

STUDIA PATRISTICA

VOL. XXXII

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...and his opponents. Cappadocian Fathers,
...Greek witness after Nicaea

Edited by
ALEXANDER A. BRUNYAN



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STUDIA PATRISTICA

VOL. XXXII

Papers presented at the Twelfth International Conference
on Patristic Studies held
in Oxford 1995

Athanasius and his opponents, Cappadocian Fathers,
other Greek writers after Nicaea

Edited by

ELIZABETH A. LIVINGSTONE



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XI. ATHANASIUS AND HIS OPPONENTS

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B.H. Warmington

Athanasius and the Pachomians

Leslie W. BARNARD, Harrogate

The relationship between Athanasius and Pachomius and his followers presents problems. In Athanasius' extant works there are no references to Pachomius apart from that in his first letter to Horsiesius which is certainly genuine¹. The reason for this is that Athanasius, notwithstanding his strong attraction towards asceticism², did not write any formal treatise on monasticism, if we exclude the *Vita Antonii* concerning the genuineness of which controversy still rages. Most of Athanasius' works, as distinct from his letters and sermons, are concerned with his public and political life and with his exposition of Christian dogma. It was his relentless struggle against Arianism which dominated his literary concerns. However in the Sahidic and Greek Lives of Pachomius³ there are various references to Pachomius' and Athanasius' dealings with the Pachomians. James Goehring has argued that these *Vitae* reflect later interests and do not give a coherent account of Pachomian origins and development as there are no references in Athanasius' works which could confirm their veracity⁴. While the Pachomian *Vitae* must be used with caution and allowance made for a tendentious element, particularly in matters of practice and belief, and also for some chronological confusion, overall *SBo* and *G¹* appear to preserve genuine historical information about the contacts of the archbishop and the Pachomians

¹ PG 26, 977

² *Hist. Arianorum* 14; *Ep. Ammonis* 2. For various ascetic letters D. Brakke, 'The Authenticity of the Ascetic Athanasiana', *Orientalia* 63 (1994), pp. 17-56.

³ Sahidic, the Coptic dialect of Upper Egypt, was the language of Pachomius and his disciples. The Coptic *Vita* was however translated into Bohairic, the Coptic dialect of the delta, and it is this translation which preserves the Coptic life in its standard form (*SBo*). *SBo* is much longer than the first Greek *Vita* (*G¹*) but both of these are independent witnesses to the same original oral tradition. The definitive edition of *SBo* is by L.T. Lefort (*CSCO* 89; Louvain 1925) supplemented by the Sahidic fragments (*CSCO* 99-100; Louvain 1933-1934). Further fragments in *Le Muséon* 49 (1936), pp. 219-230 and 54 (1941), pp. 111-138. Eng. tr. by A. Veilleux, *Pachomian Koinonia* Vol. I (Kalamazoo, 1980), pp. 23-266. The Greek *Vitae* have been edited by F. Halkin (*Subsidia Hagiographica* 19; Brussels 1932); translation in Veilleux *op. cit.*, pp. 297-407.

⁴ J.E. Goehring, 'Pachomius' Vision of Heresy', *Le Muséon* 95 (1982), pp. 241-262 and in *The Roots of Egyptian Christianity* (ed. B.A. Pearson and J.E. Goehring) (Philadelphia, 1986), p. 238. It is however worth noting that the only reference to Antony by Athanasius outside the *Vita Antonii* occurs in *Hist. Arianorum* 14. Similarly there are no references to Pachomian monasticism in the *Apophthegmata Patrum* although the question of monastic community was central to the latter. On this G.E. Gould, *The Desert Fathers on Monastic Community* (Oxford, 1993), p. 14.

and this fills out the bare references to his movements in the *Festal Index*. These references in the Pachomian *Vitae* are all the more valuable inasmuch as among Christian writers there was a degree of ignorance about Pachomius and his organisation⁵.

Athanasius was particularly interested in the coenobitic type of monasticism with its corporate and collaborative emphasis which may have attracted him to the Pachomian conception of *koinonia*. And the fact that the Pachomians did not abandon society was an added point in their favour. The various Pachomian *Vitae* which come from the middle period of the movement between 346 and 400, of which the Bohairic is the fullest, record contacts between Athanasius and the monks which continued, at intervals, throughout the Alexandrian archbishop's long and stormy career. *G¹* gives shorter abbreviated accounts which do not differ in substance from the longer *Vitae*. We now look at these contacts as recorded in *SBo* supplemented with references from *Ep. Ammonis*⁶. Where these references do not refer to matters of practice and belief we are on stronger historical ground.

The first contact between the archbishop and Pachomius and his followers occurred in AD 329/330 soon after Athanasius' disputed election to the Alexandrian see⁷. Athanasius had travelled south to the Thebaid with the intention of proceeding to Aswan (Syene, Συήνη) in order to bolster his authority in areas where the Meletians were active, a dangerous political situation for the Alexandrian see⁸. An escort of bishops flanked the archbishop in Tabennesi, as Pachomius and the brothers walked with him chanting psalms as they led him to their assembly room and cells where Athanasius prayed. There followed a remarkable incident when Sarapion, bishop of Nitentori, grasped the archbishop's hand and begged him to ordain Pachomius priest so that he could be the leader of the monks in his diocese. Pachomius however immediately disappeared into the crowds. We know that there was great reluctance among many elders of the monks to be ordained which many regarded as an impediment to salvation. Thus Abba Matoes showed consternation when during a journey to Mount Sinai with a brother he was forcibly seized by a local bishop and ordained priest with the brother. Neither of them ever celebrated the eucharist owing to their sense of unworthiness⁹. Other monks who were ordained showed great reluctance to be leaders. So Peter, priest of Dios, when he prayed

⁵ P. Rousseau, *Pachomius* (Berkeley, 1985), p. 54.

⁶ Edited by J.E. Goehring (Patristic Texts and Studies 27; Berlin, 1986).

⁷ *SBo* 28. On Athanasius' election L.W. Barnard, 'Two Notes on Athanasius', *OCP* 41 (1975), pp. 344-356. Cf. also Pachomius on Athanasius' consecration in *Ep. Ammonis* 13: 'Good men do not criticize God's judgement concerning him by bringing up his youthful age and hastening to divide the Church of God. For the Holy Spirit has said to me: "I have raised him up as a pillar and light for the Church"'.
⁸ *Festal Index* 2 (329-330); P. Rousseau, *op. cit.*, pp. 161-162.
⁹ Matoes 9 (*PG* 65, 292C-293A).

should have stood at the front, yet because of his humility stood at the rear¹⁰. In the case of Pachomius Athanasius told Sarapion that he already knew of Pachomius' faith, even before his consecration in 328. And to Pachomius' monks Athanasius said that he acceded to Pachomius' wish and prayed that he would never have ecclesiastical rank. Apart from a recognition of Pachomius' charisma there may have been other reasons for the archbishop's caution. The Pachomian system was only six years old and he himself was newly consecrated. He may have been unhappy with Sarapion's desire to extend his authority beyond his town. Countering Meletian influence was of greater importance. As far as Pachomius was concerned he wanted to ensure the independence of his community from outside interference — and also he knew that ordination could encourage ambition and conflict — a sentiment later echoed by Athanasius himself¹¹. Later Pachomius was to accept that his communities would need priests, if they lived as other monks, for how otherwise could the eucharist be celebrated?

The archbishop then left Tabennesi for the south accompanied by other bishops and a large crowd carrying lamps, candles and censers which led to Pachomius coming out of hiding. The only substantial difference between the Bohairic account and the shorter version in the Greek *Vita* is the statement that Pachomius gazed at Athanasius on the boat recognising him as a holy servant of God 'all the more as he had heard of the trials which Athanasius had endured for the sake of the Gospel'¹². It is uncertain what these trials were; in his *Festal Letter* written during the winter of 329/330 Athanasius spoke of the power of quietness and withdrawal during the troubles of life — and these troubles were the clamour of the crowds and the pressures of an unbelieving society¹³.

The next reference we have of contacts between Pachomius and the archbishop is recorded in *SBo* 89, although we do not know the date of these incidents. A young man called Theodore aged twenty seven had become a Christian after forsaking his pagan background. The archbishop had baptized him, apparently without a catechumenate, after which he appointed him a lector in the Alexandrian Church. Theodore regarded Athanasius as a source of inspiration and, contrary to the archbishop's inclination, embraced an extreme form of asceticism. However after twelve years as lector Theodore became disillusioned with the vain glory and worldliness of the local clergy and, to his advantage, got to know a group of Pachomian monks who were resident in the

¹⁰ Peter of Dios (*PG* 65, 385C) quoted in D. Burton-Christie, *The Word in the Desert* (Oxford, 1993), pp. 251-252.

¹¹ *Festal Ep.* 11 (Lefort 40ff.).

¹² *G¹* 30; Veilleux, *op. cit.*, p. 317.

¹³ *Festal Ep.* 24 (Lefort 38, 14-16). On the political background the present writer's *Studies in Athanasius' Apologia Secunda* (Bern, 1992), pp. 23-25.

metropolis and who were singing the praises of the *koinonia*. They had a profound influence on Theodore and when other Pachomian monks arrived by boat to visit the archbishop and to purchase medical supplies Athanasius gave permission for Theodore to return with them. This group of monks had no Greek and so needed an interpreter but, although at first wary, they agreed to take Theodore back once Athanasius had given permission. On arrival at Tabennesi Pachomius embraced Theodore, after reading a commendation from Athanasius, and made him housemaster of the house for Greek-speaking monks; later Theodore of Alexandria mastered Sahidic and became Pachomius' interpreter. This is a vivid picture of contacts between Athanasius, Pachomius and the Greek-speaking monks in Alexandria and the Thebaid. There was clearly a community of interest between them although it should not be assumed that this necessarily implied an acceptance of Alexandrian ecclesiastical control on the part of the latter.

Our next notice (*SBo* 96) occurred in September or October 345 when Zacchaeus, head of the boatmen, and the other Theodore, Pachomius' favourite disciple, were sent by Pachomius to Alexandria to minister to the boatmen there. They were also to carry a letter to Athanasius who, in turn, wrote a letter to Pachomius praising Theodore's humility. On their return they reported on the condition of the Alexandrian Church which was at peace after trials. Pachomius gave thanks and prayed for the people who had been deprived of their archbishop, the 'Christ bearer', through the machinations of the Arians. There is some chronological confusion in this account as Athanasius was in exile until 21 October 346, Gregory having taken possession of the see in the meantime. The mention of a letter to Athanasius and his reply may be misplaced from another earlier occasion, as was realised by the writer of the Greek *Vita* who omits any reference to Athanasius (*G¹* 109). It was a custom to make a yearly journey to Alexandria by boat. It was also in 345 that the Synod of Latopolis took place at which Pachomius, in alliance with the local rural population, successfully defended himself against the charge of being a clairvoyant (*G¹* 112), after which he and the brothers returned to the monastery at Pnoui, Pachomius' last foundation and the furthest upstream¹⁴.

Another instance of contacts with the archbishop is recorded in *SBo* 124 where again the chronology is askew. Theodore and the brothers leave for Alexandria sometime between 5 May 346, the date of Pachomius' death from plague, and 19 July 346, the date of his successor Petronius' death also from plague, to visit Athanasius and to obtain medical supplies for the sick brethren. This account is however misplaced as Athanasius at that time was still in exile.

¹⁴ *Ep. Ammonis* 2 states that Theodore had sent letters to Athanasius by the hand of two monks.

The community of interest which existed between Athanasius and Pachomius is best seen in the latter's eulogy, recorded in *SBo* 134:

'In Egypt now in our generation, I see three principal things flourishing with the favour of God and man. The first is the blessed athlete, the holy Apa Athanasius, the archbishop of Alexandria who struggles for the faith even to the point of death. The second is our holy father Antony, who is the perfect model of the anchoritic life. The third is the *koinonia*, which is the pattern for everyone who wants to gather souls together according to God in order to help them to achieve perfection'¹⁵.

It is however noteworthy that this eulogy does not imply that Pachomius accepted the ecclesiastical control of his movement — it is Athanasius' faith under persecution that Pachomius applauds. It was Theodore, after Pachomius' death, who accepted a greater element of control from Alexandria — perhaps because his social status, as a member of a wealthy Christian family, had given him in the past easy access to a bishop¹⁶.

There is evidence that not only were letters from Athanasius read to the Pachomian monks but also that his writings were circulating among them. This was at the time when Horsiesius was leader of the community to whom Athanasius wrote a letter. On the way back from Alexandria the brothers tried to visit Antony but he had left for the Inner Mountain. When they arrived at Phbow Theodore gave certain of Athanasius' writings to Horsiesius who then read them to the brothers who gained comfort from 'the words of life' (*SBo* 136). We do not know what works were read — possibly extracts from earlier works such as *De Incarnatione* and *Contra Gentes*. Later Shenoute of the White Monastery laced his sermon *De castitate et Nativitate*, which discusses the place of chastity in the monastic life, with citations from the works of Athanasius although no Greek source ever mentions Shenoute — a fact that Tito Orlandi regards as one of the great mysteries of the Greek Christian tradition in Egypt¹⁷.

The Bohairic and Greek *Vitae* give vivid accounts of the search made for Athanasius during the time of his third exile (356-361) when he hid in the monasteries of Nitria and the Thebaid. *SBo* 185 and *G¹* 137, 138 refer to the year 360 when the Emperor Constantius was seeking out Athanasius at the instigation of the Arians¹⁸. The search was carried out by the military general *dux* Artemius, whose headquarters were at Alexandria, while the province of the Thebaid was administered by a Governor as civilian prefect under the

¹⁵ Veilleux, *op. cit.*, p. 192.

¹⁶ J.E. Goehring, *The Roots of Egyptian Christianity*, *op. cit.*, pp. 244-245. On Athanasius' growing strength in Egypt before and after 346 see T.D. Barnes, *Athanasius and Constantius*, (Cambridge, Mass., 1993), pp. 94-95.

¹⁷ H. Guerin, 'Sermons inédits de Senoute', *Revue Egyptologique* 10 (1902), pp. 159-164; 11 (1905), pp. 15-16. Also L.T. Lefort, *Le Muséon* 48 (1935), pp. 55-73, and T. Orlandi, *The Roots of Egyptian Christianity*, *op. cit.*, p. 64.

¹⁸ *Festal Index* 32 (359-360).

authority of the *dux*. Artemius visited the monastery of Phbow in search for the archbishop accompanied by troops. There is a vivid account of the *dux* sitting down with an axe in his hand surrounded by archers. Through an interpreter he demands that the brothers bring their abbot to him but they prevaricate saying that he has gone to visit another monastery. The second-in-command Psahref is then brought before the *dux* who demands that Athanasius, an enemy of the Emperor, be produced — otherwise he will loot the monasteries. Receiving a negative response the *dux* then searches the brothers' cells but without success. After further exchanges the *dux* left the monastery at Phbow and returned to the riverside where the Governor was waiting. He seems to have been impressed by the *koinonia* and the asceticism of the brethren: 'For I saw that they do not wear fitted garments nor do they wear shoes on their feet even on days when there is heavy frost outside. Truly I felt so sorry for them that I would have gladly given them as alms the clothes I was wearing. When I visited the refectory I saw no food except greens'¹⁹. The Governor was also sorry for their state. While this may be an *ex parte* version there is no doubt that Athanasius successfully evaded capture. *G*¹ 138 has the significant detail that accompanying the *dux* was an Arian bishop.

Another of Athanasius' visits to the Thebaid occurred in 363 at the time of his flight from the Emperor Julian, the archbishop having left Alexandria on 24 October 362. He travelled south towards Phbow while Theodore and the brothers went north to Šeneset to meet Athanasius — although only after Horsiesius had demured. They eventually found the archbishop in the northern part of the diocese of Šmoun mounted on a donkey accompanied by bishops, clergy with lamps and candles, and monks chanting psalms and canticles with also a great crowd following. Athanasius then embraced Theodore and the brothers and prayed over them. The party of a hundred Pachomian monks then preceded the archbishop singing Psalms as they moved to the principal Church building of Šmoun. Later the party withdrew to local monasteries to rest.

Athanasius' aim was not only to encourage the brothers in matters spiritual. As always he had an eagle eye for physical conditions and after a few days he inspected the accommodation in two monasteries founded by Theodore (Nouoi and Kahior) and was impressed by what he saw. After a few days respite Athanasius said to Theodore, 'If it is the Lord's will, we wish to spend some days here because the days of the Holy Passover of our salvation are approaching'²⁰. This dates the visit to early 363. Then he gave a letter to Theodore to give to Horsiesius — a letter which contains Athanasius' only reference to Pachomius and which may represent an intervention, on the archbishop's part, to establish harmony between the two²¹. The full account in *SBo* 200-204 is remarkable for

the tenderness and concern shown by Athanasius for the Pachomian monks. There was a mutuality of interest between them and the archbishop was at home during his visits to the Thebaid. Athanasius distrusted individualism, apart from his own, and had a strong idea of the Church as a sacramental body. The fact that teaching and biblical exposition was central to Pachomianism and that the *koinonia* applied to itself the biblical images of the 'body of Christ', the 'spiritual Temple', the 'vine of saints' and the 'people of God' would have appealed to him. So Pachomius in a catechetical address:

What danger we are in then, when we hate another, when we hate our co-members, one with us, sons of God, branches of the true vine, sheep of the spiritual flock gathered by the true shepherd, the Only-Begotten Son of God who offered himself in sacrifice for us²².

Although imperious in his own views with a tendency to see events in black and white — and this is particularly true of the period following the death of Pachomius in 346 — it is possible that Athanasius regarded at least some of the Pachomians in this period as more orthodox than other groups in Egypt for they spoke of their Rule as a 'tradition' and 'deposit' and they emphasised the Cross. The Pachomians likewise reciprocated the archbishop's interest and concern for their welfare.

The last notice of Athanasius occurred in connexion with his *Festal Epistle* for 367, concerning the Canonical books of the Old and New Testaments, which was explicitly directed against Meletians and Arians. Theodore, in an address to the monks, stated that the archbishop had established the number of these books: 'Thus in it he has defined for us the wellsprings of the waters of life from which it is very necessary for us to drink to be made whole through the grace of God and the favours he gives us' (*SBo* 189). Theodore does not list the Canonical books but reproduces the Introduction to *Festal Epistle* 39: 'They have fabricated for themselves what are called apocryphal books, claiming for them antiquity and giving them the names of saints'. Theodore significantly tells the monks to cease reading heretical books and from now on to read only Canonical books. Athanasius' letter is to be translated into Sahidic, as presumably his yearly *Festal* letter was, and placed in the monastery as a law — an indication that prior to 367 the Pachomian monks may have read a variety of works some of which were far from the 'orthodoxy' demanded by Athanasius²³.

The last reference in the *Vitae* to Athanasius occurs in *SBo* 210 and dates from 368 towards the end of his life. The archbishop was in the diocese of Šmoun and on hearing of Theodore's death he wrote a letter of consolation to Horsiesius which we have studied elsewhere²⁴. This letter does not throw

¹⁹ Veilleux, *op. cit.*, pp. 223-224.

²⁰ *SBo* 202.

²¹ Cf. Athanasius' eulogy of Theodore in *Ep. Ammonis* 34.

²² Instruction Concerning a Spiteful Monk 37, Translated Veilleux, *op. cit.*, Vol. 3, p. 30.

²³ The alleged connexion of the Nag Hammadi texts with the Pachomian community has not been finally established.

²⁴ L.W. Barnard, *The Monastic Letters of Saint Athanasius the Great* (Oxford, 1994), pp. 14-15.

further light on the tangled relationship between Theodore and Horsiesius although it is full of solace and optimistically stresses the unity which existed between the two during their life together. Such a letter provides an insight into an aspect of Athanasius' character which does not appear in his more public writings. His relentless struggle against the heresy which he believed was destroying the Church is so prominent in his writings that it is easy to underestimate his spirituality and tender concern for the *koinonia*.

Antony, in contrast to Pachomius, had established no community *per se*; although he strongly supported Pachomius this was not true of all his monks. Antony knew that anchoritism and coenobitism were both valid practical expressions of asceticism. Strangely Athanasius' contacts with Antony were minimal — he had never visited the saint — and he may have kept Antony at arm's length, possibly because some of Antony's followers had contacts with Meletians. And the archbishop may have been aware of the fact that anchorites in Alexandria had a poor reputation for their lack of asceticism²⁵. Athanasius' relations with Pachomius were quite different for Pachomius throughout his life had a reputation as a vigorous ascetic — 'awesome' and 'sad' and at times filled with anxiety. His strongly biblical teaching on the Cross and Martyrdom²⁶ would have attracted Athanasius, notwithstanding Pachomius' initial reluctance to have clergy in his communities. It is strange that Pachomius never visited Alexandria although no doubt Athanasius had invited him. His followers had no such reluctance. There may be wisdom here. The favour of the great could be unpredictable as monks were to discover later when Theophilus hounded Origenist monks from Egypt. Moreover some bishops had anxieties about monastic leaders as Pachomius found out when he was summoned to the Synod of Latopolis in 345.

Athanasius, on the other hand, accepted Pachomius' charisma as a person chosen by God to establish the *koinonia* and warmed to his friendly relations with the local Church and his positive attitude towards the wider world²⁷. While neither Pachomius nor many of his monks were, at least in his life-time,

²⁵ SBo 89. Jerome, *Ep.* 127, 5 states that Athanasius told Marcella about Antony and Pachomius. There are however serious chronological difficulties in accepting this, cf. T.D. Barnes, *Athanasius and Constantius*, *op. cit.*, p. 254, n. 24.

²⁶ Veilleux, *op. cit.*, pp. XVIII-XIX. Note also the possible influence of the treatise ascribed to Athanasius, *On Charity and Temperance*, on Pachomius' *Instruction Concerning a Spiteful Monk*, ed. A. van Lantschoot, *Le Muséon* 40 (1927), pp. 265-292. D. Brakke, 'The Authenticity of the Ascetic Athanasiana' *op. cit.*, pp. 34-36 accepts its authenticity with hesitation. The work was originally a Coptic homily dating from the fourth century as is shown by its use of 'virgin', 'renouncer' and 'anchorite' as a three-fold formula. However a close reading of this turgid piece does not suggest to me Athanasian authorship. I regard it as of unknown authorship but used by Pachomius as a homily for his community — and also as an instruction for dealing with the misdemeanours of a specific monk.

²⁷ G.E. Gould, 'Pachomios of Tabennesi and the Foundation of an Independent Monastic Community', in *Voluntary Religion*, ed. W.J. Sheils and D. Wood (SCH 23; 1986), pp. 15-24.

'orthodox' in the Alexandrian sense Athanasius found in the *koinonia* and its founder much to his liking — and this was re-inforced when Theodore became the Pachomian leader. Moreover we should not underestimate the appeal of a strong organisation with an economic side to the Alexandrian archbishop. What Athanasius would not stomach was support for Meletians and Arians for his religious views were always conditioned by political and social events. And he did not forget that it was the Pachomian monks who had hid him in his exiles.

It says much for Athanasius' tolerance that, at least in Pachomius' lifetime, he accepted his view that there were others, lacking official status in the Church, who could lay claim to a fatherly responsibility parallel to that of bishops²⁸. Even as late as 363, after a triumphant return from exile to Alexandria, Athanasius was still deferential to Theodore when insisting that the title 'father' belonged not to bishops but to monks and their superiors. Yet in the end it was the Pachomian communities which showed the strongest submission to episcopal rule. After the death of Theodore and with increasing numbers Athanasius took more control and confirmed Horsiesius as superior for the second time requesting that he should be informed about community affairs. He directed that the prayers of the monks should be for the peace of the Church²⁹. So the wheel had come full circle and for a short time the *koinonia* was under the control of the archbishop — a relationship which was always fragile and which was to experience many vicissitudes in later years.

The history of Athanasius' dealings with the *koinonia* show Athanasius giving an increasing attention to problems of order. His goal however was not to control the Pachomian monasteries in every detail — that was impossible with such large numbers and the archbishop's other responsibilities — but to establish connexions which would enable him occasionally to intervene³⁰.

²⁸ G¹ 135.

²⁹ G¹ 150; P. Rousseau, *Ascetics, Authority and the Church* (Oxford, 1978), pp. 66-67.

³⁰ D. Brakke, *St. Athanasius and Ascetic Christians in Egypt* (Yale, Ph.D. thesis 1992), pp. 209-233 has much useful information on the relations between Athanasius and the Pachomians.

Athanasius of Alexandria and the Cult of the Holy Dead

David BRAKKE, Bloomington, Indiana

Although Athanasius of Alexandria placed the divinization of the body at the centre of his soteriology, he criticized practices that had developed around the corpses of martyrs and ascetics. Two sets of sources are relevant: the *Life of Antony*, whose chapters on Antony's death are well known, and the *Festal Letters* of 369 and 370, which have not received much attention from scholars and so are the focus of this paper¹. Athanasius opposed those practices surrounding the holy dead that appeared to him either to violate his Word-centred theology or to threaten the authority of the episcopal hierarchy allied with him. While other bishops, such as Augustine, were able to integrate the cult of the dead into their spiritualities, Athanasius' particular theological commitments and political situation rendered this strategy untenable².

Athanasius' first attested public thoughts on this subject appear in chapters 90-92 of the *Life of Antony*. My remarks on this familiar document will be brief. In his portrait of the ideal 'saint', Athanasius characterizes Antony's supernatural abilities to heal and to exorcize as the works of God the Word through the monk, and he presents Antony primarily as a figure worthy of moral imitation³. Thus, everything that Athanasius' Antony does is meant to be emulated, including how he dies. In a famous scene, Athanasius has the dying Antony withdraw to a secret place, lest people mummify and otherwise honor his corpse; Antony is made to condemn those Christians who do not bury the dead bodies of holy persons. Still, Antony does leave two relics behind: both sheepskins, which he gives to Athanasius and his trusted ally, Bishop Serapion

of Thmuis⁴. There are two motivations for this presentation. First, Athanasius' theology is radically Logos-centred. Thus, he presents Antony's body as the supreme instance of ascetic appropriation of the Word's divinizing power, but not as a medium for transmitting that power to others apart from Antony's moral activity, which the Word enables. Second, Athanasius seeks to prevent the development of any non-Athanasian cult of Antony's corpse and to make permanent Antony's affiliation with the Athanasian episcopate, which he depicts as the sole heir to Antony's legacy.

The twin motives of theological Logos-centrism and political expedience also explain Athanasius' condemnations of practices associated with martyr tombs found in *Festal Letters* 41 and 42, written for 369 and 370⁵. These two letters belong to a series of *Festal Letters* that Athanasius wrote during the years 367-70, all of which deal with matters of church order: the biblical canon, irregular ordinations, and the like. It would be a mistake to treat the problems in these letters solely in terms of theology; rather, each of these issues was a matter of social organization and conflict, including practices involving the dead⁶. Athanasius himself is vague about the theological bases for the behaviors that he condemns. Throughout these letters, he stigmatizes unacceptable practices by labeling them both 'Arian' and, more frequently, 'Melitian', although the activities in view were not limited to such parties in the Egyptian church⁷. Common to all these letters is Athanasius' effort to restrict all Christian revelation to that which came from the incarnate Word and all Christian authority to the parish-based episcopate that he led. To Athanasius' mind, the veneration of martyr bodies and the use of them for divination undermined these goals.

In *Festal Letter* 41 (Easter 369), Athanasius condemns the display of martyr corpses for reasons similar to what is found in the *Life of Antony*, but here the bishop also makes explicit the political basis for his opposition to the martyr cult. After rehearsing his stereotypical complaints about 'Jews' and 'Arians',

⁴ *V. Ant.* 89-93. See Monique Alexandre, 'A propos du récit de la mort d'Antoine (Athanasie, *Vie d'Antoine*, PG 26, 968-974, § 89-93). L'heure de la mort dans la littérature monastique', in *Le temps chrétien de la fin de l'Antiquité au Moyen Âge — III^e-XIII^e s.* (ed. Jean-Marie Leroux; Colloques internationaux du CNRS 604; Paris, 1984), pp. 263-82.

⁵ These letters survive only in fragments of their Coptic translation published by L.-Th. Lefort, *S. Athanasie: Lettres festales et pastorales en copte* (CSCO 150; Louvain, 1955), pp. 23-9, 62-5, and by René-Georges Goquin, 'Les lettres festales d'Athanasie (CPG 2102). Un nouveau complément: Le manuscrit IFAO, copte 25', *OLP* 15 (1984), pp. 133-58. Since there is not yet a critical edition that combines this evidence, I will indicate from which edition each citation is taken.

⁶ For a general treatment of the social dimensions of burial in antiquity, see Ian Morris, *Death-Ritual and Social Structure in Classical Antiquity* (Cambridge, 1992). On the social background of *Festal Letter* 39 (367), see David Brakke, 'Canon Formation and Social Conflict in Fourth-Century Egypt: Athanasius of Alexandria's Thirty-Ninth *Festal Letter*', *HThR* 87 (1994), pp. 395-419; of *Festal Letter* 40 (368), Brakke, *Athanasius*, pp. 99-102.

⁷ Camplani, *Lettere festali*, pp. 271-4.

¹ Among the few previous studies is Alberto Camplani, *Le lettere festali di Atanasio di Alessandria: Studio storico-critico* (Rome, 1989), pp. 272-4. On the cult of the dead in Egypt, see T. Baumeister, *Martyr Invictus* (Münster, 1972); in the West, Peter Brown, *The Cult of the Saints: Its Rise and Function in Latin Christianity* (Chicago, 1981). See recently R.A. Markus, 'How on Earth Could Places Become Holy? Origins of the Christian Idea of Holy Places', *Journal of Early Christian Studies* 2 (1994), pp. 257-71.

² On Augustine's change of mind regarding martyrs and miracles, see Peter Brown, *Augustine of Hippo* (Berkeley, Calif., 1969), pp. 417-18; Margaret R. Miles, *Augustine on the Body* (Missoula, Mont., 1979), pp. 35-9; and Rowan A. Greer, *The Fear of Freedom: A Study of Miracles in the Roman Imperial Church* (University Park, Penn., and London, 1989), pp. 170-9.

³ For discussions and citations, see David Brakke, *Athanasius and the Politics of Asceticism* (Oxford Early Christian Studies; Oxford, 1995), pp. 245-62; and Greer, *Fear of Freedom*, pp. 104-07.

Athanasius turns to the actual problem at hand: 'the inheritors of the Melitian evil and those who commune with them'. The latter, he says, 'are defiling themselves with the dead'⁸. The metaphor was carefully chosen, for it appears that it was practices involving the literally dead that attracted such nominally Athanasian Christians to Melitian parishes:

They (viz., the Melitians) have not left hidden in the earth the bodies of the martyrs who contested well, but they try to put them on stretchers and pieces of wood so that those who want to can view them. They do this with pomp, as if on account of the martyrs' honor, but truly this is a contemptible thing, and they do it for a shameful reason. For indeed they do not have the bodies of martyrs in their city, nor do they know which is a martyr, although they have taken counsel to blaspheme their bodies and take them from the cemeteries of the catholic church. In fact, those who have already been buried they exhume and carry out, so that, since they are put to shame for denying him whom the holy martyrs confessed, they might, even through their (the martyrs') bodies, find a way to deceive those whom they lead astray⁹.

From here Athanasius adduces biblical examples, culminating in Jesus himself, of persons whose bodies were buried in the ground and left there¹⁰. The similarities of this passage to Antony's speech against mummification in the *Life of Antony* are striking. These include the reference to putting the bodies on stretchers, the acknowledgment that people do all this for the 'honor' of the martyrs, and the use of Jesus and the biblical prophets and patriarchs as examples of persons whose dead bodies were buried and left in the ground¹¹. If Athanasius did not write the *Life*, he must have studied it very closely. In this letter, however, three concerns of Athanasius come to expression.

First, the conflict over the martyr cult reflected a struggle over which church, Athanasius' or the Melitians', was the genuine successor of the pre-Constantinian martyr church¹². In the passage above Athanasius denies that his opponents have any genuine martyr bodies or even know 'which is a martyr'; hence, they must move such genuine bodies to their churches¹³. Moreover, Athanasius charges that his opponents, by their unorthodox theology, now betray the very Christ 'whom the martyrs confessed'. This rhetoric suggests that Athanasius' opponents had enjoyed success in using the bodies of martyrs

⁸ *Ep. fest.* (cop.) 41 (OLP 15: 9v. b4-16).

⁹ *Ibid.* (CSCO 150: 62. 23-63. 5).

¹⁰ Adam, Abraham, Sarah, Jacob, Joseph, 'the prophets', 'the Lord': *ibid.* (CSCO 150: 23. 22-24. 30).

¹¹ *V. Ant.* 90 ('the patriarchs and prophets', 'the Lord'); cf. Alexandre, 'L'heure de la mort', pp. 269-70.

¹² Cf. L.-Th. Lefort, 'La chasse aux reliques des martyrs en Égypte au IV^e siècle', *La nouvelle Clío* 6 (1954), pp. 225-30, at 225.

¹³ In the surviving fragments, Athanasius does not explain how a martyr's body was identified or discovered. In a sermon on the martyr cult that shows knowledge of Athanasius' *Festal Letters*, Shenute quotes Christians as saying, 'Certain martyrs appeared to us and informed us where their bodies are' (ed. E. Amélineau, *Œuvres de Shenoudi* (2 vols.; Paris, 1907-14), 1. 212-20, at 212).

to legitimate their network of parishes as that church which truly existed in continuity with the now legendary persecuted church of an earlier golden age¹⁴. Their efforts anticipated Ambrose of Milan's more celebrated translation of the relics of Saints Gervasius and Protasius to his basilica in 386¹⁵. Athanasius, however, did not oppose this programme with the same strategy by moving martyr bodies to the parish churches associated with him: rather, he condemned any exhumations of corpses. Athanasius instead tried to establish continuity with the historic church of the martyrs through 'orthodox' doctrine, continued right belief in 'him whom the martyrs confessed'. He thus charged the Melitians with recycling an old Arian and pagan error: 'they worship the creature more than the one who created everything, God' (cf. Rom. 1:25)¹⁶. Athanasius' focus remained on proper confession of God the Word.

Second, this debate concerned precisely where holiness was to be located: Athanasius' reliance on orthodox belief rather than translated martyr relics to legitimate his church did not preclude completely localization of the holy. He did say that the corpses of martyrs belonged in a place — in 'the cemeteries of the catholic church'. For Athanasius, holiness was to be found only in the 'catholic church': bodies on stretchers were, to him, disturbingly mobile; they could be 'carried out' of the 'catholic' church and so 'lead astray' unsuspecting Christians. Here Athanasius closely associated his orthodox belief with actual places, like cemeteries and church buildings, and thus portrayed the physical movement of martyr bodies as a movement away from the unity of the 'catholic' church toward the fragmentation of heterodox error. During his exile of 356-62, when Athanasius and his allies had been removed from the church buildings of Alexandria and other cities, the bishop had told his followers that holiness was not to be found in any place; rather, it belonged only to those people who are 'within the truth'¹⁷. Now a decade or so later, when Athanasius was more in control of such places, he could more closely associate orthodoxy with actual physical locations. Here it is useful to recall that the traditional Egyptian practice in the Hellenistic period was to keep a mummified corpse in the private home¹⁸. This observation suggests how in Christian Egypt, as elsewhere, the martyr cult could become, as Peter Brown has put it, 'a zone of conflict' between the 'centrifugal' force of privatized funerary practices centred around the home and the 'centripetal' force of the church's communal life centred around the bishop and his altar¹⁹. It is this kind of social conflict, both between

¹⁴ On this function for the martyr cult, see R.A. Markus, *The End of Ancient Christianity* (Cambridge, 1900), pp. 90-95.

¹⁵ *Ibid.*, pp. 143-5.

¹⁶ *Ep. fest.* (cop.) 40 (CSCO 150: 62. 14-15).

¹⁷ PG 26. 1189-90.

¹⁸ Baumeister, *Martyr Invictus*, p. 56.

¹⁹ Brown, *Cult of the Saints*, pp. 31-2.

private and communal cultic practices and between competing cultic communities ('Melitian', 'Athanasian', 'Arian', and so on), that Athanasius phrased in terms of unity and fragmentation, orthodoxy and heresy.

Third, there was a financial — and violent — aspect to the conflict. A primary means by which the developing imperial episcopate established and maintained its power was through control of the church's money and welfare system. The bishop became the patron of ordinary Christians and of parishes in his diocese²⁰. It would appear that the martyr cult undermined this economic patronage by the bishop, for Athanasius accuses those who exhume the bodies of martyrs of doing so 'for the sake of financial gain'²¹. Where holiness goes, so goes the money of the faithful. Thus, Athanasius equates his efforts to rid the church of such persons with Christ's cleansing of the Temple:

This (practice of exhuming martyrs' bodies) resembles the crookedness of Jeroboam, who sold <the priesthood, and of those who sold> and bought doves in the Temple of God, as it is written (1 Kings 12: 31; Matt. 21: 12-13; par.). Indeed, it is clear without a doubt that those who are lawless now and are being driven out by whippings are the ones to whom the Lord said: 'Do not make my Father's house a house of trade' (John 2: 16). They too will hear him say: 'Do not sell the body of my martyrs, and do not make their good confession profitable for the sake of greed'. For those who commit such a sin must receive the same punishment²².

Some scholars may still doubt that, early in his career, Athanasius sponsored violence in his campaign against the Melitian church, as a famous papyrus suggests²³. Here it does indeed appear that the older Athanasius explicitly sanctioned violence ('whippings', 'the same punishment') against those who, as he portrayed it, trafficked in martyr relics.

If the 41st *Festal Letter* concerns where holiness is to be located, then the 42nd concerns where truth is to be located, for here Athanasius takes on the practice of using martyr corpses for divination and exorcisms. Athanasius

²⁰ Egyptian church orders reveal a continuing effort to consolidate the church's financial organization and welfare system around the bishop and his assistant, called 'the steward' (*The Canons of Athanasius, Patriarch of Alexandria* 16, 61, 81, 89, ed. and trans. W. Reidel and W.E. Crum (Text and Translation Society 9; London, 1904), pp. 26-8, 40-1, 50, 55-6); cf. A. Martin, 'L'église et la khôra égyptienne au IV^e siècle', *REA* 25 (1979), pp. 3-26, at 7-11, 22-3; C. Bobertz, 'Cyprian of Carthage as Patron: A Social Historical Study of the Role of Bishop in the Ancient Christian Community of North Africa' (Ph.D. diss., Yale, 1988).

²¹ *Ep. fest.* (cop.) 41 (CSCO 150: 26. 9-10).

²² *Ep. fest.* (cop.) 41 (CSCO 150: 26. 10-20). I have accepted Lefort's conjectural restoration as well as his suggestion that Athanasius understood 1 Kings 12:31 to refer to simony on Jeroboam's part (cf. *Apol. Const.* 28; Lefort, *Lettres festales*, p. 26, n. 80).

²³ *P. Lond.* 1914 was published by H.I. Bell, *Jews and Christians in Egypt* (London, 1924). For Athanasius as a violent 'gangster', see T.D. Barnes, 'The Career of Athanasius', *SP* 21 (1987), pp. 390-401, esp. 393-9. For a defense of Athanasius against charges of violent conduct, see D.W.-H. Arnold, *The Early Episcopal Career of Athanasius of Alexandria* (Notre Dame, Ind., and London, 1991), pp. 62-89.

states categorically that, if exorcisms of demons take place at the tombs of martyrs, it is Christ who performs them, not the martyrs. It would appear that Christians who went to martyr shrines for exorcisms justified this practice with biblical passages such as Acts 16:16-18, in which Paul, not Christ, casts out a demon. Athanasius replies:

Let them listen, and I will answer them by saying that they are not healed by the martyrs coming upon the demons, but they are healed by the Saviour, the one whom the martyrs confessed. And the demons cry out because they are being tortured by *him*, just as those in the gospel cried out, saying: 'I beg you, do not torture us!' (Luke 8: 28). But they try to see the demons that are destroying them! These people give glory to them (the demons) and ask them about what will happen. After these words, will they dare to question the unclean spirits? Yes, they will dare, for they are shameless lovers of pleasure²⁴.

Athanasius does not deny that successful exorcisms take place in the martyrs' tombs, but insists only that they be attributed not to the martyrs, but to Christ, a strategy that the bishop used in the *Life of Antony* when he declared that Antony's miracles were not his, but God's or Christ's²⁵. But unquestionably wrong to Athanasius' mind is the interviewing of possessed persons 'about what will happen': divination. This, Athanasius claims, is the real reason why his opponents go to martyr shrines: not to see Christ's power over the demonic, but 'to see the demons' and ask them questions. How precisely this divination was thought to work is not clear. In the passage above, it would seem that people questioned the demons themselves, who then responded. But later Athanasius says that the people consider the demons to be 'the martyrs' prophets' and so believe that the martyrs or even Christ spoke 'through the demons', who functioned only as mouthpieces²⁶.

