNO VI, 307–308).

In the text of *Cant* 10 to which we are referring, Gregory defines the invitation to eat and drink of Mt 26.26 as an invitation and mystagogy that the Word realizes in the sacrament of union and love.

J. DANÉLOU (25–26) has focused attention on the parallelism which exists between the stages of spiritual life indicated by Gregory and the sacraments of Christian initiation: Baptism corresponds to the first stage, in the two aspects of purification and illumination; Confirmation corresponds to the second stage, as ascent from the visible world to the invisible one; the Eucharist is related to the mystical life both as union with the Word and as ecstasy, i.e. as love which is manifested in “sober drunkenness”. VÖLKER (241–247) has underscored the same truth, highlighting the ecclesiastical aspect of Gregory’s teaching on the Eucharist itself and its influence on the spiritual life. The ascent to perfection is possible only in a living relationship to the Church, as a member of the Mystical Body of Christ. For this reason, the Eucharist, given to us in communion, always accompanies the ascent towards Christian perfection; moreover, it is what renders this ascent possible.

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EUN I AND II

Contra Eunomium libri I et II

In the years preceding the death of the Emperor Constantius II in 361, many parties contended for supremacy in the eastern Church (see VAGGIONE; КОПЕЦЕВ; B. STUDER in *El "Contra Eunomium I"*, 140–146). One of these was that named ‘Anomean’ (ἀνόμοιοι, ‘Unlikers’) by enemies and ‘Neo-arian’ by modern writers. It was begun by a skilful polemist Aetius and widely promoted by EUNOMIUS (→), a man of powerful religious *charisma*. It was variously opposed by other groups, not only those who demanded ὁμοούσιος and the Nicene Creed, but the powerful ‘Homean’ and ‘Homeousian’ parties. A network of bishoprics was set up, constituting a Eunomian church. Ca. 360, Eunomius produced a defence of his position, called either Ἀπολογία or Ἀπολογητικός (*Apologia* or *Liber apologeticus*). The occasion is uncertain, but the best opinion is that of Vaggione, viz. that it was a published version of Eunomius’ statement to the Council of Constantinople in January 360, which led to his appointment as Bishop of Cyzicus. The uncertainty arises because Basil of Caesarea would soon deny that the *Apology* was ever actually delivered, and Gregory felt obliged to support what Basil had said. Like all that survives of Eunomius’ writings, the *Apology* has to be reconstructed from the quotations of his critics (see Eunomius, *The extant works* 33–75; also Sources Chrétiennes 305, 177–299). Fortunately, Basil quotes most of it systematically in his own refutation (Basil, *Contra Eunomium I–III*). Eunomius was exiled from Cyzicus in 362 and began writing a larger work, Ὑπὲρ τῆς ἀπολογίας ἀπολογία, *Apologia apologiae*. This took many years to write and was only part of his polemical output of the period (see the sketch of the literary debate by M. VAN ESBROEK in *El "Contra Eunomium I"*, 204–205). Eunomius wrote a point-by-point refutation of Basil, and only the first volume was issued before Basil’s death in 379. Gregory took up the task of defending his brother, and produced *Eun I*. When a further part of the *Apologia Apologiae* appeared, Gregory wrote *Eun II*. This history is set out by Jaeger in the Prolegomena to GNO 2 vi–xiii. A substantial outline of the *Apologia apologiae* can be reconstructed from Gregory’s refutation of it (Eunomius, *The extant works* 77–127), as can some of Eunomius’ actual wording. The latter can be seen in the spread (‘italic’)

text which appears in Jaeger's edition; this cannot be relied upon, however, because Jaeger cannot distinguish precisely between exact quotation and loose paraphrase of Eunomius' argument.

The text of *Eun I* was established by Jaeger in GNO 1 22–225 (English version in *El "Contra Eunomium 1"*, 19–135). Jaeger also introduced the enumeration into 691 sections. One lacuna, which includes the entire 30th chapter of Gregory's 42, follows section 438 (GNO 1 134; *El "Contra Eunomium 1"*, 99). It may be partly filled with the help of Gregory's own chapter-headings (GNO 1 6,5–7), and references back to the missing material later in Gregory's text, but chiefly from quotations in the Syriac version of Peter of Callinicum, *Contra Damianum* III, chapters XXI, 2004–221 and XLIX, 107–149 (CChr.SG 35, pp. 44 and 54, pp. 418–425).

The chapter-headings (GNO 1 3–7) are Gregory's own guide to the contents of his work, though there can be disagreement about where each chapter begins and ends (S.G. Hall in *El "Contra Eunomium 1"*, 21–25). These headings do not reveal the structure of the work. The whole may be divided into three main parts (S.G. Hall in *El "Contra Eunomium 1"*, 27–31 has some numerical errors, and the headings printed on pp. 43 and 45 are misplaced: see his p. 22). The book may be divided into three parts:

1. Introduction and historical arguments (sections 1–146)
2. Eunomius' statement of faith (147–473)
3. Eunomius' critique of Basil (474–657)

In the first part Gregory explains why he has taken up the cause of defending his late brother (91–17). He then makes the first of many criticisms of Eunomius' pretentious style, and reviews his account of his activities with Aetius in relation to Gallus, and the plots against them of Eustathius of Sebaste and Basil of Galatia (see VAGGIONE, 157–161; Eustathius and Basil are named in Gregory's heading to chapter V). Gregory next presents a scurrilous account of the early careers of Aetius and Eunomius (35–58), and a defence of Basil's allegation that the *Apologia* was a literary fiction never actually delivered (59–71; 83–90; cf. Basil, *c. Eun.* 1,2); Eunomius had made great efforts to refute this, and was probably right (Eunomius, *Extant Works* 100–101). The matter of presenting the *Apologia* is confused with Eunomius' withdrawal from the Council at Seleucia later, an event which itself enables Gregory to throw back the accusation of cowardice which Eunomius had made against Basil (83–90; 119–156). Gregory has difficulty with Eunomius' point that if he had not

made a successful defence he would never have been rewarded with the bishopric of Cyzicus, so that proves the *Apologia* was actually delivered (111–118; VAGGIONE, 226–227).

Secondly, Gregory turns to theological matters, quoting and criticizing in detail Eunomius' statement of faith (147–154). Responding to Basil's attack on the simple traditional credal statement of the *Apologia* (Basil, c.Eun. 1.4), Eunomius uses philosophical terminology: 'The whole statement of our doctrines consists of the highest and most authentic being; of the one which exists because of that being and after that being has supremacy over all the rest, and of a third which is in no way aligned with them, but subject to the one because of causation and to the other because of the activity by which it exists, etc.' In view of the fact that Eunomius was responding to Basil's criticism of his simple traditional language, Gregory's protest about the absence of the names of Father, Son and Holy Spirit is rather unfair: he ought to contrast it, for instance, with the wording of the Nicene Creed. Eunomius' statement however gives the foundation for Gregory's theological arguments which follow. By calling the first Being 'highest and most authentic' (τῆς ἀνωτάτω καὶ κυριοτάτης οὐσίας), Eunomius denies the supremacy and lordship of Son and Spirit; it can even be argued that denying 'authentic being' to the Son is to deny his existence altogether (161–190). Gregory next denies that the Spirit is 'subject' (ὑποτακτομένης) to the first and second Beings, which he says is not scriptural (187–204). Eunomius had written that the names of the three beings and their activities (ἐνεργειῶν) defined the beings in the Trinity (151), and that each of them is simple and unique in its own rank (152). This begins apparently not far from the Cappadocian doctrine of the ἰδιώματα: the divine Persons are distinguished by their individual characteristics of paternity, sonship and procession. Gregory however resists Eunomius' argument that each of the divine beings is simple, and therefore separate, with an argument which comes near to making the divine unity generic: God is one Being, (οὐσία) with three instances (ὑποστάσεις) rather as Peter, James and John are instances of human Being (226–230; for the debate, see A. MEREDITH in El "Contra Eunomium 1", 339–351). Gregory argues with some sophistry that you cannot treat the Son and Spirit as products of another 'activity' (242–260), and that the notion of 'rank' in the Godhead is unacceptable (261–293). This includes a clear statement of the three distinct hypostases within the divine Nature (278–281), which is given scriptural backing (294–316). On this basis, Gregory goes on to reject in detail the way Eunomius had made the distinction of hypostases depend upon great-

ness, seniority, or differences of activity (ἐνέργεια) (317–405). Eunomius' attempt to base the unity of the divine hypostases on the 'invariable bond' inherent in their relationships is swept aside as nonsense (419–438), although it might be thought to have some support in the Origenist tradition that the Trinity is one in will. Gregory strongly rejects Eunomius' important argument from the top downwards, that one must start with God and his essential Being, identified as ἀγεννησία, unbegottenness (419–438). The latter is precisely where Basil's doctrine that the names for God were of human invention (ἐπίνοια) comes to the fore (cf VAGGIONE, 258–264). The chapter now lost between 438 and 439 criticized the presumption of Eunomius' philosophy, which Scripture does not sanction.

After that, the third part of the book deals with wider aspects raised by the *Apologia apologiae*, notably questions about providence and the unity of the divine works (439–473), and Eunomius' attacks on the *homousion* (474–507). There is extended criticism of the logical methods used by Eunomius to demolish Basil's arguments (535–631). Finally, Gregory embarks on the issues of 'unbegotten' and 'eternal', which will occupy much of the second Book (666–691).

A second volume of Eunomius' work appeared, dealing with chapters 5–15 of Basil's *Contra Eunomium* 1 (Eunomius, *Extant Works* 105–115). Gregory's response was relegated in the manuscript tradition to the end of the anti-Eunomian works and numbered XIIB (or XIII), and this was followed in PG 45.909–1121. It is now restored to its original place, and named *Contra Eunomium* 2 (GNO 1 226–409). For details see especially Jaeger's Prolegomena to GNO 2; Jaeger's arrangement is clearly confirmed by the Syriac text of Peter of Callinicum *Against Damian* III.19 (CChr.SG 32, 538.407–540.441), where it appears that the order and division of Gregory's work was already a cause of dispute in the sixth century, but Peter argues for the arrangement as in Jaeger.

Gregory's book is apparently complete. The chapter-headings in the manuscript tradition are not original, and are here ignored. There are thus no divisions in the text except those imposed by editors. Jaeger divided it into large unnumbered paragraphs and 627 numbered sections. B. Pottier proposed an analysis (POTTIER, 425–430). S.G. Hall, in consultation with other members of the 10th Colloquium on Gregory of Nyssa in 2004, produced a series of chapter headings, agreeing largely but not totally with Jaeger's paragraphs. These are published in the Proceedings pp. 55–201. According to Vaggione's reconstruction, Eunomius had followed the order of Basil's argument fairly closely.

For much of his response, Gregory did the same, but he sometimes jumps about; for example, 401–413 and 413–417 refer to much earlier parts of Eunomius' work. After a rhetorical introduction (1–11), Gregory's argument falls roughly into three parts: Orthodox faith and Eunomius' doctrine of unbegottenness (12–66); the limits of human knowledge and the status of names for God (67–444); and arguments about eternity (445–627).

In the first part, Gregory outlines his position, which he claims is the universal Christian one, on the true deity of Christ. With this he contrasts Eunomius' claim that 'unbegottenness' (ἀγεννησία) defines God, and that Christ's status is defined by 'begetting' (γέννησις), and thus radically different (12–22). Eunomius had developed his concept in terms of 'simplicity', which was another way of describing the divine Being (22–43), and by arguing that unbegottenness could not, as Basil supposed, be regarded as a 'concept' (ἐπίνοια), but is unique and indivisible. All of this may be regarded as introductory, outlining issues which are dealt with in detail later in the book. Gregory regards Eunomius' true aim to be to degrade Christ (50–66).

In the second and longest division of the book Gregory deals systematically with the arguments he faces. One issue is the claim to know the truth about God, which was made by Aetius and Eunomius, and denied by Basil; there are important subtleties in the Eunomian position which make it less outrageous than it appears in the writings of their opponents (VAGGIONE, 251–258). Gregory moves this forward as the prime issue, and he devotes several long paragraphs to the impossibility of knowing divine things (67–83), the need to conform to Abraham's faith and the words used in Scripture (84–105), and the limitations of our knowledge even of earthly things, including ourselves (106–124). The passage about Abraham includes a picture of the patriarch advancing in the knowledge of God through his active attributes to the point where he perceived God to be beyond any verbal description, and rested on faith alone (89), in a manner reminiscent of those about the spiritual ladder and the patriarch Jacob in Gregory's Homilies on the Beatitudes II.1 and V.1 (see LUDLOW, 217–237). Gregory believed in the apophatic way towards the knowledge of God: the more we know, the more we are aware of our ignorance. Eunomius was startling in his argument that God's nature was as knowable to us as it is to God himself, a claim which divided him from the general consensus of theology, Nicene and non-Nicene alike, and notably from Arius himself. Gregory then begins the arguments about the way we name and conceive God for which this book is famous. First, he distin-

guishes positive and negative words for God, analysing the use of privative and negative terms: this is an argument which tends to relativize 'unbegotten', which for Eunomius was unique and fundamental (125–147). Secondly, he argues that where God is spoken of positively in Scripture, it is in terms of his actions (ἐνέργειαι), not of his Being (148–158); this is an emphasis which will be fruitful in later Greek theology. The next passage (159–170) tackles Eunomius' argument that God's Being is prior to all human concepts of him, so that *agennesia*, unbegottenness, is what we mean by God, it is his essence. Basil had responded that the words used for God, including ἀγέννητος, 'unbegotten', are ἐπίνοιαι, thought up by human beings. Eunomius repudiated this on the ground that God's name does not depend on human invention: 'conceptual statements (τὰ κατ' ἐπίνοιαν λεγόμενα) by their nature dissolve along with their utterance ... but God, when they are silent, and when they utter sound, when they have been made, and before the things which are were made, both was and is, Unbegotten (ἀγέννητος)'. This potent claim for divine transcendence over human descriptions of God is supported by various claims about *epinoia*, especially related to its transience, weakness and unreliability: it is the faculty by which, for instance, fictitious monsters are invented (159, following philosophical discussions). The topic of *epinoia* in the Eunomian debate has attracted much literature: see VAGGIONE 242–247; V. DRECOLI; A. ORBE; and papers of the 10th Colloquium, especially those of L. KARFÍKOVÁ, T. KOBUSCH and B. STUDER. Part of the large philosophical and theological background is undoubtedly Origen, who had explained the various titles of Christ in Scripture as concepts by which we apprehend him, which he calls τὰς ἐν τῷ σωτῆρι ἐπινοίας, 'concepts applied to the Saviour', and not directly applicable to his Being (οὐσία) (*Comm. in Joh.* 1.xxviii.200 [SC 120, 158]). Gregory allows that God's Being, whatever it is, is prior to all human knowledge of him and speech or thought about him, but denies that this affects Basil's position (159–176). *Epinoia* is, however, not to be disparaged, since in the sense that it is the creative power of conceptual thought, it is the source of so many good things which human beings learn and think up (177–195).

Eunomius criticized Basil for allowing philosophical notions of *epinoia* to dominate, instead of listening to the Scripture. Moses in Gn 1.8,10 depicts God as naming the things he made before the creation of Man in 1.26–27. To this Gregory responds that Eunomius seems to imply that God spoke physically, which is absurdly anthropomorphic (195–204), and that speech implies an interlocutor, who cannot be identified (205–218), and he uses Ps 18/19.2–4 to show that there can

be speech without words among the heavens (219–232). There are also other texts, as where God calls the stars by name (Ps 146/147.4), and the naming of Adam (probably Gn 5.2). To the first, Gregory argues that the idea of God counting stars is one of the Bible's many anthropomorphisms, designed to make it clear that God knows and controls what we do not (423–442). Eunomius misuses Paul's interpretation of Adam. The naming of Adam is apparently raised by Eunomius with explicit reference to the typology by which Adam represents Christ, who thus names the beasts in Gn 2.19–20. Gregory passes over this abruptly (443–444), not wishing his readers to appreciate that Eunomius' whole interpretation of the Gn 1 is typological rather than physical. After dealing with Genesis, Gregory devotes many sections (237–293) to the origin of human language. This is a topic much discussed among philosophers, since Plato's *Cratylus*, as Gregory is aware (403–405). The question whether names applied to things in a natural way (κατὰ φύσιν), fixed by nature or by God, or whether they were imposed by human custom or invention (κατὰ θέσιν, κατὰ νόμον) divided the Neoplatonists from the Stoics. Eunomius was nearer the Neoplatonist position, Gregory nearer the Stoic; see T. KOBUSCH, G.C. STEAD and A. VICIANO in *El "Contra Eunomium I"*, 247–258, 303–320, 321–327, and papers of L. KARFÍKOVÁ and T. KOBUSCH at the 10th Colloquium. Gregory argues that God gave to mankind the power to invent words for things (237–246), as the variety of human languages demonstrates (246–261). Far from supporting Eunomius' claim that Moses taught that things and names were dictated by God, Genesis describes Adam's work of naming creatures (246–281). It is human beings who need words, not God (281–293). This leads to further discussion of ἐπίνοια, 'concept' or 'conceptual thought', and to Eunomius' attack on Basil, *Contra Eunomium* 1.6–7. Eunomius held that to call 'unbegotten' a concept which human beings apply to God is to demean God (*Apology* 8), and Basil deployed the biblical titles of Christ in Origenist fashion as describing different aspects of his nature and actions, but not his being. This is elaborated by Gregory, not only on scriptural but on logical grounds (293–358). Eunomius expresses outrage at the passage in Basil, *Contra Eunomium* 1.7, where Basil explains how concepts work with reference to lowly things like corn, and then applies the same to the titles of Christ; Gregory demolishes this easily (359–366). He will go on later to reiterate arguments to show that concepts about God are human, not directly divine (387–444).

Gregory's third division (see especially J.S. O'LEARY in the Proceedings of the 10th Colloquium) takes up Eunomius' claim that, like 'Unbe-

gotten', 'Indestructibile' (ἄφθαρτος) refers to God's essence, and is not, as Basil says in *Contra Eunomium* 1.8, one concept among many. He especially objects to the name 'Father' being reduced to a mere function of the Unbegotten (366–386). He repudiates the allegation that Basil denied that God is by nature either unbegotten or indestructible (445–468). Eunomius would reduce all divine attributes to one, with nonsensical effects (469–536; 605–610). The final topic discussed is the use of negative or privative words for God, which increase human understanding and are used in addition to positive terms based on his activities (561–610). Gregory concludes by discussing one particularly silly argument of Eunomius, which he easily demolishes before a final flourish (611–627).

We do not know how much Gregory contributed to the downfall of the Eunomian church or the establishment of pro-Nicene doctrine as orthodox. He had still to deal with further parts of Eunomius' *Apologia apologiae* as they appeared. Imperial pressure in the reign of Theodosius I obliged the churches to reach a consensus, one which accepted the Nicene Creed and the Consubstantial Trinity. Gregory certainly enabled scholarly churchman to feel that, for all its clarity and power, Eunomius' doctrine failed to represent the truth of God in Christ. Perhaps the most influential part of his work historically is his discussion of names and words, which constantly provoked interest not only in the Middle Ages, but in the Enlightenment (on the *Wirkungsgeschichte* see T. KOBUSCH in *El "Contra Eunomium 1"*, 248–251).

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EUN III

Contra Eunomium III

Gregory wrote the *Contra Eunomium I* in 380 as a response to the first book of the *Apology of the Apology*, with which Eunomius had responded in 378 to Basil's *Anatreptikos* (redacted between 363 and 365) (QUASTEN, *Patrology*, Allen 1983, III, 257; DROBNER, *Lehrbuch der Patrologie*, Frankfurt am Main 2004, 233). Shortly after finishing *EUN I* (→), Gregory wrote *Contra Eunomium II* (380). This book was his response to the second book of Eunomius' *Apology of the Apology*. The fact that *EUN II* (→) appears shortly after *Eun I* could be due to the fact that Eunomius did not simultaneously publish the different books of his work. There are documentary proofs that this book was already finished at the time of the celebration of the Council of Constantinople in 381.

Shortly after the publication of *Eun II*, Eunomius released another part of his response to Basil. Gregory wrote his third book *Against Eunomius* to respond to this new attack.

The date of composition is uncertain. It is usually placed between 381–383 (QUASTEN, 286). Immediately after its publication this book appears to have been, in turn, divided into ten books (Books III–XII in the Migne edition).

From the perspective of content it can be said that, if *Eun I* was dedicated primarily to metaphysical questions and questions of Trinitarian theology, and *Eun II* to themes of the philosophy of language, *Eun III* presents a fundamentally Christological content. MORESCHINI underscored that, while *Eun I* and *Eun II* are distinguished by a notably speculative and philosophical argumentation, *Eun III* has more ample recourse to scripturally based arguments. Gregory is continually interested in proposing an adequate exegesis of biblical passages which Eunomius and other Arians interpreted in a distorted manner (cfr. pp. XLIX–L). The work is composed of ten books. Even if they sometimes reuse arguments from preceding volumes, each of them could be considered in an autonomous manner. MOUTSOULAS has realized an interesting analysis of the succession of ideas in *Eun III* (MOUTSOULAS, 148–168).

Tome I (139 Paragraphs): In the beginning, Gregory uses an athletic comparison, recalling that in order for an athlete to be considered

a victor, it is necessary that his adversary either withdraw or suffer three losses. Given that Eunomius has not surrendered, he considers it necessary to take up a third criticism of his arguments. Gregory here uses the same method as in *Eun I* and *Eun II*: he cites Eunomius' texts and then presents his critical commentary. The principal theme of this tome is the distinction between engendered and unengendered. Gregory demolishes the identification that Eunomius had established between generation and creation, affirming that while Paternity and Filiation are eternal, creation has a temporal beginning. Gregory sees a reference to the economic Incarnation in the OT texts that speak of creation of the wisdom.

Tome II (161 paragraphs): In this book Gregory above all deals with the manner in which one must understand the generation of the Son. Basing himself on the Prologue of John, he criticizes the intrinsic relationship that Eunomius had established between generation and passion. Gregory maintains that the generation of the Son in eternity is radically different from human generation. In God, Father and Son are coeternal and possess the same substance in common. The Son is generated in eternity, not created in time. The Scripture applies the terms of "Firstborn" and "First Fruit" to the Son in relation to the Incarnation.

Tome III (67 paragraphs): Gregory examines in what sense the Scripture affirms that Jesus was constituted Christ and Lord after his passion (Acts 2.36). Gregory uses the distinction between uncreated and created nature. When Peter announces that God has constituted Jesus as Lord and Christ, he is not referring to the eternal Logos, but to Him who humbled Himself assuming the form of a servant, and was crucified. It is thus the Logos in the economy of Salvation. If before his Incarnation He would have had a form of a servant, it would have been superfluous to affirm that He assumed it in the economy, as Paul does. He thus responds to Eunomius' accusation, in that the Son's sufferings in the Passion do not imply the existence of "two Christs", one a servant and another Lord. Gregory will chastise Eunomius for having strayed from the truth by considering the passion a demonstration of the difference of the Son from the Father in substance. Correctly interpreting Acts 2.36 implies understanding that God constituted as Lord the Incarnate Son.

Tome IV (64 paragraphs): The central question of this tome is to which subject must human salvation be attributed, and with what instrument it was achieved. Gregory rejects again the accusation that he professes "two Christs". It is certainly impossible that the divine nature could suffer; the Passion is proper to the human nature. He who suffered the Passion in

his human element is the Son of God; it is the Word through the flesh Who accomplishes the salvation of men. Gregory then examines more deeply the question of the *communicatio idiomatum*.

Tome V (64 paragraphs): In this tome Gregory deals with the consequences of Eunomius' theory of names, a central theme of *Eun II*. According to Eunomius, the title of "Lord" is a name that the Son can receive only because He is created. Following Basil, Gregory replies that if the Father is God and the Son is God, it is absurd to maintain that one is uncreated and the other created. Father and Son receive equally a great number of names: incorruptible, just, merciful, eternal, magnanimous, etc. The commonness of these names indicates with certitude the communion in substance. Gregory indicates the relativeness of the names of human language.

Tome VI (80 paragraphs): Gregory manifests his intention to confront what he sees as Eunomius' most serious error in the following tomes: the thesis that the Only Begotten passed from non-being to being by a voluntary act of the Father. Father and Son live always in an eternal and indivisible union. Gregory then examines the different senses of the word generation, in order to maintain that the divine generation is totally different from that proper to created beings, whether material or rational.

Tome VII (64 paragraphs): Gregory continues to deal with the modality of the Son's generation. He underscores that in God one cannot distinguish a double nature. Against Eunomius' thesis which affirms that the Father generated the Son when he wanted, Gregory declares that there was never a time in which the Father would have decided to consider whether it was good to convert Himself into a Father. The words "before" and "after" have no sense in Him who created the ages. There is no temporal interval between the existence of the Father and the generation of the Son.

Tome VIII (64 paragraphs): After having referred to the question of names, Gregory deals with some consequences of Eunomian theology in soteriology. Eunomius maintained that it is impossible that the Son gave eternal life, since, in his judgment, eternal life is not present in the Only Begotten. Gregory affirms that the Gospel teaches that eternal life is a divine property that the Father, Son and Holy Spirit possess without any difference.

Tome IX (63 paragraphs): Gregory begins responding to the affirmation of Eunomius that it is necessary to reserve "goodness" to the Father exclusively. Gregory asks Eunomius if He who created him in the image of God, He who assumed the form of a servant for his salvation, He who

suffered and delivered himself to death for his sins, should not be called good. Gregory then maintains that Christ is superior in dignity to the angels because He is the true God. All of angelic nature remains subordinated to Christ. Gregory sees in Eunomius a noteworthy closeness to the Judaic faith in removing the divinity of the Son from Christian faith, and attributing to Him equal dignity with the angels.

Tome X (54 paragraphs): Gregory underscores that by his divine nature, the Only Begotten possesses from eternity all of the characteristics of God. By his human nature He possesses all of the common properties of the human being as well. Gregory accentuates the soteriological dimension of the Incarnation. He warns that offenses to the Son are transformed into offenses to the Father as well.

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EUNOMIUS

1. LIFE · 2. WORKS · 3. THOUGHT.

1. LIFE. Eunomius came from the Cappadocian village of Oltiseris, close to the border of Galatia (E. CAVALCANTI, 11, affirms that he was born in Caesarea). His father was a farmer who could nevertheless give him his primary education. He carried out various professions in his country and at Constantinople, including that of school teacher. He moved to Antioch, where he began to study the thought of Aetius of Antioch, also meeting the Arian Bishop Secundus of Tolemaides. These led him to Alexandria, where Aetius lived at this time. He then became the disciple and secretary of Aetius, beginning a relationship which would last his entire life.

Aetius and Eunomius participated in the Arian synod at Antioch of 357, presided over by Eudoxius, at which Anomoian ideas were professed. Eunomius was ordained a deacon. Later, due to a change in direction of ecclesiastical politics, the council passed under the control of the Homoiousians, and both were sent to exile. The two are nevertheless found in Constantinople in 360, and participate in the synod that gives Eudoxius and the followers of Acacius predominance once again. This synod deposes many Homoiousian Bishops, placing Homoian and Anomoian Bishops in their seats. Eunomius received the see of Cyzicus, while Aetius was not reestablished. This dating of Eunomius's episcopal ordination is based upon various ancient authors, such as Basil of Caesarea (*Adversus Eunomium*, I, 2, 72–73; ed. Sesboüé), Philostorgius (*Historia Ecclesiastica*, V, 3; ed. Winkelmann), Sozomen (*Historia Ecclesiastica*, IV, 25, 6; ed. Bidez) and Theodoret (*Historia Ecclesiastica*, II, 28, 21; ed. Parmentier-Hansen). Socrates however, in *Historia ecclesiastica* IV, 7, 1–2 (Ed. Hansen), affirms that the episcopal ordination took place in 366, under the reign of Valens. Sozomen follows him (*Historia Ecclesiastica* VI, 8; ed. Bidez-Hansen), even though contradicting himself. In recent times, authors such as B. SESBOÜÉ (*Basile de Césarée. Contre Eunome. Suivi de: Eunome. Apologie* I, 23–24) follow the first date, 360. Others, such as M. SPANNEUT (1400–1401), support the second date. The date of 360 seems more probable, since it is difficult to accept that Valens, an enemy of Eunomius (since the latter had supported

Procopius), would have permitted his ordination as the Bishop of Cyzicus. The reason for Socrates' error still awaits an explanation. Nevertheless, shortly after beginning the governance of the Church at Cyzicus, Eunomius found himself surrounded by problems. His preaching, marked by his Anomoian faith, displeased the faithful, who had him transferred to Constantinople so that the ecclesiastical authority could judge his faith. He then went on to Cappadocia. In this context of self defense, Eunomius wrote his first *Apologia*, in which he seeks to defend himself. Basil of Caesarea refuted this writing with his *Adversus Eunomium*.

In 361, Eunomius found himself in Constantinople along with Aetius. Together they led the Anomoian branch of the Arian party, which carried out an intense work. E. CAVALCANTI (12) maintains that the party of Aetius at Constantinople, along with the new freedom with which he could act, is explained by the rise to power of Julian, the new emperor, since he supported Aetius. In 361–363, the relationships between the Homoians and the Anomoians, directed by Aetius and Eunomius, were good.

During Jovian's reign, however, these relationships became more tense, so that the two Arian branches split into two distinct parties. In this context, Aetius and Eunomius dedicated themselves to organizing an Anomoian hierarchy under them, independent of the Homoians.

During the first period of the government of the new emperor Valens (L. ABRAMOWSKI, 937), a synod was convoked at Constantinople, at which certain Eunomian Bishops, such as Theodosius of Philadelphia and Phebus of Policalanda, obtained from Eudoxius, the Bishop of Constantinople, the expulsion of the two Anomoian heads from the Oriental capital. Aetius went to Lesbos, while Eunomius went to Calcedonia, where he had a house.

During the period in which the usurper Procopius held power in Constantinople, Aetius and Eunomius returned to the exercise of their activities. Aetius died in 367, Eunomius celebrating his funeral rites.

Valens managed to quell Procopius' revolt, and regained control of Constantinople. In 367 Eunomius was exiled to Mauritania by the prefect of the praetorium, Ausonius. While traveling in this region, he stopped at Myrsa, and the Bishop of that city, a certain Valens, obtained a mitigation of the exile. He then probably returned to Calcedonia. Nevertheless, since he continued to cause problems with his activity as the head of the Anomoians, Modestus, the new prefect of the praetorium, exiled him to the island of Naxos in 370 (X. LE BACHELET, 1503, citing Philostorgius,

Historia Ecclesiastica, IX, 7–8). The sources state nothing about the activity Eunomius carried out during his exile on Naxos. He must have written the *Apologia Apologiae*, which appeared in 378, during this period. This was intended as a rebuttal of Basil's *Adversus Eunomium*. In 379 Gregory of Nyssa wrote his *Contra Eunomium* in defense of his brother Basil, who had recently died without being able to respond to the Eunomian writing. Valens died in the battle of Adrianopolis in 378.

The following year, profiting from the favorable situation caused by Valens's death, Eunomius returned to Constantinople, convoking there a Eunomian council. We know some of those who took part: Eunomius himself, Arianus, Euphonius, Julian, Theophilus of Ethiopia and John, Bishop of Phrygia. This reflourishing of Anomoian activity was quickly cut down by the anti-heretical decree of Theodosius (February 28, 380). One year afterwards, the Council of Constantinople came together, at which Gregory Nazianzen was elected Bishop of the capital, although he renounced this office shortly afterwards in order to help the difficult conciliar negotiations, and at which the theology of the Cappadocian Fathers was accepted and the various Arian groups—such as the Eunomians—were condemned, as well as the various semi-Arians, such as the Eudoxians and the Pneumatomachians.

In 383, Theodosius attempted to bring the previously condemned heretical heads back to the Church, and in view of this he demanded that they accept an Orthodox profession of faith. Eunomius however wrote an *Expositio fidei* in which his positions appeared even more rigid than before. Gregory of Nyssa responded with a treatise in which he refuted the Anomoian doctrine: The *Refutatio confessionis Eunomii*. This treatise was combined with three other earlier writings of the Nyssen, the third of which was itself divided into ten chapters. The *Refutatio* took the place of the second book of the thirteen which resulted from this fusion, while the old second treatise was moved to the end of the series. Twentieth-century textual criticism has shown this to be a response to Eunomius's *Expositio fidei* and has re-established the original order of these books.

The Church of Antioch tried to attract Eunomius so that he could practice his ministry there. Nevertheless, Eunomius required the memory of Aetius to be restored first. This attitude caused Theodosius to exile him from Calcedonia to Almyris on the Danube. When this city fell to the Goths, Eunomius was transferred to Caesarea of Cappadocia. He was shortly afterwards transferred to Dacora, where he died. The date of his death is later than 392, as Jerome, in *De viris illustribus* 120, written in that year, affirms that Eunomius was still alive, and anterior to 395, since

one of the first measures adopted by the prefect of the praetorium Caesarius, nominated in 395, was to transfer the body from Dacora to Tyana, in order to prevent his followers from bringing it to Constantinople to bury him next to Aetius (X. LE BACHELET, 1504, citing Philostorgius, *Historia Ecclesiastica*, X, 6).

The Anomoian movement had a fugitive life after this. The severe measures adopted by the imperial authority against the works and followers of Eunomius, as well as a series of internal divisions caused by sacramental practice, meant that as early as the time of Theodoret, the followers of Eunomius were few. L. ABRAMOWSKI (937–938) suggests a possible reason for the sect's decline. She maintains that it presented itself rather as a school of thought, as can be seen from the attitude of Philostorgius towards Eunomius in his writings, and from the fact that Aetius and Eunomius did not act as Bishops in their role of governance of the Anomoian church. It had no more sense, when Eunomius found no new disciples of a sufficient intellectual level to carry on after his death, as he had done at the death of Aetius.

J. DANÉLOU placed Eunomius in the circle of Neo-Platonic followers of Nestorius—the founder of the Neo-Platonic school of Athens, and, through his daughter Asclepigenia, the teacher of Proclus. He was also the teacher of Iamblicus, the teacher of Maximus, who in turn influenced Julian the Apostate greatly. His theory begins from the analysis of the polemic on the origin of names between Eunomius and Basil, bases itself on the discovery of positions similar to those of the Anomoian among the Neo-Platonic philosophers, and deduces that there was a relationship between them, concluding with a characterization of the figure of Eunomius in harmony with this discovered relationship. In fact, the Anomoian maintained that ἀγέννητος is the proper name of God, revealing his substance, while the other names that are attributed to Him are ἐπίνοιαι, that is, words that signify nothing or indicate imaginary entities. Basil instead extended the denomination of ἐπίνοιαι to all of the names applied to God, but accentuated the fact that these names manifest something of God, and that combined one with another, they offer a fairly complete knowledge. Employing an Origenian concept, he asserted that Christ in person described himself with a series of ἐπίνοιαι. Eunomius replied that God, creating things, gave to each one a name that manifested its nature, and that the affirmation that human beings created the names means negating divine providence. It is correct that the names with which Christ describes himself are valid, since the Word is multifaceted and can describe himself with various names which allude to his

various aspects. He adds however that they do not serve to describe the Unengendered, who is simple, and that these names nevertheless have a divine origin. God, Eunomius concludes, reveals the names through persons who are particularly close to Him. Daniélou explains that the *Oracula chaldaica* (Ed. W. KROLL, *Breslauer Philol. Abh.*, 7, 1 [1962], 58) assured that the prayers pronounced in Barbarian languages had a great efficacy since they contained names of divine origin, and thus more efficacious. They counsel against changing these names. This work, written in the 2nd century, was quite widely diffused in the theurgic Neo-Platonic circles of Iamblicus in the 4th century. He reminds us that the *De mysteriis Aegyptiorum*, VII, 4, a work written in the Neo-Platonic circle of Iamblicus, affirmed that the divine names are beyond every ἐπίνοια and every rational discourse, and that if they are purified of spurious adherences, they permit those who know them to reach a complete knowledge of the divine essence through revelation. He also calls upon Cyril of Alexandria's criticism of Julian the Apostate, a member of Nestorius's circle, as proof. Here, Cyril employs the idea that there are certain θεόδοτοι names, an idea probably taken from Julian himself (*Contra Iulianum*; PG 76, 857B). All of these theories share with Eunomius the idea that there are certain names revealed by the gods, which give knowledge of the essence of things, particularly of the gods. Basing himself on the fact that Aetius, Eunomius' teacher, had good relations with Julian as well as on the Anomoian conception of the Trinity as three descending hypostases, typical of Neo-Platonism, Daniélou concludes that Eunomius belonged to Nestorius' group. He presents him as a hierophant, since in that group certain mysteries were practiced in which, by means of a purification, one would reach mystical visions. For this last point, Daniélou notes some strict parallels between the system of Eunomius and Proclus' *Commentaria in Platonis Cratylum*, in which the Neo-Platonic ideas are combined with Aristotelian logic. He formulates the hypothesis that Eunomius is a witness to the Neo-Platonic tradition of the end of the 4th century, and thus an intermediary between Iamblicus and Proclus.

R.P. VAGGIONE (*Eunomius of Cyzicus and the Nicene revolution*, 364–382) sees in Eunomius the final representative of the Arian theological conception (“the non-Nicene framework”)—also called “Lucianist” after Lucian of Samosata, the teacher of Arius. This conception would have been predominant at the beginning of the 4th century, and would have led to the initial refutation of the *homoousios*, which was considered Sabellian. The Nicenes would have gradually built up a new theological vision (“the Nicene framework”) around the central notions of Nicaea in

opposition to the Arian vision. They managed to have it accepted by the Church as the authentic inheritor of the Apostolic Tradition. With this, they left Eunomius, who grasped at a system that precisely presented the old Arian position, at the margins of Orthodoxy as the model of a heretic. This manner of explaining the Arian struggle manifests elements not yet sufficiently studied, but does little to show the incompatibility of the Arian conception of the Word as creature created in time with Christian faith.

2. WORKS. Socrates (*Historia Ecclesiastica*, IV, 7, 7; ed. Hansen) affirms that Eunomius composed a commentary in seven books on the Letter to the Romans, and both Philostorgius (*Historia Ecclesiastica*, X, 6; ed. Winkelmann) and Photius (cod. 128) state that his letters were gathered in an epistolary, but both works are now lost.

Vaggione has gathered and published the part of Eunomius' literary corpus which has survived until our times. The *Apologia*, already presented, has 28 paragraphs, although the last one does not belong to Eunomius. The dating suffers from the same uncertainty as Eunomius episcopal ordination, but most scholars assign it to 360 (L. ABRAMOWSKI, 939).

The *Apologia Apologiae*, of 378, consists of five books (Philostorgius, *Historia Ecclesiastica*, VIII, 12), even if Gregory only refutes the first three, thus leading to the erroneous belief that only these three originally existed due to the posterior tradition, as can be seen with the example of Photius (cod. 138). The only surviving passages are those passages cited by the Nyssen in his *Contra Eunomium*, so that Vaggione (R.P. VAGGIONE, *Eunomius: The extant works*, 77–127) limits himself to offering the list of Gregory's passages in which the citations of the *Apologia Apologiae* appear in the Jaeger edition in GNO. He gives a brief summary of each, but not the Greek text.

The *Expositio fidei* has come to us via two paths: On the one hand completely, and on the other through the Nyssen's criticism, which cites 60 % of the work. It is composed of: 1) A Prologue. 2) A formula of faith which first of all professes the one and only God, the Only Begotten God and the Spirit of Truth, then recalls future judgment. 3) A conclusion. It is based upon a great number of biblical citations, avoiding the more characteristic terms of Anomoian thought, such as the terms of γέννημα for the Son or ἀγέννητος for the Father, or the adjective ἀνόμιος to describe the relationship between the Father and the Son, but conserves the fundamental thought without variation. The citations of the *Expositio fidei* that Gregory gathers in his *Refutatio* are completely trustworthy,

even if he omits passages in which Eunomius' thought is free of heretical aspects.

There also exist four authentic fragments: A Scholion to Aetius, in which Eunomius maintains that the will of God is not identified with his essence, which has come to us in the Pseudo-Athanasian work *Dialogus de Sancta Trinitate*, II, 6 (PG 28, 1165AB); a reference in Socrates's *Historia Ecclesiastica*, IV, 7, according to which our knowledge of God is identical to that which God has of himself; a citation from an anti-Monothelite florilegium of Anastasius Sinaiticus (Ed. K.-H. UTHEMANN, *Anastasioi Sinaitae sermones duo in constitutionem hominis secundum imaginem Dei necnon opuscula adversus Monotheletas*, CCSG, 12, Turnhout 1985, 88), in which Eunomius affirms that the will of Christ is distinct from the will of the Father due to its being created; and finally a Syriac passage of Barhadbešabba (PO 23, 281, 2–4) on the creation of the Son by the Father. R.P. VAGGIONE (*Eunomius. The extant works*, 186–190) shows that other fragments attributed to Eunomius are to be located within these preceding works, or attributed to other authors.

3. THOUGHT. B. SESBOÛÉ (*Saint Basile et la Trinité. Un acte théologique au IV^{me} siècle*, 19–53) has managed to explain in a profound and coherent manner the thought of the second great Anomoian head. He was not a Bishop of the court, interested in maintaining a privileged position favored by the imperial power like other Arian or Semi-Arian leaders, but rather an intellectual convinced of the truth of his position, nor did he lack the desire to give glory to God. Nevertheless, one can affirm that his thought is not Christian, given that he continues to maintain the doctrine of a God completely different from the world, who produces an intermediary in order to create the world through him, a theory proper to Neo-Platonism. He begins with the idea that God is the being that has no origin, a notion he considers to be innate to the human being. On this principle he constructs a complete logical system. He is an author in whom the encounter between faith and reason assumes the form of a total imposition of the reason, which deforms the realities of faith so that the encounter remains frustrated. His rational discourse is based upon Aristotelian logic, which he uses in a rigorous manner. Gregory accuses him of being a “technologue” (τεχνολόγος) due to the manner in which the perfection of his syllogisms neglects the content of the faith (*Eun* II, GNO I, 402, 28). Like other Arians, he affirms that his thought is compatible with the creed and defends this affirmation, presenting his doctrine in the *Apologia* as a commentary on a creed which

he calls ancient and which is, in fact, quite generic (on the origin of this symbol, B. SESBOÜÉ, *Basile de Césarée. Contre Eunome II. Suivi de Eunome Apologie*, 240, n. 2). He uses this ambiguity to interpret it in conformity with his thought. Eunomius reaches the knowledge of God through two paths. On one hand, he follows the path of the substances, a totally rational knowledge based upon the concepts fixed beforehand in the mind, which leads to the knowledge of God as being without origin, with all the consequences that derive from this. On the other hand, he mentions the path of operations, i.e. the ascent from creatures to their cause, God. This path is based upon the presupposition, admitted by Eunomius, that there is a certain similarity between the creature and the operation that produces it.

Eunomius affirmed that the human being knows the names that define the substances of things through a type of divine revelation. These names are different from those invented by human beings, which have no value. The term “Unengendered” is the name that defines the substance of God, and thus is the starting point from which Eunomius claims to deduce his entire system. Eunomius asserts that the other names are either homonyms, i.e., that the names attributed to God, the Word and the Holy Spirit have one and the same form but different meanings, or that they are synonyms, i.e. they have a different form with the same meaning. To the first group, among others, belong “Father”, which when attributed to the Unengendered signifies something different than when attributed to earthly fathers; “creature”, with a different meaning when attributed to the Son or to earthly sons; and “spirit”, which does not mean the same thing when attributed to the Holy Spirit or when said of the spirits. “He who is”, “Only true God” and all the terms attributed to the Unengendered belong to the second group, by which the Anomoians always mean the same thing, i.e. Unengendered.

This model includes an arbitrariness on which Eunomius bases his playing with the meaning of words, which he thus adapts to his own system. Eunomius maintains that the Word is different from God, since being “unengendered” by its very nature cannot be transmitted to a Son. He therefore considers the Word as a creature, having come from nothing in a temporal moment before which one can reach the moment in which the “Unengendered” would have been alone. For this reason Eunomius maintains that his idea, in which the praise due to God is reserved to the Unengendered alone, is the only one which gives to God the glory He is due. Eunomius applies the passage “from whom (that is the Son) everything comes” (1 Cor 8.6), to the Holy Spirit, interpreting it in the

sense that the Holy Spirit is the first and most worthy of the creatures made by the Son, who has not the power to create, but only to teach and sanctify.

Through the path of the substances, Eunomius admits that the Trinity is different from the rest of beings, none of which can be called substance in the proper sense, since all have been created from nothing. This permits him to affirm that he acknowledges the Trinity. Through the path of operations however, he affirms that the Unengendered is different from all the others who are creatures, and is the only God in the proper sense.

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Manuel Mira

EUPHROSYNĒ

εὐφροσύνη

Gregory attributes great importance to Christian rejoicing as a fruit of the proximity of the soul to God. *Euphrosynê* is a term frequently found in Gregory's works; it is related to similar concepts, such as peace, joy and serenity (MANN, 613–618). These are interior dispositions that necessarily flow from the domination of the passions and contact with God that is ever more intimate. These dispositions reflect the interior condition of those who struggle for virtue and are, in themselves, a first fruit of eternal joy (VÖLKER, 219).

This is because, for Gregory, the virtuous life in itself is already an “angelic life”. It is clear, for example, that he represents the monastic life at Annesi as an imitation of the angels. Moreover, when he describes Macrina's serenity in her hour of death, he says it is as if an angel had assumed human form (*Macr*, GNO VIII/1, 383 and 396). This means that among the effects of virtue we find a sense of beatitude, of interior peace equal to the joy of the angels (*Cast*, GNO X/2, 328) and the divine happiness.

In *Beat* 1 an important and extended description of the characteristics of heavenly beatitude can be found: God is true happiness. Happiness is an immortal and incorruptible life, an ineffable beauty; it is a perpetual exultation, an eternal joy (*Beat* 1, GNO VII/2, 80); eternal life is described as a life of perpetual joy because it lies in the vision of God in whom we have all good things and thus unperturbed happiness and incessant joy (*Beat* 6, GNO VII/2, 138). This implies that in heaven every blessed person is not only happy with his or her own joy, but also gives joy to others, so that each one rejoices in the joy of the others (*Mort*, GNO IX, 65–66).

In *Inst* there are numerous passages where Gregory repeats that eternal life and the “ineffable joy that is in heaven” are a gift of the Holy Spirit. On earth, such gifts fill the soul “worthy to receive these gifts and to enjoy this grace” (GNO VIII/1, 47). This joy “from above”, which is born in the soul through the Spirit, is what Christ indicates in speaking of the kingdom of God in us. This joy is an “image, a first fruits, a presage” of the joy which the souls of the saints will enjoy (*Inst*, GNO VIII/1, 79). Gregory uses an eloquent image to describe the “supernatural character” of this perfect

life given by the Spirit: joy is the rudder of the ship, Christ is the one who navigates, and the Holy Spirit is the wind that pushes the ship along (*Virg* 23, VIII/1, 341).

Joy comes from the transformation of one's life: in distancing oneself from sin and accomplishing the good, one is restored to paradise through Baptism, as is symbolized in the donning of white tunics (*Diem lum*, GNO IX, 241). Virtue and joy are indissolubly united, so that joy remains for one's entire life. Gregory attributes a particular value to this long duration in comparison to pleasure, which is a fleeting sensation (*Beat* 4, GNO VII/2, 121). Joy is a characteristic note of Christianity. In order to understand Gregory's perspective, it is useful to reflect on the exultant joy that pervades the fourth homily for Easter (GNO IX, 309–311) or the homily for the Ascension (GNO IX, 323–327). On this subject Gregory agrees with the ideas of the Cappadocians as a whole. This theme is prominent in Basil: ecstasy is nothing other than a happiness that causes the heart to burst (BASIL, *In Psalm* 32, 1, PG 29, 324); Christian joy is related to the heavenly good (BASIL, *Hom* 4, *De gratiarum actione*, 4, PG 31, 228A).

DANIÉLOU (247–248) observes that Gregory speaks of a wine that gives joy to those who drink of it. While Origen identifies wine with drunkenness, Gregory conserves the idea of a joy that is proper to an elevated state of spiritual life, without identifying it with SOBER DRUNKENNESS (→), i.e. with ecstasy.

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Lucas Francisco Mateo-Seco

Eusebeia → Cult

EUSTH

Ad Eustathium, De sancta trinitate

This treatise in epistolary form, transmitted in an incomplete form as *Ep.* 189 of Basil as well, is addressed to Eustathius, whose medical profession is artistically illustrated in the beginning of the writing (*Eust.* GNO III/I, 3, 1 – 4,9). It is probable although not certain that this Eustathius coincides with the addressee of Basil's *Ep.* 151. In both cases it seems to be one of the personal physicians of the imperial court, known also for other reasons.

Gregory responds in this writing to a consolatory letter of Eustathius, who had encouraged him during a situation of heavy theological attacks (3,16–4,1). Gregory states that the accusations continually change (4, 21–22). One can nevertheless perceive that the accusers who proffer these accusations are Pneumatomachians. They accuse Gregory on one hand of affirming three hypostases (and of placing them on the same level as three gods), on the other they criticize the fact that the Spirit too is considered a sharer in the unique divine nature, and thus that the differences between Father, Son and Spirit are leveled (5, 3–19). Gregory himself states that the heart of the controversy is not the distinction of the hypostases (since the adversaries go so far as to posit a difference of substance); the central issue is rather the affirmation that in God there exists only one unique goodness, one unique power and above all, one unique divine nature (6, 6–17). According to the adversaries this is certainly true for the Father and the Son, but not for the Spirit. As decisive criteria in this context, only the Scripture can be adequate, but not custom (which can be different from time to time) (5,20–6,6).

In his own argumentation Gregory starts from the affirmation of the unique divine nature, as can be seen from various biblical passages (Col 2.9, Rm 1.20) (6,18–7,4). He refers explicitly to the command to baptize (Mt 28.19) in the name of the Father, of the Son and of the Spirit (7, 17, 21), as well as to the other appellations which are used for the Father, the Son and the Spirit—e.g. good, holy, eternal, wise etc. Among these appellations one cannot propose any sort of gradation (with the consequence of subordinating the Spirit), since all of these terms refer to nature (7,21–8,15). The name of “God” is then not at all applied to only the Father and

the Son, and should not be refused to the Spirit, all the more so since in Scripture it is used with an homonymous sense even for demons and idols (8,20–10,13). Against this insertion of the name “God” among the appellations common to the Father, Son and the Spirit is the contrary argument that “God”, unlike the other terms, indicates the nature (10, 14–17). Gregory responds to this by underscoring that the nature (φύσις) of God in itself is inaccessible to human thought and is transcendent. The human being must therefore limit himself to analogical deductions based upon the operations. A difference in the operations permits us to deduce a difference in the natures that are the causes, while inversely the identity of operations indicates the unity of nature. This is true both in reference to sanctification (which should not be exclusively attributed to the Spirit, since in the *Our Father* one asks of the Father the sanctification of his name) and in reference to the angels, who are above souls, but whose vision of God is made possible only by the Spirit (11,15–12,10). If this is already true of the identity of operations, it is all the more true in the case where the name of “God” indicates the nature (φύσις) (13, 19–23). It is nevertheless necessary to affirm that none of the above terms can in fact be a definition of the nature of God. The nature of God remains unknowable, but the unity of nature in the Father, in the Son and in the Spirit is knowable through the identity of activities. Thus the Spirit too belongs to the unique divine nature (14,16–15,7).

Nothing would change if one wished to understand the designation of “God” as a designation of dignity. For in reference to the dignity of the Spirit one must affirm that the name Christ signifies literally “the Anointed,” but the Anointing is the Holy Spirit, so that Christ receives royal power specifically through the Spirit. In this way, then, the Spirit would also belong to the “unique divine nature” (15,7–16,21).

With this idea, the writing abruptly ends (perhaps the end is lacking). A dating of the writing is not possible; theories that it belongs to somewhere around 380, when Gregory was at Sebaste (where he had to organize the succession to the head of the Pneumatomachians Eustathius, as ZIEGLER maintains) cannot be confirmed. In his argumentation Gregory has ample recourse to the *De Spiritu Sancto* of Basil (such as in reference to Mt 28.19, in the considerations on the sanctification of the angels, or in the notion of dignity). The most important difference is that Gregory admits not only a rigorous coordination of the activity of the Father, Son and Spirit (like Basil in the *De Spiritu Sancto*), but also an identity of *energeia* understood according to unity (this refers back to Athanasius).

In the theological Trinitarian conception, it is perhaps surprising that the concept of φύσις takes pride of place (it appears however as equivalent to the concept of οὐσία, itself rarely employed), crystallizing in formulas such as “the unicity of nature” or “the community of the nature”. Father, Son and Holy Spirit are defined as hypostases (the concept of πρόσωπον is totally absent), but the concept of ὑπόστασις is not developed with any greater precision. Gregory moves the discussion from ontological terminology (simply excluding the accusation of having divided the three hypostases) to the question of whether, concerning essence or nature, the Spirit should be separated from the Father and the Son. He responds in the negative. In a difference from *Graec*, the designation of “divinity” is not analyzed in depth, but is inserted among the many designations of activity. The argumentation however is then carried out in such a manner that it remains valid whether “divinity” indicates nature or indicates dignity.

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Volker Henning Drecoll

EVIL

Gregory stands in the Platonist tradition of defining evil as an absence of the good and therefore in some sense as an absence of being. In Book VI of the *Republic* (508c–509b), Plato describes the Idea of the Good as the supreme being and the cause of all other being, just as the sun is the prototype and ultimate source of all light. Whatever exists does so in dependence on the good. Therefore, to the extent that anything lacks the Good, it is also less than fully real. In Book V (477a–479d), he characterizes the world of change and becoming as existing somewhere between being and nonbeing. In the *Timaeus* (48a), he explains that an irretractable “necessity,” which is apparently a property of unformed matter, prevents the demiurge from creating a world that is a perfect image of the intelligible essences.

The Platonist position reaches its logical extreme in the thought of Plotinus (*Enneads*, esp. 1.8, 2.4, 2.5, 2.9, 3.9). Evil is the limit of being, the furthest extent to which being can reach, the point at which the overflowing of the Good is exhausted and must end. This non-being is not an evil principle that exists outside of and in opposition to the good. It is rather a necessary consequence of multiplicity and therefore, in a sense, good. Nevertheless, this utter formlessness infects everything with which it comes into contact and is therefore the source of evil.

Gregory’s understanding of evil has much in common with that of Plotinus and may have been influenced by it. For a Christian, however, the notion that evil might be a necessary consequence of the process of coming into being is unacceptable. Non-being is not the consequence and outer limit of being, but rather the precondition of being. Gregory states frequently that creation is the passage from non-being toward being. A creature is of itself nothing, but exists only in dependence on God. An intellectual creature formed, like the human being, in the image of God possesses that most distinctive of all divine properties—freedom. Evil arises therefore when the soul turns away from being towards non-being. Since non-being is the precondition of the creature, rather than the outer limit of being, Gregory understands evil as a blight upon nature, a deconstruction of being. In opposition to Plotinus, therefore, Gregory thinks of evil, rather than good, as reaching a limit in non-being.

This opens the possibility for salvation through the intervention of the Creator in the Incarnation.

The single most comprehensive statement of Gregory's understanding of evil appears in the seventh Homily on Ecclesiastes (GNO V, 406,7–407,15):

The really real is the self-good. This good, therefore, or rather, this beyond the good, both itself truly is and by means of itself has given and continues to give to the things that exist the ability to become and to remain in being; whatever is found outside of it is non-subsistence, for whatever is outside of the real is not in being. Now, since evil is understood as the opposite of virtue and since the perfect virtue is God, evil is therefore outside of God; its nature is conceived not in its being anything itself, but in its not being good. For to the conception 'outside the good' we have given the name 'evil.' Evil and good are opposite in conception in the same way that not-being is distinguished as the opposite of being. When therefore by our own sovereign movement we have fallen away from the good—just as those who shut their eyes in the light are said to see the dark, for to see darkness is precisely to see nothing—it is then that the non-subsistent nature of evil is given being in those who have fallen away from the good; and it exists for just as long as we are outside the good. If the sovereign motion of our will again tears itself away from its company with the non-subsistent and is grafted on to the real, then that which no longer has its being within me will no longer have being at all. For there is not evil subsisting by itself outside of the free will.

That evil is a product of the free will and not of nature was of course a commonplace in early Christian thought. This teaching appears in the First *Apology* 43 of Justin Martyr, in Tertullian's *Exhortation to Charity* 2, and in a more philosophical reflection in Origen's essay on free will in ch. 1 of Book 3 of his *Peri Archôn*. Gregory's brother Basil in his commentary on the *Six days of creation* (PG 29, 37C–D) describes evil as "not a living essence, but a disposition of the soul opposed to virtue, resulting through a falling away from the good." Similarly, in a sermon specifically addressing the problem of evil (PG 31, 341B), Basil says that there exists no proper substance of evil. Gregory seems to be echoing his brother's views when he says in the essay *Virg* (GNO VIII.1, 299,12–14), his earliest work, that "no evil exists in its own substance outside the faculty of free choice."

What is most interesting and distinctive in Gregory's approach to the problem is the way that he describes evil as having no substance of its own, but nevertheless as taking subsistence in dependence on the faculty of free choice through the very act of having been chosen.

It is then, he says in the passage quoted, “that the non-subsistent nature of evil is given being in those who have fallen away from the good.”

To avoid a Neo-Platonist identification of evil with the non-being that represents the limit of the Good or even worse, with the non-being out of which God brought all things into existence, Gregory must distinguish between a non-being which is pure nothingness without quality in the absence of the good and the non-being to which we give the name “evil” whenever there is a withdrawal from the presence of the good. Gregory clarifies his philosophical position in a passage of the *Or Cat* (PG 45, 28C: GNO III/4, 24 ff.) that is clearly dependent on the definition given in the Seventh Homily on Ecclesiastes, but complements it in an important way.

As we say that blindness is the opposite of vision, not that blindness is anything by nature in itself, but a privation of a previous condition, even so we say that evil is understood in the privation of good, like a shadow following the passage of the sunbeam. Now the uncreated nature is un-receptive of any motion of change or variation, while everything that subsists by means of creation is akin to change, because the very substance of creation begins with a change, non-being having been transformed into being by a divine power.

The Greek word translated here as “privation” is *steresis*. In Aristotelian logic, this word has the technical meaning (*Categories* 12A) of absence in the sense of the loss of what ought to be present. Because the uncreated nature is not subject to change, there can be no loss in its possession of the Good. The created nature is by definition both subject to change and possessed of no being in and of itself. Therefore it is possible for the creature to fall away from the Good, and such a fall necessarily entails a loss of being. Only intellectual creatures—angels and humans—endowed with the ability to affect their own motions are liable to this fall. Gregory goes on to explain how the intellectual creation—or, rather, a portion of it—by its own sovereign movement withdrew from the Good and thereby provided a receptacle for the otherwise non-subsistent nature of evil. Envy was born within the will of the angelic inventor of evil, who then deceived man into making an equally free choice of evil. Gregory concludes (PG 45, 32C) by recapitulating his definition of evil as the nonsubsistence of the good.

Evil has its character in being the absence of good, not being a thing of itself nor conceived of as substance. For no evil exists by itself outside the faculty of free choice, but is so called by its not being the good. That which is not has no substance, and the Maker of the subsistent cannot be the Maker of that which has no subsistence.

It is the will of God that brings beings into subsistence out of non-being. Created being has no subsistence of its own and can remain in existence only in dependence on the divine will. Thus, it is the will of God that provides the receptacle for whatever truly exists. Similarly, evil is not a self-existing condition that presents itself to the soul as a false object of choice, but an otherwise non-existent condition that the soul constitutes as a possibility for choice by the very act of choosing it.

This suggestion appears explicitly in a passage in the Homilies on the Beatitudes (GNO VII.2, 129.19–22), where Gregory says that “Evil takes subsistence as soon as we choose it, coming into being at the very moment of choice, for by itself in its own substance outside of the faculty of free choice evil is nowhere to be found existing.” In his formal definition of evil as the non-subsistence of the good in the seventh Homily on Ecclesiastes, Gregory says that this non-subsistent nature takes being in those who have fallen away from the good and remains in being for as long as that withdrawal from the good continues. Similarly, in the *Catechetical Oration*, Gregory says that evil grows from within, coming to subsistence in the faculty of free choice whenever there is any withdrawal of the soul from the good. The notion of the free will as “receptacle” appears specifically in the *An et Res* (PG 46, 101A), where Macrina assures her brother that evil must disappear into non-being in the end: “since outside of free choice evil has no nature, when all free choice is in God, evil will vanish, there being no receptacle left for it.”

For Gregory, evil is neither a nothingness that has no existence at all nor an authentic form of being brought into existence by the will of God and therefore enabled to subsist in its own right as a constituent of created reality. Evil is a non-subsistence that depends for whatever existence it has on the created will that produces and sustains it within its own “receptacle.” When Gregory says that no evil exists in its own substance “outside” of free choice, he means that phrase quite literally: evil exists somehow “within” the faculty of free choice.

This notion of evil as a spurious existence clinging to being in dependence on the powers of the created will informs some of Gregory’s most suggestive metaphors. Whatever is outside of being, he says, existing only in the not-being of the good, is like a false growth, rootless and unsown, whose apparently abundant crop is without real substance (*Inscr*, GNO V, 155,5–50). Evil is like an intestinal parasite that the soul nourishes within itself to its own destruction (*Eccl.*, GNO V, 384,3–15). In one of his most interesting analogies (*Inscr*, GNO V, 134,14–28), Gregory likens evil to the mule, a creature outside of creation existing by a mockery of nature:

“Like the mule, evil cannot preserve and propagate itself; it must always be generated by another, whenever the noble steed in our nature, haughty and exultant, conceives the desire for an asinine union.”

In one of his most interesting exegetical reflections—a passage in the sixth Homily on the Song of Songs (GNO VI, 348,12–352,1)—Gregory explains how it is that Scripture could speak of two trees as occupying the center of the Garden of Eden. Such a situation is physically impossible, Gregory says, and contravenes the rules of geometry. Two things of opposing power—the tree of life and the tree of death—cannot occupy the same point at the same time. Scripture (Gn 2.9) describes both trees as being in the same center in order to teach us that “The center of God’s planting is life, while death is unplanted and rootless by itself. Death has its own space nowhere, but implants itself in the privation of life, whenever participation in the better lies fallow for living things.” The one tree exists by nature, Gregory continues, the other succeeds the existent one by privation; for it is from the same tree and in the same space by means of participation and privation that the interchange of life and death takes place. As he says elsewhere in the same work (GNO VI, 56,3–6; cf. *Vit Moys*, GNO VII.1, 59,21–23), all being is of one nature, but the faculty of free choice has divided it into friend and foe.

Whereas for Plotinus evil arises at the outer limit of being and is therefore a necessary consequence of the expansion of being, Gregory’s definition of evil as a kind of hole within being implies that the expansion of evil must reach a limit in non-being. That limit does not entail the total destruction of created being, however, but a necessary return towards the good. In his essay *Op hom* (PG 44, 201B–C), Gregory says that motion in the good is unlimited because of the infinite space being traversed. But if the creature “should direct its motion toward the opposite, when it has finished the course of evil and arrived at the utmost measure of evil, then, since its nature knows no stopping, having traversed the expanse of evil, it will of necessity turn its motion toward the good. Because the progress of evil is not infinite, but contained within fixed bounds, good necessarily succeeds the boundary of evil.”

While Gregory states here that good “necessarily” follows evil, elsewhere he associates the acme of evil specifically with the intervention of Christ. A good example appears in the sermon *Trid spat* (GNO IX, 283,13–284,8), responding to the question why God waited so long before intervening against evil. Evil increased from its beginnings with the first human beings, spreading and increasing in each successive generation. Thus evil expanded indefinitely to its extremity and ruled all of

human nature. It is at this greatest extent of evil that God intervened; and it is the supreme miracle, scarcely a reason for complaint about a delay, that Christ destroyed the whole mass of evil in only three days.

Although Christ “destroyed the whole mass of evil,” there is nevertheless a historical process that must be completed before the effects of evil are completely eradicated. In the *Or cat* (PG 45, 52C: GNO III/4, 48 ff.), Gregory explains that just as evil was complete in Adam, yet reveals itself in an historical expansion toward death, so the redemptive death and resurrection of all mankind is complete in Christ, yet is accomplished in each individual in an historical struggle with evil. So it is that evil appears still to hold being in its grasp, even after the decisive intervention of Christ. The power of being over non-being is such that in the end all evil will in fact disappear. In the *Arium* (GNO III.1, 78) and in a short piece dedicated to the text, Gregory explains Paul’s phrase (1 Cor 15.28) about the subjection of the Son to the Father not as a subordinationist Christology, but as a reference to the endtime when all will be subjected to Christ and through Christ to the Father.

The goal of our hope is that nothing contrary to the good is left, but the divine life permeates everything . . . Every wicked authority and dominion has been destroyed . . . All are subjected to the one who rules over all. Subjection to God is complete alienation from evil (PG 44, 1313: GNO III/2, 16,4–13).

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EXEGESIS

In addition to his use of the Scriptural argument as the foundation and support of every doctrinal or ascetic argument, Gregory dedicated a large part of his literary activity to the specific interpretation of texts of Scripture, from both the OT and the NT. The literary genus is in part homiletic, derived from series of homilies which appear to have been heavily reworked in view of publication. Other texts were composed for publication directly. Chronologically, the two writings pertaining to the Basilian *Hexaemeron* are separate, having been composed towards the beginning of Gregory's literary activity a little after 379. All the others appear to be somewhat later, from 385 on, but it is difficult, as for the other Gregorian writings, to establish a precise chronology. The brief description of these writings which follows here is ordered according to the sequence of the books of Scripture.

Op hom and *Hex*, composed at the request of Gregory's brother Peter, Bishop of Sebaste, propose first of all to integrate the exegesis of Basil's *Hexaemeron*, supplying it with an interpretation of the biblical account of the creation of man (Gn 1.26–27; 2.7). Secondly, they reply to the criticisms leveled against the Basilian writing and deepen some of the explanatory points which Basil had proposed. *Vit Moys*, in two books (circa 390), presents Moses as a model of Christian perfection. In the first book Gregory briefly describes the relevant episodes of the life of Moses; in the second, much longer than the first, he interprets them, taking them as symbols of the various moments of the ascetic itinerary that the Christian must traverse in order to reach the ideal of perfection. The brief treatise *Python*, of uncertain dating, criticizes the interpretation that Origen had given of the episode of 1 Ki 28.12 ff. He had maintained that Samuel, when called up by the sorceress, had really come from below and appeared to Saul. Gregory, like Eustachius of Antioch before him, instead maintains that it was a demon who appeared to Saul under the guise of Samuel, in order to deceive him. *Inscr*, in two books (circa 387), treats of the order of the Psalms in the first book, in the second interpreting the rubrics which, in the LXX, embellish the individual Psalms. The division of the *Psalms* into five books is taken as signifying the progressive ascent of the human being from the moment that he separates himself from sin until the attainment of beatitude, which

consists in reaching likeness with God. The Gregorian exegesis of the *Psalms* also includes an isolated homily dedicated to the interpretation of Psalm VI. In his later years, around 389, Gregory preached and then published eight homilies on Qoh (Eccl). Following Origen's interpretation, Gregory assumes that the sequence of the three Solomonian books, *Proverbs*, *Qoheleth* and *Song of Songs*, signifies progress in the knowledge of God and the path of perfection. In this optic, *Qoheleth*, once the hedonistic interpretations are neutralized, adequately lends itself to accentuating the vanity of the world and its goods. This traditional Christian interpretation of the Solomonian book is assumed by Gregory as well, who develops it according to the favored theme of progress and ascent. The fifteen homilies on the *Song of Songs* (circa 390) are considered the crown of Gregory's exegetical activity. The introduction to this text is basic to an understanding of the theoretical foundation of the Nyssen's exegesis. These homilies, which interpret the biblical text from the beginning to 6.8, are attached to those on *Qoheleth* and, according to the Origenian schema, complete the discourse on Christian perfection, in so far as the union of the two protagonists is considered either, as Tradition would have had it, as the union of Christ and the Church, or, above all, as Origen would have had it, as the union of the Logos with the soul. Some years before the homilies on Ct (*Cant*), around 385, Gregory preached and published five homilies on the *Our Father* (*Or dom*), and around 387, eight on the Gospel discourse on the Beatitudes (*Beat*). Both these writings treated the favored themes of ascetics and spirituality. Various Plotinian influences have been noted in the second of them.

Towards the end of *Hex*, Gregory observes that he has never reduced the biblical account of creation to an allegorical interpretation (*tropikê allegoria*), and that he has held himself to the letter (*lexis*) of the account, harmonizing the *physikê theoria* with it, i.e. an explanation enriched through reflection on natural realities. This is the context of one of the only two occurrences in all of his writings (here, not in a positive sense) of the contested term of *ALLEGORY* (→). His affirmation is not totally precise, as allegorizing treatments are not lacking in this writing, as in *Op hom*. There is however no doubt that these two Gregorian exegetical texts are mainly of a literal character, and the development that the exegete brought to the Basilian interpretation focuses on the scientific character of the exposition. It would be misleading to generalize Gregory's literalistic declaration as an affirmation of a principle. The prevalent literalism of these two writings of Gregory is to be explained along the lines

of the Basilian interpretation which was itself systematically literal and polemic in regard to those who allegorized. In reality, like Origen, Gregory was above all a master of spirituality and therefore naturally inclined to valorize spiritual exegesis, largely allegorical, of the Sacred Text. On the other hand one needs to consider Gregory's complete involvement in the polemic, in full course at that time, of the Antiochian literalists against the allegorism of the Alexandrian tradition: This explains a certain level of his prudence in the application of that form of hermeneutics. If his interpretation of the OT remains fundamentally allegorical, this is not the case of that of the NT, as it was easy for him to find a lesson on morals and ascetics without going beyond the literal sense of the Gospel text. In this polemical context there is a renunciation, as far as exegetical terminology is concerned, of the use of the term *allegoria*, the term most contested by the literalists. On the other hand, Gregory took from Origen the most distinctive term of spiritual exegesis itself, *anagogê*, and continued to use other terms typical of this type of exegesis, such as *THEORIA* (→) and *dianoia*; he used *ainigma* extensively, because of its broad signification, while *tropologia* is employed much less. As for terminology of a literalistic nature, next to *HISTORIA* (→), *lexis* and *gramma* are used (never *rhetôn*, common in Origen and Didymus). While *lexis* is most often adopted in a neutral sense, to indicate the primary signification of the sacred text, *gramma* has a pejorative connotation, just as in Origen: cf. "who is slave of the letter (*grammati*)" of *Vit Moys* II, 222.

Gregory's most important systematic text on his hermeneutic *ratio* is placed at the head, as an introduction, to the homilies dedicated to the interpretation of the *Song of Songs* (GNO VI, 3 ff.). It has been stated that this work is quite late, so that its introduction can be considered a definitive affirmation about the methodology he employed in the interpretation of Sacred Scripture. In this optic it should be noted that he prepended this systematic text to the interpretation of a book of Scripture which, in order to be considered Sacred Scripture, imperatively required to be interpreted in an allegorical manner, as had been already done in the Judaic world and as had been done only a few years earlier by Theodoret, although he was a representative of Antiochian exegesis. Gregory mentions, though not by name, certain clerics who held that the interpretation of Scripture must limit itself to the literal sense, without the search for hidden senses. These are clearly representatives of the Syro-Palestinian environment, Antiochian in particular, who had already for several decades polemicized against the allegorism charac-

teristic of the Alexandrian school. At the time in which Gregory was active, the most qualified representative of Antiochian literalism was Diodore of Tarsus, and one could hypothesize that it was he in particular who was the antagonist of the Nyssen's polemic. To this unnamed adversary he replies, offering the finality which inspires and conditions Alexandrian exegesis: *ophelia*, utility, in the sense that the primary end of the explanation of the Sacred Scripture must be the manifestation of the moral utility that those pages can, even must, bring to the listener and the reader. If this utility can be gathered from the literal sense alone, one can content himself with it; but if this interpretation is insufficient for the proposed end, one must seek that which is expressed in enigma in the text, i.e. in a covered, hidden manner. To give an example of this position, a little further on Gregory asks himself what use for the life informed by virtue one can draw from the text on Hosea and the prostitute (Hos 1.2), or from the text where Isaiah impregnates the prophetess (Is 8.3) or from the narration of David's adultery and homicide (2 Ki 11). It is therefore necessary to find a positive signification to such episodes, valorizing the Pauline dictum, the cornerstone of spiritual exegesis, according to which the letter kills but the spirit gives life (2 Cor 6). A little earlier on, with the same goal, Gregory had cited Pr 1.6, in which it is stated that the wise man, in order to instruct, uses parables, enigmas and hidden words, considering the variety of technical terms (tropology, allegory etc.) irrelevant, provided that thanks to the application of this hermeneutic methodology, the interpretation could provide a morally useful signification. After this establishment of his position on the specific polemic of the Antiochians against the use of the term *allegory*, Gregory, turning once again to Paul ("the Law is spiritual" [Rm 7.14]), explains that with the term of "Law" the Apostle understood the historical narrations of the OT as well, in such a manner that he implicitly authorized the exegete to seek the spiritual signification in those narratives too. Interpreted only according to the letter, they indicated something completely different, something which was often far from edifying: "In any case we cannot always stop at the letter, almost as if the most obvious signification of the text could hinder us from gathering an interpretation adapted to the virtuous life in many cases, but one must pass over to the immaterial and intellectual (*noetê*) *theoria*, so that the corporeal significations be transferred into the mind and intelligence after having removed the dust and carnality of the literal expression". A little earlier Gregory had spoken of *theoria* obtained by means of *anagogê*. By *theoria*, he understands the contemplation of the profound,

spiritual sense of Sacred Scripture, while *anagogé* (action of elevating) means the exegetical procedure which elevates the letter of the text from the first level of literalness to the higher one of the spiritual signification.

In the rest of the introduction Gregory will continue to exalt the Scriptural support for the interpretation of a spiritual type, first proposing the example of the preaching of the incarnate Logos, who often used hidden speech, in parables and symbols, and then recording various examples of symbolic expression that are found in the OT (the mountain elevated above the mountain tops [Mic 4.1], the shoot of the root of Jesse [Is 11.1] and others as well). This part of the introduction offers two important considerations: 1) Among the examples of symbolic interpretation Gregory includes the tree of Eden, confirming what can be gathered from other authors as well—that the polemic between the literalists and the allegorists gravitated above all around the narrations of chs. 2–3 of *Genesis* (the description of paradise and the sin of the first couple), a text which the literalists continued to interpret according to the first and immediate sense of the text, while the allegorists, beginning as early as Philo, and perhaps even before him—attributed to it only, or at least principally, a spiritual signification. 2) That Scripture often uses parable and symbolic expression is something the literalists had already understood, correctly defining it as metaphor. They had considered it as another type of expression of the sacred writer, next to the literal one, and drew a radical distinction between the two manners of expression. Gregory on the other hand uses these cases of symbolic expression as examples of hidden speech, and accordingly maintains that he is authorized to find this hidden word even where the literal sense of the text clearly appears, as long as it is not morally useful. As can be seen, his manner of interacting with the Scriptural text is completely different from that of the exegetes with literalistic tendencies, since Gregory's approach is subordinated to the primary requirement of *ophelia*. This confirms that the contrast between the Antiochian literalists and the Alexandrian allegorists was not a misunderstanding, as certain modern scholars have stated (Guillet), but had its roots in the very manner of entering into contact with the sacred text. It is therefore clear that Gregory, despite the concessions noted above to exegesis of the literal type, was fundamentally an exegete of the Alexandrian tendency. It is also clear that the requirements imposed on him by polemic pushed him to concessions of various types. It is enough to recall the first book of *Vit Moys*, dedicated to the literal narrative of the episodes of Moses' life, to which we can add the renunciation, or at

least the reduced use, of procedures characteristic of an allegorical exegesis, such as etymological or numerical exegesis. Above all, despite the continuing influence of Origen on his exegetical practice, the Platonic basis of it is less noticeable—a basis which the Alexandrian had split into two superimposed levels of reading Sacred Scripture, corresponding to the division of realities into two superimposed levels. This was discreet enough to avoid the accusation of excessive allegorism. This methodologically foundation of ontological criteria which imposed a spiritual reading of the whole of Scripture was replaced by Gregory, as the foundation of his exegesis, with the principle, itself Origenian as well, of *opheilia*. This permitted quite an ample use, even if not a generalized one, of the application of allegorizing principles in the interpretation of Sacred Scripture.

With Gregory's affiliation to the Alexandrian exegetical tradition thus established, it needs to be specified that, in this tradition, he occupies a position of his own, since he intended to develop the spiritual interpretation of Sacred Scripture in a more organic and concise manner than the normal Origenian manner, one which was easily separated from the adherence to the immediate sense, be it literal or spiritual, of the text as this was interpreted from time to time. There are two criteria to which he adhered, in order to accomplish this goal. They are far from original, but are applied by him with a much greater coherence than by other representatives of his hermeneutic circle: *SKOPOS* (→) and *AKOLOUTHIA* (→). On the basis of the first principle, Gregory assigns to each of his exegetical works a specific end, which is not the habitual one of interpreting the sacred text to manifest its more or less profound meaning. According to the other criteria, based upon this finality, Gregory interprets the details of the texts he is examining in an organic and consistent manner. The *skopòs* that Gregory assigns to his exegetical works of a spiritual nature, which are thus open to the allegorization of the biblical text, is that of guiding the listener and reader in the arduous ascetic path of the practice of Christian virtue, a path which winds through successive levels, in an ascending direction and in a progress without end, beginning from the most elemental purifications from sin to the most bold and exhilarating mystical flights. In this sense, Gregory's more significant exegetical texts, despite the variety of texts examined, are a unity, as a series of variations on a unique theme where the matter for the variations is furnished by the variety of passages interpreted little by little by Gregory in harmony with the customary *skopòs*. In view of this, Gregory, with a great liberty, does not feel obliged to interpret all the details of

the examined text, selecting and grouping the material in order to interpret it on the basis of the finality he has pre-established. It is obvious that this mode of interpretation gives a homogeneity of results which is unusual in the writings of exegetes of the Alexandrian school. It is to be noted as well that the biblical text does not always easily lend itself to the *ratio interpretandi* imposed upon it at least partially from the exterior. In these cases Gregory, in order to encapsulate the text in his interpretation, is constrained to force this sense on it. We limit ourselves here to only one example, taken from the most ambitious of Gregory's exegetical writings. Ct 5.7 "The guardians of the wall have hit me, they have wounded me, they have removed my veil" invited *prima facie* to a negative symbolism: punishment for sin, or something similar. Gregory recognizes that these words belong to someone who is lamenting rather than rejoicing. But in this advanced moment of the spiritual life such an interpretation is no longer possible, and the words of the woman *must* be words of joy. Therefore, removing the veil signifies liberating the soul from the final impediments to contemplation, and the beatings signify that God has wrenched the soul from death (GNO VI, 359ss). Precisely because he is aware that the biblical text does not always lend itself to be interpreted in line with the *skopòs* he has assigned to it, Gregory, in both *Cant* and in *Vit Moys*, synthesizes the theme of the progressive ascent in a series of summaries which from time to time sum up the path thus far followed by the ascetic soul.

In synthesis, Gregory appears, like Didymus in his time, and in some ways Cyril a little later, as a representative of the Alexandrian exegetical tradition, in particular the Philonian and Origenist tradition; but he was working in the critical period when this tradition was undergoing a bitter and harsh criticism from the exegetes of the Antiochian sphere. Accordingly, both sides were constrained to more or less significant concessions in order to avoid at least the most visible of these criticisms. In this context we have gradually shown how Gregory felt the need to separate himself from the most extremist, and thus most easily criticized, aspects of Origen's exegesis. In substance he nevertheless remains an Alexandrian exegete, since he shared the two fundamental motives of that hermeneutic method: the requirement that the reading and explanation of Sacred Scripture must prove itself useful for the practice of a life informed by Christian virtue; and a conviction that, even if not always, one can find such a utility only by taking the interpretation of the text beyond the literal sense, in a spiritual sense. 2 Cor 3.6 inspired the Nyssen's exegesis, like Origen's before him.

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FAITH AND REASON

In the Nyssen, the concept of faith, frequent in his vocabulary, is not strictly technical: It is used in various senses which indicate at once the general lines of its signification as well as its theological and spiritual role. It is thus found with the meaning of “credibility” (*Eun* I, GNO I, 152, 5–10; *An et Res*, PG 46, 64A; *Inst*, VIII/1, 43, 2), of “fidelity” (*Macr*, GNO VIII/1 375, 20–21), or even “demonstration” (*Op hom*, PG 44, 196AB). It is often adopted to designate the “profession of faith” (*Ref Eun*, GNO II, 316, 11–15; 317, 15–20; 357, 14–21; 390, 4–9; *Abl*, GNO, III/1, 51; *Inst*, GNO VIII/1, 42, 14; in a broad sense this meaning is present in: *Simpl*, GNO III/1, 61–67). In general, it indicates the relationship of the human being to God in its various theological and existential senses.

Gregory is not interested in the personal aspect of faith in the common sense of the word; he only once observes that it is the effect of the decision of the human being, in so far as it resides in free will (*Or cat*, GNO III/4, 92, 21–23). In a certain manner he places faith in the sphere of human liberty in a general sense, since he regards liberty as a fundamental anthropological reality (cfr. J. GAÏTH) (→ ANTHROPOLOGY, *PROAIRESIS*). His attention is rather directed to the objective aspects of faith, not however in the sense of a reality which is separated and isolated from the human being, but in so far as it determines the attitude that the human being has in its regard. The question of the direct relation of faith and reason had already been of interest to Clement of Alexandria and various Fathers, but is extraneous to Gregory (C. MORESCHINI, 100–128). The position of the Nyssen is largely a result of the confrontation with the rationalism of Eunomius, for whom the fundamental element is the “knowledge that comes from reasonings”. He therefore underscores, in the anti-Eunomian polemic, that only faith is in conformity with human nature (*Eun* III, GNO II, 242, 18–25). It is situated above all reasoning (*Thaum*, GNO X/1, 9–15 – 10, 13), and thus has no need for a rational proof which is proper to the science of this world. It however possesses its own sphere of knowledge, which is proper to it and follows its own laws: “But that which escapes our consideration, faith makes our own, since with its certitude it is the guarantor of that which is not seen” (*Eun* II, GNO I, 254, 3–6).

Gregory is conscious that faith is a dynamic reality. He thus distinguishes various degrees or levels in it. In the first place it is the adherence to a transmitted doctrine: "Faith of the teaching which was transmitted to us" (*Ref Eun*, GNO II, 319, 9–10)—a teaching which regards the doctrine of the TRINITY (→) and the divine economy (→ OIKONOMIA). But this faith grows and develops, and thus becomes a vital tie between God and the human being: "It is not possible to approach to God if faith does not intervene and does not join by itself the intellect that seeks it to the incomprehensible" (*Eun* II, GNO I, 253, 24–26). Its fulfillment is reached in the union with God and the participation in the divine life. In this respect it possesses a salvific dimension: "The soul, conjoining itself to Him [God] through faith, possesses, by this fact, the first fruits with which to reach salvation" (*Or cat*, GNO III/4, 93, 1–5).

The Nyssen heavily accentuates the fact that the principal content of the relation with God, that is *theognosia*, is "faith in the Son" (*Inscr*, GNO V, 82, 24), and that this leads to an intimate relationship with the Lord as a condition of spiritual ascent: "The soul which wishes to fly above towards the divine must also join itself to Christ" (*Inst*, GNO VIII/1, 50, 9–10). Gregory particularly recommends to the believer "submission" to Christ, as a manner of concretely realizing faith in his life: "For, after all have shed the old man, with his actions and desires, and have accepted the Lord in themselves, He who lives in them necessarily works the good actions which are accomplished in them. The highest of goods is salvation, which is accomplished by us through the alienation from evil. But there is no other way to separate from evil than to unite oneself to God through the submission to Him who lives in us" (*Tunc et ipse*, GNO III/2, 24, 19–25, 4). The same Christological perspective of faith is present in *Cant* (L.F. MATEO-SECO).

The Christological aspect, in its objective signification, is founded on the "mediation" which Christ enacts, as the universal Mediator (*Mesites*: *Ref Eun*, GNO II, 374, 15–17) in the economy and in history (G. FERRO GAREL, 65–70). Because of this mediation, faith realizes its unifying and salvific effects. The believer becomes first of all one who participates in God himself: "Our legislator [unlike Moses . . .] instead of the mountain, leads to God himself, whom He has made accessible to all men through virtue; He also makes those who approach not only spectators, but also participants (*koinonous*) of the divine power, leading them, so to speak, to a kinship with the superior nature" (*Or dom*, GNO VII/2, 12.21–25; cfr. *Virg*, GNO VIII/1, 252, 7–11). In other circumstances, Gregory speaks

of “familiarity” and “intimacy” with God (*Cant*, GNO VI, 71, 5–8; 253, 8–18). The ultimate effect of the mediation of Christ is divinization (cfr. e.g. *Or dom*, GNO VII/2, 252, 7–11).

The Christological concretization of the faith shows its decisive importance for the spiritual development of the human being. It is the foundation of formation in the realm of moral life: “The principle of this sublime fortification of life consists in faith in Him, on which we throw, as if it were a foundation, the principles of our life” (*Perf*, GNO VIII/1, 193, 4–7). Gregory admonishes: “Make of this faith, according to piety, the guide of life” (*Inst*, GNO VIII/1, 43, 10–11). Faith implies thus obedience to the VIRTUES (→), makes their accomplishment possible, and thereby gives form to life—thus bringing a transformation to all of existence and a complete entrustment to God. In reference to this aspect, Gregory allegorically explains the signification of the perfumes that the women bring to the tomb of the Lord (*Trid spat*, GNO IX, 304). One can thus say that faith envelops the entire human being, extending beyond the realm of an external adhesion and constituting the nucleus of religious life, from which all the rest develops in an organic manner (→ CULT).

The Christological aspect of faith and its foundational dimension also leads the Nyssen to affirm it as a foundation of reason (*gnosis*): “Faith, thanks to which wisdom is generated in the faithful” (*Eun* III, GNO II, 25, 14–15). Reason, belonging to the fundamental faculties of the human being as a creature of God, first of all fulfills a preparatory function for faith, constituting thus its foundation. In this sense it also possesses an apologetic function, in so far as it permits one to convince pagans of the Christian doctrine of the faith, manifesting the TRUTH (→) of it. This dimension of reason is confirmed on the practical level by Gregory when he employs philosophy in the theological sphere, “adapting the spiritual heritage of Greece to the expression of the Christian experience” (H.U. VON BALTHASAR, 7; cf. C. MORESCHINI, 571–616). In the development of faith, reason serves to reinforce it, and thus to facilitate it. Nevertheless, the summit of faith is found only in the shadows, which signify the obscurity which covers human senses and faculties, as well as the inaccessibility of God to the human mind. Reason is, in fact, incapable of understanding God, who is unreachable in his transcendence. Such an experience should not be placed on the same level as irrationality (→ APOPHATIC THEOLOGY).

The concept of faith in Gregory is tightly linked to his doctrine on perfection and MYSTICISM (→), thus confirming the organic character and the completeness of his spiritual vision. In it, human life is purified

by baptismal grace and is thus placed in relationship with the possession of the Spirit. But this grace is rendered active through faith, from which, as from a seed, all of the spiritual possibilities of the human being are developed. Certainly, this development of life according to the virtues is not something mechanical, but must be based on liberty and take into consideration the possibility of temptations as well. Faith is actuated in suffering and defeating temptations; it is fortified in the struggle against the demonic powers, against sin and against the passions. In this way, the human being separates himself from the world and feels in himself a state of desire for God and of impulsion towards God.

Gregory identifies the models of the faith in the saints, above all in the Apostle Paul, and then in those to whom he dedicates his sermons, BASIL (→) in particular. One can clearly see that their faith is taken into consideration as a criterion of their sanctity and their exemplarity.

It is further necessary to underscore that Gregory's conception contains a strong experimental and personal aspect. In his exposition of various aspects of faith, references to his own spiritual asceticism and his life recur. He writes, for example: "I was educated to disdain the things of the world, to surpass earthly realities, and to hurry towards the heavenly realities" (*Diem lum*, GNO IX, 240, 12–14). All his existence, through his faith, was passionately directed towards God, and he takes from his life various images to describe the mystery of the soul that progressively matures in the Spirit. His whole life served to present the faith of the Christian as an ascent towards the always higher levels of perfection—as one stretching forth to that which lies onwards before him (→ *EPEKTASIS*).

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FASTING

Gregory dedicates a number of extended and interesting passages of the sermons preached for the faithful in Lent 382 (*Benef*, GNO IX 93–108, sp. 93–99) to the question of fasting. These passages are magnificent expressions of the penitential meaning of Lent and at the same time of the Christian conception of fasting. Gregory warns his listeners that in fasting, they should not follow the “Judaic habits”, but must fast as “disciples of Christ”. The two forms of fasting are clearly distinct: The reason that Christians fast is to accompany Christ in his sufferings. This reason gives Christian fasting its proper identity, together with an unmistakable tone. Nevertheless, in fixing the conditions of the Christian fast, Gregory has frequent recourse to texts of the Old Testament on this point (cfr. Is 58.4).

Fasting is at the service of charity towards the poor. Here, Gregory’s words become truly eloquent and beautiful: “You who fast”, he says, “give to the poor that which you take from your stomach; give it with words full of humanity, so that the poor find a refuge in you. Recognize the dignity of the poor: They are clothed in the person of our Savior” (*Benef*, GNO IX, 97–98).

Corporeal fasting should be accompanied by a spiritual fast, i.e. by the repression of all vice. There is no sense in fasting while one is possessed by the desire for others’ goods, while one steals or defames. Remember, he says, that fasting was no help to Judah. Gregory sees the importance of fasting in its spiritual utility: It was recommended to reach purity of soul. In contrast to evils that cause gluttony, fasting is an authentic “foundation of virtue” (*ibidem*, 95, 17–18). At the same time, Gregory warns that temperance and moderation are required even in fasting: One must seek the equilibrium between the satisfaction of the one who fasts and the hunger of one’s brother.

The theme of moderation in fasting is critically important in Gregory’s ascetic doctrine. In his first work he dedicates four chapters to this argument (*Virg* 21–23, GNO VIII/1, 330–343). Gregory is afraid of exaggerated enthusiasms, of an ascetic practice moved by pride, of an excessive rigorism. J. GRIBOMONT observes that chapters 21–23 manifest a strong influence of Basil. It is precisely these chapters that underscore that it is proper to not practice abstinence beyond what is necessary, and that it is, naturally, a grave imprudence to subject the body to excessive rigors.

To demonstrate the necessity of this moderation, Gregory bases his arguments on the medical theory of ἰσορροπία: the human being is composed of four contrary elements, which are opposed to each other; health consists in the equilibrium and harmony that exists among them. The conclusion is logical: Ascetic life should not seek the annihilation of these elements, but their equilibrium, in order to place the whole of man in perfect health, in search of the ideal of virginity. This search would be obstructed—and perhaps completely impeded—not only through a lack of equilibrium in favor of the body, but also by a body so weakened by fasts as to not have the energy to collaborate with the soul in its ascent towards God.

Perhaps Basil of Ancyra, in chapters 7–12 of his *Treatise on Virginity* (PG 30, 681–693), is the one who most influenced the balanced attitude that Gregory maintains in *Virg.* Basil of Ancyra had been a doctor before placing his efforts at the service of the semi-Arian cause; he had sought also to place his medical science at the service of ascetics. Basil had no difficulty lifting his voice as Physiologist-Ascetic to condemn as pernicious, not only the slavery to the pleasures of taste—unchained gluttony—but also emaciation, common among those who fasted in those times. Gregory receives from him a respect for medicine and the concept that health is found in equilibrium. Gregory's struggle against rigorism in the *Virg* refers to certain concrete names, in particular to the Messalians.

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Lucas Francisco Mateo-Seco

FAT

Contra Fatum

This short work of Gregory contains a dispute of the author with a pagan philosopher in Constantinople, dated between 381 and 383. Gregory defends the liberty of the will against astrological fatalism, demonstrating the absurdity of believing that the position of the stars at the moment of the birth of a human being might determine his future. He combats in particular the theory that destiny dominates all beings, as if it were the cause of all that might occur, be it good or bad, in nature or in the private life of human beings.

Gregory's interlocutor speaks of "sympathy" among all beings, as a sort of correspondence of sentiments, in order to justify simultaneous movement and the influence of certain beings on others. Gregory asks how it is that animated beings can be dominated by inanimate and unconscious ones.

The different behavior of human beings and of peoples shows that what we call fate or destiny is nothing other than the free choice of each one, and that, in some cases, what was said in some "prediction" is verified, this is not the work of destiny but of demons—in as much as it is opposed to the faith in the true regulator of life, the divine will.

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Juan Antonio Gil-Tamayo

FILIATION

The development of the concept of φύσις (→) was due to the confrontation with Arian theology, for which the generation of the Son automatically implied subordinationism. Being generated, the Son necessarily needed to be subordinate. For this reason, Filiation becomes the fundamental category of Gregory's theological construction, which is opposed to Eunomius in showing how the action of the Son in time—the economy—is anchored in the immanent mode of being, in so far as the Son is the perfect Image of the Father in his action as well. Commenting the Johannine Prologue, Gregory affirms: "The Father is the principle of all things. But it is proclaimed that the Son too is in this principle, because He is by nature that which the principle is. In fact, God is the principle and the Word which is in the principle is God" (*Eun* III, GNO II, 193, 23–26). The Father and the Son are inseparable: "The Son is in the Father, as the beauty of the image is in the form of the model, and the Father is in the Son, as exemplary beauty is in its own image. But, while in images made by the hand of man there is always a temporal distance between the communicated image and the model, in this case, instead, the one cannot be separated from the other" (*Eun* I, GNO I, 209, 8–14). The Son not only possesses that which the Father possesses, the Son possesses the Father himself (*Eun* II, GNO I 288, 19–23). Better, the name of Father signifies two Persons, as the idea of Son inseparably follows upon that of Father, so that, in saying Father, our faith impels us to think of the Father with the Son (*Eun* III, GNO II, 81, 3–4 and *Eun* II, GNO I, 208, 11–14).

In this sense, the Nyssen ties human paternity and filiation to divine paternity and filiation, maintaining the relative dimension, but purifying the concept. Gregory in fact denies that the generation of the Son can be compared to generation in the flesh. Unlike that which occurs when bodies are engendered, God does not pass from non-existence to existence. It is for this that Heb 1.3 speaks of *radiance of his glory* (ἀπαύγασμα δόξης), in order to indicate that, as light flows from that which illuminates without any mediation, and as soon as light appears, radiance does as well (ἀπαύγασμα), so too does the Son flow from the Father, and one can never separate the Father and the Son, since it is impossible that his glory be deprived of light. There can be no light without glory and radiance. And the Son is this radiance (*Simp*, GNO III/1, 63, 22–64, 16).

Thus, the center of the Nyssen's theology is divine Filiation itself, whose theological depth is shown by Gregory in all of its extension in order to refute the arguments of the subordinationists. The Son unites heaven and earth: In the struggle for the consubstantiality of the first two Persons, Gregory in fact affirms that the name of Son is in itself the best guarantor of the communion of nature of Christ, with both God and with human beings. For this reason He is called *Son of man*, indicating that He is of human nature itself, and *Son of God*, indicating that He is of the divine nature itself: "And it is precisely this word which is the strongest defense of the truth. In fact, no other name indicates *the Mediator* (μεσίτην) *between God and men* (1 Tim 2.5), as the great Apostle calls Him, as the name of Son does, since it is equally applied to both the divine nature and the human one. For it is the same who is the Son of God and has become Son of man in the economy, in order to unite in himself, due to the communion in both [natures], that which had been separated in nature" (*Eun* III, GNO II, 35, 12–19). For the unique mediation of Christ, human filiation and the divine filiation are always united in the Person of Christ himself, the Only Begotten Son of the Father. It is the power of the divinity, which Christ possesses through his natural communion with the Father, to unite the two natures of Christ. This union heals and repairs the lack of union that characterizes the human being on the horizontal level. One of the strong points of Gregory's theology is the inseparability of Trinitarian and Christological doctrine. The central category is the μεσιτεία of the Son, which, for the Nyssen, is inseparable from his *mode of being God*, that is from his being a Person. The term is in fact used in both immanence and economy (*Tunc et ipse*, GNO III/2, 21,15 and *Ref Eun*, GNO II, 374, 10), and is comparable to the constant central position of διὰ applied to the Son in the Trinitarian formulas.

The Father and the Son have a unique action, which flows from the unicity of will, expressed by Gregory through the image of the mirror (*Eun* II, GNO I, 288): The will of the Son follows the unique movement (θελήματος κίνησιν) initiated by the Father, as the image of a mirror. Thus, the second Person of the Trinity is immediately and inseparably coordinated with the first. It is nevertheless fundamental to note that the Son is not passive in this movement: "The Father willed something, and the Son, who is in the Father, had the same will as the Father, or, better, He himself became the Will of the Father" (*ibidem*, 288, 17–19). This becoming the will of the Father is the being of the Son himself: "That which, in the eyes of the Arians, is the proof of the subordination of the

Son to the Father, his action in obedience to the Father, his instrumental role in relationship to Him: it is precisely this that is thus revealed as the very mystery of the communion of the divine Persons" (C. SCHÖNBORN, 49). It is this free obedience itself which becomes for us the image of the Father, because this obedience is not extrinsic, but touches being itself: Obedience is the very *mode of being* of the Son, that is, his Person. For this reason the unity of will does not exclude personal distinction, but rather founds it. The Arian error was that of confusing the personal order with the substantial order. For Scripture in fact speaks of a τᾱξις: The Father is before the Son, who in turn precedes the Holy Spirit. But this says nothing about any distinction of nature. It is only a relationship of origin.

The mode of being of the second Person is that of being Son. A Son however perfectly accomplishes the will of his Father, and is concerned only to give all glory to him. Eunomius thus objects that this obedience of the Son is nothing other than a necessity, i.e. that the very nature of the Son is obedience (*Ref Eun*, GNO II, 371). If this were true however, the Son would be inferior even to human beings, who are free. Gregory therefore distinguishes the human obedience of Christ in his Passion from his divine obedience. The role of the Son in creation instead demonstrates his divinity. For the δὲ αὐτοῦ also indicates the very mode of being of the Son, his being the image of the Father, who in turn acts and is known only through the Son.

For this reason, it is essential that the δὲ αὐτοῦ of the economy be an extension of that found in immanence: Only if this is true has Gregory truly given a response to Eunomius. In the contrary case, either one makes of Christ two different beings, or one reduces the Son to the economic level. It is worth noting that the notion of μεσιτεία was not free of danger in the Neo-Platonic environment in which the Nyssen moved. The only way to avoid confusing the mediation of Christ with the hierarchy of subordinated and subordinating mediations presupposed by Eunomian theology was to indissolubly unite the immanent μεσιτεία of the Son to his economic μεσιτεία. Thus, the missions are conceived by Gregory as extensions of the processions, and there is neither separation nor confusion between the supernatural and the natural.

Gregory dismantles the Neo-Platonic schemata of Eunomius, showing how being Son is tied to liberty and love: "In truth, that which the Son himself has revealed to us is profoundly paradoxical, that is, the fact that He is at once obedient in all things to the Father and united in all things to Him. In God there is no designation of superior and inferior: Obedience is identical to liberty, total self gift is identical to

total self possession" (C. SCHÖNBORN, 53). For this reason the Cross is called θεολόγος (*Trid*, GNO IX, 303, 8–12) by the Nyssen, in so far as it reveals, in the free obedience of the Christ, that God has a Son, a Son who loves the Father and who manifests the love of the Father himself. Thus Filiation implicates φιλανθρωπία (→) as an attribute of the divine nature, and as the reason for the Incarnation itself: The Son unites economy and immanence, eternity and history, with his love.

BIBL.: See the article TRINITY.

Giulio Maspero

FLACILL

Oratio funebris in Flacillam

Oratio funebris in Flacillam imperatricem is an oration delivered in 385 by Gregory upon the death of Flacilla, the consort of Emperor Theodosius I. As in the oration which he had prepared earlier in the same year upon the death of Pulcheria, the young daughter of Theodosius and Flacilla, Gregory appropriated the form and language of the Hellenic consolatory genre to convey a distinctively Christian consolatory message to those mourning Flacilla's death. After first establishing the worth of expressing grief in times of sorrow, Gregory attends to the specific tragedy at hand, the death of the Empress. He extols Flacilla's piety and virtue (i.e. humility, kindness, tenderness, and philanthropy) and the universal effect that she had within the empire. It is no surprise, then, that Gregory indicates that her death resulted in universal lament. Indeed, so great was the tragedy of her death that Gregory attributes meteorological events (e.g. clouds and rain) to the creation's proclamation of her death. Using the words of Christ, the apostles, and prophets, he consoles his audience, reminding them that Flacilla has exchanged the grief, sorrow, toil, and insatiability of mundane existence for the superior, immortal blessedness that is now hers in the presence of Christ. Given the fact that Flacilla exerted influence through Theodosius to establish the Nicene formula as the orthodox standard in the empire, Gregory also uses this occasion to contrast the evil associated with Arianism with the virtue and blessings of those, like Flacilla, who adhered to the Nicene understanding of the divinity of Christ.

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Christopher Graham

FORNIC

Contra fornicarios

This brief homily is one of the two that Gregory dedicated to commenting on the First Letter of Paul to the Corinthians. The first homily, which interprets the passage of 1 Cor 15.28, demonstrates, with the words of Paul, the true divinity of Christ (→ *TUNC ET IPSE*). The present homily is found among his discourses with the title of *Oratio contra fornicarios*. Gregory dedicates it to the explanation of 1 Cor 6.18, underscoring that one of the concrete ways in which the Christian can defend himself from the insidiousness of evil is through flight. At the same time, following Pauline doctrine, he indicates that the difference between fornication and other sins consists in the fact that this sin is committed with one's own body, and is therefore a sin against one's body itself.

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Juan Antonio Gil-Tamayo

Freedom of Choice → *Proairesis*

GLORY

δόξα

The concept of “glory” (δόξα) occupies an important position in Gregory’s thought, in harmony with the importance that the concept has in Sacred Scripture. Beyond the usual meanings of “celebrity”, “fame” and “honor”, Gregory uses it to designate the divine majesty, equality in the Trinity, the divinity of the Holy Spirit, the recognition of the divine Persons by human beings, the eschatological glory communicated by the risen Christ to his disciples, and eternal life in heaven.

The nature of God in itself is “goodness, sanctification, sanctity, power, *glory*, purity” (*Or dom*, GNO VII/2, 23). The faith professes that the divine nature *is* immortality and *glory* (*An et res*, PG 46, 160); consequently, the participation of human beings in the divine goods implies also the participation in the *glory* of God. The human being can not only give glory to God, but also give *glory* to God while participating in said *glory*. Thus Gregory’s thought on the spiritual life can be described as a constant progression *from glory to glory* (DANIÉLOU, 68–71). The bodies of the saints will also rise again in “incorruptibility and glory” (*An et res*, PG 46, 160).

Given the unity of the Trinity, Gregory repeats that the three divine Persons possess the same glory, and, following his brother Basil, he repeats that they must be glorified with the same honor and same *glory*. Gregory’s teaching in this matter is firm and clear: The Son has all that the Father has (Jn 16.15, 17.10); all the goods that the Son has are also in the Holy Spirit, without there existing between them even the most minimal difference (*Epist* 24, GNO VIII/2, 78).

Together with this, Gregory emphasizes that this *glory* consists also, and principally, in the recognition and personal love that the contemplation of the glory of God engenders, above all in the divine Persons themselves. This is a glorification that Gregory calls “circular” (ἐγκύκλιον): the Son is glorified by the Spirit, the Father is glorified by the Son, the Son receives glory from the Father, and in his turn is the glory of the Holy Spirit (*Maced*, GNO III/1, 109). The doxologies refer to this “recirculation” because in them “we glorify” the Father through the Son in the Holy Spirit.

In order to be Christian, Gregory maintains, it is not enough to confess the divinity of the Son, it is also necessary to confess the divinity of the Holy Spirit. For this reason, whoever does not honor the Spirit, as Gregory maintains against the Pneumatomachians, honors neither the Son nor the Father (*Maced*, GNO III/1, 102). The *glory* of the Trinity is indivisible, since the Father, Son and Holy Spirit do not have a *part* in the same glory, but *are* and *possess* the same, indivisible *glory*. Gregory bases his ideas on Jn 17.10 (*all that is Yours is Mine*) to demonstrate that in the Trinity there is an intimate communion in the same, single glory, just as such a communion also exists in the same, single nature (*Ref Eun*, GNO III, 328–329).

Gregory's theology of *glory* has a particular relationship with Pneumatology, so much so that the contemplation of the Spirit as *glory* permits a profound understanding of all of Gregory's Trinitarian and Pneumatological doctrine (MASPERO, 306). For Gregory, the Spirit is essentially and properly *glory*. The Holy Spirit is the *glory* that eternally surrounds the Son.

Gregory repeatedly uses the HOMOTIMIA (→) with which the Church venerates the Spirit as an argument to demonstrate the faith of the Church in his divinity, as Basil, Gregory Nazianzen and the First Council of Constantinople do (*Ref Eun*, GNO II, 399; *Inst*, GNO VIII/1, 42). But he also uses the concept of glory in another, suggestive, perspective: The Spirit is the *glory* of the Son. Thus, he who receives the Spirit knows "in this same Spirit the glory of the Only Begotten", and, knowing the Son, knows also the Father (*Maced* 20, GNO III/I, 107).

The Spirit is not only the Giver of life, but also *Glorifier* (in Gregory's thought the two concepts are inseparable). In fact He could not be *Glorifier* if He were not "*glory*, honor, magnificence and majesty". Gregory treats this argument extensively in *Maced* (GNO III/1, 108–109): The Spirit does not only glorify the Father and the Son, but He *is* the *glory* of the Son. Gregory frequently bases his arguments on Jn 17.5, a text often cited on his part with invariably the same application: Jesus asks to be glorified with that *glory* that He had with the Father before the world existed; this *glory* is nothing other than the Holy Spirit (MATEO-SECO 2003, 188–196).

It is for this reason that Gregory affirms that man knows the *glory* of the Only Begotten, that is his divinity, only in the Holy Spirit. Precisely since the Holy Spirit is the *glory* and the *Glorifier* of the Only Begotten, He is also the *Revealer* and calls all to unity. While commenting

on the prayer of Christ for unity (Jn 17.21) Gregory writes in *Cant* 1 (GNO VI, 467) that the bond of this unity is “glory”.

No one would deny, Gregory says, that the Lord “calls the Holy Spirit glory” (Jn 17.22). This *glory* glorifies the flesh of Christ in his resurrection; Jesus in turn gives this *glory* to his disciples in the apparition of Easter. Thus the Holy Spirit is indivisibly the Glorifier and the cause of unity of the Church. In *Cant* 15, Gregory calls the Holy Spirit both “glory” and “bond of unity”. Throughout his work, Gregory always has the same exegesis of Jn 17, contemplating at the same time intra-Trinitarian unity, the unity of the disciples, and the unity of the Church in heaven. The three aspects of this unity are realized in the Holy Spirit. This vision is portrayed in a lively fashion in the homily *Tunc et ipse*. The Holy Spirit is the *glory* that unites us to Christ, and consequently with God (GNO III/2, 21–22).

Gregory’s affirmations regarding the Spirit as the *glory* of the Word prove important in the consideration of the relation that exists between them: The Holy Spirit is the *glory* that reposed over the Word before the beginning of the world, it is He who glorified his flesh and it is He who will glorify human beings by uniting them to Christ. It consequently follows that the action with which the Spirit unites human beings to Christ makes them also participants in his glory, and is for this very reason an action of “divinization”.

Christ, raised to life by the Holy Spirit, gave his glory to his disciples so that they might be “perfect in unity” (Jn 17.23), so that they might be united to the Father and the Son in the unity of *glory*, i.e. in the unity of the Holy Spirit (*Cant* 15, GNO VI, 467). In Gregory’s thought, Christ is always at the center of unity, and the Holy Spirit is the efficient cause, both at the personal level and the collective level, i.e. of the MYSTICAL BODY (→): The Holy Spirit unites to Christ and transforms into one body those whom He sanctifies through such a union. Gregory describes this process of sanctification as a process into *glory*: The Word asks the soul to advance, transforming *itself from glory into glory* (2 Cor 3.18) in such a way that, even if one has received a great *glory*, one must always think that it is less than the glory that yet awaits one (*Cant* 5, GNO VI, 158–159).

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Lucas Francisco Mateo-Seco

Gnoseology → Philosophy of Language; Divine Names

GOOD / BEAUTY

ἀγαθόν / καλόν

These concepts are closely interrelated in Gregory, sometimes even to the point of overlapping. Good itself and Beauty itself are identified with God. The main sources of Gregory's conception of Beauty and Good are the Bible and the Platonic tradition.

Plato elaborated the metaphysical doctrine of the Good: he put it on the top of the Ideas and posited the One-Good as the first principle in his protology. It is thanks to the Good that all things exist and are knowable. Also, the Demiurge is described as "good" in *Tim.* 29A and *Rep.* II 379 BC (cf. *Phdr.* 247A and *Tim.* 29E). Aristotle identified the Unmoved Mover, the supreme νοῦς, with the Good and Beauty: by virtue of this, it is the final cause of all. Most Middle-Platonists conceived of God as the supreme Good, e.g. Plutarch, *Is.* 53; Albinus, *Epit.* 10,3; Numenius *ap.* Eusebius, *PE* XI 22, who called the first God the αὐτοαγαθόν, the same term that Origen applied to God. The most important Neoplatonic development is in Plotinus, who identified the Good with the One, his first hypostasis, beyond Being and Thought, but (unlike Gregory, who knew his thought) he did not identify the Good/One with Beauty itself.