In any case, Athanasius condemns this questioning of possessed persons as the seeking of truth apart from its revelation in the Word of God. When Christ expelled demons, Athanasius points out, he silenced them, 'not because they were lying — for what they said, that he is Son of the holy God, is true — but so that they would not deceive the people through these words and then later teach them about their own doctrines'²⁷. In other words, even if a possessed person should, under the influence of a martyr's holiness or of a demon's ability to spy out matters²⁸, say something true about the future, this, Athanasius claims, is only a seductive first step toward heretical doctrines. Christians who need to know about their future should not consult martyrs or demons, but the Word of God: true Christians 'would call upon Christ, who is within themselves, and

²⁴ *Ep. fest.* (cop.) 42 (CSCO 150: 65. 4-15).

²⁵ *V. Ant.* 37, 48, 56, 58, 62, 65, 84.

²⁶ *Ep. fest.* (cop.) 42 (CSCO 150: 65. 31-66. 1).

²⁷ *Ibid.* (CSCO 150: 28. 3-7).

²⁸ Athanasius explains how demons, using their ability to travel long distances quickly, can appear to predict the future accurately in *V. Ant.* 31-5.

wait until he reveals what they are seeking, either in a dream or by speaking in their heart, and they would not run to the demons.... Because we worship the Word of God who speaks from heaven, we do not need words from earth'²⁹. Truth, as Athanasius portrays it here, is to be found only in Christ, the single 'Word of God who speaks from heaven', presumably through the canon of Scripture that Athanasius established three years earlier; competing voices are merely multiple, fragmented 'words from earth'³⁰.

Athanasius' theological 'Logos-centrism' and his political conflict with the Melitians ruled out divine revelations that took place apart from this canonical Word. Whether as mobile bodies on stretchers or as divine oracles, dead martyrs could represent alternative sources of truth and holiness and thus, to Athanasius, were best left safely in the ground. Continuity with the pre-Constantinian church of the martyrs was to be achieved through confession of the orthodox faith in the Word for which the martyrs died, not through possession of or devotion to their corpses. But on these matters Athanasius was out of step with where world Christianity was going and, one might argue, with his own emphasis on the Word's divinization of the human flesh. Nothing illustrates this fact better than the discovery in the sixth century of the very body of Antony that Athanasius had portrayed as hidden from Christians forever³¹.

L'Utilisation Christologique de l'Épître aux Hébreux dans les *Orationes contra Arianos* d'Athanasie d'Alexandrie

Dominique GONNET, SJ, Lyon

'Le démon sait parfaitement cacher la perversité de ses doctrines sous les saintes expressions de l'Écriture'¹. Voilà qui pose le problème de l'interprétation de l'Écriture par les ariens. Si la première des *Orationes contra Arianos* d'Athanasie d'Alexandrie commence par une réflexion théologique sur l'éternité et la génération du Fils de Dieu, elle se poursuit par l'exégèse de différents textes de l'Écriture 'puisque les ariens allèguent des paroles divines', comme l'écrit Athanasie (CA I, 36). Parmi ceux-ci, l'Épître aux Hébreux représente pour Athanasie et les ariens un texte essentiel pour comprendre qui est le Christ. Les citations de l'épître ont même une valeur structurante pour les *Orationes contra Arianos*: les chapitres 46 à 64 de la première *Oratio* ont pour trame des références à cette épître.

Après avoir délimité le champ d'étude, j'envisagerai la démarche d'interprétation de l'Écriture mise en œuvre dans les *Orationes*. Je développerai ensuite la christologie qui en ressort.

Délimitation du corpus

L'inauthenticité de la quatrième *Oratio* a été démontrée par A. Stegmann en 1917² et la question de l'authenticité de la troisième *Oratio* a été posée par Charles Kannengiesser. Il a développé divers arguments en faveur de 'la différence doctrinale de la troisième *Oratio*'³. L'enquête que j'ai faite a montré que dans la troisième *Oratio*, il n'y a que cinq citations (He 1, 3 (2 fois); 1, 4; 3, 2 (2 fois)) et deux allusions (He 1, 14 et 11, 5) à l'Épître aux Hébreux alors qu'il y a soixante-sept citations ou allusions dans les deux premières *Orationes*⁴.

¹ CA I, 8; le sigle CA désignera les *Orationes contra Arianos* dans le reste de la communication.

² *Die pseudoathanasianische IVte Rede gegen die Arianer als 'κατὰ Ἀρειανῶν λόγος', ein Apollinarisgut* (Rottenburg, 1917), pp. 8-42.

³ *Athanasie d'Alexandrie, évêque et écrivain. Une lecture des Traités contre les ariens (Théologie historique, 70; Paris, 1983), pp. 310-368.*

⁴ Les références des *Orationes* à l'Épître aux Hébreux sont, dans l'ordre des *Orationes* (les allusions sont en italique); CA I, 9: He 1, 3; I, 12: 1, 3; I, 14: 1, 3; I, 24: 1, 3; I, 36: 13, 8, 1, 10; I, 40: 1, 6; I, 41: 6, 20, 9, 24; I, 46: 1, 8-9; I, 48: 13, 8; I, 49: 1, 9, 1, 3; I, 51: 1, 9; I, 52: 1, 9; I, 53: 1, 4, 3, 1; I, 54: 1, 4; I, 55: 1, 1, 1, 4, 1, 2; I, 56: 1, 4; I, 57: 1, 5, 1, 7; I, 58: 1, 8.

²⁹ *Ep. fest. (cop.) 42* (CSCO 150: 66, 3-7, 22-3).

³⁰ On the connection between the problems with the martyr cult and Athanasius' formation of a biblical canon, see Brakke, 'Canon Formation and Social Conflict', pp. 410-17.

³¹ G.J.M. Bartelink, ed., *Vie d'Antoine* (SC 400; Paris, 1994), pp. 74-6.

Cette différence n'est pas en soi significative puisque les citations de l'Écriture sur lesquelles s'appuient Athanase dans la troisième *Oratio* sont essentiellement celles de l'évangile de Jean, mais il est un peu surprenant que l'Épître aux Hébreux, si présente dans les deux premières *Orationes*, disparaisse pratiquement du champ de notre auteur dans la troisième. Aussi me suis-je cantonné aux deux premières.

Interpréter l'Écriture

Les *Orationes contra Arianos* interprètent l'Écriture. En cela, l'Épître aux Hébreux est déjà un guide, puisqu'elle cite et commente nombre de textes de l'Ancien Testament: 'Dieu a parlé jadis aux pères par les prophètes' (He 1, 1). Ces paroles des prophètes sont à comprendre dans la perspective du Fils venu 'en ces jours qui sont les derniers' (He 1, 2). Mais les textes de l'Ancien Testament cités dans l'Épître aux Hébreux sont ouverts à diverses interprétations que les ariens ne vont pas manquer d'envisager. Quelle place et quel statut pour les citations scripturaires?

Dans les *Orationes contra Arianos*, les citations de l'Écriture ne sont prédominantes que dans le deuxième temps, le premier étant celui d'un développement dogmatique. Le passage est très net: 'Jusqu'ici, c'est avec des **notions logiques** (*ennoiais*) concernant le Fils que nous nous sommes opposés, autant que le Seigneur nous en a donné le pouvoir, aux opinions irrationnelles (*alogous epinoias*) des ariens. Mais il est bon d'ajouter maintenant les **paroles divines** (*ta theia logia*), pour montrer encore davantage qu'au Fils appartient l'immutabilité et la nature inchangeante du Père, et à ces gens la perversité de pensée'⁵.

La réflexion théologique — 'les **notions logiques**' — est donc première face aux ariens qui formulent en une synthèse théologique leur raisonnement. Dans la deuxième partie, consacrée aux '**paroles divines**'⁶, les têtes de chapitre sont des citations scripturaires, souvent des citations de l'Ancien Testament faites par le Nouveau, en particulier par l'Épître aux Hébreux⁷.

1, 10, 1, 11; I, 59: 1, 4, 2, 1-3, 7, 22, 8, 6, 7, 19, 9, 23; I, 61: 1, 6; I, 62: 1, 5, 1, 13, 1, 14; II, 1: 1, 4, 3, 2; II, 4: 3, 2; II, 6: 3, 2; II, 7: 3, 1-2; II, 8: 2, 14-18, 3, 1-2; II, 9: 3, 1-2, 7, 24; II, 10: 13, 8, 3, 4-6, 11, 10; II, 13: 1, 5, 1, 8; II, 14: 1, 13; II, 18: 1, 4, 3, 2; II, 23: 1, 5, 1, 6; II, 32: 1, 3; II, 33: 1, 3; II, 35: 4, 12-13; II, 47: 10, 5, 10, 5; II, 52: 2, 7; II, 55: 2, 14-15; II, 64: 1, 6; II, 65: 10, 20; II, 72: 4, 12-13; II, 77: 1, 2; III, 1: 1, 4, 3, 2 (2 fois); III, 14: 1, 14; III, 52: 11, 5; III, 59: 1, 3; III, 65: 1, 3. Ces références n'incluent pas les emplois fréquents des mots *apaugasma* et *charaktèr*, typiques de He (6 emplois de *charaktèr* en CA III pour 16 en CA I et II, et 34 emplois de *apaugasma* en CA III pour 39 en CA I et II).

⁵ CA I, 40 (trad. B. Meunier dans B. Sesbotté-B. Meunier, *Dieu peut-il avoir un Fils? Le débat trinitaire du IV^e siècle* (Paris, 1993), p. 80-81).

⁶ De CA I, 35 à la fin de CA II.

⁷ Cf. CA I, 59.

En effet, l'Épître aux Hébreux accumule les citations de l'Ancien Testament ouvertes à une perspective christologique. Certaines sont employées dans l'Ancien Testament pour Dieu⁸ et c'est cette épître qui les applique au Christ. D'autres concernent des figures comme le Messie: ces figures ne s'identifient pas immédiatement au Verbe. Les citations de l'Ancien Testament dans le Nouveau ne sont jamais vraiment des preuves en soi. Voilà où se trouve la difficulté de la réflexion: ces citations sont 'théologiquement malléables'.

Quelle solution Athanase donne-t-il à ce problème? Il fournit des critères d'interprétation à propos de He 1, 4: 'Il a été fait d'autant supérieur aux anges'⁹. Les critères qu'Athanase donne sont la personne, l'événement et l'époque¹⁰. Or dans l'Épître aux Hébreux, la personne dont il est question est le Fils, l'événement est la mission du Fils et l'époque est 'les derniers temps'. La phrase: 'Il a été fait d'autant supérieur aux anges' implique une différence de nature. Les ariens n'y voient qu'une différence de degré parce qu'ils ne tiennent pas compte de la situation particulière de ce texte dans l'Épître aux Hébreux.

En somme, les ariens ont soulevé une réelle difficulté de l'interprétation des textes. Forts de l'exégèse alexandrine, ils se reconnaissent dans la démarche de l'Épître aux Hébreux qui aborde de façon originale les textes de l'Ancien Testament pour expliquer quelle est la situation du Christ. Mais, selon Athanase, ils n'en saisissent pas toute la nouveauté: ils ne comprennent pas comment les mots *apaugasma*¹¹ et *charaktèr* que l'Épître aux Hébreux applique au Christ manifeste qu'il est l'authentique et unique Fils de Dieu.

Comprendre le Christ

La référence constante à He 1, 3 — le Fils de Dieu qui est ἀπαύγασμα τῆς δόξης καὶ χαρακτήρ τῆς ὑποστάσεως ('resplendissement de la gloire et empreinte de l'être' du Père) — est caractéristique des *Orationes* comme des autres Pères de l'Église¹². Cette définition christologique dans le Nouveau Testament anticipait sur les débats théologiques postérieurs. Placée dans l'exorde de l'Épître aux Hébreux, elle donne le ton de l'épître entière, dont l'exégèse récente a souligné encore plus le caractère christologique.

⁸ Par exemple, en He 1, 6, le Ps 97, 7 parallèle au texte grec de Dt 32, 43 'appuyé par un texte hébreu trouvé à Qumran' (TOB, 3^e éd. intégrale, Paris, 1991, note p): 'Que se prosternent devant lui tous les anges de Dieu'.

⁹ He 1, 4 fait allusion à la version grecque du Ps 8, 6 dont le sujet est l'être humain en général placé juste en dessous des anges. Toute la difficulté du premier chapitre de l'Épître aux Hébreux est de montrer la supériorité du Christ par rapport aux anges en s'appuyant sur l'Ancien Testament.

¹⁰ Cf. CA I, 55.

¹¹ Le mot *apaugasma* est lui-même repris de Sg 7, 26.

¹² Cf. F.M. Young, 'Christological Ideas in the Greek Commentaries on the Epistle to the Hebrews', *JThS*, N.S., 20-1 (avril 1969), pp. 150-163 et particulièrement p. 151.

En effet, le P. Albert Vanhoye a montré comment cette épître avait une organisation en forme de chiasme mettant en son centre le 'sacerdoce et le sacrifice du Christ'¹³. Athanase fait appel à chacune des différentes parties de l'épître pour venir à bout de son exégèse. Cette division de l'Épître aux Hébreux met en valeur l'enjeu sotériologique de l'abaissement du Verbe, thème majeur de la théologie d'Athanase tant dans les *Orationes contra Arianos* que dans ses autres œuvres comme le *De incarnatione*.

Ce sont les deux premiers chapitres de l'Épître aux Hébreux — c'est-à-dire l'exorde et la première partie que Vanhoye intitule: 'Situation du Christ' — qui sont le plus cités dans les *Orationes*. On le comprendra: les ariens mettent en cause cette situation du Christ à l'égal de Dieu que l'auteur de l'Épître aux Hébreux définit au point de départ pour mettre en valeur son abaissement.

Face aux ariens qui font de l'abaissement du Christ sa position réelle par rapport au Père, Athanase montre qu'il n'y a pas de salut possible sans que le Christ soit vrai Fils, engendré par Dieu. Pour les hommes, il a été 'fait', mais en lui-même il n'est ni 'fait' ni 'créé'. Si le Fils est 'fait', c'est pour notre salut: par exemple, 'Le Verbe a été fait d'abord salut, vie, expiation ... et enfin vie et résurrection' (CA I, 64). En employant des termes contemporains, on pourrait dire que tout l'art d'Athanase est de déplacer l'argument des ariens en faveur de la *facticité* du Christ — qui le mettrait au rang des créatures — vers l'argument de la *fiabilité* du Christ: celui sur qui l'on peut compter pour notre salut parce qu'il est éternellement Dieu. C'est ainsi que le mot *pistos*¹⁴ d'He 3, 2 citant Nb 12, 7 est un leitmotiv d'Athanase pour parler du Christ. Il est 'accrédité' depuis toujours, l'acte d'institution étant lié à l'Incarnation¹⁵.

La structure d'ensemble de l'épître montre une autre dimension qui la rapprocherait des accents théologiques ariens. Elle manifeste une christologie de l'épreuve: 'Puisqu'il a souffert lui-même l'épreuve, il est en mesure de porter secours à ceux qui sont éprouvés' (He 2, 18; CA II, 8); c'est pourquoi aussi Dieu l'a glorifié. Nous sommes proches ici de la christologie de l'hymne de l'Épître aux Philippiens¹⁶.

¹³ *La structure de l'Épître aux Hébreux* (Paris, 1976²): Exorde (He 1, 1-4); I. Situation du Christ (1, 5-2, 18); II. Grand prêtre digne de foi et miséricordieux (3, 1-5, 10); III. Valeur sans égale du sacerdoce et du sacrifice du Christ (5, 11-10, 39); IV. Foi et endurance (11, 1-12, 13); V. Des pistes droites (12, 14-13, 18).

¹⁴ Quelle que soit sa traduction: 'fidèle à celui qui l'a institué' (BJ); 'accrédité auprès de celui qui l'a constitué' (TOB).

¹⁵ Cf. Young, *ibid.*, p. 153: 'Behind Cyril's remarks lies Athanasius' understanding of salvation whereby sin and death are dealt with through the perfect life and sacrificial death of the Son of God and man is re-endowed with the lost image of God and raised to divinity (*theopoiësis*). For both Alexandrian bishops this salvation could be accomplished only by the power of God himself. It was this sotériological principle which had stimulated Athanasius to spend his life opposing the Arians and establishing that the Logos must be *homoousios* and *atreptos*'.

¹⁶ Ph 2, 6-11; Athanase consacre 18 chapitres à l'interprétation de cette hymne (CA I, 35-52). L'Épître aux Hébreux développe la christologie de l'hymne de l'Épître aux Philippiens autour du thème central de l'unique et parfait sacerdoce du Christ.

Une christologie de l'épreuve pourrait impliquer une création ou du moins une transformation dans la deuxième personne de la Trinité: 'Il a été fait d'autant supérieur aux anges qu'il a hérité d'un nom bien différent' (He 1, 4; CA I, 53), ce qui prouverait selon les ariens que le Verbe aurait pu 'devenir meilleur à partir d'une condition inférieure' (CA I, 40). Ce point-là correspond bien au point de vue arien qui fait du Christ une créature, certes avec un statut démiurgique particulier, mais cependant créature parmi d'autres. Mais pour Athanase, l'épreuve du Christ est totalement finalisée par le salut de l'homme: il ne la prend pas en compte pour elle-même.

S'il est vrai que l'Épître aux Hébreux offre une christologie de l'épreuve, il est aussi vrai qu'elle exprime clairement la divinité du Christ. La référence qui paraît à Athanase sans conteste possible est celle du Psaume 2, 7 cité à quatre reprises dans les *Orationes*: 'Auquel des anges a-t-il jamais été dit: Tu es mon fils, moi aujourd'hui, je t'ai engendré'¹⁷. Athanase applique le Psaume 2, 7 à l'engendrement du Verbe par le Père. Le Fils est le 'propre engendré de la substance du Père' (CA I, 16). C'est là que les mots *apaugasma* et *charaktër* jouent un rôle si important (cf. *ibid.*) car ils viennent prouver que l'*engendrement* est vraiment participation à la substance de Dieu comme le *resplendissement* l'est à la lumière qui rayonne et l'*empreinte* au sceau qui l'imprime.

Athanase montre la justesse de sa compréhension de l'Épître aux Hébreux quand il parle du lien constant qui unit dans l'épître la divinité et l'humilité du Christ:

'Dès que, dans l'Épître (aux Hébreux), l'Apôtre Paul signale l'Incarnation du Verbe par le biais du sacerdoce suprême du même Verbe, il ne reste pas longtemps silencieux à signaler aussitôt sa divinité, nous donnant l'assurance de part et d'autre, et surtout lorsque l'apôtre nous parle de l'humilité du Verbe, que nous connaissons immédiatement et à la fois la grandeur et l'humilité du Fils' (CA II, 10). C'est ce va-et-vient que fait sans cesse l'Épître aux Hébreux, c'est en cela qu'elle exprime la totalité du mystère.

Dans sa réponse aux ariens, Athanase est habité par la conviction que l'on doit pouvoir tirer de l'Épître aux Hébreux les éléments¹⁸ qui permettent de prouver l'engendrement du Fils unique de toute éternité dans une perspective salvifique, quitte à distinguer ce que l'épître réunit, à savoir l'être même de Dieu et l'économie du salut liée à l'«épreuve» du Christ.

¹⁷ Cité en CA I, 57; I, 62; II, 13; II, 23. L'Épître aux Hébreux est seule à faire cette citation du Ps 2, 7 avec les Actes: He 1, 5; 5, 5; Ac 13, 33.

¹⁸ Outre les mots *apaugasma* et *charaktër*, et les citations de He déjà mentionnées, la référence qui revient le plus souvent en CA I, 49-62 (section de CA commentant He) est He 1, 8-9 citant le Psaume 45, 7: 'Ton trône est établi à jamais! ... Tu aimas la justice et détestas l'iniquité, c'est pourquoi, ô Dieu, ton Dieu te donna l'onction...'

Conclusion

Avec l'Épître aux Hébreux a été inauguré dans le Nouveau Testament un genre littéraire fondé sur une réinterprétation systématique de l'Ancien Testament. La conviction d'Athanase est que les ariens ne vont pas jusqu'au bout de leur interprétation de l'Écriture. L'épître lui fournissait trois éléments essentiels pour sa réponse aux ariens:

- Une interprétation christologique de l'Ancien Testament;
- Une formulation développée de l'abaissement et de l'élévation du Christ que l'hymne de l'Épître aux Philippiens donnait en raccourci;
- Une théologie du salut réalisé par l'unique grand prêtre, le Christ, vrai Fils de Dieu.

L'épître a été pour lui un texte privilégié en un débat difficile avec ceux qui 'ne voyaient pas dans l'hérésie (arienne) d'atteinte portée à la foi' (CA I, 7).

Athanasius und das Mönchtum

Uwe KÜHNEWEG, Marburg

Athanasius und das Mönchtum — der Titel meines Beitrages ist bewußt allgemein gehalten. Denn es soll nicht etwa nur um die Vita Antonii und das Problem der Verfasserschaft des Athanasius gehen. Vielmehr möchte ich versuchen, ein Gesamtbild der kirchenpolitischen und literarischen Stellungnahmen des Athanasius zum Mönchtum zu entwerfen. Dabei werde ich auf das Problem der Vita Antonii zurückkommen.

Das Studium der Anfänge des christlichen Mönchtums hat in den letzten Jahren eine neue Blüte erlebt¹. Ein Ergebnis der neueren Untersuchungen ist ein neuer, geschärfter Blick für die Vielgestaltigkeit des ältesten ägyptischen Mönchtums, die allzu einfache Betrachtungsweisen und Erklärungsmuster zum Scheitern verurteilt². Das Mönchtum hat von Anfang an Teil an der 'variety' des ägyptischen Christentums überhaupt³.

Diese Buntheit betrifft die theologischen Traditionen, aber auch die Erscheinungsformen der Spiritualität und die Gestalten asketischen Lebens: Städtische Asketen, darunter Anhänger des Hierakas, allein oder in Gemeinschaften lebende Jungfrauen und Witwen, außerhalb der Städte Einsiedler und Eremitenkolonien, schließlich meletianische und pachomianische Klöster.

All das war schon vorhanden oder entfaltete sich gerade in der Jugendzeit und den ersten Amtsjahren des Athanasius zu voller Blüte. Während die Formen städtischer Askese auf längere Traditionen zurückblickten, lägen die Anfänge des Eremitenwesens nach den Angaben der Vita Antonii in der Mitte des 3. Jahrhunderts. Die Klostergründung des Pachomius fällt in die letzten

¹ An größeren Monographien wären hier zu nennen etwa die Arbeiten von Peter Brown, vor allem sein meisterhaftes Werk, *The Body and Society* (New York, 1988; dt.: *Die Keuschheit der Engel*, München, 1991), und Susanna Elm: *Virgins of God: The Making of Asceticism in Late Antiquity* (Oxford, 1994).

² '(...) ascetic life in Egypt was characterized by an extraordinary degree of variety and, consequently, fluidity'. S. Elm a.a.O. S. 331.

³ 'It is no longer as common as it was once to read, as if an established fact, that in the early centuries Egyptian Christianity was predominantly gnostic or heterodox in character (...). We have become accustomed to working with a more flexible, less oppositional concept of Christian development, and to seeing Egyptian Christianity in varied, pluralistic colours'. Graham Gould, 'Recent Work on Monastic Origins: a Consideration of the Questions Raised by Samuel Rubenson's *The Letters of St. Antony*', *Studia Patristica XXV* (Leuven, 1993), S. 405f.

Amtsahre des Bischofs Alexander. In Athanasius' ersten Amtsjahren finden wir ein entwickeltes System meletianischer Klöster⁴.

Athanasius fand das Mönchtum bereits vor, als er den Bischofsthron bestieg. Andererseits hatte er keine Vorbilder für den bischöflichen Umgang mit der neuen, 'mönchischen' Form asketischen Lebens: Der Bischof und die Mönche — das war ein neues Problem, ebenso neu wie der Begriff 'Mönch'⁵. Wir müssen davon ausgehen, daß Athanasius als Mann der Stadt, der schon früh eine Karriere am Sitz des alexandrinischen Patriarchen begonnen hatte, manche Erscheinungen des Mönchtums, insbesondere die extreme Anachorese, zunächst mehr oder weniger fremd waren und wohl z.T. auch blieben. Tatsächlich sind seine inneren und äußeren Verbindungen zum koinobitischen Mönchtum von Anfang an stärker. L.W. Barnard hat kürzlich angemerkt, die Abfassung einer Vita Pachomii müßte Athanasius eigentlich näher gelegen haben als die einer Vita Antonii⁶.

Daß er im Rahmen der Visitationen seiner ersten Amtsjahre auch in pachomianische Klöster kam, ist wahrscheinlich. Die Vitae Pachomii⁷ berichten, daß der Ortsbischof Sarapion von Nitentori vorgeschlagen hatte, Pachomius zum Priester zu ordinieren. Aber der entzog sich, und so blieb es bei einem beiderseits akzeptierten status quo, in dem die Pachomianer nicht direkt in ein System kirchlicher Leitung einbezogen waren. Zu Pachoms Nachfolger Theodor hatte Athanasius offenbar ein engeres Verhältnis⁸.

Über persönliche Begegnungen hinaus bestand auch brieflicher Kontakt. Die Osterfestbriefe des Athanasius wurden auch in Klöster geschickt, in deren Bibliotheken sie sich zum Teil erhalten haben⁹.

Athanasius' Verhältnis zum Mönchtum ist bestimmt von der kirchenpolitischen Situation. Arius genoß als Asket das Vertrauen vieler städtischer Asketen und Jungfrauen in Alexandria¹⁰ und darüber hinaus wohl auch mancher Mönche, soweit sie sich für theologische Fragen interessierten. Es spricht aber manches dafür, daß die arianische Lehre der asketischen (und 'monastischen') Spiritualität einer Imitatio Christi sehr entgegenkam¹¹. Die Meletianer bauten

⁴ J.E. Goehring, 'Melitian Monastic Organization: A Challenge to Pachomian Originality', *SP XXV* (Leuven, 1993), S. 388-395.

⁵ E.A. Judge, 'The Earliest Use of Monachos for 'Monk' (P. Coll. Youtie 77) and the Origins of Monasticism', *JbAC* 20 (1977), S. 72-89.

⁶ L.W. Barnard, 'Did Athanasius know Antony?', *Ancient Society* 24 (1993), S. 139-149.

⁷ Vita Prima Graeca c. 30: F. Halkin, *Sancti Pachomii Vitae Graecae* (SH 19; Brüssel, 1932), S. 19f. Vita Bohairica ed. Th. Lefort (CSCO 89 = Scr. Copt. 7; Louvain, 1953), S. 28f.

⁸ Elm 363.

⁹ *Osterfestbriefe des Apa Athanasios*. Aus dem Koptischen übersetzt und erläutert von P. Merendino (Düsseldorf, 1965), S. 9.

¹⁰ Christopher Haas, 'The Arians of Alexandria', *VC* 47 (1993), S. 234-245.

¹¹ Vgl. hierzu R.C. Gregg/D.E. Groh, *Early Arianism - A View of Salvation* (London, 1981), S. 131-153.

ihr eigenes Klosterwesen auf. Es mußte Athanasius daran liegen, einerseits Druck auf die gegnerischen Gruppen auszuüben, andererseits sich der Pachomianer als eines gewissen Rückhalts zu vergewissern. Daß Athanasius und seine Gefolgsleute mit meletianischen Gegnern dabei nicht zimperlich umgingen, zeigt der auf der Synode von Tyrus verhandelte Fall des zerbrochenen Kelchs des Ischyras¹². Der Erfolg der Politik der frühen Amtsjahre tritt andererseits beim Fall des angeblich ermordeten Arsenios zutage: Die Beziehungen des Athanasius reichen offenbar bis in meletianische Klöster hinein, und so kann er den angeblich Ermordeten lebendig aufspüren¹³.

Den größten Teil seiner Amtszeit hat Athanasius um seinen Bischofsstuhl kämpfen müssen¹⁴. Der Kampf um sein Amt, und, zwischen den Exilen, um den Rückhalt in Ägypten, vor allem in Alexandria selbst, ist der Antrieb seiner Kirchenpolitik. Dabei ist Athanasius eher bestrebt, die Mönche für seine Sache zu interessieren als daß er sich für ihre Angelegenheiten interessiert. Gegenüber dem Mönchtum erweist sich Athanasius eher als Kirchenpolitiker denn als Theologe.

Theologisch waren seine großen Themen, bedingt durch die Auseinandersetzung mit der Lehre des Arius und seiner Nachfolger, die Christologie und die Erlösungslehre. Fragen der Ethik nehmen daneben in seinem Werk nur ganz bescheidenen Raum ein. Die koptisch überlieferten Briefe an Jungfrauen¹⁵ zeigen Athanasius in traditionellen Gedankenwelten. Gegenüber der häretischen Eheverachtung der Hierakiten vertritt Athanasius eine gemäßigte Linie¹⁶.

Das Mönchtum als solches ist fast nirgends ein Thema für Athanasius (sieht man von der Vita Antonii ab).

Auf grundsätzliche Fragen zu sprechen kommt Athanasius freilich in zwei Briefen an Mönche, beide aus den Jahren nach 350¹⁷. In beiden Briefen bietet Athanasius seine ganze geistliche Autorität auf, um gegen bestimmte übersteigerte Mönchsideen anzugehen.

Dabei geht es (im Brief an Amun) um die Frage der Askese bzw. (im Brief an Drakontius) um das Verhältnis von Mönch und Bischof.

Der Brief an Amun ist eine dringliche Warnung vor (wohl manichäisch beeinflussten) überzogenen asketischen Ideen, die zu einer Verachtung der menschlichen Geschöpflichkeit führen. Die menschlichen Ausscheidungen

¹² Vgl. T.D. Barnes, *Athanasius and Constantius. Theology and Politics in the Constantinian Empire* (Cambridge (Mass.)/London, 1993), S. 21-23. 27-30.

¹³ Vgl. Apol. c. Arian. 8. 67-69.

¹⁴ Vgl. dazu jetzt die gründliche Darstellung bei Barnes a.a.O.

¹⁵ Elm a.a.O. S. 331-342.

¹⁶ 'Simply because virginity is better, marriage is not wrong'. Elm a.a.O. S. 338. Derselbe Grundsatz begegnet uns wieder im Brief an Amun.

¹⁷ Vgl. L.W. Barnard, 'The Letters of Athanasius to Amoun and Dracontius', *SP XXVI* (Leuven, 1993), S. 354-359.

sind aber Teil unserer Geschöpflichkeit und verunreinigen darum den Menschen nicht. Über die Unreinheit des Rotzes aus der Nase oder der Spucke nachzudenken — und sich so von der heilsamen Betrachtung (μελέτη) ablenken zu lassen, das heißt einer Verwirrung des Bösen erliegen¹⁸. Athanasius argumentiert mit der Schrift, wehrt aber eine Hermeneutik des Buchstabens ab: Die Bewertung von Handlungen hat immer die Umstände mit zu berücksichtigen. Das gilt auch für das Verhältnis der Geschlechter: Gegenüber der Ehe hat der Weg der Jungfräulichkeit seine besondere Verheißung, aber auch seine besonderen Gefahren. Schließlich aber haben Jungfräulichkeit und Ehe beide ihr Recht¹⁹. Deutlich weist hier Athanasius ein übertriebenes asketisches Selbstbewußtsein ab. Mönche sind nicht an sich bessere Christen als die verheirateten Weltmenschen.

Und auch nicht bessere Christen als die Bischöfe. Um diesen Anspruch geht es im Brief an den Kloostervorsteher Drakontius, der zum Bischof von Hermopolis Parva eingesetzt worden war, sich dann aber, '(...) auf Anraten rigoros gesinnter Mönche (...)')²⁰, der übernommenen Verantwortung durch Flucht entzogen hatte. Im Hintergrund steht offenbar eine klare Verachtung des Bischofsamtes und organisierter Kirche überhaupt. Aufgrund der Verwicklung in weltliche Angelegenheiten droht dem Bischof geistlicher Schaden²¹. Athanasius hält dagegen, es komme immer auf die Ausfüllung des jeweiligen Amtes an. Askese ist kein Privileg des Mönches, sondern auch im Bischofsamt möglich²², der Siegeskranz wird κατὰ πρᾶξιν, nicht κατὰ τόπον verliehen²³. Aber das Bischofsamt hat auf jeden Fall Vorrang. Es ist von Christus eingesetzt²⁴, der Bischof ist ein μιμητής der Apostel²⁵, er steht in Verantwortung vor Gott und denen, für die er ordiniert ist: 'Bevor du eingesetzt wurdest, lebstest du dir selber, nachdem du eingesetzt bist, denen, für die du eingesetzt bist'²⁶. Der Unterton der Kritik am selbstbezogenen Leben der Mönche ist unüberhörbar.

¹⁸ PG 26, 1172 A.

¹⁹ PG 26, 1173 B/C.

²⁰ M. Tetz, 'Zur Biographie des Athanasius von Alexandrien', in: ders., *Athanasiana* (BZNW 78; Berlin/New York, 1995), S. 46.

²¹ '(...) ὡς χειρῶν σεαυτοῦ ἐσόμενος', Abschnitt 8; PG 25, 532 B 13.

²² 'Hier scheint die Wüste um ihren Eigenwert gebracht zu sein, der Wert der Askese aber nurmehr in den Enthaltungen erblickt zu werden, die auch außerhalb der Zelle geübt werden können'. H. Dörries: 'Die Vita Antonii als Geschichtsquelle', in: ders., *Wort und Stunde I* (Göttingen, 1966), S. 224.

²³ Abschnitt 9 Ende; PG 25, 533 B 3f.

²⁴ Die Ordnung der Kirche und das Verdienst des Bischofsamtes in Frage zu stellen, läuft auf die Verachtung Christi hinaus: 'εἰ δὲ τῶν Ἐκκλησιῶν ἡ διάταξις οὐκ ἀρέσκει σοι, οὐδὲ νομίζεις τὸ τῆς ἐπισκοπῆς λειτουργημα μισθὸν ἔχειν, ἀλλὰ καταφρονεῖν τοῦ ταῦτα διαταξαμένου Σωτῆρος πεποιήκας σαυτὸν.' Abschnitt 3; PG 25 523 C.

²⁵ Abschnitt 4; PG 25, 527 A-C.

²⁶ 'Δεῖ γὰρ εἰδέναι σε καὶ μὴ ἀμφιβάλλειν, ὅτι πρὶν μὲν κατασταθῆς σαυτῷ ἑξῆς, κατασταθῆς δὲ, οἷς κατεστάθης'. Abschnitt 2; PG 25, 525 A.

Schließlich kann Athanasius auf eine Reihe von Mönchen verweisen, die bereits Bischöfe geworden sind²⁷.

Die Ordination von Mönchen zu Bischöfen war vermutlich die effektivste Maßnahme innerhalb der Kirchenpolitik gegenüber dem Mönchtum. Athanasius scheint als erster so verfahren zu sein²⁸. Diese Maßnahme konnte das Mißtrauen gewisser Mönchskreise gegenüber dem Klerus verringern und Verbindungen schaffen, da die Mönchsbischöfe weiterhin Kontakte zu den Klöstern und Mönchskolonien hielten und ein Ohr für die Anliegen der Mönche behielten.

Bestes Beispiel dafür ist die herausragende Gestalt unter diesen 'Mönchsbischöfen': Serapion von Thmuis²⁹. Nach guter Schulbildung wandte er sich in den 320er Jahren der Askese zu, wohl in einer Mönchskolonie im Ostdeltagebiet³⁰. Zu Beginn der 30er Jahre zum Bischof von Thmuis berufen, wird er ein wichtiger Mitstreiter und Gesandter des Athanasius. Zugleich ist er auch ein wichtiger Mittelsmann gegenüber dem Mönchtum³¹.

Nicht zuletzt suchte Serapion — wohl aus eigenen asketischen Interessen — den Kontakt zum großen Antonius³². Auch hierin wirkte er — ob mit oder ohne Auftrag — als Vermittler für Athanasius, der selbst Antonius wohl überhaupt nicht kannte³³.

Die Früchte seiner Politik erntete Athanasius in seinem dritten Exil. Im Schutz der Mönche nutzte er die Zeit zu ausgedehnter Schriftstellerei. In seiner *Geschichte der Arianer*, (die als Geheimschrift zirkulierte), rollt er noch einmal seinen Fall auf und sucht die Mönche (und sicher auch die städtischen

²⁷ Abschnitt 7; PG 25, 531 A/B. — Der Brief hatte offenbar den gewünschten Erfolg: 362 finden wir Drakontius als Bischof unter den Teilnehmern der Synode von Alexandrien: PG 26, 808 B, vgl. Tetz a.a.O. S. 46.

²⁸ H. Chadwick, 'Bishops and Monks', *SP XXIV* (Leuven, 1993), S. 45-61, 49. In der *Apol. ad Const.* 28 heißt es einmal: 'Καὶ οἱ μὲν ἀπὸ Ἀλεξάνδρου ἐπίσκοποι, μονάζοντες καὶ ἀσκηταὶ, ἐξωρίσθησαν'. (PG 25, 632 A 11f.) Dazu A. Eichborn, *Athanasii de vita ascetica testimonia collecta* (Diss. theol. Halle, 1886), 12: 'Nam quos Alexander ordinavit μονάζοντας καὶ ἀσκητὰς non monachi sensu vulgari fuerunt, sed viri studiis asceticis dediti (...)'. Das alexandrinische Synodalschreiben von 338 bezeichnet ja auch Athanasius als 'ἓνα τῶν ἀσκητῶν': *Apol. c. Arian*, 6,5 (Opitz II/1, 92, 26).

²⁹ Vgl. dazu jetzt K. Fitschen, *Serapion von Thmuis. Echte und unechte Schriften sowie die Zeugnisse des Athanasius und anderer* (PTS 37; Berlin/New York, 1992).

³⁰ Zum Charakter des monastischen 'Milieus', in dem Serapion lebte, vgl. Fitschen a.a.O. S. 118f. 121.

³¹ 'Er motiviert die Anachoreten im Umkreis des inzwischen verstorbenen Antonius gegen die Arianer und setzt sich mit Athanasius' brieflicher Hilfe gegen die Behauptung zur Wehr, Arius sei in Gemeinschaft mit der Kirche gestorben'. Fitschen a.a.O. S. 137.

³² Er begegnete ihm schon als Gemeindebischof. 'Was er und andere an Antonius suchten, war — ganz unabhängig von Serapions Vergangenheit — eine Befruchtung des christlichen Gemeindelebens durch das geistliche Vorbild der Anachoreten'. Fitschen a.a.O. S. 122.

³³ Vgl. die überzeugende Darlegung von L.W. Barnard, 'Did Athanasius know Antony?' (s.o. Anm. 6).

Asketen Alexandrias)³⁴ auf seine Linie einzuschwören. Wahrscheinlich fällt auch die Entstehung der Vita Antonii in diese Jahre.

Die Frage der Verfasserschaft der Vita Antonii ist neuerdings wieder umstritten³⁵. Zugleich ist unser Blick dafür geschärft worden, daß die Vita Antonii nicht einfach ein Mönchsideal vorführt, sondern auch kritische Züge enthält. Nun sind es gerade diese korrigierenden Züge, die mit der Haltung des Athanasius gegenüber dem Mönchtum übereinstimmen und es m.E. nahelegen, in der Vita Antonii den Höhepunkt und Abschluß der bisher verfolgten Politik gegenüber dem Mönchtum zu sehen. Vier Motive sind hier hervorzuheben: Orthodoxie des Antonius, sein Kampf gegen die Häresie, die Mäßigkeit und christologische Fundierung seiner Askese, Unterordnung des Mönches unter den Klerus.

Der Antonius der Vita ist ein orthodoxer Asket, dessen Spiritualität von origenistischen³⁶ und gnostischen³⁷ Ideen gereinigt ist. Er streitet — ganz im Geist des Athanasius³⁸ — gegen die Häresie, hält keine Gemeinschaft mit den Meletianern³⁹, kämpft gegen die Manichäer⁴⁰ und vor allem gegen die Arianer⁴¹, während der historische Antonius solche Abgrenzung wohl nicht vollzogen hat

³⁴ Susanna Elm (a.a.O. S. 369-371) betont die Bedeutung der städtischen Asketen als Basis der Macht des Patriarchen, insbesondere auch der wirtschaftlichen Macht. 'Athanasius' true concern, Alexandria, clearly shaped his dealings with Coptic asceticism. He was not primarily interested in Egypt for its own sake nor motivated by a desire to regulate and structure Egyptian asceticism — until and unless the Egyptian ascetics had an effect upon his urban ascetic support group'. (370).

³⁵ R. Draguet hat in seiner Edition der syrischen Fassungen der Vita (CSCO 417/18) auf eine Vorlage in koptisierendem Griechisch geschlossen, deren Verfasser unmöglich Athanasius sein könne. T.D. Barnes ('Angel of Light or Mystic Initiate? The Problem of the *Life of Antony*', *JThSt* N.S. 37 (1986), S. 353-368) rechnet mit einer koptischen Ur-Vita. Athanasius kann nicht der Verfasser sein. Ähnlich Barnard, 'Did Athanasius know Antony?' — Dagegen für Vorrang der griechischen Fassung und athanasianische Verfasserschaft A. Louth, 'St. Athanasius and the Greek *Life of Antony*', *JThSt* N.S. 42 (1991), S. 504-509 und G.J.M. Bartelink, SC 400, S. 27-35. Mit Draguets These setzen sich kritisch auseinander L. Abramowski, 'Vertritt die syrische Fassung die ursprüngliche Gestalt der Vita Antonii?' *Mélanges A. Guillaumont* (Genf, 1988), S. 47-56 und R. Lorenz, 'Die griechische Vita Antonii des Athanasius und ihre syrische Fassung', *ZKG* 100 (1989), S. 77-84.

³⁶ S. Rubenson, *The Letters of St. Antony* (Bibliotheca Historico-Ecclesiastica Lundensis 24; Lund, 1990) hat herausgearbeitet, wie die VA das Bild des Antonius von den origenistischen Zügen reinigt.

³⁷ Vgl. M.A. Williams, 'The *Life of Antony* and the Domestication of Charismatic Wisdom', *Journal of the American Academy of Religion. Thematic Studies* 48 (1980), S. 23-45.

³⁸ Deutlich z.B. in der Widerlegung der Arianer in Kapitel 69,3: 'Ἐδίδασκέ τε τὸν λαὸν μὴ εἶναι κτίσμα τὸν Υἱὸν τοῦ θεοῦ μηδὲ ἐξ οὐκ ὄντων γεγενῆσθαι, ἀλλ' ὅτι αἰδιόξ ἐστι τῆς τοῦ Πατρὸς οὐσίας Λόγος καὶ Σοφία'. 316, 7-10 Bartelink (SC 400).

³⁹ Vita Antonii 68,1. Vgl. 89,4.

⁴⁰ 68,1.

⁴¹ 68,2. 69. 82. 86. 89,4. 91,4. In der Vision von Kap. 82 deutet er die arianische Krise als Auswirkung göttlichen Zorns, sagt aber auch die letztendliche Wiederherstellung der früheren Verhältnisse und des orthodoxen Glaubens an (82,11f.). Antonius wird so zum Propagandisten der athanasianischen Kirchenpolitik, indem er mit der Autorität des heiligen Sehers ihren Erfolg voraussagt.

und von verschiedenen Seiten als Autorität in Anspruch genommen werden konnte⁴².

Die asketischen Leistungen, die Erfolge gegen die Dämonen und die Wundertaten des Antonius werden in der Vita durchweg auf das Wirken Christi zurückgeführt⁴³. Noch in der Anweisung zur anonymen Bestattung⁴⁴ klingt Kritik am Toten- und Märtyrerkult mit⁴⁵. Vor allem aber zeigt sich der Antonius der Vita gegenüber dem Klerus hilfreich und demütig⁴⁶. Durch das Vermächtnis der Schaffelle (μηλωταί)⁴⁷ an Serapion und Athanasius⁴⁸ legt er sein geistliches Erbe in die Hände der Bischöfe⁴⁹. Dem Athanasius läßt er außerdem einen Mantel *zurückerrichten*, den er einst von ihm empfangen hatte. So wird in der Vita Athanasius zum Patron und (mit Serapion) zum geistlichen Erben des Antonius stilisiert⁵⁰.

Antonius als Heros der Orthodoxie, als gemäßigter und kirchenfrommer Asket, den Bischöfen untertan: Diese Darstellung der Vita entspricht genau der Haltung und Kirchenpolitik des Athanasius gegenüber dem Mönchtum. Für die Frage der Verfasserschaft bedeutet das m.E., daß die Vita Antonii entweder in unmittelbarem Umkreis des Patriarchen entstanden oder von ihm selbst, unter Verwendung vorliegenden Materials (oder mündlicher Tradition)⁵¹ redigiert sein muß⁵².

⁴² Barnard, 'Did Athanasius know Antony?' S. 147f. Gregg/Groh a.a.O. S. 131-153.

⁴³ Besonders deutlich in Kapitel 83f. Vgl. 7,1: 'Τοῦτο πρῶτον ἄθλον Ἀντωνίου γέγονε κατὰ τοῦ διαβόλου· μᾶλλον δὲ τοῦ Σωτῆρος καὶ τοῦτο γέγονεν ἐν Ἀντωνίῳ τὸ κατόρθωμα (...)'. 150,1-3 Bartelink (SC 400).

⁴⁴ Kapitel 90f.

⁴⁵ Gemeint ist offenbar nicht die Mumifizierung als solche, sondern die bei Märtyrern geübte öffentliche Aufstellung der Leichname auf Gestellen vor den Häusern, vgl. T. Baumeister, 'Spätägyptische Bestattungssitten und christliche Heiligenverehrung in Ägypten', *SP* XII (TU 115; Berlin, 1975), S. 406-412. Antonius will 'anonym' bestattet werden, wie Mose.

⁴⁶ Vita Antonii 67. In Kap. 69 wird er von den Bischöfen zu Hilfe gegen die Arianer gerufen und kommt dieser Bitte gerne nach. In Kap. 90 rät er den Bischöfen, in Fragen des Totenkultes mäßigend auf die Gläubigen einzuwirken. Sein Respekt vor dem Klerus erstreckt sich nach Kap. 67 sogar auf Diakone.

⁴⁷ Vgl. I. Könige 19,19 (Elia und Elisa).

⁴⁸ 91,8f.

⁴⁹ Vgl. A. Dihle, 'Das Gewand des Einsiedlers Antonius', *JbAC* 22 (1979), S. 22-29.

⁵⁰ Brennan a.a.O. S. 222-224. Athanasius und Serapion stehen gerade nicht auf derselben Stufe, wie T.D. Barnes ('Angel of Light or Mystic Initiate?' S. 367) behauptet. Athanasius ist zuerst genannt, durch die Rückgabe des ἱμάτιον ist eine schon lange währende Förderung des Antonius durch Athanasius angedeutet. Serapion erhält nur 'die andere Melote'.

⁵¹ Literarkritische Bruchstellen konnten bislang nicht deutlich aufgewiesen werden. 'Nous sommes plutôt frappés par la grande unité de style de la VA'. Bartelink, SC 400, S. 35.

⁵² Die Hypothese von Martin Tetz, daß Serapion von Thmuis der Gewährsmann der Vita ist, verdient nach wie vor Beachtung, hat aber mit der Unechterklärung der Serapion zugeschriebenen *Epistula ad Monachos* (Fitschen a.a.O. S. 79-84) an Plausibilität verloren. Serapion kommt für Fitschen als 'ein Tradent und Interpret unter mehreren' in Frage, kaum als Verfasser einer schriftlichen Vorlage. (115) 'Der Mittelsmann, der ihm nicht wenige Zeit nachfolgte und Wasser über seine Hände ausgoß (Vorwort der Vita) (...) muß weiter anonym bleiben (...)'. Ebda.

Athanasius vertrat gegenüber dem Mönchtum eine konsequente Politik, die auf lehrmäßige und organisatorische Eingliederung in die Kirche (konkret im Sinne der Stärkung der Position des Athanasius) gerichtet war. Bevorzugtes Mittel war dabei die Einsetzung von 'Mönchs Bischöfen'. Nachdem er schon lange zu Pachomianern und Asketenkolonien gute Kontakte hatte, gelang ihm mit der Vita Antonii einerseits die literarische und kirchliche Integration des Anachoretentums (und die Selbststilisierung als dessen Patron), andererseits schuf er mit dem 'gereinigten' Antonius ein Idealbild des Mönches, so wie der Erzbischof ihn sich wünschte.

Anti-Arian Polemic in Eusebius of Caesarea's *Ecclesiastical Theology*

Kelley McCarthy SPOERL, Manchester, NH.

In a 1987 article, Joseph Lienhard outlined a new set of categories within which to examine the trinitarian controversies of the fourth century¹. Instead of the labels 'Arian' and 'Nicene', Lienhard proposed the labels 'mihypostatic' and 'dyohypostatic' to describe the two theological traditions in conflict in the years spanning 318 to 381. As Lienhard describes them, the primary difference between the two traditions lies in the divergent emphases they exhibit in their respective presentations of trinitarian doctrine. The mihypostatic tradition, associated with the episcopal sees of Rome and Alexandria and typified in the theology of Athanasius, emphasized divine unity, summed up in the assertion that Father, Son, and Spirit share one divine hypostasis. The dyohypostatic tradition, associated with most other sees in the Greek-speaking East and typified in the theology of Eusebius of Caesarea, stressed the distinction of the persons of the Trinity, summed up in the statement that Father, Son, and Holy Spirit comprise three divine hypostases.

These two traditions contended with one another throughout the middle decades of the fourth century, articulating their own characteristic emphases over against what their representatives saw as the excesses of the other tradition's characteristic emphases. For the mihypostatic tradition, bent on upholding divine unity, the nemesis is Arianism — that theory that emphasizes the distinction of the Trinity's persons to such a degree that it denies any unity or even continuity of divine being and its attributes between them. For the dyohypostatic tradition, concerned to maintain divine distinction, the enemy is the Neosabellianism propounded by Marcellus of Ancyra, a theory that emphasizes divine unity to such a degree that it denies any enduring ontological distinction between the persons of the Trinity².

In Lienhard's view, in the late 350s and 360s, after decades of head-on conflict, an important transitional approach emerges in works that begin to combine an anti-Arian with an anti-Neosabellian outlook. Here I refer to texts

¹ Joseph T. Lienhard, 'The "Arian" Controversy: Some Categories Reconsidered', *Theological Studies* 48 (1987), pp. 415-437.

² The two texts that best express the characteristic emphases and hostilities of the two traditions are Athanasius' *Orations Against the Arians* and Eusebius of Caesarea's *Ecclesiastical Theology* (= ET).

like the *Adversus Arium et Sabellium* attributed to Gregory of Nyssa and the *Contra Sabellianos et Arium et Anomeos* attributed to Basil of Caesarea, which Lienhard believes were produced in Cappadocian circles³. We can also include in this category the *Κατὰ Μέρος Πίστις* of Apollinarius of Laodicea, a work dating from roughly 358 to 362, wherein we can discern quite clearly the influence of the two figures whom Lienhard sees as representative of the miahypostatic and dyohypostatic traditions, Athanasius and Eusebius⁴. What is significant about these transitional works is that by combining insights from both Athanasius and Eusebius, and attacking distortions at both extremes of the trinitarian spectrum, they prepare the way for the consensus on the doctrine of the Trinity that takes hold across the Roman empire in the late 370s, which the Cappadocians articulate in its most refined form.

For all its neatness and symmetry (indeed, probably because of it) Lienhard's reconstruction of the development of trinitarian doctrine in the fourth century has recently met some challenges. American scholar Michel Barnes has questioned the influence of Athanasius' anti-Arian rhetoric on the early Cappadocians, and thus Athanasius' influence in the emergence of the trinitarian consensus at the end of the fourth century⁵. But while Barnes's thesis regarding Athanasius' influence on the Cappadocians remains debatable, it nevertheless encourages us to consider not only what influences were coming from *outside* each major trinitarian tradition that served to balance its own peculiar emphasis, but also what forces were operating from *within* each tradition that impelled those theologians working within it to strive to achieve the right balance between the claims of unity and diversity that the doctrine of the Trinity demanded.

A case in point is provided by a passage in a work written by the theologian who typifies the dyohypostatic tradition, Eusebius of Caesarea. This evidence appears in chapters 8 through 12 in Book I of Eusebius' *Ecclesiastical Theology*, the second of his tracts against Marcellus of Ancyra. As I've indicated above, the governing concern in Eusebius' anti-Marcellan works is the articulation of the real ontological distinction of the Trinity's members, over against Marcellus' denial that Father, Son, and Holy Spirit constitute distinct πρόσωπα or ὑποστάσεις. However, in the chapters of the *Ecclesiastical Theology* just mentioned, Eusebius criticizes a central claim associated with Arius and his early supporters, namely, that the pre-existent Son of God is a creature made by

³ One can also cite the Pseudo-Athanasian *Contra Sabellianos* and the *Fourth Oration Against the Arians*. These works are discussed extensively in Joseph T. Lienhard's study *Contra Marcellum: The Influence of Marcellus of Ancyra on Fourth-Century Greek Theology* (Habilitationsschrift; Albert Ludwigs Universität zu Freiburg im Breisgau, 1986), Ch. 6, 'Opposition to Marcellus I: The Eusebian Legacy', and Ch. 7, 'Theological Opposition to Marcellus II: Tracts "Against Sabellius"', pp. 184-265.

⁴ Kelley McCarthy Spoerl, 'A Study of the *Κατὰ Μέρος Πίστις* by Apollinarius of Laodicea' (Ph.D. diss., University of Toronto, 1991).

⁵ Michel R. Barnes, 'Athanasius and Other Western Anti-Arians' (paper presented at the annual meeting of the North American Patristics Society, Chicago, Illinois, May 1993).

God the Father out of nothing. Numerous parties attributed this view to Arius from an early stage in the trinitarian controversies⁶; from this comes the justification for labelling this section of the *Ecclesiastical Theology* 'anti-Arian', even though (and this is significant)⁷ Eusebius himself makes no mention of 'Arius' or 'Arians'. What we see here, I argue, is evidence of an awareness from *within* the dyohypostatic tradition that even the crucial ontological distinction of the Trinity's members must not be overstressed to the point of deeming the second person a creature and that in fact the emphasis on divine distinction must be balanced by some account of the ontological unity — or in Eusebius' case, perhaps it would be better to say *continuity* — of the Trinity's members.

The first sounding of the anti-Arian theme in the *Ecclesiastical Theology* occurs in chapter 8 of Book I. Here, Eusebius asserts that the Son does not subsist or live in a manner similar to that of the remaining beings that have come into existence (τοῖς λοιποῖς γεννητοῖς) because He alone is begotten by the Father⁸. This vague allusion is made explicit then in chapter 9, where

⁶ Arius affirms the Son's creation *ex nihilo* in his letter to Eusebius of Nicomedia (Urk. 1 in H.G. Opitz, *Athanasius Werke*, vol. iii, fasc. 12 (Berlin, 1934). An article by Pierre Nautin, 'Deux interpolations orthodoxes dans une lettre d'Arius' (*Analecta, Bollandia* 67 (1949), pp. 131-141), argued that the particular phrase ἐξ οὐκ ὄντων was interpolated into the letter by a writer other than Arius. Simonetti responded, conclusively arguing against this thesis. See Manlio Simonetti, 'Su due presunte interpolazioni in una lettera di Ario', *Studi sull'arianesimo* (Rome, 1965), pp. 88-109. The claim that Arius taught the Son's creation out of nothing appears in Alexander of Alexandria's letter to Alexander of Thessalonika 10, 15, 16, 44, 46 (Urk. 14 in Opitz) and in the Synodal Letter from the Council of Antioch in 325, 9, 10, 13 (Urk. 18 in Opitz). Debate continues on whether Eusebius knew that this view regarding the Son's creation *ex nihilo* was propounded by Arius in light of a letter Eusebius wrote to Alexander of Alexandria (Urk. 7 in Opitz) wherein he defends Arius from the charge of teaching such a view. Scholars assess this discrepancy variously, Simonetti in the above article negatively (*Studi sull'arianesimo*, pp. 103-104, n. 52), Colm Luibhéid more generously in *Eusebius of Caesarea and the Arian Crisis* (Dublin, 1981), pp. 20-27. H. Berkhof also takes a more generous interpretation of Eusebius' professions of ignorance on this question in *Die Theologie des Eusebius von Caesarea* (Amsterdam, 1939), pp. 163-192. The question is further complicated by the fact that a polemic very similar to the one conducted in *ET* i.8-12 appears in Eusebius' *Demonstratio Evangelicae* v.1. The latter work has always been thought to have been composed prior to the outbreak of the Arian crisis (hence, roughly between 312 and 318), but Simonetti observes that the dating of both the seminal events of the Arian controversy and of Eusebius' works are not entirely certain. See *Studi sull'arianesimo*, 48-51, especially pp. 49-50, n. 161, and pp. 103-104, n. 52.

⁷ Numerous documents attest to Eusebius' links with Arius and his other supporters in the period before the Nicene council. On this see Colm Luibhéid, *Eusebius of Caesarea and the Arian Crisis*, pp. 1-27, Rowan Williams, *Arius: Heresy and Tradition* (London, 1987), pp. 48-61. Timothy D. Barnes, *Constantine and Eusebius* (Cambridge, Mass., 1981), pp. 204-207, and Berkhof, *Die Theologie*, pp. 164-178. See also Henry Chadwick, "'Eusebius" and the Council of Nicea', *JThSt* 24 (1973), pp. 85-100. See also above note 6.

⁸ 'Οὐκ ὁμοίως μὲν τοῖς λοιποῖς γεννητοῖς ὑποστάντα οὐδὲ ζωὴν ἐμπερη τοῖς δι' αὐτοῦ γεγεννημένοις ζῶντα, μόνον δὲ ἐξ αὐτοῦ τοῦ πατρὸς ἀποτεχθέντα'. *ET* i.8.2-3. All references are to the edition of the anti-Marcellan works in *Eusebius Werke*, vol. iv, ed. Erich Klostermann and G.C. Hansen (Berlin, 1972), referring respectively to book, chapter, and right-hand paragraph number.

Eusebius calls for the censure of those 'who dared to represent Christ as a creature (a κτίσμα) that came into existence out of nothing (ἐξ οὐκ ὄντων) like the remaining creatures (τοῖς λοιποῖς κτίσμασιν)⁹. Here Eusebius launches his anti-Arian polemic in earnest.

I can give here only the briefest outline of this polemic. There are three key features of Eusebius' argument in this section: 1) the distinction between the Son's begetting by the Father and the creation of all other beings; 2) the assertion of the Son's divinity because of His begetting by the Father; 3) the inclusion of anti-Marcellan asides within anti-Arian polemic. The first feature of Eusebius' polemic appears throughout chapters 9 and 10. Through a series of rhetorical questions, Eusebius makes it clear that in his view the categories of creaturehood and sonship are mutually exclusive¹⁰. Eusebius reiterates this difference by contrasting the Father's begetting of the Son with a king's founding of a city and the craftsman's manufacture of an artifact¹¹. Eusebius further asserts that Scripture attests to the Son's identity as only-begotten Son, and although other creatures have been called sons and gods (as in Ps. 81:6), Christ alone is begotten from the Father and is in the form of God and is the image of the invisible God¹².

Having asserted the difference between creation and begetting, then, Eusebius draws certain conclusions about the Son's divine status: hence the second feature of his anti-Arian polemic, the assertion of the Son's divinity. This assertion appears most forcefully early in chapter 10, where Eusebius states: 'The true Son of God, having been born from Him, that is to say, from the Father, would rightly be called both the only-begotten and beloved (Son) of the Father; thus He would also be God'¹³. The Son thus acquires His divinity as a result of His begetting by the Father, and elsewhere Eusebius implies that this begetting results in the Son's sharing in the divine nature; this at least we can conclude from Eusebius' statement in chapter 9 that the only-begotten Son does *not* share the same nature as the rest of creation¹⁴, and his statement in chapter 10 that the very title 'Son' indicates the second person's 'natural relationship with the Father' (τὴν πρὸς τὸν πατέρα φυσικὴν σχέσιν)¹⁵.

The third feature of Eusebius' anti-Arian polemic, that is, the inclusion of anti-Marcellan asides, is evident in chapter 10. Since Eusebius is trying to assert the distinction between begetting and creating, it makes sense that this

⁹ 'ὄθεν εἰκοτῶς ἂν τις μέμψαιτο τοῖς κτίσμα αὐτὸν φάναι τετολημκόσιν, ἐξ οὐκ ὄντων ὁμοίως τοῖς λοιποῖς κτίσμασιν γενόμενον'. *ET* i.9.1.

¹⁰ *ET* i.9.1.

¹¹ *ET* i.10.1.

¹² *ET* i.10.5.

¹³ *ET* i.10.1.

¹⁴ *ET* i.9.1.

¹⁵ *ET* i.10.3.

effort would involve some discussion of Proverbs 8, verses 22 and 25¹⁶. Indeed, Eusebius refers to this scriptural passage in this section, only to say that he is deferring his exegesis until later on in the treatise¹⁷. What Eusebius *does* say here, unexpectedly, is that *Marcellus'* exegesis is all wrong, and results in the destruction of the Son's existence (ὑπαρξίς)¹⁸. Later on in the chapter, then, Eusebius *compares* Marcellus and the anonymous men who assert the Son's creation out of nothing. Eusebius alleges that both these parties suffer from the same malady, an excessive anxiety for the preservation of Christian monotheism. One man, Eusebius says, being afraid of two gods, denied the Son, dismissing His hypostasis, while others establish one God by granting the existence of two hypostases, one of which is unbegotten, one of which is created out of nothing¹⁹.

Having noted these features of Eusebius' anti-Arian polemic in the *Ecclesiastical Theology*, I'd now like to make a few observations about its significance for our understanding of the development of trinitarian doctrine in the fourth century. *First*, the fact that Eusebius of Caesarea, the premier representative of the dyohypostatic tradition in trinitarian theology, engages in this polemic against a thesis widely associated with Arius, the nemesis of the miahypostatic tradition, may lend support to Michel Barnes' thesis that Athanasius' anti-Arian polemic, and his account of divine unity given therein, is not *the definitive* influence on the Cappadocians in this regard. Indeed, the evidence from Eusebius suggests that already by the late 330s there was discussion within the dyohypostatic tradition regarding certain theses associated with Arius and his early followers. In at least one quarter, this discussion sought to criticize excessive distinction between the divine persons (at issue with the claim that the Son is a creature) as well as to articulate the real genetic continuity between the Father and Son (which is the point of Eusebius' effort to distinguish the processes of begetting and creation). While I continue to think that Athanasius in all likelihood *did* influence the Cappadocian account of divine unity in some way. I do not think admitting this requires us to deny that Eusebius, too, and his many followers in the anti-Marcellan theological tradition, also had important contributions to make to Cappadocian theology on this key trinitarian point. Indeed, the fact that Eusebius gives voice so forcefully in the *Ecclesiastical Theology* to his concern to give an account of the continuity of the divine nature linking Father and Son, in order to avoid the excesses of some thinkers he may at one time have supported, may constitute

¹⁶ The Septuagint text for each verse runs: v. 22: 'κύριος ἐκτίσεν με ἀρχὴν ὁδῶν αὐτοῦ εἰς ἔργα αὐτοῦ'; v. 25: 'πρὸ τοῦ ὄρη ἐδρασθῆναι / πρὸ δὲ πάντων βουνῶν γεννᾶ με'.

¹⁷ He eventually provides it in Book iii. This is discussed in Anton Weber, *Αρχή: Ein Beitrag zur Christologie des Eusebius von Cäsarea* (n.p., 1965), pp. 127-131.

¹⁸ *ET* i.10.2-3.

¹⁹ *ET* i.10.4.

the first step taken by a member of the dyohypostatic tradition towards meeting halfway the position of those thinkers in the miahypostatic tradition who were especially concerned to uphold the unity and equality of the members of the Trinity²⁰.

Second and lastly, Eusebius of Caesarea's *Contra Marcellum* and *Ecclesiastical Theology* are the first anti-Marcellan treatises. Insofar as the *Ecclesiastical Theology* combines, however briefly, an anti-Arian with anti-Marcellan/anti-Neosabellian perspective, it may constitute one of the first documentable sources of the awareness that Arianism on the one hand and Neosabellianism on the other, constitute the extremes between which trinitarian orthodoxy must be found²¹. Defining in a single text the extremes as excessive differentiation between the Trinity's members (which is what Arianism represents) and insufficient differentiation between them (which is what Neosabellianism represents) was essential to creating a conceptual framework wherein the claims of divine unity and personal distinction in the Trinity would find their proper balance²². That the Cappadocians are the ones who successfully achieved this balance is probably not a claim that anyone here would want to dispute. But insofar as Eusebius of Caesarea set up the parameters within which they could do this, they, and indeed all Christians, owe a great debt to him.

²⁰ This development would eventually bear fruit in the transitional texts I discussed earlier in this paper, as well as in the *rapprochement* that began to take place in the late 350s between members of the Homoiousian party (whom Lienhard identifies as the true heirs of Eusebian theology, *Contra Marcellum*, p. 272) and the supporters of the Nicene account of divine unity.

²¹ In his paper, Barnes notes that this awareness was standard in pro-Nicene literature from across the empire by the middle of the fourth century. See Barnes, 'Athanasius and Other Western Anti-Arians', p. 4.

²² Hence the importance of Eusebius' 'dual perspective' for the series of hybrid anti-Arian and anti-Marcellan texts produced by Apollinarius and perhaps the early Cappadocians, which Lienhard sees as preparing the way for the Cappadocian resolution. Interestingly, Eusebius' efforts to find a trinitarian solution that lay between the errors of Arianism on the one hand and Neosabellianism on the other finds a parallel in his understanding of Christianity as a *via media* between paganism and Judaism. For example, see the *Demonstratio Evangelicae* i.2. I thank Prof. J. Rebecca Lyman of the Church Divinity School of the Pacific for this reference.

Was Arius a Neoplatonist?*

Christopher STEAD, Ely, Cambs

Dr. Rowan Williams is highly respected both as a theological scholar and as a master of Christian spirituality; he has added to his distinction by accepting the Bishopric of Monmouth; he is moreover a personal friend, who has done me the honour of dedicating to me his book on Arius¹, published in 1987 and widely regarded as the best overall study of that much maligned theologian. It is therefore with some hesitance that I undertake to criticize a theory propounded in that book, namely that Arius was influenced by Neoplatonist thinkers, including Plotinus, Porphyry and Iamblichus, besides Anatolius and others. I must appeal to Proverbs 27:6 'Faithful are the wounds of a friend', recalling Aristotle's painful resolve to criticize his friends' convictions (*N.E.* 1.6). It is unnecessary to add that Dr. Williams himself is a splendid exemplar of controversy conducted with courtesy and impartial judgement.

The book was foreshadowed by an article published in the *Journal of Theological Studies* for April 1983, pp. 56-81, entitled 'The Logic of Arianism'. The two presentations agree in the main; and a reference to the article made early in the book (p. 31) may be quoted as an introduction to Williams' thesis, as it is entirely typical of his blend of cautious assertion with bold theorizing. 'Likewise', he writes, although (Arius) is described as a skilled dialectician², we cannot with confidence reconstruct a philosophical education. If he was, as has been argued — in the article, of course — 'indebted to certain currents in revived Aristotelianism and Iamblichus' version of Neoplatonism, he could have encountered such teaching in Syria around 300, when Iamblichus himself was teaching at Antioch and Apamea'. This, however modestly propounded, is a startling hypothesis; it suggests that Arius, whose philosophical education is considered uncertain, consulted Iamblichus, whereas his contemporary Eusebius, who is well known as a student of Greek philosophy, never even mentions Iamblichus either in his *Praeparatio Evangelica* or in any other work that I can discover.

* Part of this paper has already appeared in a Spanish version in D. Ramos-Lisson et al. (edd.), *El Diálogo Fe-Cultura en la Antigüedad Cristiana* (Pamplona, 1995), the record of a symposium held there under the auspices of the Faculty of Theology. I am most grateful both for their generous hospitality and for permission to print.

¹ *Arius, Heresy and Tradition*. By Rowan Williams (London, 1987).

² The evidence is late: Socrates, *H.E.*, 1.5, Sozomen, *H.E.*, 1.15. Perhaps more significant is Constantine's reference to his profession of belief 'worked out in bold and extremely detailed terms', σοβαρῶς πῶς καὶ μάλα ἀκριβῶς ἐξησκημένα, *Opitz Urk.* 34, § 8.

The article puts forward three points in favour of Neoplatonic influence on Arius, each of them based on a phrase to which he took exception. The first, at p. 58, turns on the description of the Son as 'integral to his Father's substance', τῆς τοῦ πατρὸς οὐσίας ἴδιος, which in Arius' opinion as Williams presents it would reduce the Son to a mere impersonal property or attribute. The second, at p. 63, springs from the phrase μέρος ὁμοούσιον, where Williams adduces a parallel in Iamblichus *de mysteriis*, illustrating the objectionable view that both Son and Father participate in a prior divine *ousia*, which thus would be divisible and negate the divine simplicity. This objection is well known; but the suggested parallel drawn from Iamblichus is new and surprising. The third point in the article, at p. 66, begins from Arius' protest against the doctrine that Father and Son are equal in rank, which he says would result in two ingenerate beings, δύο ἀγέννητα. Williams discusses this in relation to the concept of participation, μετοχή, as expounded by Aristotelian scholars; but I must postpone any detailed analysis.

The book does not reproduce the first two arguments that I have mentioned, though it refers to them³ and makes it clear that Williams was prepared to uphold in 1987 the conclusions he had put out in 1983. In their place we find two new suggestions. The first begins with an excellent review of ancient theories of creation, and of the Son's role in it. Williams adverts to the term δυάς, the Dyad, as applied to the Son, and tries to explain it by citing numerological treatises by Anatolius and Iamblichus. I think this is far-fetched, and prefer simpler explanations. The second argument discusses the relation between God and his Logos, and in particular the Son's limited knowledge of the Father, with Arius' surprising comment that the Son does not know his own *ousia*, let alone the Father's. Here Williams finds a background in Plotinus' fifth Ennead; once again I remain unconvinced.

In the third place the book contains a chapter headed 'Analogy and Participation', which develops the third argument already presented in the article. We may say that Williams' argument for Neo-platonic influence on Arius is presented under five headings, and it will be convenient to discuss them in the following order: (1) and (2), the first two points from the article; (3) and (4), the first two points from the book; and lastly, the concluding point from both works, which correspond closely enough to allow of a single discussion.

(1) Williams begins by noting that Arius condemned the phrase ἴδιος τῆς οὐσίας, which he says was 'current in Alexander's circle' as applied to the Logos. It would, he says, present the Logos as an *idion* of the Father in terms of Aristotelian logic, and thus reduce him to a mere impersonal property. Williams names Porphyry's *Isagoge* as a likely source for this deduction, and adds the comment 'Given Arius' reputation for expertise in logic, it seems perfectly possible that he was familiar with the *Isagoge*'⁴.

³ Op. cit. p. 31, cf. 189, 196, 223.

⁴ *J.Th.S.* n.s. 34 (1983), p. 60.

I agree that the phrase was current in Alexander's circle: but I do not think it originates with Alexander. It is not found in his surviving texts. Moreover Alexander seems concerned to minimize the *difference* between the Father and the Son while emphasizing the real distinction between them. They are τῆ ὑποστάσει δύο φύσεις⁵, but the Son is exactly like the Father (ἐμφορῆς)⁶, lacking only the attribute ἀγέννητος⁷. The epithet ἴδιος of course appears, notably in § 32 which cites Romans 8:32. But ἴδιος τῆς οὐσίας is especially characteristic of Athanasius, and consorts with his profoundly suggestive but much less logical view which recognize the distinctness of the Logos as Son but also makes him integral to God's being as his Wisdom. Alexander no doubt could accept such teaching; but his own emphasis is perceptibly different.

It seems to me, rather, that the phrase embodies a reaction against Arius' formulations, real or supposed; a reversal of Williams' explanation. Arius wrote in his *Thalia* the words: ἴδιον οὐδὲν ἔχει τοῦ θεοῦ καθ' ὑπόστασιν ιδιότητος, an enigmatic phrase to which we must return. Alexander paraphrases this sentence in § 13 of his letter Ἡ φίλαρχος: οὔτε γὰρ φύσει υἱός τις ἐστὶ τοῦ θεοῦ, φασίν, οὔτε τινὰ ἔχων ιδιότητα πρὸς αὐτόν, and the same charge is often repeated by Athanasius in looser and more polemical expressions, as in *c. Ar.* 1.6, ὁ λόγος ἀλλότριος μὲν καὶ ἀνόμοιος κατὰ πάντα τῆς τοῦ πατρὸς οὐσίας καὶ ιδιότητός ἐστιν. The words ἀνόμοιος ... τῆς ... οὐσίας read like a response to Arius' next following line οὐδὲ γὰρ ἐστὶν ἴσος, ἀλλ' οὐδὲ ὁμοούσιος αὐτῷ.

So far I have been presenting a fairly minor disagreement with Williams on the origin of the phrase ἴδιος τῆς οὐσίας. The case is very different when I turn to his comments on the adjective ἴδιος together with its neuter form ἴδιον or τὸ ἴδιον; for his argument is gravely weakened by a failure to distinguish between them. On ἴδιος he writes as follows: 'The point is straightforward: divine properties are eternal and impersonal. Of course God 'has' σοφία and λόγος, but they are qualities belonging to his substance. Thus to say that the Son is ἴδιος to God is to reduce the Son to being an impersonal quality ... Arius, in short, is quite clear about the meaning of ἴδιος; it relates only to a quality predicated of a substance'. Williams then refers to Porphyry's *Isagoge*, where he says Arius could have found a discussion of the meaning of ἴδιος, 'making it abundantly clear that ἴδιος cannot be used of something which is a substance in its own right'; moreover a debt to Porphyry might account for Constantine's reference to the Arians as 'Porphyrians'⁸.

Williams does not make it quite clear whether he himself accepts the extraordinary doctrine that he attributes to Porphyry and Arius. Of course ἴδιος,

⁵ Letter Ἡ φίλαρχος, in Opitz *Urk.* 14, § 38; cf. §§ 15, 16, 52.

⁶ *Ibid.* § 47; cf. § 38.

⁷ *Ibid.* § 19; cf. § 47.

⁸ *J.Th.S.* 34, pp. 59-60; cf. Opitz *Urk.* 33.

being an adjective, does not ordinarily *name* a substance; but it is normally 'used of a substance' when it is *applied to* a substance; we need look no further than Romans 8:32, 'God spared not his own Son'; and the New Testament provides many other examples; in St. Matthew alone we find 'his own city', 'his own country', 'his own field', 'his own slaves'. There is no evidence whatever that Arius would have rejected this usage.

Williams, then, has misled us by careless formulation. The adjective ἴδιος is essential to his argument, which begins from the phrase ἴδιος τῆς οὐσίας. But he assumes that Porphyry's use of it is dictated by what he says about its neuter form τὸ ἴδιον. He refers to Porphyry's *Isagoge*; but the connection with 'impersonal qualities' is made by turning to another work, where equality, τὸ ἴσον, is said to be an ἴδιον of the category of quantity⁹. This, I concede, is a quality: but if Williams had followed up the *Isagoge* passage a little further, he would have found Porphyry giving examples of the ἴδια of mankind, namely laughter, and turning grey-haired in old age. These appear to be, respectively, an activity and a passive affection: it would be a misuse of language to call them impersonal qualities.

Arius does in fact use the neuter form ἴδιον in the *Thalia* verse already mentioned:

ἴδιον οὐδὲν ἔχει τοῦ θεοῦ καθ' ὑπόστασιν ιδιότητος
οὐδὲ γὰρ ἔστιν ἴσος, ἀλλ' οὐδὲ ὁμοούσιος αὐτῷ.

I am not sure about the meaning of καθ' ὑπόστασιν ιδιότητος. It might conceivably be used *metri gratia* in place of κατ' ιδιότητα ὑποστάσεως, which would make good sense¹⁰. It seems to be an attempt to clarify the sense of ἴδιον. But it is plain that Arius objects to the term in this context for reasons almost exactly contrary to those deduced by Williams. Arius does not think it would degrade the Son by reducing him to an impersonal quality, but rather that it would honour him unduly by promoting him to equality with the Father. That is why he continues οὐδὲ γὰρ ἔστιν ἴσος, ἀλλ' οὐδὲ ὁμοούσιος αὐτῷ.

Our only other evidence for Arius' use of ἴδιος is found in his Letter to Alexander, § 2, where he states that the Father brought his Son into existence ἰδίῳ θελήματι, by an act of will, whatever impersonal qualities may have determined it. But Arius makes it abundantly clear in the same letter that he does not think of the divine properties as 'impersonal'. The Son was 'created by the will of God before times and ages, and received from his Father his life and being, and his glories, which the Father brought into substantial existence along with him', συνοποστήσαντος αὐτῷ τοῦ πατρός. He adds that 'the Father gave him the inheritance of all things without depriving himself of his own unoriginate possessions' (ὧν ἀγεννήτως ἔχει ἐν ἑαυτῷ). But there must

⁹ Porphyry, *Comm. on Arist. Categories*, CAG IV ed. A. Busse, p. 115.

¹⁰ See e.g. Porphyry *Sent.* 33, p. 37.23 Lamberz.

be some force in this denial; and there would be no force at all if the items in question were mere impersonal attributes. If glories are to be inherited, they must be real and substantial.

Two further points before we close this rather long discussion. First, an Alexandrian writer could easily have based his use of ἴδιον on Clement, who knows Aristotle's *Topics* and conforms to its usage¹¹; there is no need to appeal to Porphyry. And secondly, theologians can borrow the logicians' terminology without adopting their doctrines. Athanasius, for example, can say that it is the property of created beings to choose between alternatives; it is the property of bodies to be emptied and filled; it is the property of Christians to be beaten¹². The idiom is rhetorical; Athanasius does not seriously mean that no one but a Christian ever gets beaten, but rather that they often suffer this fate.

More generally, whether something is to be categorized as a quality or not depends largely on the writer's intentions. Take the accepted definition of man as 'a two-footed animal capable of laughter'. 'Animal' is the *summum genus*; 'two-footed' defines a sub-class of it; but 'capable of laughter' is the ἴδιον, the quality which belongs to man universally and uniquely, *omni et solo*. But in describing it thus, how extremely remote one is from the reality under review, from the infinitely variable performance which we call 'a sense of humour', which involves both action and response, for one can both make jokes and be amused by them; not forgetting the category of quantity, since everyone knows that a good joke can be spoiled by being overdone.

Arius, then, wrote that the Son has nothing proper to God in the real sense of 'property'. His intention is to indicate mysteries and glories in the Father which are unknown even to the Son. We may dislike this doctrine; but we should not commend our dislike by attacking the form of expression. Arius is using a logician's short-hand that is allowable in its proper context. We have just observed Dr. Williams writing in a similar vein; and no one, I trust, will dismiss Dr Williams as an arid logician.

I do not propose this as a conclusive demonstration, since the logicians themselves were capable of rhetorical and tendentious argument; nevertheless I submit that so far we have found no proof that Arius was affected by Porphyrian logic. And there is another reason to doubt this suggestion. Porphyry's logical works are not cited either by Eusebius or by the Alexandrian philosopher Alexander of Lycopolis, though both of them know his *De Abstinencia*, nor again by Methodius. What reason have we to think that Arius was better informed?

(2) This first section of Williams' paper has required painstaking examination. The second, I think, can be more briefly considered. Williams refers to the phrase μέρος ὁμοούσιον, which Arius rejects in his credal letter, and comments,

¹¹ *Str.* 1.168.3, p. 105.5; 8.21.2, p. 93.3.

¹² *Orat.* 1.52; *Hist. Ar.* 41.

correctly, that it was suspect because of its materializing implications. Whatever grace or sonship the Father confers on any other being cannot be viewed as a material substance which issues from God and passes to them, if God is known to be simple and indivisible.

Williams then notes that the term *δμοούσιος* appears in Iamblichus, and suggests, very tentatively, that Iamblichus also may have influenced Arius. He refers to a passage discussing divine inspiration. Could this be regarded as a process in which divine inspiration mixes or amalgamates itself with the soul? No, it is replied; for if some one thing is composed out of two, this is always uniform and connatural and consubstantial. But the divinity, which is 'uncombinable', *ἄμικτον*, could not amalgamate with the soul¹³.

I do not find this parallel convincing, for several reasons:

(i) The context is different: divine generation in Arius, divine inspiration of a soul in Iamblichus; both misleadingly compared, but to two contrary processes; division in one case, amalgamation in the other.

(ii) Iamblichus does not use the term *μέρος*, which is crucial to Arius' argument. *Ὁμοούσιος* is a sort of makeweight, used by the opposite party to strengthen their case; for it would be ridiculous to think of the Son as a *μέρος* of the Father which was *not* *δμοούσιον*, like a line, say, which is part of a triangle but is not a plane figure.