Gregory very much relied on the Bible, where καλός is a counterpart of ἀγαθός and means both "beautiful" and "good". In the LXX ἀγαθός occurs 548 times and καλός 236; in the NT the occurrences of both are exactly the same: 102. That καλός means "good", as a synonym of ἀγαθός, can be seen e.g. from John 10:11.14, where Jesus is ὁ ποιμὴν ὁ καλός, "the good shepherd" (not "handsome"); from Hebr 5:14, where καλόν and κακόν are opposed to one another as "good" and "evil"; from Gen 3:5, where the tree symbolizes the knowledge of "καλόν and πονηρόν"; and above all in the Genesis account of creation, which is crucial to Gregory's reflection on the metaphysical goodness of creation. In Genesis, where only καλός is attested, not ἀγαθός, after each creating act God contemplated the resulting creature "and saw that it was a good thing [καλόν]". All that God created is good, because God is Being (Ex 3:14) and the Good. Consequently, what was not created by God has no ontological consistence and is not good. In the NT, too, God is described as essentially good and giver of goods. In Mt 19:17 Jesus

states that only God is good (cf. Mk 10:18; Lk 18:19; Mt 20:15). In Origen's view, which was influential on Gregory, this means that only God is the Good itself, while creatures only participate in the Good; this is why they are unstable in it and they may also choose evil. Since only God is the Good, all possible goods come only from God (Jas 1:17). Gregory absorbed the principle that only God is truly good and is the Good (the καλόν: Good and Beauty at the same time), and all that, and only that, which God created is good and has ontological subsistence. God created only good things, whereas evil has its origin in deception and error. It has no ontological consistence because it is not a creature of God, but the result of a wrong choice. Evil brought about death (Wis 1:13), but since evil and death are no creatures of God, they have no ontological status and thus cannot endure forever. According to Gregory, this is also revealed in 1 Cor 15:26–28: Christ will reign until all enemies have submitted to him, in a submission that Gregory, like Origen, understood as salvation, achieved through illumination, spiritual therapy and conversion. As Gregory explains in *Tunc et Ipse*, the creatures of God will convert, but the powers of evil and the last enemy, death, will be destroyed. Then God will be “all in all”: God alone will be all goods for all. Evil and death, introduced by Adam, will vanish in the reign of Christ; as all die in Adam, all will receive life in Christ (1 Cor 15:22–23). Because of one person, the condemnation reached all human beings; likewise, also thanks to the work of justice of one person, the vivifying justification reaches all human beings and all will be rendered just (Rom 5:18–19). As Gregory puts it: “The Good has entered human nature, pouring from one human being to all, just as evil poured into all through one single human being” (*Tunc et Ipse*, 11 Downing). Only the Good and life will remain, not evil and death, as God is the Good and Christ is life, and all that is good has God, the Being (Ex 3:14), as its creator and ontological guarantor. The equation God-Good-Being is clear in Gregory, just as it was in Origen. According to the latter (esp. *Peri Archôn*) and Gregory (e.g. *Tunc et Ipse*), the Good is present permanently and substantially only in the Trinity, in all other beings only partially and by participation, so they can lose it. Origen describes the Father as “original and absolute Good” and αὐτοαγαθόν (*Princ.* I 2,13). The Son, begotten by the Father, and the Spirit, proceeding from the Father, reproduce this original Good, while the creatures only participate in it. Thus, “they have in themselves an accidental good, not the substantial Good”; in them, “the Good is not present substantially, as it is in God, in Christ, and in the Holy Spirit. For only in the Trinity, who created all, does the Good exist substantially. The

other beings possess it accidentally, so that it may fail, and they are in bliss only when, and insofar as, they participate in the holiness of Wisdom and divinity itself” (*Princ.* I 6,2; cf. I 8,3 etc.). Likewise—but with emphasis on Beauty, too, and using both καλόν and ἀγαθόν—Gregory in *An et res* 92D–93AC depicts God as “the nature that exceeds all possible concept of Good [ἀγαθοῦ] and transcends all power, in that it lacks nothing of what is possible to conceive in respect to the Good [ἀγαθόν], because it is the fullness of goods and does not happen to be in a condition of beauty and goodness [ἐν τῷ καλῷ] by participation in something that is beautiful and good [καλοῦ τινος], but it is itself the essence of Beauty and Good [ἡ τοῦ καλοῦ φύσις] ... Since divine nature transcends all other goods [παντὸς ἀγαθοῦ], and the Good [ἀγαθόν] always and absolutely loves the Good [ἀγαθοῦ], then, while it looks at itself, it both wishes what it has and has what it wishes, admitting nothing alien in itself. On the other hand, outside it there is nothing but evil [κακία]. Now, evil—albeit it is paradoxical to say—has its being in non-being, since the origin of evil is nothing but a lack of what is. And what properly and primarily is, is the nature of the Good. Thus, what is not in what is, certainly is in non-being”.

Gregory highlights the infinitude of God-Good and the finitude of evil: “Only what is contrary to Beauty and the Good [τῷ καλῷ] is limited, whereas the Good [τὸ ἀγαθόν], whose nature is not susceptible of evil, will progress toward the unlimited and infinite” (*An et res* 97AB). Consequently, an eternal permanence in evil is impossible: once one has touched the bottom of evil, one will move back to the infinite Good, the true Being (*Op hom* 21). For only those who are in the Good truly exist; those who are in evil tend to non-existence and have no stability: accordingly, they cannot endure in evil forever. The alternative is that they vanish, but Gregory, like Origen, refuses to endorse this, because these beings were created by God in order to exist. Therefore, if they cannot endure in evil forever, they will convert and return to the Good. Sin and evil will be extinguished, because the sinners are creatures of God, but evil is not. In the end, all will be found in the Good-God, in an infinite loving tension toward the supreme Object of love. Due to their mutability, all creatures must voluntarily submit to Christ and to God in order to participate in God’s goods (*Tunc et Ipse*, 7). Moreover, in the end, and only then, will the creatures no longer abandon the Good in order to turn to evil, which will have disappeared by then. All, then, will participate in divine life, and God will be all goods in all; so, their free will will turn to no other object. In perfect unity in love, there will be no

more fall, because “love will never fall”, as Origen maintained in *Co. Ro.* V 10,15–16 quoting 1 Cor 13:8. Gregory takes up this argument in *An et res* 96 BC: “The divine Apostle ... foretells the end of all our concerns and solitudes, and their cessation in peace ... of love alone he finds no end ... because *love never falls*, which is tantamount to saying that it always remains in the same condition ... Thus, if the soul will reach this end, it will find itself in such a condition as to need nothing else, in that it will be surrounded by the fullness of existing realities, and it alone seems, in some way, to keep in itself the stamp of divine beatitude. For the life of the superior nature is love, as what is beautiful and good [καλόν] is lovable in all respects to those who know it; now, the divinity knows itself and such a knowledge immediately becomes love, because that which is known by it is beautiful and good [καλόν] by nature, and insolent satiety does not attach itself to what is truly beautiful and good [καλόν]. Thus, since satiety does not interrupt the disposition to love what is beautiful and good, divine life will always endure through love, for it is both beautiful and good by nature, and disposed by nature to love beauty and the good, and feels no satiety in this activity according to love, as it is impossible to find a termination to Beauty and the Good”. The infinity of God-Good guarantees again the stability of the eventual unity and love. This condition is salvation, which is “the culmination of all goods” (τῶν ἀγαθῶν πάντων, *Tunc et Ipse* 25) and is achieved through alienation from evil (κακοῦ), the result of which will be the complete destruction of evil. Only God-Good will remain, and divine life will permeate all.

As is clear even from the few quotations above, Gregory expresses the notion of good also by καλόν. Especially in *Cant*, Gregory presents God as infinite Beauty, in whose image the human being was created (cf. *Hom op* 4). God alone is really beautiful, always existing as the essence of beauty and the archetype of all beauty (*Cant* 4, GNO VI 107,1; *Virg* 11; *Or cat* 6). Although Gregory’s conception of beauty has many points in common with that of Plotinus, nevertheless, unlike Plotinus who placed Beauty below the Good/One, Gregory conceives of God as supreme Beauty and Good at the same time, also following the biblical use of καλόν. Thus, in *Virg* 11,2 he defines “the nature of Beauty [καλόν]”, i.e. God, as “simple, immaterial, and shapeless”. This formula echoes Plotinus, *Enn.* II 9,1, where, however, not καλόν but ἀγαθόν is employed: “the nature of the Good [ἀγαθόν], simple and primary.” Gregory tends to link ugliness not to matter, which was created by God by the union of pure intelligible aspects, but to sin: it is an elongation

from Beauty as sin is from the Good. In the final restoration, no ugliness will remain, since evil will vanish. In *Cant* 5, GNO VI 386,1–3, Gregory adapts Plato's idea of the ladder from sense-perceptible beauty up to Beauty itself. What is beautiful in creation participates in divine Beauty, for God's Beauty is reflected in all created beauty: this is why the inference from created beauty to Beauty-God holds true. All creatures participate in beauty in that they correspond to God's idea of each of them (*Hex* 31,46,6–9). "Anyone who looks at the sense-perceptible world and considers the wisdom that appears in the beauty of what exists, from what is seen, by way of analogy, infers that an invisible Beauty exists, the source of wisdom, whose emanation composed the nature of the cosmos" (*Cant* 13; cf. *Or Cat* 2,9; 5,2; 15,2). The beauty of the cosmos is based on harmony and unity, depends on God's Logos and Wisdom, and is "the first, archetypal, and true music" (see *Inscr* I, 3, GNO V, 31–32). The harmony, unity, and existence of all beings is guaranteed by "the power [δυνάμει] of the true Being. Now, the true Being is the Good itself [αὐτοαγαθότης] ... the ineffable nature" (*Eccl* 7, GNO V 406,1–9). God's nature is ineffable, but it is revealed precisely through its works in the cosmos and their beauty, e.g. in *Cant* 1: "What the true scent of divine nature is by nature, is beyond any name and thought, but the wonders that are admired in the cosmos provide matter for names in theology ... they only indicate a quality ... the Beauty that we can only imagine by conjecture, basing ourselves on what is seen, is infinitely greater ... that Beauty of which human intellect can find no description or delineation or explanation" (full references in RAMELLI, *Triade*).

But the relationship between human and divine beauty is the closest in all creation, as the ἄνθρωπος is God's εἰκὼν: "Human nature, thanks to its likeness to the Lord of universe, was made as though it were a living image, participating in its archetype in dignity and name. All the characteristics that are found in the dignity of royal power show that this nature was rendered perfectly similar to the Model's beauty" (*Op. Hom.* 4, 136C). A treatise devoted to the archetypal Beauty and its image reflected in the human mirror, *Ad imaginem Dei et ad similitudinem* (PG 44,1328–1345), was ascribed to Gregory. Since God's image in the ἄνθρωπος lies above all in the human νοῦς, the highest part of human soul, human beauty is primarily noetical, just like divine beauty (a notion inspired by Origen, *Co. Io.* I 9 [11]: νοητὸν κάλλος and θεῖον κάλλος are those of Wisdom, one of Christ's *epinoiai*). In *Cant* 4 it is clear that the soul's beauty depends on freewill: "You have turned away from any contact with

evil and have come close to me: having approached the archetypal Beauty, you have become beautiful, like a mirror, taking, so to say, my stamp. For the human being is truly like a mirror, which changes according to the images produced by its choices". The mirror imagery recurs in these homilies, e.g. in *Cant* 5: "The mirror of human nature becomes beautiful once it has approached what is beautiful and has been formed in the image of divine Beauty ... it turns its sight to the archetypal Beauty, and thus, by approaching the Light, becomes light". So, too, at the end of *Cant* 9: the soul has no other place in which to elevate itself, since by now "it has been assimilated to the archetypal Beauty". Noetic Beauty must be loved in *apatheia*: the soul "must stare at the inaccessible Beauty of divine nature, and love it ... by transforming passion into impassibility [ἀπάθεια]" (*Cant* 1).

But human beauty is not exclusively noetic, since the ἄνθρωπος also has a body: the present one is corruptible, due to sin, but the body of resurrection, corresponding to God's project for all humans, will be glorious and incorruptible, and will shine forth in all its beauty, ἐν ἀμείνوني καὶ ἐρασμιωτέρω κάλλει (*An et res* 108A). Origen, in *Princ.* III 6,4, citing Cor 15:44 on the σῶμα πνευματικόν, tried to describe the qualities of the risen body, which will be "an appropriate abode not only for the blessed and perfect souls, but also for all creatures, which will be liberated from enslavement to corruption" [Rm 8:21; Origen goes on to quote also 2 Cor 4:18]. What is invisible, non-fashioned, and eternal is far superior to all these bodies we see on earth and in the sky, which are fashioned and not eternal. From this comparison one can imagine how the beauty, radiance, and splendour of the spiritual body will be "most subtle, purest, brightest, as the condition and merits of the rational natures will require". Creaturely beauty will be closer to divine Beauty in the end.

In *Cant* 6 (GNO VI 191,7–9) Gregory says that "Divine beauty [θεῖον κάλλος] seems to have its lovability [τὸ ἐράσιμον] in what is fearful [ἐν τῷ φοβερῷ], deriving its manifestation from the characteristics opposite to corporeal beauty [τῶν ἐναντίων τῷ σωματικῷ κάλλει]". For divine beauty is incorporeal and incommensurably superior to corporeal beauty and to any material attraction, from which humans should turn away to contemplate Beauty itself (*Virg* 10–11); it cannot be described except by way of images. It is infinite, so that the process of contemplating it will never cease. When Gregory speaks of opposition between corporeal and divine Beauty, he intends rather to highlight the absolute transcendence of the latter. As for God's beauty being φοβερόν, this is surely influenced

by φόβος θεοῦ in Wisdom and Paul; on the philosophical side, there may be an influence from Περὶ ὕψους (which, in turn, quoted Gen 1:3 and 1:10) and Plotinus, who identified the *pathe* produced in our soul by beauty not only with πόθος and ἔρως, but also with θάμβος, ἔκληξις, and πτόησις (*Enn.* I 6 [1] 4,15–17). According to SHERRY, it is precisely as a response to an ecstatic experience of God as Beauty that Gregory reads the statement “All humans are liars” in Ps 115/6 (*Virg* 10). In *Mort* and *An et res*, too, God is supreme Beauty, and human beings will recover their original beauty, which is in the image of that of God but was obfuscated by sin. The image of God will eventually shine in all alike, in the divine Beauty which belongs to our original nature in God’s plan. There will be no change in light, pureness, and incorruptibility, but “one and the same grace will sparkle in all [Tit 2:11], when they have become children of the light [John 12:36] and will shine forth like the sun [Matt 13:43]”; all will be made perfect, becoming one and the same thing (*Mort* GNO IX, 63.65–66). At the end of *Cant* 16 Gregory depicts the final unity in God as καλόν, Beauty-Good. “He gave them to be no longer divided in many parts, when they had to choose the Good [καλόν], due to the diversity of their choices, but he said that all would be one and the same thing, in the One who is the only Good . . . the rush to reach this beatitude is common to the souls of every order . . . until all those who look at the same object of their desire have become one and the same thing and no evil remains in anyone. Then God will be all in all”. Indeed, all, “thanks to reciprocal unity, will be one in the communion with the Good”. For evil can only blur and cover, but not cancel, the image of God, as was already maintained by Origen, *Hom. Gen.* 13,4: “The Son of God is the painter of this image, and since the painter is such and so great, his image can be darkened by carelessness, but cannot be erased by evilness. For the image of God endures forever”. His fellow-disciple, Plotinus, likewise maintained that the soul’s beauty can be covered by the dirtiness of evil, which is alien to its nature, but can also be cleaned (*Enn.* I 6,6). The *epektasis* will be an infinite tension toward God’s infinite Beauty: “One who gazes at that divine and infinite Beauty, since what appears each time is more surprising and wonderful than what has already been seen, admires what appears each time, and his or her desire to see never ceases, because what is expected is surely more magnificent and divine than what has already been seen” (*Cant* 11). The soul sees “her Beloved’s infinite Beauty, which is impossible to encompass and becomes ever more sublime in all the eternity of the aeons, and extends in an ever stronger desire” (*Cant* 12).

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Ilaria Ramelli

GRACE

Gregory's concept of grace is tied to the concept of gratuity and embraces all the gifts that God gives to the human being, beginning with the fact of creating him in his image; even freedom is conceived of a *gift* or *grace* given to the human being, since it is an essential part of the gifts included in being "in the image of God". What Gregory says on grace needs to be situated in this ample panorama of his theology of the human being as image, called to participate in the divine life precisely through his characteristic of being in the image of God.

Gregory does not propose a specific presentation of the relationships between freedom and grace, but is very much aware of the gratuitousness of the divine intervention in human salvation, as well as of the fact that sanctification is realized specifically through the intervention of the Holy Spirit. At the same time, he is a great defender of human freedom and its irreplaceable role in the ascetic struggle. This will lead him to pay great attention to the cooperation (*συνέργεια*) between grace and the efforts of human freedom in sanctification. In general Gregory remains, like other Oriental Fathers, in the *synergistic* line (VÖLKER, 125).

Gregory underscores, principally in his ascetic works, that *grace is united to free human choice*. Perhaps the most sensitive point in situating his thought on the relationship between *grace* and human freedom can be found here—since he seems to attribute the initiative in the first movement of approach to God to the human being. *Grace* would come later to collaborate with this first movement. God would thus act in the human being as a response to the first choice of the free will (*Cant* 9, GNO VI, 263–264). If this were the case, it is clear that Gregory's position would be quite close to "Semi-Pelagianism" *avant la lettre* (JAEGER, 88 and 97).

This can be deduced from certain phrases that we find in his principal ascetic works, in which he affirms that the human being must take the initiative in his relationship with God. Many of these phrases can be understood in the sense that the human being for his part must commit everything that is in his power in the struggle for virtue. Nevertheless, as VÖLKER (80–81) observes, it is clear that what later theology would understand as *prevenient* grace has no role in Gregory's thought; the

notion of *cooperating* grace is, however, clearly present. This is present, it is important to note, in the context of his insistence on accentuating free will and its decisive importance in human salvation.

One must use a high degree of prudence while evaluating Gregory's thought on these problems, since, obviously, he is writing before Augustine and the controversies on grace that will take place in the fifth century, and because he wrote no treatise on grace; nor did he even pose the question in a specific manner. It is thus logical to think that in some of these passages, Gregory wishes only to state that even if *grace* is granted freely by God, it is not given *arbitrarily*, but given in coordination with human behavior.

Gregory states that grace is an unmerited gift that God gives, since God is he who calls and attracts the soul to Himself (*Cant* 5, GNO VI, 158). What is primordial in the sanctification of the human being is the action of the Holy Spirit. Certain passages of *Inst* are of particular importance in this respect. Here, Gregory underscores that grace *collaborates* with human effort. This *collaboration* fills the soul with joy, and without it, Gregory states, it is impossible to advance on the path of virtue, since human effort is not sufficient to ascend to God. Grace also serves nothing, if freedom does not accept it. This means that God fights *with* those who struggle, and at the same time, that those who struggle should not count on their own strength without placing their hope in God (*Inst*, GNO VIII/1, 46–47). The concrete sense in which Gregory understands *synergeia* is thus clear: The grace and power of God cooperate with human efforts; the love of God does not reach the human being in an automatic fashion, but through much toil and with the *cooperation* of Christ (*Inst*, GNO VIII/1, 72).

Even if the relationship between *Inst* and the *Epistola Magna* of Pseudo-Macarius (ca 380) is a complex question, as are the relationships between Gregory and the Messalians (CANÉVET, 1005–1006), *Inst* appears to be a rather free transposition of the *Epistola*. It is thus useful to read *Inst* in the light of the *Epistola*, which insists on the fact that the human being obtains the communion of the Holy Spirit in the measure that he loves and struggles, so that he reaches eternal life by grace and by his own efforts (STAATS, 94–96; ŠPIDLÍK, 1414–1415). The texts of the *Epistola* on human effort are fairly explicit; they are also clear in affirming that the power of God *cooperates* with human initiative, since human effort, above all in *Inst*, appears as a precondition for grace (ABEL, 439–440). It is nevertheless wise to follow MÜHLENBERG'S (110–111) observation in which he notes that in Gregory, the human will cannot

be interpreted in the same way as Augustine understands it. Whatever Gregory states on this subject must be interpreted in the global context of his thought, which is clearly extraneous to Augustine's preoccupations in his struggle against Pelagius.

Moving beyond the question of Gregory's probable "Semi-Pelagianism", it is clear that he assigns primary importance to the action of the Holy Spirit in the soul, and this even in *Inst*: It is the action of the Holy Spirit that grants to the soul *ease* in the accomplishment of the works of virtue; thus, it is the Spirit that grants to the soul to take upon itself the sufferings of the Savior, and to find in them more delights than the lovers of this life find in the demonstrations of honor that they receive from other men (*Inst*, GNO VIII/1, 85). Gregory is peremptory in affirming that none can reach Christian perfection through human effort alone; the action of divine grace is also necessary (*Or dom* 3, GNO VII/2, 36–37; *Virg* 1, GNO VIII/1, 251). The Christian progresses in his identification with Christ "by his good behavior and the gift of the Spirit" (*Inst*, GNO VIII/1, 84–85).

Even if the human being must do his part, the gift of grace is always unmerited. Claims about Gregory's "Semi-Pelagianism" must be tempered due to phrases such as these, which can be found in his writings: salvation comes to the human being as a gift, not in virtue of his works, but in virtue of grace (*Inscr*, GNO V, 150); grace is a gift of the Lord; nobody asks for compensation for the gift he receives, but is in this a debtor. Thus, when we have received the grace of Baptism, we are obliged to demonstrate our gratitude to our Benefactor (*Bapt*, GNO X/2, 369/370; DUNSTONE, 238–239). As VÖLKER observes (125–126), even if Gregory is influenced by the Stoics in underscoring that the human being must do all that he can, he never grants a primacy to human effort that would go so far as to "attribute any merit to the one who begins".

What is primordial for Gregory is the gift of the Holy Spirit. Through the power of Baptism, the Holy Spirit *dwells in* the soul and collaborates with it in its efforts to accomplish the acts of faith (*Inst*, GNO VIII/1, 44). The task of the Christian is to identify himself with that which the name of Christ signifies; this identification is a fruit of the Spirit who *dwells in* him (*ibid.*, 45–46). Gregory interprets the fact that the Christian is a "new creature in Christ" in a radical manner, i.e. as a fruit of the new birth "through the seal of the Spirit" who *dwells in* him (*ibid.*, 58 and 61). This aspect of Gregory's doctrine on grace is markedly present in his SPIRITUAL THEOLOGY (→) and in his mystical

teachings (→ MYSTICISM), at the same time relativizing claims concerning his *Semi-Pelagianism*.

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Lucas Francisco Mateo-Seco

GRAEC

Ad Graecos, Ex communibus notionibus

The writing is transmitted with two titles: in some manuscripts it reads “How is it When We Affirm Three Persons, That We do not Affirm Three Gods as Well”, in others “To the Greeks On Common Concepts”. There is no addressee named, nor is the writing situated (as for example *Eust* is). It fundamentally deals with the accusation of incoherence in distinguishing the unique substance and the three hypostases in the three Persons of the Father, Son and Holy Spirit. The theology maintained by those with whom Gregory disputes saw a dangerous affirmation in the distinction of the three hypostases which would lead necessarily to speaking of three substances (οὐσίαι), and thus of three gods. These are probably representatives of the “Old-Nicene” persuasion, for whom the concepts of οὐσία and ὑπόστασις are equivalent (cfr. *Graec*, GNO III/I, 19, 1–2; 20, 20–24; 28,9–29,4).

At the center of Gregory’s argumentation is the denomination of “God”. He defines it as the denomination of the substance of God, distinguishing it from the names of the Persons, i.e. Father, Son and Holy Spirit. Only the latter should be united with the conjunction “and” in the sense of an enumeration, so that we move from three Persons or three hypostases. The name of “God” should then be used neither in a numbered series nor in the plural (19, 3–16). Further, the name of “God” does not indicate exactly that which the substance of God is, but refers to a particular property of the substance of God, viz. the capacity to oversee the whole of creation (both material and intelligible worlds)—this is based upon the etymology of the term θεός, often employed by Gregory, an etymology which, according to him, refers to the verb θεάω, to watch or regard (21, 17–22, 13).

That one can speak of a unique substance along with a plurality of persons (i.e. that in affirming a plurality of persons one is not forced to affirm a plurality of substances) can be clearly seen from the example of Peter, Paul and Barnabas: They are three persons, but belong to the unique substance “man”. This is not contradicted by the fact that the concept of partial substance (μερικὴ οὐσία) can be applied to Peter, Paul and Barnabas, since with this expression one fundamentally signifies the

same thing as “person” (23, 4–13). Nothing is changed if, in speaking of Peter, Paul and Barnabas, one speaks of “three men”. Speaking of “three men” is not strictly scientific, but is a linguistic custom from everyday discourse (23, 13–24), certainly based on the observation of two facts: that the actual existence of those who belong to the substance “man” varies continually, growing or diminishing, and that men have origin from always different individual causes (23, 24–24, 14). Such an affirmation is not at all valid for the Trinity: in this case, when one speaks (even in the sense of everyday discourse), one should not speak of three gods (24,14–25,17). From a rigorously scientific perspective, even in the case of man one should speak of “one unique man” (25,17–26,1).

One cannot object by citing passages of the Bible in which a plurality is mentioned, e.g. Gn 18.2, where three men (at the tent of Abraham) are spoken of, for in other passages the Scripture often speaks of man in general in the singular, for example in Ps 102.15 (“Man, as grass are your days”). Passages like Gn 18.2 are to be understood in a figurative sense, like those passages in which it is stated that God has eyes and ears (Gn 26.6–28.8). All these passages are not a definition of God, but only designations that have been transferred to the corporeal domain, in order to lead the human being to God (27, 16–21).

In the final part of this writing, Gregory deals with the argument of the adversaries in which the concept of *ὑπόστασις* is essentially a concept to which a more precise determination must be added in order to indicate the persons (*τοιῶδε ὑπόστασις*), just as to the determination of *οὐσία* one must add a more precise determination to indicate the difference of persons. This is however possible only if one speaks of both more hypostases and more substances (*οὐσίαι*) (28,9–29,4). Gregory rejects this argument. The more precise determination through a qualifying adjective like “such” is a differentiating characteristic which refers to a specific aspect. This is possible when referring to different realities (such as man, horse, dog), but not in the interior of a unique substance (30, 5–11). Here, the determination by means of a qualifying adjective is possible only in reference to the hypostases. In a rigorously scientific sense, for man too, one should start from one substance, “man”. It is also true for “man” that a more precise determination is possible only on the level of the individual existence such as Peter, Paul or Barnabas. It thus refers to individual properties, such as tenderness, greatness etc. (30,1–31,9). This is all the more true of “God.” Here too, the more precise determination by means of a qualifying adjective is not possible on the level of the unique

substance, but on the level of the three hypostases. It is thus correct to speak of three hypostases and at the same time affirm that there is only one God, and one substance of God (32,21–33,5).

The writing is a defense against the accusation of the “Old-Nicene” theology according to which Gregory affirms a sort of tritheism. This could also be the reason that leads Gregory to use the concept of πρόσωπον frequently, and as an alternative concept to ὑπόστασις (since the concept of πρόσωπον was more acceptable to an “Old-Nicene” theologian like Marcellus). The writing presupposes the distinction between οὐσία and ὑπόστασις (but does not justify or develop it). One probably should also accept that the example of three men is presupposed, since Basil had already used it to explain the unique οὐσία and the multiple ὑποστάσεις. Gregory appears to defend rather than propose the example in *Graec* (noting that one can speak of three men only in everyday speech). This is considered “inconsistent” by STEAD, particularly in the perspective of the criticism of the Nyssen’s Trinitarian theology. But the comparison with men should only demonstrate the unknowability of many hypostases with a unique substance (this is the *tertium comparationis*), but cannot be transferred to the Trinity in a global manner. The difference between the Trinity and man is explicitly underscored by the Nyssen. Other authors (Zachhuber, Leemans) assume that the treatise didn’t receive a final review. The hypothesis of HÜBNER according to which the work was written in the context of the synod of Antioch 379 for integrating the “Old-Nicene” party of Antioch with its bishop Paulinus has been examined sceptically by Zachhuber and Leemans. Overall, the writing demonstrates the difficulties which the introduction of the concept of three hypostases (developed by Basil) had encountered in Nicene theology.

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Volker Henning Drecoll

GREEK MYTHOLOGY

Greek myths were virtually inseparable from the great poets who expressed them in pleasing and memorable forms. Greek education did not change under Christian emperors, so Christians, like their pagan peers, learned to read and write through the Greek poets—especially Homer. Higher-level education required the analysis of poetic texts and in rhetorical exercises quotation from Homer and other poets was common, if not expected.

It is well known that Plato rejected epic and tragedy as a false reflection of reality: they contained myths which were immoral as well as untrue and had an adverse emotional impact on their audience. It seems to be *bad* myths that Plato condemned, for he presented some of his ideas in the form of myth: e.g. Er's story in *Republic* X is called a 'saving myth' (621b). Later philosophers responded by developing ways of reading Homeric and other myths usefully. These so-called 'allegorical' readings of myth varied widely, ranging in style from Porphyry's allegorical interpretation of the cave of the nymphs (*Odyssey* XIII 102–111) to much smaller-scale investigations of the meanings of gods' names.

The Church Fathers too were repelled by the immorality of Greek myths and were not bound to seek for an underlying truth; yet because the stories were so much part of Greek culture it was difficult (and undesirable) to dispense with them completely. Thus, Gregory Nazianzen described Homer as a 'sweet comfort and physic to the soul' (*Ep.* 70, PG37:136A), but complained about the allegorical interpretation of myths: if they are true they should be honoured, not explained away; if they are merely decorations for a deeper truth, then the decoration is disgusting (which casts doubt on the inner truth: *Oration against Julian* I:114–119). In his *Address to Young Men* (4–6), Basil says that he knows someone for whom 'all the poetry of Homer is a praise of virtue', and cites some examples of moralising allegorical exegesis. But Basil advises more discrimination: 'When [poems] recount the words and deeds of good men, you should both love and imitate them ... But when they portray base conduct, you must flee from them and stop up your ears, as Odysseus is said to have fled past the song of the sirens ... the soul must be guarded with great care, lest through our love for letters it receive some contamination unawares, as men drink in

poison with honey'. He questions the *content* of the myths while ostentatiously retaining them as a means of elegantly illustrating a point (sirens *Ody.* XII 173–177; Circe's honey-sweetened poison *Ody.* X 229–236).

Gregory of Nyssa has no such explicit advice, although he reports with approval that Emmelia taught Macrina through biblical texts: comedy was improper, tragedy too passionate, and the *Iliad* presented immoral characters. Drama and epic focussed on female characters who could have a bad effect on a woman (*Macr* 3).

However, Gregory himself frequently cited or alluded to Greek mythology. Broadly, he used myths in three kinds of ways: decorative allusions; easily-recognised illustrations of a specific point; more complex networks of references which open up a different perspective on a narrative.

Mythology used as a witty or beautiful embellishment to a text belongs most often to Gregory's more rhetorical pieces. There are frequent allusions to Homer in his letters, for example: his friend's country estate is 'worthy of some Homer to sing its praises beyond that of Ithacan Neritus, which the poet calls "far-seen with quivering leaves"' (*Epist* 20:6, tr. Silvas, quoting *Ody.* IX 22). In *Eun* some of Gregory's invective has a mythological flavour: e.g. Eunomius' followers are 'stupefied' as if by Circe's drug and they stoop like pigs gathering acorns to pick up heresies instead of raising their eyes heavenward. Yet, while Circe's drug acted on the men's bodies, Eunomius' words change men's souls and his followers (unlike Odysseus') accepted the drug knowing its effects (*Eun* III:2,77–80; GNO II, 77:25–79:1).

Elsewhere in *Eun* Gregory illustrates a point with mythological language: he argues that the fact that the biblical names for some stars, planets and other beings such as sirens are Greek shows they were not divinely-ordained (for God would speak Hebrew). (He is seemingly unaware that the LXX translators have inserted Greek equivalents, rather than transliterating the original Hebrew!) He ignores the role of sirens as epitomes of danger (presumably this lies behind the LXX of Isaiah 13:21) and interprets their meaning merely as being 'pleasing to the ear'. This makes no sense in the biblical context, but may reflect other Christian readings of the Sirens (*Eun* II:437; GNO I: 354:20–23; RAHNER, 303–308).

More subtle and successful are Odyssean echoes in *Macr*. Frank argues that Gregory uses the myth of the returning Odysseus to highlight certain aspects of Macrina's own story. At one level, Gregory is the returning hero

whose heroism is subverted (Odysseus/Gregory is prone to tears; Penelope/Macrina's patient suffering is more heroic). At another level, Macrina herself is Odysseus-like: she is 'identified' when Gregory sees her scar (cf. the scar scene, *Ody.* XIX). As in the epic, the recognition scene structures the story effectively, allowing e.g. flash-backs and narratives-within-narratives. Identifying Macrina with Odysseus deepens understanding of her: it portrays her death as a 'home-coming' and prompts one to see that Gregory finally recognised her *true* identity as a holy woman, rather than his sister (the latter perspective had previously dominated the story).

Even more allusive is Gregory's use of the fish-hook analogy in *Or cat.* Building on CONSTAS' analysis, one can argue that Gregory invites the reader imaginatively to compare Christ's subversive heroic behaviour with the notoriously odd hero Odysseus. Plato commended Odysseus the trickster over Achilles (because only a deceiver knows the full truth). In Gregory's example, the devil appears to know it all and to have victory by force; his victory is seized from him by the deception of one who is far wiser. The point of the allusion is not to claim simplistically that Jesus was like Odysseus, but to probe the *nature* of Christ's power over the devil (*Or cat* 22–24). Similarly, there may be deeper layers to Gregory's use of receptacle-imagery (extending HARRISON's analysis). Gregory's various references to the vicious soul as a leaky pot which cannot be filled seem both to contrast with the widow's ever-full jars from which Elijah was fed (1 Kings 17:14) and to allude to the Danaïds (who were forced to fill up leaky pots in Hades for eternity).

There is still much work to be done on the use of myth in Gregory of Nyssa (and other Church Fathers). However, just as Gregory creatively combines allusions to Plato and the Bible, so he uses allusions to Greek myths: they have both a decorative and an illuminating function in his works.

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Morwenna Ludlow

GREGORY NAZIANZEN

Gregory Nazianzen is, with Basil and his brother Gregory of Nyssa, one of the three great Cappadocian Fathers. Before tracing the essential lines of his biography, it is worthwhile to refer to his works, as in them Gregory Nazianzen himself provides numerous elements for the reconstruction of his bibliography. His literary productivity includes 45 discourses or orations (the 35th clearly being spurious), 245 letters and a substantial corpus of poems with a total of 17,533 verses. The works in verse consist of 185 carmina, 129 epitaphs and 64 epigrams. The attribution of the century *Christus patiens* to Gregory Nazianzen is disputed. The carmina have been classified in two books, each subdivided in two sections. The first book, containing theological carmina, includes a section of dogmatic carmina with 38 carmina, and a section of 40 moral carmina. The second book, of historical carmina, contains 99 autobiographical carmina and 8 carmina regarding others. The *Carmen de vita sua*, otherwise known as *Autobiography* (carm. II,1,11), is of particular importance in reconstructing of Gregory Nazianzen's life. It consists of 1,949 iambic trimeters, in which Gregory rereads his own history following its episodes and dwelling on what most profoundly marked him.

He was born around 329–330 in Arianzus, a small neighborhood close to the Cappadocian city of Nazianzus. His Father, also named Gregory, was Bishop of this same city. His mother Nonna was a woman of profound faith. Gregory pronounced the funeral oration for his father in 374 (*Or.* 18). He did the same for his brother Cesarius, who died in 368 (*Or.* 7), and his sister Gorgonia (*Or.* 8), who died before 374, the date of his father's death.

Gregory's cultural formation took place first in Caesarea of Cappadocia and then at Caesarea of Palestine and Alexandria, from 349 to 352, finishing at Athens from 352 on. He shared his formation there with Basil, with whom he developed a strong bond of friendship, a bond he describes admirably in the funeral oration that the Nazianzen dedicated to his friend, on the third anniversary of his death (*Or.* 43). They had also as a study companion one Julian, the future emperor who came to be named the Apostate, against whom Gregory will later write two invectives, after Julian's death in 363 (*Or.* 4 and 5).

Once his formation was completed, he returned in 359 to his native land, living in alternate periods of solitude in study and contemplation, often with his friend Basil, and periods of ministerial activity as a collaborator with his father in the pastoral care of the Church of Nazianzus. After the first period lived in solitude in Pontus with Basil who was himself intent on starting a monastic activity (a period in which one should probably situate the compilation of the *Philocalia* of Origenian texts that they redacted together), Gregory felt a strong need to respond to the invitation of his father who asked for his help, and who, in 361, ordained Gregory a priest—almost against his will. This event, as well as the discomfiture before the greatness of the task to which he was called (as he himself states: cf. *Or.* 2)—will cause first of all a return to the solitude of the monastic life, and then will impel him to return to Nazianzus to exercise his ministry, something that is witnessed to in a privileged manner by *Or.* 1–19. In 372 his friend Basil wishes him to be the Bishop of Sasima, more for reasons of ecclesiastical politics than for pastoral ones—to stop the advance of the Arian episcopate. Nevertheless Gregory, without ever taking possession of the Church of Sasima, returned to help his father in Nazianzus. After his father's death in 374, and a brief period in which he guided the Church of Nazianzus, he withdrew again into monastic solitude, until he was called in 379 to Constantinople to take charge of the few Christians who had remained faithful to the Credo of Nicaea. Most of his orations are from this period (*Or.* 20–42). The theological orations are the most noteworthy among them. Gregory there explains the doctrine of the divinity of the Logos and the Spirit, of whom Gregory explicitly affirms consubstantiality with the Father. With the entry of the emperor Theodosius into Constantinople, Gregory assumes the Episcopal See of the city (*Or.* 36), and later the presidency over the council of 381. The pressures to which he was subjected by other Bishops (harsh words against them can be found in *Carm.* II,1,12 and 13), for both doctrinal reasons and reasons of ecclesiastical politics, led him to offer his own resignation. After pronouncing his parting discourse (*Or.* 42), he withdrew to his own Cappadocia, where in the last 10 years of his life he continued to offer his services to the Church of Nazianzus, deprived of a Bishop since the time of his Father's death (cfr. *Or.* 43–45), before finally withdrawing into monastic solitude. The majority of his poetic works are to be placed in this time period, works dedicated not only to the rereading of his own life, but also to the expression of the content of the faith in metrical form, already partly expressed in the orations (cfr. above all the *Carmina Arcana*—I,1,1–11). Because of these verses, he has with reason

been named the "theological poet" (cfr. C. NARDI, *Note al primo carme teologico di Gregorio Nazianzeno*, Prometheus 16 (1990) 166) as well as "theologian of poetry" (T. SPIDLIK, *La théologie et la poésie selon Grégoire de Nazianze*, in "*Homo imago et amicus Dei*" (cur. R. PERIC), Rome 1991, 98). He died around 389–390 in Arianzus, where he had retired.

The letters and certain discourses allow us to follow the relationship with Gregory of Nyssa. In letter 11 he will admonish him for having left the lectorate to dedicate himself to the work of a rhetor. In discourse 11, pronounced at Sasima, he speaks to the Nyssen, at this point a Bishop, who had come to visit him. The discourse betrays the Nazianzen's perplexity, as one who does not know whether his guest has come to encourage him in the fight against the Arians, or to position him against the hard Basil, who had thrown the two of them into the thick of this fight. Letters 72–74 were written to support the Nyssen in the difficult affair of his deposition from the See of Nyssa, orchestrated by the Arians. They witness to the Nazianzen's changed attitude, henceforth full of affection for the Nyssen. After Basil's death he will write him another letter (76), in which he calls him the "comfort" left by Basil on earth. He replied to various notes in which the Nyssen complained of the various displacements he had to undergo in the years 379–380 to organize the situation in various Churches. He paints himself as a piece of wood moved by the waters, while the Nazianzen calls him rather a sun that with its movement brings light, warmth and life to the places it visits (81). Letter 182 informs the Nyssen of the election of the Bishop of Nazianzus which took place in 383. Finally, in letter 197 he offer his condolences to the Nyssen on the death of Theosobeia, while justifying his missed visit to Nyssa (cfr. J. DANÉLOU, *Grégoire de Nysse à travers les lettres de saint Basile et de saint Grégoire de Nazianze*, VigChr 19 (1965) 31–41).

Trisoglio traces the Nazianzen's complex personality well, demonstrating his extraordinary sensibility in the face of various problems (F. TRISOGLIO, *Gregorio di Nazianzo. Il messaggio spirituale di un teologo, di un poeta precursore delle ansie moderne*, Tiellemmedia, Rome 1999, n. 5 on p. 5).

Gregory's theological thought was obviously marked by the Arian controversy, something central and determinative for the fourth century as a whole. He too, like the other two Cappadocians, is an ardent opposer of the radical Arian Eunomius. Basil and Gregory of Nyssa both have among their works a *Contra Eunomium*, but the works of Gregory Nazianzen take an equally clear position against the heresiarch. It is no exaggeration to consider the five *Theological Orations* as a true and proper

Contra Eunomium (cf. F. PILLONI, *Teologia come sapienza della fede. Teologia e filosofia nella crisi ariana del IV secolo*, EDB, Bologna 2002, 99–110). The polemical reference to Eunomius deserves to be underscored, above all because it was without doubt one of the reasons that led Gregory to develop his own theory on the unknowability and ineffability of God, a theory that will open the path to the more articulated reflection on apophatism, further developed by Gregory of Nyssa and later theology.

His Christology also deserves note for the accentuation of the integrity of the human nature assumed by the Word and the consequent unity of the person of Jesus Christ, in opposition to the heresy of Apollinarius. This is expounded in detail in the letters to Cledonius (*Ep.* 101 and 102), which were later used by the fathers of the council of Chalcedon in the formulation of Christological definition. It was this that merited for him the title of Theologian, with which the Tradition, particularly its Oriental aspect, loves to refer to the Nazianzen.

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GREGORY OF PALAMAS

Gregory of Palamas (ca. 1296–1359), monk of Mt. Athos, archbishop of Thessalonica, Byzantine theologian. Saint of the Orthodox Church, feast day Second Sunday of Great Lent. From his name comes the term Palamism, which denotes a certain theological doctrine made official teaching of the Byzantine church at local synods of Constantinople in the mid-14th century. A monk from Calabria, Barlaam, was shocked when he learnt that the hesychast monks of Mt. Athos claimed the experience of light during contemplation to be a direct communication with the uncreated divine light itself. In defence of the hesychasts, Palamas developed the teaching on God's essence (*ousia*) and activity (*energeia*) into a doctrine of divine experience. In the *Triads* (cf. 2.3.9 and 37), one of his most important works, Palamas interprets the experience of light as an experience of God's *energeia* (→ ENERGY), not his essence. This doctrine has been controversial, not least in modern times, when Orthodox theologians such as Vladimir Lossky and John Meyendorff interpreted it in a Western context. It has been feared that in Palamas' theology God was made into a synthetic being, consisting of a higher and a lower divinity (essence plus "energies"). This, however, is a misunderstanding. The Palamite view is not radically different from Gregory of Nyssa's teaching on essence and activity, even if Palamas developed the doctrine to answer contemporary challenges. In *Capita* 150 (§§ 108–111) Palamas gives several arguments that God's essence is unparticipable. However, the purpose of human life is to participate in divine life by grace, so how is this accomplished? The answer is, of course: We participate in the *energeia*. It is important to note, in order to avoid misunderstanding, that *energeia* is conceived as *activity*. The *energeia* is "the essential motion of nature", he says (*Capita* 150, § 143). God *foreknows* and *provides* for inferior beings, He *creates, preserves, rules* and *transforms* them (προγινώσκει, προνοείται, δημιουργεί, συντερεῖ, δεσπόζει μετασκευάζει: *Capita* 150, § 137, cf. § 136).—All these are divine "energies". The "energies", Palamas says, are *deifying, being-making, life-giving, wisdom-granting* (ἐκθεωτικὰς ἢ οὐσιποιοῦς ἢ ζωογόνους ἢ σοφοδώρους: *Triads* 3.2.11).

The question is, however, how are essence and "energy" related? Palamas says the energy is not separated from the essence (μὴ χωριζομένην), but differs from it (διαφέρει τῆς οὐσίας ἢ ἐνέργεια: *Capita* 150,

§ 126, cf. *Triads* 3.2.13). The “energy” is just God being active in accordance with what He is: He creates, preserves and deifies beings, which means that they participate in God’s gracious presence according to their capacity to receive (cf. *Capita* 150, § 69). It should be easy to understand that *being* human and *acting* in accordance with the capacities of human nature differ. It is, however, misleading say that essence and “energy” are really distinct (cf. J. MEYENDORFF, *Byzantine Theology*, New York 1987, p. 186). Palamas appeals to tradition for his teaching. There are several references to Gregory of Nyssa. In his critique of secular philosophy as a way to genuine knowledge of God, he appeals to *Vit Moys* 2.10 (SC 1) (cf. *Triads* 2.3.3). For the doctrine that the uncreated light is visible only through the presence of the Holy Spirit in the believer, he quotes from *Steph I* (GNO X/1, p. 89 f.) (cf. *Triads* 3.3.5). There is, further, a Gregorian idea in Palamas’ teaching on eternal progress into the divine sphere (the *epektasis*, cf. *Triads* 1.3.22). He quotes from the *Eun II* (GNO I, pp. 396–397) in support of the doctrine that divine names are derived from the divine activities (Cf. *Capita* 150, § 84), and he alludes to Gregory’s *Abl* (GNO III/1, 47–48) when he argues that the energy (i.e. activity) of the Trinity is not divided among the three, but is one and the same, coming from the Father, proceeding through the Son and manifested in the Spirit (cf. *Capita* 150, § 112). It is quite obvious, however, that Palamas’ debt to Gregory goes further. The Palamite doctrine of uncreated light, the dynamic idea of divine activity as a transforming power of uncreated grace in the believer, owes much to his reading of Gregory of Nyssa.

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Torstein Tollefsen

GREGORY THAUMATURGUS

1. DISCOURSE OF GRATITUDE TO ORIGEN · 2. THE SYMBOL OF FAITH
3. THE SO-CALLED CANONICAL LETTER · 4. THE METAPHRASIS IN
ECCLESIASTEN SALOMONIS · 5. WRITING TO THEOPOMPUS ON THE
IMPASSIBILITY AND PASSIBILITY OF GOD · 6. TO FILAGRIUS ON THE
EQUALITY OF ESSENCE · 7. TREATISE ON THE SOUL TO TITIAN
8. HOMILIES · 9. DISPUTATION WITH HELIANUS · 10. DETAILED
PROFESSION OF FAITH · 11. DE FIDE XII CAPITULA.

Gregory Thaumaturgus (ca. 210/213–268/270), a charismatic personality of the 3rd century, came from a noble pagan family of Neo-Caesarea in Pontus. Originally named Theodore, he was a disciple of Origen in Caesarea, where he was won to Christianity by his teacher. A few years later, having returned to his own home, he became an industrious Bishop of the city of his birth.

1. DISCOURSE OF GRATITUDE TO ORIGEN. Gregory Thaumaturgus' most important literary work is the *Oratio panegyrica in Origenem*, pronounced by Gregory for his teacher on his leaving Caesarea. The writing has undoubtedly arrived to us by way of Pamphilius (H. CROUZEL, 1983, 782). The authenticity of this "Discourse of Gratitude" was contested some time ago by NAUTIN (99–133), but his arguments, based on his explanation of the text, do not appear to be adequately founded. The panegyric is the first Christian discourse of praise and parting; written in an elevated style, it transmits to us important information about Origen and his school. The structure of the writing is simple: in the introduction Gregory declares that the courtesy and sentiment of gratitude obliges him to dedicate the discourse to his teacher. Then, in the first part of the work he thanks God and his guardian angel for his meeting with Origen, who had introduced Gregory and his brother Apollodorus to the world of philosophy, and had transmitted to them an intimate knowledge of love of the "Logos". In the second part the order of Origen's program of studies is presented in detail: After the exercises in dialectics and logic, the natural science and morals are taught, the crown of studies being theology. The work is rich in ancient philosophical teachings and Christian

reflections on them on Origen's part. At the end of the work, Gregory's pain at the separation from his teacher is expressed.

2. THE SYMBOL OF FAITH. A brief exposition of Trinitarian doctrine is conserved in Gregory of Nyssa's encomiastic work *De Vita Gregorii Thaumaturgi*. Gregory of Nyssa notes that the manuscript in Gregory Thaumaturgus' own hand is still preserved at his time in the Church of Neo-Caesarea. The formula of faith is composed of four parts. The first three points regard each hypostasis of the Holy Trinity, and the fourth the Trinity in general. There are various opinions on the authenticity of the work among scholars. C.P. CASPARI comments on the writing in depth, and examines the conceptual content, above all in relation to Origen's doctrine. The scholar arrives through these means at the conclusion that the writing is Origenistic and anti-Monarchian. The author is original only in the treatment of the Holy Spirit. He then compares the four parts of the Symbol, verifying that the work has only one author. This does not however exclude the possibility that the fourth part was added at a later date. According to CASPARI this Creed was well known by Gregory Nazianzen too, who quotes a portion of it (*or.* 31. 28, 40, 42). Gregory Nazianzen observes that the work had been written "a short while before", although he does not name the author. L. ABRAMOWSKI has recently contested the authenticity of this writing, regarding CASPARI's arguments as dubious. ABRAMOWSKI attaches a fair amount of significance to Basil the Great's silence on the Symbol of Faith. She also sees an important contradiction in Gregory's statement that the writing was composed "a short while before" if one affirms that it is written by the Bishop of Neo-Caesarea, who had died almost 100 years earlier. L. ABRAMOWSKI's arguments do not seem so convincing to H. CROUZEL (1983, 788) that they would seriously call into doubt the information of Gregory of Nyssa or definitively undermine the authenticity of the Symbol of Faith.

3. THE SO-CALLED CANONICAL LETTER. The addressee of the Canonical Letter is an unknown Bishop. The letter appears to have been composed between 254 and 258 (PAULY-WISSOWA, 1858), after the invasion of the province of Pontus by the Goths and Boradi. The letter deals with the problems of ecclesial discipline of the times and the penitential rites. The letter was later divided into canons and underwent both removals and additions.

4. THE METAPHRASIS IN ECCLESIASTEN SALOMONIS. This is a brief descriptive exposition of the biblical text. In the majority of documents it is attributed to Gregory Nazianzen (cf. V. RYSSEL, 27–29).

5. WRITING TO THEOPOMPUS ON THE IMPASSIBILITY AND PASSIBILITY OF GOD. The considerations of the author on the sufferings and the death of God are directed against the Hellenistic principle of the impassibility of God. The apologetico-philosophical writing is conserved only in a Syriac manuscript. The authenticity of this writing has been contested by L. ABRAMOWSKI (1974, 274–277).

6. TO FILAGRIUS ON THE EQUALITY OF ESSENCE. The work is conserved in Syriac, but in Greek manuscripts is attributed to either Gregory Nazianzen or Gregory of Nyssa. Trinitarian doctrine is briefly explained in it. Despite lively discussion, the authenticity of this writing of the dialogue has not yet been clarified (cf. V. RYSSEL, 101–118; J. DRÄSEKE, 1882, 383–384).

7. TREATISE ON THE SOUL TO TITIAN. The problem of the authorship of this short work has not been definitively resolved. Maximus the Confessor could be the author, or he may have completed it with Aristotelian propositions (cf. H. CROUZEL, 1983, 790; V. RYSSEL, 34 s).

8. HOMILIES. The authenticity of a few homilies preserved in various languages and attributed to Gregory Thaumaturgus is not accepted by scholars (cf. J. DRÄSEKE, 1884 657–704; M. VAN ESBROEK, 64 s. 120.s).

9. DISPUTATION WITH HELIANUS. This work is cited by Basil the Great (*ep.* 210, 5). We have no information from other sources. Its authenticity is contested by H. CROUZEL (1963, 422–431), because the phrases cited by Basil the Great appear to him to be modalist.

10. DETAILED PROFESSION OF FAITH. Almost all scholars acknowledge that this work is by Apollinarius of Laodicea (cf. C.P. CASPARI, 65–146; J. DRÄSEKE, *Apollinaris v. Laod. Sein Leben und seine Schrift*, in: TU 7 (1892)).

11. DE FIDE XII CAPITULA is not considered one of Gregory Thaumaturgus' works (cf. V. RYSSEL, 42 s).

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Tamara Aptsiauri

HEX

Apologia in Hexaemeron

Apologia in Hexaemeron is the second of Gregory's works dedicated to the theme of creation. In it he tries to correct certain false interpretations of the biblical texts, as well as of Basil's exegesis found in his *In Hexaemeron*. At the same time it represents an effort to deepen and harmonize the affirmations of Genesis and the scientific knowledge of his time, so that no doubt might remain as to the truth affirmed therein. Basil limited himself in his work to an historical-philological interpretation of the biblical text, explicitly stating his own lack of interest in allegory. For his part, Gregory, without rejecting the literal sense, offers an allegorical interpretation where he deems it necessary, without completely transforming the text into a "symbolic allegory". At the end he affirms with a certain satisfaction that he never strayed from the literal sense of the Bible, something all the more remarkable given that his other works show his tendency to seek and to find an allegorical sense behind the words of Scripture.

This work was written in the first months of 379, a few months after *Op hom*, to which he alludes in the conclusion. It is dedicated to his brother Peter, who would later become the Metropolitan of Sebaste. From the prologue one can discern that Gregory was moved to write this work in the face of unfavorable reactions that Basil's homilies had provoked in certain circles, where his exegetical ingenuity and the avoidance of the aporias of the biblical text were criticized. Thus, from the outset, Gregory extols Basil's work, even comparing it to the work of Moses: This is the tree, and that is the offshoot that has sprung up. *Hex* does not attempt to be anything but the offshoot nourished in the sap of the master's great work.

Gregory then responds to the objections presented by the Gn text which were not answered satisfactorily in Basil's work: How is it possible that the heavens and the earth were created from the beginning, yet the earth appears unformed and deserted? How can there be other waters above the firmament? How is it possible that the sun was created after three days? How is it possible to reconcile the fact that in Gn there are two heavens created, while the Apostle Paul speaks of three? Gregory

explains Basil's lack of resolution of the apparent contradictions—not with his incapacity to answer, but rather with the lack of instruction of his audience, for which reason he dedicated himself to the exposition of the major philosophical themes. Gregory then proposes to respond to the aporias thus presented in a profound reflection on the cosmos, nevertheless presenting his work as a simple “exercise in spare time” which does not pretend to be or to form a teaching, but to be simply an intellectual exercise.

Among the more relevant principles found in *Hex*, one can cite the division into sensible and spiritual realities, which reveals to some extent the Platonic influence on Gregory. He responds to the question how an immaterial God could have created a material world. The solution he adopts is that matter is composed of immaterial qualities such as lightness, weight, density, color, figure, etc., i.e. qualities which are in themselves simple notions, pure concepts. A notable part of the work is dedicated to the explanation of the theories which refer to natural place, to the transformation of the elements, to the conservation of beings and other questions from the domain of physics.

K. GRONAU, in a specific study of this work, underscores the influence of the Stoic Posidonius on both Basil's and Gregory's thought. Gregory must have directly used, in addition to the writings of Philo and Origen, a Stoic source, and this can be identified as the *Commentary* of Posidonius on the *Timaeus* of Plato, in which the opinions of Pythagoreans, Stoics and others are eclectically brought together.

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Juan Antonio Gil-Tamayo

Historia → History

HISTORY

ἱστορία

1. EXEGESIS · 2. GENERAL USES · 3. BIOGRAPHY · 4. THEOLOGY.

There are around three hundred occurrences of the lexical family tied to *ἱστορία*, distributed throughout the Nyssen's work. They appear principally in the exegetical domain, with a clearly technical value (1), but also in various other contexts, following the usage of the period (2). The use in the sphere of biography and personal history is particularly interesting (3), which, in its more properly Christological reference, accentuates the structural value of *ἱστορία* in Gregory's thought and biblical theology (4).

1. EXEGESIS. In the exegetical domain, the terminology is used in reference to both the New Testament and the Old Testament. This is manifested in the use of technical formulas: Scripture, in fact, *narrates* (ὑπὸ τῆς γραφῆς ἱστορεῖται: *Eust*, GNO III/1, 10, 1), *indicates* (ἡ ἱστορία παρασημαίνεται: *Op hom*, PG 44, 205B), *accuses* (ὁ διὰ τῆς ἱστορίας ... κατηγορούμενος: *Vit Moys*, II, 279, 7–8; p. 294), *witnesses to* (μαρτυροῦσης τῆς ἱστορίας: *An et res*, PG 46, 53C), and even *cries* (βοώσης: *Vit Moys*, II, 55, 8; p. 138) with a loud voice (*Thaum*, GNO X/1, 12, 19–20). The use of formulas is particularly rich in *Vit Moys*, which is structurally divided into a first, more literal, part (*ἱστορία*) and a second, centered on spiritual interpretation (*θεωρία*). The same formulas are also found in the exegesis of the New Testament, as in the case of ὡς ἡ τοῦ Εὐαγγελίου ἱστορία δηλοῖ (*Op hom*, PG 44, 216A), referring to Mk 13.1, together with οὕτω γὰρ φησὶν ἡ ἱστορία (*ibidem*, 217B), for Jn 4.49, and ἱστορεῖ ἡ Γραφή (*ibidem*, 217D), referring to the city of Nain in Lk 7.11.

The Old Testament is called ἡ παλαιὰ ἱστορία, (*Deit fil*, GNO X/2, pp. 130,15–131,3), and, in it, the book of Gn is considered ἱστορία *par excellence* (e.g. *Inst*, GNO VIII/1, 76, 19 and *Pulcher*, GNO IX, 467, 25). As for the New Testament, the narrations of the Gospel are called εὐαγγελικὴ ἱστορία (*Antirrh*, GNO III/1, 147, 6 and *Vita Moys*, II, 294, 1; p. 306) in reference to Jn 1.14 and Mt 3.16. Gregory also has recourse many times to the expression τῶν Πράξεων ἱστορία (e.g. *Eun* II, GNO I, 296, 5 and *Pent*, GNO X/2, 289, 13–14) to indicate the book of Acts.

The passages in which the vocabulary linked to *ἵστορία* is precisely the element of union of the Old and New Testaments are theologically interesting, since in Gregory's work the opposition of the two Covenants, as that between Jews and pagans, is surpassed by the antithesis of sinners-saved, which becomes the Nyssen's interpretive key for many texts (M. CANÉVET, 1983, 238). This occurs, for example, with the use of *ἵστορία* in the comparison between John the Baptist and Elijah (*Beat*, GNO VII/2, 101,24-102,1) and in *Virg* (6, 1, 4-5; SC 119, p. 338).

The relationship between the Old Testament and the New Testament is the relationship between the figure and its accomplishment, according to the essentially typological character of the Nyssen's exegesis (M.N. ESPER, 11). This is manifested by the use of the adverb *ἱστορικῶς*, which appears primarily in reference to the Old Testament (*Hex*, PG 44, 76C and 113B; *Eun* II, GNO I, 300, 29 and *Vita Moys*, II, 320, 5; p. 326). In *Or dom*, the adverb occurs in the reading of the Prodigal Son (*Or dom*, GNO VII/2, 26,26-27,3). Its application to a parable creates a parallel between the narratives of the Old Testament and the parables of the New. At first this could seem to weaken the value of history itself, in so far as the adverb is tied to a purely spiritual and hortatory environment. The fact however that this interpretation of the parable of the *Prodigal Son* is based upon a specific conception of history of each human being cannot be overlooked: There is a certain identification of personal history with the universal history of mankind. In this way the use of *ἱστορικῶς* in the context of the book of Gn is illuminated as well.

Jesus, like Moses, narrates a *history* to the human being so that he can understand his origins and his destiny. This *history* may be not *true* in the most superficial sense of the term, but *truly* corresponds to that which can and must be the history of each one who follows the voice of Christ. Since each human being *truly* comes from the Father, he must return to Him. Otherwise, the use of the adverb accentuates how the Word reveals the truth about the human being in the form of history, since He knows the heart of man, the only creature conscious of his own temporality and capable of remembering his own history. This remembrance is mediated by the liturgy, in which sacred history is proclaimed (*Eccl*, GNO V, 282,22-283,2).

Eunomius separates himself from communitarian reading and interpretation, and is for this reason ironically called *the new exegete of sacred history* (ὁ νέος τῆς θείας ἱστορίας ἐξηγητής: *Eun* II, GNO I, 284, 2), an ironic epithet parallel to ὁ καινὸς θεολόγος (→ THEOLOGY).

2. GENERAL USES. The occurrences in the non-exegetical sphere have various senses, but are limited in number. Gregory uses the term ἐπιῖτωρ five times: In *Antirrh* it is found in the plural (*Antirrh*, GNO III/1, 136, 24) to indicate those people who have experience of Apollinarius's affirmations. In a more specific sense, it is found in *Op hom* in reference to people who are experts in the Hebrew language (*Op hom*, PG 44, 204C). The same meaning of "expert" is found in *Or cat* (32, 39: 117), and, in an ironic sense, in *Eun II*, where Eunomius is called *attentive expert in Scripture* (*Eun II*, GNO I, 304, 6).

The Nyssen's interest in medical science can be noted in his description of the formation of the human being, which probably follows Galen. He affirms that, in attempting to follow the operations of the soul in the formation of the body, one can read, as in a book, the *history* of the operations of the soul (*Op hom*, PG 44, 237D) since nature itself explains, in a more clear manner than any discourse, the various operations of the soul in the body, both in general and in the specific acts of formation. A similar use can also be found in *Op hom*, PG 44, 240C. Despite this, the scarcity of occurrences in this context is striking when compared to the pertinent occurrences of medical descriptions and considerations in the Nyssen's corpus. This is probably due to the centrality of the term and concept of ἰστορία in the exegetical domain after Origen.

Still in the scientific context, certain uses in connection with geography occur, such as ἰστορήσον τὸ πλάτος τῆς γῆς in *Usur*, GNO IX, 199, 3, οἱ τοπικῶς ἰστορήσαντες in *Cant*, GNO VI, 97, 12, or the reference to mountains so high that human beings cannot climb them for lack of air, in *Hex*, PG 44, 96C. These are typical uses for the natural science of the times.

The technical use of the terminology in the context of theater can be traced back to Gregory's rhetorical culture, as in the description of the activity of actors who narrate the story of an ancient myth through action, putting on costumes and adapting the stage so as to evoke wonder in the spectators (*Epist* 9, 1,2–2,1; GNO VIII/2, 38,25–39,8). In *Cant*, GNO VI, 185, 21, the dynamic of the progress of the soul in virtue is compared precisely to the skill of actors who change roles and costumes in following the script (ἰστορία).

The term ἰστορία also appears various times in the sense of pagan history, as is the case of the war scenes decorated on silk cloth of images taken from history and artistically sculpted in metal (*Beat*, GNO VII/2, 86, 8 e 115, 17–25). Even if in some cases there is a reference to human

vanity, Gregory also admires the realism of certain sacred representations, capable of moving to tears (*Deit fil*, GNO X/2, 138,20–139,3).

It is in this domain that the citations of the history of the Medes and of that of the Greeks are to be situated (*Fat*, GNO III/2, 51, 18), along with the citations of the studies of Archimedes (*Epist* 19, 18, 6; GNO VIII/2, 67, 16) and the references to the work of Plato (*Fat*, GNO III/2, 50, 3). It is however interesting to note that, for Gregory, this use of vocabulary is often tied to the direct knowledge and experience of events. It is for this reason that he introduces examples and episodes taken from contemporary history, stating that *our historical memory is the witness to it* (τούτων ἡ καθ' ἡμᾶς ἱστορία μάρτυς ἐστίν: *ibidem*, 61, 8).

3. BIOGRAPHY. The uses relative to personal experience, memory and one's own life are particularly important, if we are to understand the specificity of the Nyssen's uses of the terminology, and thus of the role of ἱστορία in his thought. The terminology linked to it is, in fact, extremely frequent in his biographical works, taking up again, on a more theological level, Basil's combination of ἱστορία and βίος (e.g. Basil, *In Gordium martyrem*, PG 31, 492A).

The Nyssen narrates the life of Macrina, which was a true life in so far as it was perfect in virtue—i.e. perfectly identified with the divine image, which constitutes the authentic definition of humanity. This identification is the normative source for all human action: For this reason Gregory writes the life (ἱστορία) of his holy sister. The narration should not extend to all the individual episodes of her life, but should limit itself to those facts which transmit her virtue with sufficient clarity (*Macr*, 39, 19–23: 266). In this sense, ἱστορία as narration of a life reveals the requirements of narrative οἰκονομία.

These affirmations are repeated in the case of Gregory Thaumaturgus, the evangelizer of Cappadocia. In passages referring to him, it is clear that Gregory closely links the notion of human life to that of narration (*Thaum*, GNO X/1, 26,25–27,6). The same thing is repeated in the case of St. Theodoret (*Theod*, GNO X/1, 70, 15–18), St. Stephen the Protomartyr (*Steph I*, GNO X/1, 89, 1–2) and, above all, for Basil, who is placed in parallel with the typological model constituted by the figure of Moses (*Cast*, GNO X/2, 331, 1–4 and *Bas*, GNO X/1, 126,20–127,2).

The person is thus narrated, not in the chronological, historiographic order, but rather in the profoundly human and in some way *familiar* sense, which naturally presses one to know the biography of their own

ancestors through the narration of the events of their life. The path towards knowledge of personal being passes through the narration of one's life, that is, through the singular significant episodes of individual existence. A suggestive confirmation comes from the fact that Gregory narrates the lives of his sister Macrina, his brother Basil, and the evangelizer of Cappadocia, Gregory Thaumaturgus, from whose preaching his grandparents had received the inestimable gift of faith. There is thus a wonderful mutual compenetration of familial history and ecclesial history: the most intimate memories of his own family are universalized by faith and vocation, thus becoming, so to speak, *catholic*, i.e. the heritage of every Christian.

Thus, ἱστορία as personal history is manifested as οἰκονομία, in which the details of chronology do not count so much as the scope, the synthesis and the global vision. In the οἰκονομία, the union of personal history and universal history is found, since in the life of Christ οἰκονομία and ἱστορία simply coincide.

4. THEOLOGY. It is this Christological dimension that permits us to appreciate the structural value of the terms tied to ἱστορία in the whole of the Nyssen's thought and exegesis. The narration of the life (ἱστορία) of Christ in fact constitutes the norm for the life (βίος) of every human being (*Maced*, GNO III/1, 112,23–113,4). To be men of God means, then, to *remember* the very life of Christ, recognizing it as οἰκονομία, with the consequent spiritual and sacramental implications. Every Christian must thus become a witness, with his life, to the love of God for human beings.

Jesus was perfect God from the first instant of his virginal conception, but He becomes man little by little, since the creature is necessarily temporal (*Epist* 3, 16,1–17,6; GNO VIII/2, 24, 6–19). The life of Christ was perfectly human, but its beginning and end truly reveal his Divinity: The virginal conception and the Resurrection are outstanding historical proofs of the union of the human nature of Christ—evident in itself—with the divine nature, a union that constitutes the profundity of the mystery. In this manner the ἀρχή and τέλος of the personal history of Christ lead back to the ἀρχή and τέλος of the human being, revealing the movement of *exitus-reditus*, true pivot of all of the Nyssen's theology (→ THEOLOGY OF HISTORY).

Gregory's allegorico-typological exegesis thus has the function of uniting the dimension of personal history of each individual with the universal history of humanity in the personal history of Christ. For, in his

Person, as the point of coincidence of οἰκονομία and ἱστορία, οἰκονομία itself opens into θεολογία. Here, Christological placement in the unique movement of *exitus-reditus* is made possible.

From the genetic perspective, it would thus appear that the Nyssen's exegesis constitutes an original synthesis of holistic exegesis, characteristic of the literary interpretation of Iamblicus, and the hermeneutic principle of σκοπός, typical of Origen's thought. This synthesis is made possible precisely by the eminently positive value that Gregory attributes to the body, and thus to ἱστορία, in union with the strength of his theological conception of οἰκονομία. The realities hidden in ἱστορία are the events of the New Testament and their extension in time, the sacraments and the Church. The spiritual sense is therefore always *intra*-historical, in so far as divine salvation entered into history, making itself history and living in it. The spiritual sense is thus essentially different from the Origenian one. This is, in Gregory's case, a profoundly *corporeal spiritual* sense, in as much as the Divine became man, in body and soul. In fact, as is particularly evident in Gregory's final works (*Cant* and *Vit Moys*), it is μυστήριον understood in a historical and sacramental sense that unites history (ἱστορία) and life (βίος)—in continuity with Pauline exegesis (*Cant*, GNO VI, 5,19–6,12) and the teaching of Christ himself (*ibidem*, 7,14–8,6).

The Nyssen's allegory is thus essentially typological, because it interprets ἱστορία Christologically, making explicit the connection between θεολογία and οἰκονομία. Everything is interpreted on the basis of Christ and his hypostatic union. The spiritual sense thus coincides with the illuminated sense of the οἰκονομία itself. For this reason, the Nyssen's allegory is recognized as authentic typology precisely in the οἰκονομία, its foundation. This implies that exegesis must always be ecclesial exegesis, since only the sacramental and magisterial dynamic permits the requisite typological actuation and access to the mysteries for every human being (R.L. WILKEN, 129).

The connection between θεολογία, οἰκονομία and ἱστορία implies that the incomprehensibility of the divine nature postulates itself the necessity of spiritual exegesis, since one can speak of God only with earthly images. The Nyssen's allegory does not interpret the Sacred Text arbitrarily, using it to offer a moral or theological teaching. He interprets it, instead, from the perspective of the unity of history and the lordship of God over it, i.e. from the perspective of the economic design of the Father who wills the human being to return to intimacy with the Trinity.

The originality of the Nyssen's exegesis thus resides in the synthesis of the philosophical vision of the general ἰστορία of humanity, characteristic of Origen and the Alexandrians in general, and the rhetorical understanding of ἰστορία itself as exemplary personal history, typical of the Antiochenes. It is the Christological dimension mediated by the concept of οἰκονομία that permits this synthesis.

For Christ is the perfect realization of every typological anticipation (*Trid spat*, GNO IX, 273, 5–10), thanks to which salvation is made accessible to every human being in history through corporeal and sacramental realities, without remaining any longer limited only to gnostic saints who with their intellect can manage to understand revelation.

In light of the Incarnation then, *it is possible to see the entire mystery of piety in history* (*ibidem*, 275, 3–4), since the mystery of οἰκονομία is revealed in history and as history: history of man, history of humanity from creation to the Apocalypse, and *history* of the Man, that is, Christ. Gregory's technical exegesis in fact reads ἰστορία in the light of the connection of θεολογία and οἰκονομία in the hypostatic union (*ibidem*, 275, 6–11).

This alone is the path to reach being truly human, since in Christ (ὁ ἀληθινὸς ἄνθρωπος) coincide *Alpha* and *Omega*, ἰστορία and οἰκονομία, personal history and universal history, spiritual sense and literal sense: It is He who reveals *Who* is Man and unveils the mystery of history.

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Giulio Maspero

HOMOTIMIA

The theological method applied by the Nyssen to the demonstration of the divinity of the Holy Spirit to respond to the Pneumatomachian heresies, following on Basil and the First Council of Constantinople, consists in deriving the equality of nature of the Persons of the Trinity from the equality of honor.

This method had been determined in close relationship to different motivations highlighted by the Pneumatomachians in their negation of the divinity of the Holy Spirit. First of all, the absence of an explicit mention of the divinity of the Spirit in the Bible, something that gave the impression that this was introducing into the Church a divinity that was not witnessed to, and was consequently unacceptable. In the second place, the concept of the absolute transcendence of God excluded the divinity of the Spirit and his interventions in human beings and in the world. In third place, a certain logical rigor should require that, even if the Spirit is God, one falls into tritheism. For these reasons—according to a group of Pneumatomachians—the Spirit is neither God (since not unengendered) nor is He a creature, (since He is not engendered), and is thus necessarily placed in between God and creatures as a third independent reality. Theologically and liturgically this position is presented through the following: To the Father, as Creator, they assign the *ex hou* (from whom), to the Son as servant the *di' hou* (through whom) and to the Spirit, in so much as He contains in Himself time and space, is assigned the *en hô* (in whom). A second group, without considering the Spirit as God, characterizes him as “divine”, subordinating him and placing him on a third level after the Father and the Son.

Gregory dedicated one work specifically to this topic, the *Adversus Macedonianos, De Spiritu Sancto* (GNO III/1, 89–115). This is otherwise treated in *Eun*, *Ref Eun*, *Eust*, and *Simpl*. In *Maced* he systematically refutes all the objections posed by the Pneumatomachians, insisting on *homotimia*, subordinating the other arguments to it as its confirmations. According to the Nyssen, *homotimia* is a theological and spiritual experience which the Church continually lives from, and which is transmitted in the Tradition. It consists in the glorification of the perfect divinity of the Spirit: “Destroying the equality of honor (*homotimia*) of the Spirit signifies, in fact, showing not to believe that he participates in perfection”

(GNO III/1, 95,31–96,1). In this ecclesial experience of doxology, each of the faithful participates through baptism and the resulting faith. According to Basil's principle: "We believe that as we were baptized and we give praise, so too we believe in the same way" (*Epist* 159). Only this confession brings the sanctification of the Christian to completion.

Gregory demonstrates *homotimia* through three arguments:

1. The action of the Holy Spirit in creation: given that the Bible affirms his participation in the creative act, He cannot be a creature (→ UNITY OF ACTION).
2. In the New Testament the Spirit is interiorly united to Christ as his Anointing, which indicates that "there is no distance between the Son and the Holy Spirit" (GNO III/1, 102,32–103,1).
3. In his name, as well as those of the Father and the Son, is the Christian baptized and thus initiated into the spiritual development of confirmation, sanctification and perfection. The Spirit is the Author of this development, making the "spiritual" man, that is conforming human beings to the image of God, something He can do only as God (→ MYSTICISM).

The unity of action, in which the unity of the properties of the divine hypostases (→ *HYPOSTASIS*) is shown, amply confirms that *homotimia* is one of the major proofs of the orthodoxy of the divinity of the Holy Spirit, and a justification of his adoration in the Church.

Gregory generally follows the Pneumatological position of Basil, who also takes his stand on the ecclesial experience, but notably deepens it by turning to the Bible and to speculative arguments. The Christological implications of these developments deserve special attention (→ *CHRISTOLOGY*).

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HOMOOUSIOS

ὁμοούσιος

The Council of Nicaea (325) had inserted the term *homoousios* into the creed in order to confirm the true paternity of the Father and the true filiation of the Son. Before the subterfuges that Arius used to negate the perfect divinity of the Son, the Fathers of Nicaea decided to insert an extremely important precision: “that is, of the essence (*ousia*) of the Father”. In this manner it is confirmed that the Father is the principle and source of the Son, who is true Son because he proceeds from the Father by generation. The participants of the Council, particularly Saint Athanasius—who took part as the deacon of Alexander of Alexandria—witnessed the intention of the Council in inserting the aforementioned clause: to underscore the authentic natural generation of the Son on the Father’s part. The Council wished to proclaim in an unequivocal manner that the Son is not something made by the Father, but a communication of the very essence of the Father through generation. This is the context in which the term of *homoousios* is introduced into the Symbol. Precisely because the Father gives to the Son his own substance in generating Him, one must profess that the Son has the same substance as the Father.

The term *homoousios* is thus used at Nicaea to reaffirm that there is a true generation in God. This is the *iter idearum* of the Symbol: Jesus Christ is Son, and therefore is generated; He is generated, and therefore comes from the same essence as the Father; He comes from the essence of the Father, and therefore does not have a different essence from Him, because every son receives the same nature as his father. The term of *homoousios* is based on that of *ousia*: The Son is of the same *ousia* as the Father. However, at the celebration of the Council of Nicaea, the distinction between *ousia* and *hypostasis* was not yet commonplace. This distinction was to be affirmed a few decades later, with the Cappadocian Fathers.

Initially, the term *homoousios* only implied the affirmation that the Son possesses the same substance or essence as the Father, without considering the fact that this participation requires that the two *substances* or *essences*—that of the Father and that of the Son—are *numerically* identical. This question would become explicit at later date. In the first discussions with the Arians the distinction between specific and numerical

unity in reference to the Father and Son was not projected; what was discussed was whether the nature of the Son is created or not, i.e. whether the Son belongs to the sphere of the divinity or to that of created being.

Between the Council of Nicaea and the first Council of Constantinople (381) two important events were to influence the signification given by the Cappadocians, and particularly Gregory, to the term *homoousios*. The first event consists in the universal diffusion of the distinction between *OUSIA* (→) and *HYPOSTASIS* (→), between substance and person: *ousia* is used to speak of that which is common in the Trinity, while *hypostasis* serves to designate that which distinguishes the Father, the Son and the Holy Spirit from each other. The second event is the emergence of the Pneumatomachians and the necessity to defend the divinity of the Holy Spirit against them. This defense would be included in the creed of Constantinople from the perspective of the sanctity and equality of honor of the Holy Spirit, *HOMOTIMIA* (→), but not from the perspective of the *homoousios*.

The *Antirr*h is the book in which Gregory explicitly and in greater depth deals with the signification of the term *homoousios*, as well as the sense that it has in the Council of Nicaea (*Antirr*h 19–20 and 23, GNO III/2, 157–158). The problem that Gregory confronts in the *Antirr*h is not strictly speaking Trinitarian, but Christological. APOLLINARIUS (→), who accepts the faith of Nicaea and therefore accepts the *homoousios*, denies that Christ has a spiritual soul and further does not sufficiently distinguish between the divine nature and the human nature of Christ, so that he speaks of Him as of a man with a heavenly body. All of this is affirmed on the basis of the *homoousios* professed at Nicaea and a decided opposition to Arius.

Gregory shows Apollinarius that it is absurd to profess the *homoousios* and at the same time not clearly distinguish the two natures of Christ. The *homoousios* speaks of the equality between the Father and the Son. Now, the Son has a body and the Father does not. Equality can thus not be based upon this, since—this is the key point of the argument—*homoousios* signifies a total equality.

Apollinarius, Gregory states, mentions the teaching of the Council of Nicaea, in which “the Synod of Fathers acclaimed in a loud voice the *homoousios*”. Nobody, Gregory maintains, gives this name to that “which is of different genus (ἐτερογενές), but to those realities whose substance has the same and identical signification (ὅν εἰς καὶ ὁ αὐτός ἐστι τῆς οὐσί-ας λόγος)” (*Antirr*h 19, GNO III/1, 157) *homoousios*. It follows, Gregory continues in his argumentation, that if Apollinarius calls the Son consub-

stantial to the Father, and those realities which have the same and identical definition of substance are called consubstantial (τὰ τῷ αὐτῷ λόγῳ τῆς οὐσίας ὑπογραφόμενα), he will have to profess either that the Father has a fleshly nature, or that the Son has a carnal divinity. Only in this way can one maintain the precision of that which is signified by the affirmation that both of them are consubstantial (*ibidem*, GNO III/1, 158).

Thus, in Gregory's vocabulary, *homoousios* is diametrically opposed to *heterousios*, of different substance. In other words, *homoousios* requires a total equality of substance. Gregory also offers the adjectives of σύμφυλον (of the same genus) and συμφυές, "congenital", of identical generation, as synonyms of *homoousios*.

This sense of *homoousios* is underscored in the following chapter (*Antirrh* 20, GNO III/1, 159), in the explanation of the signification of Ph 2.6: [*The Son*] *being equal to God*. Is it, Gregory asks, that this equality concedes some sort of difference between Father and Son? He responds: the term of *homoousios* implies that the Son, like the Father, possesses the divinity in plenitude. The Apostle does not state that the Son had "a similar form" to the Father (Phil 2.6) as if He were made in his image, but that he has the same form, that is, that that which the Father has is in the Son, and therefore He too is eternal.

Chapters 19–24 of the *Antirrh* are a clear demonstration of the manner in which Gregory understands *homoousios*, not only because of the explanation that he gives of the term, but also because of the context of equality and unity between the Father and the Son in which it is employed. This is evident if the question is approached from the perspective of the distinction between created and uncreated, which for Gregory is the most important division of beings (→ CREATION). This radical division prevents the interpretation of *homoousios* as *homoiousios*: "If the Son is not of the same substance as the Father (*homoousios*), He is of a completely different substance (ἑτεροούσιος πάντως), since realities in which substance has a different meaning do not have the same nature (φύσις) or same name in them" (*Antirrh* 23, GNO III/1, 164–165).

In the following chapter Gregory insists not on the fact that the Word is equal to the Father, but that this equality implies a unicity of nature. Citing Mt 27.46 (*My God, My God, Why have You abandoned Me?*), he demonstrates the absurdity which Apollinarius reaches through lack of dexterity in the use of the *communicatio idiomatum*: "If the divinity of the Father and Son is unique, he says, by whom is He abandoned when He says this on the Cross? [...] In what way, the divinity being unique, is it divided in the Passion?" (*ibidem*, GNO III/1, 168, 4 e 9–10).

BETHUNE-BAKER (54), summarizing Basil's thought on the *homoousios*, states that, for him, the *ousia* of the Father is not similar to the *ousia* of the Son, but is the single, identical substance. Therefore, for Basil, the term *homoousios* (consubstantial, of the same substance) has a different sense than that of *homoiousios* (of similar substance). That is, both of the terms continue to have the meaning that they had at Nicaea, in such a way that they are opposed to each other. This is the same thing that POUCHET (337) notes after his rigorous examination of Basil's correspondence: "We know that, personally, Basil always adhered to the substance of the teaching of Nicaea of 325, and that, little by little, he adhered also to the formulation of *homoousios* itself". This is the same sense as the one he understands in *Contra Eunomium* I, 20 (SC 299, 245).

Gregory, his younger brother, has a similar position, as we have seen: he understands *homoousios* with the same signification as the usage of the Council of Nicaea: *Ousia* signifies substance and the term *theos* indicates the substance and not the persons.

Now, in God there is nothing but a unique and identical substance, and therefore one can never use the plural: there are three *hypostases*, but only one *ousia*. It follows that one cannot affirm that there are three gods.

This is the argumentative line of *GRAEC* (→) and one of the fundamental themes of *ABL* (→). This clarity of terms and concepts permits Gregory to easily refute Apollinarius in the *Antirr*, as has been seen, as well as Eunomius in the *REF EUN* (→), by affirming that *unengendered* (ἀγέννητος) is a name of the Person of the Father and not of the divine substance, and consequently, the Son can be God without being *unengendered* (BETHUNE-BAKER, 57).

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HYPOSTASIS

ὑπόστασις

One of the most important writings where a serious discussion about ὑπόστασις takes place is *Ad Petrum: De differentiae usiae et hypostaseos* (*Diff ess hyp* hereafter). Nowadays, most scholars attribute to Gregory this treatise that used to be considered Letter 38 by Basil of Caesarea. Studies such as those undertaken by CAVALLIN, HÜBNER, FEDWICK, and most recently ZACHHUBER have convincingly argued in favor of Gregory of Nyssa's authorship. Also, in Gregory's time the meaning of *hypostasis* is more and more that of a person rather than a synonym of οὐσία (substance). Gregory is certainly aware of his brother's penchant for using ὑπόστασις (rather than πρόσωπον) for person, but like their common friend, Gregory Nazianzen, he does not share it. (TURCESCU 1997)

To explain the difference between οὐσία (the substance or nature persons share) and ὑπόστασις (person), Gregory writes of the "human" (ἄνθρωπος) versus "a certain human" (τίς ἄνθρωπος). The context of Gregory's explanations is a reference to some of his contemporaries who do not distinguish between οὐσία and ὑπόστασις. When referring to God, they speak either of one ὑπόστασις or of three οὐσίαι (*Diff ess hyp* 1). Those who speak of one ὑπόστασις are probably strict pro-Nicenes for whom ὑπόστασις and οὐσία are synonymous and mean "substance," whereas those who speak of three οὐσίαι are probably Homoiousians, Homoians and Anomoians. According to Gregory, a ὑπόστασις is to be distinguished from the common nature (οὐσία or κοινή φύσις) in the same way as Peter or John is to be distinguished from "human or human nature." Gregory writes: "From among all names some, used for subjects plural and numerically diverse, have a more universal meaning, as for example 'human' (ἄνθρωπος). For when you say 'human,' you thereby signify the common nature (τὴν κοινήν φύσιν), and do not specify any human (τινὰ ἄνθρωπον) who is particularly known by that name. For Peter is no more human than Andrew, John, or James. Therefore, the community of the thing signified, since it refers to all alike who are included under the same name, demands a further subdivision if we are to understand not merely human in general, but 'Peter' or 'John'" (*Diff ess hyp* 2. 1–11)

The influence of Basil's *Ep.* 236,6 on Gregory's *Diff ess hyp* 2. 1–11 is obvious, but a common philosophical source of inspiration for both Cappadocians is not to be excluded. The most likely influence on them is either the Aristotelian distinction between individual and species or the Stoic distinction between individually qualified and commonly qualified. To illustrate their point, both brothers use the example of “human” versus “this human”. They only differ in their choice of the modifying pronoun: Basil uses δεινός while Gregory τίς.

Having distinguished between οὐσία and ὑπόστασις in *Diff ess hyp* 1–2, Gregory proceeds to give definitions of ὑπόστασις in sections 3–6. “That which is specifically referred to is indicated by the term ὑπόστασις” (*Diff ess hyp* 3. 1–2). In Gregory's view “human” (ἄνθρωπος) is a rather indefinite term which leaves the listener with an almost vague, unqualified idea of what it is referring to. As he employs the term in the other trinitarian treatises, “human” indicates human nature, thus being the name of a species. That explains why it is rather unqualified. Of course, “human” is qualified in the sense that it is distinguished from other species, e.g. from horse, but as the name of a species it conveys little information. Gregory summarizes this by saying that, “although the nature is indicated by the name ‘human,’ the thing that subsists (τὸ ὑφεστός) in that nature and is specifically (ἰδίως) indicated by the name is not made evident to us” (*Diff ess hyp* 3. 4–6). On the contrary, “Paul” is the name of a *hypostasis*, because it indicates “the nature subsisting in the thing indicated by this name” (*Diff ess hyp* 3. 7–8.). A ὑπόστασις, however, “is *not* the indefinite notion of substance, which by reason of the commonality of the term employed discloses no stability” (*Diff ess hyp* 3. 8). It now becomes evident that for Gregory ὑπόστασις means “individual” and is opposed to species. In the human and divine cases, ὑπόστασις can also be rendered as “person.”

To clarify the issue even further, Gregory adds that a ὑπόστασις is “the concept which, by means of the specific notes which it indicates, restricts and circumscribes in a particular thing what is common and uncircumscribed” (*Diff ess hyp* 3. 10–12). If Gregory speaks of “circumscription” (περιγραφή) in the case of a ὑπόστασις, he speaks only of “description” (ὑπογραφή) in the case of οὐσία (*Diff ess hyp* 3. 17). In doing so, Gregory characterizes a hypostasis as “something that circumscribes” (περιγραφούσα) or the “circumscription of a particular object” (πράγματός τινος περιγραφή) (*Diff ess hyp* 2. 14; SCHÖNBORN).

Gregory then offers a concrete example borrowed from Scripture of what he has said thus far on a rather theoretical level: the case of Job.

The story of Job in Scripture starts in general terms describing what Job has in common with other humans; more precisely, the biblical author writes “human” (ἄνθρωπος). But then he immediately clarifies that he is indicating a particular human by adding the word “this” (τίς) (*Diff ess hyp* 3. 13–17). The Septuagint text which Gregory has in mind reads: “There was once this human (Ἀνθρώπος τις) in the land of Uz, whose name was Job, and that human (ἄνθρωπος ἐκεῖνος) was truthful, blameless, righteous, fearing God, and avoiding evil. There were born to him seven sons and three daughters. He had seven thousand sheep, three thousand camels, five hundred yokes of oxen, five hundred donkeys, and very many servants” (Job 1:1–2).

The account becomes more specific—“this human”—in order to characterize Job by means of his peculiar notes (γνωρίσματα), designating the place (the land of Uz), the marks which reveal his character (truthful, blameless, righteous, fearing God, and avoiding evil), and all such external adjuncts that differentiate him and set him apart from the common notion of human (with ten children, seven thousand sheep, etc). This description gives the reader a rather clear account of just who Job was. Gregory thinks that, if the biblical author were to give an account of the substance (that is, the human nature) of Job, he would not have referred to the characteristics just mentioned because the substance is the same for both Job and his friends Eliphaz the Themanite, Baldad the Sauhite, and Sophar the Minaean (*Diff ess hyp* 3. 26–30; cf. Job 2:11). Here Gregory makes a distinction between the species “human” and some of its individuals (Job, Eliphaz, Baldad, Sophar). Also the description of the person (ὑπόστασις) named Job suggests that this person is individualized by putting together some of his characteristic marks. Gregory confirms this supposition later in the treatise when he says: “a ὑπόστασις is also the concurrence of the peculiar characteristics” (*Diff ess hyp* 6. 4–6; cf. Gregory Nazianzen, *Or.* 33, 16; cf. DRECOLL, 317.) The latter definition of ὑπόστασις is highly reminiscent of the Neoplatonic definition of an individual as a collection of properties (Plotinus, *Enn.* VI.3.8.20, VI.3.15.27 and Porphyry, *Isag.* 7, 21; TURCESCU 2005, 38–40). After giving the example of Job, Gregory states that one can apply the same reasoning to divine teachings in order to understand the three divine Persons (*Diff ess hyp* 3. 30–33). Gregory seems to be aware that Plotinus and Porphyry had applied only to sensible substances the definition of an individual as a collection of properties. Therefore, when he passes from a sensible to an intelligible substance such as God, he warns, “it is of no avail to press upon a spiritual thing a definitely prescribed conception, because we are sure

that it [i.e., the divine] is beyond all conception" (*Diff ess hyp* 3. 35–36). Gregory seems to be aware that he extends to an intelligible substance the Neoplatonic definition of an individual, a conclusion Neoplatonists would have probably found unacceptable. Nevertheless, he does not pretend to provide an explanation of how one should understand the divine nature and the three Persons in perfect agreement with a philosophical view. He claims to provide his readers with "an illustration merely and an adumbration of the truth, not the very truth of the matter" (*Diff ess hyp* 5. 1–2).

In *Eust* Gregory uses the term ὑπόστασις six times. The term occurs four times in the plural (ὑποστάσεις), with reference to the three divine Persons (*Eust*, GNO III/1, 5, 18; 6, 8; 6, 12; 6, 15); it can be translated as "person" in two of the cases, but it should be transliterated as "hypostasis" (and understood as a synonym of οὐσία) in the two other cases. Then ὑπόστασις occurs twice in reference to God the Father alone. Gregory uses ὑπόστασις here interchangeably with πρόσωπον to refer to the same reality: the "Person" of God the Father.

In *Graec* most of the time Gregory uses πρόσωπον and ὑπόστασις synonymously when referring to divine or human persons; but whereas the former term occurs sixty times, the latter occurs only thirty-six times. To express the notion of the person, however, he also uses other terms, such as: "individual or indivisible" (ἄτομον), "partial substance" (μερικὴ οὐσία), and "particular substance" (ἰδικὴ οὐσία). *Graec* 31, 16–20 is a passage hard to interpret. Here Gregory asserts beyond any reasonable doubt that ὑπόστασις is a species for πρόσωπον, thus confirming what he says in *Graec* 30, 20–21. The statement is astounding, because it makes one think that ὑπόστασις is actually synonymous with οὐσία, after Gregory himself has assured the reader that ὑπόστασις is in fact the individual or person. It can also mean that ὑπόστασις is a subspecies of οὐσία, something between οὐσία and πρόσωπον. If the latter is the case, then Gregory can be credited with making a distinction between individuals and persons, thus being a personalist *avant la lettre*, which is perhaps unlikely. The text reads: "[W]e attach the phrase 'such and such' to hypostasis in order to differentiate the persons (πρόσωπα) from one another, even though they have in common this name, that of hypostasis, and thus differ from one another not in peculiarities proper to substance, but rather according to so-called accidents" (*Graec* 31, 16–20). The "new" meaning of ὑπόστασις seems to be a mistake in judgment rather than some new meaning.

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Lucian Turcescu

IDOLATRY

Idolatry, like its synonym “impiety” (*asebeia*), belongs to the Nyssen’s apologetic and moral vocabulary—frequent among the Fathers (cf. CH. GNILKA, 131–155)—and is integrated into the fundamental contexts of the economy (→ OIKONOMIA) and CULT (→). With the fulfillment of the economy, realized in the incarnation of the Logos, the ancient superstition with its gods and rites was abolished, in place of which the new cult and new priesthood was instituted. In this manner, the human being is called to participation in the “true religion” (*theosebeia*) (*Or cat*, GNO III/4, 51,5–52,1). Gregory’s affirmations regarding the Christian refutation of idolatry are quite strong and clear: “The victory of the true religion is effectively the ruin and death of idolatry” (*Vit Moys*, SC 1, 36).

Gregory is nevertheless conscious of the fact that the believer finds himself confronted by a constant temptation to idolatry. It is a reality that can continually appear in the life of the Christian. He therefore identifies three causes that expose man to this temptation.

1. The first is *intellectual error*: Gregory points to this frequently and sees it as one of the principal causes of idolatry, something that stems from the importance he gives to the cognitive and intellective capacities of the human being (→ ANTHROPOLOGY) and to the primacy of the TRUTH (→). He thus writes: “For error is imagination relative to non-being that forms in our intellect, as if that which does not exist had real existence” (*Vit Moys*, SC 1, 38). Idolatry is therefore the refutation of the truth of being and a turning to the void through the imagination (cf. also *Deit fil*, GNO X/1, 121,19–122,4).

In the realm of error one should also note another type of idolatry, which concerns the knowledge of God in a Christian environment in particular. It can be found when one accords more importance to concepts than to the living God. It is a form of “idolatry of concepts”, in response to which Gregory developed the doctrine of apophatism (→ APOPHATIC THEOLOGY). It thus constitutes a proposition of spiritual experience which should first of all protect the Christian theologian from this idolatrous temptation. It is to be noted that this is the common theology of the Cappadocian Fathers.

2. The second cause of idolatry has a moral character. It can be defined as *moral error*, and is thus tied to the human will—"the distorted will that sought the worse instead of the better" (*Vit Moys*, SC 1, 35). Through the wounds to the will, and thus to liberty, the passions impel the human being man towards evil, which is chosen when the human being, and in particular his liberty, is not informed by the knowledge of God and thus by the reference to transcendent good and beauty. Gregory explains: "We can learn with clarity from the Apostle who is abandoned to ignominious passion: the one who did not want to know God, He does not protect, since He has not been known by them, and He abandons them as prey to their passions. For this person, his not having wanted to know God is the reason why he is drawn into the ignominious life and is dominated by the passions" (*Vit Moys*, SC 1, 52). The ignominious life consists in a life according to the vices which are opposed to the virtuous life (→ VIRTUE) in which the likeness to God is realized. Every vice has therefore an idolatrous "structure", since it distances the human being from God to turn him towards and tie him to material and malicious earthly realities. This logic is applied by Gregory in a highly significant manner in his *Commentary on the Beatitudes* (GNO VII/2, 75–170).

As a means of grappling with and overcoming this type of idolatry, the Nyssen proposes a spiritual life characterized by various accentuations that have as their goal the manifestation of its dynamic dimension in the sense of infinite progress. He thus uses the image of the "ladder", for example in *Vit Moys* (SC 1, 105) and *Cant* (GNO VI, 158, 15–21). With time, this image will be replaced in the more mature works by other symbols that are more representative of infinite dynamics, above all by the "law of consequence" (→ AKOLOUTHIA) which follows along with the ascent of the soul towards God and coincides with the economy of salvation, efficaciously helping to overcome idolatrous temptation. *Akolouthia* is particularly present in this sense in *Beat* and in the third book of *Eun*.

3. The third cause is linked to the choice of *erroneous doctrine* on the Christian's part. It is identified with heresy or heretical doctrine, more or less separated from the "right doctrine" and the "true cult". It is thus situated on the doctrinal level and is manifested in the rejection of right doctrine. This question is particularly present in *Eun*. The path to overcome this type of idolatry is to follow the true religion which, uniquely, guarantees the salvific union with God.

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Janusz Krolikowski

IMAGE

εἰκὼν

1. IMMANENCE · 2. CREATION · 3. REDEMPTION AND ESCHATOLOGY.

The term refers to one of the key concepts of Greek philosophy and Patristic thought, which is particularly important in order to understand Christian originality. For Plato εἰκὼν indicates the sensible world in its relation to the intelligible world: The philosopher, in fact, does not define the soul as the image of God—with the term of εἰκὼν he expresses a certain analogy between the ideas and material realities, but at the same time a certain inferiority as well. In Middle Platonism, a similar conception can be found in the Stoic milieu, where the concept of intermediary image, also fundamental for Neo-Platonism, appears in the divine Triad.

In assuming the term, Judeo-Christian reflection modifies it substantially, as J. Daniélou shows when he underscores the difference between the sense of the word εἰκὼν in Plato and in Philo: If for the first that which is primary is inferiority, for Philo this category instead expresses participation applied to the λόγος, the κόσμος, and even to the human νοῦς. Gregory principally follows this second signification: “It designates a true commonness of “nature”. Nevertheless, it implies a certain number of distinctions which the non-Christian uses of the term did not offer. Applied to the λόγος, as found already in Paul (Col 1.15, cfr. Wis 7.26), the term εἰκὼν does not designate a deficient participation, but the pure relation of origin in perfect equality or nature: This is a new sense, tied to the Trinitarian dogma” (J. DANIÉLOU, 48).

Therefore, in the Nyssen's corpus, the term, which is not exclusively technical—so that it is used *inter alia* for artistic images (*Theod*, GNO X/1, 63, 5; *Benef*, GNO IX, 99, 3) and for dreams (*Op hom*, PG 44, 173C)—has however a great and properly theological importance. From the systematic perspective, the most fundamental sense in Gregory's thought is, in fact, that which refers to the divine immanence (1), on which is based, through the mediation of Gn 1.26, the signification relative to the creation of man in the image and likeness of the Trinity (2); on this in turn depends, through the correspondence of ἀρχή and τέλος, redemption understood as restoration of the image (3).

1. IMMANENCE. The application of the term to the Only Begotten Son of the Father principally depends on the Pauline usage, in particular the exegesis of Col 1.15 (*Eun* I, GNO I, 180, 10; *Eun* II, GNO I, 288, 15), of 2 Cor 4.4 (*Eun* III, GNO II, 190, 2–3; *Antirr*, GNO III/1, 230, 29) and the reading, illuminated by the New Testament revelation, of Wis 7.26 (*Eun* II, GNO I, 288, 6; *Eun* III, GNO II, 100, 18). Gregory has recourse to philosophical terminology, setting out the substantial modifications which are necessary to express the Trinitarian mystery: “The Son is in the Father, as the beauty of the image is in the form of the model, and the Father is in the Son, as exemplary beauty is in its own image. But, while in the images made by the hand of man, there is always a temporal difference between the communicated image and the model, in this case, on the other hand, the one cannot be separated from the other” (*Eun* I, GNO I, 209, 8–14). Thus the Son follows the Father in a unique movement, as the image of a mirror (cfr. *Eun* II, GNO I, 288), in a perfect and immediate coordination—without however any sort of passivity—in so far as the Son freely follows the unique will of the Father, making himself the will of the Father (*Eun* II, GNO I, 288, 17–19).

The properly theological penetration of the Trinitarian immanence is manifested in the affirmation of apophatism (→ APOPHATIC THEOLOGY), which situates the image as the essential element of the relationship between economy and immanence itself. Gregory shows the interaction of the Pauline doctrine with the Johannine teachings, linking 1 Tim 6.16 and Jn 14.9: Paul did not in fact give any name to the divine substance, which is and remains ineffable, while he spoke of Christ, image of the Father (*Perf*, GNO VIII/1, 188, 2–189, 16). To be “image” does not then presuppose inferiority; rather, it is in his being image of the Father that the glory of the Son fully shines forth, as the glory of the Father himself. It is said that Christ is He who is always, because He always knows Him who is: The Son has his regard eternally fixed on the Father. This knowledge is distinct from the human knowledge of this reality, which is limited and must constantly grow (*ibidem*, 194, 10–14).

In this manner the context of εἰκὼν is cleansed of any possible subordinationist connotation in order to express filiation itself, in so far as the passive dimension, which characterized the philosophical understanding of the term, is transformed to signify only the origin from the Father, so that in union with the originality of the active dimension of image, εἰκὼν can express διὰ itself and the central position which characterizes the role of the Son in the Nyssen’s well loved Trinitarian formulas (→ TRINITY).

2. CREATION. Gregory cites Gn 1.26 fifteen times and Gn 1.27 seventeen times, the majority in *Op hom* (as one would expect). These texts are read in the light of the theology of filiation, expressed as theology of the image: The narrative of creation has recourse to κατ' εἰκόνα θεοῦ to express with a word, in a synthetic manner, the goodness and fullness of natural goods which the divine plan provided from the beginning for the human being (*Or cat* 5, 64–76: GNO III/4, 18). The Nyssen's conception introduces a fundamental dynamic principle which reads anthropology and eschatology inseparably—the being and existence of the human being—linking the desire of the Eternal which is inserted into the human being himself with the primordial εἰκόν.

This theology of the image is completely descending, in the sense that human nature is read in the light of the divine nature. All of the Nyssen's structure of thought has, in fact, the Trinitarian reading of Gn 1.26 as its foundation: “For He who said: ‘Let us make man in our image,’ and with the plural indication manifested the Holy Trinity, would not have referred to the image in the singular, if the models had been different one from another. For it would not have been possible to indicate a unique image of beings that do not coincide among themselves. But if the natures had been different, they would certainly have given rise to different images, creating the image that corresponds to each [nature]” (*Op hom*, PG 44, 140 BC). The unity of human nature is founded on that of the divine nature (→ SOCIAL ANALOGY) in mediation through Christ: It is Christ himself who is the model of creation in the beginning, a model that the Word reforms in us through the models of the virtues (*Inscr*, GNO V, 116, 24–26)—after original sin had clothed human beings in the mortal condition which comes from irrational creatures, but not in such a way that the most interior nucleus of the divine image was destroyed in man (*Or cat* 8, 37–42: GNO III/4, 30).

3. REDEMPTION AND ESCHATOLOGY. In the light of the theological structure of Gregory's thought, salvation consists, then, in the restoration of the primordial image, in so far as the new creation is nothing other than the reconstitution of the authentic man (ὁ ἀληθινὸς ἄνθρωπος), i.e. of the human being in the image and likeness of God, realized in the Paschal Mystery of Christ, the model of creation itself (*Trid spat*, GNO IX, 280, 1–5). It is in precisely this context that the active dimension of the Nyssen's conception of εἰκόν is accentuated, since the Son is not the extrinsic and distant Image, but is the Image that makes of us other images of God: “Thus, He who is above every knowledge and understanding, who is

ineffable, unspeakable and unexplainable, to make you anew the image of God, for love of man made of himself an image of the invisible God (εἰκὼν τοῦ θεοῦ τοῦ ἀοράτου) as well, so as to be configured to you in the very form that He assumed, and so that you might be newly configured by Him to the image (χαρακτῆρα) of the archetypal beauty, to become that which you were from the beginning. Therefore, if we ourselves must become also images (εἰκόν) of the invisible God, it is proper that the form of our life be conformed to the model of life that is proposed to us (cfr. Jn 13.15). And what is this model? While living in the flesh, to not live according to the flesh (Rm 8.12). In fact, the prototypical Image (εἰκὼν) of the invisible God, who comes among us through the Virgin, was tried in all things like human nature, but did not experience sin alone" (*Perf*, GNO VIII/1, 194,14–195,12). The passage is a remarkable synthesis of the whole of Nyssen's theology, and shows with extreme clarity the movement of *exitus-reditus*: everything moves from the Trinity, in which the Son is the image of the Father, who by love created man in his image and likeness. Because of human infidelity, the Son became incarnate in order to restore us to the beauty of the primordial image in which we were created. The movement starts from the Trinity to return to the Trinity.

In this context Gregory also uses the example of the painter, describing Christians as apprentices of a great artist, from whom they are learning the art of painting. They attempt to imitate the beauty of the master's work, and if they would succeeded in their effort, the canvas of all would reproduce the beauty of the proposed example. Thus, *each one is the painter of his own life* (*ibid.*, 196, 3), in which the free will is like the artist of the work and the virtues are like the colors which serve to form the image (*ibid.*, 195,14–196,9). For this reason it is necessary that the colors be pure, so as to not paint the marvelous image of the Lord in a face rendered ugly by the filth of vice: "But it is necessary that, in so far as is possible, the colors of the virtues be pure, amalgamated one with the other in an artistic combination in order to receive the imitation of beauty, so that we become images of the image (τῆς εἰκότος εἰκόνα), reproducing the beauty of the model, thanks to the most active imitation possible" (*ibidem*, 196, 9–14). The passage contains one of the most beautiful and most theologically profound definitions of the human being and of the Christian as *image of the Image*, showing that the active dimension of εἰκὼν is transmitted in the identification with Christ.

Gregory, having purified this category of the subordinationist connotations which tainted it in the Trinitarian context, has recourse to it on the

soteriological level to express the reality of divinization. To be conformed to Christ is not simply the result of an extrinsic imitation, as the pictorial example might suggest, but that of an authentic connaturality, expressed in a Pauline manner through the doctrine of the Mystical Body: Every head is of the same nature (ὁμοφυΐης) and substance (ὁμοούσιος) as the body, in a unique agreement (συμπνοία) and conformity of sentiment (συμπάθεια) on the part of the whole (*Perf*, GNO VIII/1, 197,19–198,4). This is thus a true participation in the divine nature.

The Beatitudes, then, summon the human being to wash himself of all encrusted filth, so that the beauty of the image may be fully resplendent. Thus it is possible to contemplate, in one's own soul in grace, the image of the living God (*Beat*, GNO VII/2, 142,15–143,16). This is the Trinitarian life in the soul of the Christian, the life of the Father, of the Son and of the Holy Spirit, lived in identification with the humanity of the Son himself. The very eschatological accomplishment is, then, expressed in terms of restoration of the image, in its definition as ἡ τῆς θείας εἰκόνης εἰς τὸ ἀρχαῖον ἀποκατάστασις (*Virg*, 12, 4, 2–3: SC 119, 417).

In synthesis, Gregory uses the expression εἰκόν in both the immanent and economic spheres as an instrument to express the inseparability of the two realms, and to formulate, thanks to the essentially dynamic dimension recognized in the term itself (BALTHASAR, 89), his theology of FILIATION (→), which has its foundation in the intimacy of God, the origin and end of man.

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Giulio Maspero

Imitation → *Mimēsis*

Impassibility → *Apatheia*

INCORRUPTIBILITY

ἀφθαρσία

In Gregory's work, the term ἀφθαρσία unites meanings such as incorruptibility, immutability or integrity, and is used in a large number of theological themes, such as Trinitarian theology, Christology, anthropology and eschatology. Incorruptibility is, for Gregory, one of the names of the divine nature (*Eun* I, GNO I, 175, 24; *Beat*, GNO VII/2, 148, 10; *An et res*, GNO III/3, 157, 9). He emphatically affirms that "God is completely incorruptibility" (Θεὸς δὲ πάντως ἐστὶν ἡ ἀφθαρσία: *Antirr*, GNO III/1, 225, 4). Therefore incorruptibility is equally attributed to the Father, to the Son and to the Holy Spirit (*Simpl*, GNO III/1, 66, 17; *Epist*, GNO VIII/2, 77, 27; 78, 16). That which characterizes the divine life and distinguishes it from any other type of life is that it is totally free of all corruption. For Gregory, any other possible attribution of the name "incorruptible" is always participation in the divine life, and presupposes that God, in his economy of salvation, has opened up the possibility of participation in his own nature (*Or cat*, GNO III/4, 94, 12; 98, 5; *Perf*, GNO VIII/1, 199, 2, 3; *Or dom*, GNO VII/2, 39, 2).

In his polemic with Eunomius, Gregory elaborated a noteworthy theory of the divine names. In *Eun* II he distinguishes between the positive names, which indicate properties that are in God (to state that God is just, signifies that God possesses justice), and privative names, which negate all imperfection on the part of God (incorruptible signifies the absence of corruption) (*Eun* II, GNO I, 266, 28). Gregory affirms that the attribution to God of a positive name implies the negation of its contrary (if we say that God is eternal, we also state that He is not temporal). Thus, each of the divine names indicates either a perfection that is attributed to the divine nature, or an imperfection that is rejected (eternal life—immortal) (*Eun* II, GNO I, 263, 21–264, 24). Gregory was therefore aware that *the use of privative names implies the attribution of positive significations*. As for the term "incorruptible", in certain texts it is presented as the negative proper synonym of the positive term eternity (cfr. *ibidem*), and in others it appears as a negative manner of expressing the divine life (*Eun* II, GNO I, 375, 7).

According to Gregory, the multiplicity of names that human knowledge uses to describe the divine nature in no way lessens its simplicity (MATEO-SECO, 395–397), since they are attributed according to the imperfect understanding of human knowledge. The human being knows in parts that which is in itself one and simple. Therefore, incorruptibility for Gregory is nothing other than one of the terms used by human beings, a term which is on the same level as many others (omnipotence, eternity, wisdom, immutability ...) and contributes its proper, distinct and complementary signification. It can in no way pretend to be the unique adequate expression of the divine essence (*Eun* II, GNO I, 266, 29 ff.).

Eunomius on the other hand maintained that the human being can fully know the essence of God. Being unengendered is the essential characteristic of God, and describes his nature in all exactitude. Eunomius also maintained that incorruptibility is a synonym of innascibility. Therefore, in his judgment, “incorruptible” is not one name among others. Starting with this premise, Eunomius reached the conclusion that the generated Son cannot be of the same substance as the Father, since the Father alone is unengendered.

Gregory sees the concept of incorruptibility as a key concept in manifesting the inconsistencies of Eunomius’s arguments. He dedicates a number of pages in *Eun* II, *Eun* III and *Ref Eun* to this argument. Gregory argues in two directions. The first consists in distinguishing incorruptibility from innascibility. While incorruptibility is an attribute of nature, innascibility is the particularity that distinguishes the Father as one of the three divine Hypostases (*Eun* I, GNO I, 107, 25–108,1; 162, 21–23). The second line of argumentation consists in maintaining that incorruptibility is a characteristic of the Son, which makes Him identical to the Father in substance. That is, he takes the attribute of incorruptibility as a basis for affirming the true divinity of the Son. The identification of the divine substance with innascibility and incorruptibility, which Eunomius maintained, led him to reserve the divine nature to the Father exclusively—the only one who is unengendered—and to negate that the Son is truly God. According to Eunomius, all that is not unengendered exists by an act of the divine will, i.e. is created. Therefore—and here Eunomius tries to attenuate the consequences of his argument—one must affirm that the Son is “non-uncreated”. Gregory argues that if, as Eunomius states, innascibility and incorruptibility are synonymous, one must infer that the Son is not incorruptible. If one, however, does not wish to negate the

truth and affirms that He is incorruptible, one must admit that He is the true, eternal and uncreated God, consubstantial to the Father (*Eun* I and II, GNO I, 177, 18; 333,31–334,18; 389, 7–13).

While incorruptibility is proper to the divine nature, corruptibility is an essential characteristic of created nature. Nevertheless, the human being is called by God to participate in his incorruptible life.