(iii) It seems unnecessary to bring in Iamblichus, for the doctrine that incorporeal substance is indivisible has a very long history. It goes back, presumably, to the puzzle propounded in Plato's *Parmenides* (how can an Idea be related to its multiple instances?) and the subsequent analysis of absolute Unity. This concept is taken up by Philo, Moderatus, Albinus, Numenius and Clement, contrasting either with a dyad or with an inferior unity, and is vividly characterized by Origen *De Principiis*, especially 1.2.6, 'We must take care not to fall into the absurd fables of those who imagine for themselves certain emanations, splitting the divine nature into parts and dividing God the Father'; and 4.4.4, 'It is impossible to speak of a part of what is incorporeal, or make any division of it'. Moreover the same point is made by Alexander of Lycopolis as an objection against the Manichees' doctrine of a divine power analogous to the Logos: 'If it is part of God, then ... they make out God to be composite and corporeal; but this is absurd and impossible'¹⁴. And it is precisely as a Manichean doctrine that Arius rejects the phrase *μέρος δμοούσιον*.

Turning now to the points made in the book: the first and second of them have something in common. Williams attempts to explain Arius' contentions by citing parallels from Neoplatonic writers, in one case Porphyry, in the other Iamblichus. The passages adduced are correctly interpreted, and have a certain

¹³ *J.Th.S.* art. cit. pp. 63-6.

¹⁴ Alex. Lyc. p. 24 Brinkmann; see *An Alexandrian Platonist* (etc.), ed. P.W. van der Horst and J. Mansfeld (Leiden, 1974), p. 80; ed. A. Villey (Paris, 1985), p. 77.

illustrative value. But they by no means prove, or even suggest, that Arius was influenced by Neoplatonism; for in both cases we can offer an alternative explanation which avoids this assumption.

(3) We begin at p. 191 of the book, where Williams introduces the puzzling line from the *Thalia*: *σύνες ὅτι ἡ μονάς ἦν, ἡ δυάς δ' οὐκ ἦν πρὶν ὑπάρξει*: in Williams 'You should understand that the Monad (always) was, but the Dyad was not before it came to be'. Williams refers to my own account of the term *δυάς*¹⁵, which I still think was basically correct, but which admits of better presentation. I will briefly outline the background. The Neoplatonic use of *μονάς* and *δυάς* derives from the antithesis attributed to Plato by Theophrastus and other commentators¹⁶ between the One and the 'Indefinite Dyad'; the One, or the Unit, functions as a measure; the Dyad is a second or derivative power, and also a duality; it represents those aspects of our experience which are unquantified, and therefore can be either more or less; accordingly it stands for the indefinite multiplicity of the world's constituents which issue from their primal source. Philo identifies the *δυάς* with *τὸ γενόμενον*, as opposed to the *μονάς*, which is *ὁ πεποιηκώς* (masculine, N.B.); he describes it as *εἰκὼν παθητῆς καὶ διαιρετῆς ὕλης*¹⁷. But a complication was introduced by the later recognition that there are two possible concepts of the Monad — a theory that was deduced from Plato's *Parmenides* — namely a One that is pure simplicity and a One which is essentially multiple; applied to theology, this appears as a distinction between a first and a second God, which is well known from its appearance in Numenius and Origen. Numenius does not himself use *δυάς* to denote the second God in any surviving fragment; the word appears only once, identified with matter in the manner of Philo¹⁸. But he certainly holds that there is a secondary God who is also a duality; so in fragment 16/25 reproduced by Eusebius *ὁ γὰρ δεύτερος διττὸς ὢν αὐτοποιεῖ τὴν τε ἰδέαν ἑαυτοῦ καὶ τὸν κόσμον*. Festugière¹⁹ therefore is certainly right in seeing the closest possible connection between Numenius and fragment 8 of the *Chaldean Oracles* preserved by Proclus: *δυάς παρὰ τῷδε κάθηται· ἀμφοτέρων γὰρ ἔχει, νῶ μὲν κατέχειν τὰ νοητά, αἰσθησιν δ' ἐπάγειν κόσμοις* — which expresses both his secondary position (for in fr. 7 he appears as 'second mind') — and his dual role in cosmology. And we can recognize this dual role in the Arian Logos, though admittedly it is not expressed in a single antithesis, for he both glorifies the Father and attends to the created world. I would not assert that Arius knew the *Chaldean Oracles*; but since most of the surviving fragments of Numenius are preserved by Eusebius they could have reached

¹⁵ *J.Th.S.* n.s. 15 (1960), p. 19.

¹⁶ W.D. Ross, *Plato's Theory of Ideas* (Oxford, 1951), pp. 184-5.

¹⁷ *Somn.* ii.70, *Spec. Leg.* iii.180.

¹⁸ Fr. 11 des Places, l. 15.

¹⁹ *La Révélation d'Hermès Trismégiste* iii (Paris, 1953), pp. 55-6.

Arius directly, quite apart from some indirect influence mediated by Origen. In either case appeal to the Neoplatonic arithmetic is unnecessary, if not positively misleading. Consider this passage from Iamblichus *Theologoumena Arithmeticae* p. 9: *δυὰς λέγεται παρὰ τὸ διέναι καὶ διαπορεύεσθαι: πρώτη γὰρ ἡ δυὰς διεχώρισεν αὐτὴν ἐκ τῆς μονάδος, ὅθεν καὶ τόλμα καλεῖται*, and so on.

I translate: 'The Dyad is so called because of its "diadynamic" and penetrative power; for the Dyad was the first to separate itself from the Monad, whence indeed it is called self-assertion'. I need not emphasize the contrast between this divisive self-originating power and the Arian Logos, evoked from nothing by his Father's will and addressed in the words 'Thou art my Son, this day have I begotten thee'.

(4). The following section of the book, entitled 'Intellect and Beyond', is an extended discussion of the role of intellect in the universe, including the distinction between a primary intellect identified as its first principle and a secondary intellect, the divine Logos²⁰. On pp. 208-9 Williams discusses Arius' views on the Son's knowledge of the Father. Arius appears to contradict himself; on the one hand he argues for a positive though limited knowledge — *Thalia* 14, 15, 31 W. — based on the Father's self-knowledge (14); on the other he says (35, 36) 'It is impossible for him to search out the mysteries of the Father ... for the Son does (even) know his own substance (οὐσία); thus (39) 'He cannot know by comprehension — ἐν καταλήψει — the one who gave him birth'. According to Williams the Son's ignorance of his own οὐσία 'has long been a puzzle' (p. 209); and he proposes to explain the contradiction by citing Plotinus 5.3.7, which admittedly bears some resemblance to Arius' words.

Nevertheless we need not invoke Plotinus, for a far simpler explanation lies ready to hand. It is to be found in Bishop Alexander's letter *Ἡ φίλαρχος*, §§ 20, 21. Alexander asks, how can any sane man explain the hypostasis of the Logos? The prophetic Spirit refers to it, saying 'Who shall declare his generation?' (Is. 53:8); and the Saviour himself, in his kindness towards the Saints, relieves them of any responsibility for such knowledge, saying that it is naturally incomprehensible to them all (*πᾶσι[ν] ... αὐτοῖς ἀφυσικὸν εἰς κατάληψιν*), a mystery known only to the Father; he then quotes a New Testament text identified by Opitz as Matt. 11:27, but in reality closer to its parallel at Luke 10:22; Alexander's wording is: *οὐδὲις γὰρ ἔγνω τίς ἐστὶν ὁ υἱὸς εἰ μὴ ὁ πατήρ, καὶ τὸν πατέρα οὐδεὶς ἔγνωκεν εἰ μὴ ὁ υἱός*. Recalling the same text at § 47, he reverses the order of the two clauses, but retains Luke's τίς ἐστὶν formulation in both cases.

The text presents problems which had long been recognized²¹: Christian theology would come to a stand if we had absolutely no knowledge of the Son,

²⁰ See *PGL* s.v. *νοῦς* F.3.a, 'Son as νοῦς'.

²¹ See e.g. Eusebius *Dem. Ev.* 5.1.25-6.

and yet had to depend upon the Son for our knowledge of the Father. The solution must be that we have a degree of knowledge sufficient for our needs, but not exact or comprehensive knowledge. And both Alexander and Arius think along these lines; they both introduce the Stoic term *κατάληψις* to indicate the complete understanding that we cannot attain. In other respects, of course, they differ. Alexander says that the Son's hypostasis is 'not naturally comprehensible' (*ἀφυσικὸν εἰς κατάληψιν*) to anyone but the Father, since he holds that the Son exactly resembles the Father; he tactfully omits any qualifying clause to the effect that our ignorance of the Son cannot be absolute. And Arius is also concerned with the Son's hypostasis, and is indebted to the same Lucan text; its opening words *πάντα μοι παρεδόθη ὑπὸ τοῦ πατρός μου* are recalled in his Letter to Alexander, § 5, *παρὰ τοῦ θεοῦ ... τὰ πάντα αὐτῷ παρεδόθη*. Arius is concerned to stress the absolute transcendence of the Father; and since the Lucan text asserts that only the Father knows 'who the Son is', τίς ἐστὶν, it is a simple deduction that even the Son has mysteries which he cannot explain ἐν καταλήψει. He cannot exactly comprehend either his Father or his origination or his own being, his οὐσία. There is no need, therefore, to appeal to Plotinus.

(5) I turn now to Williams' last point, set out in § III of the paper and expanded in Part III Section C of the book, entitled 'Analogy and Participation'. According to Williams "'Participation" is primarily the word used by Plato to designate the relation existing between forms or ideas and particulars'²²; he means, of course, that particulars participate in the forms, but not vice versa. But Aristotle denied such forms; and his successors, we are told, redefine participation to denote a relationship between equal members of the same species. 'Substantial participation, then', says Williams²³, 'is understood by the third-century writers we have mentioned in a "lateral" rather than a "vertical" sense'. This leads him to make the useful point that not only *ὁμοούσιος* but *ὁμοιούσιος* could suggest that 'God' is the name of a genus which has several members²⁴. He then refers to the Aristotelian commentators Alexander of Aphrodisias and Porphyry, suggesting that it was they who put the so-called 'lateral' sense of participation into common usage.

Williams offers no concrete evidence to suggest that his proposed redefinition influenced Christian writers. Alexander's relevance might yet be arguable; but the evidence taken from Porphyry can be dismissed at once, as it rests on a sheer mistranslation. Williams makes him say that if A and B participate, then they are equal. What he actually says is that if A and B participate *in a third thing, C*, then they participate equally if C is a species or a genus, but may participate unequally if C is an accident (*Isagoge*, p. 17.6, cf. 22.9-10); thus Socrates and

²² *J.Th.S.* 34, p. 67.

²³ *Ibid.*, p. 68.

²⁴ *Ibid.*, p. 70.

Callias must be equally men, but need not be equally wise. This is simply a version of Aristotle's well-known dictum that substance does not admit of degrees²⁵. Moreover Porphyry clearly sets aside Aristotle's view of participation as 'an empty metaphor' and continues to use it its Platonic sense²⁶.

The whole argument needs to be reconsidered. First, the distinction between two senses of μετέχειν and its cognates does not originate with Platonic metaphysics and its detractors, as Williams appears to suggest. Μετέχειν is pre-Platonic, and is used with a *genitivus rei*, for instance by Theognis and Herodotus; and μετόχος likewise. The looser sense of μετόχος to mean simply 'partner', with a personal genitive to mean 'someone's partner', appears in the third century B.C., according to Bauer²⁷; but the most striking case is the LXX version of Psalm 44 (45); 3, which is quoted at Hebrews 1:9: διὰ τοῦτο ἔχρισέν σε ὁ θεός, ὁ θεός σου, ἔλαιον ἀγαλλιωσεως παρὰ τοὺς μετόχους σου. The μετόχοι here may be seen as companions of inferior rank, but they clearly do not participate in the authority of the prince as their ideal exemplar; and in Luke 5:7, καὶ κατένευσαν τοῖς μετόχοις ἐν τῷ ἑτέρῳ πλοίῳ, we translate quite naturally 'they beckoned to their partners', who are fishermen of equal rank. It follows, first, that Aristotle does not use μετέχειν to denote a relation between equals, but rather in its Platonic sense, to express his criticism of Plato; and Porphyry follows suit. Secondly, that what Williams calls 'horizontal participation' was expressed in texts that were familiar to the Church almost from its outset.

As the distinction of two senses does not originate in philosophical discussion, I would prefer to contrast them by the purely formal point that one is symmetrical, the other is not. If A is B's partner, then B must be A's; but if A or B engage in an activity C, then C does not engage in them. St. Paul says that 'we all partake of one bread'; we all eat this bread, but we ourselves are not eaten.

It seems, then, that a reference to Alexander of Aphrodisias is not needed to explain the facts as presented. The hypothesis that Aristotelian commentators could have influenced Christian thought in the early fourth century would be hard to disprove; but we can surely establish that it is most unlikely. We can reflect that the Aristotelian commentators examined their master's works with

²⁵ *Categg.* 5, 3 b 33, 4 a 9.

²⁶ The distinction between substantial and accidental participation should be noticed. It is found both in Alexander and in Porphyry. But I have not found it in Christian writers. Athanasius at least assumes that 'participation' indicates an unstable and impermanent relation; thus μετουσία is regularly contrasted with οὐσία. The contrast is found in the literature relating to Paul of Samosata; see H. de Riedmatten, *Les Actes du Procès de Paul de Samosate* (*Paradosis* 6; Fribourg, 1952), p. 149f. (S. 25): *Tu vero videris mihi secundum hoc nolle compositionem fateri, ut non substantia sit in eo Filius Dei, sed sapientia secundum participationem.* Cf. also S. 31, p. 155, and esp. S. 36, p. 157, ll. 4-10.

²⁷ W. Bauer, *Griechisch-deutsches Wörterbuch des NT*, etc. (6th edn., 1988).

the same patient and meticulous care as Christians devoted to the Bible; there is no sign that Christians examined even Aristotle's own works in this fashion, let alone the commentators upon him. In particular Eusebius, the most learned scholar of his generation, knows and quotes Porphyry, but never once refers to his logical works, not even the *Isagoge*. And as for Alexander, Eusebius quotes his influential *De Fato*; but so far from citing his commentaries, he never even mentions their existence.

It remains nevertheless to consider a point which could seem to support Dr. Williams' views on 'horizontal participation'. I refer to the claim, introduced by the homoiousian party and attributed by Athanasius to Paul of Samosata²⁸, that if two beings are *homoousia* there must be a third, prior, *ousia* from which both are derived. This argument presumably originated in Christian circles, though perhaps using pagan material²⁹; *homoousios* was important for Christians, but rather marginal for pagans; yet it seems to involve a fairly sophisticated reflection on the term, contrasting with its loose and ill-defined usage, say, in Irenaeus and probably at Nicaea.

The Nicenes replied that the Father himself is the supreme *ousia*, as of course the Arians insisted; it then remained to be argued whether any other being can be called *homoousios* with him without suggesting some loss of substance or some infringement of his supremacy. The Nicenes of course admit that the Son and the Spirit are derived from the Father, but insist that they nevertheless enjoy full equality with him. This might suggest that they reinterpret the language of participation, giving importance, in Dr. Williams' terms, to 'horizontal' rather than 'vertical' participation.

If a prior *ousia* be disallowed, *homoousios* can indeed indicate what I call a symmetrical relation. It can be used of the Father and Son in conjunction, or of the Trinity as a whole. But the symmetry is not complete; I have not yet traced any pronouncement that the *Father* is *homoousios* with the Son or the Spirit; such teaching, if it ever existed, must have been a rarity. More important, it has not been shown that this controversy affected the terms expressing participation, e.g. μετέχειν, μέτοχος, μετουσία, in such a way as to confirm Dr. Williams' proposal. On the contrary, when used in Trinitarian contexts, they seem to indicate an asymmetrical relation which is also accidental rather than essential; this is particularly clear in the case of μετουσία. The use of μετέχειν, qualified by ὄλως, to denote the Son's relation to the Father, in Athanasius *c. Ar.* i. 16, is distinctly unusual and perhaps inadvertent, since the word is used in the following sentence to denote *our* participation in the Son by grace; this fact, and its connection with γεννᾶν, suggests that he was thinking *currente calamo*

²⁸ See Hilary *syn.* 81; Athanasius *syn.* 45; Basil *Ep.* 52.1. Excellent discussion in F. Dinsen, *Homoousios* (Diss., Kiel, 1976) pp. 41-51.

²⁹ See for instance Plotinus *Enn.* 6.1.2, presumably based on Aristotle, *Metaph.* Γ.4, 1000 b 26.

rather than following any established convention. His normal use of such terms appears at *c. Gent.* 46, *c. Ar.* i.9, and *Syn.* 51.

We have shown above that fourth-century Christians had access to texts in which participation needs to be understood in a symmetrical sense. But it seems most improbable that they recognised this as a distinct usage. I know of no text that points this out; rather, the accidental sense of participation seems to be taken for granted. It is therefore a surprising thesis that fourth-century Christian writers went over to use participation language to denote equal partnership. The further suggestion that this was prompted by a general adoption of Aristotelian metaphysics which discarded the Platonic Forms, I can only regard as fantastic. I am quite unable to believe that this aspect of Aristotelian thought influenced either Christians of the fourth century or contemporary Neoplatonists; though both could accommodate Aristotelian logic, following Porphyry; and the Neoplatonists at least could find a place for the *ἔνυλον εἶδος*. But this was not felt as a challenge to the authority of Plato. By way of confirmation, a quick look at the first book of Iamblichus *On the Mysteries of Egypt* yielded about thirty examples of *μετέχειν*, *μέτοχος* and related terms, all entirely consonant with the Platonic tradition and without any sense of participation between equal partners.

I will conclude by reverting to a point suggested in my 1964 paper which perhaps needs to be more clearly restated. It has been customary among scholars to divide the later Platonists into two groups, distinguished according to their treatment of Plato's *Timaeus*. The great majority accepted Aristotle's doctrine of the eternity of the world³⁰ and the impossibility of a beginning of time³¹; accordingly Plato's description of a quasi-temporal act of creation was treated by them as a mere pedagogic device, intended for simple people to show the world's eternal dependence on its first principle. Only a minority, among whom Plutarch and Atticus are commonly named, continued to interpret the *Timaeus* as describing a real beginning, at least of an ordered cosmos, though not necessarily of material being itself. The majority, represented by Plotinus, Porphyry and Iamblichus, were in varying degrees hostile to Christianity; nevertheless some Christian thinkers, Origen in particular, were influenced by their teaching. Origen is clearly impressed by the reasoning that since the Father is eternal, his relationships must be eternal; so just as he always had his eternally begotten Son, so 'all genera and species have for ever existed, and possibly even individual things'³², and the biblical doctrine of creation has to be relativised, as describing the origin simply of *this* world, considered as one of a successive series³³. Bishop Alexander rejects this theory, since he sharply

³⁰ *Cael.* 3.2, 301 b 33.

³¹ *Metaph.* 12.6, 1071 b 7.

³² *Princ.* 1.4.5.

³³ *Ibid.* 3.5.3, cf. 2.3.5-6.

distinguishes between creation and the eternal generation of the Son: 'the creation of the world from nothing implies a new subsistence and a recent beginning' (τὸ δὲ ἐξ οὐκ ὄντων δημιουργεῖσθαι τὸν κόσμον νεωτέραν ἔχει τὴν ὑπόστασιν καὶ πρόσφατον τὴν γένεσιν)³⁴, which seems to preclude any suggestion of previous worlds. But Arius takes a more radical line; as I previously expressed it, 'Origen had placed the Father in an eternal relationship, not only with the Son, but even in principle with the world. Arius asserts the Father's priority, not only to the world, but to the Son'. Accordingly the Son had a real and momentary beginning, even if it is not strictly a beginning in time.

But this surely means that Arius stands at the furthest possible remove from the majority, or eternalist, school of Neoplatonic philosophers; from Plotinus, Porphyry, and Iamblichus. I have tried to show that his supposed dependence on various points of their doctrine is illusory. But even if I am here mistaken, and there were some traces of dependence, nevertheless any sort of general agreement is out of the question. I have to conclude that Dr. Williams has been advancing, with great ingenuity and learning, a theory which we must reject as unfounded.

³⁴ *Opitz Urk.* 14, § 18.

Appendix

Metechein, metochos, metoche, metousia, methexis, in late antiquity

1. Aristotle follows Plato's usage of terms such as *metechein* while rejecting the ideal theory. So also his commentators; e.g.:

Alex. Aphr. in *Metaph.* 101.3: Καὶ τοῦτο, μετέχειν τὰ τῆδε ἐκείνων, κενολογεῖν ἔστι καὶ μεταφοραῖς χρήσθαι ποιητικαῖς. Cf. *Metaph.* A9, 991 a 21-2.

2. The commentators also continue to use *metechein* etc. to denote hierarchical relations between individuals, species and genera: see next item.

3. Both Alexander and Porphyry draw a clear distinction between essential and accidental participation:

Alex. op. cit. 91.10: εἰ δὲ μὴ καθ' αὐτὸ ἀλλὰ κατὰ συμβεβηκὸς μετέχει τὰ ἐνταῦθα τῶν ἰδεῶν ...

Porphyry *Isagoge* 17.6: Καὶ τοῦ μὲν γένους ἐπίσης τὰ μετέχοντα μετέχει, τοῦ δὲ συμβεβηκότες οὐκ ἐπίσης· ἐπίτασιν γὰρ καὶ ἄνεσιν ἐπιδέχεται ἢ τῶν συμβεβηκότες μέθεξις.

Ibid. 21.15: Καὶ τοῦ μὲν εἶδους ἢ μετοχῆ ἐπίσης, τοῦ δὲ συμβεβηκότες, κὰν ἀχώριστον ἢ, οὐκ ἐπίσης.

Ibid. 22.9-10: Καὶ τῶν μὲν εἶδων ἐπίσης ἢ μετοχῆ, τῶν δὲ συμβεβηκότες ἢ μὲν μᾶλλον ἢ δὲ ἦττον.

4. The distinction is less sharp in some Platonist writers; thus the 'second God' participates in the first, indicating neither complete correspondence nor mere accidental similarity:

Numenius fr. 20 (Eus. *P.E.* 11.22.10) εἰκότως ὁ δημιουργὸς εἴπερ ἔστι μετουσίᾳ τοῦ πρώτου ἀγαθοῦ ἀγαθός, (ἀγαθου) ἰδέα ἂν εἶη ὁ πρῶτος νοῦς.

Cf. also fr. 19.

Origen is similar: *In Joh.* 2.2.16: πᾶν δὲ τὸ παρὰ τὸ αὐτόθεος μετοχῆ τῆς ἐκείνου θεότητος θεοποιούμενον οὐχ ὁ θεὸς ἀλλὰ θεός.

Per contra Sel. in Ps. 135 (Lomm. 13.134): The Logos is God οὐσία, not μετουσίᾳ. This contrast was imitated: see 6 below.

5. *Metousia* can also apply to the created world:

Numenius fr. 16 (Eus. *P.E.* 11.22.5): ἥς μίμημα ὁ καλὸς κόσμος, κεκαλλωπισμένος μετουσίᾳ τοῦ κάλου:

not mere accidental likeness, but obvious inferiority.

6. Christian writers often ignore essential participation and imply that any participation is always accidental:

Paul of Samosata (as reported), fr. 33 (p. 155 de Riedmatten):

τὴν δὲ συνάφειαν ἐτέρως πρὸς τὴν σοφίαν νοεῖ, κατὰ μάθησιν καὶ μετουσίαν, οὐχὶ οὐσίαν οὐσιωμένην ἐν σώματι. (Cf. fr. 22 and 25 for background).

7. This contrast is often used as an artifice of controversy; e.g. by Athanasius; but he is not consistent; thus *c. Ar.* i.15 κατὰ μετουσίαν υἱός is supposedly an Arian phrase; yet *ib.* 16, perplexingly, ὁ υἱὸς οὐδένοιο μετέχει, τὸ δὲ ἐκ τοῦ πατρὸς μετεχόμενον, τοῦτό ἐστιν ὁ υἱός.

Athanasius and the *Filioque*: *Ad Serapionem* I,20 in Nikephoros Blemmydes and Gregory of Cyprus

JOOST VAN ROSSUM, Kodiak, Alaska

This communication does not deal with the question: did Athanasius teach the doctrine of the *Filioque*?¹ Its purpose is to study the interpretation of a passage in Athanasius' *First Letter to Serapion* by two Byzantine theologians of the thirteenth century within the context of the debate on the issue of the *Filioque*. The text in question runs as follows:

As the Son is an only-begotten Offspring, so also the Spirit is given and sent from the Son, and He Himself is one and not many; and He is not one from among many, but Only Spirit. For as the Son, the living Word, is one, so must His living Energy and Gift which sanctifies and enlightens, be one, perfect and complete. The latter is said to proceed from the Father, because (ἐπειδὴ) He shines forth (ἐκλάμπει) from the Logos who is confessed to be from the Father (παρὰ τοῦ Λόγου τοῦ ἐκ Πατρὸς ὁμολογουμένου), and is sent and given by Him².

For our purpose we have to discuss first of all the meaning of the verb ἐκλάμπει in the last sentence: does it refer to the eternal relation between the Logos and the Holy Spirit (the divine 'theology'), or to the sending of the Spirit in the world (the divine 'economy'), or perhaps to both? In order to answer this question, we have to look at the context of this passage. In these chapters of *Ad Serapionem* Athanasius wants to point out that 'the Spirit has, in relation to the Son, the same rank and the same nature as the Son has in relation to the Father' (I,21). In order to show that the Holy Spirit is not a created being, Athanasius stresses the close relation between the Father, Son and Holy Spirit. He does this with help of the metaphors 'Source-River', 'Light-Splendor', and 'Image' (εἰκόνας). In this passage Athanasius uses also another argument to show the divinity of the Holy Spirit: he refers to the

¹ It has been suggested that the doctrine of the *Filioque* is in accordance with Athanasius' Pneumatology. Cf. Joh. Quasten, *Patrology* III (Utrecht/Antwerp, 1960), p. 77; Joseph Lebon in Athanase d'Alexandrie, *Lettres à Sérapion* (SC 15; Paris, 1947), p. 76f.; C.R.B. Shapland, *The Letters of Saint Athanasius Concerning the Holy Spirit* (London, 1951), p. 40ff. However, the texts in Athanasius which might suggest this doctrine do not explicitly say that the Son is, together with the Father, the origin or cause of the Holy Spirit.

² *Epistola I Ad Serapionem* 20, PG 26, 577C-580A. The text in Migne does not read 'Offspring' (γέννημα), but cf. Shapland, *op. cit.*, p. 116 (and note). Quoted in Nikephoros Blemmydes, *Discourse I On the Holy Spirit* (to Jacob of Bulgaria), PG 142, 540BC; Gregory of Cyprus, *On the Procession of the Holy Spirit*, PG 142, 288AB.

'sanctification' which occurs 'from the Father through the Son in the Holy Spirit', and which is 'one', because each Divine Person is 'one', i.e. is not composed and cannot be divided³. Thus it appears that in this chapter of *Ad Serapionem* Athanasius speaks about both the divine 'theology' (the eternal relations of the Divine Persons) and the divine 'economy' (the 'sanctification' of man and the sending of the Holy Spirit), and easily moves from one to the other.

These observations lead us to the conclusion that the meaning of the verb ἐκλάμπει here is ambiguous, and that it can be explained in different ways. It may refer to the divine 'theology', or to the divine 'economy', or, and what is perhaps most likely, to both at the same time.

Nikephoros Blemmydes

We know from Nikephoros Blemmydes (1197-1272), the major Byzantine theologian in the beginning of the thirteenth century, that there was a discussion at that time on the meaning of the verb ἐκλάμπει in this text of Athanasius. During the period of the Latin occupation of Constantinople (1204-1261) the Byzantines had resumed theological discussions with the Latins, and the main theological issue was the problem of the *Filioque*⁴. At those discussions patristic texts were quoted which said that the Holy Spirit proceeds 'from the Father through the Son', or even 'from the Father and the Son'⁵. Several Byzantine theologians refused to accept these formulas, for they might support the Latin doctrine of the *Filioque*, which teaches that the Son is, together with the Father, the origin of the Holy Spirit. Therefore they said that these texts were corrupted by the Pneumatomachians, and they refused to discuss the eternal relation between the Son and the Holy Spirit. The text of Athanasius was also quoted at these discussions. These theologians argued, as we might expect, that the verb ἐκλάμπει refers to the divine economy only, i.e. to the revelation

³ PG 26, 577C.

⁴ Discussions between Byzantines and Latins were held at Nicea in 1234, and at Nymphaion in 1249/50. Nikephoros Blemmydes gives an account of these meetings in his *Autobiography*, ed. Joseph A. Munitiz, *Nicephori Blemmydae Autobiographia sive Curriculum Vitae necnon Epistula Universalior* (CCG 13; Leuven, 1984). Detailed historical information on these meetings is given in the English translation by J.A. Munitiz: Nikephoros Blemmydes, *A Partial Account* (Leuven, 1988), p. 106f. (note), and p. 119 (note).

⁵ Nikephoros Blemmydes, *Discourse I*, op. cit., 533B-540A. Blemmydes quotes amongst others Cyril of Alexandria, *De Adoratione in Spiritu et Veritate I*, PG 68, 148A: τὸ οὐσιωδῶς ἐξ ἀμφοῖν ἦγουν ἐκ Πατρὸς δι' Υἱοῦ προχέομενον Πνεῦμα; Gregory of Nyssa, *Ad Ablabium*, PG 45, 133B: τὸ μὲν γὰρ προσεχῶς ἐκ τοῦ πρώτου, τὸ δὲ διὰ τοῦ προσεχῶς ἐκ τοῦ πρώτου. On Cyril see George C. Berthold, 'Cyril of Alexandria and the Filioque', *Studia Patristica* 19 (Leuven, 1989), pp. 143-147; André de Halleux, 'Cyrille, Théodore et le Filioque', in *Id.*, *Patrologie et oecuménisme* (Leuven, 1990), pp. 367-395.

or manifestation (φανέρωσις) of the Holy Spirit in the created world. Blemmydes disagrees with this interpretation, and says that the verb ἐκλάμπει refers to the eternal existence or being of the Holy Spirit⁶. He paraphrases Athanasius' text as follows:

Thus as Energy of the Son and Logos of God the Holy Spirit eternally shines forth from Him, i.e. through Him from the Father; and as Gift He is substantially (φυσικῶς) sent and given⁷.

Thus Blemmydes wants to point out that the patristic teaching of the procession of the Holy Spirit from the Father 'through the Son' does not imply the Latin doctrine of the *Filioque*, and that the Person of the Father is the only origin of the Holy Spirit⁸.

Gregory of Cyprus

Under the influence of Gregory of Cyprus (ca. 1241-1290), the major Byzantine theologian after the failure of the Council of Lyons (1274), and Patriarch of Constantinople from 1283-1289, the teaching of the 'eternal manifestation' or 'shining forth' (αἰδιος ἐκφανσις, ἐκλαμψις, φανέρωσις) of the Holy Spirit from the Father 'through the Son' had become the official doctrine of the Byzantine Church⁹. Gregory quotes the text of Athanasius in his work *On the Procession of the Holy Spirit*, and comments on it¹⁰. However, his concern here is not the doctrine of the 'eternal manifestation' of the Holy Spirit, but he discusses a different problem, viz. that of the relation between the divine 'economy' and 'theology'. The 'filioquists' had drawn conclusions concerning the eternal Being of the Divine Persons on the basis of what is observed in the divine economy: because we see that the Son bestows the Holy Spirit, therefore we may conclude that the Holy Spirit proceeds from the Father and the Son. In his reply Gregory stresses the priority of the eternal Being of God over the divine economy. The bestowal of the Spirit by the Son is not the cause of

⁶ *Discourse I*, op. cit., 540C. Blemmydes uses the word ὑπαρξίς in the general sense of 'existence', and not 'coming-into-existence', as will be done later. See below, n. 18.

⁷ *Ibid.*, 541A.

⁸ On the 'Monarchy' of the Father see *ibid.*, 557CD. A summary of Blemmydes' Pneumatology is given by V. Grumel, 'Nicéphore Blemmyde et la procession du Saint-Esprit', *Revue des sciences philosophiques et théologiques* 18 (1929), pp. 636-656.

⁹ At the Council of Blachernae in 1285, the *Tomos* of which was written by Gregory. See Aristides Papadakis, *Crisis in Byzantium. The Filioque Controversy in the Patriarchate of Gregory II of Cyprus* (New York, 1983), p. 90ff.

¹⁰ PG 142, 269-300 (288-290). Partial translation and commentary by Olivier Clément, 'Grégoire de Chypre, *De l'ekporèse du Saint Esprit*', *Istina* 3-4 (1972), pp. 443-456.

the eternal origin (ὑπαρξίς) and procession of the Spirit from the Father¹¹, but it is just the other way round:

Because the Spirit proceeds from the Father and is inseparably connected with the Son, and has the same nature as Him and is one-in-essence with Him, therefore the Son bestows the Spirit Himself, and gives Him, and sends Him¹².

Gregory wants to emphasize that the eternal Being of God is independent of His acts *ad extra*. Therefore he spends a long time pointing out that the word ἐπειδή in the last phrase of the quotation does not have to be understood here in a 'causal' sense, but rather has the meaning of 'sign' or 'proof'. He argues as follows. We say e.g. that fire burns 'because' we see ashes and 'because' the loosing of liquid becomes mud. But this does not mean that mud or ashes are the cause of fire. They are rather its 'sign' or 'proof' (σημεῖον)¹³.

Gregory points out that Athanasius' theological language, if not properly understood, might lead to a confusion of the divine 'theology' and 'economy'. Athanasius uses concepts which belong to the divine economy (such as 'Energy' and 'Gift'), says Gregory, because they are 'more familiar to us, humble and earthly beings'. But 'we should not rush to them immediately and transfer them hastily to what is not proper'¹⁴. In other words, Gregory says that Athanasius' theological language needs clarification, for he uses 'impersonal' terminology when he refers to the Person of the Holy Spirit. Gregory, therefore, stresses that it is necessary to distinguish between the Person or Hypostasis of the Holy Spirit, and His Gift or Energy:

How can the gift be one-in-essence with the Giver? How can it be of the same rank with Him according to nature? How will the energy have the same principle (λόγος) as the essence of which it is the energy? How will the Spirit have His own Hypostasis (αὐθυπόστατον) if He is merely energy? For the concept (λόγος) of 'energy' does not allow this¹⁵.

Gregory concludes his comments on this text of Athanasius with a short remark on the importance of the distinction between the Hypostasis (Person) and the Gift or Energy of the Holy Spirit. If one reduces the Holy Spirit to

¹¹ *Ibid.*, 289A.

¹² *Ibid.*, 288D.

¹³ *Ibid.*, 288CD.

¹⁴ *Ibid.*, 289C.

¹⁵ *Ibid.*, 289D. It has to be noted that Gregory is not concerned here with the question of 'created' or 'uncreated' grace. He only wants to emphasize that 'Person' and 'Gift' of the Holy Spirit are not identical. Cf. *ibid.*, 288BC: 'The Son too is sanctification, righteousness, peace and redemption in the writings of the Apostle, not because He Himself is these things, but because He has operated them. Thus in the same manner the Spirit is called with good reason "Energy and Gift", because from Him every good thing comes to us and because all benefits given by God to men are the Spirit's energies and gifts. The Spirit is called [by Athanasius] Energy and Gift "of the Son", because the works of the Spirit are works of the Son, and there is nothing, says Athanasius, that is not performed through the Logos in the Spirit'.

'gift' or 'energy' only, it is implied that the very hypostatical essence (ἐνυπόστατος οὐσία) of the Paraclete is merely gift and energy. This would mean, says Gregory, that we who are able to participate in this Gift, are also able to participate in the very Essence of God, and this would contradict the patristic tradition:

And what truth will he have who says that the Divine Being is participable by us only through 'energies' and 'illuminations'? And the word of this great Athanasius, that the coming of the Holy Spirit occurs by means of 'energies' and 'powers', what use will it have?¹⁶

Thus the patristic teaching of man's 'participation' in God, or θεώσις, implies the necessity for theology to distinguish between the Hypostasis or Person of the Holy Spirit and His Gifts or Energies, and also between the Essence of God and His Energies.

Conclusion

It is interesting to notice that these somewhat 'scholastic' discussions on a patristic text reveal at the same time an important development of the Byzantine theology of the Holy Spirit, and also contribute to a clarification of patristic Pneumatology.

1) *Eternal Relation Son-Spirit*

We notice that the debate on the *Filioque* has shifted its focus. Photius (ca. 820-ca. 891) had discussed the relation between the Son and the Holy Spirit only within the context of the divine 'economy' in his *Mystagogy of the Holy Spirit*, the first systematic discussion of the *Filioque* in Byzantium. With Nikephoros Blemmydes Byzantine theology starts to focus on the eternal relation between the Son and the Spirit, on the basis of the patristic teaching that the Holy Spirit proceeds from the Father 'through the Son'.

2) *Distinction between 'Hypostatic Origin' and 'Eternal Manifestation'*

The expression 'through the Son' needed clarification, for it could be argued that it implies the doctrine of the *Filioque*. Gregory of Cyprus, therefore, was led to distinguish between the hypostatic origin (ὑπαρξίς) of the Holy Spirit from the Father alone, and His eternal manifestation or shining forth (αἰδῖος ἔκφανσις, ἐκλαμψίς, φανέρωσις) from the Father 'through the Son'¹⁷. Blemmydes,

¹⁶ *Ibid.*, 290A. We were unable to find the patristic references. They seem to be of a more general than specific nature.

¹⁷ Or between 'existing' (ὑπάρχει) and 'having existence' (ὑπαρξίν εἶχειν), cf. Papadakis, *op. cit.*, p. 90ff. See also above, n. 11: 'ὑπαρξίς καὶ ἐκπόρευσις'.

however, did not yet make this distinction, and he did not yet use the word ὑπαρξις in this particular sense¹⁸. Therefore his theology might seem somewhat undeveloped and ambiguous¹⁹.

3) *Distinction Person (Hypostasis)-Gift (Energy) of Holy Spirit, and Divine Essence-Energies*

Gregory of Cyprus points out that the theological vocabulary of Athanasius, such as 'Gift' and 'Energy', needs clarification. He argues that the Gift or Energy of the Holy Spirit is not identical with His Hypostasis or the Divine Essence. We notice here already in rudimentary form the teaching of Gregory Palamas (1296-1359) one century later²⁰.

4) *Distinction between Divine Theology and Economy*

In conjunction with the previous point Gregory remarks that the theological vocabulary of Athanasius did not yet make a distinction between the two levels on which we can speak about God, viz. His Eternal Life or Being, and His revelation and saving acts *ad extra*. Gregory points out that such a distinction is necessary for theological clarity, and that the doctrine of the *Filioque* confuses the divine theology and economy.

¹⁸ See above, n. 6.

¹⁹ However, some of the criticisms, made by scholars in the last few years, are not based on any evidence. Thus Papadakis remarks that, according to Blemmydes, 'the Son had a real participation in the eternal procession of the Spirit' (*op. cit.*, p. 85). This remark is not supported by any documentation, and Grumel already had come to the conclusion that Blemmydes did not attribute the 'active production of the Spirit' to the Son (*op. cit.*, p. 651f.). It also has been argued that Blemmydes identifies the Person of the Holy Spirit with His *charismata*: Andrew J. Sopko, 'Palamism before Palamas and the Theology of Gregory of Cyprus', *St. Vladimir's Theological Quarterly* 23 (1979), pp. 139-147 (144, n. 16); Papadakis, *op. cit.*, p. 85. Both authors refer to PG 142, 540. However, this passage does not deal with the χαρίσματα, and the word itself is not even mentioned.

²⁰ Several scholars have already noted the relation between Gregory's main theological concept, viz. the 'eternal manifestation' of the Spirit through the Son, and Palamas' doctrine of the divine 'energies'. See especially Jean Meyendorff, *Introduction à l'étude de Grégoire Palamas* (Paris, 1959), pp. 25-30.

Eusebius of Caesarea and Some Early Opponents of Athanasius

B.H. WARMINGTON, Bideford

In 'The Life of Constantine', to give it the usual inexact title, written or completed by Eusebius at the very end of his long life some four years after the Council of Tyre of 335, there stands a passage¹ which seems to have more relevance to a specific concern of Eusebius than to the emperor. Giving an enthusiastic account of the Council held at Jerusalem between two sessions of the Council of Tyre, to dedicate Constantine's newly built Church of the Holy Sepulchre and to celebrate the thirtieth anniversary of his accession, Eusebius listed the numerous provinces, many of whose bishops were present. He singled out, without naming them, some individual bishops who could doubtless be identified by his earliest readers, as we can identify them now. The Macedonians, he says, sent their metropolitan. This was Alexander of Thessalonica, who had been on the side of his namesake of Alexandria in the early stages of the Arian controversy. More recently, c. 334, he had congratulated Athanasius on ensuring the collapse of a serious allegation by the Meletians, and a year later, at the Council of Tyre, had written a letter objecting to the composition of the so-called Mareotis Commission, saying it was loaded against Athanasius. Next, however, we read that the Pannonians and Moesians had sent 'the fairest of God's youthful flock' — τὰ παρ' αὐτοῦ ἀνθοῦντα κάλλη τῆς τοῦ θεοῦ νεολαίας. These have long been recognized as Valens of Mursa and Ursacius of Singidunum, both members of the Mareotis Commission and active in church politics for the next twenty years, constantly appearing as leading opponents of Athanasius. An encyclical sent to all churches by the Egyptian bishops in support of Athanasius in 337/8, in which the hand of Athanasius himself is often seen, referred to the two as 'young in years and behaviour' — δύο νεωτέρος τὴν ἡλικίαν καὶ τὸν τρόπον². Since the 'Life' was probably not completed till 339, Eusebius may be quietly replying to this hostile description. Among those Eusebius went on to characterize as leading Cilicians were presumably to be numbered Narcissus of Neronias, an old associate of pre-Nicene days, also with many years as an opponent of Athanasius to come, and probably Macedonius of Mopsuestia, another member of the Commission. One could suggest that

¹ VC. IV 43, 3, 4.

² Ath. *Apol. c. Ar.* 13. In 343, The Council of Serdica called them scoundrels, παμπυνηρῶν καὶ ἐξωλεστάτων, Ath. *ibid.* 37,41.

among those described as highly cultivated Cappadocians was the metropolitan Dianius of Caesarea, later praised by Basil for his personal qualities³.

What is Eusebius doing here with allusions to such an apparently mixed bag? The 'Life of Constantine' is not a formal panegyric⁴, but the influence of the panegyric genre upon it was so strong that Eusebius adhered almost consistently to the convention that only the emperor and his family should be named, and other persons referred to obliquely, if at all, and then only in connexion with the emperor. In the whole work only one secular official is singled out for high praise, and his name is not in the text but in a posthumous chapter heading; this was the imperial *notarius* Marianus who escorted the bishops from Tyre to Jerusalem and represented the emperor at the celebrations⁵. In the context of such a work as the 'Life', with its almost exclusive concentration on the actions of the emperor, to refer favourably to some half a dozen bishops identifiable even in coded language was to pay them a very high compliment and suggests some definite purpose. This is the more obvious in that the most important presence in the 'Life' after the emperor is its author. Through many first person statements, references to his speeches before the emperor, and the incorporation of letters from the emperor to, or referring to, himself, Eusebius strove to enhance his own importance and add to the authority of his work.

The Council of Tyre, and especially the Mareotis Commission, is damned in the history of Athanasius, or perhaps we should say Athanasian history, since it was he who wrote most of it, as having been hopelessly biased against him. This was his argument when he appealed to Constantine from the Council, and in the following years it was constantly reiterated by his supporters⁶. Constantine had accepted the verdict of Tyre in spite of his protest, to the extent of relegating him to Gaul⁷, but had not allowed a successor to be appointed. Within a month of his death in May 337, all exiled bishops were allowed to return to their sees; this included Athanasius, who was furnished with a letter from Constantine the Younger, whose initiative the restoration is assumed to be, because of his status as eldest and potentially senior Augustus⁸. The letter could claim

³ Ep. 51.

⁴ For recent treatments of the nature of the VC., T.D. Barnes, 'Panegyric, history and hagiography in Eusebius's Life of Constantine', in R. Williams (ed.) *The Making of Orthodoxy: Essays in Honour of Henry Chadwick* (Cambridge, 1989). But see Averil Cameron, 'Eusebius of Caesarea and the Rethinking of History', in *Tria Corda. Scritti in onore di Arnaldo Momigliano* (Como, 1983), and H.A. Drake, 'What Eusebius knew: the genesis of the Vita Constantini', *CP* 83 (1988), pp. 20-38.

⁵ VC. IV 44. On Marianus, see B.H. Warmington, 'The Sources of some Constantinian Documents', *Studia Patristica* XVIII, vol. 1 (1985), pp. 93-98.

⁶ Ath. *Apol. c. Ar.* 86 (personal appeal); pp. 3-19 (encyclical of Egyptian bishops).

⁷ T.D. Barnes, *Athanasius and Constantius* (Cambridge, Mass., 1993), 25 asserts that Constantine thus annulled the decision, but this goes too far.

⁸ Ath. *Apol. c. Ar.* 87.

without fear of contradiction that the restoration had been intended by the elder Constantine all along. No explanation for this precipitate action exists, other than the pretensions of Constantine the Younger as eldest son. Given the well-attested political uncertainty in the months following his father's death, Constantius acquiesced. However, matters changed in the next two years. If the recent and convincing reconstruction by T.D. Barnes⁹ of the chronology of events in the career of Athanasius between May 337 and April 339 is correct, Eusebius's presentation of Tyre falls into place. Athanasius is deemed to have been faced soon after his return with a renewed condemnation by a council at Antioch in 337/8, to have seen Constantius at Cappadocian Caesarea in the summer of 338 and to have justified himself (by what means is not known), but to have lost the support of the emperor following another Antiochene council in 338/9. Constantius spent both winters at Antioch and may even have been at the second council. The strength of the opposition to the return of Athanasius and perhaps the violent scenes which had occurred in a number of eastern cities seem to have impressed Constantius who, now that his control of the eastern part of the empire was firmly established, agreed to the removal of Athanasius and the sending of a replacement, thus accepting the verdict of Tyre in full. It was during this time, in 337/8, that the bishops of Egypt issued their encyclical denouncing in detail its conduct and that of the Mareotis Commission¹⁰.

It was also the period in which Eusebius was completing his work. He had of course been at both Tyre and Jerusalem and was indeed one of the six bishops sent by the bishops at Tyre to Constantinople to defend its proceedings when they were called in question by Constantine¹¹. His specific reference to Tyre is bland in the extreme¹². Having alluded in the vaguest possible terms to troubles in the church in Egypt, he reproduced Constantine's letter to the bishops assembling at Tyre urging them to settle their differences, but dismissed the Council's proceedings in a single sentence, to the effect that his instructions were carried out. This at least associated the emperor (and himself) directly with the Council's verdict. He then focussed on the celebrations at Jerusalem which, for the emperor, were the main point of the gathering of bishops, and it is in the context of congratulatory rhetoric about this event that he alludes to the bishops mentioned. The juxtaposition of Alexander of Thessalonica, who had expressed doubts about the proposed composition of the Mareotis Commission, with two if not three of its six members, may seem at first sight surprising. However, it is not certain that Alexander did not in the end agree to the membership of the commission, or that the bishops finally chosen were

⁹ Above n. 7, pp. 35-46.

¹⁰ Ath. *Apol. c. Ar.* 3-19.

¹¹ Ath. *Apol. c. Ar.* 87. The others were Eusebius of Nicomedia, Theognis of Nicaea, Patrophilus of Scythopolis, Ursacius and Valens.

¹² VC. IV 42, 43.

those he had objected to¹³. Furthermore the Egyptian bishops in their encyclical of 337/8, for whom Alexander's letter of protest was an important document, admitted that their opponents nevertheless numbered Alexander as one of their own, and explained this by alleging intimidation¹⁴. Eusebius's favourable allusion to him accords exactly with the admission of the Egyptians.

The three members of the Commission alluded to by Eusebius were all young and are not known to have been active previously. Valens and Ursacius were from Latin speaking provinces, and their presence might have been used to show that it was not entirely an affair of eastern bishops formerly defenders of Arius. The bishops who wrote in support of Athanasius during the council of Tyre name¹⁵ as leaders of a 'conspiracy' against their leader Eusebius (of Nicomedia), Narcissus, Maris, Theognis, Theodorus (of Heraclea) and Patrophilus (of Scythopolis). Maris, Theognis and Theodorus were the three members of the Commission not alluded to by Eusebius, while Valens, Ursacius and Macedonius are not named as leading 'conspirators' by the Egyptians. Their membership of the Commission may have resulted from Alexander's protest, which seemed reasonable to the *comes* Dionysius who was responsible for the good order of the proceedings. Dionysius, however, refused to refer the whole matter back to the emperor as the Egyptians asked; he was doubtless following instructions, since for Constantine the purpose of the council at Tyre was to take the decision on Athanasius. In the years 337-339, when the Mareotis affair was being repeatedly gone over by both Athanasius and those who had opposed him, the placing of the decision of Tyre in association with the letter of instruction from the emperor, and the discreet allusion to some members of the Commission with the implication that they were persons of the highest respectability, was an assertion of the validity of the Council.

It is hard to do more than guess at the intended readership of the 'Life'. No doubt Eusebius's own church at Caesarea would have had an immediate interest in it; it is often supposed that his successor Acacius wrote the chapter headings after the author's death. Then there were many bishops in the densely populated Syrian provinces with whom Eusebius can be linked, though the lack of any surviving episcopal correspondence at this date means there is no evidence to justify the use of the word 'friendship'. Of those alive in 337/9 were Patrophilus of Scythopolis, who had, with Eusebius himself, held a Palestinian synod c. 321 defending Arius though urging submission to his bishop¹⁶; Theodotus of Laodicea and Narcissus of Neronias, both provisionally excommunicated

¹³ Ath. *Apol. c. Ar.* 80-82.

¹⁴ Ath. *Apol. c. Ar.* 16.

¹⁵ Ath. *Apol. c. Ar.* 77, 78, cp. 79, adding Flacillus of Antioch.

¹⁶ Soz. I, 15, Optiz 10. On this stage of the Arian controversy, see R. Williams, *Arius, Heresy and Tradition* (London, 1987).

with him in 325 (Patrophilus and Narcissus were both attacked in the Egyptian encyclical of 337/8 as among the leaders of the conspiracy against Athanasius); Theodotus was the dedicatee of the *Praeparatio Evangelica* and together with Narcissus the most active in seeking to get Eusebius made bishop of Antioch¹⁷. Then there was Flacillus of Antioch, who had probably presided at Tyre and to whom Eusebius dedicated the *contra Marcellum*. Also significant at precisely this time was another Eusebius, later of Emesa; a pupil of our Eusebius (the only one known) and of Patrophilus, and a friend of Flacillus, it is not surprising that he was the choice of the eastern bishops in the council of 338/9 to replace Athanasius, though he prudently refused¹⁸. As for secular persons, the immense oeuvre of Eusebius is almost devoid of references to them, and the only such individual with whom there are grounds to suppose a he had a good acquaintance is the imperial *notarius* Marianus¹⁹. However, it is hard to believe that as a bishop in a provincial capital, a frequent visitor to Antioch and occasional visitor to Constantinople, there were no others. Eusebius might even have hoped for Constantius's notice, given his eastern residences in these years and Eusebius's knowledge of the court and its ways.

Athanasius always wrote of Eusebius of Nicomedia and his associates, in effect Maris and Theognis, as the source of all his troubles up to 341; Eusebius of Caesarea appears as just one of the usual suspects, along with those named above (and others). In any case, the Egyptian bishops at Tyre in 335 are specific that he only became an enemy of Athanasius the year before²⁰. There may have been a connection with the abortive council called by the emperor to Caesarea, which Athanasius did not attend. Athanasius may or may not have received rough justice, but it is certain that he had intimidated the Meletians over the years²¹ and had not acted in accordance with the eirenic decisions of Nicaea which could have led to their ultimate reintegration into the church — arrangements which Athanasius later criticized²². This may have been genuinely offensive to others besides Eusebius who, at least for the purpose of the 'Life', consistently portrayed Constantine as an advocate of conciliation and moderation, and associated himself with this approach. Whether, if at all, Eusebius of Nicomedia and others were animated by Arian sympathies to take up the Meletian cause cannot be certainly known, since all rests on the repeated assertions of Athanasius.

¹⁷ They, with Theodorus, head the list of addressees of Constantine's letter replying to their request that Eusebius be permitted to move from Caesarea to Antioch, VC. III, 62.

¹⁸ Soz. III, 6.

¹⁹ Above n. 5.

²⁰ Ath. *Apol. c. Ar.* 77.

²¹ So Barnes, n. 7 above, 32f. and 250, in particular defending the relevance of *P. Lond.* 1914 to the Meletians.

²² Ath. *Apol. c. Ar.* 71, and cp. 59.

That the amour propre of the eastern bishops was involved in any attempt to set aside the verdict of Tyre whether by emperor or bishop of Rome is certain. This is the reason for the concern of Eusebius in the passage under discussion, however surprising its context. Whether he wished to restate what was generally known in order to reassure those who had been with him at Tyre, or to seek to persuade those who had doubts, or even to reach Constantius, we cannot say. The passage should be added to others in which Eusebius, rather than concentrating entirely on the emperor, seems to have, or has been seen to have, a strategy of his own — the exaltation of episcopal status, the way Nicaea is presented, his failure to become bishop of Antioch, and possibly the omission of any reference to the discovery of a supposed relic of the True Cross²³.

Some Cultural Contacts of St. Basil at Antioch

XII. CAPPADOCIAN FATHERS

- Philip M. Beagon
- Thomas Böhm
- Peter Bouteneff
- Brian E. Daley
- Kristoffel Demoen
- John P. Egan
- Ignacio Escribano-Alberca
- Everett Ferguson
- Ronald E. Heine
- Anne Gordon Keidel
- Vasiliki Limberis
- John Anthony McGuckin
- Lucas F. Mateo-Seco
- Anthony Meredith
- Alden A. Mosshammer
- Elias Moutsoulas
- M.B. Pranger
- J. Reynard
- David G.K. Taylor
- Françoise Vinel

²³ On this last, see J.W. Drijvers, *Helena Augusta* (Leiden, 1992), 83ff., with recent bibliography.

Some Cultural Contacts of St. Basil at Antioch

Philip M. BEAGON, Oldham

I have often thought that an innkeeper at Podandus, nestling at the foot of the Cilician Gates in southern Cappadocia, must have done well out of the episcopal traffic on the road between Caesarea and Antioch in the fourth century. For Basil, one might regard that road as a sort of theological umbilical cord; his link with such friends and mentors as Meletius and Diodorus of Tarsus. In this paper I will suggest it was also a cultural umbilical cord; one which consoled Basil when the proverbial ignorance and stupidity of his Cappadocian congregation became too much for him!¹ Philip Rousseau has recently highlighted the problematic nature of the biographical data concerning Basil². Texts such as Basil, Ep. 223 and Gregory of Nyssa's, *Life of Macrina*, written in the 370s and 380s, when purporting to describe events which occurred in the 350s, must be handled with care. Of course we do possess one document from the 350s, Basil's first letter, which helps us to fill the gap in his life between leaving Athens and settling into his first monastic retreat at Annesi. But has Basil told us the whole story? In this paper I offer an account of what Basil does *not* tell us in Ep. 1 about his activities in 356/7.

I begin with the relationship between Basil and Libanius which is of course controversial. Both Socrates (*HE* 4 26) and Sozomen (*HE* 6 17) testify that Basil and Gregory of Nazianzus were pupils of Libanius at Antioch, subsequent to their studies at Athens. There is however no other indication that Basil ever studied at Antioch and the chronology of his life after returning from Athens to Cappadocia in 355 would appear to allow no time for this. The Basilian manuscripts contain twenty-five letters purporting to be between the two men (Epp. 335-59), while the Libanius tradition adds one other (Lib. Ep. 647). Their personal acquaintance is implied by Epp. 336, 345 and 358 but there seems to be independent evidence for this in Ep. 13 of Gregory of Nyssa. In this letter to Libanius, Gregory speaks of the teaching he received from his

¹ Scathing comments on Cappadocian Greek abound: Lucian, *Epig.* 43 = *Anth. Pal.* XI 436; Philostratus, *Vit. Soph.* II 13 (258); Isidore of Pelusium, *Ep.* 281. However there is evidence to place against this stereotype. Libanius, *Ep.* 1048, admittedly to a Cappadocian professor, praises the culture of Cappadocians. The whole issue is dealt with brilliantly by L. Robert, *Opera Minora Selecta IV* (Amsterdam, 1974), pp. 388-93 in his exposition of the epitaph of a Cappadocian named Glaphyrus, found on the island of Lipari, which defiantly challenges the preconceptions of his native land (G. Kaibel, *Epigrammata Graeca* (1878), no. 640).

² P. Rousseau, *Basil of Caesarea* (Berkeley, 1994), ch. 1 esp. p. 21ff.

brother Basil, who had been Libanius' pupil. The authenticity of Gregory's letter has been questioned, but without justification³. One should also note the evidence of the sixth-century historian, Zacharias Rhetor, which seems to indicate that in the late fifth century the correspondence between Basil and Libanius was regarded as authentic⁴. Any contact between the two most probably took place at Constantinople. Basil studied there between 346 and 351. For most of this time Libanius was in Nicomedia but he probably returned to Constantinople in 350/1⁵.

I do not have the space here to indulge in a lengthy exposition of the scholarly debate surrounding the Basil-Libanius correspondence⁶. As a generalization it is fair to say that Basilian scholars have been more inclined to accept the authenticity of at least some of the letters than have those who have approached the matter through the manuscripts of Libanius. That said, the letter I propose to use, Basil, Ep. 345, is one of three which occur in the Vossianus manuscript tradition of Libanius to which Seeck gave the utmost priority. In the context of the collection as a whole, its claims to authenticity are relatively strong.

Ep. 345 was dated to 358 by Seeck on account of its position in the datable tradition of the Libanius manuscripts⁷. In the letter Libanius recalls how, 'πολλάκις ἐν Στρατηγίου σοι συγγενόμενος ἠβουλήθην διὰ τῆς σῆς σοφίας

³ Greg. Nyss. Ep. 13.4 = Pasquali, *GNO* Vol. VIII, II, *Epistulae*, p. 45. A. Laube, *De Litterarum Libanii et Basilii commercio* (Breslau, 1913), p. 12, argued against authenticity. Affirmed by M. Aubineau, *Traité de la Virginité* (SCh 119; Paris, 1966), p. 45.

⁴ For Zacharias, writing in the first half of the sixth century, speaking of Alexandria between 485-7 see E. Honigmann, *Studi e Testi* (1953), p. 193ff. The relevant passage of Zacharias is in *PO* II, 13.

⁵ A. Norman, *Libanius' Autobiography, Oration I* (Oxford, 1965), vii-viii, argues that Libanius was either at Nicomedia or Constantinople between 343 and 353 and that he did not return to settle permanently in Antioch until 354. Rousseau (n. 2), p. 37, accepts that Basil did come under Libanius' influence at Constantinople and exploits the Basil-Libanius correspondence, pp. 57-60, while acknowledging the problems of authenticity.

⁶ The arguments about the chronology and the authenticity of the Basil-Libanius correspondence have a long history. Tillemont argued for their authenticity. Maran, in his *Vita Basilii*, PG 29 p. x and clviii-clx, was highly sceptical. Laube (n. 3) argued strongly against all the letters. M. Bessières, *La Tradition manuscrite de la correspondance de S. Basile* (Oxford, 1923), pp. 153-174, thought twelve letters authentic. R. Foerster, *Libanii opera*, Tom. IX, pp. 197-233, accepted only Libanius Epp. 501 (= Bas. Ep. 358) and 647 as authentic but did not think they were addressed to Basil the Great. P. Fedwick, 'A Chronology of the Life and Works of Basil of Caesarea' in *Basil of Caesarea, Christian, Humanist, Ascetic*, ed. P. Fedwick (Toronto, 1981), Vol. 1, p. 5 n. 19 accepts nine of the twelve letters Bessières thought authentic. See also M. Forlin Patrucco, *Basilio di Cesarea. La lettera* (Turin, 1983), Vol. I, p. 39, n. 95. J.-R. Pouchet, *Basile le Grand et son univers d'amis d'après sa correspondance: une stratégie de communion* (Rome, 1992), pp. 151-175 accepts only Epp. 335-40 as authentic.

⁷ O. Seeck, *Die Briefe des Libanius zeitlich geordnet* (Leipzig, 1906), p. 469. The arguments advanced by Foerster (n. 6), pp. 199-201 for rejecting this one letter of the Vossianus tradition, having accepted the other two do not seem to me compelling. As for his refusal to accept that the letters are to Basil the Great, compare the arguments of P. Petit, *Les Étudiants de Libanius* (Paris, 1957), pp. 126-128, in particular his view that one of the 'νεανίσκου' of Libanius, Ep. 647 is

εἰς τὸ βάθος τῆς Ὀμήρου μανίας εἰσελθεῖν'. Bessières suggests that Strategius was presumably a sophist friend of Libanius, living at Antioch, with whom Basil could have stayed during his trip around the near east from 356 to 358⁸. I suggest however that this man is Strategius Musonianus, praetorian prefect of the East between 354 and 358, about whom we are very well informed⁹. The details of his career need not be repeated here, merely some salient characteristics noted. His facility in both Latin and Greek had attracted the attention of Constantine, who used him as an adviser in ecclesiastical affairs (Amm. 15.13.1-2; cf. Eusebius, *Vit. Const.* 3.59.3; 3.62.1). It was the emperor himself who gave him the name Musonianus. Libanius always calls him Strategius. He features frequently in Libanius' correspondence but the full literary flavour of the friendship is brought out in Lib. Epp. 430 and 552. In the former (dated to 355), Libanius recounts how, when once he visited Strategius, he found himself reciting Homer to him in the bath! '... παρά τε τὸν Στρατήγιον ἡμεν καὶ ἐπὶ λουτρὸν ἐκεῖθεν, ὁ μὲν λουσόμενος, ἐγὼ δὲ αὐτὸν τῶν Ὀμήρου τι περιέμενον ᾄδων'. In Ep. 552, written to one Anatolius in 357, Libanius mentions hearing a rhetorical performance in Strategius' house. One can see how the scene described in Basil, Ep. 345 fits perfectly into such a context.

In Strategius Musonianus we have therefore a man of political power and of classical education who was also a Christian; a fourth century Maecenas holding literary soirées at his official residence in Antioch. Unfortunately Basil has forgotten to tell us about his attendance at these in his first letter! Ep. 1 is of course addressed to one Eustathius. In recent years Basilian scholars have followed Gribomont in identifying him as Basil's long-time friend, the bishop of Sebaste¹⁰. Gribomont interpreted the 'philosophy' Basil is seeking in the letter as Christian asceticism, which is indeed a common meaning of the word. Previously however the Eustathius of this letter had been identified with the philosopher mentioned by Ammianus as taking part in negotiations with the Persians (Amm. 17.5.15). Intriguingly his inclusion on that embassy to Sapor in 358 was suggested by Musonianus. Indeed, even since Gribomont's article, some

Firminus, the addressee of Basil, Ep. 116. Pouchet (n. 6), p. 157 rejects Ep. 345 on grounds of style, suggesting that a sophist could have provided his pupils with historically plausible data for a rhetorical exercise. Pouchet also draws attention to the letter's relatively low numerical position in the Aa Basilian tradition but he does not address the question of its strong support in the Libanian tradition. R. Cadiou, 'Le Problème des relations scolaires entre S. Basile et Libanios', *REG* LXXIX (1966), pp. 89-98 also stresses the value of Lib. Ep. 647, 'écrite en 361, pour témoigner des rencontres, et peut-être de la communauté persistante de culture entre l'école de Libanios et le grand Cappadocien'.

⁸ Bessières (n. 6), p. 170. The Loeb text misses the significance of this letter by failing to see a proper name here. I follow Courtonne's reading.

⁹ *PLRE* I 'Musonianus', p. 611-2, does mention this letter although rather confusingly labelling it Bas. Ep. 11. Ep. 345 is of course the eleventh letter in the Basil-Libanius correspondence.

¹⁰ 'Eustathe le Philosophe et les voyages du jeune Basile de Césarée', *RHE* 54 (1959), pp. 115-124.

scholars have been content to accept that Eustathius was a pagan philosopher. Given the cultural milieu in which I am attempting to place Basil at Antioch I am attracted by this earlier identification¹¹. I am not convinced that the extensive classical allusion in this letter is to be dismissed as an intellectual game. Moreover Eustathius is said explicitly to believe in the workings of Fate and Necessity. It is true that Basil concludes by saying that the receipt of a letter from Eustathius has reaffirmed his own belief in Christian Providence. We are not however justified in assuming that this proves that the letter was Christian in content and that therefore so also was its author. Basil refers only to the *fact* of the arrival of the letter; he does not comment explicitly on the content¹². In any case, even if one accepts Gribomont's identification, this letter is to be seen as an affirmation that Basil is not intending to renounce his classical education. It is easy to picture the young Cappadocian aristocrat, still somewhat puffed up by his academic success at Athens, to use his brother Gregory's words (*Vit. Mac.* 6), mingling at one of Strategius's house parties. Whether one was Christian or pagan did not, ultimately, matter in an environment which was a great deal more congenial to Basil than that which his future flock in Caesarea would provide¹³.

I conclude with one further piece of prosopographical speculation concerning Leontius the sophist, the addressee of Basil Ep. 20¹⁴. Basil's main reason for writing is kept to the end — he wants Leontius' critical opinion of his *Contra Eunomium* — but the tone and sentiment of the whole letter is illuminating. First Leontius is criticised for not writing frequently enough. Basil's own excuse for not corresponding is pressure of pastoral work. At the time he wrote this Basil had presumably emerged from his monastic seclusion in Pontus to aid bishop Eusebius of Caesarea. Basil goes on, 'the strain, as it were, that I have taken on by my tiresome association with the vulgar, makes me naturally

¹¹ For example B. Treucker, *Politische und sozialgeschichtliche Studien zu den Basilien-Briefen* (Frankfurt, 1961), pp. 60-1 and P. Brown, *The Body and Society* (New York, 1988), pp. 301-2. Those who identify Eustathius with the pagan philosopher in Ammianus usually assume he is identical with the Eustathius who figures prominently in Eunapius, *Lives of the Sophists*. However, by my reading of Eunapius, his Eustathius is dead by 355. See P. Beagon, 'The Cappadocian Fathers, Women and Ecclesiastical Politics', *VC* 49 (1995), p. 177, n. 18.

¹² *Contra Rousseau* (n. 2), p. 90, n. 106. Forlin Patrucco (n. 6) also follows Gribomont's identification but she admits that 'τῆ λογιότητι σου' is an unusual form of address for Basil to use to a bishop.

¹³ On the tolerance that Libanius could show to educated Christians see the apposite remarks of W. Liebeschuetz, *Antioch: City and Imperial Administration in the Later Roman Empire* (Oxford, 1972), pp. 226-7.

¹⁴ Leontius is also the addressee of Ep. 21. See Forlin Patrucco's commentary (n. 6), pp. 330-336. I believe he could also be the Leontius of Basil, Ep. 35. In Forlin Patrucco's opinion this man cannot be the same as the sophist, since he is described as 'τοῦ ἀδελφισμῶτάτου ἀδελοῦ' and such a form of address is normally confined to the clergy. However this title is used in Ep. 148 of Maximus, a former governor of Cappadocia, and in Ep. 198 to describe a government official, the *peraequator* of Nicaea.

reluctant to address you sophists' (Loeb trans. Vol. I, p. 125). There is a textual crux here; Deferrari reads 'τῆ κατακωρέει συνηθεία', while both Courtonne and Forlin Patrucco have merely 'τῆ κατακορία' and translate it as a reference to the unsophisticated speech of the ordinary Cappadocians. The point is, however, whichever reading one adopts, Basil distances himself from his pastoral flock and identifies the educated elite world of Leontius as his natural home. In contrast to his own reticence Basil says that Leontius should jump at any chance to publicise his own work, 'since of all the Greeks whom I know you are the best fitted to speak. And I know, I think, the most celebrated men among you' (Loeb trans. vol. I, p. 125). Leaving flattery aside, this is no small claim to make as Basil was acquainted with such as Prohaeresius and Himerius, from his time in Athens, as well of course as Libanius himself. The 'Hellenism' in question here is of the cultural/intellectual rather than the religious variety, the idea of the 'ἑλληνικός βίος', as developed by Festugière. In essence this entails paying due attention to the civilised niceties of life. And one of the marks of a civilised man is to take any opportunity to write to a friend¹⁵.

Is it possible to supplement our informations on Leontius? A glance at any relevant prosopography indicates how common the name was. Seeck listed sixteen Leontii in his work on the letters of Libanius, Hauser-Meury traced four in the writings of Gregory of Nazianzus while *PLRE* I has no fewer than twenty-three entries under the name¹⁶. Although Basil's correspondent is given a completely separate entry in *PLRE*, 'Leontius 10', there is clearly a chance that some of the material listed under the other Leontii could refer also to him. For the sake of clarity I examine here only one other *PLRE* entry 'Leontius 5' (although 'Leontius 9' also presents possibilities). This man has been hesitantly identified as the *comes Orientis* mentioned in *C.Th.* 8.18.5, dated to 349. According to *PLRE* he is 'possibly identical' with the recipient of Libanius Ep. 340 who was living at Antioch in 358¹⁷. In fact, the recipient of this letter is not Leontius at all but one Aresius. Leontius is however mentioned in the second half of this letter. This man has come to sit at the feet of Libanius, having shunned the mob, the agora and affairs of state. Libanius describes him as a skilled speaker and a lover of wise men who has gained many friends in a very short time. We have seen that this letter dates from about, or just after, the time that Basil himself was in Antioch. Was Leontius, I wonder, another house-guest of Strategius Musonianus?

¹⁵ A. Festugière, *Antioche païenne et chrétienne: Libanius, Chrysostome, et les moines de Syrie* (Paris, 1959), pp. 219-225, esp. 222 citing Lib. Ep. 347.2.

¹⁶ Seeck (n. 7); M. Hauser-Meury, *Prosopographie zu den Schriften Gregors von Nazianz* (Bonn, 1960).

¹⁷ Suggested by Seeck (n. 7), p. 194, though Foerster (n. 6) Vol. X, p. 322 thinks 'parum certa res est'.

Basilios: *Adversus Eunomium* II 4: Eine untypische Verwendung von οὐσία und ὑπόστασις?

Thomas BÖHM, Munich

Die beiden für die Trinitätstheologie des Basilios zentralen Begriffe οὐσία und ὑπόστασις sind in der Forschung der letzten Jahrzehnte eingehend untersucht worden¹. Dies trifft auch für den speziellen Fall von *Adversus Eunomium* I-III zu. Trotzdem ist die Terminologie an *einer* Stelle, nämlich in *Adv. Eun.* II 4, sehr auffällig gebraucht, wie dies auch von anderen Forschern (z.B. Garnier) bemerkt wurde. Im folgenden soll gezeigt werden, daß dies darauf zurückzuführen ist, daß eine Passage aus *Adv. Eun.* II 4 in ihrer jetzigen Form schwer in den übrigen Kontext von *Adv. Eun.* II 4 einzufügen ist.

I. Kontext und Problemstellung von *Adv. Eun.* II 4

Basilios beginnt seine Erörterungen in *Adv. Eun.* II 4 mit der Frage, ob sich aus dem Unterschied (διαφορά) der Namen (ὀνόματα) folgern lasse, daß sich auch die οὐσίαι der Benannten unterscheiden. Wenn man z.B. von Petrus und Paulus spreche, seien beide dem Namen nach unterschieden, aber sie hätten eine einzige οὐσία. Die Namen treffen also nach Basilios nicht auf die οὐσία selbst zu, sondern allein auf die Eigentümlichkeiten (ιδιώματα μόνα), bei denen eine Differenz angezeigt werde. Während also die Namen allein auf die Charakteristika der einzelnen Personen bezogen seien, sie die οὐσία als materiell Zugrundeliegendes (ὕλικόν ὑποκείμενον)² zu verstehen. Dabei würden beim Hören des Namens die Eigentümlichkeiten im Gedanken 'eingepägt' (τῶν ιδιωμάτων ἃ περι αὐτὸν θεωρεῖται τὴν ἔννοιαν ἐντυπούμεθα)³. Basilios verwendet hier ein Beispiel: wenn man Petrus höre, so denke man

¹ Vgl. zum Beispiel G. Bausenhardt: 'In allem uns gleich außer der Sünde'. Studien zum Beitrag Maximus' des Bekenner zur altkirchlichen Christologie. Mit einer kommentierten Übersetzung der 'Disputatio cum Pyrrho' (Mainz, 1992), S. 46-53 (mit zahlreichen Hinweisen zur neueren Forschung).

² *Adv. Eun.* II 4 (II 20,11 Sesboüé); vgl. auch *Adv. Eun.* I 15 (I 226,34f Sesboüé). Zur Interpretation des Begriffes vgl. R.M. Hübner: 'Gregor von Nyssa als Verfasser der sog. ep. 38 des Basilios. Zum unterschiedlichen Verständnis der οὐσία bei den kappadozischen Brüdern'. In: J. Fontaine / Ch. Kannengiesser (Hgg.): *Epektasis. Mélanges patristiques offerts au Cardinal Jean Daniélou* (Paris, 1972), S. 463-490, hier 474.480.

³ *Adv. Eun.* II 4 (II 20,12f Sesboüé).

zugleich, er sei der Sohn des Jonas (Mt 16,17), er stamme aus Betsaida (Joh 1,44), er sei ein Bruder des Andreas, von den Fischern zum apostolischen Dienst berufen (Mt 4,18), er habe wegen des Glaubens die Erbauung der Kirche auf sich genommen (Mt 16,16-18) usw. All diese Eigentümlichkeiten, die mit dem Wort bzw. Namen Petrus verbunden seien und im Gedanken erfaßt würden, seien nicht die οὐσία, nämlich die als ὑπόστασις verstandene (οὐσία, ἢ ὡς ὑπόστασις νοουμένη)⁴. Folglich zeige der Name den χαρακτήρ, nicht aber die οὐσία⁵. Aufgrund der weiteren Diskussion dieser Stelle sei der Text in Auszügen angeführt:

Καίτοι τίς ἂν τῷ λόγῳ τούτῳ σωφρονῶν πρόσθοιτο ὅτι ὦν τὰ ὀνόματά ἐστι διάφορα, τούτων παρηλλάχθαι καὶ τὰς οὐσίας ἀνάγκη; Πέτρου γὰρ καὶ Παύλου καὶ ἀπαξαπλῶς ἀνθρώπων πάντων προσηγορίαι μὲν διάφοροι, οὐσία δὲ πάντων μία. Διόπερ ἐν τοῖς πλείστοις οἱ αὐτοὶ ἀλλήλοις ἐσμέν· τοῖς δὲ ιδιώμασι μόνοις τοῖς περι ἕκαστον θεωρουμένοις ἕτερος ἕτερου διενηνόχαμεν. "Ὅθεν καὶ αἱ προσηγορίαι οὐχὶ τῶν οὐσιῶν εἰσι σημαντικαί, ἀλλὰ τῶν ιδιοτήτων αἱ τὸν καθ' ἕνα χαρακτηρίζουσιν. "Ὅταν γοῦν ἀκούσωμεν Πέτρον, οὐ τὴν οὐσίαν αὐτοῦ νοοῦμεν ἐκ τοῦ ὀνόματος — οὐσίαν δὲ λέγω νῦν τὸ ὑλικόν ὑποκείμενον, ὅπερ οὐδαμῶς σημαίνει τοῦνομα —, ἀλλὰ τῶν ιδιωμάτων ἃ περι αὐτὸν θεωρεῖται τὴν ἔννοιαν ἐντυπούμεθα. (...; es folgen die oben erwähnten biblischen Bezüge) ὦν οὐδὲν ἐστὶν οὐσία, ἢ ὡς ὑπόστασις νοουμένη. "Ὡστε τὸ ὄνομα τὸν χαρακτήρα μὲν ἡμῖν ἀφορίζει τὸν Πέτρον· αὐτὴν δὲ οὐδαμοῦ παρίστησι τὴν οὐσίαν.

Basilios will, wie die folgenden Ausführungen in *Adv. Eun.* II 5 deutlich machen, vor allem zeigen, daß auch in der Trinität, beim Vater und Sohn⁶,

⁴ *Adv. Eun.* II 4 (II 20,18 Sesboüé). Leider sagt F. Nager gerade zu diesem Satz nichts (vgl. F. Nager: *Die Trinitätslehre des hl. Basilios des Großen. Eine dogmengeschichtliche Studie* (Paderborn, 1912), S. 57).

⁵ *Adv. Eun.* II 4 (II 20,18-20 Sesboüé). M.V. Anastos zeichnet ebenfalls in knapper Form den Argumentationsgang nach (vgl. M.V. Anastos: 'Basil's *Katὰ Eunomíou*, A Critical Analysis'. In: J. Fedwick (Hg.): *Basil of Caesarea: Christian, Humanist, Ascetic. A Sixteen-Hundredth Anniversary Symposium*, Part I (Toronto, 1981), S. 67-136, hier 92). Eine Diskussion der Probleme erfolgt jedoch nicht. Dies trifft in gleicher Weise auf J. Pelikan zu (vgl. J. Pelikan: *Christianity and Classical Culture. The Metamorphosis of Natural Theology in the Christian Encounter with Hellenism* (New Haven-London, 1993), S. 242).

⁶ Diese Verwendung von Vater und Sohn bzw. der Vorwurf an die Adresse des Eunomius, daß die Namen bei Vater und Sohn nicht die Wesenheiten bezeichnen könnten, trifft nicht genau den von Eunomius herausgearbeiteten Aspekt. Denn für Eunomius bezeichnen Vater und Sohn lediglich die ἐνέργεια, nicht aber die jeweilige οὐσία (vgl. Apol. 20,6-10 (58 Vaggione); 12,3f (48 Vaggione) etc.; dazu z.B. E. Mühlberg: 'Die philosophische Bildung Gregors von Nyssa in den Büchern *Contra Eunomium*'. In: M. Harl (Hg.): *Écriture et culture dans la pensée de Grégoire de Nyssa* (Leiden, 1971), S. 230-251, hier 231; Th.A. Kopecek: *A History of Neo-Arianism* (Cambridge (Mass.), 1979), Vol. II, S. 332; R. Mortley: *From Word to Silence II: The way of negation, Christian and Greek* (Bonn, 1986), S. 130; K.-H. Uthemann: 'Die Sprache der Theologie nach Eunomius von Cyzicus'. In: *ZKG* 104 (1993), S. 143-175, hier z.B. 147.149f; Th. Böhm: *Theoria – Unendlichkeit – Aufstieg. Philosophische Implikationen zu 'De vita Moysis' von Gregor von Nyssa* (Leiden-New York-Köln, 1996), S. 171-176 (dort weitere Lit.)). Der Vorwurf des Basilios müßte, präziser formuliert, heißen: aus der Unterscheidung von Ungewordenheit

Namen unmöglich die Wesenheit (οὐσία) darstellen können. Er versucht, mit Hilfe des οὐσία-Begriffes beim Menschen den Begriff der göttlichen οὐσία zu erläutern⁷. Es ergibt sich, daß aus der Unterschiedenheit der Namen in der Trinität auch nicht gefolgert werden kann, daß eine Unterscheidung der οὐσία vorliege⁸. Dieses Beweisziel, das Basilius vor Augen hat, bedeutet dann aber für *Adv. Eun.* II 4, daß folgender Satz, auf den Basilius hinzielt, in sich problematisch ist: die οὐσία werde als ὑπόστασις verstanden⁹. Denn in *Adv. Eun.* II 4 versucht Basilius zu erläutern, daß die οὐσία nicht durch die Eigentümlichkeiten charakterisiert wird; demgegenüber soll aber sonst bei Basilius gerade der Begriff ὑπόστασις die erkennbare individuelle Existenzweise bezeichnen. Diese läßt sich hier als das Zusammensein der οὐσία im Sinne eines stofflichen Substrats mit den jeweiligen Eigentümlichkeiten verstehen¹⁰.

Diese Bestimmung ist darüber hinaus deshalb auffällig, weil Basilius in *Adv. Eun.* II 5 mit dem in *Adv. Eun.* II 4 erarbeiteten Gedankengang zeigen will, warum die Eigentümlichkeiten im Falle der Trinität die οὐσία nicht bestimmen. Würde man die in *Adv. Eun.* II 4 herausgestellte 'Identifizierung' von οὐσία und ὑπόστασις auch dort verwenden, müßte dies bedeuten, daß die Einheit der οὐσία von Vater und Sohn zugleich die Einheit der ὑπόστασις impliziert¹¹, wodurch keine Unterscheidung etwa zu Markell von Ankyra¹²

und Gewordenheit, also *dieser* Namen, wird bei Eunomius fälschlicherweise gefolgert, daß Gott seiner οὐσία nach von allem anderen unterschieden ist, also auch vom 'Sohn', weil der Begriff 'Vater' nur relativ im Hinblick auf den 'Sohn', also die ἐνέργεια, prädicierbar ist und folglich auch nur eine relative Transzendenz des Vaters gegenüber dem Sohn anzeigen kann.