Thus in the beginning man was placed in a state of incorruptibility, immune from death (*Beat*, GNO VII/2, 105, 16). Since man has lost the gift of immortality through sin, God wants to restore him to participation in incorruptibility through his Son. The Son has assumed human nature in order to cause it to participate in his incorruptible life. Gregory affirms that Christ is the source of incorruptibility through the mystery of his Incarnation (*Virg*, GNO VIII/1, 254, 17). The very humanity assumed by the Son passed through the itinerary that moves from the corruptibility of mortal life, through the death on the Cross, to the incorruptibility of the Resurrection (*Salut Pasch*, GNO IX, 248, 12; *Lucifres*, GNO IX, 318, 30). In the death of Christ, the divine nature remains united to the assumed humanity without separating from either the soul or the body. Due to its unity with the divine nature, the body of Christ remains incorruptible. Gregory sees a proof of the true Incarnation of the Son in the incorruptibility of the dead body of Christ (*Antirrh*, GNO III/1, 154, 3; 225, 3). Once glorified in the Resurrection, the incarnate Son communicates his incorruptible life to human beings through the mystery of regeneration. Through the confession of faith and Baptism, they are able to participate in the incorruptible life of the risen Christ (*Or cat*, GNO III/4, 84, 4; *Epist*, GNO VIII/2, 33), and must display the clothes of incorruptibility received from Christ (*Bapt*, GNO X/2, 360, 20).

Gregory sees in the Holy Spirit the source of incorruptibility of the soul and of eternal life (*Deit Euag*, GNO IX, 341, 3). In harmony with baptismal sanctity, the baptized must follow an honest and incorruptible type of life, far from the corruption of sin (*Beat*, VII/2, 164, 20; *Virg*, GNO VIII/1, 305, 14; 308, 15; *Eccl*, GNO V, 426, 3). Even if the human being must pass through the corruption of death, the one who maintains an incorruptible behavior will not have corruption as his inheritance (*Vit Moys*, GNO VIII/1, 143, 13). The second coming of Christ will inaugurate the moment of the final resurrection of the dead and the full participation in the incorruptible life (*An et res*, GNO III/3, 160, 13, 22; *Macr*, GNO VIII/1, 397, 9; *Op hom*, GNO IV/2, 262, 21). The vision of God will include the possession of eternal incorruptibility (*Beat*, GNO VII/2, 138, 19).

One can thus say that in Gregory's thought the concept of incorruptibility constitutes a perspective point from which the totality of the economy of salvation is contemplated, from its starting point in God all the way to eschatology, moving through the mystery of Christ and the divinization of the human being.

The concept of incorruptibility which we find in Gregory fundamentally depends on biblical theology, particularly on Pauline teaching. In the OT the idea of corruption is intimately tied to the idea of death (Ps 30.10, Ps 35.7, Ps 55.24). The verb "to corrupt" is also used in the sense of moral deterioration (Ps 13.1, Ps 52.2). It also expresses falling away from fidelity to the Covenant (Jdg 2.19). In the LXX, corruption (*διαφθορά*) is a synonym for death (Ps 16.10; Job 33.28,30). In these texts the sacred author manifests his hope that God will not allow one who by his justice is preserved from moral corruption to experience the corruption of death. In the Book of Wisdom the expression *ἀφθαρσία* shows that God created man for immortality, but that death entered into the world through the envy of the devil (Wis 2.23). According to Wisdom, the observance of the Law is a guarantee of immortality which makes us similar to God (Wis 6.18–19). The Spirit of God (Wis 12.1) and the light of the Law of God (Wis 18.4) are also incorruptible (*ἄφθαρτον*). The NT takes up this tradition and elaborates it in the light of the mystery of Christ. Quoting Ps 16, Peter announces that God did not permit Christ, the Just one, to know the corruptibility of the sepulchre (Acts 2.27,31; 13.34–37). Paul uses the term *ἀφθαρσία*-incorruptibility on numerous occasions, as well as other words from its semantic family. He describes God with the attribute of incorruptibility, a property that radically distinguishes Him from the corruptible human being (Rm 1.23; 1 Tim 1.17).

Paul establishes a close relationship between eternal life and incorruptibility, so that it can be considered the front and reverse of the same reality (Rm 2.7). As corruption is a consequence of death, so too incorruptibility is an essential property of the risen body (1 Cor 15.42,50,52). In 1 Cor 15.53 he places the binomials of death-immortality and corruption-incorruptibility in parallel, in such a way that they have similar meanings. The word "corruption" has also a moral signification in Paul (1 Cor 15.33; Gal 6.8; Eph 4.22; 1 Tim 6.5). The letter of Peter uses the term *ἀφθαρσία* and *ἄφθαρτος* to indicate the value of Christ's offering of his blood (1 Pet 1.18), to qualify the living Word of God, from which Christians have received a new birth and to express moral purity (1 Pt 3.4). One can say that in Scripture the idea of incorruptibility appears with ever greater clarity as the negative formulation of the vitality of God, in which

the human being comes to participate through a gratuitous gift, above all at the moment of the bodily resurrection. Therefore, in the Bible, “incorruptibility” is the abstract flip side to divine vitality, a life in which human beings are called to participate.

Gregory found this concept in Christian theologians as well. The concept of incorruptibility appears in the Apologists as a divine property (Justin, *II Apol.* 7,9; Tatian, *Disc.*, 7,1; Aristides, *Apol.* 4,1), and similarly in Clement of Alexandria (*Strom.*, V,36,2; 68,1). Irenaeus affirms that human beings are reborn through Baptism, and being bearers of the Holy Spirit, they are led to the Son and presented to the Father to receive incorruptibility from Him (*Apostolic Demonstration*, 7). The human being participates in this through adoption (*Adv. Haer.* III,19,1). In Origen’s thought, incorruptibility has a similar meaning: Following Pauline theology closely, he affirms that mortal man must be clothed in Christ in order to reach incorruptibility (*De princ.* I,1,5; II,3,2;10,3; *Contra Celsum*, VII,32).

One can therefore confirm that Gregory developed his concept of incorruptibility on the model of biblical teaching—and in a particular way of the Pauline doctrine (especially *Ref Eun.* GNO II, 387, 23; *Theoph.* GNO III/1, 125,8; *An et res.* GNO III/3, 153,43; 156,11; 157,6; 160,13,22)—as well as on the basis of the Christian Tradition.

Further, assuming as a starting point the biblical teaching and Christian theology, Gregory offered a fundamental contribution to this concept in the context of Trinitarian theology in his controversy with Eunomius.

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Juan Ignacio Ruiz Aldaz

INFANT

De infantibus praemature abreptis

Addressed to the prefect Ierius of Cappadocia, probably the homonymous *hêgêmôn* of *Epist* 8 (G. PASQUALI, GNO VIII/II, 36 n. 14), this is Gregory's most prestigious work *qua* literature (DANIÉLOU, 161), and is read by DANIÉLOU (181) as a response to the Origenian *De infantibus* of Didymus the Blind—a writing which postulates the preexistence of souls, and is contemporary to the *Commentary on Hosea* (Jerome, *Contra Rufin* 3, 28, PL 23, 500 C9–13), which dates from 386 (L. DOUTRELEAU, SC 83, 25).

Nevertheless, the chronological relationship between Gregory's treatise and that of Didymus is likely the other way round, with a consequent redating of the Nyssen's work to 381, as it is considered the third and final moment of a unified project to reflect on the anthropological theme (G. MATURI, 20–21; 30) begun in 379 with *OP HOM* (→) and *AN ET RES* (→), works followed by *Infant* which develops and deepens the final part which focuses on the *impeccantia* of children (*An et res*, PG46, 149D1–3; 152A6–7), resurrection at the adult age (*An et res*, PG46, 141C13–13 and D1–4) and *post mortem* progression (*An et res*, PG46, 149B–C).

Perhaps the principal aspect in favor of this date change is the fact that Didymus does not fail to polemicize with Gregory on themes such as *progressio ad infinitum* (*PsT* 5, 5–9, p. 20), “without the requirement however that Gregory's position needs to be justified, in the nature of the arguments in this case, as a response to any writing of Didymus” (MATURI, 30).

Rhetorical *topoi* and doctrinal arguments fit the period of the polemics with the Arian Eunomius (380–384) and more precisely, the year of composition of the *De baptismo infantium* (*Or.* XL, 28) of Gregory Nazianzen, i.e. 381—the year of the Ecumenical Council of Constantinople—an occasion where the two Cappadocians were in disagreement on one theme, and in a certain confrontation: where Gregory Nazianzen speaks of “sins committed by ignorance” (*Or.* XL, 28, SC 358) for infants, placing them in this life and in the *éschaton* part-way between virtue and vice, beatitude and punishment, for Gregory of Nyssa the *áōros* is free of every sin (*Infant*, GNO III/2, 82, 28–83, 1–4; 84, 15–23; 85, 1.7–9; 93, 3–5;

96, 22–23) and is placed in a state of initial beatitude which is destined to grow (*ibidem*, 79, 4–13; 83, 4–19; 84, 5–21; 85, 1–6). This is a doctrine found in the Stoics (SVF II 743 [2]; III 476 [4]; III 477; III 537 [2]), Philo (*Her.* 294) and Clement of Alexandria (*Strom.* III, 16; IV, 12). From the latter the refutation of the preexistence of souls is inherited, contrary to Didymus, for whom the *áðroi* are souls that have sinned little, and dwell for a short time in the prison of the body. With Didymus however, and in the Origenian line, Gregory maintains unreservedly the doctrine of the *apocatastasis* (*Infant.* 91, 22–92, 11).

It is worth referring to the dependence on the *De resurrectione* of (Ps.?-)Athenegoras (DANIÉLOU, 163; MATURI, 67–68) regarding the future lot of the *áðroi* (*Infant.* 76, 7–21), in particular on the method used by the apologist: To respond to the question how and when the resurrection will take place, it is necessary to respond to the preliminary question of the origin of the human being and what is his nature, according to a close and inseparable relationship between protology and eschatology. This method leads (Ps.?-) Athenegoras, for whom the resurrection takes place “first of all by the design of the Creator and the nature of created beings”, to exclude the possibility that it happens due to judgment; and this permits him to affirm the resurrection even of “tender infants” (*De resurrect.* 14, 1–6 Ubaldi-Pellegrino). This will help Gregory to eliminate in an *a priori* manner every form of retributational logic in the posing of the problem which would otherwise lead to the annihilation of infants.

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Giorgio Maturi

INFINITY

The infinity of God is commonly regarded as a characteristic motif of Gregory's works, whether it is explained as a revolutionary end of Greek metaphysics (E. MUEHLENBERG; CH. APOSTOLOPOULOS 2000), or (more plausibly) as a continuation of an earlier development of philosophical and theological thought (J.E. HENNESSY; K.-H. UTHEMANN; TH. BÖHM). Gregory's spiritual program of *EPEKTASIS* (→), the journey of the human being towards God which is never completely finished, is also closely linked to the concept of infinity. Already in Gregory's early works we find the idea of the incomprehensibility of God as well as the concept of the human soul as a continual movement (*Virg*, GNO VIII/1, 280 f.) which, in an upwards ascent (*Virg*, GNO VIII/1, 289–296) or in a forward journey (*Virg*, GNO VIII/1, 271 f.; *Beat*, GNO VII/2, 93), is supposed to turn towards this incomprehensible God. However, this movement can approach its ever elusive goal only by continuously transcending that which has already been reached (*Virg*, GNO VIII/1, 294,3 f.; *Beat*, GNO VII/2, 123 f.), i.e. in an ever fresh hunger which does not allow for a final satiation (*Beat*, GNO VII/2, 121–123). Here God is presented as *transcending every limit* (*Beat*, GNO VII/2, 104, 15–19). The eschatological future of the human being is also understood by Gregory as an “interval” without end, which is filled with an uninterrupted growth of beatitude, *an interval whose measure is the infinite (apeiria)* (*Inscr*, GNO V, 46, 8–12; 136,3 ff.) (for the eschatological infinity of man, cf. L. KARFÍKOVÁ, 77–81).

In his homilies on *Eccl*, Gregory derives the incomprehensibility of God and the never-ending journey of human knowledge towards him from the diastematic character of human knowledge. Like all created things, human life too is an interval (*diastêma* or *paratasis*; *Eccl*, GNO V, 412; 376 f.). Accordingly, the human being knows everything in a diastematic manner, i.e. not only within a time span but also as something determinate, as a *diastema* defined by limits. But the adiastratic God (*adiastatos physis*) can never be comprehended, not even in an infinitely long interval (*Eccl*, GNO V, 411–414). Here his limitlessness entails above all incomprehensibility for diastematic thought.

In *An et res*, the infinite movement of the human being is divided into two stages: (1) In earthly life, he strives towards the good that always

escapes him. This is a movement of desire (or hope). (2) Then, in an eschatological movement of love, the soul is made similar to God so that it grows in the good in which it participates. The movement of love, according to Gregory, has no limit, because, on the one hand, the limitless good can never be exhausted, and on the other, the capacity of the soul augments with the growing participation in the good so that it can never be completely filled and reach the state of satiated rest (*An et res*, PG 46, 89A–96A; 105 AC). God is thus represented as a good without limit (since it is not limited by its opposite), as one who proceeds towards the infinite (*pros to aperanton kai aoriston proeleusetai*) (*An et res*, PG 46, 97A). At the same time, God knows Himself and relates to Himself as to a limitless good with an inexhaustible, an insatiable love (*An et res*, PG 46, 96C 97A; for this divine self-love, cfr. CH. APOSTOLOPOULOS 1986, 321–366).

The theme of the infinity of God is most profoundly elaborated in Gregory's main systematic work *Eun*, viz. in his polemic against *agen[n]esia* as a concept which, according to Eunomius, is supposed to fully grasp the essence of God.

According to Gregory, *agen[n]esia* as an expression of the absence of a beginning in God should be complemented by the perspective of the absence of an end (*Eun* II, GNO I, 356,30–357,7; see already Basil, *Eun*. I,7; I,16, SC 299, 192; 228). But in the context of the whole polemic, there are more reasons why “infinity” is employed:

1. It is an expression which pertains to each of the three divine hypostases in equal measure (unlike *agen[n]esia* which cannot be easily predicated of the Son). We can summarize Gregory's argument as follows: God is raised above the sphere of the opposites, he is perfectly good and immutable, and therefore his goodness is limitless (*aoristos*) (*Eun* I, GNO I, 77). Also, God is perfectly simple: not only does he participate in the good, but he is good without limit in his very essence. Therefore, God is limitless (*aoriston*), i.e., infinite (*apeiron*), by his very essence (*Eun* I, GNO I, 95 f. *Eun* III, GNO II, 38, 24 ff.). According to Gregory, this conclusion applies to each of the three divine hypostases: we can predicate infinity of each of the three. But infinity does not allow for any gradation (as Gregory thinks, at least), and so the three hypostases are equal to one another (*Eun* I, GNO I, 77, 96; *Eun* III, GNO II, 58,22 f.; *Ref Eun*, GNO II, 324, 15–21; for the whole argument cf. E. MÜHLENBERG, 118–126 and 133 f. and the criticism of W. ULLMANN; supplemented by TH. BOEHM, 131 ff.).

2. Infinity or limitlessness (the absence of limits) is also the ultimate reason why it is not possible to grasp God, a particularly important point in the polemic: the knowledge of the limitless God cannot be mediated by a concept but can occur only through the continuous abandonment of all concepts of God that have been found (*Eun* II, GNO I, 253; cf. D. CARABINE).
3. *Infinity* as the absence of an end is also something extremely valuable for the human being, as a being oriented towards the future (*Eun* I, GNO I, 220). Because of this orientation, the adiastatic eternity of God without beginning or end appears to the human diastatic knowledge above all as the absence of every end.

In both of his late works on Christian spirituality, *Vit Moys* and the homilies on *Cant*, Gregory returns to motifs of his early works pertaining to the idea of *epektasis*: He describes the spiritual *anabasis* which involves infinity as continual transcendence of all that has ever been reached (*Vit Moys*, GNO VII/1, 3, 12 ff.; 4, 17 f.; *Cant*, GNO VI, 177 f.), he argues against satiation reached through virtue or through the good which could make a final standstill possible (*Vit Moys*, GNO VII/1, 113–118; *Cant*, GNO VI, 159, 7ss; 174, 8–11), he emphasizes the impossibility of grasping that which is sought, which can be found only through the searching (*Cant*, GNO VI, 181, 13–16). Yet the discussion of the diastatic character of the human being and the adiastatic infinity of God, as well as the understanding of human life as a limitless movement of love towards a limitless good, enabled the spiritual intuition of Gregory's youth to ripen into a well thought-out theological concept.

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Lenka Karfíková

INFLUENCE OF GREGORY OF NYSSA

Despite the fact that since the work of Werner Jaeger (reflected in the Leiden edition of his writings, begun in 1920 and not yet finished) considerable attention has been paid by theologians to Gregory of Nyssa, this does not reflect a long tradition. In comparison with his brother Basil and with Gregory Nazianzen, he was far less cited and does not rank as one of the four great Fathers of the Greek church, nor does he appear frequently in mosaics. Literary references to him are very infrequent. Jerome (*De viris illustrious* 128 = PL 23,713) says that Gregory read extracts from *Eun* before or during the Council of Constantinople of 381, and he was clearly regarded by Theodosius as a pillar of orthodoxy during his life. Theodoret of Cyrrihus (393–460) says in his *HE* 4,26 and 5,8 that he was a great defender of true religion. Again, at Nicaea 2 (787) he was acclaimed as ‘Father of Fathers’.

On two issues especially he was treated with some reserve, and this may account for later silence:

1. His teaching about the nature of the union between God and man in Christ was at best uncertain. He could be cited on both sides of the divide separating ‘monophysites’ and ‘dyophysites’. However, the balance is in favour of the latter position and he is so quoted by Theodoret in his *Eranistes* of 447/8, in his *Dialogos* 1 (“Immutabilis”) and 2 (“Inconfusus”). In 1 three passages from *Eun* III are mentioned (1,44 and 50 and 3,64), all of which reinforce a dyophysite tendency, in their desire, against Eunomius, to hold divine and human apart.
2. It cannot be denied (despite attempts on the part of some manuscripts to ‘defend’ Gregory) that he taught a doctrine of universe salvation, though unlike Origen in 543/553, he was never, apparently, censured for this. Clear evidence for his having held this view is to be found at *Or cat* 8 and 26 and and at *Vit Moys* 2,82.

These two departures from perceived orthodoxy may help to explain his lack of popularity and influence, despite the fact that John of Damascus quotes him on several occasions, especially from *Or cat* 2, in his *Expositio Fidei*.

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Anthony Meredith

Innascibility → *Agennesia*

INSCR

In Inscriptiones Psalmorum

Many specialists agree with J. DANÉLOU (160–162) that the treatise is an early work of the Nyssen, presumably written during his time in exile (376–378). J. REYNARD (14–15), on the basis of conceptual and linguistic parallels to the works of the later period, suggests 380; he argues that the *terminus ante quem* must be 381, because Gregory does not emphasize in the commentary that the Holy Spirit is God. As in other works, Gregory here also abides by an allegorical interpretation. He seems to be most indebted to Origen among the earlier Christian commentators on the Psalter. The commenting style also supports the reception of Iamblicus' systematic exegetical approach (M.J. RONDEAU 1974; R.E. HEINE, 29–49). Against the contention (e.g. that of his contemporary Diodore of Tarsus) that inscriptions were added in later times and do not impart a correct information concerning the author or the historical circumstances of their composition, Gregory puts forward the view that the inscriptions, like the entire Psalter, were created through the divine inspiration and thus correspond to the Psalms they title. In fact the actual discussion of the titles occupies just a small part of the treatise (GNO V, 69,6–108,2). The Nyssen's concern was to present a systematic research of the Psalter as a whole, to illuminate the real spiritual meaning of the inscriptions of Psalms.

The book, Gregory attests, is a systematic exposition of how to acquire beatitude, which is a natural goal of a virtuous life. Human blessedness is defined as a participation in true being, i.e. in likeness to God, who is blessed in the absolute sense (GNO V, 25, 11–26, 29). The issue is treated according to Origen's hermeneutic position, viz. that the in-depth reading of the Bible brings about a congenial development in virtuous knowledge with its inspired authors (*De Princ* 4,1,6). The whole sequence (*akolouthia*) of 150 Psalms or hymns, as Gregory calls them, is understood as a step by step ascent to blessedness. The commentary is arranged around six general topics developed in the tradition of the pagan schools. Some of them had already been treated by Gregory's predecessors in their interpretations of the Psalter. In his commentary the six topics occur as follows: the aim of the treatise (*skopos*), its composition

(*taxis*), the meaning of the inscriptions, the absence of inscriptions from some Psalms, the meaning of the word *diapsalma* and the divergence of the order of some Psalms from the historical sequence (R.E. HEINE, 20–29). These points are discussed in the two parts of the commentary.

The first part of the treatise emphasizes the soteriological aim of the prophetic book, and its structure (*akolouthia*) in accordance with this aim. Gregory, following the ancient Jewish exegetical tradition, separates the whole text into five sections: Ps. 1–40; Ps. 41–71; Ps. 72–88; Ps. 89–105 and Ps. 106–150. The Psalms of each section close with almost the same doxology to God, which indicates the end of each section (cf. J.M. AUWERS, 77). Gregory investigates the *akolouthia* of the Psalter on various levels of the text: how the sequence of the order of five sections, the sequence of the Psalms in each of them and the sequence of prophetic expressions in their turn lead to the achievement of divine blessing (GNO V, 38,6–69,4). The first Psalm already outlines this path through: (1) the will of separation from evil and choosing better; (2) the meditation on things that are sublime and (3) attainment of likeness to God (GNO V, 39, 5–16). Every initial Psalm of the five sections is moreover explained as a programme of the given stage of ascent. Thus if Ps. 1 points out the entrance to the good, Ps. 41 already expresses the desire of participation in God (GNO V, 39,5–40,18); Ps. 72 describes the capability to understand the justice of the divine judgment (GNO V, 40, 20–43, 11); in Ps. 89 Moses raises the souls of those who strive to ascend with him to his own adherence to God (GNO V, 43, 13–51, 26); and finally, in Ps. 106, Gregory considers the most sublime stage of the ascent in terms of his *apocatastasis* doctrine: A complete restoration of humanity in the good through Christ and joining angels in singing a hymn of praise to God (GNO V, 52,1–65,3; cf. J. REYNARD, 107–113).

In the second part of the treatise, the Nyssen deals in turn with five main issues: (1) classification of the inscriptions according to similarity (GNO V, 69,6–71,17); (2) explanation of their significance in the process of reaching blessedness (71, 19–91, 16); (3) Christological interpretation of the fact that some Psalms have no inscriptions in the Hebrew text (91, 18–108, 2); (4) the allegorical interpretation of the word *diapsalma* (108,3–115,8); and (5), allegorical and typological interpretation of the discrepancy between the order of some Psalms and the sequence of history (115, 10–174, 13). At the end of the commentary, the eschatology of humanity is treated once more with the remark that sin will be destroyed through an act of divine grace, preceded by the punishment of the wicked (174, 14–175, 19).

The Nyssen's hermeneutic structuring of the content of the prophetic book is not artificial. The theological reflection of the biblical text corresponds well to its content from the viewpoint of spiritual interpretation, as Gregory very carefully follows the content of the text. However, it leaves unanswered many questions posed by a philological and historical approach, which the Nyssen did not directly take up. The novelty that he brings in the Psalter commentary is to provide his specific coherent method of analysis (*akolouthia*) orientated on the main idea (*skopos*) of the Psalter (cf. M.J. RONDEAU, 1972, 517–518) as he sees it, and an original solution of textual issues in this perspective. This actually introduces the most refined composition of the commentary, which is both a synthesis and development of previous exegetical praxis, providing a keen personal contribution to it. The treatise, furthermore, is a vivid example of how a Christian author applies ancient musical aesthetics to biblical poetry.

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Tina Dolidze

INST

De instituto Christiano

JAEGER (118–119) considers this work to be Gregory's last. It is clearly a work of his full maturity (→ CHRONOLOGY) in which a great theological vision and experienced practical counsels are joined together. The manuscripts attribute this work to the Nyssen. Even if, following Jaeger, the opinion that this is one of Gregory's works has attained a consensus, there are certain problems that arise upon internal analysis. M. CANÉVET, raised these issues on the basis of the biblical citations, the vocabulary, the treatment of the arguments and the rhetorical style. Thus, GRIBOMONT and STAATS have also manifested some doubts on the Gregorian authenticity of this work.

Jaeger's first complete edition was published in 1952. Until this time, only an extremely limited compendium, compiled in the Byzantine era, was known (J. QUASTEN, *Patrologia* II, Madrid 1985, 304). JAEGER gives it the following title: "By Gregory, Bishop of Nyssa, On the Project of God and Asceticism According to Truth" (GNO VIII/1, 40); MORELLI titles the extracts he published: "By Gregory of Nyssa on the Design According to God and the Practice According to Truth; and to the Religious Who Had Presented Him with a Question on the Scope of Piety and on the Manner in which They Needed to Live Together and Encourage Each Other" (PG 46, 287).

Inst is important, not only as a witness to monastic life, but also for the manner in which it describes the cooperation between freedom and GRACE (→), as well as the role it attributes to the Holy Spirit in the soul. L. BOUYER (428–434) calls it the "final synthesis" of Gregory's "monastic" writings, and attributes great influence in the spirituality of monasteries to it. CANÉVET (DSp, 1006) observes that Jaeger's position has met with some "objections", but that it has not been "refuted", something that is important in order to evaluate Gregory's influence. In *Inst* the affirmation that sanctification is a συνέργεια, a common enterprise between grace and human effort, is insisted upon (GNO VIII/1, 87–89), even if the *initiative* of coming to God appears to be attributed to human freedom.

BIBL.: (Ed) PG 46, 288–305; W. JAEGER in GNO VIII/1, 40–89; (Tran) J.J. ARTZER, *The Goal of The True Ascetic Life According to God*, Washington 1956 (Diss.); C. BOUCHET, *Grégoire de Nysse. Ecrits spirituels*, PDF 40, Paris 1990, 62–100; L. GALLINARI, *Il “De instituto Christiano” di Gregorio di Nissa e il suo significato educativo*, Cassino 1974; S. LILLA, *Fine, professione e perfezione del cristiano*, Rome 1979, 21–64; L.F. MATEO-SECO, *Gregorio de Nisa: Sobre la vocación cristiana*, Madrid 1992, 85–126; É. DE SOLMS, *Grégoire de Nysse. Le but divin. De instituto Christiano. Traduit sur l’édition critique de W. Jaeger*, Paris 1986; V. WOODS CALLAHAN, *Saint Gregory of Nyssa. Ascetical Works*, Washington 1967; (Lit) D. ABEL, *The Doctrine of Synergism in G. of Nyssa’s De Instituto Christiano*, Thom 45 (1981) 430–448; L. BOUYER, *La Spiritualité du Nouveau Testament et des Pères*, Paris 1960, 428–439; M. CANÉVET, *Le “De Instituto Christiano” est-il de G. de N.? Problèmes de critique interne*, REG 82 (1969) 404–423; EADEM, voce *G. de N.*, in DSp VI, 971–1011; J. DANIELOU, *G. de N. et le messalianisme*, RSR 48 (1960) 119–134; J. GRIBOMONT, *Le “De Instituto Christiano” et le messalianisme de G. de N.*, StPatr 5 (1962), 312–322; W. JAEGER, *Two Rediscovered Works of Ancient Christian Literature: G. of N. and Macarius*, Leiden 1954; R. STAATS, *Der Traktat G. von N. “De instituto christiano” und der Grosse Brief Simeons*, STL 17 (1963) 120–128.

Lucas Francisco Mateo-Seco

JERUSALEM

The city, adorned with sumptuous basilicas by Constantine, was at that time the goal of numerous Christian pilgrimages by those who longed to know the places where the events of the life of Christ had taken place. Gregory expresses his judgment on the pilgrimages in *Epist 2* in response to a question directed to him; he refers to the pilgrimages in *Epist 3* as well. In the first he seeks to contextualize the importance of pilgrimages to the Holy City. These voyages do not belong to the requirements for the Christian described in the Gospels. Further, they bring with them dangers to those who have embraced the monastic way of life. Since they force women to travel along with men to overcome the difficulties of travel, they place one in contact with populations of undesirable habits that live along the path, and leave the pilgrims at the mercy of the troublemakers who inhabit Palestine. Gregory recognizes that he has visited these places, but excuses himself by explaining that he had received a charge from a Synod to visit Arabia and Palestine in order to resolve various problems. He insists on the fact that one need not visit the Holy City in order to have faith in the Lord. He also underscores that it is not the place in which one finds oneself that is important, but the goodness of one's own actions. This harsh judgment appears directed at preserving the isolation of monks which Basil had prescribed in his rule, something placed at risk by these journeys. *Epist 3*, directed to three women, describes Gregory's stay in Jerusalem, and adds to *Epist 2* a description of the theological environment of the Holy City. It begins with a praise of the virtues of pilgrimages to the places where the Lord lived and left traces of his Incarnation, but he counterbalances this positive judgment, stating that the dominion of evil is perceptible even there. He then recounts that he found the opposition of some clerics, and explains that these divisions should not be found among those who have a right faith. He then offers a résumé of the doctrine of the Incarnation, into which he inserts criticisms of those who oppose him: They had formed their own community, calling the Virgin "mother of man" rather than "Mother of God", and they defend millenarianism. It seems that those who opposed Gregory were the Judeo-Christians.

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Manuel Mira

KINÊSIS

κίνησις

Gregory's insistence on the presence of *kinêsis* ("motion, movement") in all of creation, along with that of *DIASTÊMA* (→), deeply informed his understanding of the relationships between the nature of the created order and the possible horizons of spiritual existence: "For it is not possible for anything which was created or is created not to have its being in either space or time" (GNO I, 136, 11–12). Rejecting Aristotle's and the Stoics' conception of a self-moving *kinetic* cosmos, Gregory framed his consideration of *kinêsis* within a theology of creation. The act of being created (specifically; following Athanasius, the act of being created *ex nihilo*), is in itself a *kinetic* experience—a movement from non-being to being. This initial alteration sets in motion the necessity of alteration as a mode of being—a mode of being that is a type of *kineticism* (κίνησις τίς ἐστιν) in itself: "Man was fashioned in the image of God . . . but exists in the nature of change according to necessity. For it was not possible that a being who derived his origin from an alteration should be altogether free from this liability. For the passing from a state of non-existence into that of existence is a kind of alteration . . . and being thus subject to alteration, he never continues in his existing state—for alteration is a certain kind of motion (*kinêsis*) continually advancing from the present state to another . . ." (GNO III/IV, 55, 6–23). To be created, therefore, is to be *kinetic*. Or as Gregory put it: "if ever it [creation] ceased to move, it would at the same moment cease to exist" (PG 46, 165A–C). In the ten lines that precede this last statement, there are no less than sixteen references to the perpetual motion of creation.

Gregory developed a number of significant theological implications from this notion of creation's *kinetic* existence. (1) The constant mutability of creation functions as an antidote to idolatry. There is nothing within the created cosmos that matches and, therefore, rivals the *akinetic* God [see BALTHASAR and PG 46, 129C]. (2) The very possibility of spiritual growth, the possibility of good "alteration," emerges from the combination of constant alteration and the moment-by-moment capacity that human being, due to its *kinetic* nature, has to choose God [see CANÉVET, 127]. That is, each created being is either moving toward God

in obedience (good *kinêsis*) or away from God in disobedience (bad *kinêsis*). (3) Because the human being cannot cease to move without ceasing to exist, there is no end to spiritual progress. God alone rests in his being; the human being is always becoming. Gregory's doctrine of *EPEKTASIS* (→) posits an eternal *kineticism* of movement toward God [see DANIELLOU, MÜHLENBERG] in which even "[the soul in heaven] learns that it is as far from having reached its end as those who have not yet undertaken their first steps" (GNO VI, 181, 8–10). The spiritual life, therefore, is a constant ascent deeply rooted in desire. (4) Consigned to the flux of constant becoming, the human being can never find a perfect moment of rest to know completely either the *akinetic* God or other *kinetic* created beings.

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Scot Douglass

LIFE

βίος, ζωή

1. LIFE AS βίος · 2. LIFE AS ζωή
3. RELATIONSHIP BETWEEN THE TWO TERMS.

The concept of life is particularly rich and nuanced in the Nyssen's theology, where it is fundamentally expressed by two terms, βίος (1) and ζωή (2). Both are frequent, with thousands of occurrences; the second term occurs several hundred more times. The relationship between the two (3) is complex, and cannot be reduced to an elementary schema, due to the depth of the implied concepts.

1. LIFE AS βίος. Concretely, βίος can refer to the life of the angels (*Mort*, GNO IX, 49, 4), even as a model for the life of human beings (*Cant*, GNO VI, 134, 10). Its use to indicate the corporeal and earthly life of human beings is obviously more common, as can be seen from the frequency with which the term is accompanied by τῶν ἀνθρώπων and the adjective ἀνθρώπινος. In certain cases, it refers to the suffering that characterizes the earthly life of human beings (*Thaum*, GNO X/1, 14, 19; *Sanct Pasch*, GNO IX, 249, 13). The expression many times refers to the specifically temporal dimension (ὁ κατ' ἡμᾶς βίος, ὁ βίος ἡμῶν, ὁ νῦν βίος) to indicate the humanity of the period in which Gregory wrote (*Bas*, GNO X/1, 124, 13). The significations of βίος embrace: a) the time of the first creation (*Sext ps*, GNO V, 188, 14), b) history marked by original sin (*Or cat*, GNO III/4, 74, 7), which was redeemed by the Incarnation of the Word, who made the life of man his own (*Cant*, GNO VI, 141, 12) in being born of the Virgin (*Diem nat*, GNO X/2, 236, 16), or finally, c) the life after the resurrection (*Cant*, GNO VI, 124, 10; *Eccl*, GNO V, 291, 6). The term can thus express the entire duration of human existence (*Bas*, GNO X/1, 123, 10. 12; *Cast*, GNO X/2, 330, 24), or one of its specific phases (*Infant*, GNO III/2, 75, 1), or a qualitative state (*Fat*, GNO III/2, 43, 6).

It is important to note how βίος often assumes the sense of moral life (ὁ ἠθικὸς βίος: *Perf*, GNO VIII/1, 200, 9), the life according to virtue (κατ' ἀρετήν; ἐνάρετος: *Cant*, GNO VI, 6, 16; 7, 8; 131, 10; 455, 18). This use is

important for understanding the theological significance of the term in the Nyssen's thought (see the final section). Sacred Scripture itself should serve the human being as a model to reach a virtuous life (*Eccl*, GNO V, 280, 1; *Inscr*, GNO V, 72, 10; 122, 1). In this manner the entire existence of the human being, his βίος, can become like a psalm, an ode and hymn of praise to God (*Inscr*, GNO V, 75, 17. 21; 76, 15. 19; 77, 19. 23). This possibility is radically founded in the earthly life of Christ itself, which must be imitated and followed (*Cant*, GNO VI, 271, 11; *Inst*, GNO VIII/1, 43, 16; *Beat*, GNO VII/2, 123, 26). This theme is particularly developed in *PERF* (→), in reference to the witness of the efficacy of the name of Christ, which identifies the Christian and must be manifested concretely in life (*Perf*, GNO VIII/1, 174, 11. 22. 23; 181, 19. 24; 210, 5. 12). It is for this reason that the narration of the biographies of the saints is so important: It is a true and proper praise of God, who has revealed his mercy in them, as well as a model that helps Christians to approach the likeness with God. The term βίος appears in this sense in the title of three of Gregory's works (*Macr*, *Vit Moys*, *Thaum*), and is extremely common in reference to the lives of the Patriarchs and Saints, in particular those to whom Gregory dedicated an encomium, such as Basil (*Bas*), Stephen the protomartyr (*Steph* I and II), the Forty martyrs of Sebaste (*Mart* Ia, Ib, II) and Theodore (*Theod*). For example, his sister Macrina is called *mistress of life* (τοῦ βίου διδάσκαλος; *Epist* 19, GNO VIII/2, 64, 14), so that her entire life merits narration: "Therefore, since you hold that the history of good works (τὴν τῶν ἀγαθῶν ἱστορίαν) will be of some usefulness, so that such a life (βίος) may not remain unknown in times to come, and that she herself who through a true philosophy ascended to the highest limits of human virtue may not pass without bearing fruit, veiled in silence, I thought it good to obey you and narrate her story (ἱστορεῖσαι) to you, briefly in so far as possible, in a simple narration without embellishments" (*Macr*, GNO VIII/1, 371, 16–23).

The images tied to βίος are also interesting in order to understand its role in the Nyssen's corpus: The most common association is between life and the dynamic idea of the path (ὁδός; *Eccl*, GNO V, 431, 14; *Quat uni*, GNO IX, 125, 21; *Inst*, GNO VIII/1, 64, 17), way (πορεία; *Cant*, GNO VI, 332, 6; *Eccl*, GNO V, 287, 10; *Inscr*, GNO V, 130, 22) and race (δρόμος; *Inst*, GNO VIII/1, 63, 15). Other images tied to βίος are those of labyrinth, (*Eccl*, GNO V, 379, 5; *Or cat*, GNO III/4, 87, 9), sleep (*Cant*, GNO VI, 287, 12; *Eun* I, GNO I, 350, 29) and that of a spider's web (*Inscr*, GNO V, 49, 13). Gregory particularly enjoys referring to life with terms that recall the sea, with expressions like ἡ θάλασσα τοῦ βίου (*Inscr*,

GNO V, 128, 18; *Melet*, GNO IX, 455, 8) or τὸ πέλαγος τοῦ βίου (*Cant*, GNO VI, 81, 13). He compares it to the stadium (*Steph* I, GNO X/1, 76, 13; *Inscr*, GNO V, 72, 26; 132, 22) and to the theater (*Beat*, GNO VII/2, 87, 24). As is clear, the Nyssen presents without mincing words the negative aspects of human βίος, which is even described as shackles and prison (*Melet*, GNO IX, 471, 18; *Mort*, GNO IX, 38, 17), but it is this awareness that permits him to express the radical freshness of Redemption, as the example of the CAVERN (→) shows, which alludes both to man's miserable condition (*Cant*, GNO VI, 212, 8) and to the Incarnation of Christ (*Steph* I, GNO X/1, 75, 9; *Diem nat*, GNO X/2, 257, 14), the Light who shines in the darkness. The theological value of βίος is well expressed by the image of the pomegranate, whose beauty is real due to the treasure that it contains inside itself: "For as the edible part of the pomegranate is enclosed in the peel, so too the visible beauty of life (βίου) indicates that treasure is found inside it" (*Cant*, GNO VI, 455, 14–17). To specify that which fills the significance of life, the source of this beauty, it is necessary to turn our attention to ζωή.

2. LIFE AS ζωή. This term indicates the principle and source of life itself. In this sense, ζωή refers to a concept which is intensively and extensively more vast. The expression indicates that reality whose negation is death (ἀντίκειται δὲ τῇ ζωῇ μὲν ὁ θάνατος: *Or cat*, GNO III/4, 26, 7), just as darkness is opposed to the light (*Deit fil*, GNO X/2, 129, 11). It is the same relationship as found between being and nothingness, between which there can be no metaphysical intermediary (*Eun* III, GNO II, 257, 17), in so far as death is nothing other than the absence of life (*Eccl*, GNO V, 403, 3), and EVIL (→) is nothing other than the absence of the good.

The term ζωή thus indicates the various forms of life that can be found in creation (*Infant*, GNO III/2, 79, 5; *Op hom*, PG 44, 142A), including that of angels (*Eust*, GNO III/1, 12, 23), animals (*Or dom*, GNO VII/2, 57, 16) and beings deprived of reason (ἄλογος ζωή: *Eccl*, GNO V, 419, 2). Human life is thus indicated with this term, in its corporeal and more properly diastematic dimension as well (ἡ κατὰ σάρκα ζωή, ἡ ἐν σαρκὶ ζωή, ἡ διὰ σαρκὸς ζωή: *Eccl*, GNO V, 378, 13; *An et res*, PG 46, 24B; *Mort*, GNO IX, 31, 15), as the space enclosed between birth and death, between the beginning and the end (*Epist*, GNO VIII/2, 25, 17; *Eun* II, GNO I, 246, 23). In this manner ζωή also assumes a chronological value (*Macr*, GNO VIII/1, 402, 22) analogous to that of βίος, in order to indicate the entire span of human life (*Inscr*, GNO V, 145, 11). In this context, expressions such as ἡ ζωὴ ἡμῶν, ἡ ἡμετέρα ζωή (*Virg*, GNO VIII/1, 388,

13; *Deit fil*, GNO X/2, 122, 16) and ἡ τῶν ἀνθρώπων ζωή, ἡ ἀνθρωπίνη ζωή (*Maced*, GNO III/1, 96, 26 e 112, 29) can be found, which have a precise parallel in the use of βίος. In this sense, ζωή is also placed in relation to the negative aspects of human existence, which is continually exposed to the tempests of the sea of life (*Inscr*, GNO V, 59, 2) so that it is like a prison (*Flacill*, GNO IX, 484, 12) and a labyrinth (*Eccl*, GNO V, 379, 6.10), all images that characterize βίος as well. Ζωή too is marked with pains and labors (*Beat*, GNO VII/2, 98, 1; *Virg*, GNO VIII/1, 258, 21), so that it passes like the grass (*Maced*, GNO III/1, 108, 12).

Like βίος, ζωή often has the meaning of moral life, in both the negative sense, as a life in iniquity (*Inscr*, GNO V, 116, 28), and more frequently in a positive sense, as life in virtue (κατ' ἀρετήν, δι' ἀρετῆς, ἐν ἀρετῇ, ἐνάρετος; *Perf*, GNO VIII/1, 192, 17; *Cant*, GNO VI, 81, 15; *Inscr*, GNO V, 40, 6 and 83, 22). It coincides with spiritual life (ἡ πνευματικὴ ζωή; *Cant*, GNO VI, 106, 4), the adjective here referring directly to the Holy Spirit, in so far as this is a life that is lived in personal communion with Him (*Virg*, GNO VIII/1, 305, 14; *Pent*, GNO X/2, 289, 9). This is thus the true (ἀληθῆ) life (*Cast*, GNO X/2, 325, 4), i.e. the superior life (ἡ ὑψηλὴ ζωή, ἡ ὑψηλοτέρα ζωή, ἡ ἄνω ζωή; *Beat*, GNO VII/2, 145, 19; *Eccl*, GNO V, 284, 18; *Cant*, GNO VI, 315, 20), which is defined by fixing one's regard on God (τὸ δὲ βλέπειν τὸν θεόν ἐστὶν ἡ ζωὴ τῆς ψυχῆς; *Infant*, GNO III/2, 79, 24–80, 1).

In commenting on the description of the bride as a *well of living water* (Ct 4.15), Gregory affirms that the expression *living water* indicates the divine life (*Cant*, GNO VI, 292, 19–20). The bride is thus conformed to the divine beauty, receiving the source in herself and herself becoming a source in turn, in so far as “she has properly imitated the source with source, the life with life (τῇ δὲ ζωῇ τὴν ζωὴν), water with water: For the Word of God is living, and living is the soul that has received it in herself” (*ibidem*, 293, 10–13). The true life of the human being is the life as participation and image of the divine life (*An et res*, PG 46, 60C; *Cant*, GNO VI, 271, 12), to which one has access through Baptism (*Maced*, GNO III/1, 105, 20), the formula of which recalls the Trinitarian life itself (*Epist*, GNO VIII/2, 33, 5–6)—The Father is the Source of life (ἡ πηγὴ τῆς ζωῆς), the Son is the Principle of life (ὁ ἀρχηγός τῆς ζωῆς), and the Holy Spirit is He who vivifies (τὸ ζωοποιεῖν).

The life which corresponds to the original image opens, thanks to the sacramental identification with Christ and the participation in his Paschal Mystery (*Trid spat*, GNO IX, 277–278), into the eternal life that will follow the resurrection (*Op hom*, GNO 44, 210A). This life

is characterized by adjectives such as ἄδιος (*Trid spat*, GNO IX, 279, 5), αἰώνιος (*Theod*, GNO X/1, 71, 15) and μακαρία (*Benef*, GNO IX, 103, 16)—this last being emblematic, often found along with θεῖος in reference to ζωή (MANN, 340). The end of human life thus corresponds to its beginning, that is, to that which man enjoyed in paradise (*An et res*, PG 46, 148A; *Beat*, GNO VII/2, 105, 17, 23)—an affirmation which is also at the root of the Nyssen's doctrine of the APOCATASTASIS (→) (*Op hom*, PG 44, 210B; *Virg*, GNO VIII/1, 302, 8). In this context, original sin is presented as the loss of the primordial life (*Ref Eun*, GNO II, 380, 20, 25; *Or cat*, GNO III/4, 36, 1 and 63, 11), in so far as ζωή is the gift of the three Trinitarian Persons to the human being (*Eust*, GNO III/1, 12, 3; *Abl*, GNO III/1, 48, 10, 15, 17 and 49, 2). The demon is thus defined as the enemy of life (πολέμιος, ἐχθρός, ἀντίπαλος: *Eccl*, GNO V, 425, 9; *Diem nat*, GNO X/2, 267, 8; *Steph I*, GNO X/1, 76, 2). For this very reason, however, Redemption is presented as the salvation of human life, of the entirety of human life (*Epist*, GNO VIII/2, 25, 18) in so far as Christ lived a human ζωή (*Theoph*, GNO III/1, 123, 7; *Diem nat*, GNO X/2, 238, 18–19). This is based upon the affirmation that God is the true life: Τὸ γὰρ ὄντως ὄν ἡ ἀληθὴς ἐστὶ ζωή (*Vit Moys*, SC 1bis, II, 235, 1).

The divine life is designated with the adjectives “divine” and “blessed” (θεία καὶ μακαρία: *Tunc et ipse*, GNO III/2, 9, 5), the term ζωή also appearing in the enumeration of the divine attributes, together, for example, with φῶς, ἀφθαρσία, τιμή, δόξα and ἀλήθεια (*Beat*, GNO VII/2, 148, 10; *An et res*, PG 46, 160C; *Fat*, GNO III/2, 58, 16). It is described as infinity and without limits (*Eun I*, GNO I, 217–219), free of any beginning or any end (*ibidem*, 135, 20).

The term ζωή then appears in the same discussion on the Trinitarian immanence, in as much as Eunomius attributed to the Father a superiority of life over the Son (*ibidem*, 78, 2 and 129, 1). Gregory proceeds by showing *per absurdum* that it is not possible to consider the divine life in quantitative terms, precisely because the negation of all limits to the life of the Son is required, unless one wishes to accept that the life of the Father is also determined in this, since, if the Son began to be, this beginning necessarily reflects on the Father (*ibidem*, 132–133). Instead, between the life of the Father and that of the Son there can be no distance (διάστας, μέσον: *Eun III*, GNO II, 219). Thus the life of the Son must be eternal (ἄδιος) like that of the Father, since the second Person of the Trinity is *Life from Life*, just as He is *Light from Light* (ὥς γὰρ ἐκ φωτός φῶς καὶ ζωή ἐκ ζωῆς: *Eun I*, GNO I, 223–224). In this manner it is clear that the Son himself is defined as ζωή because He is God, and God is

αὐτοζωή (*Eun* III, GNO II, 212, 16). Gregory does nothing more than develop the content of the Johannine Prologue (*ibidem*, 8, 19, 22, 188, 8 and 253, 25), showing how, if it were true that the Son had begun to be in some way, it would necessarily follow that all that He is would not have yet been. In this manner the Father would not have been ζωή before the generation of the Son, in so far as neither life, nor light, nor truth nor the good would have existed (*ibidem*, 235), and the bosom of the Father would have been deprived of them (*Ref Eun*, GNO II, 316).

In the same way, Gregory states that Life is in the Holy Spirit as well, precisely because He is the One who gives life (*ibidem*, 397, 13; *Pent*, GNO X/2, 288, 21): One must then confess that the three Persons of the Trinity are a unique vivifying power (μία ζωοποιὸν ἐξουσίαν) and a unique life (μία ζών: *Maced*, GNO III/1, 115, 25–26).

That which was said in reference to the Son extends also, in the soteriological domain, to Christ, perfect God and perfect man, to whom the attribute of ζωή is applied (*Antirrh*, GNO III/1, 219, 18; *Eun* III, GNO II, 242, 12; *Prof*, GNO VIII/1, 134, 18). By the Incarnation, the divine life became present in human life (*Diem nat*, GNO X/2, 238, 18–19) in such a way that death itself is destroyed by the power of life (*Inscr*, GNO V, 57, 9; *Or cat*, GNO III/4, 63, 9). Thus Christ is the ἀρχηγὸς τῆς ζωῆς (*Ref Eun* II, GNO II, 346, 3) and πηγὴ τῆς ζωῆς (*Cant*, GNO VI, 41, 8).

3. RELATIONSHIP BETWEEN THE TWO TERMS. From the analysis of ζωή and βίος, it appears that in many cases they are interchangeable—various images are applied to both of them, and their semantic spectrum is obviously overlapping. In certain texts the two terms appear side by side in order to refer to the life of animals (*Or cat*, GNO III/4, 17, 18; *Beat*, GNO VII/2, 107, 6), or to the life of human beings (*Infant*, GNO III/2, 72, 14; *Eccl*, GNO V, 379, 6, 10). The same is true in the ethical domain (*Thaum*, GNO X/1, 12, 3; *Fat*, GNO III/2, 34, 1) as well as in the soteriological domain (*Op hom*, PG 44, 210B). In many cases, the proximity of the two terms appears to be dictated by stylistic concerns alone, in order to avoid repetition (*Eccl*, GNO V, 291, 6; *Mort*, GNO IX, 28, 8): this witnesses to an evident synonymous usage.

In other passages however, the two terms are used with a clear difference, as when Gregory affirms: “For also that which happens receives its own power according to the dispositions of the heart of him who approaches the sacramental economy, so that he who confesses that the Most Holy Trinity is uncreated enters into the immutable and invariable

life (ζωήν), while he who, through erroneous conviction, sees created nature in the Trinity and is baptized in this [error], is born anew to the changing and variable life (βίωφ)” (*Or cat*, GNO III/4, 100, 1–7). In this text, ζωή indicates eternal life, immutable in the good, while βίος refers to the changing and historical life. This distinction could suggest a clear difference between the terms, all the more since other passages suggest the same thing (*Infant*, GNO III/2, 83, 5; 84, 18; *Cant*, GNO VI, 156, 11; *Thaum*, GNO X/1, 38, 14), especially chapter XXXII of *Or cat*, dedicated to the parallel between the generation in the flesh and baptismal regeneration, where Gregory presents the effect of the sacrament in the following manner: “When the mortal comes to life (ζωήν), this first generation (γενέσεως) introduces to mortal life (βίον). It was thus logical that another generation should arise, which does not have its origin in corruption nor does it end in corruption, but which introduces the one who is generated into the immortal life (ζωήν), so that, as that which has begun with a mortal generation necessarily receives a mortal existence, so too, that which has begun with a generation that does not admit corruption should be superior to the corruption of death” (*Or cat*, GNO III/4, 82, 6–14). The use of ζωή manifests the intra-Trinitarian roots of the sacramental dynamic, which, as an introduction to eternal life, flows from the same eternal generation that characterizes divine life.

This distinction is nevertheless not so rigorous, since other passages can be adduced in which the role of ζωή and that of βίος is simply inverted, in reference to the relationship between the present life and the future life (*Pulcher*, GNO IX, 469, 13; *Mort*, GNO IX, 34, 15 and 45, 18), or to the weight of this earthly life compared to the true and authentic life (*Cant*, GNO VI, 283, 1; *Inscr*, GNO V, 88, 6). All that can be affirmed with certainty is that ζωή represents a greater range of significations, and is in a certain sense a more generic term. Its specificity is that of expressing the concept of the divine life itself: in this sense it indicates the source of life itself, and therefore in many cases can indicate supernatural life. As for βίος on the other hand, one can affirm that it is never applied to the Trinitarian life, while its specificity appears to be the reference to the temporal, chronological and narrative dimension.

On the basis of this information, certain texts can be useful in tracing a brief theological profile of the relationship between ζωή and βίος. Gregory writes in *Inscr*: “He who truly and in the right manner aims at theology (πρὸς τὴν θεολογίαν) will certainly show that his own life (βίον) is in accordance with faith. This does not occur in any other way than the end of the carnal rebellion through virtuous practice. The

summit of virtue is the alliance (συμμαχία) with God, of which is found worthy he who with his own life (διὰ τῆς ζωῆς) conforms himself to the divine mercy" (*Inscr*, GNO V, 148,21–149,1). The dynamic to which the text appears to refer moves from θεολογία, i.e. from the contemplation of the life of the Father, the Son and the Holy Spirit, a life that must be reflected in everyday life, in the human βίος, which is characterized by the struggle against the passions. The movement cannot however be limited to this struggle in a negative sense, since it is necessary to fight one's battle on God's side, together with Him, so that one's interior life (ζωή) may be conformed to the image of his mercy.

This contemplative and descending element of the relationship between ζωή and βίος finds its ascendant correlate in μίμησις, made possible by the Incarnation of the Son: "For this [the Lord] calls the peacemaker *son of God*, because he becomes an imitator (μιμητής) of the true Son, who gives these goods to the life (ζωῇ) of men. Therefore, blessed are the peacemakers, for they will be called sons of God. And who are they? They are those who imitate the love of God for men, that is, those who show that which is proper to the activity of God in their own life (βίου)" (*Beat*, GNO VII/2, 159, 13–19). One can thus note how ζωή and βίος are correlated terms, referring to each other in a circularity which is founded on the relationship between being and action: The divine life, with the love that characterizes it, must become visible and efficacious in the life of the human being, i.e. in his history (βίος), based upon the same relationship that is found between the efficient principle and its manifestation. At the same time, this is possible only because God, invisible in himself, has offered to the human being in the life (βίος) of the incarnated Son the path to transfigure his own life (ζωή): "Therefore, if we too must become images of the invisible God, it is fitting that the form of our life (τῆς ζωῆς ἡμῶν) be conformed to the model of the life (βίου) which is proposed to us" (*Perf*, GNO VIII/1, 195, 5–8).

The life of the human being, his history and his biography rise to the highest dignity, since in Christ they have become the path to reach God, so that the term βίος, in its relationship with ζωή, plays a fundamental role in Nyssen's thought (G. MASPERO, 418). For this reason, the affirmation of T. Špidlík in reference to the Cappadocian context, that "for a Christian, the only value consists in *zoē*" (T. ŠPIDLÍK, 107) seems to need to be extended in the sense that Trinitarian ζωή remains the foundation and principle of every life, and this in a unique manner the life of the human being, in which the connection between ζωή and filiation is manifested—itself the true heart of immanence. This ζωή is however

accessible to the Christian only through the sacramental union with the βίος of Christ, who makes the imitation of his life real and possible, thus making human life true life.

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Giulio Maspero

LIGHT

The concept of “light” and its lexical family recurs with such frequency in Gregory’s writings that it is impossible to attempt to exhaustively document its use, much less analyze it, in a brief article, even limiting oneself to the Greek and its derivatives.

φῶς (in all cases and numbers) occurs 582 times, if I have calculated exactly—but in its relationships the following numbers give an adequate backdrop—φωστήρ (“luminary”, “light-[of heaven]”) 30, φωταγωγέω, φωταγωγία, φωταγωγός (“lead towards the light” etc.) 8 times in all, φωτεινός (“luminous”, “clear”, “shining”) 20, φωτίζω (“illuminate”) 40, φῶτισμα (“illumination” [through Baptism]) 2 times (*Or cat* 32, GNO III/4, 82; *Cant* 2, GNO VI, 52, 17–53, 2), φωτισμός (“illumination” in the physical, mental or spiritual sense) 5 times, φωτιστικός (“illuminating”) 25, φωτοειδής (“luminous”) 11 and φωτοφόρος (“light bearer” or “light bringer”) once (*Lucifres*, tit., GNO IX, 315, 3).

There are three main reasons for the large number of occurrences: first of all, Gregory is a “typical Greek” in this as in other respects: he is a highly visual man. Secondly, the larger part of the aforementioned concepts recurs with extraordinary frequency in the Greek Bible, whether in the Old or New Testament. As noted, Gregory loves to work with biblical citations and allusions, even if not in a uniform manner in all of his writings. Finally, there is his general endeavor to speak with the greatest clarity possible, or better, to give the reader the possibility to (at least) interiorly contemplate the principal concepts that he expounds and to recognize their coherence (ἀκολουθία); for this reason he continually returns to examples of nature and to metaphors.

Only a few of the many examples of comparisons from nature can be cited here: cf. *Eun* I, GNO I, 101, 6 (contrary realities that cannot contain and enclose each other reciprocally, such as fire and water or light and darkness); 224, 2 (light comes from light as life comes from life); *Eun* II, GNO I, 230, 8 (nocturnal foraging of animals that are dazzled by light); 402, 5 (where there is not light, there is darkness, where there is not life, there is death); *Epist* 3, GNO VIII/2, 23, 21 ff. (beyond the alternating of night and day, there is always a unique light); *Ad Simpl*, GNO III/1, 63, 26–64, 15 (the relation between God the Father and God the Son is like the relationship of light [φῶς] and lamp [λύχνος]).

There is metaphorical use of language when, for example, it is said that a project “was brought to light” only with much fatigue and labor (ὁψὲ δέ ποτε καὶ μόγις) like a difficult birth (*Eun* I, GNO I, 24, 8s), or when Gregory speaks of the “light of the conscience” (φῶς τῆς γνώσεως) or finally when Paul defines the Son as “radiance of the glory” of God the Father (*Ref Eun* 222, GNO II, 406, 4–9; *Simpl*, GNO III/1, 26 f.). Naturally, one must understand it as a metaphor when, with a high frequency one speaks, as in Gregory, of light in God, particularly in reference to the divine Logos. By metaphor here, in conformity with the Aristotelian definition (*Poetics*, 21, 145b), is understood the “transfer of a name of another kind”, i.e. the transfer from one thing to another (as the anonymous author of *ad Herennium: Rhet. ad Herenn.* IV, 34, 45 affirms). Aristotle distinguishes four types of metaphor in the aforementioned writing. The fourth (metaphor according to analogy) is the most important for him. “Analogy” is further understood as an equality of relationship (proportionality), as in the example of the relationship between old age and life compared to the relationship between evening and the day. From this the metaphor of the “evening of life” is derived, with the metaphorical sense of “the brief form of a relationship condensed in a unique word” (this is Cicero’s definition, *De orat.* III, 157, in perfect accord with the author of *Rhet.* III, 4, 1406b–1470a).

In Gregory, however, the terminology of light does not only appear in comparisons and metaphors. As a biblical exegete, he finds numerous occasions to form and express concepts of the natural light and its sources as well (sun, fire, lamps, candles). Above all, the narrations of creation at the beginning of the Bible, particularly the first, and the book of Psalms offer material and motifs in abundance.

Reference has already been made to the writings which contain a particularly large number of affirmations about “light and lights”: *Hex* (PG 44, 61–124), and in a lesser measure *Op hom* (PG 44, 124–256), *Inscr* (GNO V, 1–175) and various homilies. Gregory’s interpretation in the *Hexaemeron* (he briefly but clearly treats the theme, cfr. J.C.M. VAN WINDEN, in the entry “Hexaemeron,” in *RAC*, XIV, 1988, 1250–1269, esp. 1260–1263) and as a whole his understanding of the creation of light (on the first day of creation) and lights (on the fourth day) show that, like his dead brother Basil, Gregory too endeavors to remain close to the literal sense, but delineates a global interpretation of the history of creation that resolves, in his eyes, the problems that Basil’s adversaries had discovered in his interpretation. Thus Basil did not know how to explain that, before the creation of the sun on the fourth day, one could

already speak of day and night, or what relationship the heaven of Gn 1.1 has to that of Gn 1.8. Gregory replies: At the beginning of the work of creation, of which Gn 1.1 speaks, God created at once the seeds of all things (τὰς ἀφορμὰς καὶ τὰς αἰτίας καὶ τὰς δυνάμεις): One thing derives from another according to a predetermined order (τάξις), which the account of creation describes as if it were a treatise of physics in narrative form (*Hex*, PG 44, 72 BC: ... ἐν διηγήσεως εἶδει περὶ τῶν δογμάτων φιλοσοφήσας (i.e., Moses); cf. *Eun* II 226, GNO I, 291). The same is true of light, that is the unique light of the beginning (Gn 1.3–4; cf. *Hex*, PG 44, 113D: φῶς, οὐχὶ φῶτα γεννηθῆναι προστάξας) and the multitude of “lights (φωστῆρες)” (Gn 1.14), as if they developed from the unique “illuminating power” (φωτιστικὴ δύναμις) thanks to the divine principle (λόγος) present in creation. Gregory’s interpretation of the history of creation also manifests numerous reminiscences of contemporary philosophy and natural sciences (e.g. meteorology) and their “potentialities” (cf. *Op hom*, PG 44, 201C: οἱ δεινοὶ τὰ μετέωρα; *Eun* II, 278. 280 f.: GNO I, 308, 4–15; 309, 1–7).

As for the fact that it is above all in the case of the Son of God that one should speak of the “true light”, the biblical witness is decisive (naturally, the central reference here is to the Johannine prologue), a witness that is incomprehensibly neglected by adversaries such as Eunomius (*Eun* III, 1, 131–135; GNO II, 47, 26–49, 12; cf. for the interpretation of Jn, esp. 1, 1 ff.). It is thus evident in itself that the concept of light, taken from the realm of sensible realities and referred to the divine Logos, must be understood in a metaphorical sense. This, unlike the concept of Son, does not indicate the essence, “the sublime and inexpressible glory” (δόξα) of God the Father, but—like “corner stone” (λίθος), “pastor” (ποιμὴν) or “resurrection” (ἀνάστασις)—indicates his “multiplex providential action of salvation” (τὸ ποικίλον τῆς προνοητικῆς οἰκονομίας) (*ibidem*). See also *ibidem* 8, 10 f., GNO II, 242, 8–26: “I instead, taught by the divinely inspired Scripture, openly declare (θαροσῶν ἀποφαίνομαι) that He who is above any name receives many names for our good (ὁ ὑπὲρ πᾶν ὄνομα ὢν ἡμῖν πολυώνυμος γίνεται), and according to the multiplicity of his goods, is called light when he causes the darkness of ignorance to disappear, life, when He gives immortality, path, when He leads from error to truth ...” All of these are indicators of a unique, stupendous mystery (θαῦμα τοῦ μυστηρίου), affirmations of sovereignty which are just as valid and credible as the affirmations of inferiority on which the heretics continue to insist (cf. *ibidem* 3, 35, GNO II, 120, 5–11 and 3, 32, GNO II, 119, 11–14).

The relationship of the Son, as “true light”, with the Father, who (according to 1 Tim 6.16) “dwells in inaccessible light” (φῶς οἰκῶν ἀπρόσιτον; cfr. *Eun* III, 5, 55, GNO II, 180, 1–12; *Hex*, PG 44, 81B) and, unlike the “(only) engendered light” (γεννητὸν ὁ μονογενὲς φῶς), can be called “unengendered light” (ἀγέννητον φῶς), can be clarified by us, according to Gregory, through the relationship of the sun and ray (*Eun* I, 532–534, GNO I, 180, 14–181, 11).

The Spirit of God is also not excluded. Thus, as God and light can be reciprocally identified (1 Jn 1.5: ὁ θεὸς φῶς ἐστίν), and God and Spirit (Jn 4.24: πνεῦμα ὁ θεός), so too, according to Gregory, one can also state: “If God and Spirit are a unique essence (εἰ δὲ μία φύσις τοῦ Θεοῦ καὶ τοῦ πνεύματος), since God is light, so too could the Spirit of God also be light” (*Hex*, PG 44, 81B; cf. also *Eun* I, 378 f., GNO I, 138, 5–20; 533 f., 180, 28–181, 11: the Spirit is also light, who shines by means of the Son, [γεννητὸν φῶς], but who possesses the cause of his hypostasis in the original light; and being light himself, He accomplishes the works of the light; *Ref Eun* 222, GNO II, 406,4–9).

Adolf Martin Ritter

LITURGY

There are two aspects of Gregory's important contributions in the field of liturgy: theological reflection on the liturgy and the testimony he offers to the situation of liturgical feasts in his time.

The theological dimension of the liturgy, in the Nyssen's universe, is situated relative to the following axes: 1) the theology of the PRIESTHOOD (→) of Christ and of Christians. 2) the theology of the Sanctuary (→ ADYTON). 3) the strength with which he underscores the presence of the Spirit and the power of words in liturgical activities. A long passage dedicated to the power of priestly benediction and the action of the Holy Spirit in sacramental action is highly instructive on this point: The Spirit blesses the body that is baptized and blesses the water that baptizes, He consecrates the altar for the cult to God, He transforms the bread into the Body of Christ and transforms the priest, converting him into *mystagogue* of hidden mysteries (*Diem lum*, GNO IX, 225–226).

The term MYSTERY (→) occupies an important place in Gregory's writings and is applied to many areas, among others to the liturgical celebration. *Mystagogy* often designates sacramental initiation. It also designates the celebration of the Eucharist (DANIÉLOU 1944, 179–183). BAPTISM (→) is the initiation which permits participation in the mystery of cult, whose center is in turn constituted by the Eucharistic liturgy: this is the mystery to which baptism introduces the catechumen in the Easter vigil. Gregory describes the EUCHARIST (→) as the sacrament of bread and wine transformed into the body and blood of Christ through the sacramental action of the priest (*Bapt* GNO X/2, 362). What is said of the sacraments should be extended to the whole of Christian worship, of which they form the center: Easter is the great mystery (*Salut Pasch*, GNO IX, 309–310); Christmas is "the mystery of the true feast of tabernacles" (*Diem nat*, GNO X/2, 236–237).

The liturgy is essentially formed of *logoi* and *actions* (*Salut Pasch*, GNO IX, 309–310). The *Logoi* are the readings that refer to the events of the OT and NT; the actions are the liturgical rites. Christian liturgy is an efficacious memorial of the great events of the history of salvation. Thus, for example, in his liturgical homilies, Gregory accentuates the relationship that exists between the crossing of the Red Sea, the Resurrection of Christ and Baptism. The lights of the Easter vigil recall the column of fire

of the Exodus, and the light of Christ. Liturgy is a ritual imitation of the events of the history of salvation which generates a mysterious participation in those events and actions.

In the fourth century, a major development in liturgy occurred. The feast of Easter was subdivided into distinct feasts of the same cycle: Easter, Ascension and Pentecost. Another cycle around Christmas in the West and Epiphany in the Orient also developed. Gregory provides abundant information on the celebrations of the cycles of Easter and Christmas. In the Paschal sermons, Gregory underscores, logically enough, the Resurrection of the Lord, while at the same time offering interesting details about the celebration of the Easter vigil. In it, the true repose of the Sabbath is celebrated, in which the Lord rests from his works; the light of the torches guides the faithful as the luminous cloud guided the Hebrew people in the desert.

The multitude of the faithful sings psalms and hymns throughout the night. The light of candles and the light of the new fire make the Paschal night the festival of light (*Salut Pasch*, GNO IX, 309–311). These are the same themes found in Ambrose's *Exsultet*, a contemporary text. Gregory's homily on the Ascension (GNO IX, 323–327) is the first witness to this feast as an autonomous feast celebrated fifty days after Easter. His homily on the Pentecost is also important; in it, the feast appears not only as a conclusion to the Paschal cycle, but principally as the celebration of the descent of the Holy Spirit (GNO X/2, 287–292). Gregory also speaks of the Lenten time as preparation for the Paschal feasts, as preparation for Baptism and Reconciliation. Gregory also speaks of FASTING (→) in interesting terms (*Benef*, GNO IX, 93–99).

From Gregory's sermons it can be discerned that the Christmas cycle was in full development. The most ancient feast was that of January 6, celebrated in both East and West as the feast of the manifestation of Christ. In it, Christ's birth, the adoration of the Magi, Christ's baptism and the wedding at Cana were celebrated. The feast of Christmas is reported in Rome for the first time in 336. It appears that the Cappadocian Fathers were the first to adopt it in the Orient. There is a sermon of Gregory for December 25 and another for January 6 (*Diem nat*, GNO X/2, 253–269 and *Diem Lum*, GNO IX, 221–242). At the beginning of his *Praise of Basil*, Gregory describes the feast of Christmas as a feast of the *theophany* of the Only Begotten which took place in his birth from the Virgin (*Bas*, GNO X/1, 109). Inside the Christmas cycle, we have two more of Gregory's sermons: one for the day after Christmas, dedicated to St. Stephen—again the most ancient witness to the celebration of his feast

on December 26 (GNO X/1, 75–76). After the celebration of St. Stephen, Gregory also speaks of the celebration of the Apostles Peter, James, John and Paul (*Bas*, GNO X/1, 109–110).

There are also abundant pieces of evidence in Gregory concerning the development of the Sanctoral and the cult of relics. There is a panegyric of Gregory dedicated to the martyr Theodore (GNO X/1, 61–71) as well as three panegyrics dedicated to the martyrs of Sebaste, who were entombed on his family's property (GNO X/1, 137–169). On the anniversary of their martyrdom, the faithful gathered at the place in which the bodies of the martyrs were buried. The celebration of the feast was preceded by the celebration of a vigil. The large gathering of the faithful at these celebrations led to the construction of *martyria*. Gregory's letter 25 to Amphilocheus of Iconium, which contains a detailed description of a project for a *martyrium*, is interesting in this respect (GNO VIII/2, 79–83).

Finally, *Macr* (GNO VIII/1, 398–410) contains a detailed description of a Christian death and the funeral liturgy: in the hour of death, Macrina asks to be turned to face the Orient and prays, asking God to send her an angel of light to carry her to paradise. She then crosses her eyes, mouth and heart with the sign of the Cross. At evening fall, a lamp is lighted and Macrina recites the hymn *Phôs hilaron*. After her death, those who live in the monastery celebrate a funeral vigil similar to the vigil for the anniversary of the feasts of martyrs. The following day Macrina is carried in procession to her sepulcher.

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LOGOPHASIS

Logophasis never appears in the writings of Gregory. The neologism serves, nevertheless, to designate a characteristic feature of Gregory's theory of apophatic union with God. Simply stated, *logophasis* refers to the manifestation of God the Word (*Logos*), who speaks (*phasis*) through the deeds and discourse of those who experience divine union. Examples of *logophasis* appear in that work chiefly concerned with divine union, the *Homilies on the Song of Songs* (*Cant.* I, GNO VI, 15, 15) and are typically situated in a context of apophatic union. The manifestation of *logophasis* is seen in the *effect* that the deeds and discourse of the bride, Paul, John (among others who experience divine union), have on those who surround them. For Gregory divine union has a double face, *apophasis* and *logophasis*. The following examples serve to highlight the manifestation of *logophasis* in Gregory's apophatic theology. In each case we shall see an experience of divine union followed by speech or action that transforms those who witness it.

The bride in the *Homilies on the Song of Songs* is the outstanding example of *logophasis*. As Gregory comments on Cant 1–4 in Homily Six, he depicts the bride's union with the Beloved, a union characterized by Gregory's signature theme, *epektasis* (LAIRD, 2007), and situated in an apophatic ascent featuring language of letting go (*aphairesis*). She is "embraced by the divine night" and "seeks the Beloved in darkness." She "abandons knowledge gained by sense perception." The Beloved ever escapes the grasp of her thought, and so she continues her ascent in search of Him. Realizing that her Beloved can be known only in not knowing, the bride says, "I left every creature and passed by every intelligible being in creation; having forsaken every manner of comprehension, I found my beloved by faith" (*Cant.* VI, GNO VI, 181,12–183,9). For Gregory's bride, finding God by the grasp of faith is an experience of apophatic union (LAIRD, 2004, 85–107; CANÉVET, 63). It is important to note the apophatic motifs of ascent, letting go, and oxymoron: the bride ascends through levels of knowledge; she leaves behind and forsakes every manner of comprehension; the coincidence of knowing and unknowing. It is in just such apophatic ascents that *logophasis* appears; just after this experience of apophatic union, the bride begins to speak. She addresses the daughters of Jerusalem in Cant 3.5: "I have charged

you, O daughters of Jerusalem . . ." It is crucial to note not simply what she says, but the *effect* which her words have on them: the bride "makes the daughters rise so that the bridegroom's will might be fulfilled in them" (*Cant* VI, GNO VI, 184, 14–15). This, then, is *logophasis*: by virtue of the bride's union with the Word, her words become a vehicle of the Word. Through her words the Bridegroom causes the daughters of Jerusalem to rise and seek Him.

Other examples abound. In Homily I, Gregory comments on *Cant* 1.2, "Let him kiss me with the kisses of his mouth." We see the bride approach the Bridegroom to place her mouth on his. Union is symbolized by this kiss (CANÉVET, 344; CORTESI, 177–179), with the result that "words of eternal life well forth, filling the mouth drawn to it" (*Cant* I, GNO VI, 32, 13–14). The effect of this union is that the bride is filled with words. Gregory links this in Homily 9 to the Bridegroom's observation of the bride: "Your heart has become a honeycomb full of every kind of instruction" (*Cant* 9, GNO VI, 270, 7–8). In Homily 4 the bride is shot by the divine arrow. As a result of this divine indwelling, the bride herself becomes an arrow and even while at rest in the arms of the Beloved, she is paradoxically shot forth by the archer (God). Once again she begins to speak to the daughters of Jerusalem, instructing them and leading them in a life of virtue (*Cant* IV, GNO VI, 131, 4–10). The power of the Word speaks through the words of the bride.

Logophasis is likewise manifested in the deeds and discourse of Paul and John. Paul breathes in the good odor of Christ. As a result of this divine indwelling, he becomes a fragrant presence of Christ in the Church. In Homily 3 Titus, Silvanus, and Timothy are transformed when they inhale Paul's fragrance, which bears the presence of Christ (*Cant.* III, GNO VI, 91, 17–92, 4). By inhaling the fragrant Word, Paul himself has become fragrant, and through this Word-bearing fragrance the Word is transmitted in the Church. In Homily 14 Thecla hears Paul speak. Because the Word is incarnate in his words, Thecla is transformed into a divine dwelling place: "After [Paul's] teaching . . . the Word alone lived in her" (*Cant.* XIV, GNO VI, 405, 7–9). John places his heart like a sponge on the Lord's breast, which is a fountain of life, and is filled with an ineffable transmission (an apophatic term for Gregory). But John is not content to rest in this loving communion. Because he is in communion with the Word Incarnate, he participates in the incarnating dynamic of the Word. Therefore, John offers us the breast "filled by the Word and fills us with the good things he got from the fountain of goodness" (*Cant.* I, GNO VI, 41, 10–13).

Logophasis is the consummation of Gregory's apophatic theology. Because of the incarnating dynamic of the Word, those who are united with the Word become vehicles of the Word, transforming those who see and hear them by the power of the Word in their deeds and discourse.

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Martin Laird

LOVE

ἀγάπη, ἔρωσ

1. MYSTICISM · 2. TRINITARIAN DIMENSION
3. RELATIONSHIP BETWEEN ἈΓΑΠΗ AND ἘΡΩΣ.

Since it is in conformity with biblical language, the frequency of the term ἀγάπη in the Nyssen's writings is not surprising. Including the derivative verbs and adjectives, it occurs hundreds of times. The use of ἔρωσ is different, its usage being less frequent, though nevertheless occurring dozens of times. Despite the quantitative difference, the use of the second term is striking, both for its reference to the physical dimension and for the fundamental role that it has in Platonic philosophy and tradition. Gregory, who is quite aware of the distinction between the terms (G. HORN, 379–380), uses ἀγάπη and the verb that refers to it to express both the love of God for human beings (*Or cat*, GNO III/4, 17, 2; *Cant*, GNO VI, 123, 5; 461, 14), and to indicate the response of human love which is directed towards the Lord (*Eun I*, GNO I, 127, 7; *Eccl*, GNO V, 425, 10; *Inst*, GNO VIII/1, 61, 7). Following 1 Jn 4, the term is used by the Nyssen to indicate the divine nature itself (*Op hom*, PG 44, 137C; *Perf*, GNO VIII/1, 203, 22). In this sense, ἀγάπη is a very general term, indicating both divine love and human love, according to a movement that can be either descending or ascending. The term ἔρωσ is on the other hand exclusively ascending: Gregory, who knows the ordinary uses of the term (*Eccl*, GNO V, 387, 18), often collates it to adjectives such as οὐράνιος, καθαρός (*Virg*, GNO VIII/1, 328, 11), μακάριος, ἀπαθής (*Inst*, GNO VIII/1, 40, 10) and θεῖος (*Cant*, GNO VI, 192, 1.4) in order to purify its meaning.

The analysis will be developed by first of all presenting love in its most common context, i.e. in *mysticism* (1), then deepening the theological foundation for this use with reference to the *Trinitarian dimension* which characterizes the term ἀγάπη (2), then concluding with the synthesis of the *relationship between ἀγαπη and ἔρωσ* (3).

1. MYSTICISM. The expressions linked to ἀγάπη and ἔρωσ characterize the mystical writings of the Nyssen in a particular manner. In fact, love is

the fundamental category of Gregory's SPIRITUAL THEOLOGY (→), where he develops the Origenian perspective. Origen had identified the summit of mysticism in contemplation and knowledge. The Nyssen, on the other hand, manages to affirm the primacy of the unitive dimension present in ἀγάπη, so that from θεωρία and γνῶσις the summit of the spiritual ascent passes to ἀγάπη. In *Cant* especially, Gregory affirms that there are three ways to be saved: by fear, by hope and by love (διὰ τῆς ἀγάπης), this last being the most perfect path (*Cant*, GNO VI, 15, 17–18). The most elevated state of the soul, in which one adheres “to the Word by a disposition of love” (ἐρωτικῇ τινι διαθέσει: *ibidem*, 461, 10–11), belongs to it. The Nyssen has recourse to mystic vocabulary to express the union (ἀνάγκρσις) of man with God, a union that constitutes the true end of mystical life. In doing this, Gregory uses both ἔρως and ἀγάπη.

In 1930, the Swedish scholar Nygren, in his voluminous work *Eros und Agape*, a highly important study for the understanding of these two concepts, maintained that the Fathers of the Church, and the Nyssen in particular, succumbed to the temptation of Hellenization, deforming the Gospel notion of love by replacing the notion of Christian ἀγάπη with the Platonic ἔρως (NYGREN, 232).

The first of these two terms is extraneous to classical Greek, but appears in the LXX translation of the Song of Songs to express human love, perhaps an indicator of a local use, typical of Egypt in this period. In the New testament, ἀγάπη, indicating the love of God for the human being and the love that unites human beings among themselves, is characterized as the descent of the superior towards the inferior, in pure gift, a movement opposed to that of Platonic ἔρως. For paganism, every humiliation was in fact a fall, as can be seen in both Platonic and Gnostic cosmology.

In Gregory, the proper signification of the terms of ἔρως and ἀγάπη remains difficult to distinguish, since the latter indicates “the interior disposition towards that which pleases us” (πρὸς τὸ καταθύμιον ἐνδι-άθετος σχέσις: *An et res*, PG 46, 93C), so that it can lead not only to good, but also to evil. The essential idea is that love leads the soul to unite itself to that which it loves (κατακινῶνται τὸ ἀγαπώμενον.: *Eccl*, GNO V, 417, 22), being “a love of enjoyment that implies a fusion” (J. DANIELOU 1944, 202). Gregory states: “When the soul, once having become simple, in unity and authentic likeness with God, finds the true, simple and immaterial good, it adheres to that which alone is truly lovable (ἀγαπητὸν) and desirable (ἐράσιμον) thanks to the movements and

activities of charity (διὰ τῆς ἀγαπητῆς κινήσεώς τε καὶ ἐνεργείας), conforming itself to that which it learns and continually discovers" (*An et res*, PG 46, 93C).

It is important to remember that the mystical aspect in the Nyssen is bound inseparably to sacramental life, since the Eucharist itself is presented as the supreme revelation and realization of love. Speaking of virtue as the good odor of Christ, he says that, as "the disposition of love naturally realizes the union with that which is loved" (ἡ δὲ ἀγαπητικὴ σχέσις τὴν πρὸς τὸ ἀγαπώμενον ἀνάγκρᾳ φυσικῶς κατεργάζεται: *Eccl*, GNO V, 422, 20–21), so "we become that which we love (διὰ τῆς φιλίας ἐλώμεθα), either the good odor of Christ or a bad odor. In fact, the person who loves (ἀγαπήσας) the beautiful will also be beautiful, in so far as the goodness of that which is in them transforms the person who has received it into itself. For this reason, *He who always* is offers himself to us as food, so that, receiving Him in us, we become that which He is" (*ibidem*, 422,21–423,6)

In this passage one notes that, for Gregory, participation is not preexistent to ἀγάπη, as is the case with the Platonic ἔρως. This is not a necessary return to the divine sphere, which would correspond to the soul's true nature, but the participation and free communication that God makes to the soul of his divine life: "Love is not the consequence, but the cause of participation and union" (J. DANÉLOU 1944, 203). This transformation will have no end (→ *EPEKTASIS*). It is essential to understand that growth in love does not fill an emptiness in the soul, but it is rather grace itself which both expands and fills the capacity to love in man at each moment: "No fulfillment interrupts the disposition of love (τὴν ἀγαπητικὴν σχέσιν) towards the Beautiful, but the divine life (ἡ θεία ζωή) always acts in charity (δί' ἀγάπης), which is beautiful by nature and possesses a disposition of love towards that which is beautiful, having no limits in the exercise of love (κατὰ τὴν ἀγάπην), since the Beautiful has no limits, so that love is unlimited as the Beautiful is" (*An et res*, PG 46, 96D–97A).

2. TRINITARIAN DIMENSION. The reference to the divine life (ἡ θεία ζωή), i.e. to the Trinitarian dimension, is fundamental for understanding the text just cited. In fact, the passage is immediately preceded by the affirmation: "The life of the superior nature is love (ἀγάπη), since the beautiful is absolutely lovable (ἀγαπητόν) for those who know it: The Divine knows it, and knowledge becomes love (ἀγάπη)" (*ibidem*, 96C). The text is properly Trinitarian, and refers to the immanent life and the relationship of love and knowledge that characterizes it. Even if

Platonic resonances are obvious, the theological substance of the Nyssen's thought is profoundly Christian, as the final formula of the text shows, marvelously expressing the radical newness of the primacy of love over knowledge.

As W. Völker also affirms, the Trinitarian dimension itself was undervalued by Nygren (W. VÖLKER, 252), who, for this same reason, does not manage to understand the essential liberty in the Nyssen's conception of love, something which is fundamental on the theological level as well. In fact, in developing his theology of filiation in order to respond to Eunomius, Gregory emphasizes the role of love in the eternal generation of the Word. He affirms, on the basis of Col 1.13, the following identification: "There is no difference in any way between calling God the Only Begotten of God or the *Son of his Love* (υἰὸν τῆς ἀγάπης αὐτοῦ)" (*Cant*, GNO VI, 213, 15–17).

Love will thus flow as a free gift from the intimacy of the communion of the three divine Persons, a love which is poured out into the human being through identification with Christ: "If the Father loves (ἀγαπᾷ) the Son, and we are all in the Son, as we have become his body by faith in Him, He who loves (ἀγαπῶν) his own Son will consequently also love (ἀγαπᾷ) the body of the Son, as the Son himself. And we are the body" (*Tunc et ipse*, GNO III/2, 23, 11–14). This passage, read in context (*ibidem*, 22,22–23,14), also reveals the connection of the Nyssen's ἀγάπη with the mutual immanence of the Persons of the Trinity, i.e. with the perichoresis, which is conceptually affirmed by Gregory (→ TRINITY).

This perichoretic dimension of love is at the root of the commentary on Ct 2.5, where the Bride says that she is wounded by love (τετραωμένη ἀγάπης). Gregory affirms that, with this expression, the Bride indicates that the arrow has lodged deeply in her heart, "and the archer is love (ἀγάπη). But we have learned from Sacred Scripture that *God is Love*, it is Him who shoots his chosen arrow—the Only Begotten God—towards those who are to be saved, anointing the triple point of the arrow with the Spirit of Life (τῷ πνεύματι τῆς ζωῆς)—the arrow is faith—so that the archer too penetrates with the arrow into the one who is reached by it, according to the words of the Lord: I and the Father *will come and dwell in him* (Jn 14.23)" (*Cant*, GNO VI, 127, 11–17). In this manner the Bride has access, in Christ, to the communion with the three divine Persons. She who was hit by the sweet arrow of love (τὸ γλυκὺ τῆς ἀγάπης βέλος) and received, through the wound, the divine life (ζωή), finds herself in the place of the arrow itself in the hands of the archer (cfr. *ibidem*, 127,18–128,15).

3. RELATIONSHIP BETWEEN ἈΓΑΠΗ AND ἜΡΩΣ. It is the image of the dart of love that illuminates the relationship between ἀγάπη and ἔρως. The Nyssen writes: "Contemplating the inexpressible beauty of the Spouse, the soul is wounded by the incorporeal arrow and inflamed with love (βέλει τοῦ ἔρωτος). For intense charity (ἀγάπη) is called love (ἔρως), of which no one is ashamed if its blow from the arrow reaches the flesh, but rather, he is proud of the wound, even if he receives the point of immaterial desire in the depths of his heart" (*Cant*, GNO VI, 383, 7–12). The opposition between ἔρως and ἀγάπη is overcome by the definition of the first as an *intensification* of the second. The verb used includes the sense of *to be extended, expanded*, even in a temporal, diastemic sense (→ *DIASTĒMA*). It is desire that has encountered its infinite object, finding its own fulfillment in being always satisfied and never satiated. In this, the human being discovers that he is radically oriented to the infinite God, because he is in His image.

It is thus evident that the Nyssen's ἀγάπη cannot simply be identified with the charity of the Gospel, but nor can it be reduced to the Platonic ἔρως, as if this last had simply been clothed in a Christian name. Instead, ἀγάπη "is love in so far as principle of unity between the lover and the beloved" (J. DANIELÉLOU 1944, 204). This is an original, properly theological, sense, which expresses a certain connaturality between the divinized soul and God, through that familiarity and friendship between the human being and God which is particularly evident in *Vit Moys*, where perfection itself is expressed in terms of friendship (φιλία) with God (*Vita Moys*, II, 320, 11–15; SC 1bis, 326). It is essential to note that this connaturality, familiarity and friendship are a gift of God; they do not belong to the human being by nature, as in Plato. In the Nyssen's work "the vocabulary of participation is transposed from the realm of the essence to that of grace" (J. DANIELÉLOU 1944, 205).

Nygren rightly understood the distinction between the Nyssen's ἀγάπη and the Pauline term, which Gregory expresses through the categories of φιλανθρωπία (→) and κατάβασις (*Cant*, GNO VI, 304, 17: ἡ δὲ κατάβασις τὸ τῆς φιλανθρωπίας ἔργον διασημαίνει), but Nygren also simply assimilated the Nyssen's ἀγάπη to Platonic ἔρως, perhaps because of his presupposition "of wanting to see the essence of genuine Christianity exclusively in *agape*" (C. MORESCHINI, 288). In this manner, he cannot understand the radical newness of the theological reflection, which, beginning in the revealed affirmation of love as an absolute gift, recognizes the very desire of the human being and the presence of grace in the soul as the completion of the gift itself. The harmony of ἀγάπη

and ἔρως instead founds the value of the human, historical and material dimension. In his analysis, Nygren appears to consider texts where Gregory clearly refers to spiritual ascent and the progress of the soul, as proof of the Platonic nature of the Nyssen's ἔρως, confusing the necessary and ontological participation of a philosophical nature with the free movement of purification of the soul, which can perfect itself and approach God only by the previous free descending movement of God, who gives himself in the Son. The gift is completed in liberty, and kindles liberty.

Thus, in Gregory, ἀγάπη and ἔρως are almost synonyms, as is demonstrated by the parallel usage of expressions such as ἐρωτική διάθεσις and ἀγαπητική διάθεσις (*Cant*, GNO VI, 264, 5 and 38, 4) or βέλος τοῦ ἔρωτος and βέλος τῆς ἀγάπης (*Cant*, GNO VI, 383, 8 and 128, 1). The two terms thus cannot be opposed. One can only say that ἔρως is less common, in so far as it indicates a particular aspect of ἀγάπη, i.e. its passionate, intense and ecstatic dimension (J. DANIELÉLOU 1944, 206). It is necessary to remember that the Nyssen had to rework the concept of *passion* in his defense of the perfect divinity of Christ in opposition to Eunomius' theses. The profound Trinitarian vision led to a dynamic vision of divine intimacy, in a clear contrast to the static vision typical of philosophy. There is an impassible passion which has as object and subject God himself: "Since it is thus Wisdom who speaks: Love (ἀγάπησον) all you can, with your whole heart, with all your strength, desire (ἐπιθύμησον) as much as you are capable. I audaciously add this to these words: Love (ἐράσθητι). For this passion (πάθος) is irreprehensible and impassible for incorporeal realities, as Wisdom states in the Proverbs, commanding us the love (τὸν ἔρωτα) of the divine Beauty" (*Cant*, GNO VI, 23, 6–12). Ἐρως is thus a πάθος, and presents an essentially passive aspect. This is, however, no longer as an automatism and a dependence on that which is inferior, characteristic of earthly passion, but rather as free acceptance of radical dependence on that which is superior, i.e. God. This passion is thus beyond reason, not as irrational, but as meta-rational. The term ἔρως thus indicates the ecstatic aspect of ἀγάπη, i.e. its intensity which is due to its divine origin.

The difference here from Platonic ἔρως is radical (J. DANIELÉLOU, *DSP* II, 1881). For this reason Gregory can audaciously go so far as to place Moses, and the saints in general, in parallel with the demon *Eros* as presented in the Symposium (J. DANIELÉLOU 1970, 132), calling him *passionate lover of beauty* (ὁ σφοδρὸς ἐραστὴς τοῦ κάλλους: *Vita Moys*, II, 231, 5–6) with the soul full of *an ardent love of Beauty* itself (ἐρωτικῇ τινι

διαθέσει: *ibidem*, 231, 1). In the same way, Gregory speaks of the divine and pure love for the Spouse of his sister Macrina (τὸν θεῖον ἐκεῖνον καὶ καθαρὸν ἔρωτα τοῦ ἀοράτου νυμφίου: SC 178, 22, 31–32).

In this manner, the Nyssen, faithful to the synergistic position of his thought, shows that love is inscribed as a vocation upon the very nature of the human being *qua* image of God (W. VÖLKER, 249). But this vocation can be realized only in an openness to the Trinitarian life which is given in Christ. The human ἔρως, once purified, reveals itself as a response to the ἀγάπη of God, since it itself is ἀγάπη. One could then say, at the end, that the relationship between ἀγάπη and ἔρως is analogous to that between ζωή and βίος (→ LIFE): The first term is more general than the second, can be applied to God, and for this very reason, becomes the foundation of the value of the second term, which can be understood only through the first.

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Giulio Maspero

LUCIF RES

In luciferam sanctam domini resurrectionem

The Homily *In luciferam sanctam Domini resurrectionem* is not considered an authentic work of Gregory by most scholars, and is thus not included in his Easter homilies, or else is included in his dubious works. As in the homily *Sanct Pasch*, the solemn tone of the entire exposition is prominent, as can be seen in the treatment of the Christian cult as a continual celebratory present in which time ceases to subsist as past, present or future, to be lived by the faithful as a continuous “today”.

The Christian is called to participate in the very life of Christ and in the infinite richness of goods that derive from his redemptive work. Basing himself on Is 53.2–3: “He had no form or majesty that we should look at him, and no beauty that we should desire him. He was despised and rejected by men; a man of sorrows, and acquainted with grief”, the author contrasts the condition of humiliation, the *kenosis* of Christ, with Christ’s condition of glory after his Resurrection. The author underscores forcefully the condition of humiliation, describing it with vivid color and images taken from the life of the Lord, particularly from his Passion. In the final part of the homily, that which was said in the beginning is taken up again, as the faithful are invited anew to celebrate the Resurrection of Christ, who has secured for all eternal life. The vigorous and concise style reminds one of the Easter homily of Melito of Sardis, while certain scholars attribute it to Anphilochius of Iconium.

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Juan Antonio Gil-Tamayo

MACARIUS

Of interest here is a body of ascetic writings, comprised of homilies and letters, which circulated under the name of Macarius, probably the so-called Macarius the Egyptian, a monk who lived during the 4th century. However this attribution is clearly erroneous, as these writings are based upon Messalian ideas and explain their signification, something difficult to reconcile with the 4th-century monastic world of Egypt. These writings have thus been attributed to Pseudo-Macarius, or to Simeon, a name that appears at times in the works, whom Dörries identifies with Simeon of Mesopotamia, a Messalian condemned at Antioch around the year 400.

The relationship between Gregory and this ascetic group has been studied by various authors. DANIELLOU identified the Messalians with a group of monks whom the Nyssen criticized in *Virg* 23 (GNO VIII/1, 337) for their laziness and their trust in revelations received in prayer; this reprimand would have its origin in Basil of Caesarea, given that the Nyssen wrote *Virg* to help him to diffuse his monastic ideal. Daniélou explains that Gregory was not among those Bishops who in the following years condemned the Messalians, something that would indicate his sympathy in their regard. An article of BAKER analyzes the relationship between the *Great Letter* of Pseudo-Macarius and the *Inst* of the Nyssen. Baker considers that the study supports the probability that Gregory depends on Pseudo-Macarius, and not the inverse. This corrects the earlier position of JAEGER, who thought Macarius was a fifth-century Syrian monk “whose conception of Christian spirituality was derived almost exclusively from Gregory.”

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Manuel Mira

MACED

Adversus Macedonianos, De spiritu sancto

This writing, transmitted in only one manuscript and one copy (together with *Adversus Arium et Sabellium* of Ps.-Gregory) is titled “On the Holy Spirit Against the Macedonians who Combat the Spirit”. The work reacts to Macedonian attacks, which had Gregory accused of impiety (ἀσέβεια) in his writings (*Maced*, GNO III/I, 89, 19–20). As can be clearly seen from the introduction, the work does not attempt to convince the Macedonians, but as a whole is a polemical stance with the goal of confirming his followers of his own theological direction in the controversy against the Macedonians while warning those who might remain undecided.

There is not a clearly structured organization, but an assembly of the more important arguments against the Macedonians. Nevertheless, it gives a good documentation of the Macedonians’ profile. According to them, the Spirit does not belong to the nature of the Father and the Son and does not participate in the honor, adoration, or veneration (not even in the Liturgy) which is due to the Father and the Son. He does not have the same dignity (ὁμότιμος) as the Father and the Son, and is thus neither God nor Lord. He does not belong to creation either, but has his own proper activity (i.e. the activity of sanctification) in dependence on the Son (90, 5–14; 90, 18–20; 99, 1–10). This is also witnessed by the order of succession in Mt 28.19 (92, 31–34). He thus has an intermediary position between the Creator and creation, He is the first created being, constituted by means of the Son, according to Jn 1.3 (97,31–98,2). This theological profile corresponds exactly to what we find on the Pneumatomachians in Basil’s *De Spiritu Sancto*. Gregory’s own arguments also often refer to his brother’s work.

Gregory begins by specifying that his theology corresponds to Sacred Scripture. He then refers to the Spirit as something perfect, which cannot participate in a limited manner in the divine nature as in a kind of subordinated divinity, just as one finds in the pure elements of fire, air, water and earth (things are not more or less water, etc.) (*Maced*, GNO III/I, 91,13–92,9). Since the Spirit is said to be divine by the Scriptures, He participates in all that is affirmed of God: He is good, powerful, wise, glorious, eternal, etc. (92, 10–30). That He is named in

the third place in Mt 28.19 does not mean that He is less God (exactly as, with three fires caused by the transmission from the first fire to a second and to a third, the third is not less “fire”) (92,31–93,14). Thus one must reject the idea that the Spirit might be unworthy of adoration, because this entails as a consequence that He has basically less dignity. Instead, the perfection of the Spirit signifies that He is perfect in the good, thus He is owed honor and adoration (94, 27–34). Gregory underscores that the reverence of human beings adds nothing to God and to the Holy Spirit, since he has always his own honor and worth, and does not need human reverence (96, 1–22); the believer instead transfers to God something of his own life, i.e. the reverence due to highly placed persons, or veneration. There is no reason to deny this to the Holy Spirit.

Gregory also rejects the idea that the Holy Spirit did not have a part in creation or that He abstained from it. The Sacred Scripture instead witnesses that, in general, Father, Son and Spirit must be considered together: The Father is never thought of without a Son, and none can understand the Son if not in the Holy Spirit (cfr. 1 Cor 12.3) (98,24–99,6). That the Father and the Son would have hindered the Spirit from collaborating in creation, given the absence of envy that must be presupposed in reference to God, is just as absurd as affirming that he was voluntarily inactive (while in 1 Cor 12.11 it is said that He works all things) (99,7–100,1).

A theology that does not believe that the Spirit is God has fundamentally ceased to be a Christian theology, since the seal of the Christian faith is faith in the Father, the Son and the Holy Spirit. In order to be a Christian it is not enough to adore only the Father (something clearly already found among the Hebrews) nor is it enough to call upon the name of Christ (something the Manicheans do) (101, 1–29). The close tie of the Son and the Spirit is already evident from the fact that the Son is called “Christ,” literally: “The Anointed,” and the Spirit must be considered along with the anointing, which signifies royal dominion (102,17–103,33). Consequently the Spirit belongs to the dominating nature and has no uncertain position between Creator and creature (104, 2–12). The particular importance of the Spirit is already clear from Baptism: the Spirit is the Lifegiver (cfr. Jn 6.63), as is the Son (cfr. 5.21) and is the Father (cfr. 1 Tim 6.13) (105,19–106,24). Whoever negates the divinity of the Spirit blasphemes in substance against the Spirit, but at the same time against the Son and the Father. Thus the Pneumatomachians hurt themselves with their theology (106,25–107,9). In view of this, it must be affirmed that the Spirit is by nature that which the Father and the Son

are. Father, Son and Holy Spirit reciprocally glorify each other. In adoration, as well as in human thought, the Spirit is not separable from the Father and the Son. Thus to Him, along with the Father and the Son, is due honor, glory and adoration (108,18–109,15; 115, 10–31).

This work could have been composed in the context of the Council of Constantinople of 381, in which a reworked version of the Nicene Creed was approved. This reworked version inserted, specifically in the third article, various *theologoumena* of Basil, such as the biblical appellation of “lifegiving” (Jn 6.63), the property of Lordship (in the form of an adjective: *kyrion*, dominating), the common adoration and glorification with the Father and the Son. These central affirmations of Basilian theology are defended by Gregory in the precise sense with which they are understood by his older brother. This is confirmed also by the fact that Gregory avoids applying the *homoousios* to the Spirit in this writing, only calling the Spirit “divine” (cfr. Basil, *De Spiritu Sancto* XIX, 48, 28–30). This writing shows how Gregory, after the death of his brother, continued to support both his theology and his aspirations.

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MACR

Vita Macrinae

The *Life of Macrina* is one of the earliest Christian hagiographies, written in epistolary form. Gregory proposes to show how Macrina “ascended to the highest level of human virtue by means of philosophy” (n. 1, 27–29, GNO VIII/1, 371, 19–21). In Gregory’s biographical writings, the historical facts are configured “by theological ideas and the rules of art” (A. SPIRA, p. 2). In the case of *Macr*, Gregory emphasizes not only that she is his sister, but also his teacher; she is also the guide and teacher of the virgins she directs in her monastery. Her biography is conceived, thus, as the final lesson that the teacher passes on to her disciples.

Gregory takes a large amount of liberty with the usual style of classical biographies, letting himself be taken up with digressions which do not however break up the unity of the account. This can be seen, for example, in the narration of the death of Naucratius (n. 8, GNO VIII/1, 379–380), which serves to underscore Macrina’s firmness and her constant progression in sanctity; or in the description of the life at Annesi (n. 11, GNO VIII/1, 381–383), or the details of Peter’s childhood (nn. 12, GNO VIII/1, 383–384), which are used to manifest the most excellent aspects of Macrina’s teachings, who “was everything for the child: father, teacher, pedagogue, mother, counselor of all good things”.

Gregory proposes Macrina’s life as an ideal of life. He calls it the “ideal of philosophy”. This idea entails, among other things, a renunciation of “earthly glory” and the dedication “to a life of manual labor, aspiring through a perfect poverty, to a life that is free for virtue” (n. 6, 12–13, GNO VIII/1, 17–19). This manner of life is regarded as equal to the angelic life. It is not a solitary life: Macrina lived this ideal of life in a monastic context which he defines as “fraternity” (n. 16, 2, GNO VIII/1, 388, 8) and φροντιστήριον—a place to meditate (n. 37, 2, GNO VIII/1, 410, 21).

Gregory compares his sister to the martyrs. This is already suggested in the premonitory dream he recounts: Gregory dreams of having “relics of the martyrs” in his hands; this dream is realized precisely in his holding the mortal remains of Macrina in his hands (nn. 15 and 19, GNO VIII/1, 387–388 and 391). During the funeral rite, the remains

of Macrina receive a veneration similar to that given to the relics of the martyrs (n. 33, 7, GNO VIII/1, 407,1). According to Gregory, virginity, mortification and the acceptance of sufferings gave to Macrina a power of intercession similar to that of the martyrs.

The date of composition of *Macr* is posterior to the conversation that takes place on his return from Jerusalem (381), to which he refers in the beginning (GNO VIII/1, 370–371). *Macr* must have been written in the final months of 381, or at the latest in 382 or 383 (→ CHRONOLOGY).

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MACRINA

There are two Macrinas with whom Gregory's life is closely bound up: Macrina *Senior*, who is his paternal grandmother, and Macrina *Junior*, who is his older sister (→ BIOGRAPHY).

Gregory's paternal grandparents lived in Pontus. They were rich and Christian, but they were constrained to live hidden in the woods during the persecution of Maximinus Daia, between 302 and 313 (*Macr.* 2; 20; 21, GNO VIII/1, 371, 393, 394; Gregory Nazianzen, *Or.* 43, 5–8). Macrina *Senior* was a disciple of Gregory Thaumaturgus, evangelizer of Neo-Caesarea (Basil, *Epist.* 204, 6). Through her, influences of Gregory Thaumaturgus as well as of Origen, of whom Gregory was a fervent disciple, reached the family. The name Gregory logically evokes the thought of the Thaumaturgus. Saint Basil (*Epist.* 204,6; 210, 1 and 223, 3) attributes the faith of the family to Macrina. Macrina *Senior* died around 340.

Macrina *Junior* (ca. 327–379) is the eldest of Gregory's sisters. She was born one or two years before Basil. The most ample source for her life is the narration that Gregory realizes in *MACR* (→). There is some further information in the dialogue *On the Soul and the Resurrection*, PG 46, 12–160 (→ AN ET RES), conceived as a conversation with Macrina on the soul, immortality, death and the resurrection. *Epist.* 19 (GNO VIII/2, 62–68) gives details about and sometimes corrects some of the information given in *Macr.* The verses of Gregory Nazianzen need to be added to these writings: he describes Macrina as “the eldest of the daughters of the noble Emilia, who hid herself from the eyes of men and is now on the lips of all”, in reference to the fame of her sanctity (*Epigr.* 163, PG 38, 75–76).

As MARAVAL (SC 178, 36–37), observes, although Basil says nothing about his sister, in his letters and ascetic works there are highly informative particulars on both Macrina's chronology and her lifestyle.

It is probable that Macrina was born in Pontus, perhaps near Ibora, where she passed almost all her years dedicated to the ascetic life. There was a Chapel dedicated there to the Forty Martyrs of Sebaste, where Emilia had placed their relics. This Chapel was seven stadia from the monastery in which Macrina died (*Macr.* 34, 15–16, GNO VIII/1, 408, 12–13), in a place called Annesi, sometimes Anyssia, currently Sonusa

(MARAVAL, SC 178, 39–44). The place was family property. At Macrina's death, there were two monasteries there, one for men and another for women, fairly close to each other, to judge by the narration in *Macr* 36–38.

Macrina *Junior's* influence on Gregory's formation is noteworthy, although it was less than that on her brother Peter (*Macr* 12, GNO VIII/1, 383–384). It is clear that Gregory has deep affection for her, as well as a profound admiration. The description he gives in *Epist* 19 leaves no doubts: "she was a mistress of life for us, a mother after our mother". She lived in Pontus surrounded by "a choir of virgins to whom she had given birth through spiritual sufferings" and whom she sought to "send off towards perfection" (*Epist* 19, GNO VIII/2, 62–68; MARAVAL, SC 363, 250–251). In *An et res* he calls her "mistress" or "teacher" (PG 46, 17).

Gregory compares Macrina to Saint Thecla, a paradigmatic personality for the life of virgins. He describes Macrina's education as a completely religious formation that also gave her a considerable amount of learning. According to *Macr* 2–5 (GNO VIII/1, 371–377), Emilia looked after this education personally, so that Macrina knew the book of Wisdom and the Psalms at a very young age. The Psalter was for her, Gregory states, "a good companion". He emphasizes that she was also educated to manual work in these early years, perhaps to reinforce the fact that the life of the monk should consist in prayer and labor (MORESCHINI, 353, n. 17). What Gregory states in *Macr* on the exclusively religious education of Macrina does not appear to correspond at all with the knowledge of the Greek philosophers that Macrina demonstrates in *An et res* (PG 46, 22).

At twelve years old, Macrina was promised as a bride to a young man, who then died suddenly. The engagement age is not exceptional for the epoch. At the death of her promised groom, Macrina decided to live in virginity. Emilia and Macrina lived in perfect harmony, with regard to both material work (from the care and education of the children to the payment of taxes) and the spiritual life. Mother and daughter, with the entire family, including the servants, adopted a "philosophical and immaterial" (*Macr* 11, GNO VIII/1, 381) form of life on the lands that the family possessed in Annesi.

MARAVAL (SC 178, 53) places the beginning of this way of life around 357. Undoubtedly Macrina had already adopted it when Basil returned from Athens after finishing his studies. It is a type of life that could be called "monastic". According to Gregory, the life is practically the same as her first years: prayer and labor. The same is true of the heroic works of charity. In reference to the funeral that was celebrated the day after her

death, Gregory accentuates the crying of those virgins whom Macrina had gathered while they were still children, “when they wandered the streets in times of scarcity” (*Macr* 26, GNO VIII/1, 401).

The date of Macrina’s death is uncertain, although Gregory offers much information on the particulars surrounding it. Nine months after Basil’s death, “perhaps a little less”, Gregory participated in a synod in Antioch (*Macr* 15, GNO VIII/1, 386–387). In *Epist* 19 he says that, returning to Cappadocia, the news that reached him of his sister troubled him, and he set out immediately for Annesi. The voyage took about ten days and he reached her only two days before her death. The decisive point for dating her death is the celebration of the synod of which Gregory speaks in *Macr* 15. MARAVAL (SC 178, 57–66) has meticulously analyzed the various hypotheses about this synod and the events that followed, attempting to coordinate them with Gregory’s many engagements in 380. It is possible that the Synod of Antioch to which Gregory refers took place in April of 379. This is the hypothesis proposed by MARAVAL (→ BIOGRAPHY). On his return from Nyssa, in the first days of the month of July, 379, Gregory must have received news of his sister’s sickness and set forth for Anyssia.

On the evening of his arrival and on the following day, he must have had those conversations with her to which he refers in *An et res* (PG 46, 13–14) and *Macr* 17–18; 20–21 (GNO VIII/1, 389–391, 392–394). This chronology is compatible with the possible date of Macrina’s death as July 19th, which is the date offered in the Synaxes and Menologies (*Macr* 34, GNO VIII/1, 408). J. GRIBOMONT also indicates 379 as the probable year of her death.

Gribomont presents Macrina as an example of the Christian woman. MARAVAL (SC 178, 53–54) observes that the form of life adopted by Macrina and the family appears in other places at the same epoch, in Rome for example. Marcella, when left a widow, transformed her house on the Aventine into a place of monastic life.

It nevertheless seems improbable that Macrina was considered a *deaconess*. In the literature that exists in reference to her there is only one phrase that might permit this: “only after having consecrated her hands to the divine service (ἐπειδὴ ... τὰς χεῖρας ἔχρησε), in the remaining time, with her own toil, she prepared food for her mother” (*Macr* 5, 31–35, GNO VIII/1, 376). The phrase is difficult to interpret (MATEO-SECO, 54, nt. 17). Gregory is speaking of the liturgical prayer of Macrina and of her anointed hands (ἔχρησε). What does this anointing of the hands signify? Some see in this anointing an echo of the custom of receiving

the Eucharist in the hand at that time: Macrina's hand would be anointed by the Eucharistic bread. Others think that this can be understood in the sense of Macrina preparing the bread for the Eucharist, and then preparing also food for her mother. On the basis of this passage, J. Daniélou claims that Macrina was a deaconess. Perhaps MARAVAL's (SC 178, 158, nt. 2) position is the most likely: It is unnecessary to adopt the more difficult reading for the verb, interpreting it as if the anointing of Macrina's hands implied her state of deaconess. The strongest reason to doubt such a reading is that, in the account found in *Macr* 5, Macrina is too young. It is noted that she died before reaching 60 years old, probably at 53.

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MARCELLUS OF ANCYRA

Marcellus of Ancyra lived during the fourth century. In the context of the theological polemics of the time, he is counted among those who pushed their opposition to Arianism to the extreme point of negating the distinction between the divine Persons. He wrote a treatise against Asterius, of which we have fragments transmitted by Eusebius of Caesarea. Tetz and other scholars attribute certain Pseudo-Athanasian writings, such as a treatise titled *De incarnatione adversus arianos* (PG 26, 184–228), to him. His followers, guided by Photinus, will continue to defend his thought after his death. HÜBNER affirms that Marcellus of Ancyra influenced the Trinitarian, Christological and Soteriological thought of Gregory of Nyssa. In *Ref Eun* (GNO II, 403,24–404,1), the Nyssen compares the unity that exists between the spirit in man and the man himself to the unity that exists between the Holy Spirit and the Father. Since this comparison also appears in *De incar.* 13 (PG 26, 1005 B), HÜBNER concludes that this work was a source for Gregory.

Further, Basil accuses Gregory of organizing synods against him in his *Ep.* 100. It appears that this was done with the Meletians, something that could be explained as a consequence of Gregory's closeness to Marcellus' thought. These contacts are interrupted, but Gregory must excuse himself for having taken them up again in front of a synod at Sebaste in 380 (*Epist* 5, GNO VIII/2, 92,15–93,3).

Gregory interprets the biblical passage of 1 Cor 15,28, "When all things have been subjected to him, then the Son will also himself be subjected to him who subjected all things to him, that God may be all in all," in the sense that the Son will submit his humanity to God, and in his humanity, all the human beings who will be united to it, forming one body (*Tunc et ipse*, GNO III/2, 21). HÜBNER finds this same idea in *De incar.* 20 (PG 26, 1020 C) and after emphasizing that the two authors understand the body of Christ as a spiritual and a spiritualizing reality, he sees a second point of contact. Gregory affirms that there is a union between Christ and humanity, so that the risen Christ is the first fruit of all humanity which is potentially risen in Him (*Or cat* 32, GNO III/4, 78). HÜBNER again indicates that this idea can be found in *De incar.* 12 (PG 26, 1004 B), and concludes that Gregory received this idea from Marcellus. HÜBNER's work is substantially convincing,

even if a study of the biblical sources on which Marcellus and Gregory base themselves would permit a better understanding of the Nyssen's thought.