⁷ Vgl. *Adv. Eun.* I 19 (I 240,35f Sesboüé); II 28 (II 120,48f Sesboüé); dazu R.M. Hübner, 1972 (Anm. 2), S. 476-480; R.M. Hübner: 'Basilius von Caesarea und das HOMOOUSIOS'. In: L.R. Wickham / C.P. Bammel / E.C.D. Hunter (Hgg.): *Christian Faith and Greek Philosophy in Late Antiquity: Essays in Tribute to George Christopher Stead. In Celebration of his Eightieth Birthday 9th April 1993* (Leiden-New York-Köln, 1993), S. 70-91, hier 74f.

⁸ Vgl. *Adv. Eun.* II 5 (II 22,1-5 Sesboüé).

⁹ Vgl. *Adv. Eun.* II 4 (II 20,18 Sesboüé). Die Übersetzungen eines Anonymus und von Sesboüé geben den Text folgendermaßen wieder: 'wenn man unter Wesenheit die Substanz versteht' (Anon.: 'Unsers heiligen Vaters Basilius, Erzbischofes von Caesarea in Kappadocien, Bücher gegen den Eunomius'. In: *Sämmtliche Werke der Kirchen-Väter aus dem Urtexte in des Teutsche übersetzt* (Kempten, 1838), Bd. 20, S. 35-161 (für die Bücher I-III), hier 92); 'aucune de ces propriétés n'est sa substance, prise au sens de sujet' (Basile de Césarée. *Contre Eunome suivi de Eunome Apologie*. Introduction, Traduction et Notes de B. Sesboüé, Tome II (SC 305; Paris, 1983), 20). Diese Übersetzungen sind vom überlieferten Text her möglich und richtig. Sie lösen jedoch das hier vorgestellte Problem nicht.

¹⁰ Vgl. R.M. Hübner, 1971 (Anm. 2), S. 470-482; R.M. Hübner, 1993 (Anm. 7), S. 82.

¹¹ Zu den Problemen einer Übertragung der für den menschlichen Bereich erarbeiteten Differenz von οὐσία und ὑπόστασις auf die Begriffsbildung bei der Trinität vgl. z.B. G.C. Stead: 'Why Not Three Gods? The Logic of Gregory of Nyssa's Trinitarian Doctrine'. In: H.R. Drobner / Chr. Klock (Hgg.): *Studien zu Gregor von Nyssa und der christlichen Spätantike* (FS A. Spira) (Leiden, 1990), S. 149-163; G.C. Stead: 'Homousios (ὁμοούσιος)'. In: *RAC* 16 (1992), Sp. 424f.

¹² Vgl. K. Seibt: *Die Theologie des Markell von Ankyra* (Berlin-New York, 1994), z.B. S. 323-333. Gegen die Annahme einer einzigen Hypostase wehrt sich Basilius ausdrücklich, da dies aus seiner Sicht zur Folge hätte, die vorzeitige Existenz des Einziggeborenen zu leugnen (vgl. ep.

oder dem westlichen Serdicense¹³ mehr vorhanden wäre. Um die von Basilius verwendete Terminologie in *Adv. Eun.* II 4 besser einschätzen zu können, ist ein Blick auf seine sonstige, in *Adv. Eun.* vertretene Verwendung von οὐσία und ὑπόστασις in aller gebotenen Kürze notwendig.

2. Die Verwendung von οὐσία und ὑπόστασις in *Adv. Eun.* I-III

2.1. ὑπόστασις

Basilius von Caesarea verwendet den Begriff ὑπόστασις¹⁴ in *Adversus Eunomium* vor allem, um zu zeigen, wie etwas zur Existenz (ὑπαρξις) gelangt oder zustande kommt bzw. konkret wird (σύστασις). Dabei bilden — im Hinblick auf die Trinität — die idiomatischen Unterscheidungen nicht etwa bloße Modifikationen der οὐσία, weil diese, um sich modifizieren zu können, den Modi selbst vorausgehen müßte¹⁵. Die Andersheit von Vater und Sohn betrifft somit nicht die οὐσία, sondern ist τρόπος, so daß eine relative Andersheit der Hypostasen entsteht. Basilius nennt dies nicht explizit τρόπος ὑπάρξεως. Er

210.3,15-18 (II 192 Courtonne)). Vgl. dazu R.M. Hübner, 1972 (Anm. 2), S. 468f (dort weitere Lit.). So schon F. Nager, 1912 (Anm. 4), S. 45f (mit Hinweisen auf Zahn und Atzberger).

¹³ Vgl. J. Ulrich: *Die Anfänge der abendländischen Rezeption des Nizänums* (Berlin-New York, 1994), S. 26-109, bes. 67f.75f.85.88.

¹⁴ Nicht untersucht werden sollen Stellen, bei denen Eunomius oder Hebr 1,3 (*Adv. Eun.* I 18 (I 236,27 Sesboüé); I 20 (I 244,11 Sesboüé); II 32 (II 136,48 Sesboüé)) zitiert werden bzw. bei denen ein nichttheologischer Sprachgebrauch vorherrscht (*Adv. Eun.* II 16 (II 64,39 Sesboüé); III 7 (II 170,9 Sesboüé)). Problematisch ist — im Hinblick auf die neuesten Publikationen — vor allem die Darstellung bei J. Hammerstaedt. Er leitet die Begriffsbestimmung von οὐσία und ὑπόστασις vor allem aus (Ps.-)Basilius, ep. 38 ab (vgl. J. Hammerstaedt: 'Hypostasis (ὑπόστασις)'. In: *RAC* 16 (1994), S. 986-1035, hier 1020f). Denn er sieht — gegen R.M. Hübner (vgl. R.M. Hübner, 1972 (Anm. 2), S. 463-490) — ep. 38 als echten Brief des Basilius an (vgl. J. Hammerstaedt: 'Zur Echtheit von Basiliusbrief 38'. In: *Tesserae. FS f. J. Engemann* (JAC.E 18; Münster, 199), S. 416-419). Gegen Hammerstaedt lassen sich jedoch schwerwiegende Bedenken vorbringen, die hier nicht nachgezeichnet werden können (vgl. Th. Böhm, 1996 (Anm. 6), S. 73. 132f.).

¹⁵ Vgl. F.X. Risch: *Pseudo-Basilius, Adversus Eunomium IV-V. Einleitung, Übersetzung und Kommentar* (Leiden-New York-Köln, 1992), S. 31. Risch erarbeitet diesen Grundsatz vorrangig für den Autor von *Adv. Eun.* IV-V (Ps.-Basilius; vgl. op. cit., z.B. 31-35.129f); er ist jedoch auch bei Ps.-Athanasius, C. Sabellianos (vgl. Risch, op. cit., S. 31; zum Einfluß von C. Sab. auf Basilius vgl. R.M. Hübner: *Die Schrift des Apollinarius von Laodicea gegen Photin (Pseudo-Athanasius, Contra Sabellianos) und Basilius von Caesarea* (Berlin-New York, 1989), S. 252-281) und bei Apollinarius nachweisbar (vgl. Apollinarius, κμπ 18 (173,16f Lietzmann); dazu L. Prestige: *St Basil the Great and Apollinarius of Laodicea*, ed. from his papers by H. Chadwick (London, 1956), S. 56-59; ep. 362 in der Korrespondenz mit Basilius; dazu H. de Riedmatten: 'La correspondance entre Basile de Césarée et Apollinaire de Laodicée I'. In: *JThS* 7 (1956), S. 199-210, hier 208-210; E. Mühlberg: *Apollinarius von Laodicea* (Göttingen, 1969), S. 40-43; ferner einige Hinweise zum Verständnis der ep. 362 bei H.J. Vogt: 'Zum Briefwechsel zwischen Basilius und Apollinarius. Übersetzung der Briefe mit Kommentar'. In: *ThQ* 175 (1995), S. 46-60, hier 50-52).

spricht von dem *τρόπος ὑποστάσεως*¹⁶. In *Adv. Eun.* I 15 weist Basilius nach, daß das Ungezeugtsein bzw. die Ungewordenheit (*ἀγεννησία*), die Eunomius exklusiv der Wesenheit Gottes vorbehalten hat, nicht die οὐσία Gottes bezeichnen könne. Denn wie der Mensch *aus* (ἐκ) jemandem stamme und dadurch nicht in seiner οὐσία bestimmt werde, so bedeute die ἀγεννησία bei Gott, daß er *aus* niemandem sei. Analog zu dem ἐκ τινος beim Menschen könne also die Ungewordenheit, weil sie das 'Aus-jemandem-Sein' impliziere, nicht die οὐσία treffen. Daran schließt Basilius die Feststellung an, daß er nicht nach der Art der Hypostasierung, d.h. dem 'Wie' Gottes, frage¹⁷. Der Begriff *ὑπόστασις* meint folglich an dieser Stelle den *Vorgang* des idiomaticen Hervortretens. Dieses Hervortreten ist für Basilius eine Art des Konkret-Werdens¹⁸, d.h. der *σύστασις*¹⁹. So entsteht z.B. die Individuation beim Menschen, wie R.M. Hübner hervorhebt, durch 'Addition' der Begriffe οὐσία, ζῷον, λογικόν, ἀνήρ und der *ιδιώματα* des einzelnen²⁰.

Legt man diese Begriffsbestimmung der *ὑπόστασις* zugrunde, die — wie die letzte Stelle zeigt — in *Adv. Eun.* II 4 vorauszusetzen ist, bedeutet dies, daß die *ὑπόστασις* hier den *τρόπος ὑπάρξεως* impliziert, also das 'Wie' der Individualisierung bzw. den *Vorgang* der Konkretion. Daraus folgt aber für die hier erörterte Stelle aus *Adv. Eun.* II 4: wenn die οὐσία als *ὑπόστασις* vorgestellt

¹⁶ *Adv. Eun.* I 15 (I 226,33-35 Sesboüé): 'Aber ich suche doch nicht den *τρόπος τῆς ὑποστάσεως*, könnte da einer einwerfen, sondern *αὐτοῦ τοῦ ἀνθρώπου τὸ ὑλικὸν ὑποκείμενον*'. Basilius grenzt hier also den *τρόπος ὑποστάσεως*, sozusagen die Manifestation oder das konkrete 'Wie' der Menschennatur, von dem 'Was' dieser Natur ab, das er als stoffliches Substrat versteht. Mit dem Begriff *ὑπόστασις* assoziiert Basilius also die Frage nach der Konkretion. Dies trifft selbst dann zu, falls Basilius die *ὑπόστασις* in *De spir. sancto* 39 als οὐσία versteht (vgl. H.J. Sieben: *Basilius von Cäsarea. De spiritu sancto. Über den Heiligen Geist*. Übers. und eingel. (FC 12; Freiburg-Basel-Wien, 1993), 192 Anm. 15).

¹⁷ Vgl. *Adv. Eun.* I 15 (I 224-228 Sesboüé). Explizit verbindet Basilius dies auch mit dem Begriff *ὑπαρξίς* bei der Frage nach dem 'Ältersein' (*Adv. Eun.* II 13 (II 50,28-30 Sesboüé); ferner II 17 (II 68,41 Sesboüé)) oder dem Zeugungsbegriff (*γέννησις*): *Adv. Eun.* II 14 (II 52,30-32 Sesboüé).

¹⁸ Vgl. *Adv. Eun.* II 17 (II 68,39-42 Sesboüé).

¹⁹ Zur Sache vgl. *Adv. Eun.* II 6 (II 26,12-14 Sesboüé); II 17 (II 68,41-44 Sesboüé); II 19 (II 78,45-48 Sesboüé); II 32 (II 134,18-27 Sesboüé).

²⁰ Vgl. R.M. Hübner, 1972 (Anm. 2), S. 470 mit dem Hinweis auf *Adv. Eun.* II 4 (II 18-22 Sesboüé). Zu Begriffsklärungen vgl. auch Chr. Marksches: 'Was bedeutet οὐσία? Zwei Antworten bei Origenes und Ambrosius und deren Bedeutung für ihre Bibelerklärung und Theologie'. In: W. Geerlings / H. König (Hgg.): *Origenes. Vir ecclesiasticus. Symposium zu Ehren von Herrn Prof. Dr. H.-J. Vogt* (Bonn, 1995), S. 59-82, hier 80f Anm. 107. Ob man für die hier diskutierte Vorstellung allerdings ganz allgemein davon sprechen kann, daß Basilius bei der Trinität eine Hypostasenlehre vertritt, die neuplatonisch ist, aber ohne eine Stufung wie etwa bei Plotin oder Porphyrius (vgl. A.M. Ritter: 'Dogma und Lehre in der Alten Kirche'. In: C. Andresen (Hg.): *Handbuch der Dogmen- und Theologiegeschichte* Bd. 1: *Die Lehrentwicklung im Rahmen der Katholizität* (Göttingen, 1988) (Studienausgabe; ND 1989), S. 202), müßte eigens untersucht werden. Ferner ist in diesem Zusammenhang der Hinweis auf die sog. *arbor Porphyriana* (H.J. Sieben, 1993 (Anm. 16), S. 200 Anm. 7) problematisch. R.M. Hübner meldet zu Recht Vorbehalte an (vgl. R.M. Hübner, 1972 (Anm. 2), S. 471f.477f).

wird und die *ὑπόστασις* wiederum die idiomatiche Bestimmung ausdrückt, müßte auch die οὐσία hier im Sinne der Bestimmung durch die Eigentümlichkeiten gedacht werden. Gerade dies hat Basilius jedoch nicht im Blick, da er die Abgrenzung der οὐσία von den *ιδιώματα* hervorhebt.

2.2. οὐσία

Der Begriff οὐσία begegnet in *Adv. Eun.* I-III sehr häufig, und dies vor allem in einem trinitätstheologischen Kontext²¹. Dabei ist es in der Tat bei Basilius möglich, daß er die οὐσία im Sinne der *ὑπόστασις* gebraucht, wenn er z.B. von den zwei οὐσίαι des Vater und des Sohnes spricht und so die οὐσία als Einzelsubstanz versteht²². Dies würde jedoch — falls man einen solchen Gedanken überhaupt auf den kategorialen Bereich übertragen kann — bedeuten, daß an der hier diskutierten Stelle in *Adv. Eun.* II 4 die οὐσία idiomatich, d.h. gemäß dem *τρόπος ὑπάρξεως* gedeutet wird. Dies schließt Basilius hier allerdings ausdrücklich aus (*Adv. Eun.* II 4).

In *Adv. Eun.* nimmt Basilius an vier Stellen auf den menschlichen Bereich Bezug²³. Während Basilius dabei in *Adv. Eun.* II 32 wie Apolinarius von Laodicea das Zeugungs-, nicht aber das Schaffensverhältnis als Erkenntnisgrund der Homouseität anführt²⁴, ist dies an drei anderen Stellen nicht der Fall. In *Adv. Eun.* II 4, II 19 und II 28²⁵ haben nach Basilius alle irdischen Dinge eine *einzig* οὐσία, die als stoffliches Substrat verstanden wird. So schreibt Basilius z.B. in *Adv. Eun.* II 19, daß die Menschen höher als ihre Werke anzusiedeln sind, weil sie diese durch die *τέχνη* herstellen; trotzdem seien die Menschen mit den Werken *ὁμοούσιοι*. Denn Mensch und Werk hätten gemeinsame Merkmale: beide seien körperlich, wahrnehmbar und irdisch²⁶. Dies trifft gerade auch auf *Adv. Eun.* II 4 zu. Unter Hinweis auf Hiob 33,6 ('aus Lehm bist du geformt, heißt es, so wie auch ich') will Basilius die Homouseität aller Menschen erläutern²⁷. Folglich muß auch bei der hier diskutierten Stelle (οὐσία, ἢ ὡς ὑπόστασις νοουμένη) *dieser* οὐσία-Begriff vorausgesetzt werden. Er

²¹ Auf die verschiedenen Akzentuierungen und Nuancen hat R.M. Hübner eingehend aufmerksam gemacht (vgl. R.M. Hübner, 1972 (Anm. 2), S. 469-484; R.M. Hübner, 1993 (Anm. 7), S. 74-80 (dort weitere Lit.)).

²² Vgl. z.B. ep. 361,24-35 (III 221 Courtonne); ep. 9,3,7-10 (I 39 Courtonne); hom. 23,4 in Mamantem (PG 31,597C); *Adv. Eun.* I 7 (I 188-190 Sesboüé); I 13 (I 218 Sesboüé); I 26 (I 264 Sesboüé); I 27 (I 268 Sesboüé); zwei οὐσίαι: *Adv. Eun.* II 3 (II 16 Sesboüé); II 6 (II 26 Sesboüé); II 11 (II 42-44 Sesboüé); II 13 (II 48-50 Sesboüé); II 17 (II 66 Sesboüé); dazu R.M. Hübner, 1972 (Anm. 2), S. 481 Anm. 97; R.M. Hübner, 1989 (Anm. 15), S. 1f.257; R.M. Hübner, 1993 (Anm. 7), S. 80.

²³ Vgl. R.M. Hübner, 1993 (Anm. 7), S. 81-83.

²⁴ Vgl. *Adv. Eun.* II 32 (II 136 Sesboüé).

²⁵ Vgl. *Adv. Eun.* II 4 (II 20-22 Sesboüé); II 19 (II 80 Sesboüé); II 28 (II 120 Sesboüé).

²⁶ Vgl. *Adv. Eun.* II 19 (II 80,63-66 Sesboüé).

²⁷ Vgl. *Adv. Eun.* II 4 (II 20,32-22,34 Sesboüé); dazu R.M. Hübner, 1993 (Anm. 7), S. 81; Ph. Rousseau: *Basil of Caesarea* (Berkeley-Los Angeles-Oxford, 1994), S. 111.

kann dann aber schwerlich die Bedeutung einer idiomatisch geprägten ὑπόστασις annehmen.

Aus den Begriffsbestimmungen von οὐσία und ὑπόστασις läßt sich also die hier vorliegende Stelle kaum verstehen. Es sollen deshalb die entsprechenden Handschriften kurz konsultiert werden.

3. Notwendigkeit einer Konjektur?

Es existieren zur hier diskutierten Stelle drei Lesarten:

- 1) οὐσία, ἢ ὡς ὑπόστασις νοουμένη²⁸
- 2) οὐσία, ὡς ἢ ὑπόστασις νοουμένη²⁹
- 3) οὐσία, ἢ ὑπόστασις νοουμένη³⁰.

Die syrische Handschrift³¹, die nach dem Kolophon am Ende von Buch III auf den 7. Ellul 1190 der Griechen, also auf das Ende des 9. Jhd. zu datieren ist und somit zu den ältesten erhaltenen Handschriften zählt, bietet — sogar in der Wortfolge, was für die syrischen Übersetzungen charakteristisch ist — den Text wie die Lesart (1):

ܘܘܫܝܐ ܘܘܫܝܐ ܗܘܐ ܗܘܐ ܘܘܫܝܐ³²

Alle drei vorhandenen Lesarten ergeben jedoch aufgrund der obigen Überlegungen zu οὐσία und ὑπόστασις eine nur schwer nachvollziehbare Gedankenabfolge. So sah sich bereits Garnier in dem bei Migne abgedruckten Text genötigt, zur Stelle eine Anmerkung zu machen: 'si essentia tanquam substantia intelligatur, hoc est, si essentia sumatur simpliciter pro natura humana, qua Petrus simpliciter erat animal rationale'³³. Die ὑπόστασις müsse nach Garnier also als Substanz aufgefaßt werden, d.h. in ihrer rationalen Struktur

²⁸ D (Athous Vatopedinus 68, saec. XI-XII); G (Vaticanus gr. 108, saec. X ex.) und Y (Mosquensis 122 [Vladimir], saec. IX-X).

²⁹ C (Parisinus gr. 965 = Colbertinus 4529; saec. XI); V (Marcianus fondo antico 66, coll. 352, saec. IX-X); B (Oxonensis Baroccianus 228, saec. XI); F (Monacensis gr. 466, saec. XII); K (Laurentianus LXXXVI, 12, saec. XI); R (Parisinus gr. 966, saec. XI); X (Vaticanus Palatinus 216, saec. IX-X) und Z (Mosquensis 127 [Vladimir], saec. XI).

³⁰ E (Ambrosianus E 10 inf. = 1011 cat. Martini-Bass., saec. IX-X); L (Laurentianus IV, 27, saec. X in.); M (Marcianus fondo antico 58, coll. 499, saec. IX-X) und O (Athous Lavra B 105, a. 1092).

³¹ Codex syriacus Londinensis Mus. Brit. Add. 17145; vgl. PG 29,13.

³² Fol. 8v, col. a, Zeilen 23f. An dieser Stelle möchte ich meinen Dank an Frau A. Salvesen, Ph.D., aussprechen, die mir den syrischen Text besorgt hat.

³³ PG 29,579D adn. 20. Zum Problem der Übersetzung von ὑπόστασις durch *substantia* an dieser Stelle vgl. z.B. F. Nager, 1912 (Anm. 4), S. 63f (mit Hinweisen auf Petavius und Stenstrup). Bereits die oben erwähnte syrische Handschrift bietet eine interpretierende Marginalie: 'folgich ist also die Hypostase Ousia' (ܘܘܫܝܐ ܘܘܫܝܐ ܗܘܐ ܗܘܐ). ܘܘܫܝܐ ist hier wohl als terminus technicus für ὑπόστασις gebraucht (vgl. C. Brockelmann: *Lexicon Syriacum* (Göttingen, 1928), S. 678).

vor der menschlichen Natur³⁴. Obwohl die Übersetzung bzw. Erläuterung von ὑπόστασις durch *substantia* für Basilius nach den obigen Ausführungen problematisch ist, machen die von Garnier eingebrachten Überlegungen auf das hier vorliegende Problem zumindest aufmerksam.

Basilius verfolgt in *Adv. Eun.* II 4 das Ziel, die οὐσία von den ὀνόματα abzuheben. Alle Menschen besitzen ihm zufolge eine einzige οὐσία — sie sind ὁμοούσιος³⁵. Aus der Differenz der Namen (ὀνόματα) folge nicht notwendig die Differenz von οὐσία³⁶. Zugleich erörtert Basilius den Begriff οὐσία an dieser Stelle durch die (stoische) Bestimmung des ὀλικὸν ὑποκείμενον³⁷. Die οὐσία wird also als stoffliches Substrat verstanden, das zunächst von dem So-Sein, d.h. der Konkretion, σύστασις oder ὑπόστασις genannt, unterschieden ist. Dieses idiomatisch bestimmte So-Sein des Individuierten trägt zugleich die ὀνόματα an sich und ist in diesem Sinne von der οὐσία als stofflichem Substrat unterschieden.

Um nun die offensichtlichen Differenzen zwischen οὐσία und ὑπόστασις mit dem Satz οὐσία, ἢ ὡς ὑπόστασις νοουμένη auszugleichen, scheinen m.E. zwei grundlegende Möglichkeiten zu bestehen.

1) Basilius betont die Verbindung von ὄνομα und den ἰδιώματα, die wiederum von der οὐσία unterschieden sind. In der Konkretion geht nun die οὐσία in die idiomatischen Bestimmungen ein, ist mit diesen jedoch nicht identisch. Zudem hat Basilius den Begriff οὐσία einschränkend eingeführt: 'ich nenne die οὐσία *jetzt* (νῦν) stoffliches Substrat'. Dadurch lassen sich

³⁴ Man könnte lediglich an Epiphanius denken, der von Basilius von Ankyra folgenden Text überliefert: τὸν πατέρα ἐν τῇ πατρικῇ ἀθθεντία ὑπεστῶτα νοοῦντος ... (*Pan. haer.* 73,16 (289,3f Holl)). J.N. Steenson verbindet diese Stelle aufgrund der im weiteren Kontext verwendeten Terminologie aber zu Recht mit Basilius, *Adv. Eun.* III 1 (II 146,32 Sesboüé), nicht aber mit *Adv. Eun.* II 4 (vgl. J.N. Steenson: *Basil of Ancyra and the Course of Nicene Orthodoxy* (Diss. Oxford, 1983), S. 327). Auch Stellen wie Alexander von Aphrodisias, *In Arist. Met.* 467,7 (Hayduck): ὡς φύσιν νοουμένην, oder Sextus Empiricus, *Adv. Math.* 9,437,7f (τὸ σῶμα ἄρα, ὡς σῶμα νοούμενον, οὐκ ἔστιν αἰσθητόν) passen nicht zu dem hier vorgestellten Problem. Sie betonen zwar jeweils, daß etwas nicht wie z.B. das Wahrnehmbare verstanden werde, sondern z.B. der Körper *als* Körper; aber die entscheidenden Begriffe bzw. die Vorstellung, die Basilius vertritt, wird dadurch nicht annähernd getroffen. Ansonsten lassen sich für eine solche Formulierung, wie man sie bei Basilius findet (... ὡς ... νοουμένη), bis zum 4. Jhd.n.Chr. keine Texte nachweisen, die ähnlich wie die Passage bei Basilius strukturiert sind, soweit sie beim TLG erfaßt sind.

³⁵ Vgl. *Adv. Eun.* II 4 (II 22,33 Sesboüé). Die Differenz der οὐσία Gottes und der der Menschen entspricht der Differenz von Sein und Werden, wie sie im Rahmen der Timaiosrezeption durchaus denkbar ist. Die μία οὐσία, die den Menschen — darüber hinaus aber allen geschaffenen irdischen Wesen — gemeinsam ist, kann jedoch nicht als eine rein platonisch gedachte Seele verstanden werden, sofern Basilius auf die Materialität der gemeinsamen οὐσία abhebt (so zu Recht D.L. Balás: 'The Unity of Human Nature in Basil's and Gregory of Nyssa's Polemics against Eunomius'. In: *SP* 14,3 (1976), S. 275-281, hier 278). Darin unterscheidet er sich deutlich von Gregor von Nyssa (vgl. *Eun.* III.V 62, S. 183,5-8 Jaeger).

³⁶ Vgl. *Adv. Eun.* II 4 (II 22,34f Sesboüé).

³⁷ Vgl. *Adv. Eun.* II 4 (II 20,11 Sesboüé).

jedoch die oben ausgeführten Probleme nicht annähernd beheben, da die οὐσία in der Konkretion mit dem Individuellen nicht als identisch gedacht ist.

2) Die andere Möglichkeit besteht darin, die Begriffe οὐσία und ὑπόστασις klar zu differenzieren und in *Adv. Eun.* II 4 an der hier behandelten Stelle eine Korruptel anzunehmen, die bereits früh entstanden sein müßte. Für eine Konjektur ergäben sich dann aus dem bisher Gesagten wiederum drei Möglichkeiten.

- a) Bei der Partizipialkonstruktion handelt es sich um eine Marginalie.
- b) Basilius will betonen, daß die οὐσία von der Hypostase unterschieden ist.

οὐσία, ἢ <οὐχ> ὡς ὑπόστασις νοουμένη.

Dies scheint aber unwahrscheinlich zu sein, da nach Basilius die οὐσία in die Konkretion mit eingeht, ohne dadurch die Differenz zu den ἰδιώματα aufzuheben. Wichtiger ist jedoch in diesem Zusammenhang, daß Gregor von Nyssa die Bestimmung der οὐσία als ὑλικὸν ὑποκείμενον, die Basilius gebraucht, aufgrund der kritischen Einwände durch Eunomius gerade verneint: die οὐσία dürfe nicht (οὐ) als stoffliches Substrat verstanden werden³⁸. Die hier verwendete Negation scheint also gerade von Gregor in Abgrenzung zu Basilius eingefügt zu sein³⁹. Gregor von Nyssa korrigiert jedoch lediglich die Parenthese ('ich nenne die οὐσία jetzt stoffliches Substrat')⁴⁰, bezeichnender Weise aber nicht die hier behandelte Passage, die kurz darauf folgt⁴¹. Folglich würde eine Konjektur mit οὐχ das von Gregor Versäumte quasi nachholen und ist gerade darum m.E. nicht zu akzeptieren.

c) Basilius will betonen, daß die οὐσία — anders als bei Gregor von Nyssa — als Substrat verstanden wird, also als ὑποκείμενον, wie er dies auch zuvor in *Adv. Eun.* II 4 betont hat⁴².

οὐσία, ἢ ὡς ὑπο(κείμενον) νοουμένη.

Diese Konjektur ließe sich mit dem gesamten Duktus von *Adv. Eun.* II 4 gut vereinbaren.

Mit diesen insgesamt vier erwähnten Varianten sind m.E. die wesentlichen Möglichkeiten genannt, diesen hier diskutierten Satz angemessen zu interpretieren.

³⁸ Vgl. Gregor von Nyssa, *Eun.* III.V 22 (168,2f Jaeger).

³⁹ Vgl. D.L. Balás, 1976 [Anm. 35], S. 278f.

⁴⁰ Vgl. *Adv. Eun.* II 4 (II 20,11 Sesboüé).

⁴¹ Vgl. *Adv. Eun.* II 4 (II 20,18 Sesboüé).

⁴² Vgl. *Adv. Eun.* II 4 (II 20,11 Sesboüé).

Soteriological Imagery in Gregory of Nyssa's *Antirrheticus*

Peter BOUTENEFF, Geneva

In the process of refuting the Apollinarian *Apodeixis* Gregory of Nyssa brings forward a range of Christological arguments. As is well known, a large portion of Nyssen's polemic against the Laodicean is taken up with the argument against his opponent's alleged view that the flesh of Christ pre-existed the incarnation. While Apollinarius himself systematically denied holding this opinion, Gregory's counter-assertions nonetheless contain valuable observations, e.g., that the Virgin Mary is the sole source of Christ's human nature, both psychic and somatic¹. Yet it is when Gregory applies himself to the heresy that is accurately ascribed to Apollinarius, wherein Christ's human soul or intellect (νοῦς) is replaced by the divine Logos, that we find the *Antirrheticus*' most powerful Christological statements. Gregory's Christology *per se* is problematic, primarily in his attempts at accounting for the unity of the Saviour's person. Yet this does not prevent him from making several important Christological points, some of which are new and some not, particularly in the context of soteriology.

In setting out his doctrine of salvation, Nyssen often uses vivid imagery. Amongst a certain readership he is best known for his metaphor of the divine subterfuge, wherein the fish, representing the devil, swallows the hook which was baited by Christ's human flesh². Yet in the *Antirrheticus* Gregory offers two other images which display a greater breadth of approaches, and thus show his soteriology to be more multi-faceted.

The first and most far-ranging of these is unfolded in a lengthy passage where Gregory presents the image of the Logos seeking the lost sheep, a reference to Luke 15:4. The first and most important point that the metaphor is meant to convey is that in Christ, the Logos has taken on the entire composition of human nature, including (as against Apollinarius) the rational soul.

Who does not know that the originator (ἀρχηγός) of our salvation seeks the lost sheep as does the shepherd (Lk 15:4)? This sheep is us people, torn through sin from the ninety-nine others, the rational flock. And he takes upon his shoulders the whole sheep,

¹ *Antirrh.* 9; 51 (GNO III.i, 144; 217f.). All references to the *Antirrheticus* are taken from F. Mueller's text in vol. III.i of *Gregorii Nysseni Opera* (Leiden, 1958). For convenience, the chapter numbers used in Migne's edition are also indicated.

² *Or. cat.* 24 (J.H. Srawley, ed., *The Catechetical Oration of Gregory of Nyssa* (Cambridge, 1903), pp. 92f.).

for it had not been lost only in part, but wholly. Therefore he carries it back whole to the flock. The Good Shepherd does not carry the fleece only, as Apollinarius would have it, having no care for what is within. He carries it upon his shoulders, i.e., in his divinity. Being thus assumed, it becomes one with him — in this way he wills to seek and save what was lost³.

This illustrates a basic patristic model of salvation, where the whole human person must be assumed in order that the whole human person be saved or divinised. Body for body, soul for soul: like heals like. This is a familiar theme in the fathers, which has spawned several memorable statements. Reminiscent perhaps particularly of Athanasius, Nyssen coins a phrase of his own in the *Antirrheticus*: '... so that by becoming as we are, he might make us as he is (...ἵνα ἐκ τοῦ γενέσθαι οἶος ἡμεῖς ἡμᾶς ποιήσῃ οἶος ἐκεῖνος)'⁴.

The above passage also makes it clear that both body and soul are in need of salvation: the sheep had been lost not only in part, but wholly. Gregory is in this way making two points about the human intellect: a) it is not sinful by nature, and b) it is fallen, and therefore in need of healing. Just prior to this passage, Gregory noted that Christ was in possession of a human *voûs* and yet was sinless, for 'the *voûs* is not sin'. Such assertions have the effect of correcting the Apollinarian (Platonic) notion that the intellect is necessarily sinful simply by virtue of being changeable. The *voûs* is not sinful in itself, Gregory is saying, and yet, since it is the seat of free will, it is responsible for choosing sin. In the moral sphere, Gregory does not hold to a body-mind dualism; he sees the crux of good and evil as located not in the presence of the body, nor even in the passions, but in the faculty of free choice. We hear this repeatedly in the *Antirrheticus*: free choice is seen as responsible for the movement towards sin, as well as for guilt feelings, and for the justification of the deed⁵. 'Vice is a deformity of free choice: a thought (*διάνοια*) chooses, and thought is a certain movement of the *voûs*'⁶. 'Free choice is nothing other than the *voûs* and its disposition towards something'⁷. '... to obey or fight the law is a property of free choice'⁸.

So the human *voûs* is essentially sinless, yet since the Fall it chooses to swerve away from God. Thus it is that Christ has to have a soul. 'For in its presence in both parts, (the divinity) healed bodily nature through the body and the soul through the soul'⁹. The healing of like by like is often expressed

³ § 16 (*GNO* III.i, 151.30-152.12).

⁴ § 11 (*GNO* III.i, 146).

⁵ § 10 (*GNO* III.i, 145).

⁶ § 23 (*GNO* III.i, 164).

⁷ § 41 (*GNO* III.i, 198).

⁸ § 7 (*GNO* III.i, 141). The connection between the *voûs*, free choice and sin is clear also from Nyssen's anthropological treatises. He applies it as well to his Christology, particularly in the *Antirrheticus*, where he makes explicit the critical nature of Christ's own free choice, and therefore, his *voûs*.

⁹ § 55 (*GNO* III.i, 226).

in terms of sanctification or cleansing, but it is also in order 'to make us as God is'. Gregory writes, just prior to the sheep metaphor:

The Word which was in the beginning, the Word that was with God, the Word that was God (Jn. 1:1f.), ... received into himself all our nature, so that through the blending with divinity that which is human would be co-divinized (*συναποθεωθῆ*), and with this beginning the whole composite of our being would be co-sanctified (*συναγιαζομένου*)¹⁰.

Here we see that like not only 'heals' like: like divinizes like.

The sheep passage proceeds as follows:

When he found what was sought, he put what was found upon himself, so that the sheep would no longer move by its own, once deluded feet, but be carried by the divinity. Therefore the footprints of visible sheep (i.e., the man) were, as it is written, 'unseen' (Ps 76:20). For the one carrying the sheep on himself did not leave the foot print of any sin or delusion in his human life. But the footprints that God would leave during his life, those he left: for example teaching, healing, giving life to the dead, and the other miracles¹¹.

Surely it is passages such as this which have elicited charges at the hands of modern commentators that Nyssen was himself too mired in an Apollinarian Christology to argue successfully against the heresiarch. The above might suggest a kind of docetism, a marginalisation of human nature in the person of Christ. Yet Gregory does not mean here to do away with Christ's human nature, only his human sin, or as we shall see in the passage below, 'human weakness (*ἀσθένεια*)'. On the other hand, this is not to exonerate Gregory from undermining Christ's human nature elsewhere in his written work. What was called earlier the 'problematic' nature of his Christology is manifest in his swings from anthropological maximalism to anthropological minimalism. In the very same *Antirrheticus* Gregory can elaborate the activity of Christ's fully human soul and free will, and also speak of the humanity being swallowed up in the divinity as a drop of vinegar in the ocean.

At any rate, the sheep image goes on to unfold in a way that moves from a 'physical' model of salvation to a more 'revelatory' one:

And so, taking upon himself the whole sheep, the Shepherd has become one with it, thus he speaks to the flock with the voice of the sheep. For how could human weakness make an assault on the divine voice? But he converses with us in a human, or shall we say, sheep-like way, saying, 'my sheep hear my voice' (Jn 10:3; 16). And so the Shepherd, taking (*ἀναλαμβάνων*) to himself a sheep and by it speaking to us, is both sheep and Shepherd: sheep in what he has assumed (*ἐν τῷ ἀναληφθέντι*), and Shepherd in him who assumed (*ἐν τῷ ἀνειληφότε*)¹².

¹⁰ § 15 (*GNO* III.i, 151).

¹¹ § 16 (*GNO* III.i, 152.12-21).

¹² § 16 (*GNO* III.i, 152.21-29). Referring to the Shepherd's speaking to us, Gregory uses the verb *φθεγγόμενος*, which could also be translated here as 'bleating'.

'My sheep hear my voice' was a frequently cited passage, in Origen, Athanasius and Basil. But its mention by Nyssen at this particular point in the exposition of the sheep metaphor is noteworthy. The focus has suddenly shifted from the automatic healing of all that is human by means of the irruption of the divine into human life, to the communication of the divine message to human people. Since he is both sheep and shepherd, both God and man, he is able to speak to us, and we are able to understand.

Returning to a more 'physical' approach, what follows the above evokes a distinctive Christological and soteriological feature that is central to Gregory of Nyssa:

Since therefore it was necessary for the kind Shepherd to give his life (*ψυχή*) for the sheep, that by this death he might destroy death, (he who is) the beginning of our salvation becomes by (human nature) both priest and lamb, in that he can have communion with suffering and death. Since death is nothing other than the separation of soul and body, he, being united to both soul and body, does not separate himself from either. For the gifts of God are irrevocable (Rom 11:29), as the Apostle says. (...) In this way by means of the resurrection he unites all the divided (*πάντα τὰ διεστῶτα*), for he is one with both (body and soul), who, as it is written, by his own strength gave his body to the heart of the earth (Mt 12:40), and laid down his soul (*ψυχή*) of his own accord (Jn 10:18)¹³.

Having stated firstly that God takes on or assumes the whole sheep, i.e., both soul and body in order that both be healed, Gregory goes on here to show how it is that this results in Christ's resurrection, since death consists in the separation of body and soul, and resurrection in their reunion.

The key here rests in the idea that the divinity, once joined to body and soul, remains in body and soul alike even in death. This teaching is illustrated frequently by Gregory, and is marked at each occurrence by a statement to the effect that the divinity was 'in Paradise along with the soul, paving an entrance there in the person of the thief for all humanity, also remaining in the heart of the earth by means of the body'. The *Antirrheticus* puts it this way twice¹⁴. It is also heard in the *Refutation of Eunomius' Confession*¹⁵, in the third *epistle*¹⁶, and in the sermon *On the Three Day Period*¹⁷. (It is significant that, in each case, this idea that divinity abides with body and soul in Christ's death is preceded by a statement that it first took on human body and soul in order that like would heal like).

¹³ § 17 (GNO III.i, 152.30-153.17).

¹⁴ § 55 (GNO III.i, 224f.). See also § 17 (GNO p. 153).

¹⁵ *Ref. conf. Eun.* 179 (GNO II, 387).

¹⁶ *Ep.* 3, xxii (GNO VIII.ii, 25f.).

¹⁷ GNO IX, 293; cf. the English translation in A. Spirā, C. Klock, ed., *The Easter Sermons of Gregory of Nyssa* (Cambridge, Mass, 1981), pp. 42f. In the same volume, L.R. Wickham draws out the implications of this passage in his 'Soul and Body: Christ's Omnipresence', pp. 279-292.

The function of this idea is to explain the mechanics of Christ's resurrection: because the divinity, unlike the human composite, is by nature simple and indivisible, the body and soul that are united with it themselves reunite unto resurrection. As the sermon states, 'by the unity of the divine nature which is equally present in both, the separated elements are again united with each other'¹⁸. Therefore, not only in the *Antirrheticus* but in several works, Gregory's conception approaches a quite physical understanding of the resurrection event. Indeed, in the *Cathetical Oration* Gregory even says that the divine power acts in this case like a kind of glue¹⁹. The divinity which is common to both body and soul proves to be literally their linking factor.