Recently, Lienhard has indicated that the Nyssen's Work *In Illud: Tunc et ipse Filius* interprets 1 Cor 15:24–28 in a way opposite to that of Marcellus (Lienhard, *Contra Marcellum*, p. 211, n. 1); and has shown that two anti-marcellinian works, sometimes attributed to Gregory of Nyssa, i.e., *Ad Evagrium monachum* and *Adversus Arium et Sabellium*, can not be considered doubtlessly nyssene (Lienhard, *Contra Marcellum*, pp. 232–234; see too Hübner, *Die Einheit des Leibes Christi bei Gregor von Nyssa*, p. 31, n. 1). Lienhard thinks that some of the adversaries of Marcellus, as for example Basile of Caesarea, were opposite to Marcellus, but in a moderate way, so that a rethinking of his most extreme theories could alloid Marcellus to join them (Lienhard, *Contra Marcellum*, p. 211).

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Manuel Mira

MARIOLOGY

In Gregory's work, the figure of the Mother of Jesus always appears in reference to the Son, in an intimate relationship to his work of Redemption. She is frequently present throughout his various works. Even if Gregory does not dedicate specific text to the direct consideration of Mary, he offers a rich Mariology, rooted in previous Tradition—particularly in Irenaeus and in the parallel between Eve and Mary.

In this Mariological perspective the theme of virginal motherhood dominates all others. Mary is Mother-Virgin and *theotokos*. Mary is at once true Mother of Jesus and true Mother of God. Gregory treats this theme in particular in *Antirr.*: the true maternity of the Blessed Virgin Mary is an important argument here to refute APOLLINARIUS OF LAODICEA (→). Gregory's argumentation is clear: Jesus is a true man because He is the true son of Mary, and, therefore, his flesh is true human flesh, not heavenly flesh. Mary is Mother of God because Jesus Christ is consubstantial with the Father, and therefore God. Gregory is an eloquent and trustworthy witness to the fact that, decades before Nestorius, the question of the divine motherhood, expressed even with the term of *theotokos* in a particularly incisive manner, was already clearly formulated, amply discussed and concretely resolved.

One can say of Gregory's Mariological thought, which considered in its particulars possesses a richness of subtleties and novelties in respect of earlier Tradition, that its reference point is the phrase of the creed cited in *Ref Eun.*: "[The Word], being incarnate in the Blessed Virgin (σαρκωθεὶς ἐν τῇ ἁγίᾳ παρθένῳ), redeemed us from death" (GNO II, 329). Gregory finds in each of these words a rich source of theological inspiration: Given that the Incarnation is true, Mary is true Mother, and she is All Holy and Virgin. Gregory not only deepens each term, but discovers new perspectives by placing them in reciprocal relationships.

Gregory seeks out the most realistic terms to speak of the divine maternity. With a beautiful expression he defines the body of the Virgin as θεοτόκον σῶμα: The body that generated God (*Diem nat*, GNO X/2, 247). The term *theotokos* is used three times to directly indicate the Virgin, the first two times in *Virg.* In ch. 13 Gregory presents the virginity of Mary as the limit at which death, which had *reigned from Adam*, was held back (Rm 5.14). For death reaches Christ, the fruit of the *theotokos*,

but is destroyed by the victory that Christ obtains over it in his Resurrection (GNO VIII/1, 306). In ch. 19, Gregory draws a comparison between Miriam, the sister of Aaron, and Mary, the *theotokos* (GNO VIII/1, 323). *Theotokos* is used here as a *title* which distinguishes the Virgin from other women. Gregory will return to use *theotokos* with a high degree of precision in *Epist* 3, 19–24 (GNO VIII/2, 25–26). In the first place, he states that the union of the Word with the human nature is accomplished in the womb of Mary at the same moment at which the humanity of Christ was formed. Secondly, he specifies that the term of *theotokos* is incompatible with that of *anthrôpotokos*— since the Virgin is *theotokos*, only the impious call her *anthrôpotokos*. One can say that two problems of the Nestorian position are already resolved here: According to Gregory, the Virgin is already Mother of God in the first instant of the conception of Jesus, while on the other hand she can at no time be called *anthrôpotokos*.

In treating the virginal maternity, Gregory fundamentally bases himself on four passages of Scripture: the narration of the Annunciation (Lk 1.26–38), the episode of the burning bush (Ex 3.1–6) the prophecy of Is 7.14, and Pr 9.1 (“Wisdom builds her own house for herself”). In this regard, the sermon *Diem nat* (GNO IX/2, 235–269) illustrates both the manner in which Gregory understands these texts and the manner in which he situates Mariology in his global theological perspective.

In the culminating passage of this sermon, Gregory dedicates a large space to the exposition of the *singularity* of our Lord’s birth. He insists on the concept, quite dear to him and often repeated: Jesus is a true man, but, He is not a common (κοινός) man, simply a man. He is the Lord of nature and it was not just that He be enslaved to all of its laws (e.g. *Antirr*, 21, GNO III/1, 159–160; *Or cat*, 13, GNO III/4, 41–43; *Trid spat*, GNO IX, 288–289). Gregory insists on three aspects of our Lord’s life in particular: He was born virginally, He offered his life when He wished, and He rose again from the dead. Thus the virginal conception is inserted into the larger context of the lordship of Christ over the laws of nature. This is a lordship which is coherent with his divine dignity and with the fact the He came to renew nature through his risen body.

This lordship, he comments in *Cant* 13, justifies the affirmation about Christ, that He is “white and red, elected from among ten thousand” (Ct 5.10). He alone came into this world with a new form of childbirth, nature submits as a servant to this birth. He is called elected from among ten thousand men because of the virginal purity: his conception did not derive from the union of two humans, his delivery was without stain, his birth without pain. He changed the laws of nature: He did

not have origin in pleasure, nor did He come forth provoking pain. Gregory here echoes ancient Marian traditions, which already appear in the Sibylline prophecies: The beginning of the angelic greeting is translated as “Rejoice, Mary”. It was proper, Gregory comments, that if Eve was condemned to give birth in pain, the mother of life should commence her conception in joy and realize the birth in joy (*Cant* 13, GNO VI, 388–389). These same thoughts are found in *Trid spat*, where Gregory underscores the dominion of Christ over nature and his times. Is 7.14, Gregory states, already speaks in a prophetic manner of the mother without spouse, of the flesh without father, of the uncorrupted birth (GNO IX/1, 275–276).

Is 7.14 is cited to explain that the surpassing of the laws of nature in the virginity of the conception and birth of the Savior had been prophesied beforehand. The term *parthenos*, used by the LXX in the translation of Is 7.14, is not understood as *young woman*, but as *virgin* in the technical sense. Gregory is a magnificent orator, as can be noted in this homily. The phrases are beautiful and eloquently express his thought: The virgin becomes a mother and remains a virgin, at the same time renewing the laws of nature. In the generation of Jesus, virginity and maternity draw together (συνέδραμε), since “neither did virginity impede birth, nor did the birth violate virginity” (*Diem nat*, GNO X/2, 246–247). In Gregory’s thought, divine maternity and virginal maternity are joined in the service of the history of salvation: With them, the renewal of the world and the laws of nature begins. The mystery of the virgin mother “is the mystery of the history of salvation which becomes the mystery of the salvation of history in the immaculate body of Mary” (MASPERO, 203).

The maternity of Mary occurred *corporeally*: the mother conceived the Son virginally, but conceived Him as a mother conceives her son. In dealing with this theme, Gregory is devoid of any tendency towards Docetism. The argumentation he employs in *Or cat* 28, to demonstrate that it is not unworthy of God to be born of the body of a woman, is instructive in this matter. He maintains that it was God who created the human body. Sin alone is unworthy of God, sex is not only not bad, but possesses a great dignity, since human nature assures its perpetuation through it. God thus became man through that with which human nature struggles against death (GNO III/4, 71–75).

The mystery of virginity—it is thus that Gregory calls the virginal maternity—indicates that the Incarnation took place in the last times, and that God truly became incarnate (*Antirr*, 3, GNO III/1, 134–135).

This mystery also indicates that Christ descended in all truth from David. The “Power of the Most High”, by means of the Holy Spirit, took flesh from the immaculate (ἀμιάντου) Virgin (*Antirrh*, GNO III/1, 139). The mystery of virginity signifies that Wisdom builds for herself her own house in the womb of the Virgin Mary. Proposing a link between Lk 1.35 and Pr 9.1, Gregory affirms that the Word “built a house for Himself, taking the earth from the womb of the Virgin” (*Antirrh*, 9, GNO III/1, 144).

These words of Gregory evoke the Irenaeian conception which is the basis of the parallelism between Eve and Mary: Adam was formed of virgin earth, the New Adam was also formed of virgin earth, i.e. from the womb of a virgin (Irenaeus, *Adv. Haer.*, III, 18 and 21, SC 34, 328 and 370–372). Through the influence of certain passages of Scripture, which affirm that it is the Word who becomes incarnate (Jn 1.14, Ph 2.7), Gregory states that the Word became flesh “by his own power” (*Antirrh*, 27, GNO III/1, 174).

Gregory is a precious witness to the *virginitas in partu*. He is the first to apply the episode of the burning bush (Ex 3.3) to the virginal maternity (J. DANÉLOU, SC 1bis, 37, nn. 2 and 3): the flame which flames from the bush is a figure of the Divinity that is born of the Virgin. As the flame does not destroy the bush, so too the birth does not destroy the virginity (*Vit Moys*, II, GNO VII/1, 39; *Diem nat*, GNO X/2, 247). Gregory underscores that this is a great mystery, referring to it with various formulas, all of which are equivalent: *the mystery of virginity* (*Antirrh*, GNO III/1, 134, 9; *Diem nat*, GNO X/2, 249); *the mystery according to the Virgin* (*Vit Moys* II, 21 and II, 139, GNO VII/1, 39 and 77; *Diem nat*, GNO X/2, 247); *the mystery according to virginity* (*Antirrh*, GNO III/1, 135 and 160); *the mystery that proceeds from the Virgin* (*Antirrh*, GNO III/1, 171).

The virginity of Mary includes the corporeal aspect, but is not reduced to this. It is above all a spousal pact with God: The Virgin consecrated her flesh to God definitively. Gregory thinks that the words of Lk 1.34 “How will this be, as I do not know man?” are incomprehensible unless Mary was not only virgin, but also had decided to be a virgin. She asks this question to the angel, Gregory comments, because she had consecrated her flesh to God as something holy, which needed to be guarded inviolate and in its integrity (*Diem nat*, GNO X/2, 254–255). We thus find ourselves before a great mystery.

The accentuation of the “mysterious” dimension of the virginity of Mary can be rightly called totally new in respect to earlier tradition and one of the most original aspects of Gregory’s Mariology (MASPERO,

191). This is true not only because Gregory underscores by means of this expression that the virginal maternity is a unique and extraordinary event, but because he considers this maternity in its relationship to the mystery of God and the history of salvation.

M. GORDILLO has clarified how, for Gregory, VIRGINITY (→) essentially consists in purity of being and fullness of perfection. Gregory therefore speaks clearly and without ambiguity of the virginity that exists in God: Virginity is in the Father who has a Son begotten without passion; it is in the Son, in whose begetting purity is resplendent and is the source of incorruptibility; it is in the Holy Spirit, who possesses an incorruptible purity. In this perspective, it is logical for Gregory to consider the virginity of Mary as a mystery in which the incorruptibility of the divine nature and the eternal begetting of the Word are reflected. Further, the virginity of Mary constitutes part of the mystery of God, since the virginal motherhood demonstrates that purity alone is fit to receive the coming of God in this world (*Virg* 2, GNO VIII/1, 253–254).

In fact, Gregory considers that purity is absolutely necessary to come close to Him who is purity and incorruptibility. In the case of the Virgin, this is an immaculate purity. Gregory uses the terms *holy*, *intact* and *immaculate* to refer to the body of Christ and to the virginal birth of to the Holy Virgin herself (MASPERO, 196–200). These terms are necessarily tied to the concept of virginity as Gregory understands it. The “true virginity”, according to him, implies “being free from any kind of stain of sin” (*Virg*, prol., GNO VIII/1, 248), i.e. it implies total sanctity—incompatible with any type of sin. Therefore, for Gregory, the Virgin is holy with an elevated sanctity, without the mark of any sin, totally consecrated to God. This is thus a virginity which indicates corporeal integrity, but which also indicates complete sanctity—and consequently is open to the complete absence of any stain of sin (*Virg* 2, 2 and 19, GNO VIII/1, 253–254; 306; 322–324).

Gregory used the antithetical parallelism of Christ and Adam with theological depth (*Antirr*h 21, GNO III/1, 160–161); he also uses that of Eve and Mary (*Diem nat*, GNO X/2, 265). The parallelism evokes fully the position of Irenaeus: The first Adam fell into sin, the second raised up the fallen. The woman defends the woman: Eve opened the door to sin, Mary opened the door to justice. Eve followed the counsel of the serpent, Mary gave birth to the victor over the serpent. Eve introduced sin by a tree, Mary, on the contrary, brought goodness through the tree of the Cross, whose ever fresh fruit becomes immortal life “for those who eat it”. Gregory keeps the fundamental lines of this Irenaeian concept,

but in employing it he will leave his own stamp. One notes the strength with which he describes the body of Christ hanging on the Cross as a “flowering and immortal” fruit of the tree of life, a concept which receives its full dimension when read in the light of the Eucharistic doctrine of ch. 37 of *Or cat* (GNO III/4, 93–98).

A beautiful homily, the *Sermo de Annuntiatione*, was published among the spurious homilies of John Chrysostom by Migne (PG 62, 764–768). This homily is attributed to the Nyssen by R. LAURENTIN (*Court Traité de Théologie Mariale*, Paris 1953, 163). ALDAMA (*Repertorium pseudochrysostomicum*, Paris 1965, 77–78) and MONTAGNA (Mar 24 [1962] 120) are of the same opinion. The structure of the homily is quite simple and the style is easy. The author of the homily comments on the dialogue of the Annunciation between the angel and the Virgin. The same themes already addressed above are presented in this homily, all of them typical of the Nyssen in their references to the history of salvation as well as their references to Mariology. This *sermon* will not appear among the works published in the GNO, however.

For this reason its study has been omitted (S. ÁLVAREZ CAMPOS, 260–270; MATEO-SECO, 411–425).

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MART IA

In XL Martyres Ia

Gregory delivered this *Homily in Praise of the Forty Martyrs of Sebaste* in the context of the annual celebration of the martyrs' feast at Sebaste (March 9). The year of the sermon depends on the clear connection with the origin of Gregory's *Treatise on the Inscription of the Psalms*, which it antedates: on the basis of a late date for *Insc Daniélou* dated the sermon in 383, but an earlier date cannot be ruled out (DANIÉLOU, 362; LEEMANS 2001). In any case, however, *Mart Ia* (and *Ib*) was delivered after *Mart II*. The most eye-catching feature is that this sermon is incomplete because the noise made by his audience forced Gregory to stop the sermon before he was even halfway through. This demonstrates the vivid interaction between preacher and audience, a characteristic feature of early Christian homiletics: the audience was not afraid to make its approval or disapproval known to the homilist (Olivar 761–879).

Gregory starts his sermon by expressing his joy because of the large congregation that had assembled. As *Unfähigkeitstopoi* (→ RHETORIC) he mentions his fear to be unable to overcome the people's noise with his weak voice and the impossibility to choose a theme for his sermon from the texts from Scripture that had been read: Job, Proverbs, Paul and Psalms. He decides to defer treatment of these texts and expounds on the word "Love your father and your mother", and relates this to the martyrs and the topic of his homily: since the martyrs do not need these concerns Gregory asks what can be done to honour them nevertheless. This leads to a reflection on the Christian homily: it does not correspond to the worldly standards of rhetoric but aims to present eternal truths. When Gregory, by underlining the continuity of the annual martyr feast with the martyrs' death (identity of place and time), is about to make a transition to the the martyrs' story, he is stopped by the noise of the congregation. After a vain attempt to silence them he closes the homily with a doxology and the promise to continue when they show a more welcoming disposition.

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Johan Leemans

MART IB

In XL Martyres Ib

Mart Ib was delivered the day after *Mart Ia*, also in Armenian Sebaste though not in the martyrs' shrine but in a church. In the prooemium (145,5–20) Gregory announces that his sermon will be a continuation of *Mart Ia* and adds that it was the noise made by the congregation that had forced him to abandon his sermon the day before. Picking up the thread, he touches upon their physical, moral and spiritual qualities (145,21–146,10) and then continues with their life and martyrdom, which furnishes the basic structure for the remainder of the sermon. Soldiers in the Roman army, the Forty distinguished themselves by remaining steadfast in their Christian faith. Their refusal to apostatise results in their freezing to death. The torturous pains and the burning of their bodies on a pyre are graphically described.

Throughout, Gregory uses traditional elements of panegyrics on martyrs: agonistic language, martyrdom as a struggle between the Devil and the martyrs (*passim*), the angels and God applauding the martyrs (148,26–149,2; 150,5–13). Gregory also adopts traditional themes of the hagiography of the Forty: the unity of the group (148,10–20; VINEL), the role of the mother of one of the martyrs (154,11–155,20), the link with the story of the Legio XII Fulminata and the rain miracle (146,9–147,16; HELGELAND; FOWDEN), and the connection between the number forty and the forty days of Lent (152,12–15).

The most essential point, however, is that the martyrdom of the Forty was grounded in their love for Christ. Gregory sketches the martyrs' actions as founded on their belief in the Trinity and as a *sequela Christi*. He ends his sermon by taking up a question (*zètèma*) that had been put to him some days before: According to Gn. 3.24 the cherubs with the fiery sword barred the entrance to Paradise. Does this then mean that the entrance was blocked for the saints and for all who live in the true faith in Christ? Gregory's answer is that the sword makes circling movements, thus enabling the entrance when the sharp edge had turned away (155,20–156,20; ALEXANDRE).

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Johan Leemans

MART II

In XL Martyres II

Together with *Mart Ia* and *Ib* this sermon constitutes Gregory's contribution to the hagiographical tradition of the Forty of Sebaste, a group of martyrs whose cult was extremely popular and widespread in the Later Roman Empire (MARAVAL). In fact *Mart II* is prior to *Ia* and *Ib* and probably Gregory's earliest extant sermon, delivered on March 9, 379 in the martyrs' shrine in Caesarea (DANIÉLOU; REXER).

The prooemium (159,4–160,21) starts with a comparison between the pagan feast of Mars, celebrated a few days before, and that of the Forty (LEEMANS). The Forty are an example of Christian virtue for young and old; hence the importance of delivering a good panegyric in order to inspire the audience with faith and love to God. The challenge is all the greater, because the deceased Basil used to deliver celebrated panegyrics on the Forty.

The first part of the sermon (160,22–165,18) narrates their martyrdom at length: soldiers in the Roman army who refused to offer incense to pagan deities, they were sentenced to death by freezing in the Armenian cold. From the hagiographical tradition of the Forty Gregory inserts the story of one of the Forty who, like Judas, apostatised but, dying a little later, lost eternal life without having gained anything. The number of Forty was not diminished however, since one of the executioners changed his mind like Saul at Damascus and joined the group of martyrs.

The second part (165,19–169,16) expounds on the martyrs' relics, which bless by their presence many communities, as well as the miraculous things that happened in the context of their cult. These include the healing of a soldier with a lame leg and Gregory himself who, when incubating in a sanctuary of the Forty, received a dream in which they appeared and urged him to attend the celebrations for the inauguration of a local cult by Gregory's mother. In short: the martyrs are still alive and of great benefit for the Church, in the past, the present and the future.

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Johan Leemans

MATRIMONY

The longest and most explicit passages by Gregory on matrimony and its relationship with Christian life are found in chapters 3, 4, 7 and 13 of *VIRG* (→), his first work, conceived, according to AUBINEAU (83–96), as an “encomium” or “praise” of virginity. Gregory himself defines his book as an *encomium* (prol., GNO VIII/1, 248). The *encomium* is a well defined literary genus of antiquity, the rules of which Gregory is quite faithful to, even including the passages dedicated to the “diatribe”, that is, dedicated to the indication of the limits of that which could obscure what is being defended (L. MÉRIDIER, 105–199).

This is important to bear in mind, in order to avoid misunderstanding certain of the rhetorical expressions in chapters 3–4 of *Virg*, i.e. the chapters dedicated to the “diatribe”. In these, Gregory describes the difficulties of matrimony, the inconveniences of widowhood, the risks of birth, the worry about children, etc., in order to consider virginity as a liberation from these preoccupations. These pages are conspicuously full of the habitual loci of discourse, taken from the Cynics and Stoics, for example, when they ask the question whether matrimony impedes philosophizing (e.g. MUSONIUS, *Reliquiae*, 14, ed. Hense, 70–76). These chapters do not contain Gregory’s profound thought on matrimony, but form a *diatribe against matrimony* in the most technical sense of the term, and must be read in this light. Gregory himself labels these chapters a *diatribe* (*Virg*, 3, GNO VIII/1, 265).

Gregory’s thought on matrimony is more fully revealed in Ch. 7 (GNO VIII/1, 282–284). In it he rectifies the rhetorical excesses of chapters 3–4, rejects as heretical those who disdain matrimony, and presents his thought in a brief yet explicit and clear paragraph. Gregory justifies his verbal exaggerations of the earlier chapters, stating that in them he did not “defend” matrimony, since nature itself already defends it eloquently, by “inserting the innate inclination to such things in all those that are born by means of it”. It is thus not necessary, he concludes, to laboriously write the praise of matrimony, unless some persons appear who “falsify” the doctrine of the Church.

Matrimony, Gregory states while referring to Gn 1.28, “is not without the divine benediction”. The doctrine of the Church is also clear: Whoever disdains matrimony “falsifies” this doctrine. On this point Gregory

follows Pauline thought and language closely, with numerous citations from his letters: those who reject matrimony as a bad thing have “*seared their own conscience as with a branding iron*, since they abandon the guidance of the Holy Spirit for the *doctrine of demons*” (cf. 1 Tim 4.1–2).

In general, Gregory speaks of these heretics who reject matrimony without specifying any names. They undoubtedly belong in one way or another to the variegated world of dualism and Manicheism, whose fundamental problem is a negative vision of matter and thus, of sex and sexuality. According to his description, these are people who “detest as filth the things created by God” and who preach that matrimony “leads to evil”. These are thus people who misconstrue the Christian vision of the world and of matter, since they misconstrue the consequences that derive from the faith in creation. Gregory adds further information which helps to more accurately identify the heretics of whom he speaks: “They do not understand that, if one defines virtue as a just mean, the deviation towards either extreme is an evil”. With this clearly Aristotelian perspective (Aristotle, *Nichomachean Ethics* 2, 6–8), Gregory is not maintaining that virtue is a “prudent” middle ground, but wishes to confirm that for each virtue, there are opposing vices that are contrary to each other. Calling attention to the fact that every excess is vice, Gregory seems to have a rigorist group in mind, perhaps the Encratists (G. BLOND, *Encratisme*, DSp IV/1, 628–642).

In reality, Gregory in chapter 23 (GNO VIII/1, 337–338) returns to refute the two extremes, even in their manner of life with regard to sexuality, i.e. laxism and rigorism. There are those, he states, who support hunger almost to death, “as if God were pleased with such sacrifices”, and there are also those who fall “into the diametrically opposed extreme”. He warns however, in chapter 7, that those who denigrate matrimony are really outside of “the doctrine of the mysteries”, and are thus “not under the protection of God” (GNO VIII/1, 282).

Gregory applies the axiom that virtue consists in the just mean to the virtue of chastity: in it too there can be “manifest deviations towards evil by means of one extreme or another”. Some distance themselves from the chaste life, that is, they fall into laxism; others have no moderation, going beyond the just mean and presenting matrimony as contemptible. This rigorist position is absurd, and those who disdain matrimony insult themselves. For, if the human being is the fruit of matrimony, the insults against it automatically insult the one who pronounces them, for he too is born through matrimony. This argument to refute the “rigorists” can

be found frequently in the Fathers of this period. Gregory of Nazianzen writes that there would be no celibates, if there were no matrimony (*Or. In Matth* 19, 1–12, PG 36, 293).

This argument in its formulation inevitably reminds us of Gregory's own happy experience in his family, of family life and the environment in which he was educated. Nor can we exclude the possibility that he was married himself. He at least appears to suggest it in *Virg* 3 (GNO VIII/1, 256).

At the end of chapter 7, Gregory presents his conception of matrimony in an almost scholastic form. This is what we think of matrimony, he states in a solemn form: "The preoccupation and desire of the divine realities must be placed above all, but the weight of matrimony should not be disdained, when one can live in it with wisdom and moderation" (*Virg* 7, GNO VIII/1, 285).

The true problem lies here: one must give priority to the "desire for divine realities", i.e. to the domination of the passions and to the effort for contemplation and union with God. This does not imply in any way contempt for matrimony, but requires one to live, even in marriage, "with wisdom and moderation". In other words, it is necessary to consider spiritual life as the priority in conjugal life as well. In Gregory's position, the freedom of the human being for contemplation holds the principal place. According to VÖLKER (228), in this Gregory is faithful to his conviction that in matrimony too "the fact that *spiritual realities are that which is primary* remains an axiom".

His affirmations can be clarified by the ideal that he proposes while commenting on the figure of Isaac in Gn 25.20, 27.1 and 48.10. The patriarch married Rebecca "owing to the benediction of God for his descendants". He accepted the union with Rebecca, even though her flower of youth had already passed, because the marriage did not derive from passion. The conjugal requirements accomplished, Isaac "once again dedicated himself entirely to the invisible realities, after having placated the corporeal senses" (*Virg* 7, 3, GNO VIII/1, 284).

Gregory's thought on matrimony is also reflected in an indirect but highly suggestive manner in his conception of the spiritual life and the union of the soul with God. Gregory is content to describe this union as inspired by nuptial love. In *Virg* 20 (GNO VIII/1, 325–326) he calls this union a "spiritual matrimony", πνευματικὸς γάμος (→ VIRGINITY). This argument reaches its full development in *Cant*. As far as the present theme is concerned—Gregory's thought on matrimony—the most important aspect to note is that he uses the union of husband and

wife as a starting point to speak of the union of the soul with God. He has great respect for the dignity of matrimony, of the human and divine qualities of spousal union. It may seem audacious on Gregory's part, but it was God Himself who first used a clearly erotic spousal poem—the Song of Songs—to explain his love for his people. Gregory is conscious of this, and this explains his fine sensitivity in noting the greatness of spousal love and applying it to the union of the soul with God.

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Lucas Francisco Mateo-Seco

MELET

Oratio funebris in Meletium

Oratio funebris in Meletium is an oration delivered on the occasion of the death of Meletius, Bishop of Antioch, as he presided over the synod of Constantinople in 381. This synod of 150 bishops, convened by the emperor and presided over by Meletius, effectively ended the intense theological and ecclesiastical controversy that had engulfed the Eastern church since the Council of Nicaea (325). Given Meletius' career as a staunch anti-Arian both at the synod and within his see in Antioch (from which he was forced into exile three times because of his beliefs), it is no wonder that Gregory exalts Meletius as a pre-eminent leader and laments his death so extravagantly. To console those mourning Meletius' death, Gregory appropriates the form and language of the Hellenistic consolatory genre to convey a distinctively Christian consolatory message. Gregory compares the virtues of Meletius and declares his affinity with biblical figures such as Job and the apostles in whose company he now resides. Gregory also comforts his audience by reminding them that Meletius has left the constraints of the temporal world and now resides in immortality with Christ. Although Meletius is no longer physically present with his church, he continues to intercede even more directly on their behalf because of his exalted position in the direct presence of Christ.

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METHODIUS

Bishop of Olympus (d. 311) closely followed Origen in his *Symposium*, inspired by Plato's homonymous dialogue and full of Platonic reminiscences. But in *De resurrectione* he misunderstood Origen's thought, especially on the permanence of the εἶδος of the earthly body into the resurrection. He mistook the metaphysical principle for the mere shape. He also rejected, like Gregory, the so-called "pre-existence of souls" (which was not maintained by Origen either, who rather conceived of the pre-existence of λογικά, not of mere souls, since only God is completely immaterial). Methodius's reflections on virginity in *Symposium* (physical and even more spiritual, as the pursuit of all virtues, the restoration of God's image and likeness, and a return to the original purity and incorruptibility of humanity, which was planned by God at the beginning and will be recovered in the end) are echoed and amplified in *Virg.* Gregory also follows Origen's idea (fr. 28 in *Matth.*) that every pure, and thus virginal, soul is Christ's mother. His connection between virginity and the spiritual offer of oneself on an altar (*Virg* 23,7) comes directly from Methodius (*Symp.* 5,6), who also assimilated virginity to martyrdom. The whole (Platonic) conception of the ladder of love that brings the soul to God in an infinite ascent, the *epektasis*, was present in Methodius's *Symposium*, where in turn it derives from Origen (esp. prologue to *In Cant.*). Moreover, both Methodius in *Symposium* and Gregory in *An et res* emulate Plato's *Symposium* in having consecrated women expound the highest truths. Both Methodius and Gregory received Origen's exegesis of Ct as the expression of the soul's loving ascent to Christ (besides the spousal Christ-Church love), his use of both ἔρωσ and ἀγάπη in relation to this love, his spiritual interpretation of resurrection in addition to the physical one, his doctrine of *apocatastasis* (more pronounced in Gregory than in Methodius), the idea that God will be all in all in the end, and the doctrine of Christ's *epinoiai* and the insistence on the theological theme of light, which in Methodius is prominent especially in the final hymn to Christ-Logos in *Symposium*. In *Symp.* 9,1 Methodius, like Gregory toward the end of *An et res*, interprets the Feast of Tabernacles or *Skenopegia* as a prefiguration of the *anastasis* and *apocatastasis*. It is no accident that this exegesis of the same feast was taken up by Didymus the Blind, *In Zach.* 5.172–177: "A shade, an image that foretells the resurrection and

restoration of this tabernacle of ours, which we shall resume after its ruin in the seventh millenary, when we shall celebrate the feast of the true *Skenopegia*, in the new creation, with no suffering” (ἄλυπον, just like Methodius in his final hymn in *Symposium*, Φ 3: λύπη τέθνηκε). The characteristics that Gregory ascribes to humanity in the final restoration in *Tunc et Ipse*, “sovereignty, incorruptibility, and blessedness” are the very same that Methodius attributes it in his final hymn in *Symp.* (strophe χ, v. 4).

Gregory read Origen’s teaching on the resurrection in the light of Methodius, who is among his sources at least for *An et res*. Of course, unlike Methodius, he did not misunderstand Origen’s doctrine, but Methodius’s critique made him aware of the misinterpretations it might be liable to, and he adjusted it accordingly. Likewise, the Origenian Didymus read the doctrine of resurrection in the light of Methodius in *Tura Co. Ps.* 329–330. The earthly body, Gregory explains, will be reconstructed with the same elements, but more refined and beautiful (*An et res* 105D–108A). Gregory’s definition of ἀνάστασις in *An et res* as ἡ εἰς τὸ ἀρχαῖον τῆς φύσεως ἡμῶν ἀποκατάστασις was anticipated by Methodius in *Res.* 3,2, where he called the resurrection of all Christians ἀποκατάστασις. Of course, he also relied on Origen, who applied ἀποκατάστασις to the resurrection of both Christ and Lazarus. Methodius considered the *Apocalypse of Peter* to be inspired Scripture and praised its idea that babies, once dead, are handed to angels who will help them grow up in peace (*Symp.* 2,6). This conception emerges in Gregory’s *Infant*, too. The providential nature of the death decided by God after the fall is also claimed by Methodius in *Symp.* 9,2 and by Gregory in *Or cat* 8; it was already suggested by Origen (*Co. Matt.* 15,15; *Hom. Lev.* 14,4). Furthermore, Gregory’s idea that God charged the devil with the organization of this world (*Or Cat* 6) is found in Methodius (*Res.* 1,37), but also in Origen (*CC* 5,30), whom indeed Methodius followed.

However, Gregory never mentions Methodius by name in his writings. Methodius is only named twice in a work ascribed to Gregory, *Ad imaginem Dei et ad similitudinem* (PG 44, 1328–1345). In 1329,42 the author likens the three ὁμοούσιοι ὑποστάσεις of the Trinity to Adam, Eve, and their child, who also were three individuals of the same nature (cf. Gregory’s “social analogy”). According to Methodius—the author reports—the latter are a symbolic image of the former: Adam of the Father, their child of the Son, and Eve of the Spirit. In 1133,12 Methodius’s *Symposium* is cited for his definition of the soul’s beauty as indescribable, in that it is in the image of the ineffable God. Methodius is cited, not by those

who esteem Origen, such as the Cappadocians, Didymus, Athanasius, Evagrius, and even Chrysostom, Ps.-Dionysius or Maximus the Confessor, but by his detractors, like Eustathius (*Eng.* 22,5), and by Church historians such as Epiphanius, who quotes his work on the resurrection at length (*Pan.* II 420,23–500,2; cf. 510,3; 515,10), Philostorgius (VIII fr. 14), Theodoretus, who mentions him as a bishop and martyr (*Eran.* 95,19; 99, 32; *Unicus Filius*, PG 83,1440,42), and Byzantine authors. Only Socrates, among Origen's admirers, mentions Methodius, but says that he changed his mind and wrote a work in admiration of Origen, the *Xenon* (*HE* 6,13).

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Ilaria Ramelli

METHORIOS

Μεθόριος

The term μεθόριος appears only 22 times in the Nyssen's corpus, but its theological relevance is much greater than statistical observations would suggest. Its origin is geographical, in reference to the frontier that divides two countries (*Eun* I, GNO I, 57, 22). From this the cosmological application is immediately derived, as is the case with the firmament (*Hex*, PG 44, 80D). In this sense, it can also signify an intermediary space, not only in the sense of limits, but also the neighboring zone, as in Plato (*Leg.*, 878b). It is thus used by Gregory to indicate the dawn, as the frontier between the night and the day (*Inscr*, GNO V, 83, 14).

From a theological perspective however, it is particularly important to observe that the term also signifies the limit between two orders between which there is a discontinuity (J. DANIELÉLOU 1970, 117). It is in this sense that it is transposed to the theological realm. It is a frontier between reciprocally exclusive elements, as is the case with life and death (*Or cat*, GNO III/4, 49, 13; *Virg* GNO VIII/1, 306, 5). This information is essential in order to appreciate the particularities of the Nyssen's conception: μεθόριος was used in the Aristotelian tradition to speak of the different degrees of being and their continuity, while Gregory inserts it into a Christian theological vision, based upon the clear distinction between creature and Creator, between time and eternity. J. Daniélou affirms that "he is conscious of the homogeneity at the interior of every order of reality, but underscores the discontinuity between the different orders" (J. DANIELÉLOU 1970, 118). The human soul is μεθόριος between the sensible world and the intelligible one (ἡ ἀνθρωπίνη ψυχὴ δύο φύσεων οὔσα μεθόριος: *Cant*, GNO VI, 333, 14), but not in the sense of a transition between two orders as synthesis of both of them, between which liberty is called to choose (J. ΓΑΪΤΗ, 50–51). This is the specific aspect of the Nyssen's usage: the term was also used in the Platonic tradition to indicate the border between matter and spirit (H. MERKI, 94), but in Gregory it is completely liberated of the savor of its cosmological signification to express the proper quality of the human being as the image of God, through the essential role assigned to liberty (J. DANIELÉLOU 1970, 121). The sensible and the intelligible

are not opposed to each other, while good and evil are: Human life is precisely the border between good and evil (ἐν μεθόρῳ κεῖται τοῦ ἀγαθοῦ καὶ τοῦ χείρονος ἢ ἀνθρωπίνη ζωή: *Beat*, GNO VII/2, 164, 16–17) and it is thus virtually identified with liberty itself (→ *PROAIRE-SIS*).

Gregory will develop a Philonian doctrine based upon the exegesis of the tree of good and evil in Gn (M. HARL). The Nyssen manifests that human liberty, since it is created, is capable of growth in perfection or also of regressing from it (*Eun* I, GNO I, 106, 23–26), i.e., capable of choosing or rejecting the Good, which is identified with God.

In passing from the anthropological level to the properly theological one, the clear exclusion of any possible gradation is further highlighted, since in the Trinity “more and less” cannot be applied to the Son and the Spirit (*Eun* I, GNO I, 110, 1–6). To affirm a natural difference of the second and third Persons of the Trinity from the first would be, in fact, a corrosion of the homogeneity of the divine immanence, causing the very foundation of the Nyssen’s theology to collapse, i.e. the affirmation that the eternal and uncreated are exclusively identified with the Three of the Trinity, the Only God.

J. Daniélou notes that we are confronted here by a double dualism, since the couple of created-uncreated is added to that of sensible-intelligible in such a way that three worlds can be distinguished: the material world of nature, the moral world of liberty and the divine world of God. If, for Gregory, in the material dominion μεθόριος also means the mixture of opposing qualities coming from different natures; in the human sphere, the possibility of commixtion of natures is replaced by the different choices of liberty in the interior of a unique nature. The Greek term thus undergoes an essential transformation in respect to the usage of Greek philosophy, in so far as the Nyssen refutes both the continuity that is admitted in the Stoic environment between matter and spirit, and the continuity introduced by the Platonists between the spiritual world and the divine (J. DANIELOU 1970, 124–125).

This difference from philosophical usage is essential to Gregory, who must negate any possibility of the existence of an intermediary nature between the human and the divine, between the created and the uncreated (*Maced*, GNO III/1, 104, 9), in order to avoid the subordination of either the second or the third Person of the Trinity in the discussions with the Neo-Arians and the Pneumatomachians. The Nyssen identifies the inspirational source of the Arians in Philo and his conception of the Logos as μεθόριος between created and uncreated (*Eun* III, GNO II, 168,

17 and 217, 22). In the same way Gregory also rejects the attribution of the term to the Incarnate Word in his polemic against Apollinarius (*Antirrh*, GNO III/1,133, 17).

Gregory finds himself in the position of having to reject the notion of ontological mediation from μεθόριος, but at the same time, when the context does not allow misinterpretation, he applies the term to the mediation of the saints to express divinization as supernatural participation in the divine life. He who has reached the heights of perfection finds himself, *in a certain way*, at the border between mutable and immutable nature (ὁ γὰρ ἐν τούτῳ τῷ ὕψει γενόμενος μεθόριος τρόπον τινὰ τῆς τρεπτῆς τε καὶ ἀτρέπτου φύσεως ἴσταται), acting as mediator (μεσιτεύει) between human beings and God (*Inscr*, GNO V, 45, 7–9). A second case in which μεθόριος is applied to the saints is *Macr*, GNO VIII/1, 382, 20, where it is stated that the life of Gregory's sister was at the frontier of human nature and incorporeal nature.

J. Daniélou observes that μεθόριος has the particular characteristic of being able to refer to the human being either in his constitutive origin, as situated at the frontier of the material world and the spiritual world, or in his fulfillment, as mediator between the human and the divine (J. DANIELOU 1970, 128).

Gregory therefore strips the term of μεθόριος of any possible reference to an intermediary nature, essentially changing the philosophical sense to express only the communication between the divine and the human worlds, eminently realized in the Incarnate Word and, through their identification with Christ, in the saints.

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Giulio Maspero

METOUSIA

Μετουσία

Characteristic of Gregory of Nyssa is not only the exceptional importance of the notion of participation, but also the exceptional frequency of the noun he uses to denote participation: *μετουσία*.

The word is found already in Liddell-Scott-Jones (latest ed. 1996), though it seems to be rather infrequent in classical Greek. Its philosophical meaning is given as *μέθεξις* (participation, usually associated with Plato's philosophy). The entry in Lampe is longer, but it too fails to indicate that, from at least Philo (60 occurrences) to the fifth century, *μετουσία* is the prevalent noun for participation (with a few exceptions, e, g., Origen: *μετουσία* 8, *μετοχή* 35); the primary verb being universally *μετέχω*. It is perhaps surprising to find that Gregory seems to be (according to the latest TLG disk; E) the author who uses the term most often (*μετουσία*: 179 times). The use by all other preceding or contemporary Fathers is far less frequent (e.g. Basil the Great: 19, Gregory Nazianzen: 10). Even Proclus (5th century), who uses *μετέχω* almost 2000(!) times vs. Gregory's less than 200, has *μετουσία* only 158 times. It is perhaps worth mentioning that the term *μέθεξις*, rare in the first four centuries, makes a comeback in the fifth century, both in pagan (e.g. Proclus) and Christian (e.g. Cyril of Alexandria, Pseudo-Dionysius, Maximus the Confessor) authors, though *μετουσία* remains still important.

What is the reason for such exceptional frequency of *μετουσία* in Gregory? He gives no explicit answer to this question. One reason for the frequency is clearly the all-pervading importance of the notion of participation in Gregory's theology (→ PARTICIPATION). This explains the frequency of the terms referring to participation in general, but not yet the frequency of this term. Philo was one of the authors influential on Gregory, but Origen is not less influential, although he uses *μετοχή* more often than *μετουσία*.

The reason for the frequency of *μετουσία* may lie rather in Gregory's understanding of participation. The "object" of participation is in his writings most often God. However, though grammatically "God" (or one of the many other terms referring to God, such as "the good," "the real being," etc.) is "object," in reality the relationship between God

and the rational creature participating is rather the inverse. God is the personal source continuously giving a share in a divine perfection to the creature; the latter is the recipient (though not an entirely passive recipient). Now whereas μετοχή (derived from “having”) would stress the active possession of a perfection, μετουσία (derived from “being”) stresses more that the participant “is with” or rather “dependently with” the One in whom he participates. Since for Gregory, participation in God is not a state, but an ongoing process of receiving more and more from God, μετουσία may express better the relationship envisaged between the (rational) creature and the Creator.

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David L. Balás

IMITATION

Μίμησις

The theology of the human being as the image of God occupies an important place in Gregory's anthropological thought and in his spiritual doctrine (→ SPIRITUAL THEOLOGY); logically, the theology of the imitation of God has a similar importance, as the image must reflect in itself the traits of the archetype. Given that man is as image (ὁμοίωμα), his moral task consists in becoming similar to his model through imitation (μίμησις) (*Prof*, GNO VIII/1, 136, 20–21).

For Gregory, the theology of the imitation of God is identified with the theology of the imitation and following of Christ, the participation in his name ("Christians" bear the same name as Christ), and the sacramental participation in the mysteries of his life, particularly in his death and resurrection. Like Clement of Alexandria and Origen before him, Gregory firmly unites imitation of the divine nature and imitation of Christ (VÖLKER, 253).

The theme is particularly present in Gregory's ascetic writings. In *PROF* (→) the central theme is: What does being Christian consist of? This is a question about the essence of Christianity. The response sounds like a definition: "Christianity is the imitation of the divine nature (χριστιανισμός ἐστὶ τῆς θείας φύσεως μίμησις)" (*Prof*, GNO VIII/1, 136, 7–8). It is possible that Gregory has Plato in mind when saying this (*Theaetetus* 176b and *Republic* 613b), as JAEGER suggests in the critical edition; no doubt he has in mind the exhortation of the Lord to be perfect "as your Heavenly Father is perfect" (Mt 5.48) to which he has recourse in order to encourage others to perfection in virtue (*Prof*, GNO VIII/1, 138–140).

Despite the pettiness of our nature, Gregory states, this affirmation is not excessive: the human being can imitate the divine nature, since he is made in the image of God; Christianity receives the "good news" that the human being is reestablished "in his original dignity" (*Prof*, GNO VIII/1, 136), i.e. in his dignity of image of God. Gregory conceives of salvation as a "return to the grace received in the beginning", as a restoration of "man in his original state" (e.g. *Or cat* 8 and 15, GNO III/4, 31 and 43–44).

The "imitation" of God is an authentic participation in the divine good. Gregory develops this thought in detail in *Or cat* 5 (GNO III/4, 17–18):

God created man in his image so that he could participate in the divine good, and so that he could be attracted to it. The divine image is for the human being not only a reality, but an invitation and a call. By the fact of being created in the image of God and of having a certain *kinship* with Him, the human being can feel the desire to transcend his earthly life.

Gregory uses these two affirmations equivalently: Christianity is the imitation of Christ, and Christianity is the imitation of the divine nature. This is clarified in more detail in *PERF* (→), itself a Christological writing. If Moses is presented in *Vit Moys* as the guide of the Christian, in *Perf* the guide is Christ himself, whose name the Christian must seek to adore and imitate. The best example of how one must imitate Christ is Paul (GNO VIII/1, 174), who desires only “that Christ live in him” (Gal 2.20).

In *Perf* (GNO VIII/1, 181) Gregory also reflects on perfection. The response is the same as that in *Prof*, but this time in a Christocentric perspective: Perfection consists of knowing what the name of Christ means, the name to which we must “conform (συμμορφωθῆναι) our own life”. In the final recapitulation (*ibidem*, 210–211), Gregory encourages the Christian to be coherent with that which the name of Christ signifies “in thoughts, words and works”. One must follow Him in all, and in all circumstances. In these final paragraphs, Gregory insists on the most unmistakable nucleus of his ascetic doctrine: the unlimited nature of progress in the spiritual life (→ *EPEKTASIS*). He concludes with another phrase, one that demonstrates that for him, the imitation of Christ and of God are one unique reality: “Perfection truly consists in never ceasing to grow towards that which is better and to never place any limit on perfection” (*ibidem*, 214, 3–6). When this affirmation is compared with the one we find referring to God in the preface of *Vit Moys* (GNO VII/1, 3), the identity between the two is confirmed: To imitate God is the same thing as to imitate Christ, since both affirmations are projected into a growth into the infinite.

M. CANÉVET (8–9) has called attention to the importance that the name of Christ has in Gregory’s theology: The Lord grants that we be called Christians, since He makes us participate in his very being. To call oneself Christian is at once a great gift and a great responsibility: the gift of participation in Christ, the responsibility to reflect Christ in the life of the one who bears his name. For this reason, Christian perfection consists in realizing in one’s own life all the meanings contained in the name of Christ. In other words, Christian spirituality is nothing other than the imitation and following of Christ.

It is worth observing, however, that for Gregory this participation in or imitation of Christ is situated in a different optic than those habitually found in some treatises on the imitation of Christ, treatises that treat this imitation or following only with reference to the humanity of the Lord. Gregory instead, proposing names that correspond to both the divinity and the humanity of Christ, appears convinced, to state it briefly, that life in Christ is following and union with the incarnate Word. In this perspective, the two affirmations find their perfect correspondence: to be Christian is to follow Christ, as to be Christian is to imitate the divine nature.

These affirmations imply a clear concept, not only of the divinity of Jesus Christ, but also of the particular character of his mediation. These affirmations are in fact equivalent because the human being, uniting himself to Christ, unites himself to Christ's divinity. Christ is the perfect and eternal Image of the Father. The human being, made in the image and likeness of God, finds salvation precisely in the union with Him who is the eternal Image of the Father. The Nyssen's commentary on the Song of Songs, centered on the espousal of Christ and the soul, can be understood in this light—we find there also a description of the spousal union of the soul with God. In meeting Christ, the human being meets God. In *Perf*, Gregory underscores that Christ “united that which is human with God through himself” (GNO VIII/1, 204, 18–19).

DANIÉLOU (54–96) has more than amply shown how the spiritual life and the effort to be like Christ are inseparably united in Gregory's spiritual doctrine. This is particularly clear in chapters 33–37 of *Or cat* (GNO III/4, 82–98). In these chapters, Gregory gives an explanation of the truth that the imitation of Christ necessarily includes the sacramental life. This is true of the Eucharist, in which Gregory underscores the importance of the union of the Christian with the body of the resurrected Christ.

The Logos is the Image of the invisible God, who, making Himself man, became visible and approached the human being to restore him to his dignity of image. Gregory repeats this thought with beautiful formulas reminiscent of Irenaeus: He who is above all word and concept became similar to the human being to transform him through himself, conforming him anew “to the beauty of the archetype” (*Perf*, GNO VIII/1, 194–195).

The imitation of Christ thus appears as the fundamental question of Gregory's theology. There is no other path towards God, nor is there another model outside of Him who is the prototypic Image. We must

imitate Christ to the point of being the image of the Image, reproducing in our acts “the beautiful model, as Paul did, transformed into an imitator of Christ through his virtuous life” (*ibidem*, 196). Christ is the Image, and whoever conforms himself to Him “becomes as image of the invisible God as well” (*ibidem*, 197).

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Lucas Francisco Mateo-Seco

MONASTICISM

Gregory lived in a period when monastic life spontaneously developed in Egypt, Syria and Palestine. It assumed both eremitical forms (the desert Fathers) and cenobitic forms (the communities of Pachomius). Ascetic movements will develop also in Asia Minor, first under the direction of Eustathius of Sebaste, and then definitively under Basil the Great. In this ascetic environment, first as a hermit and then as priest and Bishop, Basil elaborated biblical and theological foundations for the ascetic life and rules for the cenobitically structured organizations. He also founded monasteries, or so called “fraternal communities”. He became the true Father of monastic life in Asia Minor. Independently of Basil, his sister Macrina played a significant role in the establishment of feminine monasticism, since she, beginning in 352, guided the community founded on the family property in Pontus. This is considered one of the oldest female monasteries in Asia Minor.

Even if Gregory was under the influence of his siblings and was familiar with monasticism from his youth, he follows the steps of his father and chooses the career of rhetor. He was nevertheless interested in monastic life, something that becomes clear after his election as Bishop of Nyssa (371). His first work was in fact a treatise addressed to monks (*De virginitate*), written on request and inspired by Basil. Without mentioning his brother’s name, he refers to him and his writings, presenting him as the master of the spiritual life. Gregory even writes in the spirit of Basil’s monastic reform, underscoring the function of the community and speaking of the necessity of spiritual direction. But above all, he extols virginity and chastity as the requirements to return to paradise, to see God through the development of the virtues and the spiritual *espousal* to the Lord. Gregory himself, as he writes, could not reach the glory of virginity (cap. 3, GNO VIII/1, 256, 13–16); this is because he was married.

After the deaths of Basil and Macrina, Gregory’s role in the monastic environment becomes more important, as well as after the Council of Constantinople, when he becomes one of the most famous theologians and Bishops of the Orient. His letters, although only a few survive, clearly demonstrate this. They attest to the existence of a “choir of virgins” (*Epist* 6,10) or a women’s monastery in Nyssa, but probably to a community of “brothers” as well (*Epist* 18,5 and 21,2). Other monks also sought

the counsel of the Bishop of Nyssa. At the request of a superior of the Cappadocian communities, Gregory wrote on the advisability of a pilgrimage of monks to Jerusalem (*Epist* 2). He gives specific councils to a monk, clearly the prior of a monastery (*Epist* 19, 4.20). He also encouraged some to undertake the monastic life (*Epist* 21).

Shortly after the death of his sister, he wrote the treatise of *The Life of Macrina*, in which he supports female monachism. Strictly speaking, this treatise is not the biography of a founder of a monastery, but that of an authentically Christian woman, one who reached perfection, realizing the ideal of "Christian philosophy" (1, 28) and living in a "fraternal community" (16, 2).

Taking her life as an example, Gregory expounds the development of feminine asceticism, from the so-called familial asceticism to the foundation of the first communities, still without rules, to the monastic vows of a permanent organizational structure.

The works written by Gregory in the last period of his life, possibly after the death of his wife (385?) and of Gregory Nazianzen (390), show that he adhered more strictly to monastic spirituality. He becomes a spiritual father for the monastic communities of Cappadocia. He writes his works for them, even while keeping the works on a universal level. In the same style as Basil, he presented Christian perfection, not as reserved to a restricted group, but as accessible to all Christians. He tended not to use vocabulary that could be understood as typically monastic: "monk", "monastery", or "ascetic"; rather, he used more universal expressions such as "community of fraternity", "philosophical life" and "a Christian". This is the reason why typically monastic arguments rarely appear in his great exegetical and spiritual works, for example *The Life of Moses* or *On the beatitudes*. The only exceptions are the two monastic allusions in the *Homilies on the Song of Songs* (*Hom.* 7 and 15, GNO IX, 222,12–223,2 and 452,7–15). His three ascetic treatises have a similar character: *What Does it Mean to be a Christian* (*De Professione Christiana*), *On perfection* (*De Perfectione*), and *On the End of Life and the True Asceticism*. They give the impression of being addressed to all the baptized. Only the third, cited with the Latin title of *De instituto christiano*, as a reworking of the *Great Letter* of Pseudo-Macarius, includes specific particulars regarding the ascetics who live in a monastic community (in a "philosophical choir" as Gregory writes; GNO VIII/1, 41,20–21). This writing explains not only the end and the rules of a true asceticism, but—in the second part—speaks of love in a fraternal community, of the role of a superior, of the significance of prayer, of humility etc. (GNO VIII/1, 66–89).

The bishop of Nyssa played a role in the containment of the Messalian movement, which was active in Mesopotamia and Syria from the fourth century onwards, but also penetrated Asia Minor (their influence became more intense after Basil's death). The criticism of an ascetic movement that is without spiritual guide and follows an anarchic style of life, present in the treatise *De virginitate*, could be directed at them. However in the discourse *In suam ordinationem*, probably pronounced during the Council of Constantinople (381), Gregory praises the ascetic Bishops from Mesopotamia (the home of Messalianism), who were adorned with charismatic capacity and were distinguished by means of their ascetic perfection. There are no clear indications that those ascetics were Messalians, as is sometimes affirmed. While the treatise *De instituto christiano* implies a spiritual affinity between Gregory and Pseudo-Macarius, who was involved in the Messalian movement, it is an attempt to correct ideas typical to this movement.

Gregory's writings were above all directed to the ascetics who lived according to Basil's indications. Thus they manifest the value of community and spiritual formation under the guide of a master. Gregory nevertheless did not compose normative writings for a monastic style of life as Basil had. Gregory was more interested in the great spiritual difficulties rather than questions of organization. He thus gave instructions about the true ascetic and defined terms such as virtue or perfection, but above all described the path of development of interior life and drew attention to contemplation. He underscored that the essence of Christianity in general and of the monastic ideal in particular consists in personal union with God. While Basil took on the role of organizational innovation and was more interested in applying Christian morals to practical situations, Gregory on his part deepens and enriches Basil's thought, giving greater importance to a mystical aspect of spirituality. In this manner he continued the monastic work of his brother, completing and developing it.

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MORT

De mortuis

At the beginning of the discourse Gregory underscores that excessive mourning, as a manifestation of suffering when confronted by death, is primarily due to an erroneous conception of the present life. To know how to take on the reality of death, means above all to seek that which is truly good, to meditate on the characteristics of earthly life, and to contrast this with the realities that are held through hope. This schema will be followed regularly throughout Gregory's discourse. According to the Nyssen, that which is truly good is that which is good by nature, good for all, and good for all in the same way. Next he accentuates the fleetingness of human life, for which the passage from this life to the next does not imply the separation from any good, but the acquisition of a future life which is characterized by the absence of necessity and by immateriality. Gregory thus invites the human being to know his own nature, and the soul to see its own image, a knowledge of self that leads to a purification from sins, caused by ignorance of both this life and the next. The passage from one life to another is compared by Gregory to the birth of a child from the womb of the mother: The child also cries at the loss of its preceding life in the maternal womb. After the exit from this life, that which is truly good will appear patently to the soul, as well as that to which it had remained close, that in which it had hoped during life—life understood as a path, a gradual growth and the possibility of hoped-for perfection.

The defense of the body that Gregory is making is quite evident here: the body is not the cause of sufferings of the present life; rather, it is human free will that causes the passions; and it is these that lead us to desire something beyond the satisfaction of corporeal necessity, amplifying themselves in the search of that which is in reality useless and harmful. Therefore to despise the body is not natural, as the soul will be adorned with it in the final resurrection after having been transformed and purified of every passion. This transformed body must be loved, but not the waste that is abandoned through the purifying fire of death.

Referring to the life after death, he presents it as a "more divine" condition, as incessant love of true beauty, the key to the treasures of

wisdom, the good desire that is realized in the communion of the kingdom of God. Concluding the discourse, Gregory returns to the theme of sadness in the face of death. There is a good and virtuous sadness that is according to God, which has as its end the salvation of the human being. The believer cannot place all his hopes in the present life, but must believe in the supreme guarantor of the resurrection from the dead.

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Juan Antonio Gil-Tamayo

Movement → *Kinêsis*

Mythology → Greek Mythology

Myron → Chrism

MYSTERY

μυστήριον

The etymology of the term μυστήριον is mysterious in itself: The most probable hypothesis is that it is a derivative from the verb μύειν, which refers to the action of closing the lips or the mouth, and which thus recalls silence and keeping something secret (TWNT IV, 810). The term appears in the context of the Mysteric religions and is also used by Plato to refer to philosophical truths. Christian usages refer to Apocalyptic Judaism, in the context of which the term indicated the heavenly realities that were to be revealed at the end of times, and which were anticipated in particular revelations. The Patristic sense is based on the Pauline uses, in particular on the reference to the salvific plan typical of the letter to the Ephesians. The term indicates also the unique event of the life of the Lord. The patristic development will give this term an ontological value which, in the Cappadocian environment above all, will be inserted into the context of apophatism (→ APOPHATIC THEOLOGY) to indicate that which can never be completely understood, but in which one can participate. According to B. Studer, Gregory is the Father who most completely developed the doctrine of μυστήριον (B. STUDER, *Mistero*, 2266).

1. J. Daniélou enumerates four senses of μυστήριον in the Nyssen's thought. The fundamental sense directly depends on the Pauline use of the term, in reference to the mystery of the divine plan, hidden from all ages and revealed in Christ Jesus. This is the properly economic dimension of mystery, as the phrase τὸ τῆς οἰκονομίας μυστήριον (*Eun* III, GNO, II, 19, 20) manifests. The mystery *par excellence* is the mystery of Christian salvation revealed and communicated in the Person and life of Christ. The fundamental sense of the term is thus in direct relationship to the Incarnation: It is that of τὸ θεῖον τῆς κατὰ ἄνθρωπον οἰκονομίας μυστήριον (*Vit Moys*, GNO VII/1, 85, 3–4), which includes the events of the life of Christ from his conception to the Resurrection. In that it is salvific, the μυστήριον needs to be revealed and announced, in a paradoxical relation to the etymology of the term itself.

2. The second principal sense of the term μυστήριον refers to the sacramental realm, in which the accent passes from *revelation* to *initiation*. The term appears in the typical context of mysteric vocabulary (μνεῖν, μυσταγωγία) to indicate the sacraments in general (*Eun* III, GNO, II, 285, 13), or in particular, in reference to Baptism (*Eun* III, GNO, II, 69, 13 and 284, 10–11), the Eucharist (*Cant*, GNO VI, 308, 5–6; *Perf*, GNO VIII/1, 191, 16) or Penance (*Vit Moys*, 2, 269, 5).
3. The third sense in which the term is used is in the exegetical realm, in reference to the hidden sense and spiritual sense of Scripture, the understanding of which is given by God. In this context the hidden mysteries are the mysteries *par excellence* (τὰ κεκρυμμένα μυστήρια), which only the Spirit of Truth can reveal (*Cant*, GNO VI, 193, 7–8 and 135, 12; *Eun* II, GNO, I, 356, 11). Even the symbols used by the sacred text are indicated by means of this term, e.g. the rock (*Vit Moys*, VII/1, 80, 21), or those realities of the Old Testament which are figures of the New (*Inscr*, GNO V, 98, 13; *Cant*, GNO VI, 371, 11; *Bas*, GNO X/1, 118, 4).
4. The final sense analyzed by J. Daniélou is in reference to the mystical life: In dependence on the three preceding senses, μυστήριον appears in the context of the highest levels of spiritual life, to indicate the object of mystical knowledge itself. In *Eccl*, it is said that Paul was elevated to the third heaven and exulted due to the hidden mysteries of Paradise (τοῖς ἀποκρήτοις τοῦ παραδείσου μυστηρίοις), in the contemplation of invisible realities (*Eccl*, GNO V, 359,20–360,3). In order to understand this use of the term, it is necessary to refer to the mysticism of the shadows (→ MYSTICISM, DARKNESS) which characterizes the Nyssen's spiritual doctrine. It is particularly clear in the description of the theophany of Sinai, when Moses, penetrating into the cloud, must abandon every support from human conceptions in order to be united to God through the participation in his mystery (*Vit Moys*, VII/1, 85,16–88,12).

It is to be noted that all of the indicated senses interact in a unique understanding of μυστήριον, as is clear from the following passage of *Cant*: “After having said this to the Bride, the Word offers the mysteries of the Gospel to his friends, saying *Eat my friends, and drink, inebriate yourselves, my brothers*. For to him who knows the mystical words of the Gospel there will not seem to be any difference between these words and the mystagogy that was imparted to the disciples there, since, both there

and here, the Word says in the same way *eat and drink* (Mt 26.26–27). To many this could appear to be an exhortation to drunkenness (μέθην), offered here by the Word to his brothers, that contains something more than the Gospel. But if one should examine attentively, one would find that even this accords with the Gospel narrative. For, that which the Word here orders to his friends, He there realizes with actions, since every drunkenness tends to produce ecstasy (ἔκστασιν) of the mind for those who have been overcome with wine. Thus, the very reality that is then realized every time through the divine eating and drinking, is here exhorted to, since together with the eating and drinking, transformation and ecstasy [in the elevation] from lesser realities to the better ones occurs” (*Cant*, GNO VI, 308,5–309,2). The exegetical reading of the text of the Canticle is made in the light of the Eucharist, considered as the summit of Christian mysticism in that it is full union and participation with God himself in Christ. To understand the significance of these affirmations it is necessary to mention that in this context μυστήριον refers to the union with the Trinity itself in Christ. The term, in fact, is used by Gregory in reference to the divine immanence, i.e. to τὸ τῆς τριάδος μυστήριον (*Inscr*, GNO V, 119, 21 and *Eun* I, GNO I, 118, 25–26).

Thus the term μυστήριον represents a transversal and synthetic concept, which plays a fundamental role of connection and union. In the Nyssen’s language, it refers to θεολογία (→), to οἰκονομία (→) and to ἱστορία (→). The μυστήριον of Gregory encompasses much more than the μυστήριον of Origen: While for the latter the spiritual and intellectual sense is the essential element (Cfr. B. STUDER, *Die doppelte*; H.U. VON BALTHASAR; K. PRÜMM; H. CROUZEL), the Nyssen summarizes into a unique concept the event-sacrament of the οἰκονομία—characteristic of the first Christian thinkers—the understanding of the event itself narrated in ἱστορία—typical to exegesis—and the incomprehensible intra-Trinitarian reality of θεολογία. It is highly significant that it is precisely in the fourth century that the properly sacramental sense (P. VISENTIN) and the reference to the immanent dimension of the Trinity are differentiated from the original semantic sense of μυστήριον.

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Giulio Maspero

MYSTICAL BODY

CHRISTOLOGY (→), SOTERIOLOGY (→) and ECCLESIOLOGY (→) are so closely united in Gregory as to be inseparable. One of the uniting ties is the concept of the *body of Christ*. In all of these domains, Gregory accentuates the union of Christ with human beings and of human beings with Christ as the path and foundation of salvation. According to Gregory, the Word, in incarnating, unites Himself to his humanity through which He unites Himself to all human beings, taking all of humanity, the lost sheep, on his shoulders (*Antirr*h 16, GNO III/1, 152–153; *Or cat* 32, GNO III/4, 78). This union permits us to participate in the mysteries of his death and Resurrection, particularly through the sacraments (→ CHRISTIAN INITIATION). In making Himself man, the Word first sanctifies and elevates his own humanity, and, in it and through it, elevates and saves all who are vitally united to Him. This is an essential dimension of the Mediation of Christ, who saves human beings in uniting Himself to them, as is clear in the sacraments of BAPTISM (→) and of the EUCHARIST (→). The theology of the Church as *body of Christ* is very useful for Gregory in the expression and underscoring of the close union that exists between the Savior and those who are saved.

In this, Gregory follows the Pauline conception of the Church as the body of Christ, σῶμα τοῦ Χριστοῦ (e.g. *In Cant* 7, GNO VI, 256, 17–18), quite closely, frequently citing 1 Cor 12.12,27; 15.28; Eph 1.22; 4.11–13,15; 5.23; Col 1.24–25 (F. MANN, *Lexicon Gregorianum* III, 114; H. DROBNER, *Bibelindex zu den Werken G. von N.*, Paderborn 1988). The most important texts of the Nyssen on the Church as *body of Christ* are found principally in *Perf*, *Tunc et ipse* and in Homily 15 of *In Cant*.

In *Perf* the theme of *body of Christ* is united to the development of the theology of the mediation of Christ and of the Christological titles of Firstborn of Creation, Only Begotten and Firstborn Among Many Brothers. Christ is the Head of the Church (Eph 5.23). From this affirmation two others can be immediately derived: 1) Christ is the same substance and nature as the body which is subject to Him, i.e. the Church, and thus his Incarnation must necessarily be true and perfect; 2) There is a vital “connaturality” and a unique “concordance” of each member of this body in respect to the whole, and of all the members in respect to each one. The concept of “concordance” (→ SYMPNOIA) is very important

in Gregory, both referring to the unity of the human body and referring to the unity of the universe or of the Church as the body of Christ. In the case of the Church, Gregory underscores that the life of this body comes from the Head, who is Christ, and that each member lives by the fact of being united to the Head and participating in the same life as the other members (*Perf*, GNO VIII/1, 197–198).

In *Or cat* 32, Gregory addresses both the unity that the entire humanity conserves in itself and the salvific energy which reaches the whole of humanity from the risen body of Christ. The whole of nature “forms, so to speak, one single animated being”, and for this reason, the resurrection of one of its members is “communicated to the whole” (*Or cat*, GNO III/4, 78). Gregory’s phrases on the unity of human nature are quite strong and realistic; this unity gives him an ontological underpinning on which he can base his doctrine regarding the mystical solidarity that exists between Christ and the Church. The realism of these phrases does not however justify the interpretation of A. von Harnack, who finishes by speaking of a “collective incarnation”. That such a position cannot be justified can be seen, simply by noting the importance, for example, that Gregory assigns to the mysteries of the life of Christ, which are exclusive to his humanity.

In the homily *In Illud*, Gregory comments on 1 Cor 15.28, thinking, as the Pauline text suggests, of the unity that is perfect in heaven. The argumentation is as follows: Christ, who is one with the Father, lived among human beings in order to practice his mediation by uniting them to Himself and thereby uniting them to the Father. Consequently, all of us who are united to Christ have become one body with Him. Gregory here multiplies his Pauline citations (Col 1.21; 1 Cor 12.27; Eph 2.20; 4.13, 15–16) in order to explain in which sense he states that Christ *continues to build up his body* with those who are united to the faith (GNO III/2, 16, 9–23).

The Incarnation and the entire life of Christ, particularly the Resurrection, have this goal: the edification and growth of the body of Christ. The creation of the world itself has as its finality the foundation of the body of Christ (*Cant*, 13, GNO VI, 384, 18–21). History has no other sense than that of being the environment of this edification, which is realized in particular through the sacraments of Baptism and of the Eucharist, by means of which Christ communicates to human beings his victory over sin and death (*Or cat* 35, 5–6 and 37, 2, GNO III/4, 86–92 and 93–95). This body, through the incorporation of new members, will reach the fullness foreseen by God at the end of this world.

The “incorporation” of new members is only the quantitative aspect of the growth of this body; there is another more important and profound aspect: the total conformity of each member to Him who is its Head, i.e. the qualitative aspect. It is not enough for Christ to be in all, He must be “All in all” (1 Cor 15.28), that is, each member must be totally transformed into Christ. Each member of the body must reflect in himself the characteristics of the Head: if the Head is Peace, Sanctity and Truth, it is necessary that all the members and each of the members be peace, sanctity and truth (*Perf* GNO VIII/1, 197–200).

This is realized in heaven in particular. There, in fact, the unity for which Christ prayed in Jn 17.21–23 will be realized in plenitude; in the heavenly Church, the fact that it is the body of Christ is manifested in a definitive and full manner. United to the single body of Christ, we become one body with Him so that Christ is in all, since the multitude is nothing but one body. Through this unity, the whole of creation itself becomes one body. This is the sense, Gregory specifies, in which Christ is called Mediator between God and men (*Tunc et ipse*, GNO III/2, 18–22).

In Homily 15 of *In Cant*, citing Eph 4.3–4, Gregory relates the unity for which Christ prayed in Jn 17.21–23 to the action of the Holy Spirit, through which all must be transformed “into one body and one spirit”. The bond of unity of the body of Christ is the Holy Spirit, given by Christ as a gift (*Cant* 15, GNO VI, 466–467). It is the Holy Spirit who ensures that many are one and that the different functions of the members contribute towards a unique “concordance” and harmony. The unity of the Church of which Gregory speaks, citing Jn 17.21–23, which will be an accomplished unity in heaven, is begun on earth as union in one body. This vital union is manifested, among other things, in the fact that “even the weaker parts, due to the “concordance” (σύμπνοια) of the whole, are stronger than the one who is corrupted or separated” (*Eun* I, GNO I, 25). Thus it is a grave error to separate oneself from the body of Christ.

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Lucas Francisco Mateo-Seco

MYSTICISM

The term mysticism, with all its meanings, is closely related to the concept of mystery. For Gregory, as for Origen and Philo, the term *mystikós* indicates the sense of mystery that surrounds God, and the contact that one can have with Him in various ways (SIMONETTI, xxxvi). The mystical life is nothing other than the penetration of the soul into the divine mystery. The itinerary of Moses, which begins with a divine “mystagogy” (*Vit Moys* I, 42, GNO VII/1, 19), culminates with the entry into the “mystery of the Tent that contains everything, that is, Christ” (*Vit Moys* II, 167–169, GNO VII/1, 88–89). In *Cant* 1, Gregory proposes the Apostle John as a model of the spiritual life, who in the night of the Last Supper reposes his heart like a sponge on the source of life and is filled “with the mysteries of Christ” (GNO VI, 41).

The term MYSTERY (→) has a rich set of nuances in Gregory. Its fundamental sense is that which it has in Paul (Eph 1.1–10, Col 1.20–27), that is, the mystery hidden in God before all time, which has been revealed in Christ. Gregory’s mysticism is thus Christocentric, in continuity with his SPIRITUAL THEOLOGY (→) and the Pauline concept of mystery: For him, the mystical life does not consist in knowing a “secret” or “mysterious” doctrine, but in penetrating the mystery of the truth of God revealed in Christ. The paragraphs in *Vit moys* dedicated to the entry of Moses into the Tent “not made by the hand of man” (Ex 25, 40) clearly express Gregory’s Christocentricity: The Tent “that embraces everything” is Christ, “created and uncreated at the same time”. Gregory states, citing Col 1.16, that He is the center around which all of creation turns (*Vit Moys* II, 170–183, GNO VII/1, 90–95).

Moses and Saint Paul are paradigmatic figures in Gregory’s spiritual teaching, and more correctly, in his mystical teaching. The fact that the summit of his spiritual ascent consists precisely in penetrating into the mystery of Christ is a good demonstration that, for Gregory, penetrating into the mystery of God means nothing other than penetrating the mystery of Christ, and vice versa. This can be seen in a clear and ample manner in the homilies on the Song of Songs.

This Christocentric dimension sheds important light on the Christian genuineness of Gregory’s mysticism and its *universality*, that is, on the fact that this is a path open to all. Gregory, following Paul, insists on

affirming that all are called to clothe themselves in Christ, and to sacramentally incorporate themselves into his death and Resurrection. To state this in words inspired by J. DANÉLOU, for Gregory, the entire spiritual life is nothing other than the realization of the mystery which occurred in Baptism: Taking off the old man and clothing oneself in Christ, dying with Christ and rising with Him. Gregory's mystical doctrine is nothing other than the contemplation of the mystery contained in Baptism and the Eucharist, as is manifested in the final stages of the soul's spiritual itinerary. In them, the human being penetrates into the sanctuary of the knowledge of God in a manner like that of Moses or Paul.

The preface of the *Vit Moys* is a magnificent synthesis of Gregory's thought on Christian perfection, and thus on the position that contemplation holds in the Christian's path, and, which is of utmost importance, on the very nature of the mystical life. In this preface Gregory offers the essence of his spiritual teaching (MACLEOD, 183), precisely responding to an explicit question: What does the *perfect life* consist of (*Vit Moys* I, 3, GNO VII/1, 2)? The response is brief and clear: Perfection is above all words, because the *perfect life* is beyond any definition. While all that is material can be *defined* [*de-limited*] because it has limits, perfection in virtue cannot be defined, because it has none. Perfection can thus not be conceived as a peak that can be conquered, since such a peak does not exist. The Good is unlimited, and consequently, the desire of the one who struggles to participate in it never reaches a final point.

One observes that the reasons on which Gregory bases his affirmation that perfection is free of all limits are the divine infinity, the finiteness of every created being, and the human being's infinite capacity for growth. Given that virtue consists in *being like God*, i.e. in developing that which is contained in the theological concept of *image of God*, Gregory maintains that perfection in virtue must necessarily be free of all limits. Gregory knows he is preceded in this by biblical tradition and the Alexandrian theological tradition, and Origen in particular.

The concept of an unlimited progress in virtue should not be confused with a theology of despair about reaching God. It is Gregory himself who poses the problem and resolves it. It is true that perfection is free of limits, he states, and that it is impossible to reach perfection. It thus would seem impossible to fulfill the commandment of the Lord: *Be perfect, as your Father in heaven is perfect* (Mt 5.48). This should cause great sadness.

Gregory offers two reasons for conserving joy and hope when confronted by this reality: 1) It is already a great benefit to participate in the good, even if it is impossible to reach it in a complete manner (*Vit*

Moys I, 9, GNO VII/1, 4). 2) The perfection of human nature does not lie in reaching perfection, but in being disposed to continually seek a greater good (*Vit Moys* I, 10, GNO VII/1, 5).

It is not that God is unreachable, it that He always exceeds that which the soul can reach. At every moment of the path, one truly participates in the life of God. The unique character of this path is that it cannot be considered to be limited by a destination. Here too, Gregory's unmistakable personality appears: He decisively distances himself from the Greek mindset, which conceives of perfection as immobility and accomplishment, maintaining that every movement implies an imperfection. For Gregory, on the other hand, perfection is founded on *constant progress* in the knowledge and love of God (M. CANÉVET).

This thought is found explicitly even in the short ascetic treatises. The praise of human mutability at the end of *Perf* is noteworthy: The most beautiful consequence of the capacity of movement, he affirms, is based upon the capacity to grow without limit in the good. It would thus be a punishment for us to not be able to *change*, since this would impede our change for the better. It is opportune to insist here on this essential characteristic of Gregory's spiritual doctrine: It is not that God is "that which is unreachable", but that, even when possessed, He always surpasses the one who already possesses Him. This means that the possession of what has been reached awakens a new desire, since what is to be reached is always greater than what which has been reached. Being filled with God not only satiates us, but also provokes a greater desire. The satiety and "boredom" which, according to Origen, provoked the fall of the angels is thus impossible (HARL, 403–405).

We find ourselves on the impassioned terrain of the *EPEKTASIS* (→), one of the most characteristic traits of the Nyssen's mysticism. The *epektasis*, which also includes life in heaven, is wedded to the universality of which we have already spoken: The ascent to God, at every moment, reflects the paradigmatic ascent of Moses. Gregory describes the call to a constant progress in presenting the example of Paul: Paul recognizes that Christ already lives in him (Gal 2, 20), and at the same time says that he is extended towards that which is before him (Phil 3.13) (*Beat* 4, GNO VII/2, 122–123; *Cant* 6, GNO VI, 174). This is a possession which awakens desire. On this point Gregory is quite close to Plotinus, when he affirms that love is without limits, because the beloved in himself has no limits (*Enneadi* VI, 7, 32). The thirst for God increases to the very measure in which it is satiated. As J. DANÉLOU (1944, 306–307) observes, the idea of perfection as constant progress constitutes a beautiful synthesis of

the whole of Gregory's spiritual theology, and, consequently, of "Gregorian mysticism". This mysticism is generally defined as the "mysticism of the shadows" due to the importance in it of the shadows of Sinai into which Moses penetrated.

Following the text of *Exodus*, Gregory distinguishes three phases in Moses' ascent of Sinai, and, consequently, in the ascent of the soul towards God, of which Moses is a paradigm. We find a schema of this itinerary in *Cant* 11 (GNO VI, 322–323): A) The ascent for Moses begins with a stage of light (διὰ φωτός), since purification is an illumination which causes the truth of God to be discovered, thus liberating him from the darkness of error. B) After the purification, God speaks with Moses from the cloud (διὰ νεφέλης) which descended upon Sinai, one thus passes from light to obscurity, and in it the soul becomes accustomed to contemplating that which is "hidden", because it is above the senses. C) Finally, Moses penetrates into the shadows (ἐν σκότῳ), where he reaches the supreme level of knowledge, since, abandoning everything, he penetrates into the "theognosis" which is surrounded by "divine obscurity" (γνόφῳ). Only thus is it possible to contemplate that which is beyond every regard and understanding. We find an almost identical schema in *Vit Moys*. Following the story of Moses, Gregory discusses these three theophanies: that of the burning bush (Ex 3.1–15), that of the reception of the Law on Mount Sinai (Ex 19.16–25) and that of the splitting of the rock (Ex 34.6–9), as if they were three stages.

In the first theophany, Moses experiences the encounter with the truth which "fills the eyes of the soul with its own splendors" (*Vit Moys* II, 19, GNO VII/1, 38–39), i.e. he enters into the stage of light. This is the first encounter with the truth. In this encounter he understands that "outside of the highest cause, there is no consistency in being" (*Vit Moys* II, 24, GNO VII/1, 40). This would appear to be a purely philosophical conclusion, and yet all the force of the mysticism which understands that the beauty of being consists in being a reflection of the divine being, in which every being finds its consistency, is active here. Gregory's mysticism vigorously asserts the truth of God as Creator. This stage is not only illumination, but also includes purification. With a clear reference to the baptismal ceremony of the removal of the old clothes, Gregory admonishes that it is necessary to free the feet of the soul from the covering of hide to ascend the mountain on which truth is contemplated (*Vit Moys* II, 22, GNO VII/1, 30).

The first theophany occurs in light, the second occurs in the shadows. This is not a regression, Gregory states, but a progression. In the burning

bush Moses only learned that God truly exists. This was light. Moses has learned something superior: The knowledge of the divine nature is inaccessible to human intelligence. This is signified by knowing in *shadows*. It means accepting that God is seen “in not seeing Him”, because He transcends all knowledge: “totally encircled by incomprehensibility as with a shadow” (*Vit Moys* II, 163, GNO VII/1, 87). Thus the shadows are called luminous in this passage. The shadows of which he is speaking are not those of the obscurity of error, but the luminous obscurity inherent in the splendor of the truth.

The third theophany is addressed at greater length, and Gregory's long commentary is the culminating point of the book. Despite the numerous encounters with YHWH, and after having spoken with Him “face to face” (Ex 33.11), Moses insists on his request to see Him yet one more time. Gregory offers only one reason: “The Good attracts to itself those who contemplate it” (*Vit Moys* II, 225, GNO VII/1, 112). The soul, “with that which has been already reached, continually renews its tension toward flight” (*Vit Moys* II, 226, *ibid.*). Gregory specifies that God grants to Moses what he asks precisely in “denying it”, since God would not have granted Moses the satisfaction of his desire, if He had given him complete satisfaction of the desire in itself. For, if He had let Himself be seen in the form in which Moses could see Him, it would not have been Him, but an image of Himself. Gregory's phrases reach an unequalled force in describing the spiritual situation of Moses: he is resplendent in glory, and yet, raised in these elevations, he still burns with desires for God and is not satisfied to have always more. He still thirsts for that of which he was completely satisfied, as he asks God, as if he had never obtained it, that He reveal himself to him, not in the manner in which he is capable, but as He really is (*Vit Moys* II, 230, GNO VII/1, 113–114). The teaching of the third theophany, at the culmination of the book, is made concrete in an exhortation to the following of God and of Christ (*Vit Moys* II, 251, GNO VII/1, 120–121). The highest level of vision that can be reached is “to follow God wherever He leads” (*Vit Moys* II, 252, GNO VII/1, 121).

This tripartite schema (light-obscurity-shadows) encompasses the entire ascent of the soul towards God, from the first steps of the ascent of the mountain to the contemplative union in heaven, which will have no end. If one can speak at once of the light of faith and the obscurity of faith in the first two stages, in the third stage, that of the shadows, obscurity assumes a new, “properly mystical”, signification. In this stage, the term “shadows” serves to affirm that, even for the spirit illuminated by

grace, the divine essence remains always inaccessible, and that the “experience” of this inaccessibility constitutes the highest form of contemplation (DANIÉLOU 1954, 1873).

This is the precise reason why Gregory’s mysticism is considered a “mysticism of the shadows”. It obviously refers to “luminous shadows”. It is not the obscurity of those truths which are above human intelligence and which can be known once revealed, but the truth which transcends and will always transcend every learning capacity of any created intelligence. It is the “shadow” of light that encircles the Being whose infinity transcends all. In *Inscr*, Gregory describes Moses who penetrates into the shadows and contemplates the invisible in them (GNO V, 44–45). In *Vit Moys*, Gregory calls “entering into the shadow” the moment at which Moses discovers that what he seeks transcends every knowledge and is above all beings, “separated from them by incomprehensibility as with a shadow”. In Gregory, apophatism (→ APOPHATIC THEOLOGY) spontaneously flows from his clear perception of the infinity and transcendence of God, and is converted into the foundation of his entire mystical theology.

Gregory also calls the shadows *night*. In this regard, there is a passage of singular importance in *Cant* 6, in the commentary on the verse of Ct 3.1: *On my bed throughout the nights, my soul sought my Beloved*.

According to Gregory, the night of which the soul speaks is nothing other than contemplation (θεωρία). In reality, in the search for God, the soul, like Moses, enters into the shadows in which God is. Possessed by love, it seeks Him whom it desires, but He avoids any attempt to be reached by thought. Therefore, abandoning every search, it understands that He is above any thought and can only be found through faith. Once found, it introduces Him into its heart, which has become “capable of divine inhabitation (ἐνοίκησις)” because it has been reintegrated into its original state of image of God (*Cant* 6, GNO VI, 181–183). In this text Gregory presents the essential lines of his mystical thought: The “divine night” envelops the soul who, possessed by love and desire, asks questions about the essence (ousía) of the Beloved and discovers his infinity. She calls Him, but there is no name that can reach Him. There is, however, one path to reach Him: faith. Faith and love are united to introduce the Beloved into one’s heart, which is converted into his dwelling.

The panorama that Gregory offers is better illuminated if one reads *Cant* 6 together with *Beat* 6 (GNO VII/2, 140–144). In *Beat* 6 Gregory expands on the various manners of knowing God: Man cannot know the essence (ousía) of God, which is above all knowledge, yet he can know

his attributes which are manifested in the works He has accomplished. Thus, by contemplating creation, one can deduce that He is wise and powerful. There is another way of knowing God, which is very important to Gregory's mysticism: The knowledge through the image of God that the human being carries in himself. When the human being is purified, Gregory states, the sixth beatitude is fulfilled in him: *The pure of heart will see God* (Mt 5.8). Purity has transformed his soul into a mirror where God can be "perceived" (HORN 1927, 121–122). The "kinship" that the human being has with God though the fact of being in his image makes it possible to enjoy Him, desire Him and love Him. The reality of the image is already a call in itself, a "grace" which awakens the desire to see God. "Seeing" God is an act with a great vital richness: It includes knowledge, desire and love. These are the same themes that appear in the passage of *Cant* 6. In it too are knowledge, desire and love for the Beloved in virtue of faith and inhabitation of the Word in the soul spoken of.

In this regard there is another highly significant passage in *Cant* 11 (GNO VI, 324–327), where the itinerary of the soul is explicitly compared to Moses' ascent of Sinai: Like Moses, the soul, after having transcended all that the knowledge which comes from the senses can reach, penetrates into the sanctuary of the knowledge of God (θεογνωσία), i.e. it penetrates into shadows: Encircled by the divine night, it receives the visit of the Spouse, who does not allow himself to be seen, but offers a certain perception of his presence (αἰσθησθαι μὲν τινα . . . τῆς παρουσίας). Gregory's formulation is quite expressive, and not said casually: "a certain perception of his presence". This is a presence which is "experienced", but which, at the same time, eludes vision. The Word cannot be pinned down. This is a presence which is experienced in the obscurity of faith. As M. CANÉVET (2, 448) observes, this presence is opposed to a visible manifestation, and must be considered "a phenomenon of spiritual ascent". For this reason, Gregory would be saying that "in the night" the soul has an "obscure perception", a "sentiment" of the presence of the Word who knocks on its door in the night (Ct 5.4). This sensation of presence causes the soul to *go out of itself*. The perception of the closeness of God and his transcendence provokes "*blessed ecstasy*". He already uses this expression in his first work (*Virg* 10, PG GNO VIII/1, 290), applying it to David and his exclamation in Ps 115.2: *Every man is a liar*.

The description of David's ecstasy that Gregory gives does not allow doubt as to its mystical character. In this description the essential elements of ecstasy can be found. According to Gregory, in Ps 115.2, David expresses the "wonder" that contemplating the difference that exists

between created beauty and uncreated beauty provokes in him. When he says that *every man is a liar*, he means that everyone who attempts to express the “ineffable light” in human language is in reality a “liar”, not because he wishes to mislead, but because it is impossible for this language to express such a light. David “discovers” the divine transcendence and the impossibility that it expresses with human words in an ecstasy: This occurs on a day in which “he is elevated in his mind (διάνοια) by the power of the Spirit and, as if going out of himself (ἐκβὰς αὐτὸς ἑαυτόν), he contemplates that beauty which is impossible to see in this blessed ecstasy (ἐν τῇ μακαρίᾳ ἐκείνῃ ἐκστάσει)” (GNO VIII/1, 290). One notes that it is the power of the Spirit that elevated David. In other passages, Gregory confirms the intervention of the Spirit in ecstasy (e.g., *Steph* I, GNO X/1, 86/87).

J. KIRCHMEYER (2089) considers Gregory as the “first theoretician who accepted the phenomenon of ecstasy without hesitation”, while Christianizing it. He comments nevertheless that ecstasy as an extraordinary phenomenon represents only a transitory reality for Gregory, episodic and without signification if it is separated from the totality of Christian life and man’s itinerary towards God. In a certain sense, the entire Christian life is an “ecstasy” for Gregory, a constant going out of oneself, because the itinerary towards God—clearly seen in the example of Moses—is a constant self-transcendence and an ever deeper penetration into the divine shadow.

This observation by KIRCHMEYER is important for the evaluation of what Gregory writes about the “ecstasy” of the soul. The “experience” to which he refers, for example in *Cant*, is a “mystical experience”, but it is not necessarily tied to extraordinary phenomena; rather, it can exist in the normal path of the Christian. As M. CANÉVET (2, 453–454) writes, in Gregory’s thought this “experience” is not reserved for certain exceptional souls: God, who is inaccessible to human intelligence, is reached in faith. This causes the soul to penetrate ever further into the divine intimacy. This is what is truly important: the encounter with God through faith. Gregory clearly affirms that “there is no other means of approaching God except through the mediation of faith, which unites the spirit who seeks the incomprehensible nature” (*Eun* II, GNO I, 253).

This union through faith, as was seen in *Beat* 6, is an authentic *inhabitation*. The perception of the presence of God who inhabits the soul is related to the purity of the soul. Once purified, God is reflected in it as in a mirror. In the text cited from *Cant* 11 as well, Gregory recalls the baptismal ceremony of the removal of the TUNICS OF HIDE (→) and

the clothing in white garments that restore all of its beauty to the soul. The soul reflects God in its own intimacy, and therefore finds Him there: ecstasy signifies at once "interiorization" and "going out from oneself". *Instasis* and *exstasis* are the two facets of the same reality (CROUZEL, 197).

This "going out from oneself" is a gift received from God, which implies free acceptance on the soul's part. The soul is transported by the power of the Spirit. The language with which Gregory describes these moments of the life of the soul allows no doubt as to its character of grace and "excess". The metaphors are eloquent: "blessed ecstasy", "SOBER DRUNKENNESS" (→), "impassable love", "giddiness", "vigilant sleep", "folly", "wound" or "*EPEKTASIS*" (→). These are descriptions of the same situation from various different perspectives. DANÉLOU (3, 1876) rightly observes that the use of one metaphor or another depends upon the biblical context in which Gregory is speaking: The shadow is related to Moses, ecstasy to Abraham (Gn 15.12), David (Ps 115.2), St. Paul (Ps 67.28) and St. Peter (Acts 10.10); sober drunkenness appears in the context of the "banquet" that wisdom offers (Pr 9.5), the drunkenness of the Song (Ct 5.2) and the "chalice that overflows" of Ps 22.5. Love is tied to the Song. All of these metaphors are used to describe, in a convergent manner, the "wonder" of the soul before the divine majesty.

Gregory returns to cite David's "ecstasy" in *Cant* 10 (GNO VI, 309) and in *Ascens* (GNO IX, 325). The similarity to the ecstasies of Abraham, St. Stephen, St. Paul or St. Peter and the commentary on them which Gregory makes is clear (DANÉLOU 1944, 261–273). This is always an elevation which occurs through the power of the Holy Spirit and which causes the person who receives this grace to go out of himself. This power can at times lead to an extraordinary event, as is the case with David or St. Paul. Many other times, this grace acts as an ordinary movement of the spiritual life: It will always cause a human being to go out of himself and to be elevated. For this reason the spiritual life can be defined as a "perpetual going out from the self", i.e. as an *epektasis*.

In the analysis of *Virg* 10, 2, AUBINEAU (SC 119, pp. 374–375, nts. 1–7) observes that the term "ecstasy" is suggested to Gregory by the text of Ps 115 itself. Nevertheless, one can say that we find here an idea which is well defined in its essential characteristics, and which will repeat itself throughout the work. The influence of Origen on the Nyssen is clear with regard to the question of "ecstasy". GRIBOMONT has persuasively shown this Origenian influence on Gregory's conception of "ecstasy". W. VÖLKER (1993, 252) has done the same, indicating Origen as the principal source on which Gregory depends for his conception

of ecstasy. Another important source is, undoubtedly, Philo—apart from other parallels, in particular for the relation that he establishes between “ecstasy” and “sober drunkenness” (DANIÉLOU 1944, 261–265). We find an eloquent example of this relation between “ecstasy” and “sober drunkenness” in *Cant* 10, in the description of the Peter’s vision, narrated in Acts 10.10: While they were preparing the meal for him, “a divine and sober drunkenness came upon him, by which he went outside himself and saw the evangelical tablecloth” (GNO VI, 310). Ecstasy is thus equivalent to a divine drunkenness that overcomes the soul, causing it to leave itself and filling it with giddiness.

“Ecstasy” is also related to the image of the “vigilant sleep” spoken of in *Ct* 5.2 *I sleep, but my heart watches*. The most ample description of this metaphor is found in *Cant* 10. In the night, the soul leaves itself, as if the senses were already dead, and explains the activity of the heart in all purity. It receives the manifestation of God in a divine vigil; quieting the senses produces the vigil of the soul (*Cant* 10, GNO VI, 311–313).

The same applies to the images of “giddiness” (*Eccl* 7, GNO V, 414–415) and “impassable passion”. In *Cant* 13 (GNO VI, 382–383), Gregory uses the word ἔρως to refer to this LOVE (→), seeking to describe its gripping and passionate character: “The soul, seeing the ineffable Beauty of the Spouse, wounded by the ardent and spiritual arrow of love (ἔρως). It is thus that the intensity of charity is called”. J. DANIÉLOU (1944, 250–290; 3, 1881–1882) has rightly accentuated the ecstatic characteristics with which Gregory describes this love, thus balancing an overly “intellectualistic” vision of Gregory. In Gregory’s mystical doctrine, gnosis and knowledge have an important and primary role, but they are full of love. Contemplation in Gregory is described as a “loving contemplation”.

In this regard, the end of *Cant* 12 is truly illuminating: hearing the voice of the Spouse in the night (*Ct* 5.4–7), the soul leaves her house seeking Him whom she does not find, and calls Him who cannot be reached by a name. The guards alert her that she loves something that no one can obtain. Becoming aware of this, in a first moment the soul feels despair (ἀνελπιστία), but this veil of sadness disappears when she considers that to truly possess Him whom one loves consists of never ceasing to desire Him. The true enjoyment of desire, Gregory observes, consists in advancing in the search, in progressing incessantly, and, once passion (ἐπιθυμία) is satiated, to never desist in this progress, because passion, laying hold of us, generates a greater passion still (*Cant* 12, GNO VI, 369–370).

This conclusion to *Cant* 12 is a vigorous description of *epektasis*: God is always above any “human conquest”, attracting the human being with the power of his truth and his beauty. The human being can always advance in the knowledge and love of God. We can always resemble God more closely. The enjoyment lies precisely in the perception of divine infinity, in the love and desire for God that grow continuously.

The reading of *Cant* with its splendid nuptial language, and the variety of images used to designate the relationship of the soul with Christ, is an invitation to recognize the importance of nuptial symbolism in Gregory, as well as the position that loving union with God holds in his teaching. The symbolism of nuptial love is fundamental in understanding the Nyssen’s mystical doctrine. This doctrine is already manifested in *Virg*, which deals with the spiritual matrimony between the virgin and Christ: Gregory describes this union as mutual harmony (ἁρμόζειν, 16, 2, GNO VIII/1, 313), inhabitation (ἐνοικεῖν, 3, 8, GNO VIII/1, 264) or a union that converts the two into “one spirit” (15, 1, GNO VIII/1, 310).

The biblical personages that Gregory proposes as paradigms by whom he is inspired are also important: Abraham, Moses, St. Paul, etc., whose itineraries are reflected, in one way or another, in the itinerary of the soul—above all in one fundamental characteristic: The ascent towards God implies penetrating into the incomprehensibility that surrounds God as a shadow. This means that, in one way or another, the path towards God is always enveloped in the mysticism of the shadows. The union with God comes “in the shadow”. There is thus a certain unity between shadow and light, the mysticism of the shadows and the mysticism of light: both can be considered complementary perspectives. The shadow is a “luminous shadow”.

Gregory is an author with an extraordinary personality. His mysticism is incomprehensible if not considered in the totality of his thought, above all his thinking about the ineffability of the Triune and One God and the reality of the human being created in the image of God. The power of these convictions explains how Gregory, while receiving so many influences, particularly from Alexandrian mysticism, could have known how to transform them all, giving them a new life and a new unity. His mystical doctrine links Alexandrian mysticism and Areopagite mysticism (W. VÖLKER, 263).

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Nature → *Physis*

NEOPLATONISM

Unlike Eusebius of Caesarea, who both quotes and mentions Plotinus by name in his *Praeparatio Evangelica* XI, 17 and XV, 10, Gregory on no occasion refers to either Plotinus, Porphyry or Iamblicus by name, nor does he, except on one occasion—and even that is disputed—actually quote him verbatim. For evidence, therefore, of Gregory's use of and possible dependence on Neoplatonism we are dependent on actual verbal echoes or on similarities of thought, above all between Gregory and Plotinus (205–270 AD). The other two members of the 'school' hardly figure in the sources quoted in the indices to the Leiden edition of Gregory's works to date. The reticence of Gregory may owe something to the Julianic law of June 362.

The one certain example of quotation comes from the opening words of Gregory's treatise *Inst* which seems to echo the opening of *Ennead* IV,8,1. Both passages speak of the awakening of the mind from the body, but it must be frankly admitted that the resemblance is ignored by Werner Jaeger on page 40 in his edition of Gregory's treatise while Staats in the footnote on page 87 of his 1983 edition of the *Epistola Magna* of Macarius—Simeon says there is no direct dependence of Gregory on Plotinus *Ennead* IV,8, 1–9. Herman Langerbeck in his TLZ article of 1957 is more positive. The actual language is different apart from the occurrence in both texts of the word *σῶμα*. Plotinus has "rising to myself out of the body", Gregory has "if anyone has separated his mind from his body for a little".

Other passages in Gregory have been adduced as evidence of verbal dependence, above all those connected with likeness to the divine, which occurs in Plotinus *Ennead* 1,2,1 and often enough in Gregory, as for example at *Beat* homily 1 (GNO VII/2, 82,24). But the *Theaetetus* seems just as likely a source.

Despite the absence of reference to the name of Plotinus and the paucity of actual citations, the influence of *Ennead* 1,6 on the understanding of the beautiful is discernible above all in chapters 10 to 12 of the *Virg* and in *Beat* homily 6. Both passages insist that the vision of the beautiful is only available to those who have purified the eye of the soul, a thought which echoes section 9 of the *Ennead* and through that, both the *Symposium* and *Phaedrus* of Plato.

Gregory does on occasion refer to God in the neuter as in *Cant* homily 8 (258;1 ff.). Here God is first referred to as τὸν μόνον, which is equivalent to the three persons of the Trinity. A few lines later the masculine gives way to the neuter τό ἓν and a little later this in turn becomes τὸ θεῖον. This whole passage is regarded by Hermann Dörries in his review (ThLZ, 1963) of Langerbeck's edition of Gregory's *Cant* as undeniably Neoplatonic in emphasis.

But despite the evident Plotinian overtones, Gregory wishes to affirm in the same passage (as we have seen) that the One, far from being superior to the other two members of the triad, in fact contains all three. This is a very different picture from that which emerges in *Ennead* V, 1, where the superiority of the cause to the effect renders the One above and not inclusive of Mind and World Soul.

Again, Gregory's willingness to identify goodness and beauty, as he does in the closing words of *Virg* 11, is a long way from Plotinus' wish to distinguish the two, as he does in the final words of *Ennead* 1,6,9, where the good is stated to be both beyond and the source of beauty. This means that though it is possible to detect Plotinian echoes in both the thought and the language of Gregory he never blurs the distinction between Plotinus and the gospel.

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Anthony Meredith

NUMBER

The strength of the Nyssen's PHILOSOPHY OF LANGUAGE (\rightarrow) is revealed in a particular way in the discussion of the origin of number, a fundamental question in the Trinitarian context. Gregory unequivocally rejects the Neo-Platonic perspective which assigned to number a metaphysical reality. Eunomius had identified the order of natures and that of numbers (*Eun* II, GNO I, 201, 1–18). Gregory on the other hand traces the genesis of number to physical movement, as can be seen in his commentary on Gn 1.7, where the waters that are above the firmament are divided from those that are below. The Nyssen affirms that the firmament was placed as a separating frontier between the double nature of the waters. Following light and obscurity, designated as the first day, a second succession and thus a second day follows—in such a way that in this moment the nature of number enters into creation, since number is nothing but the composition of unity, where unity is predicated of all that is considered in a determined delimitation. Each period gave rise to a unity, and the composition of the two periods constituted the number two. From a theological perspective, the fundamental element is the affirmation that Sacred Scripture traces the genesis of number to elements of creation, indicating an ordered succession with specific names (*Hex*, PG 44, 85 BC). The priority is always placed on ontology, of which the logical and mathematical level is only a reflection.

The fact that numbering is not traceable to the divine realm or to the world of ideas, but radically depends on creation, itself indicates that we are confronted here with a reality which is intertwined with the dynamics and limited, changeable mode of being of the creaturely sphere. Its origin is exclusively physical (A. PENATI BERNARDINI). Gregory's theory of knowledge is therefore extremely realistic.

This would seem to conflict, however, with the possibility of predicating number of God, who is by nature infinite, unlimited and eternal. Gregory's theology manifests its strength and coherence precisely here, as it continuously links the names to dynamics. In *Eun* II, the Nyssen affirms that these names receive their form according to the movement of that which subsists in a hypostasis (*Eun* II, GNO I, 269, 11–14). Words, then, express the dynamics and movement of being, or better, of the existing reality. It is this passage in particular that permits the leap to the eternal

dimension, i.e. the intra-divine one. Ὑπόστασις is a term that applies both to divine immanence and economy, both to God and to man. The Nyssen's Trinitarian conception is dynamic, following an understanding of dynamics that surpasses the creaturely and temporal dimension to be rooted in the divine eternity, in parallel to that which is realized by means of the terms of ὑπόστασις and φύσις. The connection between θεολογία and οἰκονομία permits us to discern the action of the divine Persons in time, i.e. to read the reflection of their eternal dynamic in the energetic moment (→ UNITY OF ACTION), and thus in an environment that is accessible to human reason and language. From this point, one can move beyond the historical moment, since for Gregory, words which cannot state being can state the mode of being, i.e. the dynamic aspect—even when this last is outside of time. Thus in God it is possible to discern three distinct modes of being the unique nature, together with a correlative order, i.e. a numeric succession.

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Giulio Maspero

NYSSA

Ptolemy's *Geography* at the end of the second century is the first text that mentions the city of Nyssa, situating it in Morimene, in the western part of Cappadocia. The earliest epigraphical witnesses to it date to the beginning of the 3rd century (D.H. FRENCH, inscrip. n. 1–2: dedication to Septimus Severus; the second inscription clearly reads *ho dêmos tôn Nusaeôn*, p. 116). At the end of that century, the *Itinerarium Antonini* (205,7–206,7) gives some information regarding the position of Nyssa, on the road from Ancyra to Caesarea, 24 miles from Parnassus, or 32 from Osiana. Some letters by Basil of Caesarea (*Epist.* 100, 237, 239) and by Gregory himself (*Epist.* 6 and 26) provide some cues, but they are too vague to permit a precise location of Nyssa. Modern scholars (F. HILD and M. RESTLE, pp. 246–248) situate the ancient site of Nyssa about 30 kilometers southwest of Kirsehir, one km north of Harmandali, at Büyükkale Tepe and Küçükale Tepe. Of this “small city” (cfr. *Epist.* 6, 7: GNO VIII, 2, 35) there remain a trapezoidal surrounding wall and three gates. The same scholars suppose that there was also a *cardo* and a *decumanus*. Gregory says that his small city had a central street or square with porticoes, paved and flanked by columns (*Epist.* 6, 10, 36: “the interior of the peristyle”); he also names the church, which seems to have been in the central square. He informs us above all of the *martyrium* that he himself had built. *Epist.* 25 (79–83) describes in detail the future construction (which he refers to as *martyrion* or *euktèrion*): it was a building in the shape of a Greek cross, at the center of which he envisioned an octagon, four sides of which had rectangular rooms attached to them (the arms of the Cross), while the others opened into semi-domed apses. The roof of this octagon should have been either a cupola with a rounded cone or an eight-sided pyramid. Gregory also provides for eight columns that surrounded the octagon, an entrance of finely decorated marble, and at the exterior a peristyle with 40 columns (perhaps he thinks the *martyrium* is destined to receive the relics of the Forty Martyrs of Sebaste), with Corinthian-style capitals.

Nyssa became an Episcopal See only in 371/372. At this point, the administrative division of Cappadocia into two provinces deprived the Bishop of Caesarea, capital of First Cappadocia, of all of his suffragans, who now found themselves in Second Cappadocia. Basil therefore

created a number of Episcopal Sees in First Cappadocia, among them Nyssa, whose first Bishop was Gregory. Nyssa will be found in the lists of Bishoprics until the end of the 13th century.

Certain allusions in Gregory's letters allow us to affirm that, at the time of his episcopate, there was a male community of ascetics in Nyssa: Gregory regrets having been driven away from it in *Epist* 18, 5 (60), and he invites one of his friends to join him in Nyssa in *Epist* 21, 2–3 (73–74). It is also likely that in Nyssa there was a community of virgins, whose “choir” awaited Bishop Gregory at the entrance of the church, candles in hand, upon his return from exile (*Epist* 6, 10, 36).

BIBL.: D.H. FRENCH, *Inscriptions of Cappadocia I. The Museums of Kirsehir and Nigde*, EA 28 (1997) 115–124 and tab. 21–23; F. HILD—M. RESTLE, *Kappadokien (Tabula Imperii Byzantini, 2)*, Vienna 1981; P. MARAVAL, *Nysse en Cappadoce*, RHPHr 55 (1975) 237–247.

Pierre Maraval

ECONOMY

οἰκονομία

The terminology tied to *οἰκονομία* refers to three fundamental semantic areas in non-Christian Greek literature: a) The most ancient sense of government of a house and the state of affairs of the patrimony, corresponding to the etymology of the root itself. b) A derived sense in reference to the cosmos and nature. c) Finally, a rhetorical sense, referring to the most efficient organization of a discourse according to its goal and its global perspective. All three areas are highly relevant to the Christian use of the terminology. In this context, the fundamental element of the terms related to *οἰκονομία* is however the Scriptural use, particularly the Pauline one.

Paul presents the Incarnation as the revelation and dispensation of the mystery hidden before all ages by God the Creator of all things (Eph 3.9): The Incarnation of the divine Word constitutes the accomplishment of all of history. The first Fathers thus underscored the connection between the plan of God the Father and the events of the life of Christ. With Irenaeus, *οἰκονομία* takes on a structural role, and begins to be interpreted in the properly historical perspective, thanks to the Christianization of the Neo-Platonic schema of *exitus-reditus* and the influence of rhetorico-narrative terminology: The individual events of the Old and New Testaments are stages of the unique pedagogical movement realized in history by the Father, through the Son (G. MASPERO, 2006). For Clement and Origen, the semantic spectrum of *οἰκονομία* is superimposed, respectively, on *παιδεία* and *πρόνοια*. In the 4th century, with Athanasius, the definitive affirmation of the consubstantiality of the Word and the Father is based upon the shift of the terminology from a Christology of the Logos to a Christology of two natures. In this passage, the historical-narrative dimension, which had characterized Irenaeus' thought, remains in the background. At the same time, *οἰκονομία* assumed the fundamental sense of the Incarnation of the Word, from which the ecclesiastic and institutional sense is derived. In the Cappadocian sphere, Basil united the semantic area referring to the Incarnation and that tied to the vision of history in his conception of *οἰκονομία*, formulating the fundamental distinction between *θεολογία* and *οἰκονομία* in terms of divine nature

and human nature. He thus understands in a unique dynamic concept, at once historical and ontological, the history, human nature and earthly life of Christ.

Gregory continues the reflection of his brother, further deepening the theological use of the terms of οἰκονομία, οἰκονομεῖν and οἰκονόμος, which occur more than 250 times in his works—and this in a homogeneous manner in his various writings and periods of literary activity. The three usages already noted in non-Christian Greek literature are present, i.e. the context of the administration of house or goods (*Beat*, GNO VII/2, 112, 23–26 and *Or dom*, GNO VII/2, 18, 27–19, 6); cosmology and nature, Gregory's love of the natural sciences, and medicine in particular, being well known (*An et res*, PG 46, 60B and *Benef*, GNO IX, 97, 13–16); and finally, the rhetorical context, as a disposition of discourse according to its global vision (*Epist* 29, 7, 1–3; GNO VIII/2, 88, 19–21). This last case in particular is rich with consequences in the properly theological realm, in so far as, for Gregory, οἰκονομία is indissociably tied to the scope (σκοπός), to the design of the Trinity to open its own intimacy to creatures. In this sense, creation itself and the life of paradise were the primordial οἰκονομία of the Father (*Beat*, GNO VII/2, 108, 20–22).

There is thus (1) a natural οἰκονομία, freely created by God, which follows necessary laws that the human being cannot change, as well as (2) a divine οἰκονομία which unites both the idea of the plan of the Father and the divine providence of the Incarnation, and (3) the οἰκονομία of the human being, who is freely master of his own acts, since he is the image of God himself. The human being, with his liberty and sin, has perturbed the natural οἰκονομία and removed himself from the plan of the Father. For this reason the Word became man κατ' οἰκονομίαν, i.e. according to the loving providence of the Father, becoming incarnate in time.

The power of this thought is the clear-cut distinction between eternal divine nature and temporal created nature. On this, the distinction between θεολογία (→) and οἰκονομία is based: The first indicates God in himself, i.e. the Trinity, and is transferred to Christology in the affirmation of the divine nature of Jesus Christ. The second indicates the human nature of Christ with its temporality. It is essential to underscore the historical-narrative conception which characterizes human nature according to the Nyssen—it includes both the totality of human beings of all times and that which makes each one a human being (→ *PHYSIS*, *SOCIAL ANALOGY*, *ANTHROPOLOGY*). Human nature, since it is created, is essentially temporal. For this reason the Incarnation reached

its accomplishment in the death and Resurrection of Christ: Only when the divine Word united himself to all of the characteristic moments of the life of the human being did the regenerative power of his Resurrection begin to transmit itself to every generation.

The plan of the Father is thus that the rational creature, in the οἰκονομία of liberty, should guide the sensible world back to God himself (*An et res*, PG 46, 105A). To the initiative of the divine οἰκονομία responds the liberty of the human οἰκονομία. This path of return home can be followed only in Christ, who, first of all, in his human will and in his divine will, has reconciled the two *economies*.

The human will can choose what to become, since he is the image of the Creator (*ibidem*, PG 46, 120BC). Since the human being lives in time, however, he must look at Christ and imitate his οἰκονομία. The two significations of the term interact here, viz. the divine plan and the moments of the life of Christ. In fact, every instant of the earthly existence of Christ is revelation of the will of the Father, since human liberty freely follows the divine liberty at every moment. This is particularly evident in Gregory's commentary on Christ's meeting with the daughters of Jerusalem, who are invited to a correct exegesis of that which is happening, i.e. to recognize the love, strength and Divinity in this voluntary weakness. The pious women did not actually know how to discern the divine disposition of events (τὴν τῶν γινομένων οἰκονομίαν: *Op hom*, PG 44, 216B). The plan and the events coincide in the earthly life of the incarnate Word, in his humanity. The interplay of the two wills unfolds in the very heart of Christ. Looking to Christ, one can know the σκοπός of the divine plan in Him who is its principle (ἀρχή) and end (τέρας): Only in Christ can human beings know the meaning of history.

This is the context of the Nyssen's definition of οἰκονομία as the Incarnation of the Word. In his discussion with Eunomius on the interpretation of Pr 8.22, Gregory in fact affirms that the expressions contained in the verse must be read in the light of the Gospel teaching. Solomon had spoken prophetically, transmitting the entire mystery of the economy (τὸ τῆς οἰκονομίας μυστήριον: *Eun III*, GNO II, 19, 20), since, after having spoken of the power and operations of Wisdom, i.e. of the divine attributes, Solomon "once these and similar things had been explained, also adds the explanation of the economy regarding man (τῆς κατὰ τὸν ἄνθρωπον οἰκονομίας): because the Word became flesh" (*ibidem*, 20, 8–10).

J.R. Bouchet rightly accentuates the semantic spectrum of the term οἰκονομία in Gregory's thought, which refers to creation and the Old

Testament as well (J.R. BOUCHET, 194). Along the same lines, H.R. Drobner defines οἰκονομία as “The plan of salvation preordained from all eternity, which begins in the Old Testament, has its summit in Redemption and its final point in the divinization of man” (H.R. DROBNER, 50).

This extensive openness is however founded in the Christological intensity of the term, which expresses the profound conception of the unity of the two natures and the *communicatio idiomatum* (*Eun* III, GNO II, 130, 11–18 e 139, 6–8). Defending the οἰκονομία of the Incarnation, in the hypostatic union and the passage of the divine attributes to the humanity, Gregory actually redeems the movement which is intrinsic to creatureliness, from identification with sin. He says, for this reason, of Christ: “In fact, it is not passion that touches Him, but He who touches sickness. Therefore, if a person who through their art procures good for the body is not called weak or sick, but rather lover of men, benefactor and other similar names, how then do they, calumniating the economy in our regard (τὴν περὶ ἡμᾶς οἰκονομίαν) as miserable and feeble, argue thus that the substance of the Son has been changed for the worse, since the nature of the Father would be superior to passions, while that of the Son would not be immune to passion? If the scope of the economy in the flesh (ὁ σκοπὸς τῆς διὰ σαρκὸς οἰκονομίας) is not actually that the Lord be subject to the passions, but that his love for men be manifested, one cannot doubt that the Father too loves men, so that the Father is found in the same condition as the Son, if one wishes to consider the scope (σκοπόν)” (*ibidem*, GNO II, 146, 9–22).

The earthly life of Christ is thus an explanation of his being Son: Christ, Son of God and Son of Man, makes the very being of God accessible to the human being as Son, revealing it in a human history. For this reason the very word *Son* is the most efficacious defense against heresies, in so far as it manifests, as no other term does, that Christ is Mediator between God and human beings (1 Tim 2.5). It is applicable to both the divine nature and the human, since He who is Son of God has become Son of Man in the economy (κατ’ οἰκονομίαν), in view of the reunification in himself in the communion of the two natures (*Eun* III, GNO II, 35, 12–19). Therefore, given that the Son is the power of the Father, all of the works of the Son are works of the Father himself, as can be seen in numerous Gospel passages which show how Christ goes to encounter the economy of death (τὴν τοῦ πάθους οἰκονομίαν) not because of weakness, but through the power of his will (*Eun* III, GNO II, 147, 12–16). Thanks to the history of Christ itself, it thus

becomes possible to visibly perceive the incomprehensible Divinity, as is clear from the Nyssen's commentary on the description of the beauty of the Spouse in Ct 5.10–16: “For all of these expressions with which beauty is described do not indicate the invisible and incomprehensible aspects of the Divinity, but those manifested in the economy (τῶν κατ’ οἰκονομίαν φανερωθέντων), when He showed himself on earth and shared in human life, having assumed the human nature; and, through these, according to the word of the Apostle (Rm 1.20), his invisible aspects too, understood in his works, are also perceived, in so far as they are manifest through the constitution of the universe of the Church. Creation of a universe is, in fact, the constitution of the Church” (*Cant*, GNO VI, 384, 13–21).

Only in Christ, and consequently in the events of his earthly life, is access to divinization truly available in the μίμησις of his οἰκονομία, that is, in the μίμησις of his Humanity, to which every human being can approach through the sacramental οἰκονομία: “Therefore, the flesh that the Divinity received also took this element [wine] for its own nourishment, and God, making himself visible, therefore united (κατέμειξεν) Himself with our mortal nature, so that humanity at the same time should be divinized in communion (κοινωνία) with the divinity. For this reason, He, in the economy of grace (τῇ οἰκονομίᾳ τῆς χάριτος), sowed himself in all believers, through the flesh whose nourishment comes from bread and wine, mixing with the bodies of the believers, so that in the union (ένώσει) with the immortal, man too participates in incorruptibility” (*Or cat*, 37, 116–124: GNO III/4, 97, 20–98, 6). Thus the life of the Church too is nothing but a reflection of the beauty of Christ the head. It is to Him and to his action that all the ministers and all Christians must be faithful. In this manner the sacramental dimension of the οἰκονομία is developed by Gregory, and harmoniously inserted into the whole of his own theology, going far beyond what Basil had accomplished. In comparison to his brother, Gregory assigns a far more central role to the οἰκονομία, whose essential mediation is theologically developed with a great coherence.

Gregory affirms the distinction between οἰκονομία and θεολογία, but at the same time shows their inseparability, manifesting how οἰκονομία, in the historicity and corporeality of Christ, reveals θεολογία itself, i.e. the divinity of the Son and the mystery of the Trinity. In a marvelous unifying vision, he writes that it is enough to turn one's gaze to the activities (τὰς ἐνεργείας) of Jesus in order to believe that God has entered into history. For, as in observing the universe and the designs that rule

the cosmos (τὰς κατὰ τὸν κόσμον οἰκονομίας), and the beneficial effects that God renders present in the lives of human beings, one deduces that there is a superior power that guides all things, so too all the good that Christ worked through the miracles throughout his earthly existence, according to what has been recounted to us, reveals his divine nature. It is proper to God to give life to human beings and to conserve it through his Providence. It is proper to God to give nourishment and drink to those who are in a communion of life with Him. It is also proper to God to help the poor and give health back to the infirm, since He has power over all creation and is stronger than death and corruption. In the history of Christ, however, all these activities are present, for which reason one cannot doubt the divine οἰκονομία (*Or cat*, 12, 1–26; GNO III/4, 40–41). The interconnection of the divine attributes, which cannot be separately present, are explained in the history of Christ, in so far as his acts reveal and make understandable to human beings the divine Goodness, Justice and Wisdom.

Therefore, as R.J. Kees has shown in his analysis of οἰκονομία in the *Or cat*, the divine love for men is the clearest proof of the inseparability of theology and economy: “Gregory closely unites the one and the other, identifying the classic divine property of divine Goodness to the love for men” (R.J. KEES, 319). The power of divine love unites the whole cosmos and all of history, making possible the identification of the history of each human being with the history of Christ in the μίμησις of his οἰκονομία. As this reveals the θεολογία of the divine attributes, in so far as action is a consequence of being, so too, the divinization of the human being must necessarily pass through the imitation of the action of Christ, conforming in Him one’s will to that of the Father. In Christ, in the sacramental and mystical identification with Him, the path to being truly divinized is opened to all human beings, thanks to his life, thanks to τῆς οἰκονομίας μυστήριον.

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Giulio Maspero

OP HOM

De hominis opificio

This treatise is considered the beginning of “a project of reflection on the anthropological theme, which Gregory, due to the vast material, articulated in three stages” (G. MATURI, *Paradiso precoce*, 20). These are *Op hom* (beginning of 379), *AN ET RES* (→) (end of 379) and *INFANT* (→) (May–July 381), as is suggested by the fact that the final part of *Op hom* (PG 44, 213C5–229A11), with its attention to eschatological themes, in particular the resurrection, anticipates the object specifically treated in *An et res*, at the end of which we find again a brief sketch of the theories of *Infant*.

In *Op hom*, with which Gregory initiates his readers to the anthropological theme while continuing and correcting the reflection of his brother Basil (*Hexaemeron*), the speculation on the structure of the human being is based on that of the image (Gn 1.26), identified by Gregory with the intelligence and thought, “goods that God did not give so much as made to be shared in” (PG 44, 149B5–6). These goods are shared in by each human being, since he bears in himself a part of the entire human race, given that God created humanity all together, as a *plêrôma* (PG 44, 185B1–9; D1–8), while the natural limit that separates each one is extraneous to the image, as is the somatic distinction between masculine and feminine. This is an addition that makes provision for sin, and which leads Gregory to develop the concept of a “double creation” (PG 44, 181B1–4), with a change in modalities of generation: from the angelic mode, in which human beings would have reproduced like the angels, who while being an infinite myriad constitute a unique essence (PG 44, 189A13–B3), one passes to a “mode of generation proper to the beasts and irrational creatures” (PG 44, 189D3–6).

Particular attention is reserved for research into the relationship of body-soul, with the affirmation that is then taken up in *An et res*, that the two components are born and develop together since in the embryo all that is necessary to form the human being is present (PG 44, 233D1–6, 11–13; 237C1–15).

Directly connected with the problem of the relationship of body-soul is that of the origin of matter. Gregory, refuting the Manicheans

and preoccupied—like Plotinus in a polemic against the Gnostics—to justify the unity of everything, defines matter as “intelligible,” refusing to conceive of it as something in opposition to the divine *ab aeterno* (MATURI 2004, 177).

Once the idea that evil could have its foundation in matter is eliminated, its only source is in the *PROAIRESIS* (→) of the human being (PG 44, 189C11–13), and its temporal character is affirmed. This is in anticipation of the reflections in *An et res* on the doctrine of *APOCATASTASIS* (→) associated to the resurrection (PG 44, 205C10–208A1–6).

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Giorgio Maturi

OR CAT

Oratio catechetica

1. CONTENT · 1.1. *The Trinitarian Context* · 1.2.a. *God's Design for the human being: Creation, Origin of Evil, the Fall* · 1.2.b. *The Salvific Plan of God: Incarnation and Redemption* · 1.3. *Appropriation of Salvation through the Sacraments, Faith and Moral Conduct*
2. ORIGINALITY OF THE ORATIO CATECHETICA.

The *Catechetical Discourse* is not directly addressed to the catechumens preparing for Baptism or to recently baptized faithful for supplementary formation. It constitutes a manual for those who are responsible for the initiation into the Christian faith and must confront Judaism or various tendencies of Hellenism and Gnosticism. Gregory seeks to demonstrate that Christian doctrine in its orthodox formulation can be accepted by human reason, when the latter submits honestly to the requirements of a critical analysis of the revealed truths. He proposes a synthesis intended to demonstrate that the plan of God for the human being is coherent (→ *AKOLOURTHIA*) and that its realization obeys a dynamic which is ordered to the restoration of that which was destroyed by sin.

1. CONTENT. A brief analysis of content permits us to better discern the logical connection of the principal arguments.

1.1. *The Trinitarian Context* (chs. 1–4). The author immediately inserts the economy of salvation into the unifying context of the Trinity. Affirming the unity of God and the equality of the Hypostases in the Trinity, he affirms at the same time that the world is the work of the Triune and One God, not the work of an evil god as the Manicheans teach, or the work of an inferior god, limited in power.

1.2.a. *God's Design for the human being: Creation, Origin of Evil, the Fall* (chs. 5–8). A well structured argument leads one to admit that the world is the work of reason and wisdom. According to Gregory, the world is originally good since it owes its own existence to the Logos of God. The human being is not one element among many: on the contrary, he

occupies an eminent position, since God has called him to “participate in divine goods”. The human being is capable of this participation because he carries in himself “a certain affinity with the divine”. He was adorned with reason and wisdom: this is what the Scripture expresses by saying: “created in the image and likeness of God”.

Certainly, the *de facto* condition of the human being does not correspond to the projected plan of God. This is because the human being misused liberty, which was granted to him as a privilege. The responsibility of the fall is not to be attributed to God, but to man himself, fooled by the angel of the earth who was jealous of man’s prerogatives. At any rate, even fallen man remains the object of divine solicitude. Immediately after the fall, man saw God assign to him the mortal condition, which is nevertheless more a remedy than a punishment: It is the means conceived by God to purify sinful man in view of reestablishing him in his primordial form.

1.2.b. *The Salvific Plan of God: Incarnation and Redemption* (chs. 9–32). Only He who had created man could lift up again the fallen nature: The Author of creation is also the Author of the new creation. The ultimate reason for the Incarnation is the love of God for man, the “philanthropy” (→ *PHILANTHRÔPIA*) that urges God to guide back him who had fallen to participation in the good. The economy of the Incarnation manifests together (in symbiosis) the essential attributes of God, i.e. goodness, wisdom, power and justice. The confluence of these attributes permits God to free the deceived human being from the one who had deceived him: Gregory insists on this theme of the deceived deceiver. It is true that this plan implies the death of Christ on the Cross. Nevertheless, by accepting to pass through death, Christ procures for human beings the grace of the resurrection and association in his glorious exaltation. The Risen Lord grants to humanity the possibility to benefit from his vivifying power. The universal power of salvation in Jesus Christ is symbolized by the quadriform Cross, whose arms indicate that all creatures, in the heavens, on the earth and in the underworld are gathered together to Christ as to their existential center, and that all of creation receives from Him its own cohesion (→ *CROSS*).

1.3. *Appropriation of Salvation through the Sacraments, Faith and Moral Conduct*. The sacraments of Baptism and the Eucharist make possible the actualization of the mystery of the death and resurrection of Christ to the advantage of the believers. In virtue of the power of God, which is

present each time it is invoked in the context of these celebrations, the sacramental action produces an effect which is symbolized and realized by the specific actions and words.

2. ORIGINALITY OF THE ORATIO CATECHETICA. One has the impression that, in this work, Gregory felt more free to express his personal ideas than when he sets out to refute point by point the ideas of his adversaries in polemical works such as *Eun* or *Abl*.

Thus, for the doctrine of the Trinity, he accentuates an aspect also found in Augustine: the human being, image of God, reveals something of the mystery of the Trinity by means of analogy. This is not the measured approach of *Eun*.

In anthropology, Gregory proposes a rather optimistic vision: He highlights the dignity of the human being as image of God, his preeminence in respect to other creatures, his liberty that remains his privilege even after the fall.

It is characteristic of the Christology of the *Or cat* that the author focuses on the fact that the divine nature and human nature meet in Jesus Christ. He shows that Jesus has a human development, and *qua* human being has a body and a rational soul (which is denied by the Arians and the Apollinarians). On the basis of these facts, he explains that the death of Christ does not signify the separation of the divinity and humanity, but the separation of the body and soul within the humanity. The divinity remains united to both the body and to the soul after the separation. Gregory does not concentrate his explanation on the death of Christ on the Cross alone. He seeks to understand the importance of the Resurrection-exaltation of Christ and the salvific effects that derive from them as well.

As for Soteriology, Gregory develops in a fairly diffuse manner his theory of the deceived deceiver, giving it an almost definitive formulation. But the insistence on the rights of the devil (→ DEVIL) will lead Saint Anselm to write his *Cur Deus Homo*, which maintains the theory of satisfaction. On the other hand, Gregory set out an audacious thesis of the universality of salvation, maintaining that at the end of time there will be an APOCATASTASIS (→), so that all will be reconciled and the prince of evil himself will be saved (→ ESCHATOLOGY).

The reading of this work, so rich with content, is rendered even more attractive through skilled stylistic devices. The exposition is broken down into small units structured on the schema of question (objection)-response. The stylistic effects are also quite varied and move from ample

and majestic moments to incisive formulas, from tight argumentation to more concrete passages that contain numerous and varied examples.

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Raymond Winling

OR DOM

De Oratione Dominica

A certain date for the composition of this writing cannot be established. Modern scholars propose various datings: 374–376 (DANIÉLOU), 376–378 (May), before 381 (RORDORF, MOUTSOULAS), after 381 (MOSSHAMMER) or 385 (CALDARELLI). The concrete affirmations against the Pneumatomachians however indicate that the treatise probably was written either shortly before or shortly after the second Ecumenical Council, anyway it may be assigned to the most fecund literary period of the Nyssen which starts at 379.

The writing is comprised of five homilies, and unlike the *De Oratione Dominica* of Origen, is addressed to the greater multitude of the faithful, thus assuming a pastoral character. The first homily is a discourse of prayer in general, the four following homilies are interpreting the Lord's Prayer in its particular petitions. Each homily concludes with a Christological doxology.

The first, introductory homily underscores the necessity of prayer. The influence of Origen can be felt in the request for incessant prayer (VÖLKER 265). Prayer, as a holy and divine work, unites man with God. Allmost composing a hymn (GNO VII/2, 8,18 – 19,13), Gregory gives a definition of prayer and indicates its soteriological importance. In conformity with the Alexandrian tradition, the prayer of thanksgiving is particularly highlighted (VÖLKER 264). Through antitheses, the proper manner of prayer is presented: chatter is condemned, as well as prayer against one's enemies (not a human being, but sin is the enemy) and praying for that which is earthly and transitory.

In the second homily, the initial invocation is interpreted (GNO VII/2, 20,3 – 26,19), *Our Father who art in Heaven*. According to Gregory, the human being's affinity with God consists in his sonship of God. The word *Father* indicates the Creator; those descended from Him must accordingly have a virtuous conduct, a pure conscience and a pure heart. Here too, the influence of the Alexandrian tradition is clear (WALTHER 34). Before prayer one must purify the soul, freeing it from the passions. Further, prayer must be preceded by the accomplishment of vows. Gregory distinguishes between prayer (προσευχή) and vow (εὐχή): in his detailed

explanation he goes beyond Origen (KÖTTING 121). To be a son of God essentially consists in a moral likeness of essence. On the other hand, the prayer of the wicked man turns into the invocation of the devil. In the second part of the petition (GNO VII/2, 26,20 – 30,24), Gregory interprets heaven as our homeland from which we were exiled. The parable of the prodigal son (Lk 15.11–32) indicates the only path to heaven, which consists in the perfect separation from sin and leads to likeness (ὁμοίωσις) with God. Heaven is not to be understood in a spatial sense, but as a spiritual dimension into which we transfer ourselves with a decision of the will (προαίρεσις). The invocation is understood as an exhortation to a virtuous and sublime life. This idea is further developed in the third homily, and specifically in the interpretation of the first petition: *Hallowed be thy Name* (GNO VII/2, 31,3 – 37,7). God does not need glorification, but the believer must glorify God through his virtuous life. Because of his false decision, the human being is incapable of reaching the good without the assistance of God. He thus invokes the help of the Kingdom and Lordship of God, *Thy Kingdom come*, in order to be liberated from sin and death. Thus, this request assumes an eschatological dimension. Gregory reflects upon the concept of βασιλεία. Citing a passage in Luke (GNO VII/2, 39,18: *May the Holy Spirit come upon us and purify us*, Lk 11.2 *var. lect.* this text is documented only in Gregory, cfr. WALTHER 37), Gregory identifies the Holy Spirit with the Kingdom and Lordship of God. Identifying Spirit and Kingdom (βασιλεία), Gregory situates his Pneumatology in the struggle against the Pneumatomachians. He underscores the divinity of the Holy Spirit, who dominates and is not dominated. Ἐκ τοῦ υἱοῦ (GNO VII/2, 43,1) is a later addition to support the *Filioque*, and is not present in the original text (JAEGER 122–153).

In the fourth homily, the third and fourth petitions are explained. Gregory articulates the third petition in two parts, *Thy will be done, on earth as in heaven*. In the first part of the petition (GNO VII/2, 44,14 – 48,13), Gregory speaks of the relationship between the divine will and the human will. These words of the prayer ask for the sick soul to be healed, since the object of the divine will is the salvation of humanity, i.e. the liberation from evil and the realization of all the virtues perfectly possessed by the angels in heaven. Gregory also understands the will of God as the principle of perception of good for mankind. In the second part of the petition (GNO VII/2, 48,14 – 50,21), *on earth as in heaven*, Gregory inserts an excursus on all of creation where he speaks of the relationship between incorporeal nature (angels) and corporeal nature (human beings). In the fourth request (GNO VII/2, 50,27 – 58,22), *give*

us this day our daily bread, Gregory sees the response to the problem of how the soul on earth, while immersed in earthly cares due to corporeal necessity, is able to fulfill the will of God with the same perfection as the angels in heaven. Gregory interprets the petition for bread in contrast to the eucharistic explanation of Origen (*Or. Dom.* 27,4). With this request, God teaches us to be frugal (ὀλιγαρκείας) and to maintain moderation in all things. In this, Gregory follows the New Testament understanding of the concept of bread: for him, τὸν ἄρτον τὸν ἐπιούσιον the daily bread is necessary for our existence. It is only through this spiritual disposition that the one who prays imitates the impassibility of the angels, who by their nature have no bodily needs. Thus the request for bread is not mere material but closely linked to spiritual demands. The treatment of the concept of *Bread of justice* leads to a different interpretation (WALTHER, 40) than that of previous explanations of the term δόξ: It depends on the disposition of the heart of the human being, on his conscience and his justice who will be the granter of his petition for bread, i.e. God or the devil. The word *today* in Gregory, contrary to Origen (*Or. Dom.* 27,13), must be understood as the individual day—and therefore in the sense of Mt 6.34.

The fifth homily explains the final petitions. At the beginning of the fifth request (GNO VII/2, 59,1 – 72,10), *forgive us our debts, as we forgive our debtors*, Gregory speaks of the assimilation of the human being to God through virtue. If one imitates a particular attribute of God (e.g. the remission of sins), one becomes in a certain manner God himself. Gregory introduces here, as he himself observes, an audacious thought: Our forgiveness serves as an example (ὑπόδειγμα) for God, that he may imitate. Further, Gregory underscores that the sins God has to forgive are greater than those we pardon our neighbors. Gregory gives a double explanation of debts (τὰ ὀφειλήματα)—on one hand they are the total debt of humanity before God and on the other hand there is a great multitude of sins which are caused by the whole psychosomatic constitution of the human being. Gregory expresses himself in juridical form: If you absolve the debt of another, the chains on your soul fall away and you will be your own judge. Like Origen (*Or. Dom.* 32), Gregory too mentions the direction of prayer towards the Orient, as a reminder of our original home—paradise.

Gregory treats the last two petitions in their relation to one another (GNO VII/2, 72,11 – 74,5): *Do not lead us into temptation, but deliver us from evil*. He maintains (cf. Origen *Or. Dom.* 30,1) that the two concepts, temptation (πειρασμός) and evil (πονηρός), have the same meaning:

Temptation is just one of the names that Christ gave to the evil enemy. Since *the whole world lies in evil* (1 Jn 5.19), Gregory's ascetic spirit sees separation from the sinful world as the only way to flee temptations and to be preserved from evil.

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Ekaterina Kiria

ORIGEN

Gregory's grandmother, Macrina, had been converted to Christianity through the preaching of GREGORY THAUMATURGOS (→), some time after he became 'the apostle of Cappadocia' in ca. AD 264. This we learn from letter 204,6 of 375, of Basil, who also mentions him with great reverence in his letter 28 to the church of Neo-Caesarea in 368. Gregory, a pagan by birth, had himself been a pupil and convert of Origen ca. 233 at Caesarea, where Origen had spent the years from 231 subsequent to his departure from Alexandria. This means that the influence of Origen was strong in Cappadocia. Gregory, indeed, refers to him twice by name, once in THAUM, (13,11), once in the prologue to *Cant* (13,3) where he refers to Origen's laborious work on the Song of Songs. In both passages the adjective φιλόπονος is applied to Origen. Though his treatment is less literal than that of Origen, he is one with him in identifying the bridegroom with the Word/Christ and the bride with the individual soul and the church.

In his Trinitarian theology Gregory above all in *Abl* insists more on the unity of the Godhead than does Origen, who stresses on the distinction of the three hypostases. The illustration of the Trinity in *Or cat* 1 and 2 which assimilates the immanent Trinity to human speech is quite unlike Origen. However the use of the analogy of three men sharing one nature at *Eun* I,227, which derives from Basil's letter 236,6, is more pluralistic in tone. Gregory's insistence, however, on the divine infinity at *Eun* I,236, and elsewhere, as at *Vit Moys* II,236, is at variance with Origen, who insists on the limited character of the divine nature (*De principiis* 2,9,1).

Gregory's somewhat divisive Christology as in *Eun* III,3, and in his *Antirrh*—he was cited in later florilegia by for example Theodoret of Cyrrhus—may owe something to Origen, especially in his *De principiis* 2,6,6 and *Contra Celsum* 4,1–15 with special reference to 1 Cor 6.17, above all at *Contra Celsum* 2,9 and 6,47. Gregory uses the same text in *Cant* 1 on several occasions, but to describe the union of the Christian soul with God, not Christ's own union God.

Undoubtedly the main area of influence is in the 'doctrine' of ΑΠΟΚΑΤΑΣΤΑΣΙΣ (→) or universal salvation. Benign interpretations of Origen try to exonerate him of the accusation, but there can be no doubt at all that Gregory held it. Even the DEVIL's (→) salvation is argued for at the

end of *Or cat* 26 and in *Vit Moys* 2,82, despite the attempt by orthodox writers to emend the text. Origen was censured for teaching this in 543 and 553, though his Latin translator Rufinus tried to remove traces of it from the text as at *De principiis* 1,7,5 and 2,3,7. 1 Corinthians 15,28 is the text used by both authors.

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Anthony Meredith

ORIGINAL SIN

Man's first sin is described in a traditional manner, as disobedience and pride, i.e. as opposition to the will of God in PARADISE (→). On the other hand, Gregory speaks in an intellectualizing manner of an "erroneous judgment" reached through the trickery of the senses (e.g. *Or cat* 21, 4–5, GNO III/4, 56–57; M. HAUKE, 612–621). The theologian here comes close to a logical vicious circle, presenting sensuality both as the cause of the first sin and as a consequence of the same, foreseen by God. Further, a Platonizing optimism places the distinctive role of the will in danger, and thus the culpability of the first sin as well. Despite this, the primordial fall is not reduced to an erroneous judgment, since Gregory establishes the source of the error in a lack of love for God (*Op hom* 20, PG 44, 197D).

The ambiguities regarding the first sin are situated in a more ample context. The human tendency to the good is elevated to such an extent that every rational creature necessarily reaches its eternal order in the end (→ *APOCATASTASIS*). In *SOTERIOLOGY* (→), the deception of the devil by Jesus overshadows the notion of expiatory death, and the punishments of the otherworld have only a medicinal value. The ideal unity of the human race, and its spiritual structure which reduces matter to intellectual qualities, spur the Nyssen's conception in the direction of a collectivistic idealism which does not seriously take into account the personal decision of liberty in concrete history, in which the state of testing before God finishes with death (M. HAUKE, 621–624. 629s).

Despite the philosophical defects of his ideas of sin, Gregory offers a richly developed doctrine of the consequences of the primordial fall. The question of "originated" original sin is asked here: Are the descendants of Adam also afflicted with original sin?

The condition after the fall is manifested in the *TUNICS OF HIDE* (→) of Gn 3.21, interpreted as an assimilation of the human being to the animal state. The loss of the divine life is expressed here, as well as the necessity of death and the predominance of the passions that propel towards sin. In this context, no clear distinction is drawn between sin and the tendency that leads to sin. The sensual forces are nevertheless neutral, and the "animal" body is also a good creation of God—as well as the "image" of the image of God in the soul. The positive valorization of corporeality is

however obscured through the idealist conception of matter, space and time (→ *DIASTÊMA*) in which concrete history appears as a consequence of sin.

The image of God is “obscured” through the first sin; some of its elements remain (such as free will), but others are lost (such as the “true life”, the “wings” of the Holy Spirit and “happiness”). That which remains is also wounded; the intellect goes off track, liberty becomes a slave of sin and of Satan. Simplicity in the communication with God is substituted by fearful shame. Instead of “clothes of sanctity,” the “leaves of fig” are found, a symbol of the fallen state. Human nature is held prisoner by the devil.

At the heart of the consequences of the fall is the “double death”: The soul is stripped of divine life, while the body is destined to dissolution (*Ref Eun* 174s, GNO II, 385,16–386,3). The human being is born already in the state of spiritual death, and Baptism alone brings him back to life. The “death of the soul” corresponds to that which medieval theology will call *peccatum habituale*, and constitutes the most important element which shows that Gregory is a witness to the faith in (originated) original sin. Further, human nature itself assumes the sin and culpability (e.g. *Vit Moys* II, 32.45, GNO VII/, 42, 20s; 45, 22s; *Or dom* 5, PG 44, 1184AB) since every human being participates due to his descent from Adam in the fallen state of his progenitor. Next to the term of “sinful nature”, models of “inheritance” (κληρονομία), of succession because of descent (διαδοχή) and of necessary connection (ἀκολουθία) are used to describe the transmission of sin. The “filthiness” of Job 14.4–5 (LXX: ῥύπος), with which every human being is born, “is the sin born together with human nature” (Ps 50.7, LXX) (*Sext Ps*, GNO V, 189, 12–14).

Gregory approaches the distinction between personal sin and “sin of nature”, but does not offer any systematic concordance with the texts that seem to ignore the state of hereditary sinfulness in children. The theologian does not distinguish between sin and concupiscence, as the analysis of the concept of EVIL (→) shows in relationship to “malice”: Here, the loss of the “good” in the image of God, the rift between the sensual forces of the soul and the spiritual forces, and the opposition to the will of the Creator all go together. The systematic tensions in Gregory are explained with this as yet undifferentiated cohesion: When the decision of the free will is in the limelight, there is a certain tendency to place the “sin of nature” between parentheses; if on the other hand the “privation” of the goods of paradise is in question, it is easier to speak of an “innate” evil without personal sin appearing as a ratifying argument. When Gregory characterizes the fallen state as a “privation” (στέρησις) of good, he

approaches the Catholic doctrine of original sin as it will be later formulated. Infants who die prematurely are classified as “innocents” (*Infant*, GNO III/2, 67–97), but these arguments are presented as hypotheses and are in tension with the observations that speak of the obscuring of the image of God and the loss of the true “life” because of the first sin. The soul of newborns is not placed in the situation of paradise.

It is not possible to infer the union of fallen humanity with Adam through the transmission of the soul, since the inception of each human being leads to a specific creative act of God. The necessity of “nature” to be saved regards humanity as a whole and every individual human person. In this description, biblical theology, and particularly Pauline influence, is enriched with various philosophical elements that go back to Plato, particularly via Philo and Origen. It is however not possible to align Gregory’s approach with any one philosophical school. Some of the aspects of Gregorian doctrine manifest a certain similarity with Augustine, although no influence on the Bishop of Hippo can be demonstrated. Both Fathers offer an advanced reflection on the consequences of the first sin. Both of them link the sin of fallen “nature” to hereditary transmission. Augustine had to confront the Pelagians and is more systematic on this point. There is no analogous clarification in Gregory. There are therefore unresolved systematic tensions. His testimony is en route towards the mature doctrine of original sin. We find in him the decisive content which will be included in the Catholic dogma, formulated later at the Council of Trent (cf. E.V. McCLEAR, 190s, 209–212; L.F. MATEO-SECO, 227). The conceptual elaboration is quite developed for a pre-Augustinian theology and constitutes the most eminent example of Greek doctrine on original sin in the fourth century.

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OTHERWORLDLY PURIFICATION

Gregory frequently speaks of the necessity of purification from sin and its consequences. “Common sense” (κοινὸς λόγος) and the Scriptures attest that one cannot belong to the choirs of the blessed if not totally purified of the “stains of malice” (*Or cat* 36, GNO III/4, 92). This conviction leads him to speak of a purification, not only during this life, but also beyond death.

For if death can touch the human being after he is totally purified, as is the case with the martyrs, it is also possible that one could continue to be “carnal” after death, and in need of purification. Gregory touches on this theme in many passages, but treats it with special attention in *Or cat* 35–36 (GNO III/4, 86–92), in *Mort* (GNO IX, 54–68) and in *An et res* (PG 46, sp. 85–88), where he presents his thought, sometimes in hypothetical form, on the situation of souls between death and resurrection.

Gregory maintains that the purification from sin and the liberation from “carnality” (→ TUNICS OF HIDE) is a long and painful process. In reality, human death has a purifying function in the economy of salvation, as can be seen in the image of “clay vessels” (→ DEATH) that Gregory uses to show that God, after the first sin, clothed the progenitors with mortality in order to purify human nature through death and resurrect it anew. Along with the image of the clay vessel, used in *Or cat* 8 (GNO III/4, 31–32), others with similar meanings are added: the cloth that must be washed (*Or cat* 27, GNO III/4, 68), the gold that is purified by fire (*Or cat* 26 and 35, GNO III/4, 66 e 92), and the purification by fire (*Or cat* 40, GNO III/4, 106).

It is necessary to indicate, as WINLING does (SC 453, 312, nt. 1), that even if Gregory uses the term of “purifying fire” in reference to the otherworldly purification, it is imprecise to call it *purgatory* in the strict sense that this term will be used in later theology. Gregory speaks of a purification after death, but also after the resurrection of the flesh. This is furthermore a purification offered to all, regardless of the gravity of the sins in which they have died; it is even offered to the devil (*Or cat* 26, GNO III/4, 66–67).

This purifying process was inaugurated by Christ through his death and resurrection, and is rendered efficacious through the sacraments—particularly BAPTISM (→) and the EUCHARIST (→). Gregory’s theology

is Christocentric; this remains true for what he affirms of purification: even if it requires an ascetic effort and death is a decisive factor in this purification, the key point of this whole process, which culminates in the complete re-appropriation of the dignity of image of God, is the death of Christ, the sacramental life and the divinizing action of the Holy Spirit (WINLING, 95).

In *Mort*, Gregory speaks of the tunics of hide, of clay vessels and of the otherworldly purification. He begins his discussion of the theme in its most proper sense, with a vigorous praise of human liberty, understood as dominion of oneself (αὐτοεξούσιον): This liberty is an honor that renders us equal to God. For this reason, He who created the human being in his “image” sought the way to make him “discover” the error he had committed in adhering to evil, without “doing violence to” his freedom. Thus, the human being is permitted to be found in the condition he chose in adhering to evil, so that he may experience the vacuity and limitedness of this evil (*Mort*, GNO IX, 54–56). In the otherworld, having left the body, the soul will see the difference that exists between good and evil, and will also see that it cannot be a participant in the divinity without the purifying fire (καθάρσιον πῦρ) destroying the stains with which it is contaminated.

Evil itself can be purified since it is an “adherence” that is contrary to human nature, and thus cannot remain always united to it. Only the good is infinite, evil exhausts itself in itself (DANIÉLOU 1970, 197). The fire purifies not only sin, but bad inclinations, that is concupiscence (ἐπιθυμία); once these bad inclinations are purified, the human being loses the desire for exterior things and turns to sense the lovable attraction of that which is “proper” and “familiar” to him, that is, the spiritual world (*Mort*, GNO IX, 56–57). After the destruction of the evil which has rendered the eyes of the soul infirm, the human being turns to experience the delights of the light (*ibidem*, GNO IX, 57).

In *An et res* Gregory vigorously defends the survival of the soul beyond death; he thus presents the theme of the place and state in which it is after death. In treating these questions, Gregory has in mind the theme of the RESURRECTION (→) as well, since the soul is the connecting wire that permits us to attribute a unity of subject to the one who has died and the one who will rise again. In this context, there is a passage in which Gregory uses as an example the parable of the rich man and Lazarus (*An et res*, PG 46, 85–88). There is an abyss impossible to traverse between the rich man and Lazarus. This abyss fundamentally consists in the different states of the soul: Lazarus's soul does not have any nostalgia for earthly

goods, the soul of the rich man on the other hand continues to be stuck “as entrapped” to the life of the flesh. This means that after death, in the soul of the one who is attached to earthly goods, something similar occurs to the one who has spent a long time in a place with a bad odor: even after leaving the place, he continues to emit a bad odor, since he is impregnated with the bad odor in which he was immersed. A full purification for those whom death caught in the slavery of the flesh is thus necessary; the soul requires “another death that purifies it from the residues of carnal attachment”. The modality of purification is the “purifying fire” of which he had already spoken (*ibidem*, PG 46, 99 A).

In his course notes for lectures at the *Institut Catholique* of Paris, J. DANIELLOU (3, 171–184) dedicated an entire chapter to purgatory. M. ALEXANDRE has expressed certain well-founded critical observations to this chapter, analyzing specifically Gregory’s exegesis of parable of the rich man and Lazarus, as well as his manner of applying it to the otherworldly purification. Gregory certainly speaks of a purification after death in many of his works; this purification must be understood as a continuation of the purification that could have occurred on earth, and can be experienced even after death and before the resurrection. In certain passages, however, such as in *Or cat* 26, Gregory places this purification after judgment and resurrection (ALEXANDRE 1972, 438–441, partic. notes 66 and 67).

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Lucas Francisco Mateo-Seco

OUSIA

οὐσία

Gregory uses the term *ousia* primarily in the context of the Trinitarian controversy. Around four-fifths of the more than one thousand attestations of *ousia* occur in writings that exclusively or primarily pertain to this area (*Eun*, *Ref Eun*, *Graec*). By contrast, in *Virg*, probably Gregory's earliest text, *ousia* appears only once, in the non-philosophical sense of "possession" or "inheritance" (*Virg* 23, GNO VIII/1, 336,14). This does not mean that in this text Gregory was not yet interested in the conceptual realms in which he will later employ the term *ousia*. However, in this as in his other early writings, he usually contents himself with the term *physis*, used in an almost identical sense (→ *PHYSIS*). Nevertheless, a hasty conclusion about an "evolution" in Gregory's thought would be premature. Apart from the well known difficulty of dating many of Gregory's writings, it is noteworthy that even *Vit Moys* and *Cant* (generally considered later works) contain only isolated references to *ousia* (three in *Vit Moys*, seven in *Cant*). It is obvious that for Gregory, the use of *ousia* and related terminology is intimately linked to his involvement in the Eunomian controversy. An interest in *ousia* terminology independently of this context is apparent only to a limited extent. Since the use of *ousia* in Gregory's Trinitarian theology is strongly determined by contemporary theological developments, this article will begin by discussing the use of the term outside the Trinitarian controversy (A), and examine Gregory's contribution to a conceptual clarification in the context of the Trinitarian controversy on this basis (B).

A. *Use of the Term Outside the Trinitarian Controversy.* The only domain outside of Trinitarian theology in which Gregory works systematically with the term *ousia* is cosmology. *Ousia* occurs not only in the writings explicitly dedicated to cosmological themes, such as *Hex* and *Op hom* as well as (with limitations) *An et res*, but also in the cosmological discussions found in virtually all of Gregory's writings. In this complex of themes, the concept assumes a series of characteristic semantic nuances.

1. In Gregory, *ousia* primarily designates a particular being. Something is called *ousia* in so far as it is or exists. In this sense Gregory uses *ousia* in his definition of the soul as an engendered, living, intelligible being (*An et res* PG 46, 29B). God, too, is an intelligible being in this sense (οὐσία νοητή: PG 46, 44A). But this being need not necessarily be an individual. Ὑλική οὐσία is, for Gregory, a being that is material (*Hex*, PG 44, 81A); θερμή οὐσία is that which is warm (*Hex*, PG 44, 84 B). Gregory does not really introduce a further sense of *ousia* here. Rather, his understanding of being is broader than ours usually is. This breadth of the concept of being, according to which every material thing too is an *ousia*, should be remembered when we evaluate the fact that Gregory designates the soul and God as *ousiai*.
2. From this conception of *ousia* as something that is, it is a short but noteworthy step to designating the existence, the reality of beings (that is, of the *ousiai*) itself as *ousia*. In his exegetical text *Inscr*, assumed by most to be among his first works (it too contains only two occurrences of *ousia*), Gregory writes that God by his will and his command alone brought the world into existence. This existence, the existing reality of the world, is described by the term *ousia* (*Inscr*, GNO V, 94,8; cf. *An et res*, PG 46,124B). Significantly, τὸ εἶναι is used in a parallel sense in this passage; *ousia* in this context thus designates the being of a being, the fact that it exists.
3. This “existential” sense of *ousia* is, in turn, only one step away from the “essential” sense also found in the cosmological context. In the framework of his theory of simultaneous creation, Gregory writes that the *ousia* of all being (ἡ οὐσία τῶν ὄντων), indeed the *ousia* of each individual being, was created at once in the first act of the divine will (*Hex*, PG 44, 69B; 72B). Here too, one could translate *ousia* as “the being of beings”. However, it is clear that *ousia* here does not solely or principally refer to the reality of the being as such, however much this is a natural connotation in any description of creation. Rather, Gregory’s main aim in this context is to designate the particular form in which a being first becomes real. This is because the thrust of his theory of creation is that in the beginning, God created everything “in potentiality” (τῇ δυνάμει), while a particular development was required for the actualization of this possibility (*Hex*, PG 44, 77D). Thus, the *ousia* of all things which God created “in the beginning” bears the same relationship to their “empiric” reality as a seed to a plant. Gregory here takes up

an originally Stoic tradition which was later appropriated in Neo-Platonism (PLOTINUS, *Enn* III 2,2,18 ff.). In this tradition, potentiality is not characterized by the inferiority of the Aristotelean $\mu\eta\ \delta\upsilon\nu$, i.e. of matter; rather, it is an ontologically primary possibility (derived from the active meaning of $\delta\upsilon\nu\alpha\mu\iota\varsigma$, viz. power, force), which is then actualized (VAN WINDEN; \rightarrow *Dynamis*). Thus, the meaning of *ousia* here moves in the direction of “essence”; it indicates that which makes a particular thing what it is. The dynamic element of this conception must not be overlooked.

This meaning of *ousia* as essence then moves to the foreground in another group of witnesses. This is especially clear when Gregory writes that we cannot know the *ousia* of God (*Hex*, PG 44, 72C), or in general when he uses the formula *kat'ousian* (according to essence), which occurs particularly frequently in his works.

The first two nuances of the semantic spectrum sketched here correspond, in Gregory, to the term *hypostasis* (\rightarrow *HYPOSTASIS*). Independently of his distinction between *ousia* and *hypostasis* in a Trinitarian context, Gregory can thus also pair the two concepts (e.g. *Tunc et ipse*, GNO III/2, 11,9). In the context of the first and third meanings, Gregory also regularly uses *physis*. The term *hypokeimenon* is presented as an alternative to *ousia* in its third sense. In one passage, Gregory defines the “subject” (*tò hypokeimenon*) as that “to which the term *ousia* is legitimately assigned” (*Eun* I 182, GNO I, 80,11). In general, it must of course be noted that the distinctions between the three semantic nuances cannot be maintained in any overly precise manner. Rather, it is characteristic of large spheres of ancient thought that the object, its existence and its mode of being are not strictly separated, but are considered as aspects of one and the same fact of the matter.

B. *Trinitarian Controversy*. While Gregory was not naturally inclined to an excessive use of *ousia* terminology, he was in practice constrained by the state of the Trinitarian debate of his time. The Council of Nicaea had standardized the use of *ousia* terminology by defining the Son as begotten “from the *ousia* of the father”. This formulation was often subsequently criticized for supposedly subjecting the Father to what amounted to a physical process, which contradicted his absolute sovereignty (cf. e.g. the so-called First Profession of Faith of Sirmium in ATHANASIUS, *De syn.* 27). At the end of the 350's, the so-called “homoiousians” attempted to find a compromise on this point by using the terminology of generation

and of creation side by side (EPIPHANIUS, *Pan. Haer.* 73, 3,5–8). The so-called “homoians,” on their part, succeeded in convincing the emperor that *ousia* (and *hypostasis*) terminology should be avoided altogether (ATHANASIUS, *De Syn.* 30). Eunomius, by contrast, used *ousia* terminology, but radically rejected the logic of Nicaea; for him, God is the “unbegotten *ousia*” who, as such, entirely transcends all others (EUNOMIUS, *Apol.* 7). The Father’s activity (*energeia*), which must of course be distinguished from his *ousia* (*Apol.* 23), begets the Son, whose *ousia* consists in being begotten (*Apol.* 12). The Son is therefore absolutely contingent in his being on the will of the Father, and is thus not similar to Him according to essence (*Apol.* 24). The triumph of Nicene theology in the 360’s and 370’s is to be understood against the backdrop of this challenge: Only Nicaea with its use of *ousia* terminology appeared capable of adequately confronting Neo-Arian doctrine. This conviction forms the basis of Gregory’s contribution to the Eunomian controversy. The distinction between *ousia* and *hypostasis*, which had been substantially forged by his brother Basil, is also presupposed by Gregory (cf. BASIL, *Ep.* 214, 4; 236, 6). The use of *ousia* in his Trinitarian theology thus almost exclusively applies to the commonalities of the Trinitarian Persons. Here, Basil, borrowing from Aristotle’s *Categories* (ARISTOTLE, *Cat.* 1, 1a10–12; 5, 3b33–4a9), had declared that the consubstantiality of the Persons is shown by the fact that one can affirm the same “description of being” (λόγος τῆς οὐσίας) of them, and that therefore there is no “more or less” with regard to their divinity (*Adv. Eun.* 19; *Ep.* 361). This specification made it easier to conceive of the substantial sameness of the Persons as a real unity. Basil had left the question of the unity of *ousia* largely unanswered, thus exposing the Cappadocian position to the accusation of tritheism. It is at this point that Gregory intervenes. On the one hand, his own contribution repeats Basil’s recourse to the *Categories*: In one passage Gregory effectively presents a definition according to which realities are *homoousioi* if they are described by the same λόγος τῆς οὐσίας ([Basil] *Epist* 38 [= *Diffess hyp*] 2,25 f.). His innovation, on the other hand, essentially lies in his attempts to demonstrate how, under these conditions, one can think of the one *ousia* without either negating three hypostases (“Sabellianism”) or effectively introducing tritheism (cf. *Eust.* GNO III/1, 5,3–14 for this exposition of the problem).

A characteristic feature of Gregory’s argumentation is the use of the analogy of a common human nature or *physis*. (The fact that he unquestioningly assumes the semantic equivalence of *ousia* and *physis* is evinced by *Graec* and *Abl*, which develop the same argument, but do so using

ousia and *physis* terminology, respectively.) This analogy is meant to demonstrate that entities with the same λόγος τῆς οὐσίας are of the same ontological order (*Eun* I, 173–175, GNO I, 78,11–27). At the same time, the comparison (whose problems he nevertheless always recognizes: *Graec*, GNO III/1, 23,22–24, cf. in general: AYRES) is meant to make plausible the real unity of the Persons (*Eun* III/1, 74–75, GNO II, 30, 7–24). In *Graec*, Gregory maintains that the accusation of tritheism would be justified only if the name “God” referred to a Person. Since it instead refers to *ousia*, there is only one God, since there is only one *ousia* (*Graec*, GNO III/1, 19, 1–5). In this context, he explicitly uses the comparison with human individuals (ἄτομα) and the unity of species (εἶδος); *ousia* is here equated with the species, i.e. the *deutera* (second) *ousia* of the *Categories* (*Graec*, GNO III/1, 31,1). To the obvious objection that three human individuals are called three men, Gregory replies that this is an abuse of language, which can be justified pragmatically in the case of men, but not in that of God (*Graec*, GNO III/1, 23,13–24). How does Gregory understand this unity of the human species so as to be able to justify such an analogy? *Graec* makes clear that this unity is tied to the common origin (of human beings in Adam, of the Trinity in the Father) and to the almost organic bond between individuals that results from it. Since, due to their great number and dispersion in time and space, this bond is not obvious among human beings, their unity is perceptible only with difficulty (*Graec*, GNO/1, 24,26–25,4). The case of God is different; thus, we “rightly call the unique cause [that is, the Father] together with the two [that is, Persons] caused by Him, the one God, because the cause exists together with them” (*Graec*, GNO III/1, 25,6–8). This means that the three divine (just like the many human) Persons together form the one *ousia*. This solution raises numerous problems, not least the question how, in this case, each of the three Persons can be, and be called, God. It is not clear if and how Gregory intended to address this difficulty. He barely confronts it in his Trinitarian writings. Where he does, namely in his writings on creation and soteriology, he uses *physis* and not *ousia* terminology; the reader must therefore be referred to the entry on *PHYSIS* (→).

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Johannes Zachhuber

PAIDEIA

παιδεία

1. THE HISTORICAL CONTEXT · 2. THE NYSSEN'S CONTRIBUTION.

Paideia in a generic sense is an interpretation of the biblical faith which developed in contrast to the representations of the ancient cultural ideals. It is a current parallel to that of the Gnostics. These two ancient spiritual movements were not embedded in a rustic polytheism and its cultural practices, but due to their more subtle character, above all in the religious sphere, posed important questions to that Christianity which tried to present the faith as a mode of life, i.e. as a type of existential option—including all of the cultural reality in its religious proposal. In this sense it can be said that Christianity needed to seek a proper model of *paideia*, and at the same time, that its various proposals had a provisory character in so far as it was a manner of affronting the cultural reality, which is always in development and therefore is not easily systematized. The interpretive proposal of the Nyssen is also subject to the same characteristics and the same limits.

1. THE HISTORICAL CONTEXT. In order to present the conception of *paideia* contributed by the Nyssen it is necessary to situate it in a larger historical context, in particular the classical conception of *paideia* and the attempts to grapple with it by the first Christians. In the ancient interpretation, traced back principally to Plato, the concept of *paideia* not only regards philosophical and rhetorical formation in the strict sense, but embraces the human being in all of his existence, thus in his religious dimension as well. Plato, in the *Republic*, declares that the idea of good, the primordial principle of all values, dominates in the central part of the universe. The fundamental notion for educating is that education must start from this vision of the cosmos. It is necessary that education moves around the idea of the good as a planet moves around the sun. According to Plato, true *paideia* is in relationship with the divine (cfr. W. JAEGER, *Paideia* III, 225).

Despite various formulations which appeared in antiquity, the general conception of *paideia* necessarily led to a conflict with Christianity,

because of its anthropocentric orientation which was in contrast to the biblical teaching about the sovereignty of the will of God. The writers of the primitive Church intuited the religious consequences of pagan *paideia*, seeing the problematic with its fundamental attitude. The question of its exterior manifestations played a secondary role. Such a diffidence in regard to classic *paideia* cannot be attributed to either an antipathy from the social conditioning of people with a restrictive mentality or to a generic hostility towards the scientific; rather, it was due to the claim, on the part of *paideia*, to give a certain finished term to existence. The Christians, starting from their own point of view, i.e. from the principle of the subordination of the human being to God the Creator, saw their own anthropology as opposed to the pagan anthropology, leading to numerous differences in the interpretation they gave of existence. In this context, the Christian anthropology pointed out the relativity of the religious character of this ancient ideal and instead oriented *paideia* towards God the Creator. For example, Pseudo-Justin (around the middle of the third century) takes a decidedly militant stance against the religious claim of *paideia*, and clearly states that the true religion is not found in the verses of the poets, nor in their ideal of human development (cf. *Or. ad Graecos* 38: PG 6, 309AB).

It is clear that the totality of elements defined as *paideia* did not have the value of a simple product of the intellect or an education with a neutral significance for the Christians. They saw in it a doctrine in contrast with their faith, which was formulated in its most incisive manner in the word "Cross" (cf. 1 Cor 1.18). The fact that the Christians took a decidedly negative attitude to *paideia* is thus part of the dynamic of the spiritual history lived by the early Church.

Despite this critical attitude in the face of the pagan *paideia*, Christians had a certain openness to it from the beginning. This had been prepared by the LXX, which designated the salvation brought by God or the disciplinary provisions for the sinner with this term. This was then confirmed by Paul's discourse at the Aeropagus. There, the intention to adapt the message of salvation for the Greeks, citing pagan poets, was manifested, in the place which represented the very center of their culture.

From this biblical preparation, a search which aims to show Christianity as the true *paideia*, analogous to that of the Greeks, is born. This was inaugurated by the author of *I Clement*, who qualifies the salvific action of God in Christ as *paideia* (59, 3; cf. 62, 3). Clement of Alexandria, throughout his theological work, then interprets the salvific message in harmony with the ancient cultural ideal, defining the church on the

analogy of the institutions and the contents of the ancient *paideia*. Clement did not simply place rational knowledge at the service of the faith, but situated the development of faith itself as *paideia*. In this manner he elaborated a schema of theology of history. When he speaks of the Old Testament authors, he expresses the following opinion: "Whether they come from the Greek school or the legalistic school, all those who accept the faith are led to be part of the lineage of the saved" (*Stromata* VI, 42, 1: GCS 15, 452). Clement announces the reintegration of Greek thought by Christianity, which, with its religious relevance, clearly surpasses the rational sphere; but he affirms at the same time that the message of Jesus must be lived in conformity with culture, as the very apex of *paideia*.

In this position, the *kerygma* of Jesus is understood as *paideia*, and in this way is adapted to the mental structure of its hearers. In a period in which Christianity is preparing to assume the responsibility for the transmission of the ancient culture, these affirmations certainly reveal the will of the Church to enter into this important sector of the life of antiquity. In these assertions, we also find an interpretation which announces the Gospel in the religious categories of the surrounding milieu. This led to an osmosis between Christianity and culture, which came to seem inseparable; but this also included the danger of distorting the biblical message by understanding it in a cultural sense. As far as the Christian conception of *paideia* is concerned, it can be said that early Christianity elaborated two inherent principles which will appear in all the particularized elaborations of the question, and which are part of the Christian tradition: a) Culture constitutes an indispensable structural element of the Christian message. b) One must always be attentive to the danger of the possible reductions of the message by culture itself. Further, these two principles, thanks to the evolving character of their content, are continually in a state of reciprocal tension which is demonstrated by much historical evidence in the life of the Church.

2. THE NYSSEN'S CONTRIBUTION. Gregory does not offer a systematic exposition of his conception of *paideia*. Nevertheless, we can deduce various elements of his vision by examining his principal work, *Vit moys*. Certain elements can be found in *Macr* as well. Further, one must remember that this is a concept which is founded in his personal experience. In his vision, *paideia* is an education in tension towards the integration, in human and cultural maturation, of the growth of Christian faith, the inverse also being true. Gregory presents himself as someone privileged, because he had the luxury of an education which was at once

“classical” and “Christian”, something which constitutes an ideal for the well-to-do Christian family of the fourth century. We find a sketch of this type of education in what Gregory writes in *Vit Moys* about the birth of Moses: “The basket, made of interlaced rushes, represents the education which results from different teachings, which maintains the one who is carried by it above the waves of life” (*Vit Moys* II, 7: SC 1, 33). In *Macr*, Gregory gives a precise description of the education that his mother Emmelia provided for her daughter, underscoring the typically Christian character of this education (cf. *Macr* 3: SC 178, 148–150). We cannot however deduce from his affirmations that this education truly implied a total absence of the “curriculum” of the profane culture, which was common to all. Rather, it is the contrast, typical of antiquity, between the profane and Christian education that is expressed here. This contrast was due to the fact that the schools were in the hands of the pagans and the educational program was the traditional classical one. In any case, if this could have been true for Macrina, it certainly was not for Gregory, who demonstrates that he knows quite well the culture offered to the youth of his epoch. The friendship established between Basil, and consequently Gregory, and the brilliant rhetor Libanius of Antioch is at once a consequence and a proof of the cultural climate in which Gregory grew up in the decisive years of his formation. Libanius transmitted the fundamental conviction that “Religion and Greek letters are sisters” (*Oratio* 62, 8). This climate was not idyllic however, due to the edicts of the emperor Julian which left their mark both on this intellectual climate and on the personal attitude of the Nyssen. The sense of unease and constant precaution vis-à-vis culture that can be noted in texts such as Basil’s *Discourse to Youth* (which nevertheless intends to remain open), is perhaps due to these edicts, as is the irony which reaches a true and proper exposition of ridicule, of certain pages of the *Vit Moys* (cfr. II, 10–13: SC 1, 34–35).

Nevertheless, one text of Gregory’s from the *Vit Moys*, probably autobiographically referential, about his “model” Moses, can be recognized as his program in reference to *paideia*: “And only just having passed the age of an infant, Moses was raised in a royal manner and instructed in profane culture. He did not choose, however, that which was considered glorious by the pagans, and no longer accepted to recognize as his mother her who had passed as such, and of whom he had been considered the son. No, Moses returned to her who was his mother by nature and mixed with the group of his people.” (*Vit Moys* I, 18: SC 1, 8–9). The contrast between the education of “pagans” and that of “his people” is important

to Gregory, with the clear choice of Moses (i.e. Gregory) to share to the end the lot, and thus also the proper "culture" of the latter. The choice is so radical as to be compared even to a true and proper "homicide". He thus concludes the cited text: "And when a conflict arose between a Hebrew and an Egyptian, Moses helped his relative and killed the foreigner" (*Vit Moys* I, 18: SC 1, 9). This choice in reference to the pagan *paideia* was certainly not easy for Gregory when he was young, but his subsequent conclusion is then rather severe: "Truly sterile is profane education: it is always in labor pains, but never bears a living son" (*Vit Moys* II, 11: SC 1, 34). Despite this severity, the Nyssen is disposed to admit that although profane education is ultimately a ridiculous sterility, it is however founded on philosophy. And since philosophy possesses familiarity with reason, he counsels that it should not be completely excluded, at least in the early years of a youth's formation. He concedes, or even counsels, that more should be done, when he writes: "Thus one, after having lived in the life of the princess of the Egyptians as much as necessary so as not to seem deprived of that which is important to them ..." (*Vit Moys* II, 12: SC 1, 35). The bearing of the model before him requires him to add: "If one frequents profane reasonings in the time of his education, he should not separate from the milk of the Church, who nourishes us" (*ibidem*). The principle that Gregory, despite everything, establishes, is clear and valid: It is right to acquire so much familiarity with profane culture that one will not appear ignorant in those matters which are respectable, discussed and deepened by others. There is thus a possibility of growth in knowledge, thanks to the many teachings which come from familiarity with the pagan cultural heritage.

In Gregory's life and doctrine there is a moment when something broke irreparably. This is indicated in the reference above to a true and proper "homicidal" suppression of profane culture in the Gregorian interpretation of the killing of the Egyptian by Moses. Gregory takes up his reflection and concludes: "But the truest account is that which presents us him who revolted against the profane doctrines and the doctrines of his fathers as if he was between two enemies. He who is of a foreign religion opposes himself to the Hebrew word in fact, striving to appear stronger than the word of Israel. And such a religion has appeared stronger to many of the more superficial, who, having abandoned the faith of the ancients, unite to the enemy in war, thus becoming traitors to the teaching of their fathers. But he who, like Moses, is great and noble of soul, shows with his path that he who arises against the word of faith is dead" (*Vit Moys* II, 13: SC 1, 35).

This direct contrast does not appear to be a polemic provoked by any specific heresy. Perhaps Gregory refers to a true and proper revolt from Christian faith, as could be deduced from the expression of “word of faith”. The change of view in the relationship with profane culture was most probably provoked in Gregory, and perhaps also in the two other Cappadocians Basil and Gregory Nazianzen, by the “revolt” of the emperor Julian, and above all by the damages that his radically pagan edicts had provoked in Christian families. It is perhaps to these damages that Gregory refers when he notes with melancholy “the abandoning of the faith of the ancients” and denounces the “traitors to the teaching of their fathers”.

The conclusions which Gregory reaches, in reference to the years of his youth and the *iter formativum* which he had been able to enjoy, can be summarized as follows: Gregory had the fortune of being educated both in Christian and in pagan culture. He received the excellent formation at the interior of his own family, thanks to the climate of high spiritual and cultural dynamism which reigned there. He tried to live in the tension between the Christian and the pagan culture, despite the pressing invitations of those close to him to dedicate himself with a more accentuated and decisive preference to the spiritual dynamism of the Christian faith. He continued in the attempt to keep the two “cultures” together until something happened around him, and consequently in him, which provoked a radical rupture or at least a radical change of direction in his own life.

It is possible that such a change occurred in him because of the damage wrought in the souls of many Christians by the years of the reign of the emperor Julian (361–363). They abandoned quite lightly the faith of their fathers, not only passing to the side of the enemy, but even fighting with him against the faith.

One can say with a fair amount of certainty that Gregory underwent a psychological, cultural and finally spiritual trauma around the age of twenty-five. This trauma will gradually lead him to become ever more seriously involved in the choice made by his older brother, to the point where he will finally share it with him, if not on the practical level, then at least on the level of interior or spiritual engagement. Gregory received a strong impetus in this direction from his sister Macrina. It may be in this period that he returned to the type of relationship with Macrina that she had been able to establish with Peter, his younger brother, from his youngest years. In *Macr* Gregory writes: “The eldest of the sisters (Macrina) [...] a little after the newly born child had

finished being nursed with milk, took him from the wet nurse and raised him on her own, leading him to enjoy the most elevated education, training him from his youth in learning of sacred things, so as not to leave the possibility of deviation to vain occupations to his soul. Macrina was everything for the young boy: father, mistress, pedagogue, mother, counselor of all good. She brought it about that before he had left the youthful state, when he was still flowering in his tender age, he rose to the sublime ideal of philosophy" (*Macr* 12: SC 178, 182).

Gregory's return to a radically Christian teaching, which others in his paternal house had been able to enjoy from early childhood, was probably caused by the trauma induced in him, as in other Christians, by the attempt to restore paganism during the reign of the emperor Julian. This hypothesis can be confirmed by the ample traumatic effect provoked by Julian, which was noted in the Church at that time. The difficulty of those times greatly tried the ideal of Christianity, at the same time awakening a most rigid and eloquent intransigence in Christians with regard to the pagan culture. This reaction made it necessary to adhere to Christianity in the form which was most spectacularly extraneous to the Greek spirit.

It thus seems that at the age of twenty-five Gregory became aware of the "vanity" of the pagan culture, deciding to give himself body and soul to the "higher education" identified with Christian philosophy. The description of Peter, his younger brother, which he elaborates in *Macr* is a good synthesis of the ideal towards which Gregory, now an adult, intends to orient the rest of his own life: "Peter then avoided with disdain the application of himself to profane study, and having in nature a mistress capable of every good teaching, looked always to his sister, and made of her the model of every good thing. He progressed thus to such a point that he seemed not inferior to the great Basil in the excellence of virtue" (*Macr* 12: SC 178, 182–184).

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PARADISE

The affirmations of the biblical prehistory (Gn 1–3) manifest a historical truth to Gregory, but need to be interpreted “philosophically”, with the help of allegorical exegesis (*Cant.* prol., GNO, VI, 11, 5–7). Paradise is collocated to the third heaven (E.F. SUTCLIFFE; M. HAUKE, 585–587). *The tree of life* is a symbol of Christ who is the fullness of all goods, while the *tree of knowledge* indicates the deprivation of life, spiritual death through sin. *Knowledge of good and evil* means the choice of evil which presents itself under the appearances of the good, like poison presenting itself as honey (M. HAUKE, 580). According to the hypothesis of the “double creation” (→ ANTHROPOLOGY, CREATION), Gregory distinguishes the ideal unity of humanity from the creation of man (*Op hom* 20, PG 44, 185 B–D). The difference between man and woman exists only due to sin, which was known by God beforehand (*Op hom* 16s, PG 44, 184D–189A), but appears to be manifested already in the virginal state in paradise (*Virg* 12, 4, GNO VIII/1, 302, 13–17). Thus “ideal” and “historical” states can be differentiated, although the affirmations about paradise show an interlacing of the two. The beginning of history is equated with the end (*Cant* 15, GNO VI, 457s) in such a manner that the resurrection brings one back to the original state (*Op hom* 17, PG 44, 188 C). The progenitors fully participate in the image of God, in which the terms “image” (εἰκὼν) and “likeness” (ὁμοίωσις) (Gn 1.26) are not distinguished (→ ANTHROPOLOGY). Nevertheless Gregory draws a distinction between the goods that remain after the first sin, and those that are lost and thus manifest the gratuitous nature of the original state. The freedom from sin is manifested in the frankness of communication with God (→ PARRĒSIA). The typical traits of the man of paradise in the “first happiness” are “being” *par excellence*, to be “good”, beauty, virtue, freedom from sin and concupiscence (→ APATHEIA), and above all, the “first life” which includes both soul and body, and culminates in the vision of God. Unlike Origen, Gregory sustains that no disquiet (ἄρεος) is possible in the vision, but he does not succeed in explaining the possibility of the first sin. This apriorism results from the exaggerated similarity between paradise and the eschatological state (M. HAUKE, 603–605).

Through images such as that of “wings” (of the Holy Spirit) and of the first “clothing” the supernatural character of the grace of paradise is

developed, something that can already be verified through the concept of “nature” (φύσις). “Nature” signifies the metaphysical essence (see also → *OUSIA*), but also the origin which is embellished with the divine life, which surpasses the ontological constitution of the human being. Gregory distinguishes the human essence, which cannot be lost, from GRACE (→) which goes beyond this, above all in the gift of the “true” life of the soul. But an interlacing of natural and supernatural realities can be found in the image of God, which can be obscured, but not “lost” in the proper sense (→ ORIGINAL SIN). A certain tension between biblical theology, in which the divine “life” surpasses the human structure, and its Platonic interpretation which establishes the natural finality of the human spirit through its order to the Supreme Good, can be seen here.

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Manfred Hauke

Parousia → Eschatology

PARRÊSIA

παρρησία

The term of *parrêsia* (παρρησία) was used in antiquity to indicate the freedom of expression, frankness and proper tranquility of a free citizen in the perfect use of his rights of citizenship. Gregory uses the term according to its habitual usage, but enriches it with a new dimension, the theological one. Gregory uses it frequently to designate the freedom of pure, serene conscience, full of filial confidence in God: a conscience without “fear” and without “shame”. This is the confidence that is born of the state of being in the image of God. One could say that *parrêsia* is the most intimate aspect of profound human liberty (ἐλευθερία) which reflects the infinite dominion of God.

Human nature was in this situation before the fall (*Inscr* 2, 6, GNO V, 86). Gregory refers to this state of interior freedom when he comments on the nudity of Adam (Gn 3.7–13). The familiarity of man with God was nothing other than the freedom that emanates from an innocent conscience, free of fear, shame and remorse. In the original state, man “was full of trust since he enjoyed the vision of God, who showed Himself to him face to face” (*Or cat* 6, GNO III/4, 25). This liberty is lost precisely due to the interior slavery which is inseparable from sin. After sin, the shame (αἰσχύνη) before God crops up uncontrollably, inducing the first man to hide himself. Shame, and with it the loss of *parrêsia*, is an eloquent manifestation of the grave sickness of the conscience which sin and the consequent disorders of the passions are. Therefore *parrêsia* is tightly intertwined with the mastery of the passions, to ἀπάθεια or the vision in oneself of the original image of God.

In a theological perspective, *parrêsia*, as DANIELLOU observes (104), is a specifically Christian disposition of the soul, since it is tied to faith in the divine paternity. It therefore appears mainly in the works from the end of Gregory’s life: *Or dom* and *Cant*. The return of the soul to *parrêsia*, to interior freedom, signals in a certain sense the return of the soul to the state of innocence. Thus we must retrace the path in the reverse direction that Adam and Eve followed in distancing themselves from God (*Virg* 13, GNO VIII/1, 303–304). The human being must be truly healed from shame and fear, purifying himself from sin and liberating himself from

the slavery of the passions. In a positive formulation, he must acquire innocence and familiarity with God anew. Gregory describes this inner transformation in *An et Res*, stating that the soul, when “it has left all that is extraneous, that is sin, and is stripped of the shame of its sins, finds again the freedom and security of confidence (παρρησία)” (PG 46, 101C). Gregory offers an extremely important reason: Freedom is the likeness to Himself that God, master of all, has given to us.

In Gregory’s writings, this inner freedom and this friendship with God are identified with the awareness of being sons of God: Great preparation is necessary so that “the soul rises to the heights of *parrêsia* and we dare to call God Father!” (*Or dom*, 2, GNO VII/2, 25). Friendship with God and divine filiation are two aspects of the Nyssen’s conception of *parrêsia*. It is thus logical that Gregory conceives *parrêsia* as the interior disposition with which the Christian must turn to God, as well as, above all, the spirit in which he must recite the Our Father. This is precisely the meaning of the prayer that the Lord taught us, making us bold enough to say with *parrêsia*: “Our Father, Who art in Heaven” (*Or dom* 2, GNO VII/2, 29). It appears reasonable, as DANÉLOU observes (113), that the text where Gregory speaks most of *parrêsia* is his commentary on the Our Father. *Parrêsia* is a synthesis of the spirit of this prayer.

In *Or dom* 3, Gregory, commenting on the symbolism of the vestments of the priests of the OT, links the entry into the sanctuary (→ *ADYTON*) with *parrêsia*. Speaking of the entry into the *adyton*, Gregory refers to both the entry of the soul into the sanctuary of the knowledge of God and the entry of the priest in the OT into the *Sancta Sanctorum*. He who is prepared in such a manner as to call God his Father with confidence (παρρησία), Gregory states, is the one truly enrobed in the vestments that the OT required the priests to wear while entering into the Sanctuary.

Indicating the difference that exists between the priesthood of the OT and that of the NT, Gregory insists above all on the “interiorization” required of the priests of the NT, of the spiritual realities symbolized by the vestments of the priests of the Old Law. In the NT the beauty of PRIESTHOOD (→) is not manifested in the beauty of priestly vestments, but in the virtues that must adorn the soul of the priest.

In such a context, *parrêsia* is considered the “priestly stole”: He who calls God father with confidence (*parrêsia*) is vested in the “priestly stole” in order to enter into the sanctuary, to offer himself in sacrifice, and to intercede before God. *Parrêsia* implies familiarity with God, as well as

freedom and trust to intercede before Him. *Parrêsia* appears again as a fundamental disposition of the Christian in relation to God, and of Christian prayer (*Or dom* 3, GNO VII/2, 31–33).

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Lucas Francisco Mateo-Seco

PARTICIPATION

1. VERTICAL PARTICIPATION · 2. HORIZONTAL PARTICIPATION.

As every reader of Gregory's works can see, the concept of participation (the primary noun is μετουσία (→)—sometimes also μετοχή or κοινωνία—and the verb μετέχειν) is fundamental in his thought.

Participation is a key concept already in Plato; in his work it expresses primarily the relationship of the sensible instances to the intelligible forms or ideas (the most frequently used term is μέθεξις). In Neoplatonism the concept is also used to describe the relationship of the lower levels of the intelligible world to the higher, e.g. in Plotinus the relationship of the soul (ψυχή) to the intellect or mind (νοῦς), and the mind's relationship to the One (τὸ ἓν).

Gregory, too, often starts the division of beings (διαίρεσις τῶν ὄντων) with the division into intelligible and sensible, but the most important division for him is an essentially biblical one cutting through these categories: that between the Uncreated (ἄκτιστος: God) and created being. Combining these two divisions, Gregory's conception of reality includes the following three levels: the uncreated intellectual nature, the created intellectual nature (angels and human souls) and the created sensible nature. As for the human being, his place in Gregory's hierarchy of reality can be described as that part of the intellectual nature which is united to the earthly elements, or—from an inverse point of view—that part of the sensible nature which partakes of intellectual life; in other words, the human being is both an incarnate spirit and a rational animal (BALÁS, 1966/2, ch. 1).

If we ask what role participation plays in Gregory's universe, we find that it has two main directions, which we may call "vertical" and "horizontal."

- a. "Vertical" participation is not found, as we might have expected, between the sensible and the intellectual natures; rather, it is between the created and the uncreated, and especially between the created intellectual and uncreated intellectual. Thus, vertical participation is primarily the relationship of spiritual creatures (angels and human beings as having rational souls) to God.

- b. "Horizontal" participation, which is much less prominent but still important, is found on each level of reality and consists in sharing in the common nature of the species.

1. VERTICAL PARTICIPATION. As it has been said, "vertical participation" consists for Gregory in the participation in God's perfections by his creatures. God possesses (or rather *is*) every pure perfection by essential identity (φύσει, κατ' οὐσίαν) whereas creatures possess these perfections not by nature but only by participation.

A good example is a text in one of his early works, *Beat*: "Now the *truly blessed is the Divinity itself*, for whatever we suppose It to be, Its uncontaminated life is *beatitude* (μακαριότης) ... the source of all goodness ... the eternal joy (ἡ αἰδιος εὐφροσύνη) ... whereas secondarily blessed is the one who is called thus by *participation in the essential* [true, real] *beatitude* (κατὰ μετουσίαν τῆς ὄντως μακαριότητος)" (GNO VII/2, 80, emphasis added).

But Gregory develops his "dialectic" of participation especially in relation to the participation in divine goodness (e.g. GNO I, 105–113). In spite of the variety of contexts in which it appears, the theme of this participation has a remarkable unity. God possesses, or rather *is*, every (pure) perfection (such as goodness, life, being, virtue, etc.) essentially (φύσει, κατ' οὐσίαν), whereas creatures possess these only by participation. The partaking of the different divine perfections is intimately connected: the fundamental divine quality is goodness; further, the partaking of the true life consists in the progressive participation in goodness; and participation in "the real Being" is in most cases not a participation in simple existence but in the "true existence" which is synonymous with true life. The expression "participation in God" (μετουσία Θεοῦ) does not really refer to another kind of participation, but emphasizes an important aspect of all participation in God's perfections: the presence of God himself (who is αὐτοαγαθόν, αὐτοζωή, etc.) in the participants.

We shall now attempt to list the philosophical implications of Gregory's notion of participation in the order of their ontological interdependence, a characteristic resulting from participation which according to the explicit or implicit view of Gregory appears to be the foundation of another characteristic will be treated first (see BALÁS, 1966/2, ch. 5 for detailed references).

- a. The fundamental meaning of participation is "to have not by nature but as received from above." Thus the clearest opposites of "partic-

ipation” are the expressions beginning with *auto-* (αὐτοζωή, “life itself,” etc.) which together with parallel expressions (ὄντως, φύσει) indicate that God, unlike creatures, *is* absolute perfection originally and essentially (BALÁS, 1966/2, ch 5,1).

- b. From this it follows, according to Gregory’s views, that participation implies a real distinction, and composition, in the participant, “such that the subject (τὸ ὑποκείμενον) should be conceived as one thing, and that of which the subject partakes (τὸ μετεχόμενον), and by whose participation (οὗ κατὰ μετουσίαν) that which was not good before becomes good, as another.” Therefore, presupposing the simplicity of the Word and of the Holy Spirit (conceded by his adversaries too), Gregory can argue that they must be good etc. by nature and not by participation (see BALÁS, 1966/2, ch 5,2).
- c. Furthermore, participation is the principle of the limitation of perfections in creatures. Created intellectual beings can be “greater and less” not according to quantity, but “proportionately to the participation (μετουσίας) in the lofty goods—insofar, namely, as some are partaking (μεταλαμβάνόντων) more and others less according to the freedom of their will ...” God, on the contrary, is infinite in perfection, for “nothing that possesses the good not as something acquired but in virtue of its own nature can be defective in wisdom, power, or any other good.” Thus, in opposition to the hesitations of Greek philosophy and also of some Christian authors concerning the infinity of God, Gregory repeatedly and unambiguously affirms the infinity of divine perfections, while he admits that the only sense in which “infinity” can be attributed to created spiritual beings is as an indefinite growth and progress in participation (see BALÁS, 1966/2, ch. 5,3).
- d. This leads us to an especially emphasized aspect of Gregory’s notion of participation: change. Not only does “to be good by participation” imply the possibility of change in spiritual creatures (since, not being good by nature, they can lose and acquire goodness), but, according to Gregory, participation consists in a continuous “change for the better,” an indefinite growth.

Since God is perfect virtue (ἡ παντελὴς ἀρετή), perfection in virtuous life is an ongoing participation in God (*Life of Moses*). Thus, as he says in one among many of his texts, Divine Nature, being infinite, “when It draws the human soul to Its participation (πρὸς μετουσίαν ἑαυτῆς), will always remain superior by the same degree

to the participant (τῆς μετεχούσης). For the soul will constantly become better of itself through the participation in what transcends it (διὰ τῆς τοῦ ὑπερέχοντος μετουσίᾳς), and will never cease to grow, whereas the Good partaken of remains the same . . .” Gregory conceives this growth as continuing “in all eternity of the ages,” whereas “immobility” toward the good is death for the intellectual nature (see BALÁS, 1966/2, ch 5,4).

- e. These considerations may explain in what sense Gregory can speak of all creatures as found “in a certain dimensional extension (ἐν παρατάσει τινὶ διαστηματικῇ)” in the temporal sense, as opposed to the timeless eternity of God. For, since spiritual creatures too are alive only by partaking of life, their life is necessarily distended. And even though a painful distension is not found any more in our future beatitude, the eternal progress in participation, “forgetting what is behind and stretching out for what is ahead,” seems still to imply a certain temporality (see BALÁS, 1966/2, ch 5, 5).

These five points have, however briefly, shown clearly how Gregory transferred all the truly absolute attributes of the Platonic intelligible world to God, while he characterizes the metaphysical structure of created intellectual nature by attributes akin to the properties of the Platonic sensible world. Yet it is not only this radical shifting of planes which sets apart Gregory’s theory of participation from Plato’s and also, though to a lesser degree, from Neoplatonism. He also reinterpreted and often quite deeply transformed each of the attributes, e.g. his insistence on infinity as a positive attribute as opposed to the realm of “more and less,” his positive evaluation of change, his connection of temporality with the distended life of all intellectual creatures.

Finally, of particular interest today is his transposition of participation from a purely ontological to a personal sense. Of course, according to Gregory, human nature is already constituted—antecedent to any personal decision—by a certain initial participation in the perfections of God, which establishes the human being as a “free receptacle” capable of participation in the full sense. In this full sense, however, participation is a conscious, free process, a dialogue of the soul and God.

Thus Gregory’s theory of participation contains what one may call a metaphysics of created (intellectual) beings. Nevertheless, it should not be overlooked that, in spite of its philosophical value, Gregory’s theory of participation is primarily a theology of participation. Moreover, the ontological implications of participation described above develop first of

all out of a theological concern: to show that the Eunomian subordination of the Son and the Holy Spirit (which, according to Gregory, would presuppose that they are good only by participation) would entail consequences manifestly opposed to the Christian faith.

Gregory's theory of participation, however, serves not only as a weapon against Trinitarian heresies, but also as the fundamental category for describing the economy of salvation, i.e., the history of the human being's (and the angels') communion with God (For what follows see BALÁS, 1966/2, ch. 6). Participation in God's perfections is both the foundation and the unfolding of the "image of God" in the human being; sin is a refusal and loss of participation; redemption is accomplished by our sacramental and moral participation in Christ; spiritual life consists in an ever-growing participation. It is especially here that the personal and dynamic character of Gregory's notion of participation comes fully to light. Thus, in his commentary on the Cantic of Canticles participation is presented as a dialogue between the Bridegroom (Christ) and the bride (the soul); the "attraction of the good", which *per se* could have an impersonal ring, is the always-repeated call of the divine Bridegroom to further participation, imparting—together with the invitation—the power for further progress (e.g. *Cant* 3 GNO VI, 70,22–71,8). In the light of the convergent testimony of such texts, participation is clearly more than intellectual knowledge: it is desire, love, fruition of the sweetness of God, and therefore we may say *mystical* communion with God, to be continued also in blessed eternity.

Commenting on Exodus 3:14 (LXX: ἐγώ εἰμι ὁ ὢν) Gregory affirms that while only God possesses existence in virtue of his own nature (τῇ ἑαυτοῦ φύσει τὸ εἶναι ἔχει), no other being is able to exist apart from participation in the Being (διὰ τῆς μετουσίας τοῦ ὄντος). Thus we can understand why Gregory refers to God very often as "the Being" (ὁ ὢν or τὸ ὢν) or "the real Being" (ὁ ὄντως ὢν or τὸ ὄντως ὢν). In spite of his insistence that all created beings owe their existence to God, Gregory expresses this dependence relatively seldom in terms of participation in being. He speaks rather of God's will immediately realized, or of God pervading and holding together the universe. In affirming participation in existence, however, he means almost always "true existence"—in this sense only the "saints," i.e. those in communion with God by grace, "exist," and not only sin but also sinners are "non-existent" (see BALÁS, 1966/2, ch. 4).

2. HORIZONTAL PARTICIPATION. Another topic is present, though less prominent, in Gregory's thought: "horizontal participation," i.e. the sharing of individuals in the common nature of the species. Though horizontal participation is found on each level of being, Gregory develops the notion especially in connection with the sharing of many individuals in the one human nature (\rightarrow *PHYSIS*).

The contexts are, again, primarily theological: (1) To defend the unity and equality of the Divine Nature by an illustration taken from the unity and equality of human nature, and (2) To affirm and explain the solidarity of all mankind in the economy of salvation (especially the solidarity of all human beings with Christ's humanity).

Horizontal participation, in spite of some similarities, differs essentially from vertical participation (see BALÁS, 1969). This is reflected only imperfectly in the difference of terminology. Whereas the verb most often used is still μετέχειν, the verb κοινωνεῖν is common too, and the noun is not μετουσία but κοινωνία. It is noteworthy that the common possession of the one divine nature by the three divine Persons, though sometimes compared to the sharing of the same nature by human individuals, is never expressed by μετέχειν. More important than this, however, is the difference between horizontal and vertical participation regarding metaphysical implications. The common nature cannot be participated more or less, and *qua* nature it is not subject to change and time. For as Gregory says, "It is not in the power of time to determine for each individual the measure of nature, but nature abides in itself (αὐτὴ ... ἔφ' ἑαυτῆς), preserving itself through succeeding generations, while time moves according to its own manner, either surrounding or flowing by the nature, which remains firm and unchanged in its own limits" (*Eun* I, 175, GNO I, 78, 22–27). Of course, the individual beings change some of their attributes, and rational creatures grow in, and differ by, their (vertical) participation in divine goodness, but, e.g., "Humanity itself as such (ἡ ἀνθρωπότης αὐτὴ καθ' ἑαυτήν) is not transformed by baptism" (*Or Cat* GNO IV/2 102, 15–16).

Although Gregory of Nyssa has some teachings (especially in his polemics when he is rejecting Eunomius' claim to know the divine essence) and texts which may be considered as remote sources of Gregory Palamas' theology of divine energies, it should be noted, however, that in no case does Gregory connect μετουσία or μετέχειν directly with energy or energies. Although GREGORY PALAMAS (\rightarrow) often refers to Gregory of Nyssa, it would be false to interpret Gregory of Nyssa's teaching about the participation of divine perfections as a teaching on the participation in divine energies.

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David L. Balás

PENT

De spiritu sancto sive In Pentecosten

This Paschal sermon was in all probability preached in May 388, ten days after the sermon on the Ascension (→ *ASCENS*). In the Migne edition, it is included as “Discourse on the Holy Spirit, or on the Pentecost” (PG 46, 696), while in the critical edition (D. Teske) it is titled “In Holy Pentecost, commonly on the Holy Spirit, or on the Pentecost” (GNO X/2, 285).

The sermon has a solemn yet festive tone, as would be expected of a sermon preached on a feastday. It is also doctrinally quite dense. Gregory uses Ps 94.1 (“Come, let us adore the Lord”) as a fundamental text. Gregory affirms that the Lord of whom the Psalm speaks is the Holy Spirit, linking this to 2 Cor 3.17, where it is said “the Lord is Spirit”. Gregory begins with an explicit affirmation of Trinitarian faith and proposes an explanation of the divine economy in the revelation of the three Persons (GNO X/2, 288). Gregory insistently proclaims the divinity of the Holy Spirit, whom he calls God most high (Θεὸς ὑψιστος), while he refutes the “enemies” of the Holy Spirit (*ibidem*, 289–290), i.e. the Pneumatomachians.

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Lucas Francisco Mateo-Seco

PERF

De perfectione

Perf is a letter directed to the monk Olympius, to whom he also dedicates the *Life of Macrina* (→ *MACR*). Olympius had asked Gregory the question “how to reach the perfection of the virtuous life”. Gregory responds in a manner that is quite similar to the way he expresses himself in *PROF* (→). The manuscripts give various titles: JAEGER titles it “From Gregory, Bishop of Nyssa, to Olympius on Perfection” (GNO VIII/1, 173); MIGNE, “From the Same (G. of N.), on Perfection and How the Christian Should Be, to the Monk Olympius” (PG 46, 252). It is the same question that appears at the end of *Prof* in the explanation of the nature of Christianity: since God is perfect, to say that the Christian is called to imitate the divine nature is to say that he is called to be perfect as the heavenly Father is.

This writing is highly Christocentric. Gregory presents Paul as the proper guide to introduce us to the mystery of Christ, and proposes as a measure the same ideal of life as that contained in Gal 2.20. The spiritual nucleus of this writing is the explanation of the meaning of the name of Christ (GNO VIII/1, 175–212). These passages can be rightly considered a short treatise on the names of Christ.

Gregory concludes with a few lines on *EPEKTASIS* (→). How can our nature, so mutable, imitate God, who is above all change? Gregory responds by affirming that it is precisely our capacity to change that permits a continual conversion, in such a way that the ascent to God is without limits. The final phrase of the treatise is highly emblematic of Gregory’s thought: “Perfection truly consists in never ceasing to grow towards the better and to not ever place any limits on perfection” (GNO VIII/1, 212–214).

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Lucas Francisco Mateo-Seco

PERSON

The concept of person is central to a wide variety of contemporary issues, ranging from reproductive rights to the death penalty and euthanasia. We may think that the concept of person is a modern development. In fact, however, this idea does not originate with our discovery of human rights, consciousness, and individuality, but with the fourth-century attempt to defend the divinity of the Son and the Holy Spirit, and to uphold the biblical and traditional faith that the one God should be worshiped as Father, Son, and Holy Spirit. In doing so, fourth-century Eastern and Western church fathers had to clarify such key terms as substance (οὐσία, *substantia*) and person (πρόσωπον, ὑπόστασις, *persona*). Gregory of Nyssa developed a very sophisticated concept of the person in the context of his attempts to clarify the paradox of the Trinity—a single God comprising three distinct Persons. Gregory understood a person as characterized by uniqueness, relationality, and freedom. He reasoned that the three Persons of the Trinity have distinctive properties that make them individuals, that is, capable of being enumerated and circumscribed. But this idea of individuation, inherited from the neo-Platonists, falls short of expressing a clear notion of personal uniqueness. By itself it would suggest that a person is merely a collection of properties. Gregory's great contribution was to perceive the importance of relationality to personhood. The three divine Persons know and love each other, are in communion with each other, and freely act together in their common will. This understanding adds up to a concept of personal uniqueness much like our modern one.

Several studies have demonstrated that for various reasons the ancient Greek philosophers did not identify, nor were interested to elaborate on, the human individual (RIST, ARMSTRONG, KAHN). For the Platonist, the ideal was to lose himself completely in the universal mind; to remain individual meant to be imperfect. According to Aristotle, the individual could not be defined (*Metaph* 1036a 5–6) and philosophy should be concerned with the individual only inasmuch as he is a member of a class. Although Plotinus came closest to recognizing a distinctive human individuality, he did not in fact achieve this. Another step forward was taken by Plotinus' best known disciple, Porphyry, who defined an individual as a unique collection of properties (*Isag* 7, 20–26).

The concept of persons which emerges from Gregory's writings is complex, but it can perhaps be summarized as follows. First, in order to refer to a person in general, Gregory uses Greek terms such as ὑπόστασις, πρόσωπον (mainly person), περιγραφούσα or περιγραφή (circumscription), μερικὴ οὐσία (partial substance), ἰδικὴ οὐσία (particular substance), and even ἄτομον (indivisible or individual). Unlike his brother Basil of Caesarea, Gregory of Nyssa and their friend Gregory Nazianzen did not have the same reservations when using ὑπόστασις and πρόσωπον interchangeably to refer to a person (TURCESCU 1997). Ὑπόστασις is "the concept which, by means of the specific notes which it indicates, restricts and circumscribes in a particular thing what is common and uncircumscribed" (*Diff ess hyp* 3, 10–12). Thus a ὑπόστασις is distinguished from the common nature an individual has in common with other individuals.

Second, in order to distinguish a person from the nature that one person has in common with other persons, Gregory uses the analogy of the individual and the species (*Eun* I, GNO I, 186; *Eun* III, GNO II, 10, 50, *Graec*, GNO III/1, 23, 4–8): a person has the same relation to the nature as the individual has to the species it belongs to. This betrays an influence from Aristotle (*Cat* 2a, 11–18; *Metaph* 1038b, 10–12), the Stoics (e.g., Simplicius, *Commentaria in Aristotelem Graeca. De Anima* 217, 36), or perhaps Porphyry (TURCESCU 2005, 35–38; STEAD, 159, 182). In addition, in order to distinguish between nature and persons, Gregory employs the explanation that, unlike nature, persons are enumerable entities, i.e. persons can be counted while nature cannot be counted. If we are to use Gregory's rather material example, unlike gold which cannot be counted, golden coins can be counted and enumerated (*Abl*, GNO III/1, 40, 24 ss; 53, 7–54). The concept of individuals admits of a separation due to the particularizing properties observed in each. When individuals are taken together, we can count them.

Third, having distinguished between persons and their common nature (or substance), Gregory tackles the issue of personal identity and uniqueness. To do this, he adapts for Christian usage the Platonic view of an individual as a unique collection of properties (ἄθροισμα). This view is suggested by Plato (*Theaetetus* 157bc) and Plotinus (*Enn* VI, 3.8.20; VI, 3.10.16), and is elaborated by Porphyry who describes Socrates as a unique collection of properties: "Socrates, this white, and this approaching son of Sophroniscus, if Socrates be his only son, are called individual. Such things are called individuals because each thing is composed of a collection of properties which can never be the same for another; for

the properties of Socrates could not be the same for any other particular man" (*Isag* 7, 20–26). The Cappadocian fathers seem to be familiar with this definition of an individual, since in Basil of Caesarea's *Adversus Eunomium* 2,4 and Gregory of Nyssa's *Diffess hyp* 2 we see the example of Socrates being replaced with that of the apostles Peter or Paul who are described as unique collections of properties. Very much in line with the text from Porphyry, the apostle Peter as a unique person is described as the son of Jonah, born in Bethsaida and the brother of Andrew. When applied to the divine Persons, this definition allows us to describe each divine Person as a unique collection of the following characteristics: the Father proceeds from no other cause, i.e., he is ungenerated, and is the one who generates; the Son is generated from the Father as the Only-begotten, and through himself and with himself makes known the Holy Spirit who proceeds from the Father; moreover, all things (including the Holy Spirit) come into existence from the Father through the Son; the Holy Spirit in turn has his being from the Father, and is known after the Son and with the Son. To express the particularizing notes of each divine Person, Gregory also speaks of relations of origin or causal relations: the Father is the cause, the Son is from the cause or directly from the first, and the Spirit is from the cause (i.e. from the Father) through that which is directly from the first (i.e. through the Son). These causal relations are briefly expressed by the now classical formula (which Gregory does use) according to which the Father is ungenerated, the Son generated (or Only-begotten), and the Spirit proceeds from the Father.

Under the influence of Aristotle's category of relation (*Cat* 7b15, *Metaph* 5.15: πρός τι), Gregory, like his Christian predecessors from Origen (*Princ* I.2; WIDDICOMBE) onward, paid a great deal of attention to the relations between the persons, especially in the context of discussions of the divine Persons. He emphasized that the term "father" indicates the relation to a "son" because the two terms are correlatives implying one another. Other examples Gregory uses to denote relations between persons are: physician-patient, master-slave, emperor-subject. At the same time, Gregory added that "father" is the name of a person, not just a correlative term indicating a relation to another. In the case of divine Persons, the Spirit is also a correlative term of both the Father and the Son, although the Spirit's correlativity to the other two Persons is not as obvious as that between the Father and the Son. That the Spirit proceeds from the Father through the Son expresses the relationality among the three.

However, relations in Gregory's theology are more than simple ontological causality. They are manifested in the communion between the Persons. Communion (κοινωνία) is the solution Gregory proposes to the question, "What causes the Father, Son and Holy Spirit to be Persons and not mere collections of properties?" "Regarding attributes denoted by the terms infinite, incomprehensible, uncreated, uncircumscribed by space, and all others of the same order, there is no variation in the life-giving nature—I speak of the Father, the Son and the Holy Spirit—but a certain continuous and uninterrupted communion (κοινωνία) is observed in them" (*Diff ess hyp* 4. 45–50). Relationality as communion means that the Son, "who is in the bosom of the Father" (Jn 1:18), is from all eternity to be contemplated in the Father. When the Son is contemplated in the bosom of the Father, this means that he is contemplated as "power and wisdom of God" (1 Cor 1:24), "truth, light, and sanctification" (1 Cor 1:30), "peace" (Eph 2:14), "life" etc. As for the Spirit, Gregory refers to him in biblical terms as good and holy, princely, principal, life-giving, governing and sanctifying of all creation (*Ref Eun*, GNO II, 11). This allows him to present the Spirit as a correlative of both the first and the second Persons: there is "no gap between Christ and his anointing, between the king and his kingdom, between wisdom and the Spirit of wisdom, between truth and the Spirit of truth, between power and the Spirit of power" (*ibid.* 11). Since the Son is eternally contemplated in the Father and the Spirit is the Son's Spirit, the Spirit too is eternally contemplated in the Father (*ibidem*, 12). All three Persons rejoice eternally in the presence of each other and know each other perfectly. This is communion and it allows for both the distinction of each Person and the perfect unity among them. The Spirit as Person is also distinguished from the other two divine Persons by numerical order, i.e. by being listed in the third place (*Maced*, GNO III/1, 92,34–93,2, cf. Gregory Nazianzen, *Oratio* 29 (*De Filio*), 2, 22–23), and by the order of transmission, i.e. the fact that he receives his substance from the Father in the second place, after the Son (*Maced*, GNO III/1, 100, 22), if one can speak of an "after" in the case of the eternal. Last, the Spirit is said to be in very close relationships with the other two persons, this pointing once again to the paramount importance relationality plays in Gregory's concept of person.

Persons also have freedom, and many commentators have noted that Gregory's anthropology emphasizes this characteristic. The divine image in humans is reflected in the ability of human persons to choose freely (προαίρεσις), to have self-determination (αὐτεξούσιον) and self-mastery (αὐτοκρατῆς) (HARRISON; STRAMARA). "Humanity has become

deiform and blessed since it has been honored with free will" (*Mort*, GNO IX, 54, 1–3) and "Self-determination makes one equal to God" (*Mort*, GNO IX, 54, 10). Freedom of choice is connected to the rational faculty: "If there is no mind, then there is no free choice (προαίρεσις)" (*Antirr* 47, GNO III/1, 213, 1) Human persons have freedom, but it is a deficient freedom, because our nature is a borderland (μεθόριος, *Eun* III, GNO II, 1, 121; cf. DANÍÉLOU) between virtue and vice. We can become children of either light or darkness by affinity to the good or to its opposite. We can choose to change from children of darkness to children of light by "casting off the works of darkness [and] by a decent life" (*ibidem*, 1, 122). Ancient Greek used several words to express the notion of freedom, as we have just seen. Plotinus spoke of the will to choose (προαίρεσις) and another will that allows one to be what one wishes to be (βούλεσις). Gregory of Nyssa picked up this distinction and applied it to the Christian God. Gregory presented God as one who always chooses the good and wishes to be what he is because he is the supreme good. In speaking about the sonship of Christ, Gregory says that, unlike human beings, the Only-begotten Son of God does not change from an inferior to a superior state. Nor does he need another Son to bestow adoption upon him. Accordingly, Gregory maintains that the Only-begotten is properly called the Son of God because he is the Son of God by nature (*Eun* III, GNO II, 1, 123 ss). The distinction between "by nature" and "by choice" is very important in Gregory's view, and he emphasizes it several times. Yet the case of the Son of God is very different from the case of human sons: "God, being one good, in a simple and uncompounded nature, looks ever the same way, and is never changed by the impulses of choice (προαίρεσις), but always wishes what he is, and is, assuredly, what he wishes (ἅει καὶ βούλεται ὅπερ ἐστὶν καὶ ἐστὶ πάντως ὁ καὶ βούλεται). So that he is in both respects properly and truly called Son of God, since his nature contains the good, and his choice (προαίρεσις) also is never severed from that which is more excellent, so that this word [Son] is employed without inexactness, as his name" (*ibid.* 1, 125).

These are powerful statements, informed by Plotinianism. They are powerful because in the divine case, sonship-by-nature and sonship-by-will converge in the same direction of the good. There is no contradiction between the goodness of the divine nature and the good (or, rather, the supreme good) choice the Son makes. Freedom of choice in the case of God means freedom to always choose the good. The statements are Plotinian because Plotinus, in referring to the One about a hundred years before Gregory, made an almost identical statement: the One is "all

power, really master of itself, being what it wills to be" (*Enn* VI.8.9.45–46). The Son as God is thus a "willing" subject. However, his will appears as both the will to choose, which is always directed toward choosing the good, and the will to be what he wishes to be, which is an ontological will. Obviously, God has all the other characteristics of freedom already mentioned for human persons. God is absolutely free, but his freedom is always directed toward the good.

To sum up, Gregory's concept of divine Persons, although drawing on some rudimentary concepts of individual which existed before his time, is much more complex, biblical, and highly relevant to today. Like his brother Basil, Gregory endeavored to produce a fine analysis of what a person is by defending the divinity of each of the three Persons of the Holy Trinity and also by reflecting on human and angelic persons.

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PHILANTHRŌPIA

φιλανθρωπία

The term *φιλανθρωπία* occurs more than one hundred and twenty times in the Nyssen's corpus. It has a rich theological value, as an attribute of the divine nature itself, the fundamental reason for the Incarnation and the cause of the hypostatic union. This is a technical term of the Cappadocian circle (C. MORESCHINI, 234).

Gregory uses the word in the sense of *clemency*, as when he affirms that Basil has compassion for Eunomius (*Eun* I, GNO I, 23, 19) or that Joseph lied to his brothers through benevolence (*ibidem*, 59, 4). This is a usage close to that of *οἰκονομία* (→). These are typical uses of classical Greek, also present in the LXX (2 Mac 6.22, Est 8.12) and in the New Testament (Acts 28.2). In *Eccl* the term also appears accompanied by the adjective *παράλογος*, in the sense of an irrational generosity produced by drunkenness (*Eccl*, GNO V, 329, 8).

The properly theological uses principally depend, nevertheless, on the attribution of *φιλανθρωπία* to God, founded in Tit 3.4 (L.F. MATEO-SECO, 413). In Plato already, the corresponding adjective had been applied to the divinity (*Symposium*, 189c; *Laws*, 713d), even if the context of his thought does not permit one to see an oblativ dimension in this term, something which, on the contrary, characterizes the love of the transcendent God in the Judeo-Christian world. Here, the term expresses God's love in which he bends down to the world. He not only grants privileges and endowments to human beings, according to the sense already found in the classic Greek use of *φιλανθρωπία*, but also reaches the extreme of the gift of Himself, a possibility which remained unknown to Greek thought. Aristotle even explicitly affirms the impossibility of friendship between the Divinity and men, since the ontological difference is excessive (*Nic. Eth.* 1159a, 4–5; *Eud. Eth.* 1239a, 17–21). In this sense the New Testament usage of the term is founded in those passages of the Old Testament which affirm that God enters into relation with the patriarchs and prophets in a relationship of friendship (Ex 33.1; Wis 7.14,27). The biblical revelation of oblativ love transforms the concept of *φιλανθρωπία*, which for Gregory is essentially and fundamentally divine *φιλανθρωπία* (J.R. BOUCHET, 634), as can be noted in the expressions *θειά* (*Inscr*,

GNO V, 56, 7 and 64, 25), τοῦ Θεοῦ (*Diem lum*, GNO IX, 230, 13; *Ref Eun*, GNO II, 407, 20) or τοῦ κυρίου (*Benef*, GNO IX, 108, 12) which accompany it at various times.

It is therefore not surprising that the term plays a fundamental role in the discussion with Eunomius, who recognized in the Incarnation of the Son a sign of inferiority through explicit recourse to the term of φιλανθρωπία (*Eun* III, GNO II, 303, 8. 11). The Nyssen, instead, affirms that the Son was not weak by nature, but manifested himself as such through love. Eunomius, for his part, confuses weakness with love itself, and for this reason does not attribute φιλανθρωπία to the Father. This is radical enough to cause Gregory to write, in reference to the Son: “He therefore becomes obedient for us, as He becomes sin and malediction through the economy for our benefit, He who by nature was not thus (οὐ φύσει), but becomes it through love of men (κατὰ φιλανθρωπίαν)” (*Eun* III, GNO II, 370, 9–11). This also shows some of Gregory’s biting irony when he speaks of Eunomius’ φιλανθρωπία, which concedes goodness to the Son (*Ref Eun*, GNO II, 367, 25), or which gives a bit of humanity to his own discourse (νέμων τι καὶ φιλανθρωπίας αὐτῷ: *Eun* III, GNO II, 281, 19).

For the Nyssen, instead, authentic φιλανθρωπία comes directly from God, so much so that it is likened to ἀγάπη (→ LOVE), as can be seen in Homily II of *Cant*, where the φιλανθρωπία without limits of the Spouse produces the miracle in the bride, increasing through his love (ἀγάπη) the beauty of the beloved (*Cant*, GNO VI, 46, 7–9). Moreover, a little further on, in Homily IV, Gregory places the following words of praise for the Spouse’s beauty on the lips of the bride: “But you are truly beautiful and not only beautiful, but you are the very essence (οὐσία) of beauty, always remaining thus in being that which you are, without blooming and withering according to times, but extending the beauty together with the eternity of life: *Love for men* (ἡ φιλανθρωπία) is your name” (*ibidem*, 106,20–107,4).

Gregory considers φιλανθρωπία a true and proper attribute of the divine nature (ἴδιον γνώρισμα τῆς θείας φύσεως ἡ φιλανθρωπία: *Or cat*, GNO III/4, 43, 15–16), so that gratitude for salvation must be expressed to both the Father and the Son (*Eun* III, GNO II, 147, 21), since it was by love (κατὰ φιλανθρωπίαν) that the Uncreated made himself present in creation (*ibidem*, 154, 1) and entered into relationship with human beings (τοῦ μὲν καταδέχεσθαι τὸν θεὸν τὴν πρὸς ἄνθρωπον ὁμιλίαν αἰτίας εἶναι τὴν φιλανθρωπίαν διοριζόμεθα: *Eun* II, GNO I, 348, 10–12).

The Nyssen shows that the scope of the Incarnation is nothing other than the manifestation of love of God for human beings, affirming, in reference to the Word: "For it is not the passion that touches Him, but it is He who touches sickness. Therefore, if, He who through his art procures good to bodies is not to be called weak or sick, but rather lover of men (φιλόανθρωπος), benefactor and other similar names, how then can they, calumniating as miserable and wretched the economy in our regard, argue with this that the substance of the Son has been changed for the worse, since the nature of the Father would be superior to passions, while that of the Son would not be immune from passion? If in fact the scope (σκοπός) of the economy in the flesh is not that the Lord is subject to passions, but that He has manifested his love for men (τὸ φιλόανθρωπον), one cannot doubt that the Father too loves human beings (φιλόανθρωπος), whereby the Father is found in the same condition as the Son, if one wishes to consider the scope (σκοπός)" (*Eun* III, GNO II, 146, 9–22).

Φιλανθρωπία thus characterizes the action of the Holy Spirit as well, who, moved by love for human beings, transmits the divine mysteries, explaining that which is above reason through that which is understandable (*Ref Eun*, GNO II, 349, 18–22), and who through love awakens in human beings the thought of the Son (*Eun* III, GNO II, 200, 3 and *Ref Eun*, GNO II, 351, 25).

The theological reality of filiation is the issue at stake in the dispute between Eunomius and Gregory, who must insist on the absolute gratuity of the divine gift (διὰ μόνην φιλανθρωπίαν: *Eun* III, GNO II, 266, 28), based on the free condescension of the saving love (ἡ δὲ κατάβασις τὸ τῆς φιλανθρωπίας ἔργον διασημαίνει: *Cant*, GNO VI, 304, 16). In this manner the Son is Son, precisely in that he is the Image of the love of the Father. The condescension of the Incarnation becomes nothing other than the revelation of this love. All of the economy is thus a history of love, as can be seen in the Parable of the Good Samaritan, identified by the Nyssen with Christ himself (*Cant*, GNO VI, 427, 12–20). The economy is thus essentially οἰκονομία φιλόανθρωπος (*Eun* III, GNO II, 70, 22–71, 2; *Antirr*, GNO III/1, 171, 11–17) and the reason for the Hypostatic Union is φιλανθρωπία itself (*Eun* III, GNO II, 139, 6). For this reason, the term is also accompanied by the expression of ὑπὲρ ἡμῶν (*Epist*, GNO VIII/2, 20, 2. 22).

The human being, who is the object of this divine love, is called in turn to imitate the love of God for human beings, since he is a son of God and imitator (μιμητής) of the true Son and of his love (*Beat*,

GNO VII/2, 159, 13–19). For this reason, Gregory states, “He who is above every knowledge and understanding, who is ineffable, unspeakable and indescribable, in order to render you the image of God anew, through love of human beings (ὕπὸ φιλανθρωπίας), made himself too the image of the invisible God, so as to be configured to you in the very form that He assumed, and so that you might be newly configured to the archetypal beauty by Him, to become that which you were in the beginning” (*Perf*, GNO VIII/1, 194,14–195,5). This was realized in Paul (*Eun* II, GNO I, 302) and is realized in the bride, in whom love is called φιλανθρωπία in so far as, in imitation of the Lord (κατὰ μίμησιν τοῦ δεσπότου), she wishes all to be saved (*Cant*, GNO VI, 214,19–215,1).

In synthesis, one can say with W. Völker that following the Alexandrian tradition, Gregory “reads in φιλανθρωπία the content of agape which was forged in the New Testament” (W. VÖLKER, 122), while nevertheless inserting it into the Trinitarian context as an expression of the divine nature itself, and the source of the divine action in history.

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Giulio Maspero

Philanthropy → *Philanthrōpia*

PHILO OF ALEXANDRIA

Gregory read the works of Philo of Alexandria, and found inspiration in them. In the *Contra Eunomium* he compares the Arian style to that of Philo (*Eun* III, GNO II, 168, 5–27). Various authors have studied this dependency of Gregory. AUBINEAU analyses the relationship between *Virg* and Philo's *De vita contemplativa*. DANIELLOU studies that of *Vit Moys* and Philo's work of the same name. This scholar also compares Philo's *De opificio mundi* with Gregory's *Hex* and *Op hom*: both give the notion of ἀκολουθία (28; *passim*) an important place, explaining in the same way that man was created after the rest of the material universe (78; PG 44, 132D), while accepting a double creation of man (134–135; PG 44, 177D–185D). There are also differences: Philo states that the human being is a microcosm, a notion rejected by Gregory (PG 44, 177B). In general, the Cappadocian appears to have used Philo, since both wished to harmonize a positive vision of the world having a biblical character with a dualistic matter-spirit perspective of Platonic origin. Gregory however retains the independence of his judgment, using above all Christian revelation which locates the Logos in the divine sphere, as well as making use of philosophical advances. RUNIA, while resuming the conclusions of preceding authors in a critical manner, also deepens the study of the relationship between the *Contra Eunomium* and the Philonian corpus.

Daniélou studies the theme from two perspectives in his *L'être et le temps chez Grégoire de Nysse*. The first regards the problem of man's place in creation. Gregory distinguishes between the world, where sensible realities are found, and the hypercosmos, where the angels and intelligible realities are found. According to him, God has placed the human being in the cosmos in order to insert the invisible world into the midst of the visible world (*Infant*, GNO III/2, 77–79), so that the sensible world might participate in the intelligible world (*Or cat*, GNO III/4, 22). In fact, thanks to the soul of the human being, the intelligible world is found in the terrestrial one, and thanks to the risen body of human beings, the terrestrial world will be found among the intelligible realities (*Or dom*, GNO VII/2, 48–49). We can read similar ideas in Philo's work: the human being possesses both the animal and divine natures, and God gives to the human being part of his grace so that the divine might be present

in the world; the human being is united to the Logos by his soul, and to the world by his body (*Quod deterius potiori insidiari solet* 82.86). This relationship between Gregory and Philo seems to be confirmed by lexical coincidences, such as the use of the verb ἀμολγεῖν. Gregory thus distinguishes the human being, who can move freely towards God, from material realities that have a necessary movement, and from God, in whom there is no movement.

The second perspective of Daniélou refers to the nature of the human being as a frontier reality (→ *METHORIOS*). According to Gregory, the soul is the frontier between two realities, one intelligible, incorporeal, incorruptible, the other corporeal, material, irrational. When one purifies oneself from the present and material life, one turns through virtue towards the divine to which one belongs. Daniélou rejects Jaeger's hypothesis according to which this notion was received from Posidonius, since in this author the one who is μεθόριος participates in the two different worlds which he distinguishes. Daniélou demonstrates that this idea in fact comes from Philo, who in turn takes it from Middle Platonist thought, giving it pride of place in works such as *De opificio mundi*. The Cappadocian also explains that the soul is a frontier since it possesses in itself the spirit and the passions, and one can choose between them, i.e. between the good and the bad (*Beat*, GNO VII/2, 164)—this is a choice in which there is a gradualness according to which one can continually go further to the part of the spirit. This too seems to be of Philonian inspiration, but Philo states that this capacity disappears when the human being throws himself in one direction or the other (*De praemiis et poenis* XI, 62–63), while the Nyssen instead maintains that the human being never ceases to be μεθόριος. Gregory rejects the notion that the Word might be the “frontier” between God and creation (*Maced*, GNO III/1, 104), an affirmation maintained by Philo (*Quis rerum divinarum heres sit* XLII, 203–206). Instead, Philo (*De specialibus legibus* I, XXIII, 116) and Gregory (*Macr*, GNO VIII.1, 382) agree in affirming that the saints occupy a place between God and human beings, since they bring to these the will of God and present to God their supplications—but not as if they were demons possessing a nature halfway between the divine and the human, as the Middle Platonists thought.

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Manuel Mira

PHILOSOPHY OF LANGUAGE

1. INTRODUCTION · 2. THE HUMAN BEING AND LANGUAGE
3. PHILOSOPHICAL AND GRAMMATICAL HERITAGE · 4. CONCLUSIONS.

1. INTRODUCTION: REASON FOR THIS ENTRY

1.1. It is perhaps surprising to find, in an encyclopedia dedicated to a Father of the Church of the 4th century, an article titled with a reference to a discipline that its scholars consider to have been constituted at the end of the 1800's. The precise date is 1892, the year in which the logician Gottlob Frege (1848–1925) published the essay *Über Sinn und Bedeutung*. It is not that there was no discussion of questions of meaning among philosophers before this. Rather, in Greek antiquity, first Plato and then Aristotle—to mention only the major names—had established the foundations of a logico-semantic approach to natural language. The Athenian philosopher provided the first known complete theory of names, while Aristotle was the first to systematically interrogate the form and meaning of propositions. This was in the context of what we today call a theory of truth as correspondence between propositions and the state of affairs.

It is the common opinion of many scholars that Aristotle and Frege are the authors who have said the most profound and original things on language, in particular with regard to the logical form of propositions. In the more than twenty centuries that separate these two great philosophers, Aristotelian logic has been modified, expanded, and at times deformed, but it has maintained its fundamental character as the essential basis for any other semantic theory. For this reason, the study of philosophy of language begins with Frege and his ideas of function and argument, sense and reference, ideas that unhinged the theses, largely Aristotelian, which had constituted the dominant paradigm up to his time.

While respecting the opinion of many, the present author is convinced that Gregory of Nyssa merits a place among the analytical philosophers of language. This is not so much for the sake of historiographical complete-

ness, but rather, above all, because theoretical claims which anticipate later philosophy can be found in his works; even today, these can constitute a challenge to the modern philosophy of language, which sometimes remains too sensitive to the siren calls of a scientific neo-positivism. In an ideal synthesis, I would say that his principal contributions regard: (1) The semantics of names, in which Gregory interpreted the category of *schêsis* in an original manner, and, (2) The doctrine of predication, which the Nyssen revised in an original manner, both in developing the concept of *prosôpon/hypostasis* (cf. M. LA MATINA 2006) and in reaching an original synthesis of both Plato's intensional semantics of and Aristotle's extensionalism (cfr. J. ZACHHUBER 2000 and 2005, and G. MASPERO 2007).