Now, the sheep passage had promised that 'by means of the resurrection, he unites all the divided', but it does not elaborate on the nature or means of this consequence. The manner in which Christ's resurrection, i.e., the reunion of his soul and body, results in our own resurrection is addressed however in the second of our two soteriological images presented in the *Antirrheticus*:

If one were to take a stalk, (for nothing prevents the use of material things to explain the mystery of the divine dispensation through the resurrection), which is cut in half lengthwise, and sticks together the two upper bits to reunite them, then the whole stalk would necessarily unite, for when one end comes together and adheres, then the other end will follow in harmony with it. So it is in (Christ), the reunion of soul and body which happens through the resurrection means that the entire human nature which is separated by death into two parts — body and soul — comes together again, forming the intimate union of the two in the hope of the resurrection. And this is what Paul's words mean, that 'Christ has been raised from the dead, the first-fruits of those who had fallen asleep' and 'As in Adam all die, so in Christ all shall be made alive' (I Cor. 15:20; 22). For according to the example of the stalk, at one end (Adam's), our nature separated through sin, so that in death the soul separates from the body; while at the other end, which is Christ's, our nature again takes its previous state, for the division which happened in us is entirely united in the resurrection of the man in Christ (*τοῦ κατὰ τὸν Χριστὸν ἀνθρώπου*)²⁰.

This idea relies on two of Gregory's characteristic presuppositions: the total consubstantiality of Christ's humanity with ours, and the fundamental unity of all human nature, wherein it behaves as would a single living being such as a plant stalk. In this way, Gregory of Nyssa accords a powerful, organic meaning to the Pauline *ἐν χριστῷ*.

¹⁸ GNO IX, 293f; *The Eastern Sermons of Gregory of Nyssa*, p. 43.

¹⁹ *Or. cat.* 16 (Srawley 70f.).

²⁰ § 55 (GNO III.i, 226f.).

Conclusion

The early Christian writers were fond of sheep imagery and frequently cited the Luke 15 parable of the lost sheep. But they do not elaborate nearly to the same extent as does Gregory of Nyssa here. For him it is a rich soteriological image that can serve to illustrate several aspects of Christ's assumption of our human nature. While it receives its most lengthy explication in the *Antirrheticus* as we have just seen, the lost sheep image occurs in two other treatises: once in the *Refutation of Eunomius' Confession*²¹ (in a context much like that of the *Antirrheticus*), and once in passing in the *Commentary on the Song of Songs*²². The stalk metaphor, it appears, is unique to the *Antirrheticus*. Its function is primarily to aid in the understanding of the effect of Christ's resurrection on the universal resurrection, yet it also joins the sheep image in underscoring the complete identity of Christ's humanity with our own.

Divine Transcendence and Human Transformation: Gregory of Nyssa's Anti-Apollinarian Christology

Brian E. DALEY, SJ, Cambridge, Mass.

It is something of a commonplace among historians of early Christian doctrine to say that Gregory of Nyssa's portrait of the person of Christ is both puzzling and unsatisfactory. Puzzling, because it does not easily fit into the taxonomy of fifth-century controversy, or take a clear position within the categories of nature and person — οὐσία and φύσις, ὑπόστασις and πρόσωπον — which Gregory himself helped define for the Trinitarian mystery, and which were to be canonized for Christology during the debate around Chalcedon. Unsatisfactory, because Gregory seems — sometimes even in the same sentence — to combine the features of both a fundamentally unitive and a fundamentally divisive Christology, the spectres of Nestorianism and Eutychianism, in a single rather unsophisticated vision. Tixeront, writing early this century, speaks for many since his time when he writes:

'In several passages (Gregory) ... seems to distinguish two persons in Jesus: the man, in the Savior, is a tabernacle where the Word dwells; the divinity is in Him who suffers. (*Contra Eunomium* III, 3, 51 (GNO II/2 (Leiden, 1960), p. 126); *ibid.* 62 (130); *Antirrheticus adversus Apollinarium* 54 (GNO III/1 (Leiden, 1958) 222f.)) However, the contrary tendency — the Monophysite tendency — is more striking and at times makes us feel somewhat uneasy'¹.

Tixeront goes on to explain that this uneasiness is mainly inspired by Gregory's frequent use of the terminology of *mixture* to describe the relation of the divine and the human in Christ, and by his insistence that the humanity of Jesus was gradually transformed by the dominant power of the divine nature, so that in the end — like a drop of vinegar in a boundless ocean — it is virtually unrecognizable, swallowed up in the greatness of God². For Tixeront, such

²¹ § 175 (GNO II, 386).

²² § 2 (GNO VI, 61): '(The bride calls...) "Where do you feed, good Shepherd, you who take the entire flock upon your shoulders? For there is one sheep which you have taken upon your shoulders, our human nature..."'

¹ J. Tixeront, *Histoire des dogmes dans l'antiquité chrétienne* II (Paris, 1912), p. 128 (Eng. tr.: *History of Dogmas* II (St. Louis, 1914), p. 127). — Here, as elsewhere in this paper, I have cited Gregory of Nyssa's works by referring to the critical edition, *Gregorii Nysseni Opera* (GNO) (Leiden, 1958-).

² *Ibid.*; Tixeront cites *Ctr. Eun.* III, 3, 34 (GNO II/2, 119); 44 (123); 63 (130); 67 (131); *Antirrh.* 42 (GNO III/1, 201). — Tixeront might also have cited, as evidence for Gregory's paradoxical Christological language, a passage in *Antirrheticus* 48, in which Gregory is discussing Apollinarius's tendency to speak of Christ, the 'heavenly man', as composed of the three irreducible elements of body, soul and spirit. 'To some degree', Gregory writes, 'we do not disagree with him; for in saying that all the elements comprising our nature are also found in that man,

conflicting tendencies are typical of the 'obscurities' of fourth-century Greek Christological language, which had still not reached the level of professional precision needed to 'bring the Christological problem to a perfectly satisfactory and definite solution' — a consummation, presumably, that in his view would begin with Leo's *Tome*, and reach its full development in Western scholasticism³.

It is my contention here that if one considers Gregory of Nyssa's theological portrait of Christ in its own terms — within the characteristic features of his thought and style, and within the context of the controversies that exercised him in his own day — one will find it remarkably powerful and also remarkably consistent, both in itself and with the rest of his thought on God, creation, and the mystery of salvation. Gregory never treats of the person and being of Christ in a single, thematically focussed treatise, comparable to his *opuscula* on the Trinity; most of his Christological writing appears either in a polemical context — in works against Eunomian Arianism or the 'new' heresy of the Apollinarians — or in works dealing with the interior, spiritual fulfilment of the individual, such as *On Perfection* or the *Commentary on the Song of Songs*. Surprisingly, perhaps, he rarely uses the vocabulary he and his fellow Cappadocians had so carefully honed for Trinitarian discussions to express what is one and what is manifold in Christ, but speaks instead in a variety of scriptural and philosophical images which were richly suggestive for him, but which were used for different purposes by both sides of the Christological conflicts a half-century later.

Perhaps the simplest way to characterize what is distinctive in Gregory's Christology in a brief paper such as this is to consider the main lines of the conception of Christ's person and work that he developed in controversy with the Apollinarians, a group he charged with being even more wrong-headed and dangerous than Eunomius and the later Arians⁴. Gregory's first work directed against this ambitious and theologically creative new ecclesiastical party was probably his letter addressed to Theophilus, bishop of Alexandria, shortly after

one would not be wrong. "But the heavenly man, too", he says of the Lord, "is also a life-giving spirit". This, too, we accept ... For the one mingled with the heavenly man, who transformed his earthly element through blending it with what is superior to it, is no longer called earthly but heavenly'. For an interpretation stressing rather the similarity of Gregory's Christology to that of the Antiochene school, see J.N.D. Kelly, *Early Christian Doctrines* (5th ed.; San Francisco, 1976), pp. 298-300.

³ *Ibid.*, p. 130 (Eng. tr. 129f.); cf. 126 (Eng. tr. 126): 'The terminology of our authors (in the fourth century) was not sufficiently accurate, nor their conception of the doctrine sufficiently precise, to enable them to bring to a successful issue that work which was to be the work, not of mere witnesses of the tradition, but of professional and well-trained theologians, working on the data of tradition'. For a more nuanced judgment on Gregory's Christology, which nevertheless still judges it confused and inadequate, precisely in judging it by Chalcedonian standards, see A. Grillmeier, *Christ in Christian Tradition I* (London and Oxford, 1975), p. 371f., 376.

⁴ *Antirrh.* 44 (GNO III/1, 205.21-206.9).

the latter's election in 385. In it, Gregory asks for the help of Theophilus and his clergy in resisting the missionary activities of the Apollinarians. Their position, he says somewhat over-simply, is to 'represent the Word and creator of the ages, the Son of Man, as fleshly, and the divinity of the Son as mortal' — a summary of Apollinarian Christology that also characterizes his interpretation of it in the longer *Antirrheticos*⁵. But his main effort in this brief letter is to refute the main Apollinarian charge against him and his colleagues: that by insisting on the completeness of Jesus' humanity, including a human consciousness or *voûç*, they are teaching 'two Sons ... , one who is so by nature, the other who has become so later by appointment'⁶.

In reply, Gregory presents the Incarnation of the Word as the culmination of the theophanies of sacred history — all acts of self-revelation by a single divine Son. Since the previous appearances of the Son had not had the desired effect of communicating the fullness of the divine reality for the healing of a fallen, ever-more-fleshly humanity, 'he emptied himself, so that nature might receive as much of him as it could hold'⁷. As in the treatise *On Perfection*, where human salvation and fulfilment are conceived as the process of coming to be like Christ, sharing all his moral and spiritual characteristics, through a combination of intimate, contemplative knowledge and disciplined imitation⁸, Gregory assumes here that the saving process begins in the revelation of the glory of God, and that the Son has achieved this in a new and unparalleled way in his life, death and resurrection, by the moral and physical transformation of weak human flesh. The real news of the Gospel, Gregory suggests here, is that the Word, who remains transcendent and unchanging, has taken on human nature in the man Jesus and made it his own, so that 'everything that was weak and perishable in our nature, mingled with the Godhead, has become that which the Godhead is'⁹.

The point of the Incarnation, in other words, is that the human nature of Jesus, as the 'first fruits' of a redeemed humanity, should gradually lose the distinguishing characteristics (*ἰδιώματα*) of our fallen race — corruptibility, mortality, the capacity to change for the worse — and take on the characteristics of the divine nature, 'absorbed by the omnipotent divinity like a drop of vinegar mingled in the boundless sea'¹⁰. Gregory clearly has in mind the manifestations of the risen Lord, who has passed through the trials of weakness and death and

⁵ *Ad Theophilum adversus Apollinaristas* (GNO III/1, 120.14f.). For this same interpretation of Apollinarian Christology in Gregory's contemporaries, see below, n. 22.

⁶ *Ibid.* (120.17f.).

⁷ *Ibid.* (123.7-14).

⁸ GNO VIII/1, 173-214, esp. 205.22-206.14.

⁹ *Ibid.* (126.10f.).

¹⁰ *Ibid.* (126.19f.).

has received, in and for his humanity, 'the name above every name' (Phil 2.9), his own eternal titles of 'Lord' and 'Christ' (Acts 2.36)¹¹;

'For a duality of Sons might consistently be presumed, if a nature of a different kind could be recognized by its own proper signs within the ineffable Godhead of the Son ... But since all the traits we recognize in the mortal (Jesus) we see transformed by the characteristics of the Godhead, and no difference of any kind can be perceived — for whatever one sees in the Son is Godhead: wisdom, power, holiness, freedom from passivity — how could one divide what is single...?'¹²

There is no danger, in other words, of the kind of Christological dualism the Apollinarians fear, provided one sees that the man Jesus, 'taken up' by the eternal Son, is constantly being transformed in role and character to reveal the Son ever more fully in himself.

This same approach to the relationship of Christ's humanity and divinity underlies the more elaborate argument in Gregory's longer anti-Apollinarian polemic, the *Antirrhētikos*. This tract, which seems to have been written somewhat later than the *Letter to Theophilus*¹³, is a phrase-by-phrase analysis and rebuttal of Apollinarius's *Demonstration of the Divine Incarnation in Human Likeness (Apodeixis)*, a work for which Gregory's quotations are now virtually our only source. Here Apollinarius apparently accuses his opponents of holding

¹¹ *Ibid.* (127.12f.). These two texts are part of a small group of New Testament passages Gregory repeatedly uses, throughout his writings, to construct his theory of the continuing identity of the Word within the saving transformation of the human being he assumed. Besides the full text of the 'hymn to Christ' in Phil 2.5-11, they include John 20.17 (the risen Christ telling his disciples, through Mary Magdalene, 'I am ascending to my Father and to your Father, to my God and to your God'); the parable of the lost sheep (Lk 15.4f.), in which humanity is seen as the strayed sheep 'taken up' by the Word; and the combination of the images of humanity as 'mass' of dough (Matt 13.33) and the risen Christ as the 'first-fruits' of a new humanity (I Cor 15.23). See the thorough discussions of Lucas F. Mateo-Seco, *Estudios sobre la cristología de san Gregorio de Nisa* (Pamplona, 1978), esp. 30-74 (Phil 2.5-11); and Reinhard M. Hübner, *Die Einheit des Leibes Christi bei Gregor von Nyssa. Untersuchungen zum Ursprung der 'physischen' Erlösungslehre* (Leiden, 1974), esp. pp. 104-145.

¹² *Ibid.* (126.21-127.9).

¹³ So G. May, 'Die Chronologie des Lebens und des Werkes Gregors von Nyssa', in M. Harl (ed.), *Écriture et culture philosophique dans la pensée de Grégoire de Nysse* (Colloquium of Chevetogne, 1969) (Leiden, 1971), p. 61, following H. Lietzmann, *Apollinarius von Laodicea und seine Schule I* (Tübingen, 1904), p. 83f. and E. Mühlberg, *Apollinarius von Laodicea* (Göttingen, 1969), p. 90. The main arguments for putting the *Antirrhētikos* later than the letter to Theophilus are the letter's total lack of reference to the arguments of the longer work, and the fact that Gregory of Nazianzus does not seem to have known about Apollinarius's *Apodeixis* before the mid-380s. J. Daniélou, 'La chronologie des œuvres de Grégoire de Nysse', *Studia Patristica 7* (TU 92: Berlin, 1966), p. 163f., suggests the *Antirrhētikos* was composed in the winter of 382-383, on the basis of the work's treatment of the relation of the Logos to Jesus' soul and body in death; in this dating he follows J. Lebourlier, 'A propos de l'état du Christ dans la mort, II', *Revue des sciences philosophiques et théologiques* 47 (1963), p. 180, and is joined by Hübner 135f., n. 166. The chronology of Gregory's works is a notoriously speculative business.

that Christ is simply a divinely inspired human being, an *ἄνθρωπος ἐνθεος*¹⁴, and that the crucified savior had 'nothing divine in his own nature'¹⁵. By rejecting his party's conception of Christ as the divine mind enfleshed in an animated body, Apollinarius argues, his opponents' only alternative is to conceive of him as a graced human being:

'If the Lord is not enfleshed mind (νοῦς ἐνσαρκος), he must be Wisdom enlightening the mind of a human being; but that is in all people. And if that is so, then the coming of Christ was not the presence of God (ἐπιδημία θεοῦ), but the birth of a human being'¹⁶.

For Apollinarius, the elements of the Savior can only be the eternal divine Mind or Spirit and the animal body or 'flesh' he assumed: 'He is God in virtue of the enfleshed Spirit, and human in virtue of the flesh taken on by God'¹⁷. And since his fleshly component is not 'foreign' to the divine Spirit — as it would be if it 'belonged' to a human mind as part of a complete human being¹⁸ — it is accurate, in Apollinarius's view, even to say that 'Christ the human being' is heavenly and eternal:

'The human being Christ pre-exists, not in that the Spirit — that is, God — is another alongside him, but in that the Lord in the nature of the God-man is the Divine Spirit'¹⁹.

When one looks beneath the conventional rhetorical surface of his response, Gregory's critique of Apollinarius is based on a distinctively different understanding of both the being of God and the nature of salvation.

'Who does not know', he asks scornfully, 'that the God revealed to us in flesh, according to the word of pious tradition, is immaterial and invisible and uncompounded, and that he was and is infinite and uncircumscribed, existing everywhere and penetrating all creation, but that he has been seen, as far as appearance goes, in human circumscription?'²⁰

Apollinarius's conception of Christ not only limits the Logos by making him the rational soul or 'spirit' guiding a human body²¹; it implies that this one

¹⁴ *Antirrh.* 4 (GNO III/1, 135.17-24); cf. 25 (169.21ff.).

¹⁵ *Ibid.* 27 (172.16ff.).

¹⁶ *Ibid.* 36 (188.23-27).

¹⁷ *Ibid.* 7 (140.3ff.). It is interesting to note the frequent echoes, in the passages of Apollinarius's *Apodeixis* quoted by Gregory, of the 'Spirit-Christology' of the second and third centuries: drawing on I Cor 15.45 ('the second Adam is a life-giving spirit'), Gregory notes, Apollinarius 'says he is called "(the man) from heaven" for this reason, that the heavenly spirit is made flesh (in him)'. (*Ibid.* 12 (146.27f.)). See also Apollinarius's epistle to Jovianus 1 (Lietzmann 250.7, 251.15). On 'Spirit-Christology' in the Patristic period, see M. Simonetti, 'Note di cristologia pneumatologica', *Augustinianum* 12 (1972), pp. 201-232; G.W.H. Lampe, *God as Spirit* (Oxford, 1977), pp. 210-227.

¹⁸ *Ibid.* 22 (162.17-19).

¹⁹ *Ibid.* 12 (147.12ff.).

²⁰ *Ibid.* 18 (156.14-18).

²¹ *Ibid.* (156.156.26-157.9); 35 (185.7-10). Cf. 50 (227.23-26): 'If human nature receives either a mind like ours or God in place of a mind, these two must be of the same magnitude and status as each other — if indeed the place where mind is contained is also the place where divinity is received'.

governing soul, at least, is eternal, σύμφυλον θεοῦ²². Secondly, Gregory insists, to replace the human mind of Christ with the eternal Logos is to make his humanity simply into a lower form of animal life, a 'beast of burden'²³; to have a right to be called human and to be the revealer of human ἀρετή, Christ needed a human mind, human needs and limitations, and especially a human will²⁴.

This last point is of central importance for Gregory's own understanding of the person and work of Christ. The message of Scripture about Jesus, Gregory says, is that 'the divine being, changeless and unvarying in essence, has come to be in a changeable and alterable nature, so that by his own unchangeability he might heal our tendency to change for the worse'²⁵. So it is essential for him to conceive of Christ the Savior as possessing all that is vulnerable and variable in our nature, including our mind, precisely so that all of what is natural and changeable in each of us may, beginning in Christ, be transformed and exalted²⁶. The κένωσις of the Son, spoken of in Phil. 2.7, is not simply another revelation of the eternal God in our changeable world, Gregory argues,

²² *Ibid.* 28 (174.14-19). It is in the context of his insistence that the identification of the divine Logos with a νοῦς capable of governing a human composite is a violation of the divine transcendence that one should probably understand Gregory's oft-repeated point — exaggerated, surely, for rhetorical purposes — that Apollinarius holds even the 'flesh' of Christ to be eternal (e.g., 13 (147.16-148.4); 15 (150.10ff.); 18 (155.25-156.1)). Apollinarius himself seems rather to have suggested simply that the heavenly origin of the Word implies the heavenly character of the whole Christ (see *De Unione* 1f. (Lietzmann 185f.)), stressing the Biblical image of Christ as 'the Son of Man who came down from heaven' (*Antirrh.* 6 (138.18-21, 25-29)), and thus to have asserted no more than that the whole Christ, as θεὸς ἔνσαρκος, entered into the world through the Virgin's womb as through a 'channel' (*ibid.* 24 (166.14-28)). In other places, Apollinarius insists that the Word took the 'created garment' of his flesh from the Virgin, even though it was divinely generated in her and was never a distinct organism apart from the Word; see, e.g., *De Unione* 6, 9, 13 (Lietzmann 187f., 188f., 191). The Cappadocians, however, seem to have shared their contemporaries' sense that Apollinarius really held the very flesh of Christ pre-existed in heaven: see Athanasius, Ep. to Epictetus 2-9 (PG 26.1052C-1065B), a passage which seems to have the Apollinarians, among others, in mind but does not mention them by name; Basil of Caesarea, Ep. 261.2 (PG 32.969B13-972A1); Gregory Nazianzen, Ep. 101.16 (ed. P. Gallay, *Sources chrétiennes* 208.42), 30 (*ibid.* 48); Ep. 202.10-13 (*ibid.* 90-92); cf. Ep. 102.14f. (*ibid.* 79), where Gregory suggests the Apollinarian Christ has only the appearance of human flesh.

²³ *Antirrh.* 23 (165.9-28). Cf. Gregory of Nazianzus, Ep. 101.34f. (SC 208.51): 'If (Jesus) is endowed with a soul, but not with a mind, how is he human? For a human being is not an animal without intelligence. Of necessity, the outward form and tabernacle would then be human, but the soul would be that of some horse or ox or some other unintelligent being; and this will be what is saved...'

²⁴ *Ibid.* 31f (179.8-182.5). In other passages, too, Apollinarius explicitly rejected the notion of two wills or operations in Christ: see, e.g., Frags. 108f., from *On the Incarnate Appearance of God* (Lietzmann 232f.); Frag. 117, from the *Syllogistic Treatise against Diodore [of Tarsus] to Heraclius* (Lietzmann 235f.).

²⁵ *Ibid.* 2 (133.6-9).

²⁶ *Ibid.* 5 (138.7-9): '... What is passible receives death, but what is beyond the reach of passion works freedom from passibility in that which is passible'; cf. 21 (160.6-161.5).

but the concrete act of God, at a definite point in our history, taking on a human being as something new, but thoroughly his own²⁷. So Gregory insists quite simply that the eternal 'Christ' and 'Lord' in the course of time 'took up a man'²⁸ — 'not purely and simply a common man'²⁹, since he was born by a divine mode of conception, yet certainly a man in the full sense³⁰; and the salvation he has worked for all humanity is nothing less than to have transformed the passible, corruptible characteristics (ιδιώματα) of that man into the divine characteristics of the Son, so that in his exaltation the man can now share the 'name that is above every name' — the eternal, unnameable reality of God³¹. As a result, the believer always *knows* Jesus Christ in two ways, both as a human being and as God — 'human in what is seen, God in what is known to the mind'³².

Towards the end of the *Antirrhētikos*, in a passage of striking clarity, Gregory sums up the relationship between the eternal Son — who is himself always called 'Christ' and 'Lord' because he is always anointed by the Spirit and ruler over all creation³³ — and the human being he has assumed:

'We say that he is always the Christ, both before the economy and after it; but he is human neither before it nor after it, but only during the time of the economy. For the flesh, in its own proper characteristics (ιδιώμασιν) did not exist before the Virgin, nor after his ascent into heaven. "For even if we once knew Christ according to the flesh", Scripture says, "we no longer know him thus" (II Cor 5.16) ... But since humanity is changeable, but the divine unchangeable, the divinity is not moveable by alteration, either towards the better or towards the worse (since it does not receive what is worse and there is nothing which is better); but the human nature in Christ does possess the ability to change for the better, being transformed from corruption to incorruption, from what is perishable to what is imperishable, from what is short-lived to what is eternal, from what is bodily and of perceptible shape to what is bodiless and without shape'³⁴.

²⁷ *Ibid.* 15 (151.10-21).

²⁸ Gregory uses various forms of this expression: see, e.g., *ibid.* 7 (140.23-25: ὄλον συνέλαβε τὸν ἄνθρωπον); 34 (184.1-15: ἀνθρώπου πρόσληψις); 38f. (193.6-18: ἀνάληψις and πρόσληψις); 49 (215.17-21: the very word πρόσληψις implies a difference in nature).

²⁹ *Ibid.* 21 (160.3-11).

³⁰ *Ibid.* 22 (203.16-29); 49f. (214.19-215.25).

³¹ *Ibid.* 21 (161.13-26): 'And since the man in Christ was called by a name, in the usual way, according to what is consistent with humanity, through the mysterious instruction given to the Virgin by Gabriel, and that human element was named Jesus, as we are told, but (since) the divine nature is not graspable in a name, the two have become one by mixture (διὰ τῆς ἀνακράσεως). Therefore God is called by a human name, for "at the name of Jesus every knee shall bow", and the man comes to be beyond all naming — something characteristic of godhead, which cannot be signified by any verbal sign — so that as the exalted being comes to exist in what is lowly, the lowly takes on exalted characteristics; for just as the godhead receives the name of the man, so that which is joined, from lowliness, to the godhead comes to be above every name'.

³² *Ibid.* 37 (191.24ff); cf. 27 (173.10-14).

³³ *Ibid.* 52f. (220.2-221.20).

³⁴ *Ibid.* 53 (222.25-223.10).

The importance of this transformation in Christ, for Gregory, is of course that it marks the beginning of the transformation in which each of us is called to participate: a transformation of the human into the divine which does not seem to involve, in his view, an annihilation of human nature, so much as the suffusion of all its naturally changeable, 'fleshly' characteristics with the stability and luminous vigor of God. Both ἔνωσις, after all, and the various terms for 'mixture' which Gregory habitually employs for the union in Christ (μίξις, κρᾶσις and their cognates), mean in his vocabulary the close unification of elements that still remain naturally or numerically *different*: a relationship (σχέσις) rather than a total absorption³⁵. Unlike Aristotle, who uses the image of a drop of wine in ten thousand gallons of water as an example of the kind of mixture that annihilates the smaller element altogether³⁶, Gregory seems to see even the lesser, human partner in the 'mixture' of the Incarnation — though absorbed now like the proverbial drop of vinegar in the ocean of divinity and no longer perceptible, through any of its own peculiar qualities, to mind or sense³⁷ — as continuing to exist and even to undergo further change. And as the 'first-fruits' of a new humanity, endlessly undergoing transformation into the qualities that reflect the stable glory of God, the risen and transfigured human Christ is the one means by which the rest of the race can also participate in that same process of 'divinization': not, be it said, through some connection conceived of in purely physical terms, or through sharing in some Platonic universal³⁸, but through human involvement with Christ in salvation history, especially through faith, baptism, and a disciple's imitation³⁹.

Gregory's anti-Apollinarian Christology, as we have briefly sketched it out here, is certainly strange, even a little shocking, by post-Chalcedonian standards. The reason, I would suggest, is first of all terminological. The language of φύσις and ὑπόστασις, οὐσία and πρόσωπον, which were to frame the debates of the fifth and sixth centuries and which had been given stable definition for Trinitarian discussion by the Cappadocians themselves, are strikingly absent, as I have

³⁵ See esp. *ibid.* 22 (161.26f.); 34 (184.27-30). For a thorough and penetrating analysis of Gregory's terminology for the union of natures in Christ, including its background in classical philosophy, see J.-R. Bouchet, 'Le vocabulaire de l'union et du rapport des natures chez saint Grégoire de Nysse', *Revue thomiste* 68 (1968), pp. 533-582.

³⁶ *De gen. et corr.* 1.10 (328a27-29).

³⁷ *Antirrh.* 42 (GNO III/1, 201.10-16); cf. the passages cited in nn. 2 and 10 above, and *Chr. Eun.* III, 3, 68f. (GNO II/2, 133.1-4).

³⁸ For a careful discussion and refutation of the overly literal interpretation of Gregory's idea of human solidarity and 'physical' redemption found in many histories of dogma, see especially Hübner, *Die Einheit des Leibes Christi* (above, n. 11) esp. pp. 1-25 and 95-198; cf. Mateo-Seco, *Estudios* (above, n. 11) 53; Bouchet, 'Le vocabulaire' (above, n. 35), p. 538; and A. Lieske, 'Zur Theologie der Christumystik Gregors von Nyssa', *Scholastik* 14 (1939), p. 510.

³⁹ So, e.g., *Antirrh.* 55 (GNO III/1, 226.17-227.9: baptism as imitation of Jesus' saving and voluntary death); cf. *On Perfection* (GNO VIII/1, esp. 210.4; 214.6: imitation of Christ's ἀπειταί).

already said, from Gregory's discussion of Christ; both ὑπόστασις and πρόσωπον, in fact, when they are used in these works, are applied to the man Jesus alone, not to the incarnate Christ⁴⁰. The reason, presumably, is that Gregory is afraid to support the Apollinarian conception of the man Jesus as ἓν πρόσωπον and ἓν ζῶον with the eternal hypostasis of the Son; such terms are too multi-valent within the theological realm of discourse, too analogous, to be used safely in the same context of both the 'persons' of the Trinity and a human person, of both the 'substance' of God and our human reality.

In any case, Gregory's Christology differs from that of the fifth-century debates also in that his main interest is *not* to identify precisely what is one and what is manifold in Christ, but to explore the conditions of possibility for our sharing in his triumph over death and human corruption. Not only is the modern category of 'person', as autonomous and reflective subject, far from his mind, as it was from that of all the Greek Fathers; his real interest is in our salvation: in what happens to human *nature* — to τὸ ἀνθρώπινον, the common reality all of us concretely share — when it is brought into contact with τὸ θεῖον, the transcendent reality of God, through the one historical individual who is, in an unconfused and inseparable way, both God and a human being. Nonetheless, it is clear that for him, as for the classical Christology of the fifth, sixth and seventh centuries, the Mystery of Christ is also one of unconfused and undivided union: God the Word making a complete human being his own instrument of revelation and healing for the world, while at the same time enabling that human being to be, most perfectly, what all humans are created to be — fully itself, and fully, though always increasingly, a participant in the life and even the qualities of God.

In a recent, thoughtful article comparing Origen's *De Principiis* and Gregory's *Catechetical Oration* as synthetic constructions of Christian theology, Anthony Meredith remarks: 'By and large, Origen's thought is largely theocentric, Gregory's is Christocentric'⁴¹. The reason, Meredith suggests, is Gregory's pre-occupation with Apollinarianism. While I would certainly agree on the central place given to the person and work of Christ in all Gregory's thought, I suggest that he is not concerned with *Christology* in the same sense or to the same degree as Nestorius, Cyril, Theodoret and Leo would be, let alone Severus, Leontius of Byzantium and Maximus Confessor. He is concerned above all with Jesus Christ as the man in whom and through whom the infinite and saving reality of God touches us all: with preserving the transcendence of the God who is present in him, and with emphasizing the transformation of that human reality which God, in the man Jesus, has made his own.

⁴⁰ *Antirrh.* 54 (GNO III/1, 223.11-224.5); *Chr. Eun.* III, 3, 42 (122.25-29). For a thorough discussion of the Christology of Gregory's works *Contra Eunomium*, see now B. Pottier, *Dieu et le Christ selon Grégoire de Nysse* (Brussels, 1994).

⁴¹ 'Origen's *De Principiis* and Gregory of Nyssa's *Oratio Catechetica*', *Heythrop Journal* 36 (1995), p. 8.

The Paradigmatic Prayer in Gregory Nazianzen

Kristoffel DEMOEN, Gent

Ὅς πυρὶ καὶ νεφέλῃ στρατὸν ἤγαγες, ὃς δ' ὄδον εὗρες

Ἐν πελάγει πῆξας κύματ' ἔλαυνομένοις.

Ἄρτον δ' οὐρανόθεν ὕσας ξένον οὐ δοκέουσιν·

Ἐκ δὲ πέτρης πηγὴν ἔβλυσας ἀκροτόμου.

Καὶ νῦν τῷ θεράποντι συνέμπορος ἔλθῃ καλεῦντι,

Χριστὲ, φάος μερόπων, δεξιὰ πάντα φέρων.

You who have guided an army with fire and cloud,

who by holding back the force of the waves

found a way through the sea for those who were pursued;

who let a peculiar bread rain down from heaven

for those who did not expect it,

and who let a well spring from a sheer rock:

now also come as a fellow traveller for your servant who calls you,

Christ, light of mortals, who make everything turn out right¹.

This poem by Gregory Nazianzen is a typical example of a paradigmatic prayer. This is a prayer consisting of a series of παραδείγματα (paradigms) / *exempla* (examples), in which a deity is besought, as it were, to take action, by reminding him or her of previous similar deeds. The genre is rooted in Greek poetry from the time of Homer as well as in the Bible². Since I shall deal with the paradigmatic prayer as a special use of paradigmata rather than as a special kind of prayer, I shall first say a few words about the παράδειγμα³.

The παράδειγμα or exemplum is a central device in ancient rhetoric, and we can recall how deeply influenced Gregory was by his rhetorical education. Ancient rhetoricians, starting with Aristotle, describe the exemplum as the evoking of a historical event or person which is similar or related to the matter

under discussion, and which is used as an argument or as an illustration. Let me say a few more words about the subject matter of the exemplum, its functions, the modes of reasoning behind its use and its literary form.

With respect to subject matter, it is specified in rhetorical theories that histories can be taken from one's own national or from foreign traditions. In Christian authors such as Gregory, the subdivision between 'own' and 'foreign' is transposed into the categories 'Christian' and 'pagan', and the own historical examples are taken from the Bible, as in the paradigmatic prayer just quoted.

As to the exemplum as argument, rhetoricians distinguish between evidence and model; the latter function is applied in the paradigmatic prayer: God is confronted with himself or his own previous deeds as a model.

The logical basis of the argumentation can be either inductive or analogical. In the former case, the exemplum offers a particular instance of the general case that is to be argued or illustrated: it is the e.g. (*exempli gratia*) reasoning (the argumentation I use when illustrating this paper with some of Gregory's paradigmatic prayers). The analogical exemplum, on the other hand, is based on a similarity between the exemplary history and the particular case under discussion: it is the 'just as once ... thus also now ...' reasoning (the argumentation used in the paradigmatic prayers themselves).

The literary form taken by the παράδειγμα is marked by the elaborateness of the exemplary story, and by its insertion in the context. Considering the former criterion, the παράδειγμα varies from an elaborate narration (as in the Latin medieval exemplum as a separate genre) to a simple name-mentioning or an allusion. As to the insertion, the motive for using the exemplum (which could be considered as the *tertium comparationis*) can be explicitly stated or merely implied. Now, just as classical rhetorical theory sees a transition from full comparison (*Achilles is as brave as a lion*), through unmotivated comparison (*Achilles is like a lion*), to metaphor (*Achilles is a lion* or *that lion*, pointing at Achilles), one can subdivide the exemplum according to its insertion: full exemplum (*Beware of that woman, for she is beautiful and unfaithful. Remember Helen, who was also...*), minimal exemplum (*Beware of that woman. Remember Helen.*) and metaphorical exemplum (*Beware of that Helen.*). The metaphorical exemplum can take the shape of an antonomasia (substitution of a name), as in the Helen example, or of an allegory (transposition of a history).

Now let us return to Gregory's paradigmatic prayers. I shall first deal with their function and subject matter. On four occasions, three times in a funeral oration and once in an autobiographical poem, Gregory gives an account of former paradigmatic prayers by others or by himself, and he comments on the phenomenon itself. I quote one of these passages, from his funeral oration for Basil. Gregory illustrates his friend's descent with a story about his ancestors on his father's side, who retreated to the mountains of Pontus on the run from the persecutions under Maximinus. When they were hungry, they expressed their

¹ Gregory Nazianzen, *carmen* I, 1, 38 (PG 37,521-2).

² See e.g. *Iliad* 16,233-238 (Ζεῦ ἄνα, ... ἡμὲν δὴ ποτ' ἐμὸν ἔπος ἔκλυες εὐδαμένοιο ... ἡδ' ἔτι καὶ νῦν μοι...) and 2Esr 19,6-32 (Σὺ εἶ αὐτὸς κύριος μόνος· σὺ ἐποίησας τὸν οὐρανὸν ... σὺ ἐξελέξω ἐν Ἀβραμ ... καὶ εἶδες τὴν ταπεινωσιν τῶν πατέρων ἡμῶν ἐν Αἰγύπτῳ ... καὶ ἐν στύλῳ νεφέλης ὠδήγησας αὐτοὺς ἡμέρας ... καὶ νῦν, ὁ θεὸς ἡμῶν ... μὴ ὀλιγωθῆτω ἐνώπιόν σου πᾶς ὁ μόχθος...). For a succinct treatment of the 'Paradigmengebete', see A. Lumpe, 'Exemplum', *RAC*. Bd. 6 (1966), cols. 1229-1257 *passim*.

³ For a full discussion of the paradigmata in Gregory Nazianzen, see my book *Pagan and Biblical Exempla in Gregory Nazianzen: A Study in Rhetoric and Hermeneutics* (Corpus Christianorum, series *Lingua Patrum* 2; Turnhout-Steenbrugge, 1996).

trust in God by means of a paradigmatic prayer, after which the game came running along spontaneously, ready to be slaughtered (Τίς ἔγνω τοιοῦτον θήραμα;). Gregory paraphrases the prayer as follows:

Τί γάρ ἐστιν, ἔλεγον, τῶν ἀπίστων εἰ ὁ τῶν θαυμασιῶν Θεός, ὁ θρέψας πλουσίως ἐν ἐρήμῳ ξένον λαὸν καὶ φυγάδα ὥστε καὶ ἄρτον ὀμβρῆσαι καὶ βλύσαι ὄρνιθας, τρέφων οὐ τοῖς ἀναγκαίοις μόνον, ἀλλὰ καὶ τοῖς περιττοῖς· εἰ ὁ τεμὼν θάλατταν καὶ στήσας ἥλιον καὶ ποταμὸν ἀνακόψας — καὶ τᾶλλα δὴ ὑπειπόντες ὅσα πεποίηκε· φιλεῖ γὰρ ἐν τοῖς τοιοῦτοις φιλιστορεῖν ἢ ψυχὴ καὶ πολλοῖς θαύμασιν ἀνυμνεῖν τὸν Θεόν —, οὗτος, ἐπήγον, καὶ ἡμᾶς θρέψει σήμερον τοῖς τῆς τρυφῆς τοῦς τῆς εὐσεβείας ἀγωνιστάς.

Why, they said, should it be incredible that the God of miracles, who so generously nourished a wandering and fugitive people in the desert, as to rain down bread and supply them with quail, nourishing them not only with necessities, but with superabundance, who divided the sea, and made the sun stand still, and held back the river — and they added all the other things that He had done, for the soul tends in such circumstances to devote itself to such narratives and to glorify God for His many wonders — why should it be incredible, they went on, that the same God should also today nourish us, as athletes of the faith, with delicacies?⁴

From the four texts dealing with former paradigmatic prayers, the following information can be derived:

- (1) the exempla are indeed quoted as models to be used by God; in two texts this is connected with 'pious impudence' (ἀναισχυντεῖν);
- (2) in all four cases, we are faced with an emergency (illness or death threat), a situation which in the passage quoted Gregory explicitly describes as encouraging this kind of prayer;
- (3) Gregory states that both Old and New Testament episodes are appropriate as subject matter, but from the texts which also describe the prayer's content, a preference emerges for episodes from Exodus.

The third observation is confirmed by an analysis of the ten actual paradigmatic prayers we find among Gregory's verse (some of them are poems in their own right, as the one quoted as epigraph, others are part of elegiac poems)⁵. Half of the 54 exempla quoted in these ten paradigmatic prayers are episodes from Exodus, several of which recur frequently (the pillar of fire, the crossing of the Red Sea, the supplying of manna, the victory over Amalek, the passage of the Jordan). This preferential use of episodes from Exodus is, of

⁴ *Or.* 43,7 (*PG* 36,501C, translation L.P. McCauley, *Funeral Orations by Saint Gregory Nazianzen and Saint Ambrose* (The Fathers of the Church, a new translation, vol. 22; Washington, 1953), p. 32). The other prose instances are *or.* 8,18 (*PG* 35,809C) and *or.* 18,28 (*PG* 35, 1020B). For the verse passage, cf. *infra*.

⁵ The exact references of Gregory's paradigmatic prayers: three in *θρηνοι* (*carmina* II, 1, 46, vv. 39-50; II, 1, 50, vv. 69-78; II, 1, 51, vv. 32-36, each time as conclusion of the poem), three in elegiac-autobiographical poems (*carmina* II, 1, 1, vv. 1-23; II, 1, 1, vv. 577-595; II, 1, 19, vv. 90-98, as introduction or conclusion), four in/as prayers (*carmina* I, 1, 36; I, 1, 38; II, 1, 3, vv. 5-12; II, 1, 22a, vv. 1-12).

course, in keeping with the typical intention of the paradigmatic prayer: a call for rescue from an emergency.

My final remarks deal with the relation between exemplary histories and the actual situation, and with the literary form in which this relation is rendered. The interpretation of the paradigmatic prayers will also serve as an indication for the meaning of Gregory's biblical metaphors in general.

In his longest autobiographical poem, Gregory again gives an account of a paradigmatic prayer of his own. In this account, he partly describes the quoted exempla. Gregory is caught in a storm at sea between Alexandria and Athens:

πάντων δ' ὑπομνήσας σε τῶν πρὶν θαυμάτων,
οἷς τὴν μεγίστην χειρὰ σου γνῶρίζομεν,
Αἰγυπτίων μάστιξιν ἐκτετριμμένων,
πόντου ῥαγέντος Ἰσραὴλ ὄδευκότος,
χειρῶν ἐπάρσει δυσμενῶν ἠττημένων,
αὐτῆς στρατάρχαις τῆς κτίσεως δουλουμένης,
σάλπιγξι τειχῶν καὶ δρόμῳ πορθουμένων,
προσθεῖς τε τὰμὰ τοῖς πάλαι βοωμένοις,
"σός", εἶπον, "εἰμί, καὶ τὸ πρὶν καὶ νῦν ἔτι.