1.2. Unfortunately, we lack a comprehensive study of the Nyssen's philosophy of language. The various interesting writings (cf. bibliography in CARTWRIGHT 1987) illuminate only partial aspects. Further, Gregory is scarcely mentioned by the majority of analytical philosophers, or by the historians of what is commonly called pre-Fregean philosophy. And yet if we consider the characteristics that D. MARCONI (1994, 9) established as specific traits of the philosophy of language in general, there are a number of non-peripheral aspects which can link Gregory's skepsis to that of a modern analytical philosophy. In addition to the themes mentioned above, Gregory treats language in many writings, without the taxonomic pedantry of the Grammarians or the fleeting lightness of the Sophists. Among these are found the weighty criticism of Eunomius—already a great antagonist of his brother Basil—or the short treatises *Eust*, *Abl*, and *Graec*, where the Nyssen, confronting the specific themes of philosophy of language, has frequent recourse to aspects of common sense (cf. the image of Scripture as the nursemaid who makes syllables together with the child in *Graec*, GNO III/1, 27, 1–10; or the reference to the tree to illustrate the difference between the two uses of “to be”, existential or copulative, in *Eun* II, GNO I, 280, 22–281, 21); or the use of examples from the natural sciences such as optics (cfr. *Arium*, GNO III/1, 73, 5–27; *Eun* II, GNO I, 288, 4 ff.) or meteorology (cf. e.g. the description of the rainbow, used more than once as a metaphor for tri-unitary consubstantiality); or the subtly argued explicit definitions (such as those that set out, especially in *Eun* I, GNO I, the terms of *aghènnetos* / *aghenesia*).

2. THE HUMAN BEING AND LANGUAGE.

2.1. Gregory has what would today be called a “lay” understanding of language and its semantic aspects. This means that he first of all refuses those conceptions which directly or indirectly draw on esoteric or tribal thought and consider the substance of language itself as a manifestation of the substance of being, such as can be seen e.g. in some passages of *The Egyptian Mysteries* of Iamblicus (cf. A. PENATI BERNARDINI 1999). These “theories”—in reality closer to mantics than to semantics—were interested in the symbolic efficacy of names themselves, which were considered to be epiphanies of the divine, and consequently untranslatable *salva veritate*. J. DANIELOU (1956) compared the linguistic theories of Eunomius with those of the Neo-Platonic Iamblicus, unearthing the common basis in magic. Secondly, Gregory refutes those theories which, on the basis of an interpretation of the foundational account in Gn, attribute the creation of language to God himself. On the contrary, he regards the human being, not God, as the artisan of language (θεὸς πραγμάτων ἐστὶ δημιουργός, οὐ ῥημάτων ψιλῶν, cfr. *Eun* II, GNO I, 305; 308–309). This does not prevent a universal vocation from being inscribed upon language (ZACHHUBER 2000, 238–242), by which nature finds its path among things (ὁδῷ πορεύεται διὰ τῶν πραγμάτων ἢ φύσις, *Eun* II, GNO I, 297, 24), transcending any sort of easy monological temptation, such as that of Babel (cf. *Eun* II, GNO I, 299–300, where he maintains that God’s work is the confusion of languages, not their institution: *ibid.* 300, 3–5: οὐδὲ ἐκεῖ ποιεῖν λέγεται γλώσσας ὁ θεὸς τῶν ἀνθρώπων, ἀλλὰ συγχεῖν τὴν οὐσαν).

A consequence of this rejection of any sort of magical conception is the repudiation of any phonosymbolic or empowerment theory of names. As is well known, Plato had theorized a natural *ratio* which tied the sound of words to their meaning. As late as the time of Basil and Gregory, their adversary Eunomius (not for nothing known as ὁ καινὸς θεολόγος and ὁ σοφιστής) accepted a conception of *physei* significance for the divine names (*Eun* II, GNO I, 344). If however, as Gregory argues, names have meaning *thêsei*, i.e., by convention, then no name-of-God can be considered a term (*horos*) which defines the divine nature, nor can any kind of name be considered connatural to the divine substance, which remains inaccessible to the human being (*Eust*, GNO III/1, 10, 14ff., and *Eun* I, GNO I, 179–184). We should recall here that Aristotle (*Top.* 102a1, 4, 2), while defining the concept of terms (*horoi*) of a proposition,

considered the linguistic definition as a discourse (*logos*) capable of signifying that which a reality is in a non-accidental manner (*tò tí èn éinai semàinon*).

2.2. Gregory also considers that language is profoundly linked to the vocation of the human being, in that he is a creature made in the image of God. In *Op hom*, GNO IV/2, 8 he develops this theme in relation to the upright posture (*τὸ τοῦ σχήματος ὄρθιον*) which distinguishes the human being from other living creatures. Surprising consequences follow. He observes that those creatures who are deprived of language are the same creatures who are deprived of the upright posture. They are thus constrained to use their forward limbs for nutrition and relation with the telluric substrate, whereas the human being who stands upright can use his hands as organs of language. He was thus created for language. It is only in the human being that the members have become hands (*χεῖρες τὰ κῶλα ἐγένοντο*). It is precisely because hands serve the development of linguistic attitudes that the human being can be defined as a linguistic animal (*λογικόν τι ζῶόν ἐστιν ὁ ἄνθρωπος*). The bodily form permits a *συνεργεῖν* of the hands with the face and the mouth (cf. LEROI-GOURHAN 1977 and O. LONGO 1991), to the benefit of personal expressiveness. It is the face (the *prosôpon*) which is the proper trait of the human being as a being ordered to language; a face that hardship, sickness and poverty can disfigure to the point of regression to a wild condition (cf. *Quat uni*, GNO IX), but in which language can cause the human being to be recognized as a *person* who can be indwelt by Christ (LA MATINA 2005).

In this light, Gregory reads the episode of the vocation of Abraham, not only as a horizontal movement (*οὐ γάρ μοι δοκεῖ τοπικὴ τις μετάστασις*, *Eun* II, GNO I, 251), but as the abandoning by the Patriarch of a chthonian knowledge (*ἀλλ' ὥσπερ τὴν ἐγχώριον αὐτοῦ σοφίαν, τὴν Χαλδαϊκὴν λέγω φιλοσοφίαν, μέχρι τῶν φαινομένων ἐστῶσαν τῷ λογισμῷ διαβάς*, *ibid.*) in order to embrace a form of knowledge which is of the symbolic type, reading in the things of the earth the traces of a vocation towards that which is above (*ἐφόδια πρὸς τὴν ἄνω πορείαν*, *Eun* II, GNO I, 253) and linked to the person of God who called him. As we shall see, the clarification of the notion of person constitutes the achievement and heart of the Nyssen's philosophy of language.

3. PHILOSOPHICAL AND GRAMMATICAL HERITAGE. In classical antiquity the problems of language were treated by both philosophy and grammar, without a clear line of distinction being drawn between the two

disciplines. By means of this interlaced reflection it was possible to reach a well defined distinction of the parts of speech. Plato recognized two, *ònoma* and *rhèma*, but the Stoics introduced a semantic difference between the true and proper name and the *προσηγορία*, the first being indicative of the substance, while *prosègoria* was considered expressive of the qualities of the substance. Gregory demonstrates knowledge of the more common distinctions between the categories of names, particularly between absolute names (called *apòlytoi* or *àschetoi*) and those expressive of a *σχέσις* (i.e. an implicit relation between subjects). This distinction will be the wedge to distinguish his theory of predication from the Aristotelian paradigm.

3.1. Gregory also distances himself from the Aristotelian method of definition, asserting that the human being is not capable of reaching the *physis* of God, and human language is not capable of adequately comprehending or representing Him in his *horoi*. Nevertheless, through the names of Tradition, the human being can learn something of the divine operations (*enèrgheiai*) (*Eust*, GNO III/1, 14). This is the principle of apophatism—adopted many times, not only by the Nyssen, but by the other Cappadocians as well—which will distinguish every theory about the modes of knowing God and/or representing Him in language. The fact that Gregory's apophatism was taken as a theoretical basis for the discussions of the nature of iconic representation during the work of the Council of Nicaea II in 787 (cfr. L. Russo 1997) is thus not unimportant for a philosophy of language. The reality of the *pragmata*, of the state of affairs, takes precedence over that of names, since God created the first, and not the second. Names are like shadows of things, which give form to the movements of that which is (καὶ ὥσπερ σκιαί τῶν πραγμάτων εἰσὶν αἱ φωναί, πρὸς τὰς κινήσεις τῶν ὑφεστώτων σχηματιζόμεναι, *Eun* II, GNO I, 269, 13–14). Gregory here displays an “esoptric” (from Gr. *ésoptron*, mirror) understanding of language, which comes to him in part from the assimilation of the Pauline teaching: “Now we see in a mirror dimly” (1 Cor 13.12), and in part from knowledge of the principal phenomena of meteorology (on this, cf. Aristot. *Met.* and Seneca, *Nat. Quaest.* For a history of the mirror image see J. BALTRUŠAITIS 1981, esp. pp. 48–75).

What value is there then in the names-of-God? Greek philosophy, which Gregory had absorbed through Basil's teachings and the study of the writings of Plutarch of Chaeronea (40–120 ca.), as has been demonstrated (cfr. HIRZEL 1912; LA MATINA 1998), assigned to the divine

names a considerable measure of semantic vagueness. Plutarch himself realized that they sometimes indicated operations (*enérghēiai*), sometimes powers (*dynameis*), and at other times were used to designate the divine person (*prosôpon*) (*De aud. Poët.*, 22D–24C). Gregory seems to have Plutarch's observations in mind when he seeks to reconcile the Judaic heritage and its monotheism with the Apostolic Tradition of Christianity, which made explicit the triune nature of the name of God (*Ref Eun*, GNO II, 312–315).

3.2. The polemic with Eunomius began with his innovations. He used terms such as *aghènnētos* or *pòiēma* to indicate respectively the Father or the Son, obscuring thus the relations (*schesis*) that the traditional names made manifest to all human beings (*Ref Eun*, GNO II, 316–319 and 321–340). Eunomius however went further still, by claiming to derive from *aghènnētos*, a term that we would call a *nomen qualitatis*, the term *aghenēsia*, which we would call instead a *nomen substantiae*. He thus modified the ontology of the divine in such a way that he could perfidiously syllogize against the nature of Christ, and even against the Trinitarian relation itself. Stated thus (even at the risk of banalization), the question seems to be a grammatical one, resolvable with patience and a little logic, but this is not the case. That which made the sophism of Eunomius and of the Anomoeans possible was the Aristotelian paradigm, dominant in that period, according to which a sentence is resolved into its terms (*horoi*), subject and predicate.

For Aristotle, it must be added, subject and predicate are not such by their intrinsic nature or structure, but only by position (cf. esp. *De interpr.* 20b). This means that if a certain term (e.g. *ànthropoi*) is conjoined to a certain other term (e.g. *loghikòì*), the same expression which performs the role of subject in the resulting sentence *LOGHIKÒI ànthropoi* can also be a predicate in the sentence *ÀNTHROPOI loghikòì* (in this case the emphasis plays on the melody which made the predicative position of the first term evident for a Greek). The effects of this *two-terms theory* (cf. P. GEACH 1962) were destructive when applied to the definition of God. The author of *Epist* 38 understood this, and attempted to resolve the problem, differentiating the terms through the distinction between *prosôpon* and *ousia* (which will not be translated here). This will be developed by Gregory in many writings, from *Eun ad Abl*, until the truly original formulation which appears in *Graec*.

4. CONCLUSIONS. The logical form of the proposition which the Nyssen proposed is therefore not the Aristotelian one. This has notable consequences for semantics and ontology. It is now possible in fact to pluralize the *prosôpon* of God without pluralizing his *ousia*. The *prosôpa* are names of relation, structurally analogous to modern polyadic predicates, but in their function close to singular terms. In the linguistic conscience of the Greeks, the *schesis* or relation was an important category. In *Cat.* 6a36–7b14 however, Aristotle had inserted *relation* among the accidents, i.e. among the contingent variations of being. In this way a God-*schesis* was unconceivable (cf. J. RATZINGER 1968). Gregory was thus required to force the logic he inherited from his Greek formation in order to explain the content of Revelation. The new semantics of *theós* which he developed supports the Trinitarian nature of God: The Father and the Son do not split the reference to *ousia*, nor do they produce the undesired fusionality of the *prosôpa* (*Eun* I, GNO I, 170–172). God is not one *despite* being triune, but precisely *because* he is triune. According to a beautiful image of L. F. MATEO-SECO (2004), in the Trinity the *You* are multiplied, not the divine attributes. Placing God in the relation of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit, Gregory did not describe the divine nature (which remains ineffable), but he indicates a new path, one that also passes through the rethinking of the forms in which the Trinitarian relation maps onto the forms of the *schesis* among human beings. This analogy between the Trinity and humanity is well analyzed and described by G. Maspero when he states, in reference to *Abl*, that the procedure of the Nyssen is extremely audacious, above all because it applies to God and human beings not only the same conception of nature, but also the same conception of hypostasis (MASPERO 2007, p. 9). This however could not be stated by Greek philosophy, since, continually oscillating between Plato's intensional semantics and Aristotle's extensionalism, it did not conceive, until the Cappadocians, of the logical difference between nature and hypostasis, between *physis* and *prosôpon*. Gregory of Nyssa, reflecting on the mystery of God, unintentionally contributed an important point to the history of philosophy of language. He is not yet Frege, but nor is he still only Aristotle.

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Marcello La Matina

PHYRAMA

φύραμα

In Rm 11.16, Paul writes: “If the dough offered as first fruits is holy, so is the whole lump”. This verse attracted theological attention in the Church from earliest times, but generally without consideration of the immediate context in Paul or of its background in the Old Testament (Num 15.17–21). The Valentinian Gnostics identified the first fruit with the pneumatics and the lump with the psychics, the Church (IRENAEUS, *adv.haer.* I 8,3). Origen, who at this point in his commentary on the Letter to the Romans explicitly distances himself from the Gnostic interpreters, instead refers the passage to Christ (in *Rom* VIII 11; PG 14, 1193C). By establishing a relation to Col 1.15 (Christ as the “firstborn of all creatures”), he reaches a soteriological interpretation of the verse: Because—by contrast to what the Gnostics maintain—there is only one human nature (*unam esse naturam omnium hominum*: 1191C), the salvation that comes from Christ as the root or “first fruit” is valid for it in its entirety: *ex hac delibatione sancta omnis massa humani generis sanctificatur* (1193C). Its subjective appropriation, of course, requires the free decision of the individual.

This is the conceptual context in which Gregory of Nyssa initially uses the metaphor of the dough. Although Gregory occasionally cites and interprets ICor 5.6f., and in this context also uses the concept of *phyrama* (*Inst*, GNO VIII/I, 62,2; *Eccl*, GNO V, 408,9), he nevertheless, in the vast majority of its 25 attestations, uses the term in reference to Rm 11.16. Like Origen, Gregory establishes a connection to Paul’s statements about Christ as the “firstborn” (πρωτότοκος) (e.g. *RefEun* 78,84, GNO II, 344–347). In all these passages, Gregory’s goal is to express Christ’s mediation of salvation to all humanity. Christ is the “first fruit” (ἀπαρχή), from whom salvation extends to the whole lump (φύραμα). The exact understanding of this relationship varies, with important consequences for SOTERIOLOGY (→) and CHRISTOLOGY (→).

Gregory often emphasises the ethical-ascetic aspect of Christian existence. In this context, he speaks of Christ as the first fruits who, “through purity and impassibility”, became like God. Christians, as the lump, should unite themselves to God “in the same way”, i.e. through the

imitation (→ *MIMESIS*) of Christ (*Perf*, GNO VIII/I, 206, 9–11). Christ is thus here the first fruits in the sense of the perfect human model, who manifests the goal, i.e. likeness to God, to Christians, i.e. to the lump, and encourages them to appropriate salvation by imitation.

This idea certainly appears in other passages, but is there supplemented and modified by an emphasis on the active role of Christ in the sanctification of the lump. Thus Gregory, in his interpretation of I Cor 15.28, writes that in Christ, the divine nature has been “admixed” to human nature, and that thus Christ as man has become the “first fruits” from which all humanity can grow into union with the divine. Here, incarnation and sanctification are apparently presented as a natural process accomplished in a necessary sequence (→ *AKOLOUTHIA*). In the same passage, however, Gregory points to Christ’s sinlessness and thus to the ethical aspect of redemption (*Tunc et ipse*, GNO III/2, 14,8–15,1). It is no doubt not coincidental that this shift occurs initially in the writings dedicated to the Eunomian controversy. Gregory here consciously returns to elements of the soteriology of Irenaeus and Athanasius, in order to make it clear that the Christ of Eunomius could not redeem human beings. Rather, the Redeemer must be “true God” in the sense of the Council of Nicaea. Summaries of the history of salvation are characteristic (e.g. *Eun* III/2, 52–55 GNO II, 69,22–70,21); their thrust is the affirmation that the Creator himself became man in order to lead fallen humanity to the communion with God which had been lost. Gregory here does not adopt the perspective of individual Christians, but looks at history of salvation as a whole. From this perspective, the metaphor of the first fruits and the lump, used of Christ and Christians, expresses the inherent dynamic of this history. In the first fruits, the lump is “co-sanctified” (*συναγιάζειν*), as Gregory puts it in a characteristic phrase (*Eun* III/10, 13, GNO II, 294,15; *Cant* XIII, GNO VI, 381, 22). This modification of the soteriological conception also changes Christology. The Redeemer’s divine-human unity becomes particularly important for understanding him (*Ref Eun* 144, GNO II, 374). This tendency becomes even stronger when Gregory enters into discussion with Apollinarius. Christ had to assume the entire human nature in order to become the first fruits of the lump for all (*Antirr*, GNO III/1, 151,14–152,8).

Gregory’s emphasis on the connection between the Redeemer and the redeemed invited the accusation that he was maintaining a “physical doctrine of redemption” which transformed the salvific mediation of Christ into a natural, legal process and overlooked the ethical dimension of the appropriation of salvation (HARNACK, 166–168). R.M. Hübner,

by contrast, who has conducted the most extensive studies of the concept of *phyrama*, has noted how naturally Gregory refers in all his writings to the necessary collaboration of human beings in salvation (HÜBNER, 98–142, partic. 110). It is nevertheless clear that Gregory also interprets the “lump” as the entire human race, and that this interpretation is linked to his conception of the substantial unity of human nature (→ *PHYSIS*), which implies a quasi-organic relationship between its members. This is particularly clear in those passages in which *phyrama* is simply a metaphor for “human nature” and is used completely independently of soteriological statements. Thus, in his sermon *Theod*, Gregory asserts that all human beings are like one body, since they all have their existence “from one lump” (ἐξ ἑνὸς πυράματος) (GNO X/1, 64,5; cf. *Epist* 3,16; GNO VIII/2, 24,10f.). Such a refined use of the metaphor is, however, in turn based on a soteriological conception that is not unproblematic. According to this conception, it is this unity of human nature which makes the diffusion of salvation at once possible and practically inevitable. This position, precisely a so-called “physical doctrine of redemption”, is appropriated by Gregory in various passages (primarily: *Or cat* 32; GNO III/4, 78, 3–17), but in no way determines his overall thought (ZACHHUBER, 204–237).

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Johannes Zachhuber

PHYSIS

φύσις, *nature*

Physis is the central ontological concept in Gregory's thought. The term appears extremely frequently (around 3,500 times total) in all of his writings, in order to articulate fundamental assertions about the being of God, the human being, and the world. Gregory clearly prefers *physis* to comparable terms; this is particularly true of *OUSIA* (→), which in the majority of cases is used as a semantic equivalent, but less frequently and more closely tied to a specific context. Gregory's preference, in this regard, is clearly stronger and more pronounced than that of his older brother BASIL (→) or of Athanasius; among his theological precursors, ORIGEN (→) most resembles him.

Given the wealth of attestations, it is here possible only to present a schematic overview, which can only do partial justice to the subtleties of Gregory's usage. Special attention will be given to those frequently discussed texts in which Gregory uses *physis* terminology to offer theoretical justifications of theological statements about the Trinity, Christology, creation, sin, salvation and eschatology.

A. *General Principles.* Gregory often uses *physis* parenthetically, without special emphasis: it is clear that the term is part of his core vocabulary. Fundamentally, two primary meanings can be distinguished. In the first place, *physis* signifies a being that exists. A thing, in so far as it is, can be described as *physis*. Note, however, that Gregory uses *physis* not for objects in the sensible realm, but for beings with a spiritual existence, such as the soul (*An et res*, PG 46, 45B), and not least for God (*Infant*, GNO III/2, 77, 6f.). Moreover, such a being can also have a supra-individual reality. In this context, Gregory speaks of "hot *physis*" (θερμὴ φύσις; which means: the being that is hot: *Hex*, PG 44, 105B), "humid *physis*" (ὕγρὴ φύσις: *Hex*, PG 44, 65D), and also "intelligent *physis*" (νοερὰ φύσις: *Eust*, GNO III/1, 13,10), which refers to the totality of beings that possess reason. This is also the sense of the term as it appears in fundamental ontological dichotomies such as "created" and "uncreated nature" (*Eun* III/1, 15; GNO II, 9,5), and "corporeal" and "incorporeal nature" (*Antirr*, GNO III/1, 171, 6f.).

Secondly, Gregory uses *physis* in an essentialist sense, to refer to the essence of a thing. Here, *physis* is understood as a complex of properties which together make up the essence of a thing and are described by a defining formula, a *logos* (*Eun* III/1, 84; GNO II, 33,4). This sense is not, of course, absolutely different from the first: Something exists as a *physis* with such-and-such properties because and to the extent that it is made such by its essence. The “humid *physis*” for example exists only because and in so far as it exists as “humid”. There are, accordingly, numerous passages in which it is difficult to decide definitively whether Gregory is referring to a concrete object or to its essence.

The difference between the two uses is clearest where it becomes manifest that the concrete being, along with the essential properties, also possesses others, viz. accidents. Thus, in *An et res*, Gregory discusses whether the passions (πάθη) belong to the essence of the human being. He responds in the negative: They are not *physis*, because they are not part of the “definition” of the human being (PG 46, 53A) and because even those who have renounced them remain human (PG 46, 53B).

B. *Human Nature*. Especially relevant to Gregory’s theological use of *physis* is the way he speaks of human nature, which employs both senses described above. Gregory often speaks of the *physis* of humans to describe that which makes them human, i.e. that which is typical or essential in them. He often does so in the same passing manner in which we too speak of “human nature”, without a recognizable, specific conceptual or philosophical background. The frequently occurring formula “according to nature” (κατὰ φύσιν: e.g., *Eccl*, GNO V, 284, 19) is characteristic of this. This use nevertheless raises the problem of a common human nature: not only of that which makes each individual human, but also that in which all humans participate. The fact that the same concept “human being” can be predicated of all thus signifies that all share in a particular nature, whose cumulative characteristics correspond to this concept. This common nature is the cause not only of the fact that each individual is a human being, but also of the fact that all humans form a common species. There is no doubt that Gregory often speaks of human *physis* in this manner, intending “a common” (κοινόν) or universal (καθόλου) “reality” which equally pertains to all humans and makes them human (*Graec*, GNO III/1, 27,1–4; *Op Hom* 16, PG 44, 185B).

In so far as they are united by such a *physis* then, humans *qua* humanity—as the totality of all human beings—form a real, substantial unity. It

is in this sense, too, that Gregory can use the concept “human nature,” often clarified by the addition of phrases like “the whole human nature” (*Or cat* 32, GNO III/4, 78,15–17).

C. Theological Usage. Gregory’s extensive use of *physis* terminology assumes particular importance, as well as a certain controversial quality, since Gregory uses it to articulate and specify central theological concepts. His use of *physis* terminology has certainly given rise to controversy; the interpretation in individual important passages is still debated. Many interpretational problems and divergences of explanation stem from the fact that it is often difficult to determine with certitude which semantic nuances are relevant in a specific passage.

1. *Doctrine of Creation* (→ CREATION). In the context of creation theology, the term presents relatively few difficulties. In general, Gregory uses *physis* to mediate between the simplicity and transcendence of God and the spatial and temporal structure of the world. God creates the world as a whole in an instant “*in the beginning*” (Gn 1.1); at the same time, the world evolves in a process which extends from creation to the *eschaton*. Gregory explains this discrepancy by affirming that “in the beginning,” God created the world as *physis*: as universal, created, seminal being which is potentially everything (τῇ δυνάμει), but requires space and time to develop into the actual (ἐνεργεία) totality of the world (*Hex*, PG 44, 72B; 108A–B; → PLEROMA; → AKOLOURTHIA).

This theory is subsequently applied specifically to the creation of man. In a famous passage (*Op hom* 16, PG 44, 185BD), Gregory explains that Gn 1.27 wisely speaks of *man* and not of Adam. God created human nature, which was realized in Adam only “*in potentia*,” but whose totality was nevertheless already present to God in creation. In this passage, Gregory uses the term *physis* both for the totality of mankind—from Adam to the last human being—and for that which unites all human beings—that which, as he writes, “pervades” (διήκειν) them. This nature—that which makes humans human—is identified as their endowment with reason. Since for Gregory, this is also what unites the human being to God, he can say that human nature as a whole is the image of God (→ IMAGE). *Physis* therefore possesses a dynamic component here, which permits the consideration of Being as both singular and multiplex.

2. *Doctrine of the Fall*. Attestations of an application of this theory of the unity of human nature to the problem of the Fall and original sin are not uniform (→ ORIGINAL SIN). One would assume such an application to be an obvious means of explaining Adam’s influence on all

succeeding humans. Gregory even uses *physis* terminology frequently in descriptions of man after the fall (*Perf*, GNO VIII/1, 204,21–205,2). But in the majority of cases, he is concerned exclusively with the difference between humans as they are now and as they were before the Fall, not with their descent from Adam and his sin. Only in his interpretation of the fifth petition of the *Our Father* does Gregory refer to the fact that everyone, because of the human nature shared with Adam, has reason to ask for the forgiveness of sins (*Or dom* V, GNO VII/2, 66,8–15). Even in this passage, however, Gregory's theological interest in this conceptualization is somewhat limited (cf. *Or dom* V, GNO VII/2, 66,18–23).

3. *Christology*. In his debate with Apollinarius (→ APOLLINARIUS OF LAODICEA), himself one of the first to employ *physis* systematically in his Christology, Gregory uses his conception of human nature and divine nature to argue for the difference between human beings and God, and thus for the necessity of the Redeemer's full humanity (*Antirrh*, GNO III/1, 151,14–20). His terminology of two "natures" in Christ prepares the formula of Chalcedon, but does not offer adequate safeguards against a Christology of separation (ZACHHUBER, 212–228). In general, Gregory demonstrates little authentic interest in the Christological question. Rather, the center of his discourse is the doctrine of redemption.

4. *Doctrine of Redemption* (→ SOTERIOLOGY). Gregory's use of *physis* in the context of soteriology has been often debated and controversially assessed. It has been held that Gregory expounds a "physical doctrine of redemption", in which redemption extends to all human beings through the human nature of Christ (HARNACK, 166–168). However, this is negated by the central importance which, in the great majority of his writings, particularly the ascetic ones, Gregory attributes to the imitation of Jesus (→ MIMESIS). Redemption is here understood as the overcoming of the human being's alienation from his true being, i.e. intelligible being. Certain passages, however, contain traces of a further line of argumentation on the basis of the conception of a unified human nature. Against EUNOMIUS (→) and Apollinarius, Gregory is concerned to demonstrate that the Redeemer, in order to be able to redeem us, had to be true God and true man. Here he has recourse to the Pauline image of the first fruits and the lump of dough (→ PHYRAMA): Since the Redeemer is taken from the same "lump" of which we are part, we are "co-sanctified" (συναγιάζειν) with Him insofar as we are part of the same human nature (*Antirrh*, GNO III/1, 151,14–20). Gregory develops this conception particularly in *Or cat*, where he infers the reality and universality of the resurrec-

tion from the Resurrection of Jesus, whose effect extends to all human nature as the sensation of one organ extends to the entire body (*Or cat* 32, GNO III/4, 78,3–17). Also in *Or cat*, Gregory explains in a similar fashion the efficacy of the Supper of the Lord on those who participate in it (*Or cat* 37, GNO III/4, 93,17–94,4).

5. *Eschatology*. Gregory's use of *physis* in his eschatology corresponds to its use in his doctrine of creation. According to the former, *physis* evolves from potential perfection to actual perfection as *pleroma*. Accordingly, Gregory argues in a passage of *An et res* that history will reach its proper end when human nature has reached its *pleroma*. Because there will then be no more births, there will also be no more death; instead, there will be eternal life (*An et res*, PG 46, 128CD). Here, in other words, he deduces the necessity of a qualitative perfection in the *eschaton* from the quantitative limitation of human nature.

6. *Trinitarian Doctrine*. In his discussion with Eunomius, Gregory generally uses *physis* as the semantic equivalent of the dogmatically normative term *ousia* to describe the level of unity in the Trinity (→ *OUSIA*). To defend the Cappadocian Trinitarian doctrine from the accusation of tritheism, Gregory adduces the analogy of the unity of human nature. Thus, in *ABL* (→), he writes that, properly speaking, it is an abuse of language to speak of three men when one wishes to indicate three individuals, because the concept “man” refers to that which unites them, that is, to human nature. Since this represents a unity, it is strictly correct to say that there is only one man (*Abl*, GNO III/1, 40,7–8.17–23). The precise understanding of this unity, as well as the evaluation of the analogy, is highly controversial. If Gregory is thinking of the unity of a Platonic idea, it would follow that the divine nature is an essence independent of the hypostases and ontologically prior to them. If he is thinking of a purely conceptual unity, the implication is tritheism (KELLY, 267). G.C. Stead maintained that Gregory's argumentation in *Abl* is simply obscure and confused (STEAD, 158f.), while L. Ayres attempted to demonstrate that Gregory is only marginally interested in the analogy between Trinity and human nature in *Abl* (AYRES). By contrast, R. Cross, G. Maspero and J. Zachhuber have defended the coherence and theological importance of the analogy by attributing to Gregory a conception of human nature as both immanent and substantial (CROSS; MASPERO; ZACHHUBER 2005). As in his doctrine of creation, Gregory works in this analogy from the assumption that each Person contains the entire Trinity *in potentia*, while at the same time only the totality of all three Persons constitutes the reality of the divine nature ([BASIL], *Epist* 38 [= *Diff ess hyp*], 4, 79–83).

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Johannes Zachhuber

PILGRIMAGES

The concept and practice of “pilgrimage”—traveling in order to venerate a holy place—was already in full swing during Gregory’s time. On the one hand there were voyages to the holy places of Palestine, which were rediscovered and developed in the time of Constantine; on the other hand, there were voyages to the tombs or reliquaries of the martyrs, over which numerous *martyria* were erected. Gregory is a witness to these two kinds of pilgrimage. He himself traveled to JERUSALEM (→) in 381, in the context of a mission entrusted to him by the Council of Constantinople. There he visited the main sanctuaries—Bethlehem, Golgotha, the Anastasis, the Mount of Olives (*Epist* 2, 15, 17; 3, 1). He also often visited the *martyria* of his region, such as those of the Forty Martyrs of Sebaste (at Annisa, at Sebaste, and perhaps at Caesarea), or that of St. Theodore of Euchaita (*Theod*), either as a simple visitor (*Mart II*, GNO X, 1, 167) or as a preacher (*Mart Ia, Ib, II*). He himself also had a *martyrium* built at Nyssa (*Epist* 25). Nevertheless, he did not consider pilgrimages to be useful for everybody. Clearly, when recalling his visit to Jerusalem, Gregory declares that “the signs of the great philanthropy of the Master towards us that can be found in those places, ... [and the] salvific symbols of God who has vivified us ... were for me a source of great joy and happiness” (*Epist* 3, 1, GNO VIII, 2, 20). Yet, in *Epist* 2 (GNO VIII/2, 13–19), he is much more critical. This letter is a response to a question whether it was suitable for the monks and nuns of Cappadocia to go on pilgrimages to Jerusalem, and some of Gregory’s arguments concern only that group, especially the nuns: the conditions of the trip are such that they impose a mingling between males and females which is a danger for chastity (2, 6). In hotels, caravanserais and the cities of the east, one encounters “inconveniences through the eyes and ears” (2, 7). But other arguments regard the heart of the problem more directly: Gregory reminds those who hold that pilgrimage “is part of piety”, that it is not part of the good deeds required for the kingdom of heaven, nor part of the Beatitudes (2, 3). He also criticizes the notion that Jerusalem would be a “holy place” (an expression he does not employ) where divine grace is superabundant, as he saw the worst sorts of wrongdoings committed there (2, 10). More radically still, he questions the very motivation of a pilgrimage: “the change of place provides no closer proximity to God” and, applying this

judgement to the holiest places of Palestine, he underscores that his faith was neither “diminished not augmented” by the sight of Bethlehem, the Holy Sepulchre, or the Mount of Olives. He recalls that “wherever you are, God will come to you, if the dwelling of your soul is worthy so that the Lord can dwell in you” (2, 16). His severe criticism is toned down, nonetheless, by advice given to his readers to visit the numerous sanctuaries of Cappadocia, which make this region a holy land: “Truly, if it is possible to recognize the presence of God by that which is seen, one would be tempted to think that God inhabits the nation of the Cappadocians rather than foreign lands. How many sanctuaries are here in which the name of God is glorified!” (2, 9). The homilies that he preaches at the tomb of Theodore, in the *martyrium* of Sebaste, and the places of the Forty Martyrs clearly show that he attributes to these places and the relics found therein a sanctity in which the faithful can participate through sight, touch, prayer and the remembrance of the acts of the martyrs. One must finally remember that the criticism of the pilgrimage to Jerusalem can be partly explained through the problems that Gregory ran into during his stay in the holy city (cfr. *Epist* 3 and → BIOGRAPHY).

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Pierre Maraval

PLATO

Gregory is often labeled a 'Christian Platonist' but this masks wide disagreement as to what his 'Platonism' amounts to. Platonic influence is probably clearest in Gregory's association of being (*ousia*) with what is good, true and beautiful. God is the supreme good and the source of all goodness, beauty and truth; but in Gregory's system this is due to God's gracious will to create, not to a chain of being in which things participate to varying degrees in the good. Gregory reaffirms Athanasius' fundamental ontological distinction between creator and creation, which overrides the Platonic contrast between visible and invisible. Gregory agrees with Plato that if being is good, then evil is nothing, but this 'negative' concept of evil reinforces, rather than undermines, the seriousness of sin: Gregory, like earlier fathers, was arguing against those who claimed that God created evil. Gregory argues that once a mutable soul has sunk as far towards evil as it is possible to go, then the soul can only rise from this non-existence towards being/the good. (He also at times uses the notion of a universal human nature which must be restored: ZACHHUBER 1999. However, Gregory's universalism is ultimately based on his reading of Scripture, regardless of the apparently Platonic concepts expressing it.)

God is for Gregory, as for Plato, supremely attractive; and Gregory uses Platonic motifs (*Phaedrus* and *Symposium*) to describe the soul's desire for, and ascent to, God. These are combined with allusions to Paul (2 Cor 2:12; Phil 3:12–14) or with allegorical interpretations of the ascent of Abraham (*Eun*) or Moses (*Vit Moys*). Gregory combines Plato's paradoxical analogies of spiritual procreation with references to the Song of Songs (especially *Cant.*). He talks of the aim of spiritual ascent as participation (*metousia*) in the divine, but always maintains the ontological distinction between creator and created. Scholars dispute whether Gregory was the first to assert divine infinity; certainly, he differs from Plato in the way in which infinity is seen as a positive consequence of divine transcendence and is used to express God's eternal attractiveness, which endlessly exceeds the soul, whilst always nourishing and drawing it towards God.

Like Plato, Gregory has a high estimate of the soul in human beings and of its training—intellectual, moral and spiritual. Freedom of the will is one of the factors which make humans distinctive (*Op hom*). Gregory

adapts the Platonic paradox that training and hard discipline can achieve true freedom, first by insisting more rigorously than Plato that human freedom (the choice to sin) impeded itself and secondly, by adding grace as the necessary factor in the soul's progress towards humans' original freedom. Commentators disagree as to whether Gregory has a Platonic concept of a tripartite soul. In fact, he is not consistent: he is part of the ongoing debate about the nature of the soul and the relation of the emotions to the intellect. Gregory at times seems to regard virtue as the ordering of all mental and emotional faculties (cf *Republic*, *Phaedrus*); at other times, he expresses virtue as a quality with which humans were graciously endowed at creation and which will be restored eschatologically (thus associating true virtue with creation according to the image of God). His concept of the imitation of Christ and other Christ-like exemplars may have been influenced by Platonic notions of a pupil's emulation of his teacher. Like Plato, Gregory thought that *askesis* should remove distractions which hinder the soul's ascent to God. Although Gregory sometimes writes as if this meant trying to abandon the material, he mostly advocates trying to live well in and through the material world, with a Christian hope of bodily resurrection as a guide.

Plato gave some value to the material world, but Gregory put immaterial and material creation on an even ontological footing: both are good because they were created by God. Although the non-human material world is not capable of the soaring heights of the human soul, it is not capable of sin in Gregory's system (but it suffers the effects of sin). Christ's incarnation, his real death and bodily resurrection (a guarantee of human beings' own resurrection) all reinforce the goodness of the material world. Gregory's personal perspective on materiality can also be seen in his frequent affectionate descriptions of the natural world (*Op hom*; *Epist* 20), his positive estimate of the emotions, and the importance he attaches to sense experience in his epistemology.

Gregory's engagement with Platonism can be seen most impressively in *An et res* (ROTH 1992; WILLIAMS 1993). This dialogue moves from a denial of reductive materialism, to an acceptance of the immortality of the soul, and thence to an affirmation of bodily resurrection. A second movement sees the author first apparently critical of human emotion, urging its control, if not eradication, then advocating a positive role for human emotions. This dynamic is backed up by the skilful use of Platonic forms, style and motifs: the philosophical dialogue form itself is Platonic; a frequent motif is the chariot from the *Phaedrus*; the dramatic context of a death-bed discussion of immortality recalls the *Phaedo* (associating

Macrina with Socrates); the role and language of Macrina also recalls Diotima in the *Symposium*. A similar playing with Platonic imagery (light, the cave, steps in the ascent to the divine, spiritual procreation) can be seen in Gregory's other works (e.g. LUDLOW 2007).

This skilful writing technique suggests that Gregory is not adding Platonic ideas to an ill thought-out theological patchwork; rather he is creatively adapting Platonic (and other) concepts and exploiting ambiguities in the Platonic texts to do so. Sometimes he uses apparently Platonic imagery to subvert and challenge Platonic philosophical ideas; at other times he emulates Plato's writing technique to create ambiguities and tensions in his own theology. Recent commentators have suggested that Gregory writes 'like Plato' not just in *An et res*, but in other works like *Virg* in which Gregory introduces an apparently simple concept to his reader and then makes it complex, just as Plato does with 'justice' in the *Republic*, for example (BURRUS, 2000). Because of the subtleties of Gregory's technique, apparently Platonic language in Gregory must always be studied in context. He delights in images and ideas which seem to have equal grounding in Scripture and Greek philosophical traditions and blurs 'Greek' and 'biblical' concepts so thoroughly that it should warn any commentator not to draw a simplistic contrast between the two.

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PLÊRÔMA

πλήρωμα

It is characteristic of Gregory's use of *pleroma* that its qualitative and quantitative senses appear side by side, or even in conjunction. *Pleroma* often simply means "entirety" or "total number". This can refer to the total number of the Commandments (*Quat uni*, GNO IX, 121.28), of angels (*Eun* III/2, 48, GNO II, 68), or of the twelve disciples (*Eccl*, GNO V, 304.18). But the qualitative sense ("fullness" or "perfection") is documented equally often.

Gregory's use of this second meaning of *pleroma* is rooted in biblical language. Among the over 100 passages in which the term is used, there are numerous biblical quotations and references, particularly to Col 2.9 ("Since the fullness of the divinity dwells in him corporeally": e.g. *Eust*, GNO III/I, 7, 1) and Eph 4.13 (The scope of the growth of the body of Christ is "the measure of the fullness of Christ": e.g. *Inst.*, GNO VIII/1, 45.21). A separate group of witnesses is formed by the passages of the Old Testament cited and discussed by Gregory, in which *pleroma* regularly means "fullness" in the qualitative sense of "to be full" (e.g. Ps 24.1: *Ascens*, GNO IX, 325.1; Ps 96.11: *Inscr.*, GNO V, 103.18.23).

Gregory's obviously great interest in the term *pleroma* stems from the possibility of combining the quantitative and qualitative aspects. This can already be seen in the numerous passages in which he designates God as the "*pleroma* of goods". On the one hand, this undoubtedly signifies the total number or entirety of all good things which can be found in God. On the other hand, it is clear that it expresses the singular perfection of God. In numerous passages, this expression refers generically to "God" or—as Gregory likes to say—to the "divine" (τὸ θεῖον); but it is clear that for Gregory, it refers particularly to the Son in his divine perfection which is equal to the Father's (*Eun* III/7, 20 f., GNO II, 222). This use is prompted primarily by the New Testament passages already cited, although a Platonic influence, too, is clearly at work. This is particularly evident when Gregory—with reference to Jn 1.18—describes this fullness of goods as a bosom (κόλπος) (*Eun* III/1, 48, GNO II, 20.13). The Son himself, in and through this, is the *pleroma* of goods, which the creatures thus receive through Him (*Eun* III/6, 7, GNO II, 188.10;

Eun III/8,42, GNO II 254,16). A similar idea is found in PLOTINUS, who develops it in reference to spirit (νοῦς), the second hypostasis, by way of the pseudo-etymological relationship between *kronos* and *koros* (κόρος). *Koros*, like *pleroma*, means “fullness”, but also “young son”. Out of his fullness (κόρος), *Kronos* engenders Zeus, his son (κόρος), as the spirit out of its perfection engenders the soul (Enn. V 1,4,10; 7,31–37). Gregory, of course, suppresses not only the unacceptable mythical-pagan symbolism, but also the subordination of the engendered principle (Enn. V 1,7,40), maintaining only the concept of the Son as the fullness of divine perfections in the bosom of the Father.

Scholarly interest has been attracted above all by those passages in which Gregory speaks of creation, the Fall and the eschatological fulfillment of the *pleroma* of human nature. The interpretation of these passages is of course fiercely debated. The old (Platonic) interpretation is now generally and rightly rejected (ZACHHUBER, 127 f.). But is it correct resolutely to adopt a purely quantitative interpretation, as R.M. HÜBNER, and before him H. CHERNISS, have done? The theory of simultaneous creation, which Gregory develops in *Hex* (CORSINI, 120 f.), is fundamental. According to this, God created the entire world in potentiality (δυνάμει) “in the beginning” (cf. Gn 1.1), so that “in this instant, with the first act of the will of God, the entire *pleroma* of creation came into existence” (*Hex*, PG 44, 113 C). This *pleroma* then developed successively, according to a fixed order (τάξις), into the individual elements of creation (*loc. cit.*). *Pleroma* here is the primordial seed, in which everything is already contained. This unfolds into the actuality of creation within cosmic time. *Pleroma* here does not, strictly speaking, signify the entirety or total number of things, since these did not exist in the beginning, but will be fully realized only at the end of history. It seems certain that this theory constitutes the background against which Gregory’s often debated statements on the creation of man in chapter 16 of *Op hom* are to be interpreted.

Gregory writes here that Gn 1.27, describing the creation of “the human being” (ἄνθρωπος), must be understood in the sense that “in his providential power, God encapsulated the *pleroma* of human beings in a body” (PG 44, 185C). Hübner and Cherniss are right in affirming that *pleroma* here means first of all “entirety”, that is, the total number of human beings (CHERNISS, 33; HÜBNER, 83). This is, of course, already deposited in *potentia* in Adam’s creation as the *telos* of mankind. It is an expression of divine creative power that the creation of the first man is already the fulfillment, in *potentia*, of all humanity. This *pleroma* of humanity is limited; like all other spiritual essences, it has a definite

number (*An et res*, PG 46, 128C). As a whole, it is the image of God (*Op hom* 16, PG 44, 185D). Gregory writes that God could have created this number immediately, like that of the angels. But because God foresaw the Fall, He chose from the beginning to deposit the *pleroma in potentia* in Adam, to be fulfilled through sexual propagation (*Op hom* 22, PG 44, 205B).

This alone is reason enough for the belief that human history does not continue without limit. It comes to an end once the total number of human beings intended by God has been reached (*Op hom* 22, PG 44, 205C; *An et res*, PG 46, 18D). In one passage, Gregory goes even further: Once the intended number is reached, he says, historical development itself, as we know it, ends. With it, the succession of birth and death disappears as well. In this manner, Gregory draws an inference from the fulfillment of the human *pleroma* to the reconstitution of the archetypal (or originally intended) perfection of the divine image in the eschatological, universal resurrection (*An et res*, PG 46, 128D–129A). Thus, at the end of its history, humanity is completed as *pleroma* in both the quantitative and the qualitative senses.

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Johannes Zachhuber

PLOTINUS

From the perspective of historical research, the use of the Plotinian spiritual heritage is interwoven with the question of the importance of Platonism in Gregory's thought. The normative conception of Christianity has a decisive influence here. The problem is situated in the broader theme of the relationships between Platonism and Christianity.

The oldest studies of Gregory already demonstrated the ample presence of Platonic elements in Gregory's writings and pointed out the creative use made by the Nyssen of philosophical material (K. GRONAU, 1).

A precise evaluation of the use of Platonic material by Gregory as a Christian author was undertaken by Cherniss. He found that Gregory is more a Platonic than a Christian thinker. The use of the biblical conceptual heritage in Gregory's texts was attributed by Cherniss to the obligation to conformity which was imposed upon Gregory as an ecclesiastic. Gregory's literary capacity was also sharply criticized by Cherniss (H.F. CHERNISS, 62).

Apostolopoulos argued along the lines of Cherniss, interpreting Gregory's work as an attempt to overcome, through literary activity, the conflicts of an entire life.

The theses of Cherniss and Apostolopoulos have been many times refuted in later studies. Klock demonstrated Gregory's literary capacity in general terms, while Meissner focused on the *An et Res*. Dörrie and Meredith underscored Gregory's selective use of the Platonic intellectual heritage (H. DOERRIE, *passim*; A. MEREDITH 1993, 57–61).

Daniélou emphasizes how Gregory transformed the Platonic conceptual system in accordance with to his own thinking, thus imprinting a fresh perspective on the Platonic images and ideas (J. DANIELOU 1954, 216). Meredith maintains that Gregory reinterpreted the philosophical terminology while inserting it into his own argumentation (A. MEREDITH, 1999, 83–85).

Balás believes that the Platonic intellectual heritage is transformed in Gregory's work, and that Gregory appropriated the philosophical material in a Christian manner (D.L. BALÁS, 129).

Pochoshajew essentially underscores that the modern categories of Platonism and Christianity do not correspond to the self-understanding of Gregory's times. The heuristic value of these interpretative categories

is therefore limited. There was no systematic separation between philosophy and theology in Gregory's time. The selective use of the intellectual patrimony of various systems of thought corresponded to the work method of those times.

In defining the significance of Gregory's philosophical appropriations, the determinative factor is his own formulation of the issues at hand, as well as the context of each individual writing (I. POCHOSHAJEV, 229–230).

A thorough knowledge of Plotinus on Gregory's part is certain; it is however impossible to indicate the sources from which Gregory's knowledge stems. One can distinguish between methodological, thematic and theoretic influences of Plotinus on Gregory. This distinction remains theoretical and does not delineate rigid limits in Gregory's use of Plotinus; but it does distinguish the key elements.

Drobner shows that Gregory's scientific method is linked to that of Plotinus. Gregory owes to Plotinus the methodological conviction of the necessity to trace an argument back to the first cause, and to anchor the argument in the supreme principle of being (H.R. DROBNER, 88–89). As for the union of the soul with the body, one can note a thematic dependence of Gregory on Plotinus, who had amply treated the question in the first *Ennead*. Gregory attempted in various passages of his works to find an adequate description of the relationship between soul and body, as well as between intellect and body (cf. *An et res*, 197B, 3–8; *Op hom*, 168, 3–5; 188, 20–21; 194, 4–15; 282, 24–284, 1). This thematic parallel can be explained by the importance of the theme for both thinkers; it is also a sign of Gregory's scientific understanding of the problem. A theoretical dependence on Plotinus can be seen in the treatment of the problem of evil. Plotinus defined evil as deficiency of a good (*Enn* I 8 (51) 1, 12–17; III 2 (47) 5, 25–26). The definition of evil in Gregory (*Cant*, 56, 8–10) shows that he conceived evil in reference to Plotinus' thought, without adopting all the its details (J. DANIELOU 1974). The Plotinian conceptual framework often offered Gregory a hermeneutic base which was appropriate for the formulation of his own doctrine. Gregory realized the integration of Plotinus' thoughts in conformity with his own criteria for the use of the non-Christian intellectual patrimony by a Christian author: In *Vit Moys* Gregory explains that the use of philosophical material at the service of the Christian proclamation is both justified and required (*Vit Moys* 38, 6–20; 68, 9–21).

Along with the Plotinian material which can be identified in concepts, images and arguments found in Gregory's texts, this Platonic thinker

influenced Gregory many times in ways that are hard to perceive in an analytical optic. The *de facto* historical importance of Plotinus for the contemporary language and spiritual culture, together with Gregory's general culture, the cultural tradition of his family, his personal affection for rhetoric, and his scientific awareness of various issues act together in such a way that the ideal heritage of Plotinus contributed to Gregory's choice of arguments and impregnated his language. This influence can be explained by the position of the Nyssens in the history of ideas.

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Igor Pochoshajew

PNEUMATOLOGY

The action of the Son is inseparable from that of the Holy Spirit, whose personal property is in reference precisely to unity. It is necessary to bear in mind that Gregory's Pneumatology is particularly significant from a theological and historical perspective. In fact, it is probable that at Constantinople in 381, the Nyssen, besides being the theological guide of the bishops who attached themselves to the Cappadocian tradition, also had an official function (J. DANIELOU 1967, 116), witnessed by the fact that it was Gregory himself who delivered the eulogy for Meletius, and was mentioned together with Helladius of Caesarea and Otreius of Melitene as guarantor of the rule of faith for the dioceses of Pontus by the Theodosian decree. According to W. Jaeger, the council merely gave official sanction here to the official role that Gregory had played in the preceding months (W. JAEGER, 59). Gregory's prestige was eminently theological, since the see of Nyssa was too small to explain the insertion of his name along with those of the bishops of Caesarea and Melitene (J. DANIELOU 1967, 117). Certain authors even accept the affirmation of Nicephorus Callistus (PG 146, 784B), a Byzantine historian of the fourteenth century, that Gregory was the author of the Symbol itself (E. MOUTSOULAS 1997, 45; W. JAEGER, 51–77; J. DANIELOU 1967, 118).

The importance of διὰ τοῦ υἱοῦ and the μεσιτεία of the Son for the Nyssen's conception of Trinitarian immanence is evident (→ FILIATION). In fact, Gregory is considered one of the principal advocates of the formula *per Filium* in describing the second procession (A. DE HALLEUX, 4–5). This explanation seems to be traceable to an Origenian reading of the Johannine Prologue. The developmental line would have passed through the φῶς ἐκ φωτός—*Light from Light*—of Nicaea and Alexandrian tradition, which interpreted the intra-divine generation of the second Person in terms of eternal luminous radiance, on the basis of the ἀπαύγασμα of Wis 7.26 and Heb 1.3. Both Basil and Gregory Nazianzen are cautious in their use of the image. With Gregory of Nyssa, on the other hand, the theology of light is once again central, and is an instrument to explain, not only the eternal procession of the Son from the Father, but also that of the Holy Spirit. It is here that the διὰ τοῦ υἱοῦ comes into play.

Origen, perplexed by the ἐγένετο of Jn 1.3, affirms the Monarchy of the Father and introduces the intra-divine mediation of the second Person

(*Commentarii in Evangelium Joannis* II, c. 10, 75, 1–7; SC 120, pp. 254–256). He inadvertently leaves the door open to subordinationism, however, which will become an inevitable consequence after Nicaea and the distinction between γεννητός and γενητός, with the second term beginning to be read as an indicator of creatureliness. Gregory, despite the fact that he must confront the subordinationist Neo-Arianism of Eunomius, does not hesitate to use the διὰ τοῦ υἱοῦ, indeed so frequently that he surprises his commentators (A. DE HALLEUX, 17). The Nyssen is probably drawn to this by the need to negate, in his Trinitarian formulation, the claim by Eunomius that the Son was a simple instrument of the Father in the production of the Holy Spirit (cf. BASIL OF CAESAREA, *Eunomii impii apologia*, PG 30, 856 BC; SC 305, pp. 274–276). This is also linked to his endeavor to reinterpret the concept of εἰκών (→) in an active manner (this term had a passive sense in the Platonic environment). It required purification, so that the New Testament term (Col 1.15) could be read in harmony with the revelation of filiation.

Various authors have reconstituted the affirmation of an active role for the Son in the procession of the Holy Spirit in Gregory's Trinitarian doctrine (B. STUDER, 450; J.D. ZIZIOULAS, 44; G. MASPERO, 309). In a certain sense, one could say that it is already implicated in the Nyssen's conception of *Father* and *Son* as correlative names, in so far as the name of Father does not indicate the substance, but the relation to the Son itself (ἡ τοῦ πατρὸς κλησις οὐκ οὐσίας ἐστὶ παραστατική, ἀλλὰ τὴν πρὸς τὸν υἱὸν σχέσιν ἀποσημαίνει: *Ref Eun*, GNO II, 319, 1–7), in such a way that the active role of the Son in the second procession is as it were tacitly affirmed, in the most pure immanence, by the very names of the divine Persons, since one cannot think of the Father without thinking of the Son.

This however must be read in the light of Gregory's principal Pneumatological contribution, which consists in the clear definition of the personal property of the third Person: "And the Holy Spirit, who is in communion (κοινωνίαν) with the Father and the Son in the uncreated nature, is distinguished from them however in turn by his own proper traits. The most proper trait and sign is to be nothing of what reason contemplates properly in the Father and in the Son: his distinctive property in respect to the preceding [Persons] does not consist in being in an unengendered (ἀγεννήτως) manner, nor in an only-begotten (μονογενῶς) manner, but in being in such a way as to constitute a whole (εἶναι δὲ ὅλως)" (*Eun* I, GNO I, 108, 7–13). The πὼς εἶναι of the Holy Spirit is indicated by ὅλως εἶναι, and the personal characteristic of the third Person is expressed in

adverbial form: his proper mode of being the only God is constituted by bringing to unity, closing the circle of Glory as the bond of the Father and the Son.

It is important to note how the power of the Nyssen's distinction between created and uncreated is manifested here again. In fact, the limits to Basil's Pneumatology have been attributed precisely to the lack of a clear dichotomous vision of reality (A. MEREDITH, 205–206): If a third category can exist between created and uncreated, the possibility of conceiving of the Spirit in a subordinationist manner remains open. It seems that the problem for Basil is rooted in a certain Origenian heritage, for which the action of the Spirit in creation is exclusively limited to rational creatures (*ibidem*, 201). His creative role would thus be limited to sanctification. The creative role of the Spirit is quite different for the Nyssen, for whom the divinity of the Holy Spirit is shown precisely in his creational role.

This clarity permits Gregory to deepen the understanding of the immanent role of the third Person, reaching one of the absolute apexes of his Pneumatological reflection: "It is better to textually quote the very divine words of the Gospel: *So that all may be one. As You, Father, are in Me and I in You, that they be one in Us* (Jn 17.21). Now, the bond of this unity is Glory (τὸ δὲ συνδευκὸν τῆς ἐνότητος ταύτης ἢ δόξα ἐστίν). But no prudent person could oppose themselves to fact that the Holy Spirit is called *Glory*, if the words of the Lord are considered. For, He says: *The glory that You have given Me, I have given them* (Jn 17.22). He in fact gave this glory to the disciples, saying to them, *receive the Holy Spirit* (Jn 20.22). He, having embraced human nature, received this glory that He already always possessed, from before the world was (cf. Jn 17.5). And, since this human nature was glorified by the Spirit, the communication of the glory of the Spirit comes to all of those who participate in this same nature, beginning with the disciples. For this reason he says: *And the glory that You have given Me, I have given them, so that they be one as We are. I am in them and You in Me, so that they may be perfect in unity* (Jn 17.22–23)" (*Cant*, GNO VI, 467, 2–17).

The scriptural indication of the Holy Spirit as the Spirit of the Father (Rm 8.11) and the Spirit of the Son (Gal 4.6) is theologically interpreted by the Nyssen in the affirmation that the bond (τὸ δὲ συνδευκόν) that unites the Father and the Son is the Holy Spirit himself, in a perfect parallel with ὅλως εἶναι, his personal property.

Gregory's Trinitarian doctrine thus appears profoundly coherent and balanced: In perfecting the theology of φύσις, he succeeds in elaborating

a reflection which, attentively safeguarding the harmony of the level of οὐσία and that of ὑπόστασις, accentuates the divinity and consubstantiality of the Son and expresses, in the relation with the Holy Spirit, who is the bond of the Father and the Son, the dynamic unity of the Trinity as a mystery of liberty and of love.

BIBL.: See the article TRINITY.

Giulio Maspero

PORPHYRY

P. Courcelle has pointed out passages in Gregory parallel to Porphyry, and assumes that Gregory had read the *Vita Plotini* (P. COURCELLE, 406). H.M. Meissner offers a cautious evaluation of Gregory's knowledge of Porphyry (H.M. MEISSNER, 10). J. Zachhuber reminds us of the *curriculum* of studies typical of the times, while underscoring Gregory's excellent culture. In view of these two aspects, Porphyry's conceptual patrimony must have been known by Gregory, even if only through his scholastic preparation (J. ZACHHUBER, 10–12).

In Gregory's texts one can see both convergences with Porphyry and differences from him. In *Cant*, Gregory distinguishes between that which is sensibly perceptible and that which is intelligible, then dividing intelligible reality into uncreated nature and created nature (*Cant* 173,7–174,9). These developments appear, at first glance at least, to be of Porphyrian origin (cf. Porphyry, *Sent* 6, 5–14). The thematic context of Gregory's affirmations manifests a decisive difference from Porphyry: Gregory describes the ascent of the soul to God. God is unlimited. This implies a movement towards him that is without end: The good which is momentarily reached is continually the beginning of a superior good (*Cant* 174, 9–13; cf. 177,17–178,1). Gregory realizes a similar division of being in *Eun* (99,28–100,24). The differentiation between intelligible reality and sensibly perceptible reality does not correspond here, as in Platonism, to an attempt to delimit a reality in a sphere in which the determination of the object is integrally contained. Gregory's subdivision into intelligible reality and sensuously perceptible reality seeks to show that the forms of phenomena do not offer an adequate foundation for the ascent to God. The subdivision between uncreated reality and created reality accentuates the dependence on God of all of creation, while at the same time indicating that God is outside of creation. The intelligible reality in this context assumed a specifically Christian gnoseological relevance. That which can be known through thought is not God (*Eun*, 127,22–129,25).

Recent studies have sought to determine definitively the importance of Porphyry for the Nyssen, and these show that additional factors must be considered. These include Gregory's family, his personal formation, his interests and the scientific knowledge of pertinent problems.

In Gregory's family the literary tradition of ancient Greece was considered a prestigious cultural good, the classic culture being considered a status symbol. Gregory's father and his brother Basil, who had the influence of a model on Gregory, were both rhetors by profession. It is true that Gregory himself did not frequent famous cultural centers, but the stylistic elaboration of his works and the reputation he enjoyed among his contemporaries witness to his excellent literary capacities.

Gregory considered himself the defender and promoter of the inheritance of the ancient Greek tradition, and pursued a recognition of his own rhetorical capacities. He assiduously frequented the cultured people of his times, and gathered in his house a circle of literary-minded friends (CH. KLOCK, 23–34; P. MARAVAL, 45–50; H.M. MEISSNER, 47–72).

Apart from specifically Christian themes, focusing on the dogmatic and catechetical spheres, Gregory treats various questions of general scientific interest in his works. Thus, in the *Op hom* he discusses the action of reason in the organs of sensible perception, something that had interested generations of scholars before him. Before personally treating the issue, Gregory evaluates the results thus far attained in the knowledge of the question (*Op hom* 156, 28–29; 158, 1–3; 158, 24–162,7) and critically discusses previous research (*Op hom* 166, 17–26).

Porphyry was an eminent representative of the spiritual current in Platonism, which itself gathered the conceptual patrimony of other schools and preceding generations, containing a plurality of opinions and controversial intellectual projects (J.M. DILLON, 66–67). Platonism was not just one spiritual movement among others, but at that time represented the entire Hellenistic spiritual patrimony (H. DÖRRIE, *Der Platonismus*, 172). The research method of the times was marked by the recourse to the spiritual patrimonies of different systems of thought: Ammonius and Plotinus adopted Pythagorean material (H. DÖRRIE, *Kontroversen*, 426). Plotinus inserted into his own system conceptual elements not only of Platonism, but also of Aristotelianism and Stoicism. Porphyry included Chaldaean oracles in his system of thought (W. STEINMANN, 95, 103).

Gregory's social situation awakened his interest in the inheritance of classic antiquity and his formation made it possible for him to have an ample assimilation of the philosophical and spiritual patrimony.

Gregory's scientific interest and the contact with intellectuals favored his knowledge of the patrimony of contemporary thought. The research method of the times impelled Gregory to engage in dialogue with such a significant thinker as Porphyry. Gregory's knowledge of Porphyry does not necessarily imply a direct reading of the latter's texts. It could equally

be based on Gregory's participation in intellectual debate, or can be explained simply through the importance of Porphyry in the history of ideas.

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PRAYER

A statement by Gregory in *Or dom* 1 can be well interpreted as a definition of prayer: “prayer is a conversation with God (Θεοῦ ὁμιλία) and a contemplation (θεωρία) of invisible realities” (*Or dom* 1, GNO VII/2, 8–9).

Prayer is above all a familiar conversation with God, founded on our condition as his sons. In this respect, it is quite significant that the works in which Gregory speaks most of prayer and παρρησία (→) are the homilies on the Our Father. For the Our Father is the prayer of familiar trust. Thus one could rightly say that one of the essential traits of Christian prayer, perhaps the principal one, is its connection with *parrêsia* and the reality of divine filiation in Christ (DANIÉLOU, 112–113). Gregory insists on the necessity of praying with *parrêsia* (*Inscr* II, 3, GNO V, 78), to come close to the Spirit of Him who is above all change, in order to invoke Him with the most familiar word: that of Father (*Or dom* 2, GNO V, 22).

This is a fundamental teaching of our Lord in the Our Father: He encourages us to say, with confidence and freedom of expression (*parrêsia*), Our Father who art in Heaven (*Or dom* 2, GNO V, 28–29).

Parrêsia, i.e. the absence of “fear” and “shame”, is absolutely necessary if one wishes for a true prayer. In teaching the Our Father to his disciples, the Lord elevates us from human nature to the divine nature. “How do you dare present yourself before God full of fear, as if you were a slave?” (*Or dom* 5, GNO V, 60–61), Gregory exclaims. This interior disposition of trust in a father requires a great inner purity—in a certain sense the recovery of innocence on which *parrêsia* was founded. It is necessary for the human being to offer something on his part if he wishes to pray correctly. For this reason it is necessary to prepare oneself by repenting of one’s own faults, since he who approaches the Just One must be just (*Or dom* 5, GNO V, 59–60).

A second significant characteristic of this brief “definition” by Gregory is the importance it gives to the “contemplation of invisible realities”. This is a concept that includes what could be called prayer of contemplation alongside petition and thanksgiving. The explanations that immediately follow make this clear: prayer is the surety of the things that are desired, it is to have honor like that of the angels, it is the growth in good things,

it is the correction of sinners, it is the realization of future goods (*Or dom* 1, GNO V, 8–9). We find the same thing, for example, in Gregory's commentary on the prayer of Moses (*Vit Moys* I, 39–40 and II, 149–151, GNO VII/1, 18–19 and 81) and his entry into the “sanctuary (→ *ADY-TON*) of divine knowledge” (*Vit Moys*, II, 189–201, GNO VII/1, 97–103). During the battle with the Amalekites, Moses prayed, asking for victory of God, and on the peak of Sinai he contemplated the heavenly sanctuary.

Or dom 1 is a delightful homily by a pastor who knows perfectly the problems and defects of his flock. Gregory insists on the fact that the relationship with God is of extreme importance, that it is necessary to pray at all times (Rm 12.12), that prayer is the greatest good that God has given to human beings, and that prayer is not a useless waste of time. Examining the different professions and the excuses that are sought to avoid prayer, Gregory maintains that it is absurd to place hope in one's own hands, forgetting Him who gave hands to us.

If prayer were prevalent, Gregory says, sin would not find the soul so defenseless. Gregory does not speak only of asking for help to do one's work well, but also to do it “in the presence of God”. If the remembrance of God (μνήμη Θεοῦ) were rooted in the heart, the snares of the adversary would be ineffective. At this point, Gregory's expressions become rigorous: “He who does not unite himself to God by means of prayer distances himself from Him”. In these passages Gregory formulates a truly splendid oration at the service of prayer: Prayer protects chastity, mitigates anger, moderates and halts pride, prayer is the seal of virginity, the fidelity of matrimony, the shield of travelers, protection for those who sleep (*Or dom* 1, GNO V, 7–9). These expressions reveal a strongly religious disposition, demonstrating how far Gregory is distant from the Platonic and Stoic theories and how close he is to the world of the Bible (VÖLKER, 85–86).

Gregory shows that he greatly appreciates the prayer of thanksgiving. It is an obligation to God which CLEMENT OF ALEXANDRIA (*Stromata* VI, 113, 3) had already accentuated. The divine benefits are much greater than our thanksgivings, Gregory specifies, in particular the fact that God created us in his image and after sin restored us to the primordial grace (*Or dom* 1, GNO V, 8–11). Gregory's specifications regarding prayer of petition are a faithful echo of his preoccupations as a pastor: it is necessary to ask, but ask well. Do not be “verbose” like the Gentiles (Mt 6.7), do not ask for bad things, do not ask for useless things. Ask only that which is worth asking: the kingdom of heaven and that which leads us there.

“Nothing is as precious as prayer” (*Or dom* 1, GNO V, 9), Gregory resolutely states. This phrase, comments VÖLKER (368, n. 75), is an authentic witness of personal religiosity. To this should be added the numerous prayers found in Gregory to invoke the help of God, particularly in his sermons. In this respect, the prayer with which he begins his refutation of Eunomius is paradigmatic (*Eun* I, 7, GNO I, 22; VÖLKER, 143). The image that Gregory offers in these passages is that of a man who, speaking of prayer, refers to what he himself assiduously practices.

Gregory is preoccupied by the fact that his faithful, still too attached to pagan practices, may pray in an unworthy manner. It offends God, he admonishes, to ask help of Him for our inconveniences and vanities. It is absurd, he says with good grace, that you ask God to be gentle with you while at the same time you ask Him to be harsh with your enemies. This poses an evident problem for Gregory: How should we understand the passages of Scripture in which it is asked, for example, that the sinners disappear (Ps 9.1) or that ask for vengeance on one's enemies? That which is to be asked, Gregory states, is that evil disappear from the earth, not the death of the sinners—*inter alia*, because God is the enemy of death (*Or dom*, 1, GNO, 15–16). We must instead ask that “the kingdom of God come”, i.e. that his reign come so that the passions which are our true enemies are expelled, and even destroyed (*Or dom* III, GNO V, 38–39).

Following the example of the widow of the Gospel (Lk 18.3–8), we must pray with perseverance. If the perseverance of that widow changed the decision of the unjust judge, how could we not have confidence in turning to God, whose mercy is prevenient, much greater than what we ask for? One must above all ask for the gifts of the Holy Spirit, which Paul asked for the faithful of Ephesus (Eph 1.15–19).

The teaching of *Inst* on prayer merits particular attention. Together with *Or dom* 1, it is the text which speaks in most detail on this theme. The context is naturally different: In *Inst* he is not speaking to the faithful, but to the ascetics for whom prayer is a habitual and important part of their lives. Here, particular importance is attached to the cooperation between the Holy Spirit and the soul. Nobody can purify the soul “with human effort and virtue alone”, but it is necessary to receive the grace of the Holy Spirit “by means of prayer” (*Inst* 30, GNO VIII/1, 54). For this reason it is absurd to devote oneself to the ascetic struggle without having “prolonged prayer restore the soul” (*ibidem*, 69; 72).

Prayer at times appears as the fruit of charity, among a truly impressive concatenation of virtues: gentleness, humility, joy, charity, “prayer” (*ibidem*, 81; 78). Gregory is describing the life of monks: the love of God

asks the soul to be in permanent conversation with Him—the soul, taking up the Spirit as guide and ally, is inflamed with the love of God and burns with desire for Him “without finding satiety in prayer” (*ibidem*, 82; 78).

In this writing Gregory enters into quite concrete details: He calls attention to the necessity of dominating the imagination. One must pray “without voluntarily wandering with thought” (*ibidem*, 84–85; 80). Like Origen, Gregory attaches importance to the prayer of the body, i.e. to the bodily position during prayer: It is not a question of kneeling or prostration, “something that is important and approved by Scripture”, but rather of “dedicating all the soul to prayer along with the whole of the body” (*ibidem*, 87; 82).

Prayer is not a voyage without concrete commitments: True prayer is manifested in fruits of “simplicity, charity, humility, constancy and innocence” (*ibidem*, 89; 82).

In *Inst* we find prayer situated among the virtues, and like the virtues it is considered a gift of God to the one who tries, and a fruit of the Holy Spirit. God “gives prayer to he who asks” (*ibidem*, 86; 81). This perspective suggests that, for Gregory, it is the human being who must take the initiative (→ SPIRITUAL THEOLOGY). In sanctity, as in prayer, the action of the Holy Spirit has primacy, but this action requires human effort. Whatever Gregory’s thought may be on this “initiative” required of the human being, it is clear that “the flowers and fruits” of the ascetic effort come from the power of the Holy Spirit (*ibidem*, 92; 84).

Gregory’s position regarding prayer deeply affects his conception of monastic life. In *Virg* 23, Gregory criticizes those monks who, wishing to pray without ceasing, “make of idleness an art of life”. He warns against others who let themselves be let astray by their own illusions, as if these were inspirations of the Holy Spirit (GNO VIII/1, 337). DANÉLOU (1960) observes that, in the passages of *Inst* under consideration here, Gregory seems to wish to confirm contemplative prayer, liberating it from the abuses of the Messalians, which were quite similar to those of the *Alumbrados*. In line with this, one encounters the insistence on prayer and the vibrant recommendation that the monks let themselves be spiritually guided by an experienced person. Thus this would oppose the vices spoken of in *Virg*. This doctrinal backdrop, quite different between *Virg* and *Inst*, has led certain authors to doubt the attribution to Gregory (→ *INST*). CANÉVET (1006) is correct when he states that JAEGER’s thesis, which defends the attribution to the Nyssen, has been contested but never refuted.

In any case, whoever wishes to calmly read the texts in which Gregory describes the life of the monasteries will recognize in them an environment which is intimately immersed in serenity, peace and prayer. All of this is coherent with the defense of the contemplative prayer that we find in *Inst.* It is clear, for example, in the prayers pronounced by Emmelia and Macrina at the moment of death (*Macr*, GNO VIII/1, 385 and 388–402).

Emmelia dies surrounded by many of her children, blessing them and particularly praying for her “first fruit” and for “the last son” who are consecrated to God as an offering. Macrina’s death contains a most precious description of her personal prayer, of the vespers liturgy and the funeral liturgy. Everything unfolds in a spirit of intense piety. When Gregory reaches Anessi, the monks come out to meet him, while the virgins await him close to the church. Gregory prays with them and blesses them. Seeing her brother enter, Macrina raises her hand to thank him. The following day, at twilight, Macrina, now close to death, “turning her regard to the Orient” speaks with God alone and, with a weak voice, recites a moving prayer for confidence and simplicity. At the end, she traces the sign of the Cross on her eyes, mouth and heart, and continues to pray. Evening falls and they bring in lights. Macrina then “opens her eyes and turns her regard towards the light, thus manifesting her desire to pronounce the thanksgiving for the beginning of the evening”. Once the thanksgivings are finished, Macrina emits a long and deep breath, “finishing together her prayer and her life”.

Undoubtedly, Gregory, in his magnificent literary language, is describing his ideal of the good Christian death. The correspondence between the end of life and of prayer shows what he means by “sleeping in the Lord”. He also demonstrates the radicality of his conception of prayer as a familiar conversation with God, full of filial *parrësia*.

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PRIESTHOOD

Gregory manifests his thought on the theology and spirituality of priesthood in *PERF* (→) clearly, in response to the question of perfection. Christian perfection, he says, consists in identifying oneself with that which the name of Christ signifies. In this context he proposes that the names of *Passover* (1 Cor 5, 7) and *Priest* (Heb 4, 14) are included in the names of Christ: He was immolated as our “Passover”; He is the Priest Who offers himself as sacrifice, Who has given himself as “oblation and sacrifice” (1 Tim 2.6; Eph 5.2). The application to the ascetic life is immediate: the Christian must offer himself to God as a “living sacrifice, holy and agreeable” (Rm 12, 1), making of himself a “reasonable” offering (*Perf*, GNO VIII/1, 186). Gregory follows Pauline thought and texts here. Consequently, priesthood appears in direct relationship to the sacrificial death of Christ. Christ is at once “Priest and Lamb”, and works our salvation through his sufferings (*Antirr* 17, GNO III/1, 152–153). He is “Priest and Lamb who takes away the sins of the world” (*Trid spat*, GNO IX, 287–288). For Gregory, the mediation and priesthood of Christ are as two sides of the same coin (→ SOTERIOLOGY).

In the homily *Trid spat*, Gregory considers the manner in which Christ practices his priesthood in the Last Supper, giving himself as food and drink. Gregory realizes an exegesis of Jn 10.18 with a reading of this Johannine passage which is quite similar to that which Augustine would later give. Both state that in this passage the author is speaking of a particular will of Christ in his death and of his dominion over “the hour” at which He had arrived. Jesus says that He has the power to offer his soul and to take it up anew (Jn 10.18); this power was mysteriously used in the Last Supper “when the High Priest consecrated the sacrifice to God”. In that supper, “the holy and priestly body was eaten”. The terms employed by Gregory belong to a strictly sacerdotal vocabulary: ἱερεὺς, προσφορά, θυσία, etc. (*Trid spat*, GNO IX, 276–288).

Gregory dedicated ample place to the commentary on the symbolism of the priestly garb of the OT (*An et res*, PG 46, 132–133; *Cant* 11, GNO VI, 330; *Or dom* 3, GNO VII/2, 31–34; *Vit Moys* II, 189–201, GNO VIII/1, 98–103). In these commentaries, Gregory shows what his conception of the priesthood in each of the Covenants is.

In this description, Gregory indicates interior life, required by the NT, as a principal difference between the OT and the NT priesthoods. This internalization is related to the unity between the priest and victim found in Christ. The virtues of the priest are of great importance, since with them he prepares to offer himself "as offering and victim". In this perspective, Gregory gives an important role to *παρορησία* (→), based upon the consciousness of being a son of God (*Or dom* 3, GNO VII/2, 31).

In the NT, the priesthood is not only internalized, but also universalized. The priest of the OT entered the Holy of Holies in the practice of his priesthood; it is also in the practice of his priesthood that the Christian enters the sanctuary of his own heart. The "entry into the sanctuary" has a multivalent signification for Gregory: It is a liturgical act of the priest of the OT, it is the entry of the Christian into his own heart converted into the temple of God, and also the penetration into the most sublime level of contemplation. It is this that we see described in the life of Moses (*Vit Moys* II, 167, GNO VII/1, 88/89).

Jesus is at once Tabernacle and Propitiation (Rm 3.25). Given that Paul in many passages identifies the Church with Christ, it too can be considered as a Tabernacle in which is perpetually offered *the sacrifice of praise* (Heb 13.15), the incense of prayer and "the purple color of ascetic life, which is the most beautiful ornament of the tabernacle of the Church". For this reason, whoever wishes to consecrate himself to the service of God must offer his own body as a sacrifice, to the point of becoming *a living sacrifice* and a *spiritual offering* (Rm 12.1). Gregory's exhortation to VIRGINITY (→) is based on terms like "anointing", "priesthood", "immolation", "victim" and "offering" (*Virg* 23, GNO VIII/1, 342–343).

The homily *Diem lum* highlights the power of priestly blessing and the very existence of ministerial priesthood, precisely in the explanation of the effects that Baptism produces. The same thing occurs, Gregory says, as with the bread: Before the priestly benediction it is common bread and after it, it is changed into the body of Christ. The "power of the word" makes the priest "august and honorable, separated from the community by the newness of the benediction. For, while during the previous days and before, he had been one of the people, he is suddenly presented as head, president, master of religion and mystagogue of the hidden mysteries". This is because "his soul has been transformed by an invisible grace and power" (*Diem lum*, GNO IX, 225–226). The priest has the power to bless, since he himself has received a blessing that consecrated him. Explaining the effect of the benediction that constitutes a man as priest,

Gregory lists what could be called the “characteristics” of priesthood. The priest is καθηγεμών, πρόεδρος, διδάσκαλος τῆς εὐσεβείας, μυστηρίων λανθανόντων μυσταγωγός: head, president, master of piety, introducer to the hidden mysteries.

J. DANIELÉLOU and P. MARAVAL studied the figure of the bishop in Gregory, starting from *Letter* 17, addressed to the priests of Nicodemia (→ *EPISKOPOS*). Maraval and Daniélou observe that, even in this text, Gregory rarely uses the term *episkopos*, and that he instead frequently employs the noun *hiereus* (MARAVAL, 217, n. 5). Nevertheless, the episcopal figure is sufficiently delineated in this letter: The bishop is “he who has precedence over the priesthood”, he “who guides the faithful”, he “who presides over the Church”. The term *presbyter* does not have a strictly technical sense in Gregory either. Of the almost 100 times that it appears in his works, in most cases it is used with a temporal signification, to say that one thing is anterior to another or to speak of the “ancients” of the OT. Logically, he also uses it to designate the priests of the Church, as can be seen in the very title of *Letter* 17; however the theological force is not tied to this noun, but rather to *hiereus*.

It is the priesthood itself that Gregory accentuates in speaking of either bishops or priests. In this perspective, the mode in which he describes the priestly ordination of his brother Peter is eloquent: Basil leads his brother Peter “to the dignity of the ministerial priesthood, consecrating him in the holy liturgies”. Thanks to this, his life progresses even more towards sanctity, since “the priesthood contributes to his progress in philosophy” (*Macr*, GNO VIII/1, 385–387).

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PROAIRESIS

προαίρεσις

This is a central concept for the Nyssen's anthropology. It is affiliated with concepts such as αὐτεξούσιον, ἐξουσία, θέλημα and ἀδούλωτος. Gregory attempts a definition in *Or cat*: "He who has power over the universe permitted, moved by his great consideration for man, that something be under our complete dominion, and that each one be the only lord. This is our liberty of choice (προαίρεσις), a reality not subject to enslavement, free, based upon the liberty (ἐλευθερία) of our reason" (J. SRAWLEY, *The Catechetical Oration of Gregory of Nyssa*, Cambridge 1903, 112). Προαίρεσις is thus that liberty which permits the human being to be master of himself and decide by himself. It has a practical side, as it permits one to posit free acts. In this practical facet, in so far as liberty permits self possession and self realization, it is distinct from ἐλευθερία, which signified more properly "liberty from". In the Nyssen's conception, this self-mastery is given to the human being by God, who, thanks to the gift of liberty, constitutes him as his image. This analogy is fundamental to understand liberty in its fullest sense, thanks to which the human being receives his most important qualification, that of being *imago Dei*.

There is also a divine προαίρεσις. It finds its expression *quoad nos* in CREATION (→). In *An et res* Gregory affirms that whatever the divine free will wants becomes reality (PG 46, 124). The determination of God to give life to the universe already implies its realization. The divine προαίρεσις also intervenes in the intra-Trinitarian relationships (→ TRINITY): The Father eternally wants the Son, freely and without limitations, not even those of time, insofar as temporality itself is not to be found in God. This eternity of the relationship of the free will in God is used by Gregory to confirm the equality of the Father and the Son, he thus underscores the communion of the Father and the Son according to nature and according to προαίρεσις in *Eun* (GNO I, 101–102).

In reference to the human being, the Nyssen confirms the centrality of liberty in images as well. In *Cant* he sees προαίρεσις as the faithful and prudent administrator who has the oversight over everything in us (GNO VI, 345–346), or as gold, which is the most precious of goods (GNO VI, 408). The concept of προαίρεσις is also used with the

signification of interior impulse, of movement like δύναμις, and thus more aptly as a faculty—the will. The interior movement of the passions negatively influences liberty and induces to vice instead. The interior impulse, under whose auspices προαίρεσις is normally present, remains subject to the filtering of the intellect: Human decision is accompanied by rationality, since it gathers stimuli and evaluates them, in order to offer them to the liberty of choice which in its turn determines them in a certain direction. Thus προαίρεσις intervenes in the relationship of body-soul, as a self-control that the human being exercises on himself. The central position of liberty as the most precious gift for the human being means that it also acquires a central role in history: As man fell through his free choice from the state in which he was created, so too can he recover himself through free will, i.e. his being in the image of God, now obscured by sin. For it is the human προαίρεσις that provokes EVIL (→), which does not exist outside of it. Yet προαίρεσις can also turn back to the good (*Inscr*, GNO V, 46–47). In particular, it must urge the human being towards the process of divinization. Gregory expresses this with a beautiful image: προαίρεσις chooses the colors, i.e. the virtues, by means of which the painting, i.e. one's life, can reflect the divine model (*Perf*, GNO 8.1, 195–196). This process of μίμησις does not know a limit and leads to infinite growth in God (→ ΕΠΕΚΤΑΣΙΣ).

In a deeper sense, since mutability is the ontological condition of the human being vis-à-vis God, given that the human being is marked even in his substance by the passage from non-being to being, human liberty is founded on this ontological character, to cause the human being to follow the path towards an ever greater transparency in reference to the divine model on which he is based. The human being is thus situated in an internal dynamic that continually leads him to self-possession. Mutability as an ontological substrate is presupposed because liberty, never satisfied, continues to exercise and actuate itself. On the one hand, the human being knows the aspect of identity thanks to liberty, through which he is the image of God. On the other hand, he knows the aspect of difference through the radical precariousness which is due to his creatureliness. The element of identity is realized around liberty in a dynamic by which the human being, who is both identical and different, constitutes himself. Liberty thus permits a self-possession which enables the human being to be king and lord of himself and thus to determine his own development. In this sense Gregory can repeatedly affirm that, thanks to προαίρεσις, the human being is “father of himself” (*Vita Moys*, SC 1, 106–108). Liberty of choice governs and directs the process

by which the human being recovers his being in *imago Dei*, and thus his self-constitution. We can conclude that for Gregory of Nyssa, the human being *is* his very προαίρεσις.

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Giampietro Dal Toso

PROF

De professione Christiana

The manuscripts give different titles to this work. In PG 46, 237 it is called *By the Same Saint Gregory to Armonius, on What the Name or Profession of Christian Means*; JAEGER (GNO VIII/1, 129) calls it *By Gregory, Bishop of Nyssa, On What the Christian Profession Is*.

Prof is a letter directed to Armonius in response to his question about the requirements of the Christian vocation. Gregory bases his response on what M. CANÉVET (7) defines as “a theology of the name”. All that he writes is based upon the importance of the fact that the name coincides with the reality. We will thus be truly Christian, Gregory says, in the measure that we realize in our life that which the name of Christ signifies. Gregory proposes the Pauline theme as an ideal: *It is no longer I who live, but Christ who lives in me* (Gal 2.20). The question was not only important, but extremely relevant, since at that point, for Christians the contradictions had not stopped: Gregory has in mind the situation created by the acceptance of Christianity as the religion of the State: Certain people sought to call themselves Christians for reasons of personal prestige. Thus one sees why he insists that it is not enough to simply call oneself Christian, but much more is required.

“Christianity is the imitation of the divine nature” (GNO VIII/1, 136). The human being can imitate the divine nature, because he is made in the image of God, and Christianity consists in the restitution of the human being to his original dignity. Gregory also bases his exposition on Mt 5.48.

This work almost certainly belongs to the final years of Gregory’s life (→ CHRONOLOGY).

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PROSOPON

πρόσωπον

Πρόσωπον is one of several Greek words which Gregory of Nyssa uses to refer to a person. Other words are ὑπόστασις (mainly person), περιγραφούσα (or περιγραφή, circumscription), μερικὴ οὐσία (partial substance), ἰδικὴ οὐσία (particular substance), and even ἄτομον (indivisible or individual). In his works written after 365, Basil of Caesarea no longer allowed the use of πρόσωπον and ὑπόστασις as synonymous, because in his view πρόσωπον was compromised by Sabellius when the latter used it with the meaning of “mask” (TURCESCU 1997). Unlike his brother Basil, however, Gregory of Nyssa and their friend Gregory Nazianzen did not have the same reservations when using ὑπόστασις and πρόσωπον interchangeably to refer to a person (e.g. *Eust*, GNO III/1, 13, 11–21).

Thanks to modern technology a search for πρόσωπον in the *Thesaurus Linguae Graecae* database reveals that πρόσωπον is used over 300 times in the works scholars unanimously attribute to Gregory. The statistic is similar for ὑπόστασις. One scholar has analyzed all the instances of πρόσωπον in Gregory’s works (STRAMARA), and concludes that Gregory applies the term to denote the divine persons (28 %), exegetical personages (16.7 %), the human face (15.6 %), and the human person (12.3 %); πρόσωπον means mask only in 0.7 % of its occurrences. Including prepositional phrases and the connotation of πρόσωπον as person, the term refers to a person (whether divine or human) in ca. 72 % of its occurrences.

There are many instances where πρόσωπον indicates the anatomical face, although as Stramara notes, Gregory tends to glide back and forth between face and person. For example, “If any one had to give a description of the way some disease mars a human countenance (πρόσωπον), there would be then no need of words when the eye had seen how he looked” (*Eun* I, 28; GNO I, 145, 22–26). Elsewhere Gregory plays on the two meanings of πρόσωπον as both face and person in reference to God, too. Here is an example, where he does this and suggests that πρόσωπον is synonymous with ὑπόστασις: “For since it is said ‘the angels see the face (πρόσωπον) of my Father in heaven’ (Mt 18:10), and it is not possible to see the person (πρόσωπον) of the Father otherwise than by fixing

the sight upon it through his imprint (χαράκτῆρ); and the imprint of the person of the Father (πατρὸς ὑποστάσεως) is the only-begotten (Heb 1:3) ...” (*Eust*, GNO III/1, 13, 11–21).

Yet the most widespread denotation of πρόσωπον is that of person (divine, human or angelic). Gregory argues against Eunomius that πρόσωπον refers to something specific and can be enumerated without diminishing the nature of the individual being enumerated. “‘Paul and Silvanus and Timothy’ are three persons mentioned according to a particular intention. Does the place of Silvanus, second after Paul, indicate that he was other than a man? Or is Timothy, because he is third, considered by the writer who so ranks him a different kind of being? Not so. Each is human both before and after this arrangement” (*Eun* I, 116; GNO I, 85,19–86,2).

In *Graec*, GNO III/1, 23, 4–8, Gregory equates a person with an individual: “If somebody says that we call Peter and Paul and Barnabas three partial substances οὐσίας μερικᾶς (it is clear that this means particular ἰδικᾶς [substances])—for this is more accurate to say—he should recognize that [by that] we do not mean anything else but the individual, which is the person ἄτομον, ὅπερ ἐστὶ πρόσωπον.” This clearly speaks against some modern theologians who use Gregory of Nyssa or the other Cappadocians to argue for personalism *avant-la-lettre*. Unlike modern thinkers, the Cappadocian Fathers were not aware of the dangers of individualism and perhaps that is why they did not make many efforts to distinguish between person and individual. They were more concerned with distinguishing between person or individual, on the one hand, and nature or substance, on the other hand, in connection with the Christian God. At that time, the three divine Persons were not properly understood as three different entities while each was one and the same God (TURCESCU 2003)

As this example shows, Gregory seems to have deliberately amalgamated Stoic and Aristotelian categories here, some of which served as rudimentary concepts of individual and were available to the Cappadocian fathers when they shaped a concept of person: expressions such as “partial substance” (μερικὴ οὐσία) and “particular substance” (ἰδικὴ οὐσία) seem to be a mix of the Aristotelian οὐσία with the Stoic ἰδίως ποιόν, although they may as well betray a Porphyrian influence on Gregory. Porphyry uses μερικὴ οὐσία several times in one of his commentaries on Aristotle (PORPHYRY; TURCESCU 2005). Of course, this amalgamation is not unprecedented by the time of Gregory. Diogenes of Babylon, a noted Stoic himself, uses “human being” and “horse” to exemplify what a

commonly qualified entity is, whereas Aristotle uses the same examples for his secondary *ousia*. In *Graec* most of the time, Gregory uses πρόσωπον and ὑπόστασις synonymously when referring to divine or human persons; but whereas the former term occurs sixty times, the latter occurs only thirty-six times.

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Lucian Turcescu

PSYCHOLOGY

Two surviving essays of Gregory take up the issue of the nature of the soul after death and of its relationship to the body. The influence of Plato is patent, above all of his *Phaedo*, which serves as a model for *An et res* and its idea of the body as a tomb. Besides this, there is *Phaedrus* with its motif of two horses and the need to grow wings to recover the lost vision of absolute beauty; and the *Republic* with its doctrine of the soul tripartite.

Gregory's earlier treatise *Mort* of ca. 373 is a sort of consolation, in which Gregory uses language similar in tone to that of the *Phaedo* and treats this world and the body we now inhabit as a sort of prison from which death is an escape (GNO IX/1, 38, 13 ff.). Immediately before the first address, which begins at 40,1, he speaks of our mind as emancipated from the body and able to contemplate things heavenly. The primary purpose of the body is for the purification of the soul.

In the *An et res* which is situated in 380 at the death of his sister Macrina, Gregory casts himself in the mould of a questioner and his sister in that of Socrates. The nature of the soul is the subject of the discussion from PG 46, 28 D onwards. It is defined at 29 B as a 'created, living intellectual essence'. As in the *Mort*, it is the true self and can be discovered by use of the Delphic precept 'Know thyself'. Being like God (cf. Gn 1.26), the soul has an intelligent and dimensionless nature (45 B).

This austere intellectual version of the nature of soul fails to satisfy Gregory, who inquires at 48 C ff about the part played by the passions or emotions in all this, above all the emotions of desire and anger. Macrina insists at 52 A that all that is alien to God, especially desire and anger, cannot properly be located in the human soul. At 56 C they are said to be warts which do not properly belong to the soul at all. Macrina is compelled to modify her position in answer to her brother's question as to the nature of the desire we all need if we are to mount upwards to the vision of God. In answer to this, Macrina somewhat modifies her position at 64 D and allows desire a role in the life of the spirit, which when properly directed rises upwards.

This means that the austere anti emotional picture of the life of the human spirit offered at the opening of the dialogue is changed, so that an

element of ambiguity remains above all about the nature of the passions and their relation to the nature of the soul in *An et res*. Such a picture confirms what we learn about the upward motion of the soul in *Virg* 10–12, which echoes the language and ideas of the *Symposium* of Plato.

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Anthony Meredith

PULCHER

Oratio consolatoria in Pulcheriam

Oratio consolatoria in Pulcheriam is an oration delivered by Gregory in 385 on the death of Pulcheria, the daughter of the imperial couple, Theodosius I and Flacilla. The oration uses the form and language of the Hellenistic consolatory genre to convey a distinctively Christian consolatory message. Because Pulcheria was no older than seven years old at her death, Gregory uses analogies from nature (e.g. a flower that has died before blossoming) in his lament and likens the tragic nature of her death to the earthquake that had just shaken the region. Gregory then uses the words of Scripture to remind his audience that Pulcheria's death has merely transplanted her from this world into a superior place where she continues to grow in the presence of God in purity and simplicity without the encumbrance of the corruptible body. In fact, Pulcheria's early death means that she has avoided the tyranny of this life which increases as the body becomes older and more frail. Sarah, Abraham, and Job are exalted as exemplars of faith by their attitudes toward the death of children. Gregory concludes the oration by reminding the audience of the Christian hope which they have in the ultimate restoration of creation and the abolishment of evil. He explains, however, that this restoration is necessarily preceded by death and resurrection.

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Christopher Graham

Purification → Otherworldly Purification

PYTHON

De Pythonissa

In this short work, dedicated to bishop Theodosius, Gregory seeks to give an answer to the question whether the spirit of Samuel the prophet was truly seen by the witch of Endor when she was consulted by King Saul, as related in 1 Ki 28.12–19.

Justin, Tertullian, Origen, Eustasius of Antioch and others had already discussed this question. Unlike Origen, who admitted the apparition of Samuel's spirit, Gregory maintains that the witch saw a demon which adopted the aspect of the prophet.

Simonetti believes that this work cannot be dated before 380, since it is the response to a request of a Bishop, and this presupposes that Gregory already had a certain fame.

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Juan Antonio Gil-Tamayo

QUAT UNI

In illud: Quatenus uni ex his fecistis

In this discourse, Gregory uses the image of judgment to underscore that the only path to salvation is the observance of the commandments. Calling to the passage “Come, the blessed of my Father”, he observes that “the benediction is the accurate observance of the commandments, malediction the lack of care for the commandments” (GNO IX, 113, 15–17). The priest and the Levite of the parable are, according to Gregory, examples to avoid (114, 5–8). He describes in an expressive manner the deformation that the human being often undergoes due to various sicknesses, in order thus to invite all to imitate the Lord, who did not hesitate to clothe himself in “vile flesh”, “to heal the illnesses of man through the contact with himself” (114, 13–15, 19).

In parallel with physical ill, Gregory describes the moral evil existing in society. More specifically, he refers to the possible danger entailed by caring for the sick, to underscore that “no fear exists in the practice of the commandments” (124, 7–8). He concludes: “If then, the reward of the commandments is so great that with it the kingdom of heaven is prepared, while no corporeal harm comes to him who offers care, what impediment is there to the actuation of the commandment of love?” (124, 29–125, 5). Certainly, Gregory does not deny the difficult nature of virtue, but he adds that “with time that which until now is difficult, will become sweet through familiarity” (125, 5–7; 126, 4–5).

At the end Gregory observes that “compassion towards the unfortunate is useful for those who are healthy” given that “none has in himself a pledge that is in any way certain of continued health” (126, 7–8. 11–12). He concludes: “That which you show to the unfortunate, should you expect for yourself as companion of navigation” (126, 24–26).

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Elias Moutsoulas

Refutatio confessionis Eunomii

The *Refutatio confessionis Eunomii* (Λόγος ἀντιρρητικός πρὸς τὴν Εὐνομίου ἔκθεσιν) is a reply to the *Confession of Faith* composed by Bishop EUNOMIUS (→), an Arian of the Anomean party. It is not easy to determine the time in which these writings were composed. Clearly, the dating of Gregory's work depends on that assigned to the *Confession of Faith*. DROBNER (*Lehrbuch der Patrologie*, Frankfurt am Main 2004, 233), states that Eunomius' *Confession of Faith* was presented before the Council of Constantinople in 381, but does not assign a date to the Nyssen's response. MORESCHINI maintains that the *Confession* was distributed after the same Council of Constantinople (in which it was condemned), but he too abstains from determining the date of the *Refutatio* (C. MORESCHINI, LVII). QUASTEN affirms that the *Confession of Faith* was written by Eunomius to defend himself before the emperor Theodosius in 383 (*Patrology*, Allen 1983, III, 257). MARAVAL appears to be close to this position. He affirms that the *Confession* of Eunomius was presented by Eunomius himself before the Council of Constantinople of 383 (→ CHRONOLOGY). Maraval concludes that Gregory would have written the *Refutatio* at the latest in the second half of 383.

In his *Refutatio*, Gregory develops a detailed criticism of the *Confession* of Eunomius (E.D. MOUTSOULAS, 168–180). The result is a work in which the fundamental truths of Trinitarian faith and Christology are presented, in polemics with Eunomius. Where the affirmations of the Arian theologian do not contradict the orthodox faith, Gregory has no difficulty in manifesting his agreement. Nevertheless, he is cautious in respect to the senses that Eunomius' formulas might hide, and proposes to interpret them in conformity with the faith.

1. *Introduction* (nn. 1–3). Gregory begins in affirming the supernatural origin of Revelation. Christian faith was received from Christ through the Apostles. This same faith is found in Scripture. It is thus not a human doctrine. Gregory bases his arguments on Christ's mandate to baptize in the name of the Father, of the Son and of the Holy Spirit (Mt 28.19). He establishes a very close relationship between the revelation of God in Christ,

confession of the Trinitarian faith, baptism in the name of the Trinity, and the participation of the human being in the mystery of salvation.

2. *Articles on the One and Triune God.* Eunomius maintained that the Father should be called “Maker” or “Creator” of the Son. The Son should be considered the “creature”, “work” or “making”, and the Holy Spirit should be understood as “creature of creature” or “work of work” (nn. 4–19). Gregory affirms that this strays from the true faith. Even if in the Scripture other names are found to refer to God, the Lord used these three precisely: Father, Son and Holy Spirit. The faith confesses that God is one by substance and at the same time recognizes three distinct hypostases. The hypostases are distinct without separation, and exist united without confusion. Each of the hypostases is differentiated in reason of its particularity. Thus the term Father does not indicate the substance, but the relation with the Son. The Father is Father in relation to the Son and exists only in this relation, so that it is impossible to think of the Father without thinking of the Son at the same time. In the same way, the Holy Spirit is united to the Father and the Son from all eternity. There is neither distance nor interval between the Son and the Holy Spirit. Gregory maintains that the divine nature is ineffable and incomprehensible, superior to any human name. In making Himself known, God adapted Himself to our limited knowledge. It is enough to conserve the faith which is received. It is the Son who became incarnate, assuming our nature in the womb of the Virgin Mary; he died on a cross to redeem us from sin and death, rose again, and will return as Judge.

Eunomius had professed faith in the “one and unique true God”. Gregory completes this affirmation, adding that the true faith professes three names in the unique God: the Father, the Son and the Holy Spirit (nn. 20–32). Jesus did not order us to baptize in the name of the only God, but in the name of the Father, the Son and the Holy Spirit. Citing the Gospel phrase “I and the Father are One” (Jn 10.30), he demonstrates that the word “only” does not designate the Father alone, but the Father with the Son.

Gregory also comments on the affirmation that “God is not separated according to substance into many substances” (nn. 33–37). For the Nyssen, it is evident that in a substance there cannot exist that which is separated from it. However, Eunomius had explained the sense of his affirmation: “not separated into three hypostases from one substance”. Gregory shows that this text manipulates the orthodox faith, constraining it to say something that it does not say.

3. *Articles on the Father* (nn. 38–53). Gregory declares himself in agreement with Eunomius' thesis that the Father is unique in every aspect and remains always the same. But he proposes the correct understanding of this formula: Whoever confesses the Father, always confesses the Son in an inseparable manner. Father and Son are one reality, one divine nature. It is not that the Son has a part of that which the Father is: on the contrary, but He possesses it entirely. Therefore the proper denominations of the Father—such as “Creator,” “Lord,” “Most High” or “True”—are applied to the Son and the Holy Spirit in an identical manner, without distinction. According to Gregory, with his doctrine of the unique “All Powerful,” Eunomius remains in Judaism or Platonism.

4. *Articles on the Son*. Regarding the Eunomian doctrine on the Son, Gregory indicates that his error consists in affirming that generation divides the substance of God (nn. 54–72). Eunomius denied that He who generates and He who is generated are of the same substance. Gregory responds that the Father is truly the Father of the Son, and not of someone extraneous to his substance. The generation of the Son by the Father does not imply a division of nature: He who affirms that He possesses all things from the Father is Someone distinct from Him, and identical with Him, with the only exception being that He is not the Father. Gregory specifies that when it is affirmed that God created all things with his wisdom, it is affirmed that He created all things through his eternal Word.

Eunomius had declared his faith in the “non-uncreated” Son of God. Gregory sees an evident demonstration of the conclusions to which Eunomius' arguments lead in this formula, viz. to a radical undervaluation of the true divinity of the Son and to his reduction to the level of creatures. Gregory reproaches his adversary for having established an equivalence between the terms “Only-Begotten” and “Firstborn” among many brothers. The essential difference between the one and the other is that “Only-Begotten” has no brothers, while the “Firstborn” is unthinkable without brothers. Gregory explains that this term is applicable to the Son only in the economic sense, as it is found in Scripture (nn. 73–86).

Gregory proceeds to analyze the concept of “generation” (nn. 87–113). Generation is not an act of creation. Gregory also affirms the total superiority of the generation of the Son in respect to any generation of the created order. There exists no material or temporal interval between the Father and the Son, nor any interval of passion, there is no before and after. This is the idea expressed by John in the Prologue.

Eunomius had nevertheless wished to turn the generation of the Word into an act of creation which separates the nature of the Father and the Son. When Eunomius calls the “Father” “Unengendered”, he does this in view of distancing the Father from his immediate relation with the Son. Gregory underscores that the term of “uncreated” means “to not have been created”, and belongs equally to the Father, to the Son and to the Holy Spirit—since it is an attribute of the divine nature. He nevertheless affirms that the word “unengendered” means “to not have been engendered”. Therefore, the biblical texts which speak of the creation of wisdom (Pr 8.22) have an economic sense.

Eunomius states that the Son does not participate in the glory of the Unengendered. The glory of the Father cannot be participated in by anyone. Gregory produces biblical texts which disprove him (nn. 114–124). He affirms that Christ is the “radiance of the glory of the Father”, that all that belongs to the Father is also of the Son. Gregory dedicates a few paragraphs to the question of the divine names (nn. 124–131), affirming that all that is of the Father is also proper to the Son and to the Holy Spirit. Gregory here adds some arguments to justify the true divinity of the Holy Spirit, something he develops in more detail at the end of the work.

5. *Christological Articles.* Eunomius maintains that the Son is subject to the will of the Father and that this obedience is a logical consequence of his nature, which is inferior to the Father’s. Gregory has recourse to Paul to demonstrate that He who became obedient to death on the Cross is He who is equal to God (nn. 133–142). He adds that the universal dominion of the Son is affirmed in the Scripture, and that this belongs to his divine nature. Gregory also treats the concept of mediation (nn. 142–144). Eunomius had affirmed that the Son is the mediator in doctrine and law. Gregory turns this affirmation against its author: if Christ is mediator, He is thus because, while being entirely God, He made himself entirely man. Gregory uses a soteriological argument here to affirm the true divinity and true humanity of Christ.

Before continuing with the question of the salvific economy, Gregory deals with the concepts of similarity, image and seal—images which Eunomius had applied to the Son (nn. 145–171). Eunomius maintains that the Son is similar to the Father. After having analyzed the signification of the word “similarity” (that which the senses perceive in a sculpture, that of a human being in regard to God, etc.), he concludes that the Son is not similar to God in any of these senses. Eunomius had contented

himself with a negative presentation of the notion of similarity and maintains that He is not similar as Unengendered to Unengendered, nor as engendered to engendered. Gregory ironically notes the indetermination of these arguments, and demonstrates the prevarication of Eunomius in presenting the discussion in terms of Unengendered-Begotten, whereby he claims to justify the distinction of natures. It is this same intention that leads Eunomius to affirm that the Son is “image and seal of the operation of the Almighty”.

Gregory returns here to Christological questions. Eunomius maintained that the Son did not assume man formed of soul and body. He affirmed that even the most humble words of the Lord seem to come from his divine nature itself. This seems thus to indicate that the Son did not assume a human soul (nn. 172–182). Gregory again uses a soteriological argument, affirming that from these premises one deduces that the Son saved only half of the human being—his body—and not the whole human being. The Son needed to carry the entire lamb on his shoulders, not only the skin. Gregory affirms that the divine nature is always equal—before assuming flesh, in the flesh and after the Passion. In the Passion, it is the human nature that experiences death. The Son, however, being united to the body and the soul, does not separate from either of them, and unites them again in the Resurrection. Gregory insists on the fact that the union of the two natures does not imply confusion between them, since on one hand the divine nature is immutable, and on the other, the human nature cannot suffer if the soul is not in an adequate disposition to the body.

6. *Articles on the Holy Spirit* (nn. 182–201). Gregory observes that Eunomius avoids the name “Holy Spirit”, and prefers the terms “Paraclete” and “Spirit of Truth”. He does not use the name “Holy Spirit” in order to not confess with this name the majesty of his divine glory. For Scripture applies the terms of “holy” and “spirit” to the Father and to the Son. The Lord calls the Holy Spirit “the other Paraclete”, while the Father, from whom the entire work of consolation begins, can also be called “Paraclete”. Therefore, Eunomius did not succeed in this way in separating the Holy Spirit from the Father and the Son. On the other hand, when the Lord calls the Holy Spirit “Spirit of Truth”, He affirms that He “proceeds from the Father”. These words are not applied to any creature in the Scriptures. Thus, the Scripture teaches the equality of honor of the Holy Spirit with the other divine Persons. Eunomius maintains that the Holy Spirit is born of the Only God by means of the Only Begotten. Gregory

reproaches him for affirming that the Father uses the Son as of a mere instrument for the formation of the Holy Spirit. Nevertheless, the Scripture witnesses to the divinity of the Holy Spirit, attributing the generation of the sons of God to Him.

According to Eunomius, the Paraclete is inferior to the Father and the Son, and therefore cannot be enumerated with the Father nor compared to the Son. In Eunomius' perspective, this is a question of the superiority of power. Gregory explains that the word Father is in reference to the Son alone, and does not include any notion of tyranny or domination. The faith of the Church professes that in the Father, the Son and the Holy Spirit, there is only one power, goodness, substance, glory and all prerogatives, except the distinction according to the hypostases. The faith of the Church affirms that the Son is Only-Begotten, and therefore has no brothers of the same genus. The Scripture teaches to not define the Holy Spirit as the brother of the Son, but this does not mean that one must deny that the Son and the Holy Spirit belong to the same divine nature. The Holy Spirit is coeternal with the Father and the Son. Thus, the Holy Spirit cannot be defined as the most powerful work of the Only Begotten, as Eunomius does. With the Eunomian affirmations that the Spirit sanctifies the saints, Gregory declares himself in full accord, and strikes back: even Eunomius attributes to the Holy Spirit things that God alone can do. Thus, Gregory states, the greatness of the Holy Spirit and his true divinity are demonstrated by the very words of his adversary (nn. 202–232).

MORESCHINI affirms that from a doctrinal perspective, the *Refutatio* does not have the same depth as the *Contra Eunomium*. Gregory takes up previous arguments which he retouches only in certain cases (for example, in certain interpretations of scriptural texts) and seeks a greater spiritual depth. In this work, the author's attitude is different: It is not a work with a high philosophico-theological perspective, but is a response to Eunomius' claim to possess the true faith. In order to manifest the untenability of Eunomius' position, Gregory does not present a high number of speculative arguments, but has larger recourse to scriptural foundations. Moreschini maintains that this is not a simple repetition; this is a distinct work which is more modest in scope. He highlights a new contribution in the *Refutatio*: In this work Gregory develops a more determined defense of the divinity of the Holy Spirit. This aspect had been eclipsed by the urgency of defending the true faith in the Son. It is necessary to recall that at the time of the composition of the *Refutatio*, the questions concerning the Holy Spirit merited a priority treatment, due to the Council of Constantinople of 381 (MORESCHINI, LVII–LVIII).

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Juan Ignacio Ruiz Aldaz

Restoration → *Apocatastasis*

RESURRECTION

The resurrection of the body is of fundamental importance in Gregory's theology, as it is one of the essential articles of the Christian faith. It is also a truth which had received a frontal attack on the part of philosophers from the time of the Apostolic preaching. There were thus a number of arguments in existence, formed in the early centuries, both for and against the resurrection of the body, which Gregory knows and works on.

The most important passages in which Gregory discusses the resurrection are as follows: *Op hom* 25–27 (PG 44, 213–229); *Mort* (GNO IX, sp. 51–68); *Salut Pasch* (GNO IX, 245–270); *An et res* (PG 46, 11–160); *Or cat*, sp. 8, 32, 35, 37 and 40 (GNO III/4, 29–34, 81–82, 86–92, 93–95, 106). To these passages can be added others which speak of the Resurrection of Jesus Christ, which is cause and paradigm of the resurrection of the dead. Our Lord, rising from the dead, with the power of his risen body transmits the resurrection to all of humanity through the “agreement” (→ *SYMPNOIA*) that exists among human beings, and in particular with Christ. The Resurrection of Christ shows not only the possibility of the resurrection, but also the source of the resurrection of the body and the manner in which it will occur (*Salut Pasch*, GNO IX, 245–253; *Or cat* 37, GNO III/4, 93–95).

In *Or cat* 8, Gregory affirms that DEATH (→) was imposed on man by God to purify him of evil: after death, through the resurrection, God will remake him anew, like a potter who breaks the clay vessel he had made in order to remake it. Neither death nor mortality is part of the original plan of God for human beings, as is demonstrated by the fact that man is created in the image and likeness of God who is immortal, and by the metaphor of the clothing in the TUNICS OF HIDE (→), which took place after sin. These tunics are imposed on man in view of his definitive healing, which passes through death (*Pulcher*, GNO IX, 472; *Mort*, *ibid.*, 53–56).

Thus, resurrection is understood “as the restitution (ἀποκατάστασις) of our nature to its primordial state” (*Eccl* 1, GNO V, 296; *Pulch*, GNO IX, 472).

Gregory explains his thought on the Resurrection of Christ in detail in the *Trid spat*: In the Last Supper, Jesus, who is the Lord of time, mystically anticipated his death in order to give his body as food to the disciples; after death, his soul descended to hell, on the third day the Resurrection

took place, with which He came back to unite in Himself the elements (body and soul) which death had separated (*Trid spat*, GNO IX, 280–294). The descent of Christ to hell constitutes the continuity between the death and Resurrection; this continuity includes the incorruptibility of the body in the sepulcher and the survival of Christ's soul, because the body and soul remain united to the divinity. For this reason, Gregory states, Christ was in death (ἐν τῷ θανάτῳ), but was not under the dominion of death (ὑπὸ τοῦ θανάτου). The realism with which Gregory speaks of the Resurrection of Christ is clear: The Resurrection of Christ was, essentially, the event which reunited the body and soul (*Antirrh* 17, GNO III/1, 152–155).

This realism closely depends, not only on the manner in which the Scripture speaks of the Resurrection of the Lord, but also on the vigor with which Gregory defends the unity of the human being in his ANTHROPOLOGY (→). The human being is a microcosm in which spirit and matter are united. Gregory formally rejects Origen's doctrine of the pure spirituality of the human being (DANIÉLOU, 155). Body and soul belong to the human being, but are not the human being, i.e. what constitutes the human being is the concurrence (συνδρομή) of these two elements (*Antirrh* 2, GNO III/1, 133). Gregory applies this concept of the human being both while speaking of the Incarnation of the Word and in his refutation of APOLLINARIUS (→). He also directly applies it to the Resurrection of the Lord. According to Gregory, one cannot say that the soul will rise again, because the soul is immortal and immune to death. In the resurrection, the soul will return to inhabit the body, because it is the union (συνψύχια) of these two elements that characterizes the living animal (*Sanct Pasch*, GNO IX, 266).

In *Op hom*, Gregory takes the proofs offered by the New Testament as a starting point to render the resurrection "credible": The preaching of Jesus Christ, the pedagogy of Christ with miracles which culminates in the resurrection of some of the dead (e.g., the son of the widow of Nain and Lazarus), and, finally, his own Resurrection. This is the definitive "proof" (*Op hom* 25, PG 46, 221). Gregory alludes to the most realistic narrations of the apparitions, to then undertake the already classic objection: How can the soul unite itself to elements that will be dispersed and will have been part of various bodies? Gregory's solution is inspired by Methodius of Olympus (*De res.*, 1–2): After death, a permanent "con-naturalness" continues to exist between the body and the soul. This is the bodily εἶδος (the idea or figure of the body) which remains in the soul like a seal. The εἶδος is this element which remains, giving identity to our

bodies in all the transformations that it undergoes from infancy to old age, and with which the soul continues to be bonded after death without wishing to abandon it (DANIÉLOU, 156–157; *Op hom* 27, PG 46, 224–229).

In *An et res*, Gregory discusses in depth the condition of the soul after death. The survival of the soul after death, Gregory states, belongs to the Catholic faith (*An et res*, PG 46, 17 A). This then leads to the question of where the soul goes once it is separated from the body (*ibidem*, 20B–21A). Gregory places a progressive response in Macrina's mouth, which at once affirms the survival of the soul and denies its transmigration into different bodies. The response is formed of these affirmations: 1) The soul, by itself, gives life to the body. 2) It is absurd to state that such a nature must necessarily dissolve when it ceases to give life to the body. 3) God, who transcends all things, contains all things in Himself and conserves all things. There is thus a relationship of God with matter, which is not that of "animation". 4) A similar relationship can exist between the soul and the body after death (*An et res*, PG 46, 43C; 45D; 68A; 73A; 76A–77A; 80A; 85A).

On this point Gregory shows a radical divergence from Origen on two important questions: the preexistence of souls and their transmigration after death. The doctrine of transmigration and Christian faith, Gregory states, coincide in maintaining that the soul, once separated from the body by death, returns to be in relation to material elements. The difference consists in the fact that, while the faith of Christians professes that it is the same body (τὸ αὐτὸ σῶμα), composed of the same elements that are united anew to the soul in the resurrection, those who defend transmigration maintain that the soul falls into other, different, bodies (*An et res*, PG 46, 108D–109B). Gregory uses many *ad absurdum* arguments to demonstrate the untenability of transmigration (MATEO SECO, 86–97). The most important argument consists in refusing both the preexistence and transmigration of souls together: This conception, Gregory maintains, necessarily leads to accepting an eternal return, because, according to such a vision, that which is in heaven can always fall, and at the same time, all that is on earth can always be elevated again (*An et res*, PG 46, 108B–116C). This argument was already used in *Op hom* (PG 46, 229–233).

After death, the relationship that the soul conserves with the elements that composed its body cannot be conceived of as animation. Obviously, the body remains without life (ἄψυχον), the soul remains tied to the elements as a sentinel. In keeping with this hypothesis, Gregory conceives

the resurrection as the event by which the soul receives anew the strength to give life and unity to the elements of its body that are dispersed (*An et res*, PG 46, 76–85A).

Gregory does not doubt that the risen body will be transformed in conformity with the body of Christ, “the traits of the image of God resplendent in it”. There will be a profound transformation in the resurrected bodies, but the personal distinction will be preserved. Gregory thinks that such a distinction will consist in the fact that the virtues of each one will be visible, in a similar manner to how the joys and sufferings of our souls are now reflected on our faces. How great will the joy in heaven be, when the one will be able to rejoice in the splendor of the other, when no stain of vice, or evil or laziness will exist (*Mort*, GNO IX, 62–66).

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Lucas Francisco Mateo-Seco

RHETORIC

The Cappadocians spoke and wrote against the background of the larger rhetorical habits and expectations of the fourth century, both in detail and with respect to the overall place of classical rhetoric in fourth-century discourse (see SPIRA, 1985 & 1989; CAMERON, 1991; KENNEDY, 1983). Rhetoric itself, however, underwent its own transformation in its appropriation by Christianity. Classical rhetoric in the fourth century, the rhetoric of the Cappadocians' education (both Basil and Gregory Nazianzen were formally trained in rhetoric in Athens), was, by universal account, a weak shadow of its former glory. SPIRA (1985) summarizes ancient consensus for the decline of rhetoric: loss of political weight; removal from the populace to the academy; morbid focus on a barren past; and the clever, mannered ornamentation of too much poetry. In short, rhetoric had no occasion (political, public, intellectual) to demand a rigorous application of its resources. This all changed in the fourth century. The generative pressures of the Trinitarian controversy and the ecclesio-political consequences of Constantine's conversion created the conditions for a return of vigor to rhetoric, for a transformation of the value of rhetoric from poetic ornamentation to an essential resource of communicating Christian truth. As Gregory Nazianzen put it, he had studied rhetoric "to turn bastard letters to the service of those that are genuine" (*De vita sua*, 113–114). The very public and widespread nature of the Trinitarian debates put a premium on rhetorical skill and, as in the case of Basil at the Council of Constantinople (360), church leaders actively recruited those reputed to be eloquent orators.

Although Basil and Gregory Nazianzen have garnered more praise for their eloquence (KENNEDY judges Gregory Nazianzen's funeral orations to be the greatest work of rhetoric since Demosthenes), it is difficult to overestimate the substantial role of rhetoric in Gregory of Nyssa's writing and thinking. The status of rhetoric in Gregory's work was influenced by the following factors: the ultimate unknowability of God, the limitations of language, a greater commitment to reverence than to analytical closure, a belief that knowledge served the life of virtue, the literary nature of the Scriptures and the liturgical/homiletic setting for so much of his output. As a result, Gregory's works are full of vivid images and illustrations designed more to persuade and inspire than to demonstrate and prove.

That is, he attempted to influence the choices and changes of attitude that would result in the transformation of the individual into the image of Christ. In his debate with Eunomius, Gregory repeatedly turned to the resources of rhetoric as an alternative to Eunomius' over-specific claims to analytical precision. In refuting these logic-based arguments, Gregory took refuge in the rhetorically-based nature of the Scriptures which relied so heavily on images, metaphors and exhortation. This fusion of rhetoric and hermeneutics supplanted an analytical Christian discourse that constructed arguments based on data abstracted from the Scriptures rather than from a direct reading of them.

Initially tempted to abandon the church to pursue a career in rhetoric (see Naz. *Ep.* XI), Gregory revealed his ongoing love for rhetoric in the pleasure he took in receiving a compliment for his erudition from the pagan Libanius (see *Ep.* XIV).

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Scot Douglass

Sacraments → Christian Initiation

SALUT PASCH

In sanctum et salutare Pascha

This homily closes the triptych of Easter sermons, which includes *Sanct Pasch* and *Trid spat* as well. J. Daniélou maintains that it was preached on April 9, 388 (J. DANIELOU, 369–370 and J. BERNARDI, 285). It is quite a bit shorter than the other two writings, so much so that H.R. Drobner sees it as the epilogue of *Trid spat*, and consequently changes its date. It was certainly pronounced during the night of the Easter vigil, as can be seen in the continuous references to the light and to candles. Joy is proclaimed since the shadows have been definitely overcome: “This night full of light, uniting the splendor of the lamps to the first rays of the sun that rises, has created a unique continuing day, undivided by the parentheses of the shadows” (GNO IX, 309, 22–24). With Christ, the end of times is already present, the eschatological day of the Lord is already come to never set, and his victory destroys even the demonic hosts (311, 8–20). In this manner the definitive liberation is realized, resumed in the beautiful phrase: *We, once sons of men, we are now the sons of God* (310, 17–18).

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SANCT PASCH

In sanctum Pascha

J. Daniélou maintains that this homily, the first of a triptych that includes also *Trid spat* and *Salut Pasch*, was preached on April 21, 379, the day of Easter (J. DANIELOU, 350–351 and J. BERNARDI, 285). The object of the sermon is the resurrection: Gregory invites his audience to rejoice that Christ is risen, and he vigorously underscores the actuality of the Paschal event, which is expressed through the use of the present tense in the liturgical formulas. The repetition of the terms *today* and *now* accentuates the manner in which the salvation wrought by Christ, presented as a universal liberation, is rendered present in the ecclesial mediation. This aspect could be linked to the recent promulgation of a law of amnesty and to the presence in the audience of some rich Christians who possessed slaves (M. HARL, 91–93) (→ SLAVERY). The Nyssen confronts the lack of faith of those who hold the miracle of the resurrection to be impossible. Gregory cuts to the essence of the issue, recalling how man was created immortal by the divine goodness. This is a prodigy that cannot be fully understood by human reason, since divine operations are inscrutable. The possibility of the resurrection is therefore defended with the argument that He who formed man can recompose him after decomposition, and with the reminder of the miraculous resurrections recounted in the Gospels. Gregory also uses examples taken from nature: the development of the human being from seed, which gives rise to legs, flanks, brain and bones of the living being (GNO IX, 258, 22–25); the potter who remakes the broken vase; the grain that germinates and develops in the ear; the reawakening from deep sleep of reptiles, or the reflowering of the trees in the springtime. An essential point in the Nyssen's reasoning is that the body does not totally disappear in death: there is only a dissolution into the original elements. According to Gregory, those who deny the resurrection are led by a materialist spirit and the desire to overcome all limits, *since the discourse on the resurrection presupposes that of judgment* (264, 12–13). And it is just that the soul and the body be present in the judgment, since it is together, in the unity of the human being, that every action has been done (267,1–268,7). Gregory's final argument is of particular interest for the historical conception of the human being

(→ ANTHROPOLOGY): As the characteristic of ancestors can be transmitted to their descendants, so too, the excellent characteristics held by those who rise again can be revived (269,23–270,1). The ideas of power, of providence and of divine justice are thus the fundamental axes of the sermon (J.C.M. VAN WINDEN, 113). The work is also quite beautiful and refined when analyzed from the rhetorical point of view (M. HARL, 94).

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Giulio Maspero

Sanctuary → *Adyton*

Semantics → Trinitarian Semantics

SEXT PS

In sextum Psalmum

A short work dedicated to a commentary on Ps 6, which Gregory places in relation to the eighth day. He had already spoken of the eighth day in *Inscr*, defining it as “the term of the present time and initiation of the future one” (GNO V, 121, 5–6). Here he notes that in that day, the true circumcision is realized with the stone knife: the stone is Christ, through whom human life is transformed into something divine. The eighth day “remains always one, interrupted by the nocturnal shadow, since another sun generates it, that sun that causes the true light to shine” (189, 22–25). It is a day in which the just judgment of God is realized, which is why the prophet, along with the remembrance of the eighth day, also mentions penance.

In his study of this work, HANS CHRISTIAN KNUTH underscores that the soteriological context of this Psalm is interpreted by Gregory in an individual sense, not in the context of the history of salvation. Thus the scope of exegesis coincides with the scope of one’s own personal existence, and, given that the author of the Psalms, as of all the Scripture, is God himself, in order to properly understand the text there must be a vital *union* between the author of the text and the exegete.

In the editions of Gregory, this homily is often added to the *Inscr* treatise.

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Juan Antonio Gil-Tamayo

SIMPL

Ad Simplicium, de fide

This short writing, addressed to Simplicius the tribune (otherwise unknown), is titled in some manuscripts “On Faith”, in others “On the Father, the Son and the Spirit”. The work polemicizes against the Eunomians and gathers arguments developed in other writings (particularly *Ref Eun* and *Graec*). No final dating is possible; scholars sometimes hypothesize 383 or a little later. The starting point is the verse of Ps 80.10, which forbids either a “new” god or a “foreign” god. Gregory links the term “new” to the concept that the Son had a beginning successively, and the term “foreign” with the concept that the Son is of a “different” (ἄλλότριος) nature from that of the true God (GNO III/I, 61,1–62,1).

After having commented that in the end, both concepts would signify that one should not adore the Son, Gregory principally examines the conception of a beginning for the Son (cfr. the term “new” of Ps 80.10), and then the foreignness of nature.

Gregory rejects the argument taken from Pr 8.22 (“The Lord created me”), and denies that this should be referred to the Son, as if He should be considered created, observing that this affirmation, along with many other designations of Christ in the Bible, refers to the Incarnation in conformity with Jn 1.14. Thus, Pr 8.22, in a fashion analogous to that of Is 49.5 (“Thus says the Lord, who created me his servant from the maternal womb”) must refer to the human nature of Jesus (62, 16–63, 21). Only this is created, while the divine nature of the Son is eternal, something Gregory makes evident with the image of the luminous reflection that has the same duration as (the light of) the candle (63, 22–64, 15). One must reject a graduation from Father to Son (a “bigger—smaller”), since in Heb 1.3 the Son is called precisely the “imprint of existence”, something that indicates an identity of existence, and Jn 1.1 states explicitly that the Logos was in the beginning (and not after it) (64, 16–65, 9).

The affirmation that the Son is not equal to the Father in nature (cfr. the term “foreign” in Ps 80.10), since the Father is not generated while the Son is generated, is refuted by Gregory with reference to Adam and Abel:

The first was not generated (but directly formed by God), the second generated—nevertheless, the one and the other are equal in so far as the nature is concerned, i.e. they are human beings. The goal of the refutation is to demonstrate that one cannot deduce a diversity of nature from the difference between unengendered and engendered (65, 10–24).

After these Christological arguments, Gregory briefly discusses the Holy Spirit. Gregory opposes the conception of the Spirit as uncreated to the concept that He too is created; unlike creation, the Spirit does not need any of the divine goods, but rather transmits them: He dominates, consoles, liberates, gives wisdom (65, 25–66, 13). All the designations applied to the Father and to the Son, while not indicating the difference of hypostasis—thus, attributes such as eternal, blessed, good, wise, just and holy—are also applied to the Spirit in Scripture, for which reason the Spirit must be considered above creation (66, 13–67, 6). Gregory treats the biblical testimony of Am 4.3 (“he who fortified thunder and created the spirit”), adopted by his adversaries as proof that God created the Spirit, as referring it to the Pneumatological renewal of the believer: with “thunder” the Gospel is understood, which is fortified for the believer, who is recreated as spirit (cfr. Jn 3.6) and thus announces Christ (cfr. 1 Cor 12.3) (67, 7–23).

The work continues with arguments found in the controversy of Basil with Eunomius, or those Gregory had taken up in his refutation of Eunomius. The argumentative strategy otherwise follows the arguments developed by Athanasius. The work does not present an extensive conceptual system of ontology. The foreignness of nature is rejected (the concept of οὐσία is lacking), the difference of hypostases is somewhat incidentally presupposed (thus Heb 1.3: *χαρακτήρ τῆς ὑποστάσεως* is actually applied to the conformity of nature). Thus one can suppose that Gregory wished to provide Simplicius with a support with which he could oppose arguments referring to Scripture coming from Eunomian adversaries.

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Volker Henning Drecoll

Sin → Original Sin

SKOPOS

σκοπός

Gregory uses the term σκοπός around 300 times in his works (cf. FABRICIUS/RIDINGS, *Concordance*, s.v.). Classical Greek designated thereby the person who was on guard, the sentinel in an elevated observatory who studied the horizon to warn of immanent danger, as well as the object on which the regard was fixed, i.e. the target that one had to hit. Post-Classical Greek primarily conserved the second sense in figurative language: the intention, the scope of an action. Christian vocabulary assumed both of these fundamental senses: 1) σκοπός as the religious ideal, particularly in the ascetic perspective, which must be attained; 2) The prophet (e.g. Ez 33.6), and later the Christian priest; and, attaining a full signification through a combination of both of these: 3) The spiritual master (guardian) who also serves as model (scope or target). Gregory's linguistic usage is principally based on this Tradition, diversifying it with personal forms.

1. Σκοπός as religious ideal, and particularly as ascetic, can be found primarily in *Inst*, as is already evident from its title: Περί τοῦ κατὰ θεὸν σκοποῦ καὶ τῆς κατὰ ἀλήθειαν ἀσκήσεως (v.l. Περί τοῦ τῆς εὐσεβείας σκοποῦ ...). Σκοπός here means in general the following of the straight path, which consists in Christian perfection. The σκοπός ὁ κατὰ τὴν παρθενίαν (*Virg* XVIII 5: GNO VIII/1, 321, 5–6) especially refers to purity in an ample sense of the term, i.e. liberty from sin. In other works Gregory prefers to use τέλος instead of σκοπός when speaking of the end of the virtuous life: τέλος τοῦ κατ' ἀρετὴν βίου μακαριότης ἐστὶν ... ἢ πρὸς τὸ θεῖον ὁμοίωσις (*Inscr* 1: GNO V, 25, 11–26, 11; cf. *Vit Moys* II, 314–315); τέλος can itself be replaced by ὄρος at times. In synthesis, Gregory seems to refer the concept of σκοπός to the ascetic life as a well defined and delimited goal. The tendency towards perfection is, in fact, an infinite tendency, as is its scope, viz. God.

2. Gregory also knows the personal sense of σκοπός outside of the context of Ez 33.6. Moreover, all the teachers and leaders appointed by

God, such as Samuel, Micah and Moses, are “eyes” that indicate the straight path (cf. *Cant* VII: GNO VI, 217, 6–12; XIII: 394, 14–18).

3. Following Origen, Gregory uses σκοπός as a biblical hermeneutical category to describe the effective scope of the Scriptures. According to Origen the scope of the Scriptures consists in the inspiration of the sacred writers, to guide the authors themselves first of all and then, by means of them, their hearers/readers to the knowledge of mysteries, i.e. primarily of God and of his Son. Gregory however applies this general hermeneutical principle in a rather restricted manner (cf. *Op hom* pref.: PG 44, 128B). The scope of the Psalter is to describe the ascent to happiness. The method must begin with awareness of the scope, of the intention of the Sacred Scripture, and then recognize the logical structure (ἀκολουθία) and ordered succession (τάξις) of thoughts to finally reach the full understanding of the intention of the text (πρὸς τὴν τοῦ σκοποῦ γνῶσιν) (*Inscr* pref: GNO V, 24,13–25,9). The scope of the Scriptures, illustrated by the example of Moses, is “to take those who are prisoners of the perception of the senses by the hand (χειραγωγῆσαι), and through exterior appearances guide them to that reality which is beyond sensory knowledge” (*Hex* 8: GNO IV/1 17, 4–6).

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Hubertus R. Drobner

SLAVERY

The Nyssen strongly affirms the immorality of slavery. Of all the church Fathers, he is probably the one who rejects it most strongly, since Gregory Nazianzen, Chrysostom and Augustine limit themselves to affirming that slavery is a consequence of original sin (cfr. P. GARNSEY, 243).

For Gregory, the creation of the human being in the image of the Trinity corresponds to the divinization of the human being, through which God has made him a participant in every perfection, since the divine nature is the sum of all perfections. Among all these, the first and most proper is liberty, as the responsibility and capacity to choose the good. The virtue is explicitly called ἀδέσποτον, and the liberty of the person is directly founded in God (*Op hom*, PG 44, 184B). Accordingly, the human being, created for virtue, can have no masters.

The doctrine of the creation of the human being in the image of the Trinity is the essential aspect of the celebrated passage of *Eccl* as well, where Gregory explicitly condemns slavery: “God said: *Let us make man in our image and likeness* (Gn 1.26). So then, tell me, who will sell and who will buy him who is in the likeness of God and lord of all the earth, and who has received in inheritance from God authority over all that exists on earth? Only God can. Or, better, not even God himself. For it is written, his *gifts are irrevocable* (Rm 11.29)” (*Eccl*, GNO V, 336, 10–16).

Gregory affirms that God does not submit the human being to slavery: He is free, because he is created in the image of the Trinity (*Op hom*, PG 44, 140). Who then could dare to do so? What price could one pay for the human being whom God has made lord of all the earth? If the earth itself, with that which it contains, has an inestimable value, how much more will the one who is its master have an inestimable value? Not even the whole universe would be a worthy price for the soul of one human being (*Eccl*, GNO V, 336, 18–337, 7).

M.M. Bergadá identifies three arguments to which Gregory has recourse in *Eccl* to support his condemnation of slavery: the philosophical affirmation of the unity of human nature (→ *PHYSIS*), the theological argument from the creation of the human being in the image and likeness of God (Gn 1.26) (→ *IMAGE THEOLOGY*) and the anthropological affirmation that the free will (→ *PROAIRESIS*) constitutes the principal aspect of this likeness with God (M.M. BERGADÁ, 195). It nevertheless appears

important to underscore that these three arguments belong to the same theological structure of the Nyssen's thought, in which the social analogy constitutes a true and proper fulcrum in so far as Trinitarian doctrine and anthropological conceptions intersect here (→ SOCIAL ANALOGY). T.J. Dennis clearly demonstrates the essential connection between Gregory's affirmations in *Eccl* and in *Op hom*.

We should not forget that Gregory's thought starts with the necessity of explaining to Eunomius how it is possible for the Son to have assumed the form of a servant (cf. Ph 2.7). In this context, servitude between individuals of the same species is excluded, since in order to avoid subordinationism, it is not possible to admit ontological levels at the interior of the same species. It was the Trinitarian reflection of the fourth century itself that made it possible to recognize the dignity of the human being: the concept of person was initially considered as synonymous to limitedness, and thus unworthy of God. The discussion that sprang up around the Council of Nicaea and the affirmation of the equivalence of πρόσωπον and ὑπόστασις permitted the change, thanks to the application of these concepts both to Trinitarian immanence and to the human being, as can be seen in the use of the SOCIAL ANALOGY (→) for the Trinity.

Gregory's refutation of slavery has been doubted by certain authors. R. Moriarty, based upon a parallel between some of the Nyssen's affirmations and Letter 47 of Seneca, maintains that the text of *Eccl* is simply based on a common rhetorical *locus*. However it is essential to underscore that Gregory draws opposite conclusions from those of Seneca, thus showing that the rhetorical cloak is placed at the service of a new theological affirmation. One could cite numerous examples in which Gregory uses classical rhetorical images in a theological context, even in contexts which are immediately Trinitarian; this is made clear by his discussion with Eunomius, taken as a whole. Further, the Nyssen's argument can be perfectly situated in the totality of his thought. The philological individuation of a rhetorical source for this text is clearly of interest, but it seems excessive to extrapolate from this that Gregory's refutation of slavery was only formal, on the grounds that he does not speak explicitly of practical consequences. S. Elm goes so far as to accuse the Nyssen of incoherence, even to the point of being the master of some slaves (S. ELM, 103). D.F. Stramara has demonstrated that there are neither texts nor indicators that permit this conclusion. The theological position offers a different perspective, and the Nyssen's attitude seems to follow the example of conduct offered by the Letter to Philemon.

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Giulio Maspero

SOBER DRUNKENNESS

Gregory uses this oxymoron, already the fruit of a rich earlier tradition, to describe the “going out from oneself”, that is, ecstasy. The expression of “sober drunkenness” can be traced to Philo, and is closely tied to the Alexandrian tradition (LEWY, 73–107). In Gregory’s corpus this expression is interpreted in the context of other expressions typical of him, such as light/shadow, impassible/passion, vigilant/sleep, vertigo, or *epektasis*. All these paradoxical expressions reciprocally complete each other and must be borne in mind if one wishes to evaluate the mystical dimension of Gregory’s spiritual theology. In this theology, “sober drunkenness” serves to describe the mixture of passivity and vertigo that characterizes ecstasy. Gregory himself unites the two concepts. Citing Ct 5.1 (*Drink and be drunk, my friends!*), he comments that that which is proper to drunkenness is to produce an ecstasy, and that, in the case of spiritual drunkenness, this ecstasy signifies a leap from inferior realities to heavenly ones (*Cant* 10, GNO VI, 307–308).

Gregory proposes three people, for whom he has a great admiration, as examples of “sober drunkenness”: David, St. Paul and St. Peter. According to Gregory, the three experience “sober drunkenness”, and Scripture passages are cited which affirm that “they went outside themselves”. David was possessed by this “drunkenness” when he saw the invisible beauty, he entered into ecstasy and thus said “every man is a liar” (Ps 115.2; *Cant* 10, GNO VI, 308–309). In *Virg* 10 (GNO VII/1, 290), Gregory speaks amply of David’s ecstatic experience and makes the same application of Ps 115.2: this ecstasy happened because David was elevated through the power of the Holy Spirit, which causes him to go outside himself and contemplate the inaccessible beauty in a “blessed ecstasy”. The expression “every man is a liar” signifies that everyone who would wish to express this beauty that he contemplates in ecstasy must be a liar, since such a beauty is ineffable, and words always remain extremely distant from the reality. As AUBINEAU (SC 119, 374, n. 3) observes, the affirmation that it is the action of the Spirit that elevates in ecstasy the soul of David confers certain specifically Christian aspects on Gregory’s mysticism. The same can be said of the expression “sober drunkenness”: Philo is interpreted by Gregory in a Christian context, which assigns a primacy to the action of the Holy Spirit in the mystical life.

Paul was possessed of the same “drunkenness” when, entering into ecstasy like a new Benjamin, he says that he is outside himself (2 Cor 5.13). Gregory compares St. Paul to Benjamin with reference to Ps 68.28, where an ecstasy of Benjamin is mentioned (*Cant* 10, GNO VI, 309–310). Thus, in *Inscr* 13 (GNO V, 147–148), Gregory presents Benjamin as a figure of St. Paul, precisely in the “ecstasy of the mind”.

Next to St. Paul, Gregory also presents the example of St. Peter in the ecstasy spoken of in Acts 10.10. St. Peter is both “hungry and drunk”, he receives a “sober divine vision” through which he goes outside himself and contemplates the “evangelical tablecloth” which descends from heaven full of every kind of animal (*Cant* 10, GNO VI, 309–310).

The theme of sober drunkenness appears frequently in Gregory’s writings in other places. The principal texts are *Ascens* (GNO IX, 324) and *Cant* 5 and 13 (GNO VI, 156 and 362). Gregory’s doctrine can be compared to that of his contemporary, St. Ambrose, whose spiritual teachings are synthesized by DASSMANN (207–215) under the expression *sobria ebrietas*.

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Lucas Francisco Mateo-Seco

SOCIAL ANALOGY

This is one of the fundamental elements of Gregory's thought. He explicitly affirms that one must take human nature as a guide, in order to elevate oneself to the pure knowledge of the divine dogmas (*Eun* III, GNO II, 27). Accordingly, he courageously forges a parallel between the human social dimension and the Trinitarian one, a parallel founded on the relationships between persons, substance and nature. Thus, in *Eun* I, the image of three men appears to clarify the distinction between οὐσία and ὑπόστασις: Peter, James and John are one in so far as the substance is concerned, each one being a man, but they differ through their personal properties (*Eun* I, GNO I, 88). This is a common example in the Nyssen's writings, found in *Graec*, GNO III/1, 21,4–5; 22, 18–22; 23, 4–24; 25,20–23; *Abl*, GNO III/1, 38, 8–9; 54,3–4; *Epist* 38, PG 32, 325B and *Antirr*, GNO III/1, 165,12–13 as well. This parallel between three men and the TRINITY (→) is known as the *social analogy* of the Trinity. It has unfortunately been poorly interpreted at times, serving as the basis for a psychologizing reading of the intra-Trinitarian relations (S. COAKLEY, L. AYRES). This image is in fact associated with the very nucleus of Cappadocian theology, i.e. the THEOLOGY OF THE IMAGE (→), as well as with the relationship between θεολογία (→) and οἰκονομία (→). It was already present in Basil (cf. BASIL OF CAESAREA, *Contra Eunomium* II, 4, PG 29, 577C e 580AB; SC 305, 18–22, together with *De Spiritu Sancto*, 17; SC 17, pp. 185–186).

After the Council of Nicaea, the majority of oriental bishops found it difficult to accept the ὁμοούσιος, precisely due to the possible consequence of the application of human nature as an analogy of the Trinity. In order to avoid the possibility that the Father and Son could be considered as brothers or members of the same species, i.e. to avoid a certain coordination on the substantial level in the Trinity, it appeared necessary to introduce a common οὐσία as an independent entity above the Persons in order to guarantee their unity. Apollinarius of Laodicea thus resolved the difficulty by introducing the analogy of universal humanity for the Trinity, understood in a specific sense. It seems that the first letter of Apollinarius to Basil is the first case of an application to the Trinity of a human analogy (cf. BASIL OF CAESAREA, *Epistola* 362; Y. COURTONNE, *Saint Basile. Lettres*, Paris 1966, 222–224): The

Father, in a parallel with Adam, would represent the common οὐσία. Thus the necessity of opposing the Essence to the Persons would disappear, at the same time saving the fundamental principle of the paternal Monarchy. The price to pay was a slight subordination on the substantial level.

The Cappadocians, however, were confronted with Eunomius, an advocate of the ἀνόμοιος. In his case, the issue of the equality and diversity of the Father and the Son was extremely radical. The derivative interpretation of the Trinity, on the analogy with humanity, was no longer sufficient to guarantee the perfect equality of the three Persons, due to its subordinationist flavor. They therefore chose to reject the derivative model, but surprisingly decided to conserve the human analogy with the divine nature. Their solution will be completely original—a coordination on the personal level, i.e. on the level of ὑπόστασις (J. ZACHHUBER, 238–239).

It was however necessary to employ an adequate conceptual instrument to permit this shift. Gregory therefore introduced a concept of human nature which included in itself both nature understood as the sum of the properties which characterize humanity (the intensive dimension) and nature understood as the sum of all human beings (the extensive dimension). These are two distinct but complementary concepts, synthetically included in one phrase: universal human nature. It is identical in all human individuals and at the same time is the cause, on the ontological level, of the fact that each of them is a human being. It is this conceptual step which makes it possible to speak of all of humanity as of one human being (*Abl*, GNO III/1, 40, 5–9).

The importance of the concept of universal human nature has not been always recognized by the interpreters (K. HOLL, 219; G.C. STEAD, 149), but it belongs to the underlying structure of the whole of Gregory's theological thought. The Nyssen's notion of φύσις (→) is particularly rich and articulated. In addition to the intensive and extensive dimensions, it includes, in its application on the creaturely level, the temporal dimension as well (→ ANTHROPOLOGY). This richness attributes a synthetic role to φύσις, which proves crucial in giving a unity to the Nyssen's theological construction as a whole.

That which permits Gregory to pass from the creaturely level to the eternal one is filiation, because this is essential for the articulation of the relationship between φύσις and ὑπόστασις. For this reason he can write: "As in Adam and Abel there is one humanity, so too in the Father and the Son there is one Divinity" (*Simpl*, GNO III/1, 65, 22–24). The parallel

between the Trinity and humanity is clear, but every danger of confusion is eliminated by the radical difference between the eternal generation of the second Person and human generation, which was the center of the debate with Eunomius. All of Gregory's theology is founded on the radical distinction between the creaturely world and the Trinity: Only the Father, the Son and the Holy Spirit are eternal, while every other reality is inserted into the temporal dimension (→ CREATION, *DIASTÊMA*). For example, in *Eun* III (GNO II, 35, 12–19), Gregory writes that the name of *Son* is the best defense of the faith because Christ is the Son of God and Son of Man. For this reason his unique filiation is that which unites economy to theology, time to eternity. The affirmation of the radical distinction between *θεολογία* and *οἰκονομία* is conjoined to the affirmation of their inseparability, in as much as the second has its source in the first. This admirable construction permits the Nyssen to strike out on the path of the social analogy of the Trinity.

Gregory affirms that human beings must become good and pious, as God is good and pious (Ps 103.8), but that this does not make them become like God: If human beings unite among each other through free choice they will never be one reality as the Most Holy Trinity is. Human beings can enter into conformity of their liberty through free choice (*διὰ προαιρέσεως*) to reach the perfection of unity, adding to the physical union which unites them the unity through free choice, but the difference between the divine and the human remains infinite. The leap from human beings to the divine is a leap of nature, and it is not enough that human will be conformed to the divine will. The Father and the Son are united in a perfect communion, both of nature and of free choice (*Eun* I, GNO I, 171,4–172,3). The physical union of humanity cannot then exactly coincide with the unity of the divine nature. For the Father, the Son and the Holy Spirit are identified, each of them, with the whole of the divine nature, while human beings only participate in human nature itself. For the divinity, the intensive and extensive dimensions of *φύσις* coincide, while for the human being—a being in time—this is not so. The key idea is precisely that the created nature is necessarily temporal, i.e. that it extends in time.

For this reason, the true identity of human nature can unfold only in a Christological and eschatological perspective, i.e. in the Trinitarian *τέλος* which corresponds to the *ἀρχή*, the foundation of the theology of the image in which all humanity, as the body of Christ, will have access to the Father. The Body of Christ is, in fact, for Gregory, the entire human nature in its extensive and historical dimension, including the lives of

all human beings: It is to this human nature that the Son indissolubly united (κατεμίχθη) himself, making himself, in his Humanity and in his being Son, Mediator (Μεσίτης) between God and human beings (*Tunc et ipse*, GNO III/2, 21, 7–12). Thus, the true human nature is that of Christ, i.e. his body understood in a Pauline manner and perfect in unity, through which one has access to the intra-Trinitarian intimacy. The key to understanding the unity of human nature is the social analogy, and therefore Christ's mediation.

One can read in it the true relation between human nature and divine nature, i.e. the relation which corresponds to the plan of the Father. Commenting on *Blessed are the peacemakers, for they will be called sons of God* (Mt 5.9), Gregory presents human nature (τὸ ἀνθρώπινον) in its eschatological condition in a manner which is parallel to that of the divine nature, simple (ἀπλοῦν), free of composition (ἀσύνθετον) and impossible to represent (ἀσχημάτιστον): Human nature too, once perfectly returned to the good, will become simple, impossible to represent and truly as one (ὡς ἀληθῶς ἓν γενόμενον). It is this which is considered the beatitude of human beings (*Beat*, GNO VII/2, 160,21–161,5). It is important to underscore that simplicity and impossibility of representation are applied to human nature, attributes which are clearly exclusive to the divine nature, while on the other hand perfect humanity is not defined as free of composition, in so far as it, unlike the three divine Persons, reaches unity after decomposition, and reaches it only in the unity of the Body of Christ, who as Son introduces the human being into the Trinity itself, divinizing humankind in the identification with Christ Himself.

In the *eschaton*, through the imitation of Christ and by his work of redemption, when the last human being will have been born and died, unity will be re-established in the final resurrection. For all humanity, now the body of Christ, will be filled with the love of the Father, and it will be clear that the only true love is that which proceeds from the immanence of the three eternal Persons. Gregory, commenting on Jn 17.21–23, even affirms that human beings will participate in the Trinitarian perichoresis: It would not be possible for them to *become* one as the Father and Son are one, unless, after being freed of all that separates them from each other, they did not unite to the Father and the Son who *are* One. This is possible only in Christ, who has united time and eternity. For this reason, those who are perfect in unity with Him, unite themselves to the Father and become one as the Father is One with the Son. For if the Father loves the Son, and human beings are united to

the Son through faith, then He who loves his own Son loves also the body of his Son, i.e. human beings, as He loves the Son himself (*Tunc et ipse*, GNO III/2, 22,22–23,14).

The unity of human nature is underscored by Gregory in a manner which is unique in the history of theological thought, a manner which cannot be undervalued. The double dimension of φύσις, which is reflected in the two moments of CREATION (→), finds its completion in the eschatological joining of the two dimensions: the intensive, which locates in each human being the image of God, and the extensive, which presents the whole of human nature in its historical and numerical completeness as the very perfection of the same Trinitarian image in the sons of God. Restoration and access to the Trinitarian perichoresis are therefore possible in the human nature of Christ, through whom the unity and simplicity extend into every human being, whose nature is the same human nature of Christ, thus permitting an analogous human perichoresis. It has been duly noted that creaturely finiteness impedes human beings from an authentic perichoresis (V. HARRISON, 353). It is for this reason that it is important to underscore the analogical, that is to say participated, dimension of the only possible natural and eternal perichoresis. The Nyssen's eschatology is radically marked by the dynamic category of ἐπέκτασις (→), which is a defense of the analogical dimension itself.

In the light of the eschatological perspective, the social analogy appears to be much more than one simple image among the many used by Gregory in the Trinitarian context, such as that of wine or that of the arrow, in so far as these latter were not created in the image of the Trinity and are not characterized by the unicity of nature and multiplicity of hypostases. In fact, the social analogy itself leads Gregory to make of human dignity an absolute (→ SLAVERY, EMBRYO), on the basis of the new awareness of the possibility of applying the terms of φύσις and ὑπόστασις to both the Trinity and to the human being: It is a possibility which is the basis for the understanding of the elevated vocation of the human being himself, who is called in the unity of the Body of Christ to participate as a son in the Son, called to that eternal dynamic of love which constitutes the divine intimacy.

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Giulio Maspero

SOTERIOLOGY

1. SALVATION AND SIN · 2. THE MEDIATION OF CHRIST
3. SALVIFIC DIMENSION OF THE LIFE OF CHRIST.

According to Gregory, the goal of the Incarnation is the salvation of the human being: the Word became man in order to seek out and save those who were lost. Gregory considers this *synkatabasis* of the Word in the light of the Parable of the Good Samaritan, who lowers himself to the wounded one and places him on his own pack animal (*Cant* 14, 85, GNO VI, 427–428) and in the light of the Parable of the Good Shepherd, who takes the lost sheep up himself (*Ref Eun*, GNO II, 386; *Antirrh* 16, GNO III/1, 151–152). The Word becomes truly man, and, assuming his own proper humanity, unites himself to all of humanity through it. Gregory uses both the parables in a collective sense, as had been done from Irenaeus on (A. ORBE, *Parábolas evangélicas en S. Ireneo* II, Madrid 1972, 117–177).

For Gregory, the salvation of the human being includes liberation from sin and from the evils that accompany it, such as DEATH (→). It also includes a “new creation” and a “divinization” which includes the RESURRECTION (→) of the flesh and the glorification of the whole human being. Gregory insists on the fact that it was the Word’s concern to save the human being, since He was man’s Creator. The Word can save the human being, since through his humanity He takes all of humanity upon himself, and through his divinity, He has a strength capable of destroying death and giving life to all through the Resurrection (*Or cat* 12, GNO III/4, 40–41).

1. SALVATION AND SIN. Salvation is primarily a liberation from sin, first of all from ORIGINAL SIN (→). Gregory frequently recalls Adam’s sin as the evil which infects all of humanity. In this regard, the considerations he groups around the TUNICS OF HIDE (→), in which humanity was clothed after the first sin, and which one removes through Baptism, have a particular theological force (DANIÉLOU, 1967). The tunics of hide signify that man, because of sin, has been clothed in bestiality, sinfulness and death. In reality, sin introduces a transformation towards evil into humanity—Gregory uses the term of μεταμορφώω, (*Or cat* 8, GNO III/4,

29)—a deformation to which the Pascal transfiguration is opposed, this last being brought to our nature through his resurrected body by Christ. Through Baptism we remove our clothing of sin, i.e. of the “flesh” in the Pauline sense, and we clothe ourselves in Christ. Gregory heavily relies on the Pauline parallelism of Adam and Christ (*Antirr*h 21, GNO III/1, 160–161), insisting on the fact that our salvation is realized precisely through our configuration to Christ. Given that salvation consists in a profound transformation of the human being which makes him a “new creature” in Christ, Gregory underscores that only the Creator could save that which He had created (*Or cat* 8, GNO III/4, 36).

Salvation is a work of the entire Trinity. Gregory maintains that the Incarnation unfolds from the love of God for the human being—the divine *PHILANTHRÔPIA* (→)—which is the most salient attribute of the activity of God regarding the human being (→ LOVE). Logically, this *philanthropia* is also present in the Word, who is He who becomes incarnate (MOUTSOULAS, 100) for love of man, and in the Holy Spirit, who is He who brings the work of divinization to completeness (J.R. BOUCHET, 634–635). For this reason, the Word fittingly takes the appellative of *philanthropos* in a proper sense as well (*Cant* 4, GNO VI, 107).

The divine attributes are resplendent in the work of salvation. Among these attributes, Gregory accentuates power, justice, goodness, and wisdom. Power is already manifested in the fact of the Incarnation itself. For, only He who has an infinite power can overcome the infinite abyss that exists between God and the creature. The power of God is also manifested in the fact that the salvation of the human being comes through death and resurrection, as Gregory accentuates in the metaphor of the vessels of clay (→ DEATH). Justice is manifested in the path chosen by God to remake the human being, respecting human liberty and even the “rights” of the devil (→ DEVIL). Goodness is manifested in the very decision to save the human being. Wisdom is manifested in having chosen the path of the humanization of the Word, so that life reaches us through the humanity of the Word.

2. THE MEDIATION OF CHRIST. As B. STUDER (141–142) has indicated, the Nyssen’s soteriology is based upon the fact that Christ is Mediator and sympathetic to the human race (1 Tim 2.5). In this, Gregory follows Irenaeus and Athanasius, who maintain that salvation comes to human beings because of Christ’s solidarity with humanity, and, consequently, in virtue of the communion of human beings with Christ. The solidarity is realized, above all, on the level of being: Jesus Christ is really true God

and true man. Gregory's firm defense of both the perfect divinity of the Word against the Arians and Eunomians (→ *ARIANISM*, *EUNOMIUS*), and of the perfect humanity of Jesus against *APOLLINARIUS OF LAODICEA* (→) follows from this. God approaches human beings in Christ to the point of being one of them. Christ, united to the Word in a unity of person, is constituted as the Firstborn of the entire "mass" (→ *PHYRAMA*) of human beings. Actually, due to the fact of being true man, Jesus Christ is part of humanity. By the fact of his being God, the humanity of Christ, which is the humanity of God, has more power than all of the negative forces which work in humanity, and, is thus capable of transmitting salvation to it with the power of his own Resurrection. The chapters that Gregory dedicates to demonstrating the soteriological dimension of the *EUCCHARIST* (→) are very significant: The body of Christ, seeding itself in the bodies of the believers through communion, gives life (ζωοποιεῖ) to the entire human being—body and soul—making man a participant in his Resurrection.

Jesus is Mediator between God and human beings, Gregory states, frequently citing 1 Tim 2.5. He unites in himself the human with God. This mediation therefore cannot be understood as that of a stair, which serves as mediation in the measure in which it occupies an intermediary position between two floors—this being the manner in which Arius or Eunomius had understood the mediation of Christ—but as the mediation of Him who, by being at once God and man, unites to God *in and by himself* those who are in communion with Him (*Perf*, GNO VIII/1, 204–205). These expressions need to be interpreted in a strong Christological sense. According to Gregory, the Word, taking a human body and soul to himself, assumes the *first fruits* of the entire human nature, and, making these first fruits holy, attracts to himself all of human nature which is kindred to Him, restoring to it the dignity of sons of God. Since the first fruits of the mass are sanctified, thanks to them, we too, the mass (φύραμα), are sanctified (*Perf*, GNO VIII/1, 203–207).

3. *SALVIFIC DIMENSION OF THE LIFE OF CHRIST*. All of the events of the life of Christ are salvific, in particular the mysteries of his death and his glorification. Gregory underscores the existing ties between the Incarnation of the Word and the entire Paschal Mystery: Christ became incarnate to free us from sin and to divinize us, by making us participants in his Resurrection. The birth of the Lord already contains in itself the dynamics of the Paschal Mystery (*Diem nat*, GNO X/2, 265 and *Or cat* 8–22, GNO III/4, 77–82). Gregory even specifies that the Word became

incarnate in order to be able to die, and that He dies in order to rise again and give life through the power of his Resurrection (*Or cat* 32, GNO III/4, 78).

The Resurrection of the Lord occupies the primary place in the Nysen's soteriology. Nevertheless, Gregory also accentuates the expiatory and sacrificial dimensions of the death of Christ and their importance in the salvation of human beings. Referring to the events of the Passion and death, Gregory uses a decidedly priestly and sacrificial language: Christ is "Sanctification and Redemption" (ἁγιασμὸν καὶ ἀπολύτρωσιν), High Priest (ἀρχιερέαν μέγαν), Passover and Propitiation (ὑλαστήριον), Mediator between God and human beings (*Perf*, GNO VII/1, 175–176). Gregory here follows Pauline thought and language closely, frequently citing him and using his unmistakable sacrificial terminology: with his death, Christ the priest offered Himself as sacrifice, oblation and victim for us. He was immolated as our Passover (*Perf*, GNO VIII/1, 186–187).

Gregory expresses his thought on the soteriological dimension of the death of Christ, intentionally using the rich and variegated Pauline language in all of its integrity: Jesus is the faithful priest who placated God in a priestly manner (ἱερατικῶς ἰλεωσόμενον) for our sins (*Eun* III, GNO II, 140). He offered himself as offering and sacrifice (*Trid spat*, GNO IX, 286–288). Gregory bases his explanations on the ample dossier of well known Pauline passages such as 1 Tim 2.6–9; 1 Cor 1.30, 6.20, 5.7; Eph 5.2; or Heb 7.11, repeatedly citing them and applying highly significant titles such as Redemption (1 Cor 1.30), Great High Priest (Heb 4.14), Passover (1 Cor 5.7) and Propitiation (Rm 3.25).

The homilies of *Sanct Pasch*, *Trid spat*, *Salut Pasch* and *Lucif res*, in which Gregory considers the priesthood of Christ, the sacrifice of his death, the Last Supper and the Eucharist as in reciprocal relationships are quite clear in this regard. Speaking of the body and blood distributed in the Last Supper, Gregory maintains that He who is Lord of time, in his economy, offered Himself for us as offering and sacrifice (προσφορὰν καὶ θυσίαν), anticipating his sacrifice (ἱερουργία) in a mysterious way, being both priest and lamb. For, Gregory concludes, when He gave his body to be eaten and blood to be drunken that night, He made clear that the perfect immolation of the Lamb was already complete (*Trid spat*, GNO IX, 286–288).

Thus, for Gregory, the death of Christ should be understood as a sacrifice that He freely offers for the salvation of all, making expiation for sins. Gregory bases his analysis on Jn 10.18 to manifest Christ's power over his own life, even in the hour of his death (*Trid spat*, GNO IX,

286–290; *Antirrh* 17 and 29, GNO III/1, 151–154 and 176–177; *Ref Eun*, GNO II, 387), as well as on Phil 2.8 and Rm 5.12–19 in order to show that Christ died in obedience to the Father (*Antirrh* 21, GNO III/1, 160–161). Gregory's expressions regarding the redemptive dimension of the death of Christ are strong, clear and constant. Gregory does not only accentuate the sacrificial aspects of the death of Christ, but also the glory of the Cross. In this sense, the Nyssen's exegesis follows the Johannine line, which sees the CROSS (→) as a triumph. The Cross is at once once infamy and triumph. Christ, extending his arms on the cross, embraces and unifies the entire universe (*Or cat* 32, GNO VIII/4, 70). The Cross is thus *recapitulation* (*Trid spat*, GNO IX/1, 298–303 and *Eun* III, GNO II, 121–122): Christ attracts all things to Himself on the Cross (Jn 12.32). Gregory also considers Christ on the Cross as *Christus Victor* (TURNER, 57–58).

Gregory's soteriology is fundamentally based on the Resurrection of the Lord, so that he can affirm that the death of Christ is accomplished as a necessary passage towards his Resurrection, and that He can communicate it to us (WINLING, 305–321). This position is almost identical to that of Athanasius (*De incarnat. Verbi* 44, SC 199, 424–430). From this perspective, the fact that Jesus remained in the realm of the dead for three days has a particular soteriological importance. Gregory pays attention to the descent to the dead and to the condition of Christ during the Triduum of his death (DANIÉLOU 1957; DROBNER, 114–126). The Resurrection is important, not only because it demonstrates that Christ is God, but because it is the means to apply the salvation reached through death to human beings (*Or cat* 32, GNO III/4, 81–82). Commenting on Phil 2.8, Gregory observes that death entered the world through the disobedience of a man. The obedience of another man heals the evil (πλημμελῆμα) which derived from disobedience, and through the resurrection annuls the death which entered the world with the sin of Adam (*Antirrh* 21, GNO III/1, 160–161).

All of Gregory's sacramental theology is based upon the event of the Resurrection. It is enough here to recall his baptismal theology (→ BAPTISM) and Eucharistic theology (→ EUCHARIST). The Resurrection of the Lord, and, above all, the resurrecting power of his immortal body is particularly present in the vigorous chapter 37 of *Or cat*, dedicated to the salvific effects of communion to the body and blood of the Lord. This communion is a remedy against death, since the risen body of Christ, "seeding" itself in the bodies of believers, grants incorruptibility to them (*Or cat* 37, GNO III/4, 93–94). Gregory underscores the divinization of the "first fruits" (ἀπαρχή), i.e. of Christ's own human

nature, which the Word assumed personally, and through this the entire human mass (φύσσις) (MOUTSOULAS 1997, 418–419).

Gregory manifests the recapitulative power of the Cross. It is logical that he accentuates even more the recapitulating power of Christ's exaltation. This is evident, for example, in the homily of the Ascension (*Ascens*, GNO IX, 326–327). At the end of this homily we find a beautiful text on Christ, Recapitulator of the universe.

Gregory bases himself on Eph 1.10 (Christ recapitulates all things *in himself*), on Col 1.18 (Christ is first in everything) and on Acts 3.21 (Christ restores all things) in order to synthesize his vision of Christ, who saves by recapitulating all things in Himself. This is perhaps the most complete perspective in which to speak of the Nyssen's soteriology: Salvation is a *recapitulation*. Christ saves us by uniting himself to us—sharing our life—and enabling us to share his life and glory (*Antirrh* 55, GNO III/1, 224–226).

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Lucas Francisco Mateo-Seco

SPIRITUAL THEOLOGY

As R. LEYS (1957, 495–496) observes, the Fathers, and the Alexandrians in particular, would have considered the term *spiritual theology* a pleonasm, since theology for them is *spiritual*, or else only vain dialectic. The theology of monks and mystics of the 4th century was at once and inseparably theological knowledge of Christian teaching and loving contemplation of God. For Gregory, theology (→ THEOLOGY) is the steep mountain of divine knowledge up which Moses climbed into the *darkness* (*Vit Moys* II, 162–169, GNO VII/1, 86–89). Thus, all of Gregory's writings need to be considered as strictly theological, even the most "spiritual" of them. There is neither moralizing nor asceticism in them, but a consistent theological vision applied to the practical life.

Gregory has rightly been identified as one of the spiritual authors who most influenced the spirituality of Oriental monasticism (BOUYER, 428). He is without a doubt one of the spiritual authors with the greatest knowledge of ancient culture. In his "spiritual writings" the influence of Plato, the Stoics, Plotinus and even Aristotle can be perceived (CANÉVET, 2, 979–982; CAMELOT, 147–150).

Gregory is nevertheless not dominated by these influences, but freely submits them to a profound transformation, absorbing them into his Christian vision of the spiritual life. Even stronger than the influence of the Greek philosophers is that of Philo of Alexandria, precisely because of his spirituality, which is rooted in the practice of the Jewish religion. Even more important than these influences, as VÖLKER (250) observes, is the influence of Origen, and through him, that of the Alexandrians. This continuity with the Alexandrians is such that Gregory frequently uses the same Scriptural texts as they do to support his own affirmations.

Gregory begins his own literary production with an exhortation to VIRGINITY (→). Undoubtedly composed for the service of the monastic life, it is extremely important for the insight it gives into Gregory's own ascetic thought. Virginity is contemplated inside the ample paradigm of the relationship of man-image with the divine purity and incorruptibility. The fact that, even in this first writing, Gregory discusses corporal penance and monastic diet with a great equilibrium, is quite significant (JANINI, 1946, 27). Moderation and balance are distinctive

traits of Gregory's spiritual theology. These characteristics are harmoniously united to the mystical force that permeates his writings, full of images which speak of a passionate and inebriating love (→ SOBER DRUNKENNESS).

The larger part of Gregory's "spiritual" writings belong to the final years of his life. These are years of full intellectual maturity and literary fecundity. In these writings it can be clearly perceived that, with Basil and Macrina now dead, Gregory feels the responsibility to transmit, particularly to the monks, the rich doctrinal and ascetic tradition of which he is the trustee. Gregory presents his spiritual thought in two distinct literary genres: biblical commentaries and short ascetic treatises, labeled *monastic writings* by BOUYER (428). Among the biblical commentaries, the *Homilies on the Psalms* (*Inscr*), the *Homilies on the Canticle of Canticles* and the *Life of Moses* stand out. In them, the fundamentals of mystical theology are developed. Among the monastic books, besides the treatise on virginity already cited and the *Life of Macrina*, there are three highly valuable writings on the nature of Christianity and Christian perfection: *Prof*, *Perf* and *Inst*. All of these, and *Inst* in particular, present Christian life as a *synergy*, a collaboration between human efforts and the GRACE (→) of the Holy Spirit. In all of Gregory's "spiritual" writings, even the shortest and most practical, his fundamental theological convictions abound. These convictions constitute the foundations, so to speak, on which his spiritual thought is built. Among these, we should note the following points:

1. *The Transcendence and Infinity of God*. Gregory's entire spiritual doctrine is imbued with a strong sense of divine transcendence, and he consequently underscores the importance of adoration, love, trust and obedience to God. The controversy with EUNOMIUS (→) decisively influenced the compact defense that Gregory makes of the divine infinity and ineffability: God is above every word and every concept. He is inexpressible and inscrutable, therefore one sees Him only "in not seeing" (*Vit Moys* II, GNO VII/1, 87). This conviction is at the source of his thought on MYSTICISM (→), as it is expressed in the splendid texts of *Vit Moys* and *Cant*. It is also at the source of his more personal and unmistakable teaching on *EPEKTASIS* (→): Christian life, all of Christian life, is a continual progress, an ascent to God which has no limits. E. MÜHLENBERG (196–206) and M. CANÉVET (2, 984–985) have specified that, for Gregory, God is ineffable because infinite. Divine infinity is thus the ultimate reason for ineffability of God. They thus underscore the Christian

originality of Gregory in comparison with Greek philosophy. Thus, that which is most fundamental is the divine infinity; divine ineffability is simply a consequence of this.

2. *The Distinction Between Uncreated Being and Created Being.* Divine infinity also marks the essential and unfathomable difference that exists between the uncreated Being and created being: God is incomprehensible to every created being, precisely because of his infinity. The difficulties in knowing Him are not born of the opposition between matter and spirit, but from the primordial difference that exists between the infinite and that which is finite, uncreated Being and created being. The universe reflects the perfections of the Creator, for example, his Wisdom. Being limited, however, it cannot manifest infinity in itself, i.e. it cannot manifest the divine nature. God is above all limits, every definition and every created word. At the same time, precisely due to its origin from the only Creator, the universe has a high degree of unity and a unique meaning: to give glory to God through the knowledge and love of the human being, who is called to loving union with God, even if this union cannot in any way do away with the unfathomable difference that exists between uncreated Being and created being.

3. *The human being, Image of God.* Despite this infinite distance, the human being is a true image of God (Gn 1.26). This is the perspective that perhaps best encapsulates Gregory's entire spiritual theology. His affirmation in *Op hom* 4 and 11 about the human being as the image of God is of fundamental importance here: Human nature, precisely because it is made to be the image of the Lord of the universe, was created to dominate the world, to be a living image of its archetype, God (*Op hom* 4, PG 44, 136C). Due to his condition as image, the human being must reflect the divine attributes in himself, including liberty, immortality, and purity—contrary to any mixture with evil (*Or cat* 5, GNO III/4, 17–18). The pages of *Virg* are a good demonstration of how the conception of man-image is converted into a demanding reality for spiritual life. The ascetic struggle has as its objective the “restoration” of the image of God destroyed by sin in the human being.

The difference between God and the human being does not reside in the attributes that they both possess, but in the manner in which they possess them: God possesses them in an infinite manner, the human being in a finite manner (*Op hom* 16, PG 44, 184 C–D). It follows that, although the distance between the image in its archetype is infinite,

there is also a kinship, a likeness, between them: The soul is a true "mirror" of God. Precisely because of this kinship between God and the human being, we can know and love Him. The human being also feels in himself the attraction of the divine *eros*, which attracts him to God (*Cant* 1, GNO VI, 27). Gregory calls this *original grace*, or *the grace of the beginning*. God has created man in his image precisely so that, due to this *kinship*, he feels the call to continually advance towards an always more intimate union with God. The ascetic struggle and the collaboration with the Holy Spirit have the sense of causing an authentic regeneration in the human being, an authentic *APOCATASTASIS* (→), i.e. a perfect *restoration* of his original nature and vocation in the image of God. In this sense, the *regeneration* of the human being consists in returning to the *grace of the beginning*.

4. *The Struggle Against Sin*. Hamartology occupies an important position in Gregory's work, but it does not occupy a central one. The center of Gregory's theology and spirituality is occupied by the death and Resurrection of our Lord. In this realm, Gregory's spiritual teaching is a faithful reflection of his gifts as an experienced pastor, as an expert on the people of his time, and as a good spiritual director. Sin and the possibility of falling are abundantly present in his short ascetic writings. The exhortations to struggle against sin, the wise description of vices (above all of those that can more easily exist in ascetic communities) and practical counsels on the defeat of passions are present as well. For example, the picture that Gregory, in *Virg* 23 (GNO VIII/1, 324–340) draws of the qualities that a good spiritual director must possess and the characteristics which must be evaluated in a person in order to entrust him with the direction of one's soul is quite instructive, demonstrating a surprising maturity. The observations that we find in *Inst* on the dangers of vainglory, also the diatribe against hidden vices and the counsels on life in common show a great perspicacity (GNO III/1, 51–58).

Among the characteristics that structure Gregory's spiritual theology, it is necessary first of all to underscore its *Christocentric* character, its *Pneumatological* dimension and its *universality*. One can say with certainty that the center of the Nyssen's thought, be it theological, ascetic or mystic, is occupied by the dead and risen Christ. Scholars such as H.U. VON BALTHASAR, A. LIESKE, H. RAHNER, W. VÖLKER, J. DANIELOU and E. MOUTSOULAS have accentuated this. In Gregory, Christology and spiritual theology are completely inseparable. Thus, for example, his entire

teaching about the union of the soul with Christ and on the supreme love owed to Him is a consequence of the depth with which he considers the divinity of the Word, the realism with which he conceives the union of the human with the divine in Christ, and the manner in which he understands Christ's redemptive mission, that is, his mediation. The union with God, which is the scope of spiritual effort, is realized in the union with Christ.

It is not by chance that, in explicitly asking the question about Christian perfection, Gregory responds by affirming that perfection does not consist in anything other than making the contents of the name of Christ the life by which we live. In reality, for those who believe in Christ, there is only one name, which is held in common: that of being called Christians (*Perf*, GNO VIII/1, 173–174). The search for Christian perfection thus consists in the effort to lead a life in conformity with what the name of Christ signifies. The brief writing dedicated to harmony (*Prof*) is significantly structured around the various names included in the name of Christ, which synthesizes all of them. Christ should occupy the center of one's thoughts, words and actions, since anything that is not directed to Him "is outside of the light" (*Perf*, GNO VIII/1, 210–211). Gregory proposes Saint Paul as model precisely because he understood "with greater precision than anyone else" *who* Christ is and how he who bears the name of Christian must be (*Perf*, GNO VIII/1, 175).

In *Prof* (GNO VIII/1, 136) Gregory dedicates some passages to demonstrate that Christianity is the imitation of the divine nature, since "to imitate Christ" and "to imitate the divine nature" are the same thing. From this perspective, Gregory's coherence in *Cant* can be understood, which is a song on the marriage of Christ and the soul, and at the same time a description of the mystical ascent to the most intimate union with the divinity. For this reason, to imitate Christ is not something superficial or external, but something that implies a profound interior transformation, a total change. Following Saint Paul and placing the baptismal liturgy in first place, Gregory calls this change the removal of the old man and the clothing in Christ (*Cant* 1, GNO VI, 14), who is the new "clothes of the soul" (*Cant* 11, GNO VI, 328).

The Christological dimension of Gregory's spiritual theology coincides with the spirituality contained in his theology of the image. The Word is the Image of the invisible God, who, through the Incarnation, made Himself a participant in humanity. This theme, significantly, is amply treated in *Perf* (GNO VIII/1, 194–195), interlaced with the theme of *epektasis*. The reasoning is as follows: The Image of God became man

to transform man in conformity with the beauty of the archetype, leading him to be that which he was in the beginning (*Perf*, GNO VIII/1, 194–195). We must follow Christ to the point of “being image of the Image” (*Perf*, GNO VIII/1, 196).

Gregory’s spiritual teaching greatly benefits from the clarity and richness of his Pneumatology. The Spirit is a gift of Christ to the soul. In the *synergy* that occurs between the divine grace and human efforts, Gregory gives a pre-eminence to this gift received from Christ. To really participate in the name of Christ is a grace to which one must live up. This correspondence is possible only through the action of the Holy Spirit. Configuration to Christ is primarily the fruit of the Holy Spirit who dwells in the soul (*Inst*, GNO III/1, 44–45). The Christian receives the “seal of the Holy Spirit” with Baptism, and advances on his path towards God by means of this same Spirit (*ibidem*, 58). Baptism brings a new birth, which makes the human being a *new creature in Christ*. According to Gregory, this *new creature* is “the indwelling of the Holy Spirit in a pure and immaculate soul, free of every vice, perversity or laziness” (*ibid.*, 61). The Holy Spirit attracts us towards perfection (*ibidem*, 65), his action is manifested above all in the stages of interior life, in which the mystical gifts are predominant. The soul then is transformed into a dwelling of the “adored and Holy Spirit from whom it receives the immortal peace of Christ” (*ibidem*, 85).

Beginning from spiritual theology, one better perceives the importance that right faith in the Trinity has for Gregory. The access to God is accomplished in the Son, who is the Mediator, through the action of the Holy Spirit who dwells in the soul. The mystical power of this thought is surprising. The very grace of the Holy Spirit, who fills the soul “with happiness and strength, makes the sufferings of the Lord sweet for it” (*ibidem*, 86–87). Gregory is here speaking of the joy at sharing in the sufferings of the Lord: These phrases are enough to assure us that we are reading a text with indubitable mystical dimensions. The Holy Spirit conforms us to Christ and his sufferings to the point that these sufferings become sweet for the soul.

Precisely for these reasons, *universality* is a distinctive characteristic of Gregory’s spiritual theology. This *universality* is above all due to the universality of the theological principles on which it is based. In fact, the theology of the image, both at the level of creation and that of Christian vocation (to be image of the Image) carries in itself the note of *universality*. In the great diversity of personal circumstances that exist among human beings, *all* Christians are called to follow the itinerary

proposed by Gregory. In this regard, it is significant that the argument is based upon the reality of being Christians and on the call to identification with Christ thanks to the action of the Holy Spirit.

This characteristic of Gregory's spiritual theology is reaffirmed by the importance of sacramental theology in it, particularly baptismal theology. All human beings are called to Baptism and, in virtue of Baptism, to identify themselves with Christ through the action of the Holy Spirit. On this point as well, it is necessary to refer the reader to the chapters dedicated to the sacraments in *Or Cat* (23–29) and the homilies on Baptism (*Bapt* and *Diem lum*). DANÉLOU considers Gregory's spiritual theology as an extension of his sacramental theology. This marks, above all for the sacraments of CHRISTIAN INITIATION (→), the various stages in which, under the action of the sacraments, the restoration of the divine image in the human being occurs. These stages correspond to the sacraments of initiation: illumination, contemplation and union. J. DANÉLOU has studied this interface between Gregory's spiritual theology and his sacramental theology, through the tripartite division of purification, contemplation and union in his *Platonisme et théologie mystique*. These three stages do not have perfectly defined limits, so as to exclude each other absolutely: each is described according to its dominant characteristics, but many of the characteristics will be found also in the other stages.

Already, Origen had fixed the itinerary of the soul in his *Homilies on Numbers* (SC 29), perhaps with excessive rigidity. Here too, Gregory shows a great deal of originality. Taking the figure of Moses as a model, he divides this itinerary into three major paths or stages: God manifests himself to Moses first of all in the *light*, then in the *clouds*, and finally in the *darkness*.

The first stage is *illumination*, linked to Baptism in a particular way. The soul is removed from the darkness of sin and purified in the struggle against the passions. Thanks to this purification, the human being is free of vain preoccupations (→ *APATHEIA*) and acquires filial trust in God (*PARRÊSIA* →). The second stage corresponds to the ascent with which Moses distanced himself from sensible realities, penetrating into the invisible ones; that is, he penetrated into the contemplation of God in the *clouds*. DANÉLOU (1944, 19–20) observes that the cloud is a figure of the Holy Spirit and evokes the sacrament of Confirmation. Finally, the third stage is the entry into the *darkness*, which in Gregory's *mysteric* vocabulary refers to the Eucharist. Gregory calls it shadow (→ *DARKNESS*), since it implies the contemplation of Him who is above every word

and concept, that is, He who is infinitely transcendent. Gregory's language becomes particularly paradoxical here: to see in unseeing, contemplate the invisible, etc. The stage is not only a stage of knowledge of God, but also one of union (*ἀνάγκαις*) with Him (*Cant* 1, GNO VI, 22–23).

Many texts lead to speaking of “stages”, particularly when Gregory takes up the model of Moses' ascent of Sinai as a model of the itinerary of the soul. Gregory insists on the fact that God first manifests himself to Moses in light, then speaks to him in the cloud, and finally offers to let Himself be contemplated in the shadow (*Cant* 11, GNO VI, 322). This description of a path in “stages” must be understood in a broad sense, keeping the perspective of *EPEKTASIS* (→) in mind as well, i.e. the perspective of a progress that has no end. L. BOUYER (428) observes that Gregory is not properly speaking of three “stages”, but is speaking of “permanent markers of a progress that can never end”.

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Lucas Francisco Mateo-Seco

STEPH I

In sanctum Stephanum I

This sermon was delivered on Stephen's annual feast day. Celebrated on December, 26, probably of the year 386 (DANIÉLOU), this feast was part of the liturgical period of Christmas. In a rhetorically brilliant prooemium (75,4–77,5) Gregory first refers back to the feast of the day before, juxtaposing Christ and Stephen the imitator of Christ (75,4–13), and then makes the transition to the narration of Stephen's acts. In this passage, as throughout the homily, a large amount of agonistic language is present, thus sketching the Protomartyr's martyrdom as a battle against the Devil and his accomplices (75,13–77,5).

The lion's share of the sermon (77,6–88,22) is devoted to a quasi-midrashic rewriting of Stephen's story as this is recorded in Acts 6–7. Starting from the giving of the Spirit to the Apostles during the Pentecost-event Gregory moves to narrate Stephen's life and martyrdom, closely following Acts 6–7 but rephrasing it and commenting on the text. In this part Stephen is presented as a man filled with God's Spirit, who served excellently as deacon, remained steadfast in his belief in Christ and developed into a staunch defender of this faith. The latter aspect is reflected in Stephen's speech (Acts 7) which is a substantial part of Gregory's treatment. Its point of culmination is Stephen's martyrdom. On that occasion he was granted a vision of the Father and the Son (87,4–10; Acts 7,55–56). In the final section of the sermon (88,23–94,14) Gregory warns against wrong interpretations of this verse which were defended by Pneumatomachians and "Christomachians" (probably Neo-Arians advocating a subordinationist position of the Son). This final section intends to put the audience on its guard against heretical currents. At the same time the elaborated character and theological sophistication of Gregory's argument show that his sermons are veritable *loci theologici*, places to "do theology".

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Johan Leemans

STEPH II

In sanctum Stephanum II

On December 27, the feast of the Apostles Peter, James and John was celebrated. Yet the only extant sermon delivered by Gregory on this occasion, probably in 386 (DANIÉLOU), bears the title *In Stephanum II*. The reason is that after a brief prooemium (97,4–16), the first part of the sermon (97,16–101,2) is devoted to Stephen the Protomartyr, while the Apostles are only brought to the foreground in the second main part (101,3–105,19). This separation is not absolute, though: throughout, Gregory interrelates the Protomartyr and the Apostles.

In his first part Gregory refers to his treatment of Stephen the day before (= *Steph I*?) and briefly recapitulates the story of Acts 6. He stresses the appropriateness of celebrating Stephen's memory together with that of the Apostles, for the martyrs should not be honoured without the Apostles and vice versa. After all, the Apostles are the martyrs' teachers and the martyrs are the Apostles' image. Hence the Proto-martyr is also the Proto-type of the Apostles.

The second part deals with the Apostles Peter, James and John and in particular with their witnessing to Christ by their deaths. Gregory narrates the death of James and John as paradigmatic for the everlasting memory they enjoy by the Church. Gradually the scope widens to include all the Apostles, since they all deserve to be celebrated. At the end the focus narrows again and is directed to Peter, who is presented as the head of the Apostles, in whom all the apostles are remembered. Gregory ends by stressing that the remembrance of the Apostles should be less the remembrance of historical persons than that of examples of faith. As in all his other homilies on martyrs, here too the function of the Apostles of examples of Christian virtue is underlined.

In the peroration (105,19–29), Gregory asks the martyrs for their prayers and assistance as intercessors. The sermon ends with a doxology.

Nysse, RevSR 29 (1955) 346–372, 367–368; J. REXER, *Die Festtheologie Gregors von Nyssa: ein Beispiel der reichskirchlichen Heortologie*, Frankfurt a. Main 2002, 112–114.

Johan Leemans

STOICISM

J. Daniélou has highlighted the concepts proper to the Stoics in Gregory's writings (J. DANIELLOU, 488, 491–492). H.R. Drobner has demonstrated that Stoicism was one of the sources from which Gregory took elements for his method of scientific study. He took from the Stoics the idea of the order in nature and in history. Besides Stoicism, Gregory's scientific method owes much to ARISTOTLE (→), PLOTINUS (→) and Galen (H.R. DROBNER, 89–92).

Drobner shows that in *Mort*, GNO IX, 51,27, Zeno's conception of the generative activity of nature finds expression. The parallels with Zeno are both on the level of the form of expression and that of content: The different ages of human life are described by Gregory with Zeno's terminology, e.g. ὁδὸς καὶ ἀκολουθία; the continual growth of the human being is generated by an interior force.

The Stoic conception of destiny (εἴμαρμένη) influences Gregory's expression in *Deit Euag*, where he speaks of the organization of the universe by its director (PG 46, 543–554). Drobner underscores that the order here in Gregory's work, unlike in the Stoics, is not founded in the universe itself, but in God (H.R. DROBNER, 90).

As far as Gregory's direct knowledge of the Stoics is concerned, J. Zachhuber expresses himself cautiously, given that few of their writings were still in circulation by the end of the 4th century. In principle, one could maintain that, thanks to his excellent formation, Gregory knew well the thought of the Stoics (→ PORPHYRY) and of many others (J. ZACHHUBER, 9–10).

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Igor Pochoshajew

Substance → *Ousia*
Symphônia → *Sympnoia*

SYMPNOIA

σύμπνοια

1. SYMPNOIA AND THE MATERIAL WORLD · 2. SYMPNOIA AND THE SPIRITUAL WORLD · 3. SYMPNOIA AND METAPHYSICS.

Gregory does not extensively employ the term *sympnoia* (agreement, concordance, accord of the will), but he nevertheless uses it more than any other author of antiquity, and in a diversity of perspectives that confer a richness of content on the word: concord of the elements in the material world, accord and agreement of the will in the spiritual world, communion of creatures maintained in existence by Him who Exists.

1. SYMPNOIA AND THE MATERIAL WORLD. *Symponia* was a familiar concept in Greek medicine: Hippocrates spoke of a unique “agreement” and “confluence” (σύμπνοια) in the human body of all its elements, to the point of forming a united whole. Gregory will use this Hippocratic theme in *Perf* to explain the solidarity that exists between all the members of the Mystical Body of Christ (*Perf*, GNO VIII/1, 197, 20–24). *Sympnoia* will return in *Virg*, where Gregory engages in a polemic with the excessive asceticism of Basil of Ancyra, defending the theory of the equilibrium of the elements of the human body (*Virg*, GNO VIII/1, 332, 21). He demonstrates that a true asceticism should lead to a prudent ration of food, in order to reach an equilibrium. *Sympnoia* is thus initially presented as a unification of the constitutive parts of the body, which Gregory will also attribute to the totality of the material universe: The Wisdom that governs the cosmos realizes the “accord” of creation with itself, so that the distinction or opposition of natures that exists in creation does not break the general *sympnoia* (*Or cat*, GNO III/4, 20–21).

Gregory will highlight the similarity between the *sympnoia* of the elements of the universe and that which exists between the members of the human body, basing his argument on the relationship, maintained by the Stoics, between the macrocosm and microcosm. If the cosmos represents a true musical harmony whose artist and creator is God, and if the human being is a microcosm, it is also possible to find in him that same universal harmony (*Inscr*, GNO V, 32, 16–22).

In this manner *sympnoia* designates one of the central themes of the Nyssen's cosmology: The conjunction of all the parts of the material universe according to a combination of movement and stability. This is thus a "concurrence" of different and contrary elements which act in agreement like a great symphony, composed of στάσις-κίνησις, of stability in movement and movement in stability (*Inscr*, GNO V, 31, 19–24). It is interesting to observe how Gregory will use this doctrine in his anthropology as well: The spiritual path is a synthesis of stability and movement. Finally, the term serves our author to describe the unity of the material cosmos as an "agreement" of contraries.

2. *SYMPNOIA* AND THE SPIRITUAL WORLD. The term is also used by Gregory to express the union of will. This is the most common signification of *sympnoia*, from which its common translation, "conspiracy," is derived. But the use by the Nyssen to refer to the unity of the Body of Christ is more significant, where he expresses the common participation of the members in the characteristic properties of the Head. Belonging to the Body of Christ is necessary in order to participate in its *sympnoia*, in its vital force. He expresses himself thus at the beginning of *Eun*, where he maintains that his adversaries are weak despite their talent, because they are separated from the Church. In a healthy body, in virtue of the *sympnoia* of the whole even the weakest part is stronger than that which belongs to a corrupted body (*Eun* I, GNO I, 25, 17). There is a "conspiracy" of will in the good, a unity whose source is God himself. It is in God himself that Gregory projects the very term of *sympnoia*, in the relations of the divine Persons. He will demonstrate, against Eunomius, that the successive enumeration in order of the divine Persons does not signify interiority or the existence of a hierarchy between them. Rather, the contrary is true: the union through the copula underscores their radical unity. In God there exists, therefore, a rigorous unity which Gregory designates with the name of *sympnoia*: the "agreement" of Three in One (*Eun* I, GNO I, 86, 6).

3. *SYMPNOIA* AND METAPHYSICS. In this realm there are particularly important texts, since they deal with a fundamental aspect of Gregory's thought: his philosophy of being. *Sympnoia* essentially expresses the "coherence" of all beings in existence, because they proceed from Him who is existence itself. In *Eccl* Gregory seeks to demonstrate the ontological dependence of all beings due to their relation to Being itself. On this level there is a true "communion" of all that exists, but it is not a

cosmic union of Stoic inspiration: In the Nyssen, the difference of natures is respected in a clear way, in particular the distinction between created realities and uncreated reality, i.e. the divine transcendence vis-à-vis all creation. The common characteristic of all beings is that of existing only through an effective participation in Him who is existence itself. This *sympnoia* confers a fundamental and radical coherence on the whole of creation. This relationship to Being is constitutive of beings, and according to our author, it is manifested on two levels, that of origin and that of end. On the one hand, nothing exists otherwise than because of its origin from Being, so that all free wills have their source in Being as well. On the other hand, since Being is identical with the Good, the will exists in beings only when they adhere to the good. Thus *sympnoia* indicates not only the provenance of liberty from Being, but also the conversion of will towards Being itself. EVIL (\rightarrow), which is non-adhesion to the good, is consequently non-being. For this reason, every evil breaks the *sympnoia* of wills.

The development of the theme of *sympnoia* as the unification of beings due to their participation in Being can also be found in *Or cat*; however the problem is not dealt with here from the necessity of this fundamental participation on the part of beings, but from the divine Being itself, understood as the principle of unification of all beings (*Or cat*, GNO III/4, 77–79). In this case the symbolic value that Gregory attributes to the CROSS (\rightarrow) is significant: The four dimensions of the Cross demonstrate that He who was there nailed, Christ, is God whose power and providence penetrate all of creation. The Cross thus expresses at the same time the universal extension of the divine action and the divinity of Christ (*Or cat*, GNO III/4, 80; *Trid spat*, GNO IX, 301,10–302,2).

The principal meanings of the term *sympnoia* in Gregory have been examined, however there is a particular harmony that our author does not refer to with this term: That which can be established between the material world and the spiritual world. If he does not use the term in this way, it is because this harmony does not actually exist: It has been shattered by sin, and its reconstitution is eschatological. This is a concord that the Nyssen describes with the term $\sigmaυμφωνία$. It will be realized when, at the end of time, the two parts of creation (material and spiritual) will be reunited in a harmony without discord (*An et res*, 46, 69 C), in a future symphony to which Paul refers in Phil 2.10 (*Or cat*, GNO III/4, 80, 19).

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Juan Antonio Gil-Tamayo

Synergein → *Inst*

Telos → Eschatology

Time → Eternity and Time

THAUM

De Vita Gregorii Thaumaturgi

This biography is one of the principal sources that narrate the life of Gregory Thaumaturgus ("Miracle Worker"). It was probably presented at Neo-Caesarea on the feast of the Saint, November 17, 380 (J. BERNARDI, 308). The previous dating of 379 (J. MITCHELL, 115) appears doubtful (→ CHRONOLOGY). In his method of eulogizing, the Nyssen opposes pagan writers who, as he says, when they praise someone highly, concentrate their attention on earthly honors and the exterior conditions of their life. Gregory instead promises to speak only of the personal dignity of Gregory (GNO X/1, 4, 24).

According to the author, Gregory began acquiring virtue from early childhood (8, 9). The Nyssen names his efforts to attain wisdom and chastity in the first place, as well as abstinence and humility; he was immune to anger and held riches in disdain (9, 3–6). To demonstrate the perfection of his protagonist, the Nyssen often compares him to Moses, who is for him a paradigm of the virtuous man. As Moses was instructed in all the wisdom of Egypt, so too Gregory was perfectly schooled in pagan culture (10, 8–11). There are comparisons to Moses when the author describes the beginnings of Gregory's life in the desert as well, the miracle with which he obtains the symbol of the faith, the miraculous drying of a lake and the miracle produced with his staff (14, 17–23; 19, 8–19; 32, 2–9). After having obtained a pagan education, as the author narrates, Gregory frequented the school of Origen and finally returned to his country, where he began his life in the desert (13, 4–20; 14, 10–12).

The narration of how Phaedimus, the far-sighted Bishop of Amasia, consecrated Gregory against his will is remarkable. Gregory wandered from one desert to another in order to flee Phaedimus, who was thus constrained to ordain him in his absence; instead of imposing his hands on his head, "he imposed the Word", thus designating him the Bishop of Neo-Caesarea (15, 23–25). Before beginning his episcopal activity, Gregory saw in a vision St. John the Evangelist and the Virgin Mary (16, 15–17, 15), who revealed to him "mystagogical words" (17, 23), i.e. "the truth of the authentic faith" (16, 22–23) which was

announced in the form of a Creed. Immediately writing down the words, Gregory made them the basis of his teaching of Christian doctrine in Neo-Caesarea.

This Creed can be divided into four parts, three of which refer to the Persons of the Holy Trinity and the last to the Holy Trinity in its unity. The Nyssen affirms that the manuscript written by Gregory had survived down to his own days (19, 7–8). The text cited in the *Life* is considered authentic (C.P. CASPARI 25–64), but Z. ABRAMOWSKI is not certain of its exactitude (145–166). It is noteworthy that the Nyssen names no other work of Gregory other than the Creed, not even the Panegyric of Origen.

Gregory's spiritual activity was a daily struggle for the faith and Christian doctrine. As the Nyssen mentions, at the beginning of Gregory's activity as Bishop of Neo-Caesarea the members of the Church numbered only 17, but at the end of his activity the same number represented the remaining pagans (16,1–3, 53,24–54,5). According to the narration, he converted a large number of persons upon his entry into the city as Bishop. The citizens were witness to his power over a demon which, obeying his command, abandoned a pagan sanctuary situated along the road to the city (20,19–23,9). Gregory's entire life was a model of perfect service to God and the people. There was a harmony between his preaching and his moral teaching as a pastor, care for the sick and other forms of practical assistance, as well as miracle working (27,9–28,3). Some significant examples of this last activity, which is a particular characteristic of the Saint, are the following: In virtue of his prophetic capacity he consecrated a poor and disregarded miner as Bishop of Comana, a charge that was worthily filled (36,9–40,13); acquiescing to the will of the people, the Saint administered justice, he resolved the conflict of two brothers over a jointly-owned lake by miraculously drying it up (29,19–30,24). The power of his influence on the waters was also demonstrated in the account of how he placated the fury of a mountain stream named *Lukos* ("wolf") which caused unpredictable damages to the nearby inhabitants. The miracle was accomplished by planting a staff which germinated anew, becoming a great tree that prevented the river from overflowing (32,12–35,6). Gregory Thaumaturgus was also capable of miraculously influencing the human imagination: Persecuted by Decius, he found refuge in a desert with his deacon. At the moment that they were about to be overtaken, they began to pray, raising up their hands; all that the persecutors saw was two trees close together (47,15–48,15). The Nyssen finally notes that for pastoral reasons, he is leaving out many of the miracles of Gregory, to avoid injuring suspicious minds who might doubt that such

accounts were true (57, 5–8). The testament of the Saint, cited at the end of the treatise, expresses the Christian ideal of pilgrimage and poverty. The final will of Gregory was to have no private tomb after his death, as he considered it a form of possession, something he had never had in his life as a poor pilgrim. Of the historical facts narrated in the Life, the most noteworthy are: a report of the construction of the first Church at Neo-Caesarea by Gregory (28, 1–3), his institution of the feast of martyrs killed at the time of Decius (52,27–53,2), and a fairly extensive narration of the persecution of Christians under this emperor (44,15–47,2; 48,21–49,6).

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Tamaz Kochlamazashvili

THEOD

De sancto Theodoro

Gregory delivered this panegyric on Theodore the Recruit during the yearly *panegyris* (LEEMANS 2001a) in the martyr's shrine in Euchaita (Pontus) on February 17 of 379, 380 or 381 (LEEMANS 2001b, 140; REXER, 114). In the prooemium (61,4–62,3), Gregory reminds the audience that Theodore in the previous year quieted down barbarian attacks and brought to an end the war with the Scythians. The body of the homily consists of two parts. In the first (62,4–64,22) Gregory stresses that the martyrs' example of Christian faith should inspire the audience. This is a rewarding way of life, as is illustrated by T's posthumous fate: his soul is in heaven and his body is a venerated object in a beautiful building, which is described at length. The Christian way of life yields more and greater rewards than worldly careers. In the second part (64,19–69,17) Gregory becomes more specific by telling in great detail the story of the Recruit. Touching briefly on rhetorical *topoi* such as his fatherland, native city, talents, and achievements in the army, he discusses at length his steadfastness in the faith and his witty answers during interviews with magistrates, his refusal to give in and offer sacrifice and finally, his burning down the temple of the Magna Mater in Amaseia and his sentence to be burnt alive. The sermon ends with a long peroration (69,17–71,17) with a request to Theodore that he would continue to lend his support to the community of Euchaita, especially given the imminent danger caused by the barbarian Scythians, the heretics and the pagans.

Both in its structure and adoption of stylistic features (*ekphrasis*, fictitious dialogues, periphrasis ...) the sermon shows the influence of the rhetorical style of the Second Sophistic (→ RHETORIC; ESPER; LEEMANS 2005). The strong anti-pagan tone of the second part must be seen as implicitly directed against the ill-fated attempt by Julian the Apostate, two decades before, to reinvigorate paganism (LEEMANS 2001b and 2004).

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Theologia → Theology

THEOLOGIA

θεολογία

In Gregory's writings the terms related to the root of *θεολογ-* occur fifty times (F. MANN, 225–226), a proportion that is quite similar to that in Basil. According to C. Scouteris, the terms tied to *θεολογία* and *θεολογεῖν* are used with measure, but with a precise content: The true and pure theology is nothing other than the teaching about the Trinity (C. SCOUTERIS, 155–157). In particular, for the Nyssen its specific content is the mystery of filiation, which is revealed in the relationship between *θεολογία* and *οἰκονομία*. The movement of Gregory's thought goes from above towards below, from God towards the created, to then return to God, following the structure of the Johannine prologue.

In *Inscr*, Gregory presents human beatitude in terms of *ὁμοίωσις* with God, with the divine nature. For this reason every human being must truly look to theology (*πρὸς τὴν θεολογίαν*) so that his life may be in accord with the faith, not only in the struggle against the passions through the practice of virtue, but above all by conforming himself to the divine mercy (*Inscr*, GNO V, 148,21–149,1). Here, the double value, both active and passive, of the term *θεολογία* is evident: It indicates both realities and the formulations which refer to these realities. The priority obviously lies with the reference to the *μυστήριον* of the divine nature, which God alone can reveal.

The term of *θεολογία* has thus a dimension which is essentially Christological and apophatic, in so far as the divine nature remains beyond the human capacities of understanding (→ *ΑΠΟΦΑΤΙΚΗ ΘΕΟΛΟΓΙΑ*): Only the Incarnate Word, in the hypostatic union, gives the human being access to the knowledge of God, since “theology is a truly precipitous and inaccessible mountain” (*Vit Moys* II, 158, 1–2; SC 1, 206).

Theology is therefore linked to adoration, surpassing the limits of time, and, in eschatological anticipation, becomes eternal, in so far as the latreutic act of the human reason unites itself in the profession of faith to the song of the angels: “And Paradise, Heaven itself, is accessible to man, and creation, both the worldly and the supra-worldly, which once was divided in itself, is reunited, and human beings enter into the choir

of angels, professing with piety together with them the same theology” (*Diem lum*, GNO IX/1 241, 16–20).

Theology is thus an act of choral cult, which requires the reverence of the human mind before the mystery. Piety and doctrine are intimately compenetrated in the mystery of the human being, soul and body, present before God. The heavenly cult and the earthly cult are united thus in the unique symphonic song to the Most Holy Trinity.

When this apophatic and latreutic dimension is denied to θεολογία, heresy is born. The process is particularly evident in the harshness with which Gregory treats Eunomius, calling him, with severe irony, θεολόγος at least seventeen times. He is *the new theologian*, ὁ καινὸς θεολόγος (*Eun* I, GNO I, 100, 3; *Eun* II, GNO I, 238, 9; *Eun* III, GNO II, 54, 9 and 242, 1). As C. Moreschini opportunely warns, the intention of the Nyssen’s irony is to express the extraneousness of the doctrine taught by Eunomius to the Christian tradition (C. MORESCHINI, 558). But Gregory’s harshness is most manifest when he calls Eunomius *the wise theologian* (ὁ σοφὸς θεολόγος): If Eunomius were to state such things in the local tavern, he would in fact provoke sneers and laughter (*Eun* I, GNO I, 202, 16–18, the epithet occurs in *Eun* II, GNO I, 333, 6 and *Eun* III, GNO II, 305, 22 as well). In the same line, expressions such as *the authoritative theologian* (ὁ σεμνὸς θεολόγος: *Eun* II, GNO I, 339, 27 and *RefEun*, GNO II, 356, 7), and *the sublime theologian* (τὸν ὑψηλὸν θεολόγον), can be found, when he says: “See how the sublime theologian does not feel shame to apply the same words to the earth, the angels and to the Creator of the universe himself?” (*Eun* III, GNO II, 283, 21–33).

This does not mean that the attribute of θεολόγος loses its proper positive value in Gregory. The Baptist is the theologian of the highest rank, the herald and theologian of the Redeemer himself (*Steph* II, GNO X/1, 102, 8–9). In the same way, the Prophets and prophecies are subjects of the verb θεολογεῖν (*Eun* III, GNO II, 65, 20–21). The true theologian however, the theologian *par excellence*, is the evangelist John, who appears to have been thus labeled for the first time by Origen (Origen, *Fragmenta in evangelium Joannis (in catenis)* 3, 3: E. Preuschen, *Origenes Werke*, GCS 10, 483). Gregory follows the great Alexandrian and makes explicit the profound reasons for such a title by comparing John, the theologian and beloved disciple (*Theod*, GNO X/1, 71, 5), to Peter and Paul: He is a theologian because in his Gospel he spoke of the eternity of the Only Begotten Son (*Eun* III, GNO II, 200, 16–17).

Eunomius, on the other hand, does not recognize eternal filiation, because he traces being generated back to passion, and therefore to

subordination, thus separating theology and mystery—but: “Not so does the sublime John, not thus that sublime voice of thunder did proclaim the mystery of theology (τὸ τῆς θεολογίας μυστήριον). He calls Him Son of God and purifies the proclamation from any concept tied to passion” (*Eun III*, GNO II, 57, 4–7). It is precisely the mystery of theology that presents itself as the center of the Nyssen’s thought, a center which is inseparably Christological and Trinitarian.

This mystery of theology is nothing other than the mystery of filiation, in so far as theology itself is essentially theology of the Son, i.e. the proclamation of his consubstantiality with the Father. For Gregory, θεολογεῖν principally means to affirm the eternal generation from the Father of the second Person of the Trinity, as can be seen in *Eun III*, GNO II, 199, 12, where he speaks specifically of the theology of the Son (τῆς τοῦ υἱοῦ θεολογίας) in a technical discussion of the various types of generation, in reference to the attributions of *radiance of his glory* of Heb 1.3 and *perfume of anointing* of Ct 1.3—the exegesis of which was a subject of controversy. The fear that these biblical expressions could cause ambiguity in those who pondered them is completely dispelled by the Johannine prologue, in which the consubstantiality of the Logos and the Father is clearly affirmed (*Eun I*, GNO II, 202, 12–20). For: “If then the Father is God and the Son too is God, what ambiguity still remains for the exact theology of the Only-Begotten (τὴν ἀκριβῆ τοῦ μονογενοῦς θεολογίαν)? For given that with the indicator of *Son* the being of his very nature is known, with *radiance* the union and inseparability, with the name of God there is applied to both the Father and the Son the total equality of honor. The character considered in the entire hypostasis of the Father signifies that nothing is lacking in greatness, the form of God indicates absolute identity by the fact that it manifests in itself all of the proper characteristics of the Divinity” (*Eun I*, GNO II, 202,20–203,3).

The discussion is taken up again in *Ref Eun*, in parallel to *Eun III*, in a true and proper analysis of the concept of *generation*, which is divided in an Aristotelian manner into various types. The teaching inspired of God uses all of these genera contemporaneously, purifying them however of the material images which characterize them. For when Scripture speaks of creation, it attributes it to God, using the term *generation* so that we might understand what takes place, but it indicates neither place, nor time, nor ordering of matter, nor the use of instruments, nor labor (*Ref Eun*, GNO II, 349,26–350,7). Thus, referring to the eternal existence of the Only-Begotten of the Father, because of the limitations of the intelligence and the capacities of human expression, it uses once again

the category of filiation, which in common usage on the created level is referred to generation from matter (*Ref Eun*, GNO II, 350, 7–13).

Gregory's works continually correct the tendency to proceed *from the flesh to God*, so that he will let himself instead be guided by the true *theological* signification of the revealed words. The foundational movement is that which goes *from God to the human being*: only in dependence on this can the movement *from the human being to God* take place as a response to the divine initiative. The *reditus* cannot precede the *exitus*.

Thus, just as Scripture purifies the concept of creation, so too when it speaks of the *Son*, it purifies this concept from all of the particularities which characterize earthly generation, viz. passion, physical conditions, the cooperation of time and the necessity of place, and, above all, matter. That which remains is only nature, i.e. its pure and simple provenance from the Father, being one with Him by nature (*Ref Eun*, GNO II, 350, 13–351, 1). All that is said by Scripture in a material sense serves precisely to render the theology of the Son understandable to the human being: “And since such a form of generation was not enough to produce in us a sufficient image of the ineffable existence of the Only Begotten, [Sacred Scripture] adopts the other form of generation as well to signify the theology of the Son (τῆς τοῦ υἱοῦ θεολογίας), that is the form of material flux, and speaks of *radiance of his glory* (Heb 1.3), *perfume of anointing* (Ct 1.3) and *emanation of God* (Wis 7.25), realities which, according to the logical system we have expounded, are denominated in our usage *material flux*” (*Ref Eun*, GNO II, 351, 1–9).

As in *Eun*, so too here the concept which designates the image and the *being from God and with God* (ἐξ αὐτοῦ τε καὶ μετ’ αὐτοῦ: *Ref Eun*, GNO II, 351, 15) is purified of any reference to time, to space or to matter.

Therefore, the very generation of the Son of God, that is his *being Son*, is the most profound content of this theology of mystery, which unites the Trinity and the human being, since the eternal generation is revealed in the virginal generation of the Son himself, as in the entire historical existence of the Christ, culminating in the death on the Cross and the Resurrection. All of his life manifests the divinity in humanity, and therefore θεολογεῖν signifies nothing other than the recognition of this μυστήριον, as a radical newness transmitted by the ministers of the Word.

According to the Neo-Arians on the other hand, the humanity of Christ, and above all the economy of the Cross, is the motive for affirming that the Son does not have the same glory as the Father. Gregory states

exactly the inverse: The Incarnation, death and Resurrection are historical events, affirmed by eyewitnesses and transmitted by the tradition, which demonstrate the divinity of the Son, who will return to judge each human being on the basis of his life (*Eun* III, GNO II, 120, 11–23). The life of Christ, his personal history, is a proof and manifestation of his divinity, in which the path to the Father is opened to each human being, since every human life, every personal history, can be worthy of communion with Him in the final judgment, which Christ himself will pronounce in reference to that which each man has lived in his own life.

The center of all the historical events and the witness *par excellence* is the CROSS (→) of Christ, since it is the highest revelation of filiation, i.e. of the divine power of Christ which attracts and unites all things to himself (*Eun* III, GNO II, 121,21–122,5 and *Trid spat*, GNO IX, 301,17–302,2). For exactly this reason, the Cross is surprisingly labeled θεολόγος by Gregory: “It was necessary that the Son of Man did not simply die, but that He be crucified, so that for the more perspicacious the Cross might become a theologian (θεολόγος), in so far as it expresses in its form the almighty dominion of Him who was stretched forth on it, and who is All in all” (*Trid*, GNO IX, 303, 8–12).

Therefore, in the domain of the proper teaching on the Trinity, to which many other expressions also refer, the term of θεολογία and its derivatives serve Gregory not only to refer to the formulation of the doctrine, but rather to indicate the very reality of the *mystery of filiation*, which is above all revealed in the Pascal Mystery, where the very Trinitarian mystery itself is disclosed to the human being.

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THEOLOGY OF HISTORY

One of the particularly interesting aspects of Gregory's thought is his understanding of time (\rightarrow TIME AND ETERNITY), treated by various authors (B. OTIS, I. ESCRIBANO-ÁLBERCA, J. DANÍELOU 1948, D. BALÁS, S. AGOURIDES, M. MEES, P. PLASS, T. ŠPIDLÍK, A. SPIRA, T.P. VERGHESE, L.G. PATTERSON), among whom P. ZEMP has written a monograph of exemplary beauty. The Nyssen's theology is not limited to *containing* a theology of time or of historical epochs, as has been demonstrated by A. LUNEAU and the authors cited above. One can even say that Gregory's thought *constitutes* a theology of history on the level of dogmatic structure (G. MASPERO). This theology of history is defined by the reciprocal relationship of distinction without separation, and of union without confusion, of θεολογία (), οἰκονομία (\rightarrow) and ἱστορία (\rightarrow).

As J. Daniélou has written: "The idea of change is, for Gregory, perfectly positive and represents a valuable contribution to theology. For Plato, every change is effectively a defect, and, if the intelligible world is superior to the sensible world, it is superior precisely inasmuch as it is immutable. Origen himself does not escape this difficulty: Change is never anything other than degeneration from an initial state of perfection for him. But with Gregory, the equation of good = immutability, evil = mutability, is inverted" (J. DANÍELOU, in the introduction to M. CANÉVET, 13–14). Other authors reach the same conclusion, e.g. B. OTIS and above all A. SPIRA, whose beautiful and learned analysis of the conception of human time from the Greek period until Gregory clearly manifests the central role and radical originality of the Nyssen's conception of history—understood as personal life—in the development of thought.

J. Daniélou defined theology of history as the part of theology which is occupied with the specific and immutable characteristic of divine action in history. In this sense this is an extremely vast discipline, which has as its object the totality of human time, of which it seeks to identify the significance (J. DANÍELOU, ²LThK, IV, 793). It is in this broad understanding that it is applied to the dogmatic structure of the Nyssen's thought. It would therefore be erroneous to consider the theology of history as a necessarily modern category, extraneous to the thought of the Fathers. On the contrary, even if the expression *theology of history* is recent, the

object of research is clearly ancient (R. AUBERT, 131). Numerous publications dedicated to the *theology of history* of the first Christian thinkers demonstrate this fact (G. JOSSA, P. CHIOCCHETTA).

As for Gregory, certain interpreters have affirmed that his thought reduces the value of the events of the life of Christ, in favor of a largely ontological consideration. This would be a more essentialist than historical Christianity (M. CANÉVET, 157). This reading is probably due to an analysis centered primarily on Gregory's spiritual writings. J. DANIELLOU (1970) and E. CAVALCANTI have a completely different perspective, speaking explicitly of theology of history. The analysis of A. LUNEAU, who studied Gregory's thought from the perspective of the doctrine of the age of the world, is itself quite clear. He concludes by affirming that Gregory's thought is the final synthesis of Greek thought on this subject. Considering Gregory's relationship to Irenaeus, Luneau writes "The one and the other believe in the progress without end of man and give the same reason. Nevertheless, that which the Bishop of Lyons only affirmed, Gregory develops, devoting more space to explanations. Above all, living in the period of Trinitarian disputes, Gregory discovers in the Trinity a new and supreme reason for human 'infinity', because, as Revelation has taught the human being, God-Being is first of all God-Love. Consequently, the insatiable desire of the human being, transformed into a tension of love by the grace of the Word, becomes the best image of the divine life, of the 'super-movement' in the heart of Trinitarian life" (A. LUNEAU, 180).

J. Daniélou saw in Irenaeus himself the first sketches of an authentic theology of history (J. DANIELLOU 1947). For this reason it is particularly pertinent to note that the attention to temporal development and the historical conception of human nature bring Gregory and Irenaeus together, as witnesses to a specific Asiatic tradition (J. DANIELLOU 1970, vii). This is noticeable in the labor of purification of Origenian intellectualism, which is characteristic of the Nyssen. Origen also follows the schema of ἀρχή-τέλος, excluding however the body from this movement. The reintegration of the body into the dynamic of *exitus* and *reditus* is common to Gregory and Irenaeus. The specific merit of the Nyssen is to have developed the incipient theology of history along the lines of the relationship between *θεολογία* and *οἰκονομία*.

It is also important to note that for Greek thought, the divine was an ideal world which was necessarily immobile and eternal. The movement of the cosmos was not considered except as a mobile image of the immobile. For this reason, movement could not but be cyclical (J. DANIELLOU

1953, 9–10). Only with the Incarnation was a qualitative jump introduced into history, which radically constituted in itself a past and a future, replacing Greek melancholy by Christian hope.

In this passage, it is essential to note that the theology of history is truly born only when the divine ceases to be understood in a static manner, and there is openness to the personal Intra-Trinitarian dynamic (*Maced*, GNO III/1 109, 7–15). The Trinity is in fact a *supra-dynamic* reality for Gregory, not an *anti-dynamic* one. In this perspective the temporal intensification (*Salut Pasch*, GNO IX, 309, 22–24) and the meta-historical culmination of human dynamics in ἐπέκτασις (→) can be understood. Christ is thus the perfect Image of the divinity, because He reveals the unique filiation in his Name, his Life and his Operation. Time is thus not negated but transcended. This passage also reveals the *musical* conception of Christian existence, underscored by H.-I. MARROU, and evident in Gregory's thought when he affirms that it is the will of God that the life of the Christian be like a Psalm (*Inscr*, GNO V, 75, 17).

This is a conceptual jump realized by neither Origen nor Eusebius: Both have many points in common with the Nyssen, but neither of them succeeds in considering history as a source of authentic originality. Only in the mid-4th century, with Gregory and then Augustine, do we find—alongside that which never had a beginning and will never have an end, i.e. the Divine, and alongside that which had a beginning and will have an end, i.e. the perishable—the conception of that which had a beginning in time, since it is not eternal, but will never have an end, since it is destined to eternity (J. DANIELLOU, 1953, 10–11). In order to reach this radical originality, the idea of the continuity of history will be fundamental, itself based on the concept of οἰκονομία, which is a fruit of the interaction both with Judaism and with the classical heritage.

Gregory's theology of history can be synthetically presented in five points:

1. The historical-social conception of human nature and temporality as discriminating between the Trinity and creatures (→ TRINITY, NATURE);
2. Ἐνέργεια (→) in its necessarily ontological relationship to nature;
3. UNITY OF ACTION (→) and the inseparability of θεολογία and οἰκονομία;
4. The connection between mystico-sacramental μίμησις (→), the βίος-ἱστορία of each human being and the βίος-ἱστορία of Christ (→ LIFE);

5. A reading of history according to the schema of ἀρχή-τέλος and ἀποκατάστασις (→) as a return to the primordial image.

These points permit history to be read in the light of the schema of *exitus-reditus*, which includes the material and corporeal dimension. The Neo-Platonic schema, based upon the continual degrees of being, is completely reinterpreted on the basis of the theology of creation and the theology of image which distinguish the Trinity and the world through temporality, without separating Trinity and the human being irreconcilably, in that the latter is created by God and destined to the participation of the same Love that characterizes the Trinitarian immanence.

This synthesis is made possible through the purity of the formulation of Trinitarian orthodoxy, proper to the Cappadocian circle, as well as through the passage from the Christology of the *Logos* to the Christology of the two natures. Gregory's theological equidistance from the schools of Alexandria and Antioch also proves essential: The exclusive attention to general history which characterized the first, and the exclusive attention to personal history which was preferred by the second, is surpassed in the Christological confluence of the two histories. The Nyssen's theology of history, as a theology of filiation and of the Cross, demonstrates that in Christ the history of humanity and the history of each human being are definitively united, inasmuch as in the personal history of the Man-God being *man* is identified with being *son*, that is, with being *image of the Image* (*Perf*, GNO VIII/1, 196, 12).

A fundamental role is played by the historical understanding of human nature, founded on the formulation of the distinction between Trinity and the human being in terms of temporality. Οἰκονομία is in fact interpreted as the definitive union between the divine nature, which defines the dominion of θεολογία, and human nature, which is defined by the sphere of ἱστορία, i.e. by the union of *all* of human nature with *all* of the divine nature in Christ, since he is perfect God and perfect man. The historical-social understanding of human nature thus implies that the life of each human being can enter into contact with the salvation realized by the life of Christ.

The mystico-sacramental facet of οἰκονομία is therefore reinterpreted as the only possible path in ἱστορία to enter into contact with the mystery of the intimacy of θεολογία, in virtue of the contemporaneity with the concrete events of the earthly life of Christ. In Him plan and event coincide, as well as οἰκονομία and ἱστορία, spiritual and literal senses, since in the interplay of his two wills He reconciles the ἀρχή and τέλος

of each human being with the ἀρχή and τέλος willed by the Father. For this reason the narration of the life of Christ (ἱστορία) is the norm for the life of the Christian (βίος).

In economic mediation, it thus becomes possible *to see the entire mystery of piety in history* (*Trid spat*, GNO IX, 275, 3–4), since, through the connection of being and action, the acts and events of the life of Christ reveal his divine attributes. This is not a simple gnoseological revelation, but rather an opening to ontological participation through μίμησις. The path from being to action can, in fact, be followed in the opposite direction thanks to the mystico-sacramental οἰκονομία.

The form of revelation thus corresponds to the nature of human being himself and to the essential narrative dimension of his life, which is not read as a merely subjective attribute, but as a properly ontological characteristic. In this manner μυστήριον is made present and participable in ἱστορία as βίος, in the imitation of the life of Christ realized in each human being, mystically and sacramentally, by the Holy Spirit. Only thus can the human being, who comes from God (*exitus*), return to God (*reditus*), transcending all of creation in this vertex of love.

Everything thus unfolds through ἱστορία understood as the personal life of Christ and the personal life of the human being, who must reach perfect likeness in the path of μίμησις. In this way every ἱστορία can become οἰκονομία in the effort to recognize and realize, in Christ, the will of the Father. The path of *reditus* to θεολογία is thus opened to everybody in ἱστορία, thanks to the οἰκονομία of the Son of God who became Son of Man.

In this sense the triad of θεολογία, οἰκονομία and ἱστορία, in their reciprocal internal relationships, defines a theology of history which is not limited to being a *theology of the history of salvation*, but is rather *theology of the salvation of history*.

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THEOPH

Ad Theophilum

This writing is a letter addressed to Theophilus, Archbishop of Alexandria. In certain manuscripts it carries the title “Against Apollinarius”, in other the title “Against the Apollinarians”. Nevertheless, the writing does not discuss individual affirmations of Apollinarius, but is a defense (apology: GNO III/I, 128, 16) against an accusation made by the Apollinarians, viz. that theologians such as Gregory adored in the end two Sons, one who is Son by nature (i.e. the Logos), the other Son by adoption (that is the *homo assumptus*) (120, 16–20).

Gregory personally affirms that it is not an issue of two Sons, and that one cannot even speak of “Sons” due to the fact that the Creator of the world appeared in the flesh at the end of times. Gregory speaks then of the ἐπιφάνεια of the Son, which does not imply the plurality of Sons—in the same way that the different theophanies, starting with Abraham until Peter and Paul, are not founded on a plurality of gods (121, 15–122, 18). These different theophanies were justified only because they corresponded to the different capacities of those who received them (123, 1–5). If all were as Moses, Paul, Elias or Isaiah and Ezekiel, the incarnation would not have been necessary. But, since human flesh is weak, the incarnation was necessary.

The assumption of that which is human, thus of that which is mortal, weak and changeable, signified precisely that what was mortal was transformed into something immortal, what was weak into something strong, and what was changeable into something immutable. The divine element remains always identical in the incarnate and redeems the assumed human nature by transforming it. Thus one cannot speak of a duality (125, 6–21). The properties of the divine nature are not touched; rather, the properties of the human nature are absorbed and transformed, so that no opposition subsists in the incarnate. This is precisely the true and inseparable union (ἕνωσις) (128, 3–4). For explaining the character of this union between divine and human nature Gregory mentions the drop of vinegar in the sea, a comparison broadly resumed in the later Greek theology: the human nature is only a drop of vinegar that cannot change the specific qualities of the sea viz. the divine nature (126, 17–21). This

union allows to use the names of the human nature for the divine and the other way around: the names change their places (ἀντιμεδίσταται; 127, 15–19), an early attempt of describing the problem known as *communicatio idiomatum* in later times.

In the writing, the concepts inspired by Apollinarius only appear marginally and in the polemical deformation of the Nyssen. Thus Gregory states that his adversaries with their accusations wish to consolidate their opinion according to which the Logos is carnal and the divinity of the Son is mortal (120, 14–16), or that there exists a carnal Son in himself (126, 1–2). Both these affirmations are directed at the thesis of Apollinarius that the incarnate Lord is a body with a soul created in a special mode, in which instead of a νοῦς, the Logos acts as the dominating center. A more precise reference or a specific argument against Apollinarian arguments is not to be found in the writing.

Since Theophilus became Archbishop of Alexandria in 384 or 387, the writing would be composed after such dates. Gregory's intention is to prompt Theophilus to struggle more forcefully against the Apollinarians and their accusations against Gregory himself (128, 16–20). It is not known if the Nyssen was successful, or what the concrete occasion of the writing was.

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Volker Henning Drecoll

THEŌRIA

θεωρία

This is a term of great importance for ancient thought. In Gregory one can distinguish, according to J. Daniélou, three fundamental *loci* where the term is used, which are linked to each other: (a) scientific knowledge, (b) exegetical method, and (c) mystical contemplation.

“In a general sense, *theoria* is the activity of the spirit that knows the intelligible reality of things without stopping at their sensible appearance” (J. DANIELOÛ 1970, 1). The spirit is, in fact, endowed with the capacity to go beyond appearances, since the human being is the image of his Creator. For Gregory, the very word *θεός* is derived, following in the footsteps of Aristotle, from *vision* (ἐκ τῆς θέας). This helps to explain the strong Nyssen’s criticism of habit (συνήθεια).

a. In its most properly scientific use, *θεωρία* assumes a signification similar to that of *examination* or *research*. It is often accompanied by ἀκολουθία (→): “The object of *theoria* is to uncover the rigorous interconnection, the laws of reality. It is for this reason that it is properly scientific knowledge” (J. DANIELOÛ 1970, 4). Geometric figures are under the sphere of *θεωρία* (*Eun* II, GNO I, 387, 21), as are the movements of the heavens (*Fat*, GNO III/2, 49, 15). This is a methodology that can be traced back to Aristotle and which, in its speculative aspect, is immediately in opposition to τέχνη.

It is crucial to note that Gregory uses *θεωρία* for ontology, i.e. for the knowledge of the various categories of beings (*Eun* II, GNO I, 393, 15–17). Thus, “The knowledge of God through creation (τὰ ὄντα) leads to the knowledge of God in himself (τὸ ὄντως ὄν)” (J. DANIELOÛ 1970, 8). It is necessary also to note that Gregory is concerned to emphasize the limits of human reason at the same time, as *θεωρία* always remains on the discursive level alone, and the further one approaches to the Absolute Being, the more does knowledge become only conjectural.

One of the fundamental features of the Nyssen’s thought is his systematic conception of creation, which implies a distinction of various orders of beings, based on the fundamental opposition between cosmos and

hypercosmos (→ COSMOLOGY). This leads to a unified and harmonious vision of concordance (→ *SYMPNOIA*) of the various created beings in their relationship to the Uncreated. "This vision is that of an order, of an *akolouthia* which is an order of succession, a historical vision" (J. DANIELÉLOU 1970, 9).

b. For Origen, θεωρία simply indicates the hidden sense. Eusebius has a more historical conception and refers the term to the Christian economy in the prophets of the OT. Cyril of Alexandria, Diodore of Tarsus, Gregory Nazianzen and Apollinarius of Laodicea follow him. Only Didymus of Alexandria follows Origen.

Gregory applies the term directly to the text: θεωρία indicates intelligibility properly understood. Thus in certain passages it can be opposed to the material sense, while in others it refers to the comprehension of the literal sense in itself, that is to the concatenation of events (ἱστορικὴ θεωρία) (*Inscr*, GNO V, 72, 10). Thus, "properly, *theoria* is hermeneutics" (J. DANIELÉLOU 1970, 10). It would therefore be radically erroneous to simply identify it with the search for the spiritual or typological sense: Gregory differs from the exegetes who preceded him, since he treats the scientific knowledge of the Word of God, and not only mystical knowledge of it.

The essence of θεωρία is thus the discovery of the underlying theme that unites events and leads to their signification: for this, "the object of *theoria* is *akolouthia*" (J. DANIELÉLOU 1970, 9). God wishes to make use of history, and this is why events are the base and starting point of analysis, as is clear in the division into two parts of the *Vit Moys*, the first dedicated to ἱστορία, the second to θεωρία. God's goal in revelation is not to communicate a material sense to us, but to make us participants in salvation, to divinize us. It is in this that the spiritual sense consists.

Thus the coherence of the whole of history becomes an interpretive criterion for the text. Θεωρία as a search for the spiritual sense was already present in Origen, while the search for ἀκολουθία was already present in Eusebius, but Gregory alone unites the two principles: "He gives the search for this *akolouthia* as object to *theoria*, something not found in Eusebius, thus giving a different sense to *theoria* than that which it had for the Alexandrians or for the Antiochians" (J. DANIELÉLOU 1970, 13). The exegetical use of the term θεωρία in Gregory's language is thus founded "on one of his fundamental intuitions: that of the historicity of created being", characterized by an ordinary development willed by God

(B. DE MARGERIE, 246). As origin and source of this properly Nyssen signification of θεωρία, one could look to Gregory's own rhetorical formation.

c. Θεωρία in its religious sense, i.e. as contemplation, is related to the two senses already presented, but instead of moving in an Aristotelian line, it changes to a Platonic one. It is perhaps a less original usage, in so far as it follows in the Alexandrian tradition. It does not directly refer to the knowledge of God (θεολογία), which remains inaccessible, nor is it simply about the common knowledge of human things, but is the way of looking at human realities from the perspective of celestial ones. In this sense the term is linked to οἰκονομία, since it refers to the knowledge of things in the light of the divine plan. This manifests the relationship between οἰκονομία and ἀκολουθία, its correlate in the exegetical sphere. The cosmic illusion is surpassed and the eyes of the human being are raised in contemplation, to discover the true reality of the world. This θεωρία is the very essence of prayer (J. DANIELLOU 1944, 150). The contemplation of invisible realities (τῶν ἀοράτων θεωρία) characterizes paradise itself, together with friendship with the angels and union with God (*Flacill*, GNO IX, 486, 14). For Gregory, beatitude consists in the contemplation of God together with the angels; but he clearly shows that contemplation does not have for its object the angels, but God alone. Fundamentally, the term has a negative connotation here, because the divine nature remains always beyond the human being's comprehensive capacities. Nevertheless, as with apophatism (→ APOPHATIC THEOLOGY), it is in this very negation that the greatness of the Nyssen's affirmation lies. It unites the contemplation of heavenly goods with the elevation to the heights of the angels (τὴν πρὸς ἀγγέλους ὁμοιμίαν). For Gregory, contemplation is equivalent to the return to Paradise (*Eccl*, GNO V, 386, 18–20).

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TRID SPAT

De tridui ... spatio

The work is at the center of the tryptich of Pascal homilies pronounced by the Nyssen; the other two homilies are *SANCT PASCH* (→) and *SALUT PASCH* (→). The references to the liturgy and the assembly show that *Trid spat* was preached during the night office of a Holy Saturday, which J. Daniélou identifies with that of 17 April 382 (J. DANIELOU, 361–362; J. BERNARDI, 285), but it could also be situated in the years between 394 and 396 (H.R. DROBNER, 171). Gregory writes: “Behold the blessed Sabbath of the first creation of the world, recognize by means of that Sabbath that this Sabbath is the day of rest, which God blessed above all the other days. For in this day the Only Begotten, who is God, truly rested from all of his works, celebrating the Sabbath in his own flesh through the economy according to his death, and, returning anew through the power of the resurrection to be that which He was, He raised up with himself all that lay dead, becoming life and resurrection, sunrise, evening and day for those who were in the shadow and the obscurity of death” (GNO IX, 274, 12–21). The central theme is the power of Christ, on which the other theological questions discussed are based: the victory over evil, the process of salvation and the new creation of humanity. To introduce the faithful to the moment of grace that they are living, Gregory, with a poetic style that reminds one of Melito of Sardis (E. MOUTSOULAS, 273), begins with the prefigurations of the Pascal mystery in the OT, and then deals with five problems linked to the Resurrection.

1. The first is the significance of the three days from death to Easter: Their number is interpreted as a sign of the victory and is related to the triple reparation for evil; in the lineage of men the first day, in that of women the second, and finally in the very author of death the third day, thus following a reverse path of the three moments of the original fall (GNO IX, 285, 7–23). Gregory, in order to respond to a question alive in his Church at that time, then proposes an explanation of his calculation of these three days: Since the Lamb, in order to be eaten, must have been already sacrificed, Jesus would have died already in

the Eucharistic offering of himself on the evening of Holy Thursday; thus, since in Gn 1.5 the shadow is called *night*, the obscurity produced from the sixth to the ninth hour for the death of Christ divided Friday into two days; finally, Saturday is the third day (286,13–290,17). In this way there would be three days and three nights, in accordance with Christ's reference to Jonah in Mt 12.40: the night of Thursday, the darkness of Friday and the night between Friday and Saturday. This same calculation could be the work of the liberty of God in relation to the normal measurements of time. This is a unique solution in the Greek tradition, one that Gregory knows through his ties with the Syriac Church, and in particular through his direct knowledge of the writings of the monk Aphrahat (H.R. DROBNER, *Three Days ...*, 270–271), one that he chooses for theological reasons.

2. Another question that is dealt with is the contemporary presence of the Lord in the heart of the earth, in paradise with the Good Thief and in the hands of the Father. The response is always based upon Christ's divine power, which even in the three days that appear to imply the greatest annihilation, continues to be in every place in so far as He is God. The solution is of particular note from the Christological perspective, inasmuch as the affirmation that "in the time of the economy according to the Passion that which was united once for all did not separate itself from the other part, but the divinity voluntarily separated the soul from the body and demonstrated itself remaining in the one and the other" (GNO IX, 293, 8–12) manifests a profound and new understanding (L.R. WICKHAM, 285–286) of the consequences of the hypostatic union. The hands of the Father are then identified with paradise (294, 4–13).

3. In light of Christ's victory over evil, Gregory then explains why Christians do not follow all the Judaic legal precepts regarding the feast of Passover, such as the observance of the fourteenth day of the month and unleavened bread: Those precepts had a symbolic significance, which alluded to the salvation realized in the Resurrection (294,14–298,18).

4. The fourth question Gregory deals with is the role of the Cross in the divine plan: This instrument of death was chosen by Christ, who had absolute liberty of choice, to reveal through its very form the universal dimension of salvation. The theme of the cosmic CROSS (→) appears here, in reference to Eph 3.18–19.

5. Finally, in a marvelous Eucharistic reading, Gregory invites all to imitate Joseph of Arimathea, wrapping Christ in the pure linen of a pure conscience, and receiving Him in a pure sepulchre, that is, in one's own heart, purified from every stain. Like the holy women, one must run to the sepulchre with the aromatic oil of faith and a good conscience (303,12–304,14).

The work, elegantly interwoven with classic themes in profound theological re-readings proper to the Nyssen's thought, closes with the vision of Christ who carries human nature to the Father, pulling along with himself all of the human race, and with the liturgical invitation to participate in the Eucharistic banquet after having listened to the Word (304,24–306,1). Gregory underscores in this way both the affirmation of the divine power of Christ and the sacrificial dimension of the Paschal event, which are fundamental elements of his theological thought.

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Giulio Maspero

TRINITARIAN SEMANTICS

1. A PRELIMINARY DEFINITION · 2. GRAMMAR AND PHILOSOPHY
3. GREGORY: A CREATIVE GENIUS.

1. A PRELIMINARY DEFINITION. In ancient times, Greek grammarians knew “person” as a notion involved in the verbal inflection or in the staging of drama. Nowadays, modern philosophers know “person” as a concept of ethical—or human rights—theories. Having introduced the notion of “divine person” as an intermediate step between the two, Gregory of Nyssa is praised for having filled the gap between the grammarians’ πρόσωπον and the moral one. His method claimed that any ontological question should be formulated as concerning the meaning of a sentence *about* the persons of God. This meant that the metaphysical plan of argumentation was interestingly connected to the semantic plan of human knowledge which is expressed by means of language. Consequently, *trinitarian semantics* refers here primarily to a specific method employed by Gregory in his trinitarian passages and writings. Whether debating about the divinity of the Holy Spirit or discussing the innumerable nature of the Son, Gregory found in his semantic tools the surest device for unmasking anyone who opposed the faith in the divine personhood. Gregory’s way of arguing resulted in a prose so impressive that even some later theologians such as Maximus the Confessor or the Byzantine Leontius imitated this style. Trinitarian semantics could be considered as a durable feature in Greek-language theology, and this marks a significant difference from the philosophical style of the majority of Latin theological writers. It is perhaps not incorrect to describe the Nyssen’s method as a sort of “linguistic turn” in theology. Talking, e.g., about the Godhead means analysing any relevant sentence about God, in order to evaluate how its parts contribute to the truth of the whole. The meaning of its constituents is derived from the meaning of the complex as a whole. The most representative account of Gregory’s semantic method is given in *In illud Tunc et ipse* (III/II, 3–28). As usual, the starting point is a sentence from Scripture: here, Paul’s much-discussed statement in 1 Cor. 15:28: Τότε ὑποταγήσεται ὁ υἱὸς τῷ ὑποτάξαντι αὐτῷ τὰ πάντα (Cf. RAMELLI 2008).—In the second place, trinitarian semantics also designates a modern approach to Greek theology,

carried out with help of the logical devices of the analytic philosophy of language (cf. LA MATINA 2007 and 2009; → PHILOSOPHY OF LANGUAGE).

2. GRAMMAR AND PHILOSOPHY. To appreciate the novelty of Gregory's theoretical approach, it is useful to look at the commonly accepted vision of parsing (*i.e.* the study of μέρος τοῦ λόγου) as a part of grammar or philosophy.

On the one hand, Hellenistic philologists considered grammar as divided into three parts: historical, technical and systematic (or properly, the *ιδιαιτέρον* part). The exact nature of parsing was long disputed, for the proper task of the *ιδιαιτέρον* was to fix both the elements of any well-formed sentence (*ἄξιωμα*) and the number of the word-classes (*μερισμός*). However, all through late Antiquity there were no shared criteria among the grammarians regarding the limits of each part. Sextus Empiricus—who had a comprehensive knowledge of the human sciences of his age—(*Adv. Math.*, I 77, 8 ff.) refuted such a partition. Instead, he accepted Crates' distinction between the competences of the *critic* and the *grammarian*: “The critic has to be an expert in logic” (τὸν μὲν κριτικὸν πάσης δεῖ λογικῆς ἐπιστήμης ἔμπειρον εἶναι), “whilst the grammarian just ought to know the explanation of words, their pronunciation and other similar matters” (τὸν δὲ γραμματικὸν ἀπλῶς γλωσσῶν ἐξηγητικὸν καὶ προσωδίας ἀποδοτικὸν καὶ τῶν τούτοις παραπλησίων εἰδήμονα). At any rate, grammar was generally considered as a method to investigate the usages of idioms and concepts among different peoples (ἡ γραμματικὴ ... μέθοδος τίς ἐστι τῶν παρὰ ταύτας ἐτέρων λεκτῶν τε καὶ νοητῶν). In spite of what Stoics were claiming, the sentential parsing was accomplished regardless of any investigation of meaning (τὸ σημαίνον).

From the philosophical point of view, the dominant approaches to parsing were, of course, influenced by Aristotle's logic and by Stoic semiotics. Both considered meaning as a constitutive issue for a philosophical analysis of language, although Stoics were especially interested in the nature of the simplest signs (e.g., words) as well as in the theory of logical inference. The most accurate theory of philosophical parsing was due to Aristotle. In *Categoriae* (2a30) he stated the priority of term over sentence: “meaning” is what one can define *before* two terms do melt with one another to form a sentence. Conceived in this way, semantics is a matter of a set of categories whose definition is given “apart from any bond” (κατὰ μηδεμίαν συμπλοκὴν). The semantic role of the sentence

(τὰ μὲν οὖν κατὰ συμπλοκὴν, οἷον ἄνθρωπος τρέχει, ἄνθρωπος νικᾷ) is separated from the semantic role of concepts (τὰ δὲ ἄνευ συμπλοκῆς, οἷον ἄνθρωπος, βοῦς, τρέχει, νικᾷ.). Aristotle's metaphysics was a consequence of his term-oriented semantics. It is precisely such an approach that Gregory turns upside down.

3. GREGORY: A CREATIVE GENIUS. All through the *New Testament* one encounters sentences, whose trinitarian semantics is elusive; e.g. Ἐγὼ ἐν τῷ πατρὶ καὶ ὁ πατήρ ἐν ἐμοὶ ἐστὶ, Ὁ ἐώρακώς ἐμὲ ἐώρακε τὸν πατέρα, etc. In many cases a heretical attitude sprang from a misunderstanding of them. As Plato said: "It is difficult to conceive God, but to define Him in words is an impossibility" (*Tim.* 28e). In spite of this, Gregory's sentence-oriented semantics proved a powerful weapon against the most common forms of reductivism, for it forced the interpreters (no matter whether heretics or not) to distinguish between *having a private concept* of God and *explaining the word* "God" in the context of a *publicly available* sentence.

The *Eun* presents interesting arguments Eunomius claimed to impose a rigorous pattern upon the language of both the Old and the New Testament (*Eun* I, 1.74 ff.). He endeavored to introduce a certain discontinuity between the *language the Fathers talked about* (= the biblical κοινὴ) and the *language the Fathers talked in* (= the late-Antiquity Greek spoken in the fourth century). His goal was to deconstruct the fatherhood of God, i.e. to divide God from God, true God from true God, by appealing to a non-anthropomorphic semantics of γέννημα, ποίημα and ἀγεννησία, instead of the more weighty semantics of words like Πατήρ and Υἱός. The reason why Eunomius introduced such a new *Wortbildung*—so Gregory argues (cf. *Eun* I.1.159.1 ff.)—is obvious to all: when people, in fact, hear the words "father" or "son", they could understand the proper and natural relationship between the pair of names (ἀλλὰ παντὶ πρόδηλον οἶμαι τὴν αἰτίαν εἶναι τῆς καινῆς ταύτης ὀνοματοποιΐας, ὅτι πάντες ἄνθρωποι πατρὸς καὶ υἱοῦ προσηγορίαν ἀκούσαντες εὐθὺς τὴν οἰκείαν αὐτῶν καὶ φυσικὴν πρὸς ἄλληλα σχέσιν ὑπ' αὐτῶν τῶν ὀνομάτων ἐπιγινώσκουσι). Eunomius attempted to remove any anthropological depth, so that theology could be reduced to an abstract algebra of divineness. Moreover, he deliberately confused the οὐσία and the πρόσωπα of God (*Eun* I, 1.93), sometimes misinterpreting, e.g., the name of the Father (cf. *Ref Eun* 16.4: ἡ τοῦ πατρὸς κλήσις οὐκ οὐσίας ἐστὶ παραστατική, ἀλλὰ τὴν πρὸς τὸν υἱὸν σχέσιν ἀποσημαίνει), and sometimes dividing the semantics of the referring expressions, in order to divide the reference

itself to the triune God (the personal σχέσις of the persons; *Eun* I. 1, 168; cf. also I, 1.92 and 187,3). The same applies to the Holy Spirit (I.1, 117).

The germinal account of Gregory's trinitarian semantics is represented by the famous *Ep.* 38 (→ *DIFF ESS HYP*), where a theoretical distinction between οὐσία and ὑπόστασις is clearly traced. Everybody knows that such words were synonymous at that time. Now Gregory—departing from their usual semantics—assigns them a new role within the logical analysis of trinitarian sentences. Instead of trying to differentiate οὐσία and ὑπόστασις as metaphysical (or ontic) concepts, he gives them a different logical role in the context of sentences. Accordingly, every metaphysical statement is to be interpreted as consisting of (a) an οὐσία part and (b) a relational noun for the ὑπόστασις (or πρόσωπον). He takes the οὐσία-words as very similar to what modern logicians call “concept-words” (or *Begriffswörter*), while he considers the ὑπόστασις- (or πρόσωπα-) words as similar to what is meant by “relation nouns” (or σχετικά ὀνόματα) or—just in anthropology—“verity names” (cf. LA MATINA 2005 and 2005; MAUSS 1938). In comparison to Aristotle, the novelty is represented by the *non-interchangeability* of them. In *Graec* he clearly says that “God” is not the name of God, for it is not a proper noun at all: “If the name ‘God’ were indicative of person (προσώπου δηλωτικόν), by necessity we would say that there are three Gods when we say that there are three persons. But if the name ‘God’ signifies substance (οὐσίας σημαντικόν), then when we confess one substance of the Holy Triad we reasonably declare that there is one God, since the term ‘God’ is one name of one substance” (*Graec*, 1.19). Accordingly—as Gregory elsewhere maintains—saying, e.g., that “the Father is God” will not imply the converse, i.e. that “God is (the) Father”—for, in the affirmative, the Son could not be God because of his not being (the) Father: εἰ γὰρ, ἐπειδὴ πατήρ ὁ πατήρ, διὰ τοῦτο καὶ θεὸς ὁ πατήρ, ἐπειδὴ μὴ πατήρ ὁ υἱός, οὐ θεὸς ὁ υἱός (*Graec*, 1.23.17). On the contrary, the statement that “the Son is everything that the Father is, apart from being the Father himself” (*Ref Eun*, III.1.85.10, πάντα ὧν οὗτος ὅσα ἐστὶν ἐκεῖνος πλὴν τοῦ ἐκεῖνος εἶναι) is semantically testable.

The semantics of relative terms (or σχετικά ὀνόματα) involved a very serious question: how was the unbegotten being (τὸ ἀγεννήτως εἶναι) of the Father to be related to the being begotten (τὸ γεννητὸν εἶναι) of the Son? Eunomius' supporters considered ἀγεννησία and γέννησις as a pair of hypostasis-nouns which could be used to name the Father and the Son. Now, in at least three crucial passages of *Eun*, Gregory

contests such an explanation, with the help of a stringent series of semantical inferences. The pair—he claims—are not genuine names, for they do not *denominate* the divine persons. Rather, they refer respectively to the Father's *being Unbegotten* and the Son's *being begotten*. However, the real semantics of ἀγεννησία and γέννησις does not appear, unless we presuppose some sentences about the way the οὐσία of God is given to us. This *way of being* is for Gregory the self-determination (τὸ αὐτεξούσιον) of the divine ὑποστάσεις (or πρόσωπα). Thus, the problem of the ἀγεννησία and γέννησις of the divine dyad is correctly stated if, and only if, it is formulated in semantical terms. Gregory exemplifies his solution by appealing to the sample-sentence “this one was begotten” (and its contrary “this other was not begotten”), which amazingly he compares with Plato's *Sophist* famous sentence *about the sitting* of Theaetetus (Θεαίτητος κάθηται—the Stranger said in the *Sophist*): τὸ γὰρ “ἐγεννήθη” καὶ “οὐκ ἐγεννήθη” ὥς ἂν τις ὑποδείγματι σαφηνίσαι, τοιοῦτόν ἐστιν οἷον καὶ τὸ “κάθηται” καὶ “οὐ κάθηται” καὶ ὅσα τῷ τοιούτῳ λέγεται τρόπῳ (CE 2.1.18.8 ff. See also 2.1.25 ff. and 2.1.34.1 ff.). The logical form is “*the such-and-such* was begotten” or “*the such-and-such* was not begotten”; the γεννητός/ἀγέννητος is thus relativised to the personal σχέσις—and not to the οὐσία—of the Father and the Son. It goes without saying that in such sentences there is no room for any hypostatisation like that of ἀγεννησία.

Another crucial document of trinitarian semantics is the short treatise *Graec*. Here Gregory questions the more common notions of the traditional Greek metaphysics. He clearly echoes Plato when he states the connection between sentences and ontological commitments, though capsizing Plato's axiology. The word θεός stands for an οὐσία, although it cannot denote its τὸ τί, since we cannot have a finitely comprehensive idea of God. So it only works as a “δῆλωμα τῆς οὐσίας” (rather than as a genuine concept-word) calling for some completion. The semantical role of the οὐσία is thus void of any ontological commitment, until a person-indicator (δῆλωμα προσώπου) appears in the context of a sentence. Such indicators for πρόσωπα are not visible in the surface structure of the sentence, and can emerge only when a sentence is given a logical form. Anticipating a similar distinction made by the logician Gottlob Frege around the end of the 19th century, Gregory also seems to be aware of the difference between “features of an οὐσία” (later called *Eigenschaften*) and “characteristics of the individuals falling under a given predicate expressing such an οὐσία” (then called *Merkmale*). He also fights a duel about the semantics of indexical expressions like “this” and “the such-and-

such" (see STROBEL 2006) and about the semantical connection between being (existence) and numerousness. Among many original passages, we should note III.1. 19,7–20,11, which seems to anticipate a parallel passage about the nature of number found in Gottlob Frege's *Grundlagen der Arithmetik* (1884). Distinguishing among two uses of the connective καί, Gregory argues that what it expresses is not only a difference among individuals, but also the irreducibility of the persons to the oneness of their common substance. The logical relation between being and person, or oneness and numerousness, is the central topic of the short treatise *Abl.* (for which see now MASPERO 2008).

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Marcello La Matina

TRINITY

1. APOPHATISM AND TRINITY · 2. THE UNITY OF PERSONS
3. IMMANENT DYNAMICS · 4. PSYCHOLOGICAL ANALOGY
5. FILIATION · 6. PNEUMATOLOGY.

A large part of the Nyssen's corpus is dedicated to the doctrine of the Trinity, in particular the three books of *Eun*, *Ref Eun*, and the short Trinitarian treatises: *Eust*, *Graec*, *Abl*, *Simpl*, *Arium*, *Maced*, and *THEOPH* (→). This is virtually the three first volumes of the GNO, to which numerous other writings can be added, such as *Or cat*, *Cant*, *Deit fil*, *Pent* (GNO III/4; GNO VI; GNO X/2) and various letters. Gregory's reflection began under the necessity to continue the work started by BASIL (→) in response to the semi-Arian heresy. To this was later added the debate with the Pneumatomachians. One must remember that all of the Nyssen's theology is permeated by Trinitarian reflection, which is also the true foundation of his spiritual theology. For this reason, it can be affirmed that there is no writing of Gregory that is not relevant to the understanding of this fundamental aspect of his thought, which is also inseparably united to Christological doctrine. From a terminological perspective, *Τριῶς* appears around eighty times in the Nyssen's corpus, with surprising concentrations in the short works when compared to *Eun* e *Ref Eun*. The use of the terms *πρόσωπον* (→) and *ὑπόστασις* (→) is extremely important from the perspective of the history of dogma.

In Gregory's theology, the concordance of the affirmations of Trinitarian doctrine and the understanding of divine filiation is particularly clear: The Christian God is a God who eternally engenders his own Son, communicating to Him the divine life, defined in dynamic terms of love and filiation. In so far as He is the Son of God, He is presented as the Son of the Father's love (*Cant*, GNO VI, 213, 15–17). This requires a purificatory work on the human notion of filiation: For this reason, the first element in Gregory's Trinitarian reflection is essentially gnoseological (→ PHILOSOPHY OF LANGUAGE, TRINITARIAN SEMANTICS, DIVINE NAMES), concentrating on the necessary connection between *Apophatism* and *Trinity* (1) as an unavoidable requirement for a correct approach to the theology of the Father, the Son and the Holy Spirit. After this necessary introduction, God can be presented in the mystery of the *Unity of Persons* (2),

manifested by the unique Trinitarian action, the reflection of the unity of the φύσις (→). This makes it possible to reach the *Immanent Dynamic* (3) of God itself, presented no longer in a static manner according to the philosophical schema, but as the Living God. The consideration of divine procession and the relational dynamic that characterizes the life of the three divine Persons, expressed through a certain *Psychological Analogy* (4) by Gregory as well, permits an approach to FILIATION (→), the theological center of the Nyssen's reflection, and to PNEUMATOLOGY (→), to whose development Gregory's contribution is particularly important.

1. APOPHATISM AND TRINITY. Gregory's Trinitarian theology is marked by the discussion with EUNOMIUS (→), although the Nyssen has the merit of never allowing himself to be wrapped up in dialectical and polemical positions. The essential element of his thought is thus apophatism (→ APOPHATIC THEOLOGY), understood as a reaction to the semi-Arian affirmation that it is possible to understand the divine essence. Under Platonic influence, Eunomius maintained that the names were revealed by God and that ἀγέννητος—*unengendered*—adequately designates the very substance of God the Father (*Eun* II, GNO I, 233, 11–17), the only Creator. According to him, this is not a name that is applied only on the conceptual level (κατ' ἐπίνοιαν). The same would be true for the name γεννητός—*engendered*—which indicates the substance of the Son: The substance of the Father and that of the Son could not, then, be the same, because the names that indicate them are different. The Spirit, finally, would have no creative power whatsoever, but would simply be the energy with which the Son produces the world. Thus, in an extreme synthesis, Eunomius negates the consubstantiality of the three Persons (*Eun* I, GNO I, 91, 20), basing himself on a Neo-Platonic and logical theory of names which leads him to profess the identity of the ontological level and the gnoseological level, an identity against which Gregory reacts directly, distinguishing the level of *being* from that of *stated being* (*Eun* II, GNO I, 271, 30).

The value of human conjecture and reason is undeniable. It is however important for the reason not to yield to the temptation to express the inexpressible, following a philosophical technics rather than the tradition of the Fathers. For this reason Gregory denounces Eunomius' excessive recourse to syllogisms, calling him a *technologue* (τεχνολόγος: *Eun* II, GNO II, 402, 28), because he remains trapped in the philosophical schema of the κακοτεχνία of Aristotle and Aetius (*Eun* I, GNO I, 41, 4–5). The Nyssen instead gives priority to the tradition inherited from the

Fathers, rather than to his own argumentative capacities (*Abl*, GNO III/1, 39 1–3). For the mind can approach even to the point of touching the divine (ἐπορέγεται καὶ θιγγάνει), but it will never be able to understand it, much less embrace and exhaust it in its understanding. It is precisely in this discovery that one has access to the highest knowledge, viz. that of the infinity and inaccessibility of the divine nature (*Eun* II, GNO I, 265,23–266,14). This is not limited to the source of being, but is also true of every being that participates in being, because the essence of creatures is beyond the capacity of the human intellect as well (*ibid.*, 247,4–248,3). Not only is the soul incomprehensible, but even the flesh and the body, in their essence, elude the human being's analytical capacity (*ibid.*, 259, 26–31).

In this context the question of numbers arises. Their gnoseological status is fundamental for Trinitarian doctrine. The discussion of the origin is in fact essential in the encounter with Neo-Platonic philosophy and the Pythagorean heritage as inserted into the Platonic tradition. Gregory confirms the priority of ontology, of which the logico-mathematical sphere is only a reflection. The Nyssen's affirmation that number is born at the moment of creation itself is quite significant: Number follows the being of things, of the various created realities (*Hex*, PG 44, 85 BC). Numbering has something to do with movement, with the limited and changeable creaturely mode of being—its origin is physical (A. PENATI BERNARDINI). Names follow being and express its dynamic character: "Have we not clearly learned that the names that signify that which happens to beings are posterior to things, and that nominative vocabulary is like a shadow of things themselves, which receive their form according to the movement of that which subsists in hypostasis (τῶν ὑφεστώτων)?" (*Eun* II, GNO I, 269, 11–14). This permits Gregory to take a fundamental step, changing the focus from substance to hypostasis. For the Nyssen, apophatism presents a negative defense against rationalism, but it has a positive character at the same time, in that it centers its attention on the personal dimension (G. MASPERO, 138–147). In this sense it is possible to apply name and number to the Trinity, because it is possible to speak of the action of the divine Hypostases, of their action in time and of the effects of their actions. Thus, the divine Persons can be counted in their self-manifestation inside the limits of time. This however, because of the connection of θεολογία and οἰκονομία (→), means that number can be applied to the *mode of being*, i.e. to the divine Person.

The Trinity is thus known from divine action: "Therefore, considering the various activities (ἐνεργείας) of the supreme power, we adapt the

appellatives based upon the activity known to us. And we say that one of the activities of God is that of observing and watching, and, so to speak, of seeing, by which *He sees everything from above* and searches everything, seeing thoughts and penetrating with the power of his regard to the invisible things. We thus think that the Divinity (τὴν θεότητα) has received its name from *vision* (ἐκ τῆς θέας), and that He who regards us (τὸν θεωρὸν) is called God, both by habit and by the teaching of the Scriptures” (*Abl*, GNO III/1, 44,7–44,16). Names derive from the divine activity, from the divine energies (→ ENERGY). The name of *divinity* in particular is derived from *vision*, according to an etymology which depends upon Aristotle. This doctrine is common in the Nyssen’s writings (*Eun* II, GNO I, 268,30–269,2 and 397, 15–16; *An et res*, PG 46, 89B; *Deit fil*, GNO X/2, 143). He considers all the DIVINE NAMES (→) as indicators of a divine activity.

2. THE UNITY OF PERSONS. Gregory coherently founds his Trinitarian reflection on the New Testament and the liturgically based event of Baptism. For the unique divine life is given to the human being through baptismal grace (*Ref Eun*, GNO II, 379): Each one of the three divine Persons is called ζωοποιοῦντα, but we cannot speak of three ζωοποιοῦντες (*ibidem*, 382). The same is true of the forgiveness of sins (*Or dom*, GNO VII/2, 260, 28–30) and salvation in general. In this sense, the divine Persons can be known only in their unity, thanks to the Personal seal that each one imprints upon the divine action: “Therefore, in conformity to that which has been said, the Holy Trinity does not accomplish each act separately in conformity to the number of the Hypostases, but a unique movement and a unique communication of good will is generated, which from (ἐκ) the Father, through (διὰ) the Son, is directed to (πρός) the Spirit. Therefore we do not call those who actuated the unique Life (ζωήν) three vivifying beings, nor those whom we contemplate in the same Goodness three good beings, nor do we designate any of the other attributes in the plural. In the same way, we cannot call three those who actuate in unity and inseparably, with reciprocal action, this divine power and activity, or supervision, either over us or all of creation” (*Abl*, GNO III/1, 48,20–49,7). This is one of the Nyssen’s favorite arguments, that of the UNITY OF ACTION (→).

Gregory expresses through Trinitarian formulas the fact that the three Persons intervene in the unique κίνησις according to their proper personal characteristic. He does not limit himself to the ἐκ πατρὸς τε καὶ υἱοῦ καὶ πνεύματος ἁγίου (*Ref Eun*, GNO II, 336), which only places the

Persons in juxtaposition, and is the least frequent schema. The most frequent schema by far is that of ἐκ πατρὸς—δί υἱοῦ—ἐν πνεύματι, which repeatedly appears in the Nyssen's writings (*Abl*, GNO III/1, 48, 1; *Maced*, GNO III/1, 100, 9–11; *Epist* 24, GNO VIII/2, 77, 4–6). The prepositions can change, even if the διὰ of the Son remains continually unvaried. For the Nyssen, the activity of the three Persons is always unique, without this unicity veiling the personal characteristic of each one. This is possible because the persons act δι' ἀλλήλων (*Abl*, GNO III/1, 49, 6–7), and because they are with one another, i.e. ἐν ἀλλήλοις and μετ' ἀλλήλων (*Eun* III, GNO II, 177, 3–4). In fact, the unity of action is nothing other than the economic reflection of the perichoresis, in which the three Persons are united without confusion, co-present to One Another in reciprocal love. The term of περιχώρησις does not appear in the Nyssen's writings, unlike the writings of Gregory Nazianzen, who is the first to use it, although he does so in the Christological domain (*Epistula* 101, 6; SC 208, p. 38). It is applied to the Trinity only later, between 657 and 681 by Pseudo-Cyril (*De Trinitate* 10, PG 77, 1144B). Nevertheless, beyond the simple lexical issue, the theological concept is clearly presented by Gregory, who perhaps manifested no sympathy for the term of περιχώρησις due to the physical connotation which characterized it in the Stoic environment (D.F. STRAMARA, 257–258). The Nyssen's doctrine is founded on Jn 10.28 and 17.21, reaching the clear and concise affirmation that each of the Persons contains, and is contained in turn (ἀλλὰ ἀλλήλων φημι γεγονέναι δεκτικούς καὶ χωρητικούς; *Arium*, GNO III/1, 82, 28–29), in such a way that: “The Father, the Son and the Holy Spirit are always recognized in the perfect Trinity, in intimate and reciprocal (μετ' ἀλλήλων) connection and union (ἀκολούθως τε καὶ συνημμένως)” (*Maced*, GNO III/1, 98, 28–30).

Gregory expresses this beautiful reality through propitious images which permit him to show both the personal distinction and the unity of nature. The image of the sun in particular is presented by Gregory as an explanation precisely of the formula ἐκ τοῦ πατρὸς διὰ τοῦ υἱοῦ πρὸς τὸ πνεῦμα: “Firmly situated in the consideration of the light which is not generated, according to the continuity of relation, the light [that shines] from it, as a ray that coexists with the sun and whose cause (αἰτία) of being [comes] from the sun, while [its] existence (ὑπαρξίς) is contemporary to the sun [itself], because it does not arise successively in time, but together with the sun is manifested by it”. Gregory immediately purifies the image, affirming that he does not have a ray of the sun in mind, but is thinking “of another sun [which shines] from an

unengendered sun, which at once with the thought of the first shines together (συνεκλάμποντα) with Him in a generated (γεννητῶς) manner, and who is equal to Him in every way: in beauty, in power, splendor, greatness and luminosity, and in all that can be observed in the Sun". The image does not stop here, but is similarly extended to the third Person, who is: "another of such lights, who is not separated from the engendered light by any temporal interval, but who shines through it (δί' αὐτοῦ), while it has the cause of its hypostasis (τῆς ὑποστάσεως αἰτίαν) from the original light: It is certainly a light itself who, like those which we considered before, shines and illuminates and accomplishes all that is proper to light". The Nyssen clearly affirms that there is no difference between one light and another, and that the Spirit specifically, who is contemplated at the apex of all perfection with the Father and the Son and enumerated with them, grants access in Himself (δί' ἑαυτοῦ) to the light, which is contemplated in the Father and in the Son, to all those who can participate in it (*Eun* I, GNO I, 180,10–181,11).

The Nyssen can permit himself to use images from the natural world because the structure of his dogmatic thought is founded on the clear and radical distinction between the created world and the uncreated world: God alone is eternal, for which reason the divine Persons exhaust in themselves the entire domain above creation. The exclusion of any sort of intermediary reality permits Gregory to affirm the coeternity of the Father and the Son, who are not separated by any temporal interval or any difference of nature. It is this coeternity and unity of the Father and the Son which requires their coeternity and unity with the Holy Spirit, because, just as one cannot affirm that the Father was always such without the Son, so too one cannot think that the Only-Begotten could have existed eternally without the Holy Spirit. The third Person is thus divine and inseparable from the first two, since He is uncreated and eternal (*ibidem*, 137,20–138,20).

A parallel to the image of the Sun is that of the flame, used likewise to confront Eunomian subordinationism: "For in the case of those beings whose activity according to the good does not admit any sort of diminution or difference, how could it be reasonably thought that numerical order is the sign of some diminution or difference of nature? As if, in seeing the flame divided into three torches—and supposing that the first flame is the cause of the third light, because it propagates the fire to the far light by communication through [the light] which is in the middle—one concluded for this reason that the heat in the first be the highest, in

the next less, and tends to diminish, and that the third is not even called fire any more, even if it burns and illuminates in the same manner as fire, and accomplishes all that it does" (*Maced*, GNO III/1, 92,34–93,10).

The three divine Persons are a unique nature, because unique is the light, unique is the life and unique is the fire of God. God is light, life and fire. For this reason, in the history of the incarnate Son, the entire Trinity is revealed in his life, in such a way that immanence becomes accessible through the economy. For the very name of Christ unveils the mystery of his Person, and thus the mystery of the One and Triune God: "The mystery of the Trinity is confessed in this name. In this name we are taught of him who anoints, him who is anointed, and that with which he is anointed. For if one omits any one of these, the name of Christ has no foundation" (*Inscr*, GNO V, 119, 20–23).

3. IMMANENT DYNAMICS. The connection between being and action, along with the affirmation of the absolute distinction between the created world and the Trinity, permits Gregory to distinguish with certainty the Trinitarian immanence and economy, without separating them. Thus, the Nyssen can move from the economy to immanence in order to describe, from the revelation and manifestations of the three divine Persons, their intimate life. This is always a description and not an explanation: The mystery remains intact in its incomprehensibility, but reason can formulate it in a clear manner, in this way protecting Revelation from false readings which put its content at risk. This is particularly evident in Gregory's defense when he was accused of tritheism (\rightarrow *ABL*): "If then one will falsely accuse the reasoning of presenting any mixture (μίξις) of the hypostases and a distortion due to not accepting the difference according to nature, we will respond to such accusations that, in affirming the absence of diversity of nature, we do not negate the difference according to that which is cause and that which is caused. And we can conceive that the one is distinguished from the other simply because we believe that the one is that which is cause, and the other that which is derived from the cause. And in that which has originated from a cause we conceive yet another difference: One thing is to be immediately (προσέχῳς) from the first in fact, and another to be through (διὰ) that which is immediately from the first. Thus being Only-Begotten remains incontestably in the Son, and it is indubitable that the Spirit is from the Father, because the mediation (μεσιτείας) of the Son maintains his being Only-Begotten, and does not exclude the Spirit from the natural relation (σχέσεως) with the Father" (*Abl*, GNO III/1, 55,21–56,10). This text clearly refers to

Trinitarian immanence (M. GOMES DE CASTRO, 112), and is particularly pertinent from the perspective of the history of dogma, so that it is often cited in reference to the *Filioque*.

The immanent dynamic is expressed in terms of relation (σχέσις). For this very reason, the Persons are distinct through the attentive use of prepositions, made possible by the linguistic precision of Greek. In the same manner, personal property is expressed in adverbial form, in so far as the Person itself is identified with the *mode of being*: “And saying *cause* and *from the cause* (αἷτιον καὶ ἐξ αἷτιου), we do not designate a nature with these names—for one could not produce the same explanation for a cause and for a nature—but we explain the difference according to the mode of being (κατὰ τὸ πῶς εἶναι). In fact, in saying that one is in a caused mode (αἷτιατῶς) while the other is without cause, we do not divide the nature due to the cause, but we only demonstrate that neither is the Son without generation (ἀγεννήτως), nor is the Father by generation (διὰ γεννήσεως). It is first necessary that we believe that something is (εἶναί τι), and [only] later do we ask how it is (πῶς ἐστι). Thus to say *what it is* (τί ἐστι) is different from saying *how it is* (πῶς ἐστι). Therefore, stating that something is without generation, *how it is* is expounded, but, with such words, *what it is* is not also explained” (*Abl*, GNO III/1, 56, 11–22). Gregory clearly affirms that there are two distinct levels: that of nature, and that of relation, the σχέσις. In fact, after the council of Nicaea, the consubstantiality of the first two Persons of the Trinity had been definitively affirmed, but the theology of Eunomius nevertheless required a clarification with regard to the ἀγέννητος: It lent itself, in fact, to two interpretations, since it could be applied to the Divinity as such, but could also be understood in a relative sense, in exclusive reference to the Father. Gregory’s work made it possible precisely to avoid the confusion between the level of nature and the level of relation (J. DANIÉLOU 1964, 44). The first remains absolutely ineffable, while the *how it is* can be expressed: The σχέσις can be stated.

The Nyssen applies the concept of αἷτία to the immanence, while nevertheless attentively purifying it of every temporal connotation: “For, as the Son is conjoined to the father, and although having being from Him, He is not inferior according to substance, so too the Holy Spirit in his turn is united to the Only-Begotten, who is considered before the hypostasis of the Spirit only from the perspective of principle of the cause: There is no room for temporal extensions in eternal life. Thus, the principle of the cause excluded, the Holy Trinity is in no respect in

discord (ἄσυμφώνως) within itself” (*Eun* I, GNO I, 224,23–225,5). This permits Gregory to distinguish the three divine Persons on the basis of intra-Trinitarian order and *relational succession* (σχετική ἀκολουθία): For the Father has as his personal property to not be caused, while the Son and the Spirit do not have these properties, and this makes it necessary to find another property to distinguish the second and third Persons. The Nyssen bases himself on the following consideration: Scripture says that the Only-Begotten Son is from God, and also that the Holy Spirit is from God, but, in Rm 8.9 it speaks of the Spirit of the Son, so that the Spirit who is from God is also the Spirit of Christ. Nevertheless, one does not say that the Son who is from God is also of the Spirit. In this sense the scriptural witness does not allow us to invert the order of *relational succession* (σχετική ἀκολουθία): The Spirit is of Christ, but Christ is not of the Spirit. In this manner, a property which distinguishes the second and the third Persons clearly and without confusion (ἄσυγχύτως) has been identified, while the identity in activity indicates the commonness of nature (*Or dom*, GNO VII/2, 42,14–43,15). This intra-Trinitarian order, which permits us to distinguish the Son and the Spirit, is thus founded on the two processions, indicated in a technical manner by the Nyssen: “For the Person (πρόσωπον), that of the Father, is unique and the same, from whom the Son is generated (γεννᾶται) and the Holy Spirit proceeds (ἐκπορεύεται)” (*Graec*, GNO III/1, 25, 4–6).

In this manner Trinitarian immanence is dynamically characterized in terms of reciprocal relation and mutual immanence: “Do you see the circulation of glory through the same cyclical movements? The Son is glorified by the Spirit, the Father is glorified by (ὑπό) the Son. Reciprocally, the Son has the glory of (παρά) the Father and the Only Begotten becomes the glory of the Spirit. For in what will the Father be glorified, if not in the glory of the Only Begotten? And in turn, in what will the Son be glorified, if not in the glory of the Spirit? Thus too, reason, inserting itself into this circular movement (ἀνακυκλούμενος), gives glory to the Son (διά) through the Spirit and to the Father through (διά) the Son” (*Maced*, GNO III/1, 109, 7–15).

Light here becomes glory, and is found in a marvelous intersection of two movements. The first is a circular movement which represents the dynamic of intra-Trinitarian immanence, consisting in a mutual and eternal communication of glory from one Person to another, from one Person through another—an eternal and mutual self-giving. In this circular movement, through the work of the Spirit, a linear movement is

inserted, expressed by διὰ, which attracts the economic dimension to the Trinitarian immanence, permitting human reason to participate in this symphony of glory.

The essential element of this constitution is precisely the concept of filiation: For the Nyssen, to be Son does not only mean receiving everything from the Father—being his perfect Image—but also to give all glory to the Father, to restore everything to the Father. It is thus that the Son manifests the Spirit by his filiation to the Father, who is in turn fully Father in this way, by receiving his own glory from his own Son.

4. PSYCHOLOGICAL ANALOGY. The expressiveness of prepositional and adverbial distinction thus permits Gregory to have a great balance and a clear and concise formulation of the intra-Trinitarian dynamic, which was perhaps technically impossible in the domain of Latin theology, which must, for this reason, have recourse to the psychological analogy with Augustine. The psychological analogy is nevertheless present in the Nyssen's corpus, but its value is limited, since it has a purely illustrative and apologetic role. In the *Or cat*, Gregory affirms that the notion of Λόγος is in the domain of relative concepts in a certain sense, since in pronouncing the name Λόγος we refer at the same time to the Father of the Λόγος himself, because the Λόγος is always someone's Λόγος (*Or cat*, GNO III/4, 11, 1–4). In this manner it is possible to avoid both the Greek error, which multiplies gods, or the Jewish one, which does not recognize that the Λόγος of the Father is living, active and creative (ζῶντα καὶ ἐνεργὸν καὶ ποιητικόν), and that therefore there is no difference in nature between the Λόγος and Him from whom He proceeds (τὸν ὃθεν ἐστίν). The human word as well—also λόγος—proceeds from the mind (ἐκ τοῦ νοῦ) without being completely identified with the mind itself, yet without being a totally different reality either. The fact that the human word proceeds from the mind prevents us from considering it as identical to the mind, but at the same time, since the word manifests the mind, they cannot be completely extraneous realities. While being one thing alone by its nature, the word is distinct from the mind which is its subject (ἀλλὰ κατὰ τὴν φύσιν ἐν ᾧ ἕτερον τῷ ὑποκειμένῳ ἐστίν). The same is true of the divine Word, because it is distinct from Him from whom it has its subsistence, but is of the same substance, as it manifests the divine attributes (*ibidem*, 11, 6–24). In the same way, one can form some idea of the Holy Spirit from the breath of the human spirit, which, as an expiration of air, is only a shadow and image of the ineffable power. Air, being breathed out, transforms into sound in the moment that words

are expressed, thus manifesting the power of the word in itself (τὴν τοῦ λόγου δύναμιν ἐν ἑαυτῇ φανεροῦσα). Thus, the Nyssen says, it is believed that there exists a Spirit of God in the divine nature, as there is a Word of God. In fact, the divine Word cannot be inferior to the human word, which is endowed with a πνεῦμα. The image must be purified however, since it is not possible to admit that an external element flows into God to become Πνεῦμα, as is the case with the human being. For just as the divine Word was never without subsistence, inasmuch as it was not acquired as the fruit of knowledge, and just as it does not cease to be once the voice manifests it (*ibid.*, 12, 4–24); so too, in the same way the divine Spirit is a substantial power which is contemplated in itself as a proper hypostasis (δύναμιν οὐσιώδη αὐτὴν ἐφ’ ἑαυτῆς ἐν ἰδιαζούσῃ ὑποστάσει θεωρουμένην) which cannot be separated from either the Father or the Son, and which does not expand outside and cease to be, but, in a manner like that of the Word, subsists as a hypostasis (καθ’ ὁμοδιότητα τοῦ θεοῦ λόγου καθ’ ὑπόστασιν οὔσαν) endowed with will, movement and activity (προαιρετικήν, αὐτοκίνητον, ἐνεργόν), choosing always the good (*ibid.* 13, 5–11). Thus, for the Nyssen, everything in God is gift.

J. Daniélou observes: “For Gregory, the analogy is that of the relationship of the soul with respiration and the word, rather than that of the spirit with the mental word and the will. This is perfectly in line with his materialism, which causes him to seek analogies for the divinity among sensible things, rather than among the intelligible ones” (J. DANIELOU 1964, 49). The clear distinction between created and uncreated, the basis for correct Trinitarian formulation, permits the Nyssen to use material examples to express the divine mystery, while avoiding the risk of spiritual images which could have been misunderstood in the Neo-Platonic culture of the period.

Other texts cited by certain authors (H.U. VON BALTHASAR, 139) in favor of the Nyssen’s conception of the psychological analogy in an Augustinian sense have not survived the crucible of textual criticism. At this point, *Op hom* (PG 44, 137C) is the only text that can be cited in favor of such an interpretation, because of the proximity of νοῦς, λόγος and ἀγάπη.

One notes instead, on a more properly theological level, the manner in which Gregory reads the analogy in the light of the relation between spirit and life: Everything is founded on the descending conception of the Nyssen’s theology, in particular as regards the creation of the human being in the image of God (→ ANTHROPOLOGY). Since the human word is endowed with spirit, one cannot hold that the source and model of the

image, i.e. the divine Word, is deprived of a Spirit, which in this case, thanks to the principle of the unity of nature, must be divine and personal. It is the development of the theology of the φύσις that permits Gregory to extend the reflection of the theology of the λόγος in a Trinitarian sense. This theology of the λόγος had historically been exposed to subordinationist risks, but can be defined, in the light of the Trinitarian reflection of the fourth century, as an incomplete psychological analogy.

The presentation of Gregory's thought on the Trinity is completed by the two articles on FILIATION (→), and PNEUMATOLOGY (→).

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TRUTH

In a text that can be considered fundamental for this question (*Vit Moys* II, 19–24; GNO VII/1, 39–41), Gregory develops at length the concept of truth. Firstly, he decidedly affirms: “According to me, this is the definition of truth: to not err in the knowledge of being (τὸ μὴ διαψευσθῆναι τῆς τοῦ ὄντος κατανοήσεως)” (*Vit Moys* II, 23; GNO VII/1, 40). The firm knowledge of that which exists is true. On the contrary, error consists in attributing reality to that which does not exist. According to the Nyssen, error is an illusion that takes place in thought (φαντασία τις περὶ τὸ μὴ ὄν ἐγγινομένη τῇ διανοίᾳ) (*ibidem*; GNO VII/1, 40). In another passage, he attributes the knowledge of the truth of beings to thought (διάνοια) (*Virg*; GNO VIII/1, 281, 21). Thus, truth and error are certain properties of thought for Gregory, according to whether or not thought adheres to reality. In a second step, the Nyssen shows that truth consists principally in knowing with certitude that which truly exists (ἡ τοῦ ὄντως ὄντος ἀσφαλῆς κατανόησις) (*Vit Moys* II, 23; GNO VII/1, 40). This step permits him to affirm that ultimately, the truth of the intelligence consists in knowing God. For God alone is the truly real Being, radically transcending the level of sensible beings, beings which do not have consistency in being.

In order to know the “truly real” being, the human being must work intensely and for a long time. Gregory maintains that the theophany of Sinai (Ex 3.14) permitted Moses to know the truth, without passing through the mediation of sensible realities. Moses obtained this knowledge, being instructed by God himself. Definitively, the truth of the mind consists in knowing God with our intelligence, contemplating the totally permanent, invariable truth, which exists for itself, immutable, most desirable, and in which all beings participate. God is truly real Being, and knowledge of truth consists in knowing Him (τοῦτό ἐστιν ἀληθῶς τὸ ὄντως ὄν καὶ ἡ τούτου κατανόησις ἡ τῆς ἀληθείας γνώσις ἐστιν: “this is truly the being that really is, and the understanding of this Being is the knowledge of the truth”) (*Vit Moys* II, 25; GNO VII/1, 41).

There are also numerous texts in which Gregory speaks of ontological truth: “truth of beings”, “truth of things” or “truth in beings” (ἡ τῶν ὄντων ἀλήθεια, ἡ τῶν πραγμάτων ἀλήθεια) (*Fat*, GNO III/2, 48,25; *Trid spat*,

GNO IX, 300,8; *Mort*, GNO IX, 45,22; 47,12). He will identify wisdom with the understanding of this truth of beings (*Eun* III, GNO, 18,22).

The concept of truth that we find in Gregory is rich. One can say that Gregory encapsulates in this concept the Greek metaphysical tradition, uniting elements taken from Aristotelianism and Platonism. When he fundamentally describes truth as a property of knowledge which is adequate to the reality of things, Gregory accepts an element of Aristotelian provenance. While the Platonic tradition situates truth on the side of the truly real being, Aristotle fundamentally conceives of truth as a property of the acts of the human mind, in adhering to the being of things. Thus he affirms in *Metaphysics* 1027b25–27: “for the false and the true are not in things ... but in thought” (οὐ γάρ ἐστι τὸ ψεῦδος καὶ τὸ ἀληθές ἐν τοῖς πράγμασιν ... ἀλλ’ ἐν διανοίᾳ). Nevertheless, when Gregory’s discourse passes from the truth as a property of the human mind to treating of truth as a divine property, i.e. of the transcendent Being, he shows that he accepts the idea of truth of the Platonic tradition. He also shows that he accepts the Platonic notion of truth when he speaks of the truth of things (W. BEIERWALTES, 16–17).

The most important point, however, is that the context in which his conception of truth is inserted is radically and essentially biblical.

There are two reasons that justify this assertion. The first is that in the exegesis of the theophany of Sinai, Gregory underscores that the God who reveals himself to Moses is the supreme Truth, and the source of every other truth. Moses has access to the authentic Truth because it was revealed to him by God himself. The light which is the source of truth does not flow from the idea of the Good, but from the self-revelation of God at the bush of Sinai. “Regarding the light of the bush” is the way to reach the truth of God (τὸ ἐκ τῆς βάτου φῶς βλέπων) (*Vit Moys* II, 26; GNO, VII/1, 41). (On the identification of God with the Truth, cf. *Infant*, GNO III/2, 93, 22–23; *Virg*, VIII/1, 314, 17; with Truth and Light, cf. *Mort*, GNO IX, 66, 4; *Fat*, III/2, 58, 16.22; *Or dom*, VII/2, 50, 3). In this context, the Nyssen does not miss the occasion to place the Light of the bush in direct relation to the mystery of the Incarnation, and the revelatory source of the Light through the flesh covered with thorns (τὸ ἐκ τῆς βάτου φῶς βλέπων, τουτέστι πρὸς τὴν διὰ σαρκὸς τῆς ἀκανθώδους ταύτης ἐπλάμψασαν ἡμῖν ἀκτῖνα: “Regarding the light which flows from the bush, that is, the ray of light which illuminates us through the flesh bristling with spines”) (*Vit Moys* II, 26, GNO VII/1, 41).

This source of light that illuminates through the flesh is the “true light” (φῶς ἀληθινόν, with reference to Jn 1.19) and the “truth” (ἀλήθεια)

(citing Jn 14.6). Here, we encounter the second reason that justifies the affirmation of an essentially biblical and Christian foundation for the idea of truth in the Nyssen. The essentially Christocentric mark of Gregory's theology leads him to underscore that the Christian's access to the truth of God is realized through the mediation of Christ. The God who revealed himself in the Old Testament manifested the Divinity to human beings through the flesh of the Lord. The Light of God which is manifested through the flesh assumed by the Son is the Truth. Thus Christ can say the He is the Truth (for the identification of Christ with the Truth, cf. *Eccl*, GNO V, 298, 12; *Prof*, VIII/1, 134, 18; 136, 3; for the identification with the Truth and the Light, cf. *Cant*, GNO VI, 441, 4). Gregory meditated on the Truth in a Trinitarian perspective primarily in the controversy with Eunomius: The Son is the Truth that proceeds from the Father (φῶς ἐκ φωτός [...] ἐκ ἀληθείας ἀλήθεια) (*Eun* III, GNO II, 260, 14). The Father is in fact the Father of the Truth, of Light, and of all that which the Son has received from Him, wherei He is also One with Him (*Eun* II, GNO I, 295, 11; *Eun* III, GNO II, 212, 16; 312, 8; 321, 1).

BÖHM has drawn attention to the fact that Gregory received elements from Plotinus, who in turn received and went beyond the idea of truth found in Parmenides. Böhm thus partially corrects the thesis of TOWNSELEY and WATSON, who had affirmed the existence of points of contact between Gregory and Parmenides. Böhm calls attention to the fact that Plotinus affirms the necessity to pass beyond the level of sensible knowledge to reach the level of intelligible knowledge, which is situated on the level of the intelligence (νοῦς). According to Böhm, Plotinus would have in mind that in the act of thinking of the νοῦς, the contraposition of subject-object is totally overcome, given that there would be nothing other than a reflection on oneself. This, accordingly, refers to the passage from the multiplicity of the sensible to the unity of the intelligible. When the soul turns towards the νοῦς, it perceives the splendor of this light, of a luminous life. In order to reach this profound unity that surpasses the duality of subject-object, Plotinus affirmed a total identification of thought and being, deeper than that of Parmenides, so that, going beyond Plato as well, he understood the truth "not only as the structure of a form (Idea) that subsists in itself, but as the highest intensity of being as absolute truth" (BÖHM, 12–13). According to Böhm, Gregory manifests a position closer to Plotinus than to Parmenides. It is necessary to underscore that in the final paragraph of his work, Böhm does not fail to indicate two essential differences between Gregory's conception of truth and that of Plotinus. First of all, unlike Gregory, Plotinus believes that

the act of thought does not exist in the One—the first hypostasis and source of all beings—but that this is the proper act of the second hypostasis (νοῦς), and thus of a derivative being. Since it is in the thought of the νοῦς that being and thought are identified, Plotinus could never arrive at the direct identification of God with the truth. Secondly, Böhm affirms that, for Gregory, God is Truth not only in the sense that He is Truth in his Being, but also in the sense that He gives himself to be known by human beings in his self-revelation.

Böhm's study has manifested certain conceptual affinities between Gregory and Plotinus. Nevertheless, when the texts are considered in themselves, it does not clearly appear that Gregory's identification of God and the truth depends on philosophical analyses presented by Böhm, as if he needed a preliminary foundation. Gregory begins with the biblical foundation that God is the Truth. Philosophical analyses have a role in a later logical step, at the service of the principle from which he starts.

We must emphasize that the differences between Gregory and Plotinus noted by Böhm justify a radical distinction between two completely distinct intellectual worlds, so that despite the similarities that can be found between them, the Christian theologian and the Alexandrian philosopher confront the world in completely different ways. If one wishes to deepen the unity between subject and object, proper to supra-sensible realities, one can find an identification of being and thought attributed to the most perfect being in Aristotelian metaphysics: the immutable first mover is pure act because it is pure thought of itself (*Metaphysics XII*, 1072–1074). One must also recall the fact that the Plotinian themes found in Gregory are found in the Platonic tradition in general as well. It is thus not easy to demonstrate that Gregory receives them from a unique source. In conclusion, the metaphor of irradiation of divine light as the source of truth has its roots in Plato, and can be found in other representatives of the Platonic tradition as well (*Letter VII*; in *Republic VI*, 508bc; 517b; *VII*, 514a–517c; *Phaedrus* 250bc; *Alcibiades* 1, 134de; *Philo, Joshua*, 145; *Mos*, 2, 288; Origen, *Contra Celsum*, 5, 10–11). This theme is so frequent and pertinent in the late imperial culture that WALLRAFF has affirmed that one could speak of a general “solarization” (*Solarisierung*) of the religious culture of this period (WALLRAFF, 37). Nevertheless, the most important observation to be made regarding the theme of light is that it is an omnipresent theme in biblical tradition and Christian theology (Ps 104.2, Wis 7.26, Jn 9.5, 1 Tim 6.16, Heb 1.3).

This permits us to complete Böhm's study in two ways. The first is by showing that the definition of truth which Gregory proposes affects

the idea of the conformity of the intelligence with reality in an original way, something that—at least in this perspective—places him closer to Aristotle than to the Platonic tradition. The second way is by granting greater importance to the point that Böhm noted at the end of his work. In order to understand Gregory's thought, it is necessary to place the affirmation that God is the Truth who revealed himself through Moses, and above all, in the Incarnation of Him who is the Truth of the Truth, the Son who is inseparable from the Truth of the Father. For if Gregory is interested in the idea of truth, seeking to deepen and enrich this concept, this is because Christian revelation attaches great importance to the notion of Truth, situating it in intimate relationship with the revelation of God himself, with the fidelity that his word merits, with Christ, his eternal Logos, and with the Holy Spirit. The Nyssen's interest in the notion of truth is not primarily philosophical, but theological. The supreme motivator of his theological and philosophical investigation is nothing other than the frequent presence of the concept of truth in Judeo-Christian Tradition and in Sacred Scripture itself.

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TUNC ET IPSE

In illud: Tunc et ipse filius

This work was written by Gregory to explain the submission (ὑποταγή) of the Son in a non-Subordinationist manner, in reference to 1 Cor 15.28, a key text in the anti-Arian debate (J.T. LIENHARD; O. CASIMIR). J. Daniélou places it chronologically after 385 (J. DANIÉLOU 1966, 167): the Nyssen began to be more interested in 1 Cor 15.28 towards the end of his life (J. DANIÉLOU 1970, 202), once he had reached the full maturity of his thought. J.K. DOWNING, responsible for the critical edition, instead places it at the same time as the *Ref eun* due to the similarity of texts (GNO III/2, XLIV–L). Gregory begins the treatise analyzing the various senses of ὑποταγή: The submission of slaves to their master, that of irrational animals to man, or that of the nations to Israel. But the ὑποταγή of Christ to the Father cannot be understood in any of these senses. Jesus lived in a true submission to Mary and Joseph, as it is stated explicitly in Lk 2.51, but this is not in opposition to his divinity, since He became perfect man, equal in everything to us except sin. Thus, as a normal child, He was submitted to his parents. With age, this submission naturally ceased, as can be seen in the wedding at Cana (GNO III/2, 7,15–8,18).

Nevertheless, the ὑποταγή of the Son of 1 Cor 15.28 cannot be understood in this manner either. The submission to God here is nothing other than the complete separation from evil (16, 9–23), that is the union with God. The reference is thus to the eschatological submission of the Body of Christ, i.e. of all human beings who in Christ become one with the Father: “When then, by imitation (μίμησιν) of the First Fruit we will be liberated from evil, then all the mass of the nature, inseparably united to the First Fruit and having become one compact body, will receive in itself the dominion of the good alone” (16, 13–16).

A key concept here is imitation (→ *MIMESIS*). The Nyssen has recourse to the beautiful text of Jn 17.21–23: the Body of Christ is identified with the entire human nature, as the totality of human beings in history (→ *PHYSIS*) who have been guided to the unity by the Lord, who, uniting all to Himself, has united all to the Father. As the Son is one with the Father, so too are human beings one in reciprocal communion. This takes place by means of the glory that Christ has poured out onto humanity—

identified by Gregory with the Holy Spirit, who unites to the Son, who in turn unites to the Father in a marvelous movement that expresses the Trinitarian dimension of salvation (21,7–23,14). The Nyssen asks how this *being one* of human beings in the image of the manner that the Father and the Son are one is possible: “But how does this happen? Because I am in them. For it is not possible that I alone be in them, but it is absolutely necessary that you also be there, since You and I are one. And thus those who have managed to be perfect in us will be perfect in unity. For we are one. But [the Lord] explains more openly such a gift with the following words, saying *I have loved them as You have loved Me*. For if the Father loves the Son and we are all in the Son, in so far as we have become his body through faith in Him, consequently He who loves his Son will love also the body of the Son, as his Son himself. And we are the body” (23, 4–14).

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Giulio Maspero

TUNICS OF HIDE

In Gn 3.21 we read that, after sin, God clothed the first parents in “tunics of hide”. Gregory sees an important symbolism in this divine gesture. He expresses it thus in *Or cat* 8 (GNO III/4, 30): After the fall, God stripped man of the clothing of his primordial happiness (immortality, confidence in God [*parrêsia*], dominion over the passions) and clothed him in animality and mortality. For, Gregory states, given that the skins separated from the animal are dead, God, in clothing man in “tunics of hide”, clothed him in the mortality which is proper to irrational animals.

This is a severe gesture on God’s part, but He is also caring and merciful to man. There is nothing more eloquent than Gregory’s use of the comparison with “vases of clay” in this text: after sin, God makes man mortal, since He looks to his resurrection, just as the potter has the power to break the vase of clay he has made in order to make it anew (→ DEATH). The symbolism of the “tunics of hide” contains, according to Gregory, another extremely important lesson. Clothes are something accidental for the human being; so too the “tunics of hide” continue to be something “that wrap around us from the exterior”, something “extraneous” and something that in no way comes to form a part of the essence of human nature.

The theme of the “tunics of hide” has a long tradition among the Alexandrians. The interpretation of the symbolism is however various. PHILO understood the “tunics of hide” as the creation of the human body (*Quaest. Gen.*, I, 53). According to Tertullian’s testimony (*Adv. Val.* 24), the Valentinians read Gn 3.21 as if the “tunics of hide” signified the human body. This is the same thing that Irenaeus mentions regarding the gnosis of Ptolemy: “[The Gnostics] maintain that the tunic of hide is the sensible flesh” (*Adv. Haer.*, I,5,5). The same interpretation is found among the Encratists and Messalians, who speak of the human body “clothed in shame”. According to these interpretations, the human body is clearly considered as “extraneous” to the human person, and salvation would lie in liberation from it. Clement of Alexandria states that it is an error to identify the tunics of hide with the body (*Strom.*, 3,14). According to Methodius of Olympus, Origen’s exegesis was similar to that of the Gnostics (*Res* 1, 29). In reality, Origen accepts the exegesis of the Gnostics

as a possibility on one part, while on the other he understands the tunics of hide, not as “corporeality”, but as “mortality” (*Contr. Cels.*, IV, 40, SC 136, n. 1).

The Gnostics used the image of the “tunics of hide” to reject the faith in the resurrection of the flesh: if the earthly body is identified with the “tunics of hide”, the resurrected body must be different from that with which man was clothed as a “tunic of hide”. In other words, if the “tunics of hide” were to designate the earthly body and not its mortal condition, in the RESURRECTION (→) there would be no material identity between the risen body and the earthly one.

Gregory reacts explicitly and energetically against Origen on the question of the RESURRECTION (→) and on the theme of the preexistence of souls. He likewise underscores the material identity that exists between the risen body and the earthly one. In agreement with this position, according to Gregory, the “tunics of hide” do not designate the human body, but the “mortality” of the said body, its “carnal” character. Gregory already has this in mind in his first work (*Virg* 12 and 13, GNO VIII/1, 302–303): “we now see the image of God hidden in the obscurity of the flesh”; the first parents were clothed in “tunics of hide”; it is necessary to strip oneself of them, i.e. to “leave the carnal mentality”. The image of tunics of hide is thus inserted in a natural manner into the symbolism of the baptismal ceremony of the removal of the old clothes and clothing in the white vestments. He alludes to this in this passage of *Virg*, in which he is not speaking of a “liberation from the body”, but of leaving behind “the animal condition of the body”, which is precisely that which is designated in the “tunics of hide”.

In *Vit Moys* clear allusions to the baptismal ceremony and the removal of the “tunics of hide” can also be found. In the episode of the bush that burns without being consumed, God orders Moses to remove his sandals. Gregory comments: this signifies that we cannot run towards the summit if we do not strip the soul of the clothing in dead skins, in which we were clothed from the beginning (*Vit Moys*, GNO VII/1, 39–40). Only in purifying ourselves from the “mortal and earthly” vision that the tunics of hide imply can Moses reach the contemplation of the truth. DANÉLOU (1970, 155) noted that Gregory appears to be the first Christian to use the theme of the “tunics of hide” in the perspective of the spiritual ascent.

Gregory speaks of “tunics of hide” in *Mort* and in *An et res* with a meaning quite close to that which he gives them in *Or cat* 8. After man, through the misuse of his liberty, falls into sin, God clothes him in “tunics of hide” so that he experiences the limits of that which is

material, the repugnant character of the passions and the limitedness of evil. The “tunics of hide” are a bitter medicine imposed upon man with the certitude that he, in the experience (πειρα) of evil, will finally discover its limitedness and the fact that, as it is extraneous to our nature, it cannot last forever (*Mort*, GNO IX, 55–57).

The fact that the “tunics of hide” are something added and extraneous to our nature implies that, in the resurrection, our bodies will be transformed according to the Scripture (1 Cor 15.35–58). We will thus be raised with our own bodies, but the body will be transformed by the resurrection into a more divine state, henceforth purified of all that is useless for the enjoyment of the blessed life, i.e. freed from the “tunics of hide” (*ibidem*, 59–62).

We find the same arguments in *An et res*. Gregory writes that when one who wears a ragged garment undresses, he no longer sees in himself the shame of the tatters. When we have stripped off this dead tunic taken from animals, imposed upon us as a second skin, we will have also stripped off “the form proper to the animal state” (PG 46, 148–149). The strength of Gregory’s affirmation of the material identity of bodies in the resurrection is matched by the vigor with which he insists on the profound transformation that our bodies will undergo, stripped of the “tunics of hide”.

Gregory perseveres in his interpretation of the symbolism of the “tunics of hide” (DANIÉLOU 1970, 185). Undoubtedly, the tunics of hide are not understood by Gregory as human corporeality. They are sometimes understood as the “carnal mentality”, but almost always as “animality” or “mortality”. They are related to the dispensation of salvation, which passes through death. God clothed man *mercifully* in “dead skins” so that he might die, experience the limitedness of evil, and convert. DANIÉLOU (1970, 164) observes that, in the consideration of the “tunics of hide”, Gregory uses ideas drawn from both Origen and Methodius of Olympus.

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UNITY OF ACTION

This is one of the central points of the Nyssen's theology, as can be seen from the diffusion of the argument throughout Gregory's writings (S. GONZÁLEZ, 281). It has been often seen as the driving force of his reflection (G. ISAYE, 423 and L. MORI, 166). Gregory's fundamental idea is that those who have a unique activity (\rightarrow ENERGY) must also have a unique power ($\delta\acute{\upsilon}\nu\alpha\mu\iota\varsigma$), and thus also a unique nature (\rightarrow PHYSIS), in so far as activity and power depend ontologically on nature and are manifestations of it (*Or dom*, GNO VII/2, 41, 6–10). This theme is already present in earlier theology (Irenaeus of Lyons, *Adversus Haereses*, 4, 20; SC 100/2, 640–641; Athanasius, *Epistula ad Serapionem*, 28; H.G. OPITZ, *Athanasius Werke*, II/1.5, Berlin 1940, 178–180; Didymus, *De Spiritu Sancto*, 17, 32, 36, PG 39, 1049BD; Basil, *De Spiritu Sancto*, 16, 38; SC 17, 174–180), and becomes a crucial theme in Gregory's struggle with Eunomius (M.R. BARNES, 296).

The principle is clearly stated in *Eust*, where Gregory shows how the proper activities of nature reveal the nature itself, and that it is not possible for a determined nature to carry out a particular activity that is not its own proper one: for example, fire does not produce cold, nor ice heat. Thus, since the activity of the Father, the Son and the Spirit is one, their nature must also be one (*Eust*, GNO III/1, 11, 3–15). This principle is used by Gregory both to ward off the exaggerations of tritheism and to affirm the divinity of the third Person, against the Macedonians (S. GONZÁLEZ, 285). This multiple usage explains the ample diffusion in his works.

The unicity of action is affirmed both in the creation of material beings and in the creation of purely spiritual ones (*Abl*, GNO III/1, 51, 1–2 and *Ref Eun*, GNO II, 336). The same can be said of the action through which the Father, the Son and the Holy Spirit govern the world by means of divine providence (*Eun I*, GNO I, 147–148). In regard to salvation, Gregory also affirms that the pardon of sins (*Or dom*, GNO VII/2, 260, 28–30) and the life of the Spirit which is communicated to us in baptism (*Ref Eun*, GNO II, 379) are subject to the same law. In this context, each of the three Persons is said to be ζωοποιούντα, without the possibility of affirming three ζωοποιούντες (*Ref Eun*, GNO II, 382).

Nevertheless, the unity of action does not imply that the three Persons remain indistinguishable in the action itself, in so far as each one

intervenes in the unique movement according to his own personal characteristic. To understand how this takes place, the definition of ἐνέργεια (→ ENERGY) as that of φύσεως κίνησις (*Eun* I, GNO I, 88, 4–17) is quite useful: If the first term of the definition (φύσεως) is responsible for the fact that activity is multiplied according to natures, the second term (κίνησις) refers to the personal involvement. This explains the difficulty that the theology of ἐνέργεια and of the will have encountered in the history of dogma, inasmuch as ἐνέργεια and the will can be considered both from the perspective of nature and from that of person. Gregory, then, expresses by means of Trinitarian formulas the fact that each Person intervenes in the unique κίνησις according to his own personal characteristic: He does not stop at a juxtaposition of the three Persons, as can be found at rare moments in his works, but in general prefers the schema of ἐκ πατρὸς—δι' υἱοῦ—ἐν πνεύματι (*Abl*, GNO III/1, 48, 1; 49, 1; 51, 20; *Maced*, GNO III/1, 100, 9–11; *Epist* 24, GNO VIII/2, 77, 4–6) or one of its variants in which the prepositions in reference to the Father or the Spirit can be substituted by equivalent ones, while the intermediate position always uses διὰ for the Son.

Therefore, for Gregory the activity of the three Persons is unique, without any concealing of the personal characteristic of each one. This is possible since the divine Persons act δι' ἀλλήλων (*Abl*, GNO III/1, 49, 6–7) and are thus the one with the other and the one in the other (*Eun* III, GNO II, 177, 3–4). Unity of action is thus nothing other than the reflection in the economy of the Trinitarian perichoresis (→ TRINITY).

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USUR

Contra Usurarios

Contra Usurarios, delivered by Gregory during his period as bishop, is a sermon denouncing those who lend money with interest for the sake of making profit, i.e. usurers. The occasion of its delivery is unknown. Considering that usury was legal at the time, his condemnation reflects a pastoral concern built primarily upon theological (rather than social or civic) convictions. References both to Old Testament prohibitions against usury and to New Testament teachings on charity indicate an allegiance to the authority of Scripture. That usury is incompatible with Christian charity was typical of the early church's view of usury. Gregory displays his dependence on other church fathers by directing his audience to Basil's authoritative words on the subject. On the basis of this commitment to the authority of Scripture and ecclesiastical figures, Gregory employs several lines of reason to convince his audience to abstain from usury. Usury, he says, is largely responsible for the existence of a large population of destitute persons in society. Gregory details the consequences to usurers and their families already here on earth, and by juxtaposing the greed of usurers with the gracious nature and activity of God, he supports his claim that eternal distress also awaits usurers. He explains that usury, by its nature, does not provide true relief for those in need but makes debtors into victims by placing them under obligations which only add more distress as time goes on. Gregory calls on his audience to display true Christian charity by generously sharing and lending to those in need.

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Christopher Graham

VIRG

De virginitate

The *Treatise on Virginity* is Gregory's first work, most probably dating from around 371, before Gregory was ordained Bishop by his brother Basil. The book is written at Basil's request. As MARAVAL observes (→ CHRONOLOGY), the date of composition is not certain, and one could conceivably postpone it to 378, *inter alia* because the allusions to Messalianism would tend to situate it near to *Inst* and *Deit fil*. It is an important work whatever the date, not only because of the historical information that it offers, but because many fundamental traits of the Nyssen's theological and spiritual thought can already be found in it. The importance is even greater due to the fact that in this work a large part of the Capadocians' thought on virginity is gathered here, and, more generally, on Christian asceticism and monastic life.

According to DANÉLOU (78), Gregory composed the *Virg* while he was teaching rhetoric at Caesarea. When Basil asks a treatise on virginity of him, he turns to him as a noted sophist, asking him to place his talent at the service of an ideal—that of virginity—that “he knew only from the exterior” (*Virg* 3, GNO VIII/1, 256). The truth is that Gregory knows this ideal fairly well, including the problems that it raises and the dangers that those who consecrate themselves to it in an imprudent manner risk; as well as the necessity to conserve a high degree of equilibrium—even in nutrition. In this book Gregory demonstrates a great lucidity regarding both the difficulties that monastic life can present, as well as the possible solutions.

Virg is often defined as an “encomium”, “praise” and “exhortation” dedicated to virginity. This is a well defined literary genus in antiquity, the rules of which Gregory faithfully respects while explicitly defining his work as an *encomium* (prol., n. 1, GNO VIII/1, 248). One must take into consideration the literary genus of *Virg* in order to place it in the proper perspective when it speaks of certain inconveniences of matrimony in chs. 3 and 4. These are the most rhetorical pages of the entire book, in which Gregory is only seeking to make the beauties of virginity more visible, recalling the tribulations of matrimony according to the rules of the diatribe (AUBINEAU, 83–96).

The book is a praise that is intended to be efficacious. Gregory himself demonstrates this, affirming that his goal is to “inspire in the reader the desire of the virtuous life” (prol., n. 1, GNO VIII/1, 247). The audience is young people in particular. Gregory thinks of them especially: they constitute the majority of people who can still follow the path of virginity (cap. 3, GNO VIII/1, 256–257); he thinks of them when he insists on the dangers that derive from the inexperience of youth, on their capacity of generosity and on the necessity for them to have a spiritual guide (cap. 23, GNO VIII/1, 334–336). AUBINEAU (145–146) observes that, even if the book is addressed to all, Gregory particularly thinks of a male public. This can be seen, for example, in the enumeration of vices that plague false ascetics, from the number of times he uses the masculine to speak to the young, and from the final exhortations of ch. 23. Logically, he also has virgins in mind (e.g., cap. 3, n. 8, GNO VIII/1, 263–264). Gregory sometimes describes virginity as a spiritual matrimony and explicitly affirms that his doctrine is equally valid for either men or women.

The title given by Gregory to this work is unknown. The manuscripts usually title it *Treatise on Virginity*. This is the main theme. But one must remember that the concept of VIRGINITY (→) that Gregory uses is not only a reference to chastity, but above all indicates a style of life which encompasses many more realities than those strictly indicated when one speaks of virginity; even if in the Nyssen's conception of virginity the notion of chastity occupies a singularly important position (AUBINEAU, 146–147), he uses a concept of virginity that includes the entire ideal of life of which Macrina and Basil were models. The aspects regarding chastity are important in that type of life, but are neither the only ones nor the most important. Still, Gregory is highly interested in clarifying that the chastity of which he is speaking goes well beyond the simple continence of the flesh (cap. 18, n. 5, GNO VIII/1, 320–322). The virginity of which he is speaking is identified with the ideal of the monastic life and embraces all aspects of ascetic life. *Virg* is to be read while reflecting on the life of those that practiced this ideal in a paradigmatic manner. In other words, it is to be read in the light of *The Life of Macrina* (→ MACR) and *The Praise of Basil* (→ BAS) which were written some years later. In a certain sense *Virg* can be considered a reflection by Gregory on these beloved lives.

As CANÉVET (975) observes, there are two manuscript traditions of this book which cannot be easily unified. CAVARNOS (GNO VIII/1, 238–240) suggests that this may be a double edition by Gregory himself, as

if he had written it twice, or at least added certain passages. AUBINEAU (235) notes the two traditions, but does not maintain that they can be traced back to Gregory.

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VIRGINITY

Gregory attributes a great theological and ascetic importance to virginity. He dedicated his first writing to this subject (→ *VIRG*). Virginity, for Gregory, constitutes the first stage of man's return to paradise, an anticipation of the resurrection of the flesh and a participation in the very life of the angels (*Virg* 14, GNO VIII/1, 309). Virginity is also a witness to the true human condition, that is, the original project of God in the creation of man in his image. It is also a prophetic witness to the eschatological dimension of the human being (DANIÉLOU, 52). Without a doubt, virginity is a key notion of monasticism, to such an extent that at times monasticism and virginity seem to be interchangeable concepts in Gregory's writings.

This is because Gregory uses a concept of virginity which does not only refer to the body and chastity, but implies an entire lifestyle, including in itself far more than that which is strictly indicated by the term of virginity. For Gregory, corporeal virginity is like the covering which protects an interior virginity, one which embraces all of the spiritual life and is the true imitation of God, in whose image the human being was created. As VÖLKER (228) writes, Gregory "conceives of virginity as a greatness of soul, so that he at times considers it compatible with matrimony". For that which constitutes the essence of this ideal is the constant effort to unite oneself with God and to imitate and follow Jesus, something that can be accomplished in MATRIMONY (→) as well.

For this reason, Gregory has the utmost interest in clarifying that virginity of which he speaks goes beyond simple continence of the flesh. It does not only consist in renunciation of matrimony. The treasure of virginity is not "so modest and so uncostly" that it can be reduced "to the repression of the flesh". Simple continence is not enough, virginity also includes coherence with all of the other virtues, being pure "in all the aspects of life" (*Virg* 18, n. 5, GNO VIII/1, 320–321). Virginity goes beyond simple corporeal decency and "extends to all that can be considered a perfection of the soul" (*Virg* 15, GNO VIII/1, 309–310).

In reality, virginity exists originally in the Trinity. Father, Son and Holy Spirit are absolute purity and source of all purity. Virginity in God designates a perennial and absolute possession of the fullness of being, an absolute transcendence beyond any type of evil or corruption. Gregory

affirms this in total clarity: Virginity is above all in the incorruptible (ἀφθάρτω) Father, who generates a Son, paradoxically without passion, and also in the Only Begotten, virginally engendered, i.e. without passion, who is the author of incorruptibility (ἀρχηγὸς τῆς ἀφθαρσίας). Virginity is also in the Holy Spirit, who is “essential and incorruptible purity” (φυσικῇ καὶ ἀφθάρτῳ καθαρότητι) (*Virg* 2, GNO VIII/1, 253). This divine virginity is the archetype of the virginity which should exist in the human being. This is not because Gregory attributes any sort of materiality to God, but because He is infinitely incorruptible and absolutely transcends the material world.

Speaking of virginity, Gregory uses three terms synonymously that are in reality inseparable: ἀφθαρσία (incorruptibility), ἀπάθεια (freedom from all passion) and καθαρότης (purity of being). The foundation of ἀφθαρσία and ἀπάθεια is found in the purity of being (καθαρότης), possessed perennially by God (GORDILLO, 130). God is radically and essentially pure, and consequently possesses incorruptibility infinitely. Gregory calls this archetypal virginity.

This virginity is God Himself, not only in his essence, but also in the relations that distinguish the three Persons. We have seen how Gregory describes the relation of each Person to virginity (*Virg* 2, GNO VIII/1, 253). The theme is important in Basil's and Gregory's struggle against EUNOMIUS (→), who stated that the Son is inferior to the Father, precisely because he was incapable of transcending with his theology the laws of a material generation. The Cappadocians reasoned against Eunomius, on the basis of the divine incorruptibility: The Son is completely equal to the Father since the Father does not generate Him in a material manner, but in a most pure and incorruptible one. This is why there is no before or after in this generation, no greater or lesser. The Son is the perfect Image of the Father, Light from Light, God from God—because his generation is most perfect (→ CHRISTOLOGY). This reflection is not exclusive to Gregory. We also find it explicitly in Gregory Nazianzen: “The first virgin, he states, is the immaculate Trinity” (*In laudem virg.*, 20, PG 37, 523).

Gregory's conception of virginity as a transcendent reality is reinforced by a new perspective: the Christological dimension. In eternity, the Word is generated by the Father virginally. The Word, in coherence with such an eternal generation, becoming man by a woman, is also generated in time virginally. For this reason, He is essentially “the author of incorruptibility”. The argument refers to Christ above all, and from here extends to Mary as well, who is often called immaculate by Gregory, and whom he undoubtedly professes to be Mother of God and virgin (→ MARIOLOGY).

In *Virg* 2, n. 2 (GNO VIII/1, 254–255) there is a passage which bears eloquent witness to the Christocentric and Marian perspective in which Gregory situates his argument for virginity. Our Lord Jesus Christ, “source of incorruptibility”, is born virginally “to demonstrate with the mode of his becoming man this great mystery: Purity alone is fit to receive the manifestation and entry of God” into the world. For this reason, that which occurs corporeally in the virginal motherhood of Mary is also accomplished spiritually in the souls of virgins, not corporeally, as the Lord comes to “spiritually dwell in them, bringing the Father with Himself” (*Virg* 2, 2, GNO VIII/1, 254–255). Gregory is not improvising with this consideration. He is following ORIGEN, who writes: “Every virginal and incorruptible soul, having conceived through the Holy Spirit to generate the will of God, is mother of Christ” (*Fragm.* 28 in *Matth.*, 12, 46–50, SC, 87, 39). This Origenian thought is present as an acquired element in all of Gregory’s thought, particularly in *Cant* when he speaks of the indwelling of the Word in the soul (*Cant* 3 and 6, GNO VI, 84 and 183).

To this, we must add the importance that Gregory attributes to the events of the life of Christ. The Son, source of incorruptibility and purity, introduces a radical newness in the line of the long series of human births with his virginal conception and birth, thus inaugurating the human path towards incorruptibility—i.e. towards the recovery of the essential characteristics of the image of God. Gregory’s exhortation to virginity makes sense in the measure in which embracing virginity means associating oneself with the mystery of the Incarnation, identifying oneself with the author of purity, rendering oneself like the absolutely incorruptible God, returning to the life of paradise and participating in the divine life. That which occurs corporeally in immaculate Mary occurs in every soul that guards virginity: Christ comes and dwells in it.

Since God is essential virginity, virginity necessarily dwells in the divine world, i.e. in heaven. Virginity is proper to all supraterrrestrial beings, and thus is found in the angels, whose life consists in “contemplating the Father of incorruptibility” and, regarding this model, imitating it in themselves (*Virg* 4, GNO VIII/1, 276). Gregory thus defines virginity as an angelic life. Virginity “dances among the choirs” of angels and “gives man wings to raise himself to the desire of heavenly goods”. Without virginity it is impossible to come close to this world or to live in it. Virginity is a bond (σύνδεσμος) that strengthens the “familiarity” and affinity of the human being to God (*Virg* 2, 3, GNO VIII/1, 255). This is the reason why the human being, created in the image and likeness of

God, has a profound and essential vocation to purity and the imitation of the angelic life.

In exhorting to virginity, Gregory has very much in mind original sin (*Virg* 12, GNO VIII/1, 297–302; and *Or cat* 8, GNO III/4, 29–30) and the deterioration that this sin caused in the human being. The trickery of the devil, and, above all, human freedom have provoked a wound that is manifested in the fact that, after sin, the first parents covered themselves in TUNICS OF HIDE (→), i.e. they clothed themselves with animality. The tunics of hide do not signify the body, but the thought of the flesh in so far as they oppose the life of the spirit (Rm 8.5–6). The entire struggle of the ascetic life, implied by virginity, tends to restore “the divine image in its original state” (*Virg* 12, 4, GNO VIII/1, 302), to the removal of the tunics of hide (*Virg*, 13, 1, *ibid.*, 303) and to the purification of the soul (*Virg*, 10, 1, *ibid.*, 289). Virginity allows the human being to be found in his original innocence (AUBINEAU, 171).

It is important to note that being the image of God is not something acquired by the human person on his own, but a gift granted by God to human nature in the beginning. Sin has thus caused the loss of a divine gift, itself unreachable by the human being with his own efforts. Gregory expresses this thought in his exegesis of the parable of the lost drachma. The effigy inscribed on the drachma is the image of God. The loss of the drachma signifies the deterioration of this effigy because of sin. We find the drachma when we turn the mind towards God. This requires divine grace and human effort (*Virg* 12, 4, GNO VIII/1, 302). Virginity is a gift of the Holy Spirit, who lifts up the human being, carrying him on his wings. Gregory uses the dove as a symbol of the Holy Spirit to describe his action in the flight of the soul to God: The Holy Spirit carries the soul on his wings, and only the one who is elevated by the “heavenly wings” of the Holy Spirit will reach this sublime conduct of life. Only someone who is transported by the wings of the Holy Spirit will become beautiful by being brought close to Beauty (*Virg* 11, 4–5, GNO VIII/1, 294–296).

In his praise of virginity, Gregory speaks of “archetypal” virginity which must be reflected in each person who wishes to unite himself to God. He also speaks of virginity in a more precise and concrete sense: monastic life as it is lived at Anessi. This mode of life presupposes an authentic spousal bond between the soul and God, so much so that staining the soul with any passion is to commit adultery. Gregory bases his affirmation on Eph 5.27: The soul must remain far from any sort of passion and must keep itself pure for the Spouse “who has united it with Himself legitimately, *without stain, or wrinkle, or any such thing*” (Eph

5.27). This Pauline text refers directly to the Church. Applying it to the relationship of the virgin with Christ, Gregory declares that this union is analogous to the union that exists between Christ and the Church.

The example he offers does not leave room for doubt: A spouse who endures allurements from certain men remains chaste as long as she rejects all those who approach to corrupt her. If she falls for one, however, the continence she has in regard to the others does not dispense her from the punishment due to adulteresses. One is enough to contaminate the conjugal bed. It is enough for the heart to be stained with only one passion for the “matrimonial pacts” to be violated. He concludes: “It is not possible for the Spouse to dwell in a soul full of anger, envy or any other similar evil” (*Virg* 16, 2, GNO VIII/1, 313).

In this context, virginity signifies the spousal commitment to live all the virtues. This spousal signification of the union of the soul with God (with the Word) is particularly present in the homilies on the *Song of Songs*. Gregory represents this union as a “divine matrimony” (θεῖος γάμος) (*Cant* 1, GNO VI, 15). This is the same thought that we find in his first work: Virginity is an “interior and spiritual marriage” (πνευματικὸς γάμος) (*Virg* 16, 1, GNO VIII/1, 312).

Corporeal matrimony is the starting point to speak of spiritual matrimony due to the radical, intimate and definitive character proper to spousal love. Gregory uses his capacities as a rhetor to apply all the particulars of the nuptial analogy to the mystery of the union with God: Whoever aspires to such a marriage must renew his intelligence, separating himself from the mentality of the old man, he must bring as a dowry the treasures of all the virtues, he must offer above all the incorruptible goods, purity, and the fruits of the Holy Spirit that Saint Paul enumerates (Gal 5.22). Gregory specifies that what he is saying is equally valid for men and women, given that in Christ *there is no more man or woman* (Gal 3.28), and that *Christ is all, and in all* (Col 3.11). Love of true wisdom is oriented towards the embrace with the incorruptible Spouse (*Virg* 16, 1; 20, 1, GNO VIII/1, 312 and 325).

Spiritual matrimony is however a new and ineffable world, where neither flesh nor blood matters, but only the spiritual embrace in which the love for God culminates, transcending all that we can imagine. Speaking of the spiritual marriage of virgins, Gregory takes his place in an important tradition that he develops, one that was to be very fruitful over many centuries in spiritual theology. Origen and Tertullian had already used the nuptial analogy to refer to the union of the human being with God. Something similar is true of Baptism, which is compared to a spiritual

wedding. For thanks to Baptism, one becomes part of the Church, the Bride of Christ (ADNÉS, 393–394).

Gregory uses baptismal and priestly motifs to exhort his readers to virginity. Chapter 23 of *Virg* is dedicated to this theme. Virginity is presented as a Christian exercise of the priesthood: With it, something that is not exterior but interior to the human being is offered to God, since one offers one's very self. There are certain passages with a high theological density, written in the second person to directly engage the reader. The *iter idearum* is as follows: You have been anointed (Gregory is referring to baptismal anointing) in order for you to exercise the priesthood, to *offer a gift* which is truly yours, that is your interior man, which must be perfect and immaculate according to the law of the Lamb, free from every stain and sickness. Obey Saint Paul, who invites you to *offer your body as a living offering, holy and agreeable to God* (Rm 12.1–2). He who has received the true priesthood also remains a priest for all eternity (Heb 7.23–24). Gregory links the theme of priesthood and virginity to Mt 5.8: *Blessed are the pure in heart*. You, Gregory states, *have been crucified with Christ* (Gal 2.19) and have offered yourself to God as a chaste priest (2 Cor 11.2) according to the promise of Christ Jesus (Mt 5.8) (*Virg* 23, 7, GNO VIII/1, 340–342).

The theme is not new. Already, Methodius of Olympus (*Symposium*, 5, 6), who certainly influences Gregory, calls the community of virgins an *altar*. Gregory develops these concepts with an insistence and force that merit meditation. Neither virginity nor Christian chastity is identified completely with the natural virtue of temperance, but they contain a Christological and sacrificial signification, something that situates them in a typically sacrificial paradigm. J. GRIBOMONT (266) sees a veiled allusion to an ascetic who has abandoned his initial ascetic life in these passages, even if he observes that the engagement to offer oneself as victim, “to consecrate oneself as a chaste priest,” can be understood of any Christian. The paraphrase that Gregory makes of 2 Cor 11.2 is nevertheless significant. Saint Paul there speaks of presenting the Church at Corinth to Christ as a chaste virgin (παρθένον ἁγνήν). Gregory here speaks of consecrating oneself as a chaste priest (ἁγνὸν ἱερέα). The key point is the identification with Christ required by virginity.

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Lucas Francisco Mateo-Seco

VIRTUE

ἀρετή

For Gregory, the criterion and measure of moral good is God himself: He is the Good, therefore every virtue is such insofar as referred to Him. Gregory holds that ἀρετή renders the human being similar to God (*Or dom* 5, GNO VIII/1, 59–60), that virtue and divinization are the same thing (*Cant* 9, GNO VI, 285–286), that the only end of the virtuous life is likeness to God (*Cant* 9, GNO VI, 271–272; *Vit Moys* II, GNO III/1, 101–102). The center and finality of ἀρετή is God, not that which is human or the perfection of that which is human: Only that which is accomplished with our eyes turned to God, seeking to please Him alone, is truly virtue (*Inst*, GNO VIII/1, 52). Further, ἀρετή is an authentic participation in the divine life, in the sanctity and purity of God. Ἀρετή is placed on the same level as *apátheia* and purity (*katharótes*). These three qualities describe the being of God and are a communication that God makes of himself to the soul (*Cant* 3, GNO VI, 90–91). They are a ray of justice that illuminates it (*Perf*, GNO VIII/1, 184). Gregory attaches much importance to the relation of the virtues with the sanctifying action of the Holy Spirit: It is He who gives origin to the virtues, converts the human being into a new creature, identifies him with Christ, causes the virtues to grow, and bestows on him charity, which is the principle of the virtues (*Inst* 41–49, GNO VIII/1).

For Gregory, every virtue also has Christ as model: it is referred to Him, who is “the Lord of the Virtues” (*Eccl* 8, GNO V, 436). The virtuous life is nothing other than following and imitating Jesus Christ; Christian perfection consists in incarnating in one’s own life that which the name of Christ signifies (*Perf*, GNO VIII/I, 174–179). Gregory develops this thought extensively in books such as *Inst*, *Prof* and *Perf*. Two thoughts are interchangeable in them: Christianity is imitation of the divinity, and Christian life is the imitation of Christ (L.F. MATEO-SECO 1992, 9–26).

This Christocentric dimension of ἀρετή is decisive for the evaluation of the Nyssen’s concept of ἀρετή in perspective, as well as the way in which the elements that Gregory takes from Greek philosophy are employed. Among the aspects that are borrowed, it is natural to remark

on the identification of the good and the beautiful, the consideration of virtue as the good that is precious in itself, the relationship that is established between virtue and moderation, and the conception of the unity of the passions (W. VÖLKER, 209). These “loans” are inserted into a Christian vision of the human being which profoundly modifies them. It is true that, as for the Stoics, virtue consists of the development of human nature itself; but, for Gregory, this nature is the image and likeness of God, and is destined to participate in the divine life. Both realities, *archê* and *telos*, exceed human effort alone. Therefore ἀρετή is above all a *gift* of God to the human person, a gift beyond human capacities (E. KONSTANTINOU 81–95). At the same time Gregory accentuates the importance of freedom in the practice of the virtues: it is necessary to *struggle* with strength and perseverance to reach that which is promised by faith in hope (*Eccl* 6, GNO V, 379). The accent that Gregory places on the importance of freedom in virtuous activity is enough to finally affirm that the human being can be called “father of himself” because of his free activity (*Eccl* 6, GNO V, 379–380). Two extremes are obvious in the Nyssen’s aretalogy: virtue cannot be reached through human effort alone, but is fruit of divine grace (*Or dom* 3, GNO III/2, 36–37; *Virg* 1, GNO VIII/1, 251); and, although a gift, virtue requires resolved human effort. Thus Gregory’s position is described as a clear *synergism* (W. VÖLKER, 203).

Virtue is so much a participation in the divine life that the virtuous human being can know God in his own interiority, since his soul, by the virtues, is transformed into a mirror of the divinity. In *Cant* there are important passages on this theme: God is ineffable and transcends all things, but the good perfume diffused in us by the purity of the virtues keeps us close to Him; with purity we imitate the incorruptibility of the divine nature, and with goodness his goodness (*Cant* 3, GNO VI, 89–90). The Christological dimension of the Nyssen’s aretalogy is clear here as well: imitating Christ by means of the virtues, the soul is transformed into a mirror of the Word (*Cant* 3, GNO VI, 90–91).

Gregory already affirms in *Virg* that a close connection between all the virtues exists, so much so that it is not possible to embrace one virtue without embracing all the others. The same is true in the inverse with the vices: One vice is enough to corrupt the whole of the virtuous life (*Virg* 15, GNO VIII/1, 310–311). Gregory insists on this throughout his work (*Beat* 4, GNO VII/2, 117–118; *Inst*, GNO VIII/1, 77–78). The mutual connection of the virtues is present in the Stoics, in Philo and Clement of Alexandria. Gregory’s vision of this theme is so unitary that he manages to conceive of the virtues as part of a unique and identical

virtue (*Inst*, GNO VIII/1, 77). This means that it is necessary to maintain the unity of one's life, fleeing from every ambiguity or compromise with evil; it is necessary to totally conform one's life to the life of Christ, without tolerating even one vice and without reducing the importance of any virtue whatsoever (*Perf*, GNO VIII/1, 181–182). Virtue cannot be divided. Gregory enters into extremely concrete details: It is absurd to vigorously struggle against the pleasures of the flesh and at the same time allow oneself be carried away by sadness or pride; this would be the same as not freeing oneself from the tyranny of vice, but simply changing one's master. One must act as a good soldier, protecting the whole body and not only one part: in other words, it is necessary to practice all the virtues, thus avoiding all the wounds that vice can inflict (*Virg* 16 and 17, GNO VIII/1, 312–315).

That which matters most in ἀρετή is that it is an imitation of the divine nature. In principle, man was created in the image and likeness of God. This fact makes the imitation of God and the call to intimacy with Him possible (*Prof*, GNO VIII/1, 136–137). Even if this image was tarnished by the disobedience of our first parents, the salvation wrought by Christ causes it “to return to the grace received in the beginning”, since it “restores man in his original state” (*Or cat* 8, GNO III/4, 29–37). The human being is reinstated by Christ in his primordial dignity, with regard to his primordial energy, his primordial capacity to love. Citing Mt 5.48, Gregory affirms that it is an order of the Lord to imitate God with every perfection, i.e. to remain free of every wrongdoing “in thoughts, words and deeds” (*Prof*, GNO VIII/1, 138). This signifies ascending on a path without end, because virtue has no limits. In Gregory, ἀρετή is decidedly marked by its indissoluble relation to growth without limits, to ἐπέχτασις (→). For, according to Gregory, perfection consists in “never stopping in the growth towards that which is better” and in “never placing any limit on perfection” (*Perf*, GNO VIII/1, 213–214; *Inst*, GNO VIII/1, 45–47). The models of this asceticism without limits on the path to virtue are Paul and Moses. We have learned from Saint Paul, Gregory states, that it is proper to ἀρετή to have no limits, that its fullness consists in having no limits. So, he argues, ἀρετή is participation in God, who is the Good and the perfect virtue. Thus ἀρετή has no limits, just as God has no limits (*Vit Moys*, preface, GNO VII/1, 3–4).

Gregory sometimes enumerates the four classic cardinal virtues: “wisdom, temperance, fortitude, prudence and the rest” (KONSTANTINOU, 127–150) (*Cant* 1, GNO VI, 35–36). At other times he insists on typically Christian virtues such as obedience, humility, indifference to worldly

goods, faith, hope, and love (*Inst*, GNO VIII/1, 58.69). Love is a divine gift and is the foundation of the treasure of grace. The love that God has for us is at the root of our own love. It penetrates into our hearts like an arrow and fills it with love (*Cant* 13, GNO VI, 377–378). Love by its own nature has no limits because the goodness of God, which is that which attracts us, has no limits.

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Lucas Francisco Mateo-Seco

VIT MOYS

De vita Moysis

In certain mss. that have transmitted Gregory's *Life of Moses* (*Vit Moys*), it is indicated not only by this title, also with that of *On Virtue*. For as we read in the preface, the Nyssen produced this work to respond to an anonymous request from a person who has not yet been identified, perhaps from a monk, to write about the perfect life. At other times he wrote on this subject in a more systematic fashion (cfr. *Inst*, *Perf*), arguing that perfection consists in life in accordance with virtue. This time he treats the topic by tracing the events of an historical person as an example of the itinerary that the human being must follow in the progressive practice of virtue. Since this person was taken from the OT, the Gregorian work has both ascetic and exegetical value. The chronology of *Vit Moys* is uncertain, since the information that has been used in the writing to place it in Gregory's latest period, after 390 (JAEGER, DANIÉLOU), or to place it at the time of the Eunomian controversy, between 380 and 384 (HEINE), is inconsistent. The work nevertheless appears fully mature from both the ascetic and exegetical perspectives, so that we may propose a date around 390.

The Structure of *Vit Moys* is singular: Since Moses is taken up with symbolic value, the treatment cannot avoid displaying a strong tendency to allegorical methodology; but since he is engaged in polemic against the Antiochian literalists, Gregory wishes to demonstrate that the application of this method is not to the detriment of the literal signification of the text. He thus divides the treatment into two parts of unequal length: The first and shorter details, in an approximately chronological order, the events of the life of Moses as found in Ex and Num; the second, much longer part symbolically interprets these events so as to manifest their significance for the spiritual itinerary that the Christian must follow to realize the ideal of Christian perfection: "It is now the time to apply the events of the life [of Moses], which we have recalled, to the predetermined scope of discourse, so that that which we have said becomes a useful contribution (*syneisphora*) for the life according to virtue" (I, 77).

In the symbolic treatment of the *Vit Moys*, the traditional typological interpretations of Ex are not lacking: for example, the passage of the Red

Sea is a symbol of baptism (II, 121), or the twelve springs of water are symbols of the Apostles (II, 139). This interpretation is however Christological and ecclesial, while Gregory must now offer another interpretation which, if it is to have ascetic value, must be directed to the individual Christian. It is thus a spiritual exegesis of an individual type (i.e. psychological). In this sense Moses, who had been typically taken as a type of Christ or the Law by Christian exegetes, becomes in *Vit Moys* a symbol of the soul which follows the arduous ascent that leads to perfection. Given the preponderance of this type of interpretation, the influence of Philo on Gregory is notable, all the more so since Philo had composed a *Life of Moses*.

As for the content of the exegesis, the many and varied events of the life of Moses are interpreted in such a way as to signify the progressive advancement of the Christian along the path of the practice of virtue in order to finally reach perfection. But such episodes sometimes resist insertion into the ascending design even when interpreted in a symbolic manner, since the meeting of Moses with God on Sinai, which symbolically signifies the culminating point of the spiritual life, is located in the central part of the legislator's life. Thus, from II, 1 to II, 248 the itinerary follows a fairly regular progression, while after the experience of Sinai the course of the itinerary becomes more generic, and in the final pages the theme of Moses as servant and friend of God is treated without precise references to a specific event of his life. It is also well known that, for the Nyssen, given the infinity of God, the ultimate plateau of the path, the spiritual itinerary cannot ever be brought to completion. It is in a continual tension towards the successive plateau that is re-proposed always beyond that which is reached progressively from time to time. On this theme, which is a foundation of Gregory's spiritual doctrine, illuminating pages can be found in the *Vit Moys*. We quote only one example: "All the desire for the good which draws to that ascent tends to run continually faster the more one throws oneself towards it. For to see God signifies to never satisfy oneself of desiring Him, and it is inevitable that he who sees, by the very fact of being able to see, will always burn with the desire to see more. Thus no limit impedes the progress in the ascent towards God, as the good does not have limits, nor is progression in desire for the good impeded by any satisfaction" (II, 238–239).

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Gal 4.24	21	1 Tim 6.16	259, 412, 450, 764
Gal 4.26	254	2 Tim 4.15	441
Gal 4.22-31	21	2 Tim 4.18	45
Gal 5.6	252	Tit 2.12	200
Gal 5.22	781	Tit 3.4	597
Gal 6.8	419	Heb 1.3	49, 217, 233 f., 346, 632, 678 f., 725 f., 764
Gal 6.14	191	Heb 4.14	697
Eph 1.1-10	519	Heb 6.7	253
Eph 1.10	699	Heb 7.11	697
Eph 1.15-19	641	Heb 7.23-24	782
Eph 1.22	251, 515	Heb 9.11	146
Eph 2.20	516	Heb 11.8-19	21
Eph 3.9	537	Heb 13.15	645
Eph 3.10	250	Heb 13.21	45
Eph 3.18	191 f., 740		
Eph 3.18-19	191, 740		
Eph 4.3-4	517		

1 Pt 2.5	254	Jude 1.23	254
1 Pt 2.14	212		
1 Pt 3.4	419	Ap 21.10 ff.	254
1 Jn 1.5	450		
1 Jn 5.19	553		

THEMATIC READINGS

ANTHROPOLOGY: Anthropology, *Apatheia*, Body, Desire, Embryo, Faith and Reason, Grace, *Hypostasis*, Image, Life, Love, *Methorios*, *Op hom*, *Or cat*, *Ousia*, *Parrësia*, Person, *Petr*, *Philantrôpia*, *Phyrama*, *Physis*, *Plêrôma*, *Proairesis*, *Prosôpon*, Psychology, *Sanct Pasch*, Slavery, Social Analogy, Tunics of Hide.

BIBLE: Allegory, *Akolouthia*, Analogy, *Beat*, *Cant*, *Eccl*, Exegesis, *Hex*, *Historia*, *Inscr*, Mystery, *Op hom*, *Or dom*, *Sext ps*, *Skopos*, *Theôria*, *Vit Moys*.

BIOGRAPHY: Basil, Biography, Chronology, Councils and Synods, *Epist*, Gregory Nazianzen, Gregory Thaumaturgus, *Macr*, *Macrina*, *Nyssa*, Pilgrimages, Rhetoric.

COSMOLOGY: *Akolouthia*, Cosmology, Creation, Cross, *Diastêma*, Eternity and Time, Evil, *Fat*, *Kinêsis*, *Methorios*, *Metousia*, *Ousia*, Participation, *Sympnoia*.

CREATION: Creation, Devil, *Diastêma*, Eternity and Time, Evil, *Hex*, *Kinêsis*, Life, Light, *Op hom*, *Physis*, *Plêrôma*, Tunics of Hide.

CHRISTOLOGY: *Antirrh*, Apollinarius of Laodicea, Christology, Cross, *Deit fil*, *Eun III*, Filiation, *Homousios*, Image, Life, Mariology, *Mimêsis*, Mystical Body, Mystery, *Oikonomia*, *Or cat*, *Perf*, *Philantrôpia*, *Phyrama*, *Physis*, Priesthood, *Prof*, *Ref Eun*, *Simpl*, Soteriology, *Sympnoia*, *Theoph*, *Trid spat*, *Tunc et ipse*, Virginity, Virtue.

ECCLESIOLOGY: Councils and Synods, Ecclesiology, *Epektasis*, *Episkopos*, *Epist can*, Monasticism, Mystical Body, *Perf*, Pneumatology, Priesthood, *Prof*, Virginity.

ESCHATOLOGY: *An et res*, Apocatastasis, Death, Desire, Devil, Eschatology, *Epektasis*, *Euphrosynê*, *Infant*, Infinity, Influence of Gregory, Life, Original Sin, Otherworldly Purification, Paradise, *Physis*, Resurrection, *Sanct Pasch*, Tunics of Hide.

GEOGRAPHY: Cappadocia, Chronology, Jerusalem, *Nyssa*, Pilgrimages.

GOD: *Abl*, *Agennêsia*, *Arium*, Apophatic Theology, Divine Names, Energy, *Eun I* and *II*, *Eun III*, Eunomius, *Eust*, Glory, Good-Beauty, *Graec*, *Hypostasis*, *Homousios*, Incorruptibility, Infinity, Life, Light, *Maced*, Mystery, Number, *Or cat*, *Ousia*, *Pent*, Person, *Philantrôpia*, Philosophy of Language, *Petr*, *Physis*, *Proairesis*, *Prosôpon*, *Ref Eun*, *Simpl*, Social Analogy, *Theologia*, Trinitarian Semantics, Trinity, Unity of Action, Virginity.

HISTORY: *Akolouthia*, Eschatology, Eternity and Time, History, *Kinêsis*, *Oikonomia*, *Perf*, *Sanct Pasch*, Theology of History.

INFLUENCE: Augustine, Contemporary Interpretations, Gregory Palamas, Influence of Gregory.

KNOWLEDGE: *Adyton*, Analogy, Apophatic Theology, Divine Names, *Eun I* and *II*, Faith and Reason, Idolatry, Logophasis, *Metousia*, Number, *Paideia*, Philosophy of Language, *Ref Eun*, *Theôria*, Trinitarian Semantics, Truth, *Vit Moys*.

LITURGY: *Adyton*, *Ascens*, *Bapt*, *Cult*, *Diem nat*, *Homotimia*, *Liturgy*, *Maced*, *Mart Ia*, *Mart Ib*, *Mart II*, *Priesthood*, *Salut Pasch*, *Sanct Pasch*, *Theologia*, *Trid spat*.

MORALS: *Aiskynê*, *Apatheia*, *Benef*, *Cast*, *Devil*, *Evil*, *Fasting*, *Fornic*, *Idolatry*, *Inst*, *Life*, *Love*, *Matrimony*, *Mimêsis*, *Or cat*, *Or dom*, *Original Sin*, *Otherwordly Purification*, *Pilgrimages*, *Perf*, *Philantrôpia*, *Proairesis*, *Prof*, *Quat uni*, *Slavery*, *Tunics of Hide*, *Usur*, *Virtue*.

PLATONISM: *Cavern*, *Cross*, *Good-Beauty*, *Image*, *Methorios*, *Neo-Platonism*, *Origen*, *Partiticiapion*, *Plato*, *Plotinus*, *Porphyry*, *Truth*.

PNEUMATOLOGY: *Deit Euag*, *Deit fil*, *Eust*, *Glory*, *Homotimia*, *Maced*, *Pent*, *Philantrôpia*, *Pneumatology*, *Simpl*, *Trinity*.

ORIGEN: *Apocatastasis*, *Creation*, *Eschatology*, *Influence of Gregory*, *Origen*, *Tunics of Hide*.

SACRAMENTS: *Baptism*, *Christian Initiation*, *Confirmation*, *Diem lum*, *Divinization*, *Eucharist*, *Life*, *Mimêsis*, *Mystery*, *Oikonomia*, *Or cat*, *Priesthood*, *Trid spat*.

SPIRITUALITY: *Adyton*, *Apatheia*, *Beat*, *Cant*, *Cast*, *Christian Initiation*, *Darkness*, *Desire*, *Divinization*, *Epektasis*, *Eucharist*, *Euphrosynê*, *Fasting*, *Grace*, *Infinity*, *Inst*, *Kinêsis*, *Love*, *Macr*, *Matrimony*, *Mimêsis*, *Monasticism*, *Mystery*, *Mysticism*, *Or dom*, *Parrêsia*, *Perf*, *Prayer*, *Priesthood*, *Prof*, *Skopos*, *Sober Drunkenness*, *Spiritual Theology*, *Theôria*, *Virg*, *Virginity*, *Virtue*, *Vit Moys*.

SOURCES AND CONTEXT: *Apollinarius of Laodicea*, *Arianism*, *Aristotle*, *Basil*, *Eunomius*, *Greek Mythology*, *Gregory Thaumaturgus*, *Macarius*, *Marcellus of Ancyra*, *Methodius*, *Neo-Platonism*, *Origen*, *Paideia*, *Philo*, *Plato*, *Plotinus*, *Porphyry*, *Stoicism*.