(...)

καὶ νῦν μαθητῆς ἐν σάλῳ· τίνασσέ μοι
τὸν ὕπνον ἢ πέζεε, καὶ στήτω φόβος".

*I reminded thee of all the miracles of time past
when we had experience of thy mighty hand:
of the affliction by scourges of the Egyptians;
of the sea sundered and the passage of Israel;
of enemies defeated by hands raised in prayer;
of the reduction to servitude of creation itself by the leaders;
of walls collapsing at the sound of the trumpet and the people's onset.*

And I added my own experiences to the famous works of old.

"Thine", I said, "I have been formerly, thine am I now.

(...)

*Now also thy disciple is tossed upon the wave. For my sake
dispel slumber, or walk to me, and let the fear be stilled"*⁶.

We recognize all of the typical features: the explicit model function (I reminded thee...), the emergency situation, the use of Old and New Testament episodes. Now what is interesting here is:

- (1) the combination of two types of insertion: the episodes from Exodus are quoted in a full exemplum (*I reminded thee of all the miracles of time past...*), whereas the New Testament episode is a metaphorical exemplum: Gregory

⁶ *Carmen* II, 1, 11, vv. 186-201 (*PG* 37, 1042-3, translation D. Meehan, *Saint Gregory of Nazianzus. Three Poems*. Translated by D.M. Meehan. Supplementary Notes by T.P. Halton (Washington, 1987), p. 82, adapted to the critical text by C. Jungck, *Gregor von Nazianz. De vita sua* (Heidelberg, 1974), and slightly changed). The exemplary histories alluded to in vv. 190 and 191 are the victory over Amalek (Ex 17,8-16) and Joshua making the sun stand still (Josh 10,12-14).

identifies himself with the apostles on the lake (*Now also thy disciple is tossed upon the wave*). The formula 'now also' (καὶ νῦν) asks for a repetition of Christ's salvific intervention⁷.

(2) the enumeration of God's biblical θαύματα, miracles, is supplemented by some events taken from Gregory's own life (*And I added my own experiences to the famous works of old*): the subject matter for his paradigmatic prayers is not only taken from the Bible, but also from his own life. In this way, here (as on some more occasions in his works) Gregory explicitly emphasizes the continuity of God's miraculous interventions.

This soteriological continuity is not explicitly expressed, but certainly implied in the paradigmatic prayer quoted at the outset of this paper:

*You who have guided an army with fire and cloud,
who by holding back the force of the waves
found a way through the sea for those who were pursued; (...)
now also come as a fellow traveller for your servant who calls you,
Christ, light of mortals, who make everything turn out right.*

The next step is a metaphorical paradigmatic prayer. The same episodes from Exodus are used in an allegory.

Χριστέ, φάος μερόπων, πυρόει στύλε Γρηγορίου
Ψυχῆ, πλαζομένη πικρῆς βιότου δι' ἐρήμης,
Σχῆς Φαραὼ κακόμητιν, ἀναιδέας ἐργοδιώκτας·
Καὶ πηλοῦ μ' ἀδέτοιο, καὶ Αἰγύπτιο βαρείης
Ἐξερύσαις, πληγῆσιν ἀεικελίησι δαμάσσας
Δυσμενέας, λείην δὲ πόροις ὁδόν. Ἦν δὲ κίχησιν
Ἐχθρὸς ἐπισπέρχων, σὺ δέ μοι καὶ πόντον ἐρυθρὸν
Τμήξιας, στερεὴν δὲ διεκπεράοιμι θάλασσαν,
Σπεύδων ἐς χθόνα διαν, ἐμὸν λάχος, ὥσπερ ὑπέστης·
Καὶ ποταμοὺς στήσειας ἀπείρονας, ἀλλοφύλων τε
Κλίνας θούριον ἐγχος, ἀγάστονον. Εἰ δ' ἐπιβαίην
Γῆς ἱερῆς, μέλπω σε διηνεκέεσσιν ἐν ὕμνοις.
*Christ, light of mortals, pillar of fire for Gregory's
soul, which wanders through the bitter desert of life,
stop the malevolent Pharaoh and his shameless taskmasters;
and deliver me from the loose clay, and from the burdensome Egypt;
conquer my enemies with shaming strokes,
and make smooth my way. And if the enemy who always menaces me
is on my heels, then divide the Red Sea for me,
so that I can cross a dry sea,
and haste me on my way to the divine land, my inheritance, as you have promised;
and hold back the immense rivers, and deflect the furious*

⁷ Καὶ νῦν is a recurring formula in paradigmatic prayers: see the opening prayer of Gregory himself, and the two examples quoted in n. 2, from Homer and Ezra.

*force of the strangers, which causes suffering. And if I enter the holy land, I will sing your praises in uninterrupted hymns*⁸.

Despite the allegorical use of the biblical histories, this kind of metaphorical exemplum implies, I think, not an allegorical but a typological exegesis of the biblical histories concerned: it presupposes and expresses typology as hermeneutics. Here again, two historical divine interventions are connected: the Exodus (the exemplary history) and Gregory's own rescue (the matter under discussion). The relation between both is not just an analogical one, as rhetoric prescribes, but a soteriological one. In general, the choice of many of Gregory's biblical exempla is not simply based on a similarity, but, at least in his eyes, on a *real* correspondence. The actual situation comes down to more than an analogous happening or even imitation of the exemplary history: it is a repetition, an actualization of it, with the same main actor (or director): through the biblical παράδειγμα, the present is denoted as a new miracle of God's power, in Gregory's own words: θαῦμα τῆς τοῦ θεοῦ δυναστείας⁹.

⁸ *Carmen* II, 1, 22a (PG 37, 1281).

⁹ *Or.* 4, 20 (PG 35, 549A). In this passage also, Gregory explicitly emphasizes the continuity of God's miracles: he considers the defeat of Julian as a new quasi-biblical intervention of God.

αἴτιος/‘Author’, αἰτία/‘Cause’ and ἀρχή/‘Origin’: Synonyms in Selected Texts of Gregory Nazianzen

John P. EGAN, S.J., Toronto

In a communication presented here four years ago, entitled ‘Paradox in Gregory Nazianzen’s Doctrine of the Trinity’, T.A. Noble maintained that αἴτιος/‘author’, as distinct from αἰτία/‘cause’, is used as a synonym for ἀρχή/‘origin’¹. Noble asserted that Gregory uses ‘cause’ to refer to the creation of the world and ‘author’ and ‘origin’ to refer to inter-trinitarian relations². In this communication, I wish to respond to Noble’s assertion of this distinction. I shall conclude, *pace* Noble, that the distinction is variable.

In Part I, I shall present and analyze a text which Noble cites and two additional texts where Gregory uses ‘author’ and ‘origin’ as synonyms in the context of inter-trinitarian relations. In Part II, I shall present and analyze another text where Gregory uses ‘cause’ and ‘origin’ as synonyms in the same context. In Part III, I shall conclude that Gregory sometimes uses ‘author’ but at other times uses ‘cause’ as a synonym for ‘origin’ in the context of inter-trinitarian relations.

Part I – ‘Author’ and ‘Origin’: Synonyms

Noble refers to no text to support his position that Gregory uses these terms as synonyms. But these terms do appear in *Or.* 25.15 to which Noble refers for another reason³. In the opinion of its most recent editor, Justin Mossay, *Or.* 25, entitled *On Heron*, written in praise of the Cynic philosopher Maximus, *alias* Heron, was delivered at Constantinople in 380⁴. The part of #15 which I shall focus upon reads as follows:

Define, too, our right belief by teaching others to acknowledge one unbegotten God, the Father Teach them not to subject the Father to an origin [ἀρχήν] Teach them not to regard the Son or the Holy Spirit as unoriginate For they are not unoriginate,

¹ T.A. Noble, ‘Paradox in Gregory Nazianzen’s Doctrine of the Trinity’, *Studia Patristica*, 27 (1993), p. 96.

² Noble, p. 96.

³ Noble, p. 96.

⁴ Justin Mossay, ed. and trans., in collaboration with Guy Lafontaine, *Grégoire de Nazianze, Discours 24-26* (Sources Chrétiennes, 284; Paris, 1981), pp. 116-117.

yet in a certain sense they are unoriginate. This statement seems self-contradictory, but expresses a possible truth. For they are not unoriginate with respect to Author [τὸ αἰτίω]; for they are from God, even if not after him, as light from the sun. But they are unoriginate with respect to time⁵.

Here Gregory calls upon Maximus to provide instruction concerning the mystery of the Trinity, and to dissuade others from subjecting the Father to an origin and from regarding the Son and the Spirit as unoriginate. Gregory describes them as originate because they have an author and as unoriginate because they are not subject to time. Gregory admits that to call Son and Spirit originate in one sense and unoriginate in another sense is to go beyond reason. Noble cites this passage because he stresses the paradoxical nature of Gregory’s trinitarian teaching⁶.

But this passage also supports Noble’s assertion that Gregory uses ‘author’ to refer to the inter-trinitarian relations. For here Gregory identifies the ‘author’ as God, i.e. the unbegotten God, the Father. This passage also indirectly supports Noble’s assertion that Gregory uses ‘author’ as a synonym for ‘origin’. For to refuse to subject the Father to an origin and to present Son and Spirit as originate because they have an author, the Father, is equivalent to using ‘author’ and ‘origin’ as synonyms. But this text is not the only passage where Gregory uses ‘author’ and ‘origin’ equivalently as synonyms. In his notes on this passage, Mossay refers to *Or.* 29.3⁷. *Or.* 29 entitled ‘On the Son, Oration One’ is the Third *Theological Oration* according to the 27-31 sequence. Paul Gallay assigns the delivery of the five *Theological Orations* to Constantinople between July and November 380⁸. The part of #3 which I shall focus upon reads as follows:

How is it, then, that these latter [Son and Spirit] are not like the Father in having no origin, if they are co-eternal with him?

Because they are **from** him, though not **after** him. ‘Being unoriginate’ necessarily implies ‘being eternal’, but ‘being eternal’ does not entail ‘being unoriginate’, so long as the origin [ἀρχήν] referred to is the Father. So because they [the Son and the Holy Spirit] have an author [τὸ αἰτίω — the Father] they are not unoriginate. But clearly an author is not necessarily prior to its effects — the Sun is not prior to its light. Because time is not involved, they are to that extent unoriginate...⁹.

Mossay refers to this passage because here too, as in *Or.* 25.15, Gregory uses the image of the sun and its light to make the point that the Father can be the

⁵ Text: Mossay, pp. 192 and 194; partial translation, slightly adapted: Noble, p. 96.

⁶ Noble, p. 96.

⁷ Mossay, *Grégoire de Nazianze, Discours 24-26*, p. 194, note 2.

⁸ Paul Gallay, ed. and trans., in collaboration with Maurice Jourjon, *Grégoire de Nazianze, Discours 27-31* (Sources Chrétiennes, 250; Paris, 1978), p. 14.

⁹ Text: Gallay-Jourjon, p. 182; Translation, slightly adapted: L. Wickham and F. Williams, *Faith Gives Fulness to Reasoning: The Five Theological Orations of Gregory Nazianzen* (Leiden, 1991), pp. 246-247.

author of the Son and Spirit without being prior to them¹⁰. Moreover, here in line 5, Gregory refers explicitly to the Father as origin, and in line 6 he refers implicitly to the Father as author.

André de Halleux refers to a third text where Gregory speaks of the Father as both origin and author. *Or.* 20.7¹¹. According to its most recent editor, Mossay, *Or.* 20, entitled 'On Theology and the Installation of Bishops' was probably written at Constantinople between spring 379 and summer 381¹². The part of #7 which I shall focus upon reads as follows:

Let the one God be retained, and let the Son and Spirit be referred to one Author [αἴτιον] (and not compounded or coalesced) in keeping with the unity and identity of the movement and will of the Divinity and the identity in essence. Let the three persons be retained, and let there be no thought of coalescence, dissolution or mixture, lest the whole [Godhead] be dissolved by those who exalt unity more than it is right to do. Let the properties be retained: those of the Father, thought of and spoken of as unoriginate and as origin. He is thought of and spoken of as origin *qua* author [ἀρχῆς δέ, ὡς αἰτίου] and source and eternal light¹³.

Here Gregory affirms that Father, Son and Spirit are one God, that the Father is without beginning, i.e., without author, and that the Son is united to the Father as to his author. Line 7, where Gregory refers to the Father as origin *qua* author, provides strong support for Noble's assertion that Gregory uses 'author' and 'origin' as synonyms to refer to the inter-trinitarian relations.

Part II – 'Cause' and 'Origin': Synonyms

Another text which Noble cites as an example of the paradoxical nature of Gregory's trinitarian teaching is *Or.* 40.43¹⁴. According to its most recent editor, Claudio Moreschini, *Or.* 40, entitled 'On Baptism' was probably delivered between Christmas 380 and Epiphany 381¹⁵. The part of #43 which I shall focus upon reads as follows:

I should like to call the Father the greater, because from him flows both the Equality and the Being of the Equals (this will be granted on all hands), but I am afraid to use the word Origin [ἀρχὴν], lest I should make Him the Origin of Inferiors, and thus insult Him by precedencies of honour. For the lowering of those Who are from Him is

¹⁰ Mossay, *Grégoire de Nazianze, Discours 24-26*, p. 194, note 2.

¹¹ André de Halleux, 'Personnalisme ou essentialisme trinitaire chez les Pères cappadociens? Une mauvaise controverse', *Revue théologique de Louvain*, 17 (1986), p. 149.

¹² Justin Mossay, ed. and trans., in collaboration with Guy Lafontaine, *Grégoire de Nazianze, Discours 20-23* (Sources Chrétiennes, 270; Paris, 1980), p. 202.

¹³ Text: Mossay, *Grégoire de Nazianze, Discours 20-23*, pp. 70 and 72.

¹⁴ Noble, p. 96.

¹⁵ Claudio Moreschini, ed. and Paul Gallay, trans., *Grégoire de Nazianze, Discours 38-41* (Sources Chrétiennes, 358; Paris, 1990), p. 22.

no glory to the Source [τῷ ἐξ οὗ]. Moreover, I look with suspicion at your insatiate desire, for fear you should take hold of this word Greater, and divide the Nature, using the word Greater in *all* senses, whereas it does not apply to the Nature, but only to Origination [αἰτίαν]. For in the Consubstantial Persons there is nothing greater or less in point of Substance¹⁶.

Here Gregory continues the profession of trinitarian faith which he began in #41¹⁷. Noble refers to the paradoxical expression which begins in lines 1-5, namely: 'The Father is greater in that he is the Origin and Source of the equality, and of those who are equal to him'¹⁸.

Noble continues and concludes his description of the paradox which Gregory expresses here by stating that the 'greater' in lines 6-7 'is applicable in one sense but not in another'¹⁹. This statement is a paraphrase of lines 7-8: 'Greater' does not apply to the nature, but only to 'origination'. Thus, the paradox which Gregory expresses in lines 1-9 is that the Father is greater as origin, source and origination, i.e. cause, but not by nature.

The noteworthy element in this passage is the linking of origin (ἀρχή) and origination/cause (αἰτία) in the context of inter-trinitarian relations. On this point this passage provides a contrast to the passages referred to previously, where 'origin' (ἀρχή) and 'author' (αἴτιος) were linked in the same context.

But there is a problem with the term 'origin' in line 3. Gregory says he is afraid to use the term. Frederick Norris takes this fear to mean that Gregory avoids the term²⁰. Norris maintains that Gregory seeks to avoid the term 'origin' when speaking of the Father, on occasions when he locates the monarchy, the unity, in the essence of God²¹. Norris makes this assertion apropos of *Or.* 29.2²². The part of #2 which I shall focus upon reads as follows:

Monotheism [μοναρχία], with its single governing principle, is what we value — not monotheism defined as the sovereignty of a single person (after all, self-discordant unity can become a plurality) but the single rule produced by equality of nature, harmony of will, identity of action, and the convergence towards their source of what springs from unity [πρὸς τὸ ἐν τῶν ἐξ αὐτοῦ σύννευσις] — none of which is possible in the case of created nature. The result is that though there is numerical division, there is no division in the being²³.

¹⁶ Text: Moreschini (Sources Chrétiennes, 358), p. 298; Translation: C.G. Browne and J.E. Swallow, *A Select Library of Nicene and Post-Nicene Fathers, Second Series, VII*, pp. 375-376.

¹⁷ Moreschini, p. 292, note 3.

¹⁸ Noble, p. 96.

¹⁹ Noble, p. 96.

²⁰ Frederick W. Norris, 'Gregory Nazianzen's Doctrine of Jesus Christ' (Diss. Yale, 1970), p. 117.

²¹ Norris, 'Doctrine', p. 117.

²² Norris, 'Doctrine', p. 116.

²³ Text: Gallay-Jourjon, p. 178; translation: Wickham and Williams, pp. 245-246.

Here, in lines 3-5, Norris finds a description of *μοναρχία* in the list of attributes: 'equality of nature, harmony of will, identity of action and the convergence towards their source of what springs from unity'²⁴.

But Norris recognizes that Gregory refers, within this list of attributes, to the Father as source, in the expression 'convergence toward their source of what springs from unity' (lines 4-5)²⁵. I note, in addition, that Gregory explicitly names the Father as origin in *Or.* 29.3, line 5, and that in *Or.* 20.7 lines 1-3, where Gregory gives a similar description of *μοναρχία* without mentioning the term, he explicitly refers to the Father as origin *qua* author (line 7).

Noble asserts that Gregory uses *ἀρχή* to refer only to the Father as origin of the Son and Spirit²⁶. But Norris differentiates between what he calls the monarchy of God which Gregory attaches to the Trinity (*Or.* 29.2, lines 3-5) and the reference to the Fathers as *ἀρχή* (*Or.* 29.3, line 5), and Norris suggests that Gregory's view of *ἀρχή* is ambiguous²⁷. John McGuckin provides an alternative to Norris' suggestion by stating that origination and reciprocal relations are the dynamic order which constitutes the Trinity²⁸. McGuckin's comment explains why Gregory includes a reference to the Father as origin (*Or.* 29.3, line 5) in the section following his description of *μοναρχία* (*Or.* 29.2, lines 3-5).

I agree, then, with Noble²⁹ that Norris is incorrect when he affirms that Gregory avoids the term 'origin' in *Or.* 40.43. I suggest instead that the Greek *δέδοικα*, translated 'I am afraid' in *Or.* 40.43, line 2, is a gnomic perfect. It may denote a habitual feeling. Despite that habitual feeling, Gregory does not avoid the term 'origin' in *Or.* 40.43, line 2. He uses it along with 'source' and 'origination' i.e. 'cause' to explain the sense in which the Father is greater.

Part III – Summary and Conclusions

In Part I, on the basis of the analysis of three texts of Gregory, I agree with Noble's assertion that Gregory uses 'author' and 'origin' as synonyms in the

²⁴ Frederick W. Norris, intro. and comm., Lionel Wickham and Frederick Williams, trans., *Faith Gives Fullness to Reasoning: The Five Theological Orations of Gregory Nazianzen* (Leiden, 1991), p. 133.

²⁵ Norris, 'Doctrine', p. 116.

²⁶ Noble, p. 96.

²⁷ Norris, 'Doctrine', p. 118.

²⁸ John McGuckin, "'Perceiving Light from Light in Light'" (*Oration 30.3*): The Trinitarian Theology of St. Gregory the Theologian', *The Greek Orthodox Theological Review*, 39 (1994), p. 29.

²⁹ Noble, p. 97, note 18.

context of inter-trinitarian relations. In Part II, the analysis of another text where Gregory uses 'origination', i.e. 'cause' and 'origin' in the same context, leads me to suggest, *pace* Noble, that Gregory sometimes uses 'author' and 'cause' as synonyms in the context of inter-trinitarian relations.

Finally, McGuckin has commented that, for Gregory, both origination and reciprocal relations belong to the *μοναρχία* which the three Divine persons establish in themselves. Applying his comment to the texts analyzed here prompts me to suggest some consistency in Gregory's application of the terms 'author', 'cause' and 'origin' to the Father in the context of inter-trinitarian relations.

Gregors von Nyssa in Cant.: Einige Beobachtungen zur mystischen Konstruktion biblischer Offenbarung

Ignacio ESCRIBANO-ALBERCA, Bamberg

1. Die Frage nach der Offenbarung

Ist der Begriff Offenbarung ein solcher, der überhaupt zentral und unbedingt in einem mystischen Entwurf vorkommen sollte? Eine 'personale Gottesmystik' — wie allgemein jene Mystik zu nennen ist, die auf dem Boden der biblischer Offenbarung basiert — ist aber in irgendeiner Form auf Thematisierung von Offenbarung angewiesen¹. Der Terminus φανέρωσις prädoppiert statisch, zumal wenn die Interrelation AT-NT angesprochen wird². Mit dem Terminus verbindet aber Gregor keine besondere Ambitionen. Anders steht es mit ἔλλαμψις — aufscheinende Erleuchtung —. Ἐλλαμψις ist ein Terminus, der zu den inspirativen Momenten dieser mystischen Offenbarung gut passt. Inspiration und Offenbarung lassen sich kaum trennen, bei einem merkwürdigen Rückfall in Philo und in Koinzidenz mit dem Neuplatonismus. Dies lässt sich spüren im Traktat, wenn die synergetische Einwirkung des Logos zu Wort kommt³. Ἐλλαμψις verdrängt φανέρωσις in der Kennzeichnung der Offenbarung im NT: τέλεια τοῦ φωτός ἔλλαμψις γίνεται (V, 145, 6-7). AT — Prophetie und Gesetz — war nur ἀγῆ — claritas —, wobei genannte ἀγῆ aus dem AT grosszügigerweise auch ἔλλαμψις sein dürften (V, 145, 10)⁴.

¹ Zur Terminologie R. Ottos — personale Gottesmystik und impersonale Unendlichkeitsmystik — vgl. Fr. Heiler, *Das Gebet*, (1920), S. 265. Vgl. Heiler a.a.O. S. 262: 'Die Idee der Offenbarung (...) ist der Mystik innerlich fremd', und ebd. über die Umformung der Offenbarung und Heilsgeschichte durch Philo, christliche Mystik und Sufismus. G. van der Leeuw, *Phänomenologie der Religion* (Tübingen 1956), S. 574: 'Alles Einzelne, Besondere, Historische der Religion ist der Mystik letztlich gleichgültig'. Bekanntlich war die Negierung der Legitimität des Offenbarungsbegriffes in der hinduistischen Mystik ein Herzanliegen S. Radhakrishnans, auch was Relikte von Offenbarungsterminologie in den Veden anging.

² Zur φανέρωσις im in Cant.: IV, 107, 7; 126,9; V, 140,11; 141,10; 148,4-5 und 14-17; 161,13-14; IX, 262,4; XV, 436,7.

³ Vgl. W. Beierwaltes, *Proklos. Grundzüge seiner Metaphysik* (Frankfurt/M 1965), S. 288 über Erleuchtung — ἔλλαμψις — bei Proklos. Vgl. auch a.a.O. S. 290-93. Ders., *Lux intelligibilis. Untersuchung zur Lichtmetaphysik der Griechen* (München, 1957), S. 24ff. über ἔλλαμψις. Beide Werke reich an Literatur zum Terminus.

⁴ Λάμπειν und dessen Komposita in etlichen Varianten: λάμψαι τοῖς ἔθνεσιν (XV, 436,6-7), verbunden mit φανέρωσις; ἡ σοφία διέλαμψε (VIII, 205,10), mit der Folge der Bekehrung Israels; τοῦ φωτός (...) λάμπαντος bei der Bekehrung der Seele des Hohenliedes (II, 57,15-16); auch die Gnade der Taufe hat diesen Charakter: τὴν ἐκλαμπετικὴν τοῦ φωτισματος Χάριν (II,

Es ist kaum möglich, einen Offenbarungsbegriff innerhalb eines mystischen Kontexts sub vitro zu isolieren, da alles — und gerade die Akte der Analogien und Reziprozitäten zwischen Logos und Seele werden dies belegen — unter dem hohen Anspruch des Epiphanischen steht, welches sich meistens durch Licht-Terminologie kundtut. So die Offenbarung an Moses (XII, 355, 3-4): φωτίζεται, und die ἀκοὴ περιουγάζεται, nach der Philo-Vorlage. Wenn die Kirchenväter ihre Version des Christentums als inkarnatorischer Religion in einem Satz gerne wiedergegeben haben (man denke an Athanasios), so sei hier der Satz Gregors aus dem Schlusskapitel des Kommentars (XV, 448, 13-14) erwähnt: δια τοῦτο ἐπεφάνη ἡ τοῦ θεοῦ χάρις φωτίζουσα ἡμᾶς.

Überdies, die schon angesprochene, inspirierende Haltung des Logos in diesem mystischen Ludus ufert aus in Gnadenmitteilungen an die Seele, die das Ganze privatisieren.

Weit schwieriger ist die Kategorisierung einer weiteren Offenbarungskategorie: Wohlgeruch. Bekanntlich ist Wohlgeruch, Aroma überhaupt, eine flexible Kategorie, die sowohl die offenbarende-inspirierende Tätigkeit des Logos als auch die Teilhabe, oder Antwort der frommen Kreatur umfasst. Es gibt sich, dass εὐωδία, ἀρώματα etc. auch als Offenbarungsbegriffe zu würdigen sind. Als Beleg dafür möge man die passim apostrophierte, sozusagen hypostasierte Χριστοῦ εὐωδία hernehmen. Ἐυωδία ist deutlich als Offenbarung angesprochen an den Stellen, wo sie mit dem Unerreichbaren, nämlich mit dem Begreifen der οὐσία des Logos in Zusammenhang gebracht wird: das Vage und Undeterminierte des Wohlgeruches kann verglichen werden mit den ὁμοιώματα τοῦ χρυσοῦ — also nicht das eigentliche Gold — (III, 85,18)⁵. Die insinuiierende Offenbarung des Logos — εὐωδία — bewirkt viel, aber es ist nicht möglich, davon ausgehend, in die οὐσία des Logos vorzudringen (III, 89, 14-16).

52,12-13). Erleuchtung bei der Bekehrung und die Offenbarungserleuchtung lassen sich kaum trennen: vgl. ἐπιλάμψαι II, 48,8; ähnlich τοῦ φωτός λάμπαντος II, 57,15-16; διὰ τῆς λόγου ἔλλαμψεως I, 40,5 ist die Erleuchtung an die Braut.

Über ἔλλαμψις bei Gregor vgl. Walther Völker, *Gregor von Nyssa als Mystiker* (Wiesbaden 1955), S. 152: die Illumination im Gebet, etc., aber nicht spezifische Offenbarungsterminologie. Derselbe, *Kontemplation und Ekstase bei Pseudo-Dionysius Areopagita* (Wiesbaden 1958), S. 86: ἔλλάμψις (Walten des Pneuma im Menschen) beim Areopagita, auf Gregor von Nyssa zurückgeführt; S. 140-41: ἔλλάμψις und der Einfluss des Gregor von Nazianz; vgl. auch S. 169; 173; 177 (inspirative Einwirkungen Gottes); S. 178: Areopagita und Gregor von Nyssa (die θεία δωρεά und die ἔλλαμψις).

⁵ Vgl. III, 86,9; III, 89,1. Vgl. I, 36,15-37,14 über βραχὺ τι λείψανον ἄτμου τῆς θείας εὐωδίας.

2. Weitergabe der religiösen Erfahrung

Die Terminologie zu diesem Paragraphen liefert uns Gregor sehr deutlich: *διάδοσις*, Weitergabe eines Anteils (I, 40,17)⁶. Dies ist die Art der Jünger des Logos, Erfahrungen, die sie durch ihn gemacht haben, weiterzugeben. Die oben angepeilte Struktur Offenbarung kam gewiss dünn vor; durch die Hinzufügung der festen Struktur *διάδοσις* — die an Offenbarung, bildlich gesprochen, angenäht ist — gelangen wir zu einem eindeutig mystisch-inspirativen Offenbarungsbegriff.

In einer urzeitlichen Zeit, das in illo tempore des Mythos in der Auffassung des Mircea Eliade, ist die Braut des Hohenliedes die erste Seele, die vom Logos mit Tugenden und Mysterien angefüllt worden ist. In der Nachfolge der Braut bekunden die Jungfrauen — *νεανίδες* — folgendes Begehren: So wie du die Brüste des Logos über alles liebst, so werden wir in deiner Nachfolge auch *τοὺς σοὺς μάζους* — der Braut Brüste — lieben, durch die du die Milch für die Säuglinge lieferst (I, 41, 1-3). Dies ist die Quintessenz der *διάδοσις*. Die *Autoptai* der alexandrinischen Tradition behalten dies, was sie empfangen haben, nicht für sich, sondern geben es weiter *ἐκ διαδόσεως* (I, 40, 12). Der Apostel Johannes exemplifiziert diesen Vorgang: auch er 'liebte die Brüste des Logos, da er sich beim Abendmahl anlehnte an die Brust Christi' und zwar von der Quelle des Lebens wie ein Schwamm — *σπογγία* — aufzog, worauf er voll wurde *τινός ἀρρήτου διαδόσεως* — 41,1 —. Was Johannes empfing, behielt er nicht für sich, sondern er hält uns hin die von Logos angefüllte Mutterbrust — *ἡμῖν ἐπέχει τὴν πλεροθεῖσαν ὑπο τοῦ λόγου θηλήν* — (I, 41,10-11). Mit dem bizarren Bild werden wir noch zweimal konfrontiert: Auch der hochkarätige Offenbarungsüberbringer Paulus 'schloss nicht in sich die Gnade ein, ἀλλ' ἐπέχει τοῖς δεομένους τοῦ λόγου τὴν θηλήν (VII, 242,11). In einem dritten Fall wird die *θηλή* des Logos als die Milch-Stufe, der Festen-Nahrung-Stufe entgegengesetzt, erwähnt (XV, 400, 5-6).

Auf zwei Qualifikationen der Offenbarungs- oder Erfahrungsvermittler sollte man aufmerksam machen: Sie haben die Erfahrung nicht für sich behalten, also wären sie *ἄφθονοι*, wie die platonisch-christlich verstandene göttliche Bonitas, die sich verströmt, wie dies klar die mitgeteilten Stellen über Johannes und Paulus belegen⁷; sie sind zweitens nicht mehr an Stimmen der Menschen angewiesen⁸, was man übersetzen kann: *ἄνευ διακονίας*, das alte Ideal

⁶ Zur Terminologie, XV, 467,13-14: *Diadosis* der *Doxa* des heiligen Geistes durch die Jünger; sehr allgemein XV, 453,11-12: *πάν ἐπιτήδευμα* (...) *διαδίδεται*.

Über *διάδοσις* beim *Areopagita*, mit einigen Stellen von Gregor von Nazianz, die aber nicht den Institutionscharakter durchblicken lassen, vgl. Walther Völker, *Kontemplation und Ekstase* ..., S. 140 (*Diadosis* im Plural), bei Gregor von Nazianz; s. 173: *Dionysius* (auch im Plural).

⁷ Or. XV, 403,3. über Paulus als *φιάλη*.

⁸ Die Braut begehrt *μηκέτι δι' ἑτέρων* den Logos zu sehen (VV, 178,18-19); Paulus ist nicht mehr an Menschenstimmen angewiesen: XIV, 403,7-8.

der Unmittelbarkeit zu Gott nach Philo. Somit erheben sich diese Zeugen vor uns als die hochqualifizierte Erleuchtete einer mystischen Religion⁹.

Ein ähnlich qualifiziertes Phänomen, das die Weitergabe der Urfahrung zum Inhalt hat, ist das Wohlgeruch. Dem unbestimmtesten — und aristokratischen — aller Sinne, dem Geruchsinn, ist das Wohlgeruch zugeordnet. Ihm kommt eine manifestative, erfahrungsvermittelnde Aufgabe zu, die an Eindeutigkeit dem *Kerygma*, nach Bultmann, nicht nachsteht. Paulus, als *vas electio-*nis, ist eine Wohlgerüche ausströmende *φιάλη* (XIV, 403,19). Als solches Gefäß hat Paulus *τὸ ἄρωμα* unter den Völkern verbreitet (405,15). Paulus hatte sich selber beschrieben als *Χριστοῦ εὐωδία* (2 Cor, 2,15). Der Geruch aus der von der Magdalena vorweggenommenen Einbalsamierung des Heilands wird als *διάδοσις* eingestuft (III, 93,1-9).

Pater Daniélou, bei der Behandlung des Wohlgeruches, dem er sogar eine grössere Präsenz als dem Gesichtssinn gönnt, zeigt die Tendenz, diese Phänomene innerhalb des Reinigungsweges angesiedelt sein zu lassen. Wohlgeruch, trotz seiner ethischen Dimensionen, ist vor allem die Botschaft.

Da in einer Mystik alles fließt, sollte man zur Mutterbrust und Aroma andere Entitäten hinzuzählen, die funktionell dasselbe erreichen, so z.B. das verwandelte Antlitz des Begnadeten — *κάτοπτρον* —, oder Kirche — auch *κάτοπτρον* —, aber bei diesen Grössen findet sich nicht im Kommentar die Qualifikation *διάδοσις*¹⁰.

Wir enden diesen Paragraphen mit derselben Verlegenheit — nämlich Mangel an Eindeutigkeit — wie Paragraph 1, denn innerhalb eines mystischen Systems, wo kaum ein Faktum ausserhalb des Reziprozitätsgeflechtes steht, wäre eigentlich überall *διάδοσις* auszumachen.

3. Analogien und Korrelationen zwischen dem Logos und der Seele

Trotz der harten Grenzziehung zwischen Geschöpflichkeit und Gottheit — *διάστημα* — und der Konsistenz der ontologischen Rangordnungen, die keine Durchlässigkeit zulassen, ist im Kommentar ständig in Bewegung ein wogendes Meer von essentiellen Aussagen, Qualitäten, ontologisch konnotativen Bildern, das ein Gemeinsames zwischen dem Logos und der Seele herstellt. Sie

⁹ *Διάδοσις*-Charakter hat die lange Beschreibung XV, 432ff. der Bekehrung der Jünger aus Joh 1: *Philippos περιλάμπει τὸν Ναθαναὴλ δαδουχήσας αὐτῷ τὸ (...) μυστήριον* (XV, 432,11-12). Die Termini geraten hier in die Nähe des Mysterischen. Bei Andreas gibt es nur *φωνή* als Vermittlung — die des Täufers —, er wurde nur geführt — *ὡδηγήθη* —; Nathanael empfängt *ἐπιστατικῶς* — andächtig-konzentriert — das Mysterium und wurde erleuchtet — *φωταγωγηθεῖς* — durch Philippos (XV, 434,8-9). Bei der Erleuchtung der Jungfrauen in Brautfolge, die eine Verlängerung jener Szene ist, gibt es *ἐπόπτεια* (XV, 435,6).

¹⁰ Die Gestalt des Bräutigams *ἐν ἐμοὶ καθορᾶται* (XV, 440,10). Kirche ist auch manifestatives Spiegel, wie die Braut: VIII, 256,21-257,5.

sind, wie man sich heute sprachphilosophisch ausdrücken würde, Versinnbildlichung eines Begriffes — also keine blosser Darstellung oder Exemplifizierung. In *partibus infidelium* redet man auch von Allegorie, bei uns aber ist Allegorie zu kompliziert und vorbelastet. Für mich persönlich sind dies kleine Mythen, aus dem sanktionierenden Gebrauch dieses Materials im Hohenlied entnommen. Die Arbeitsweise des Autors läuft hier abseits der offenbarungstheologischen Kategorien. Der Römer-Brief darf ruhig warten auf seine Wiederentdeckung durch die Reformatoren. Paulus, als Mystiker, wurde nicht mal so einseitig von Origenes in Beschlag genommen. Resultat des Spiels der Analogien, Gemeinsamkeiten, Korrespondenzen ist eine — auch ontologische — Nivellierung, jene Nivellierung der menschlichen und der göttlichen Welt, die diastama-freundlichen, zumal protestantischen Theologen gerügt haben — auch gegen die Mystik in den eigenen Reihen.

Wohl gemerkt: in diesem Paragraphen kommt eine Dimension der Theologie Gregors zum Tragen, die für die Umkreisung des Themas Mystik vielleicht die wichtigste ist. Dieser *Ludus de sponsa Deique Verbo mirandus* atmet Geistigkeit, Reichtum, Fülle erst im Geflecht der Bespiegelungen und der unendlichen Reflektionen von einer Ecke zur anderen. Alles ist in Bewegung geraten, wie dies, um ein Beispiel zu nennen, das Wasser als tragender Mythos im 'Le Soulier de Satin' von Paul Claudel tut: die Ozeane trennen, das Wasser des Ozeans verbindet, die menschliche Tragikomödie lässt sich auf so einem wackeligen Grund wie das inkonsistente Element Wasser spielen; von einem Ende des Ozeans kommt schliesslich zum anderen Ende Flaschenpost... Hier blieb Gregor unnachahmlich. Allerdings, wenn man die Ketten von Bild-Assoziationen des Kommentars als obsoleter Erscheinung unbeachtet oder als pure Rhetorik relegiert sein lässt, hat man gut ein Viertel des Buches nicht gelesen und nicht gewürdigt.

Nun, um gleich bei zwei Analogien des Seins anzufangen, die den Aufstieg in die andere Bilder legitimieren helfen: das Göttliche steht im Bereich des *νοητόν*, der Mensch gehört sich zum selben Bereich. *Νοῦς* bei Gott und *νοῦς* bei Menschen ist eine Aussage, die bei Origenes genügt, um ihn zu den Anhängern einer bestimmten Form der Analogie zuzurechnen.

Anthropologisch ist der Mensch des Unendlichen fähig — *μη πέρας* —, was die ständige Anstachelung des *πόθος* und der *ἐπιθυμία* mit sich bringt: *μη κόρος*, nie Stättigung ist das Resultat. Auf der Seite des Göttlichen steht seine — reell unendliche — Unendlichkeit — *ἄπειρον* —, welche die Anspornung zur Weitersuche begründet — wenn man will, auch hierin Partnerschaft — ... Dies Gemeinsame in der jeweiligen Rangordnung des Seins lässt zu, über die ontologische Verankerung der Qualitäten nachzudenken, die im Kommentar ständig beide Ebenen tangieren und die Interaktion zu einer dramaturgisch gelungenen überhöhen.

Nun einige Beispiele aus diesen Bildern: Licht, Wasser, Aroma, Frucht ...

Der Logos ist vorranzig ein *Φῶς*-Phänomen, seine inspirierende Offenbarung ist *ἔλλαμψις*; die Braut — die Kreatur — strahlt in der Begnadigung

Licht aus, oder zurück: *στιλβούσα* (II, 51,13), auf die Existenz vor dem Fall bezogen; *συνεξέλαμψε* (IV, 104,14); *λάμπουσα* in jeder Situation. Von Moses gilt selbstredend, dass er zu einer Sonne wird, *τὸ φῶς ἀπαστράπτων* (XII, 355,13-14). Der begnadete Mensch lebt *ἐν φωτί*, umleuchtend — *περιαυγάζων* — (XI, 317,12-13). Die Schöpfung *κατ' εἰκόνα* macht aus der Kreatur Sterne — *φωστῆρες* —. Die Neuschöpfung, die die Kirche ist, glänzt durch das *ἄστρον πλήθος*, die *ἡλιοι πολλοί*, *τὴν οἰκουμένην φωτίζοντες* (XIII, 385,1-21).

Um das Thema Wasser kurz anzusprechen: Mit Jer 2,13 wird das Göttliche zum *πηγὴ ὕδατος* (XIII, 397,10ff.). Mehrmals wird das *πλήρωμα τῶν ὑδάτων*, das in der Kirche ist, angesprochen (vgl. XIII, 397,10-12). Die Tugenden sind auch ein solches *πλήρωμα ὑδάτων* (XIII, 395,13ff.). Ein richtiges Verhältnis zum *πλήρωμα ὑδάτων* sollen die Kirchenführer pflegen (XIII, 398,1ff.). Zu *ποταμοί* werden die Kreaturen, wenn sie an die Worte Jesu glauben (XIV, 414,9-13, nach Joh 7,38).

Die Interaktion Braut-Logos kommt an einer prägnanten Stelle sehr klar zum Tragen (IX, 293,10-20). Es ist die *Oratio IX*, wo Gregor sehr offen von Gelungensein der *ὁμοίωσις τῷ θεῷ* bei der Braut spricht. Hier heisst es, da die Braut *πηγὴ* geworden ist: *μεμίμηται γὰρ δι' ἀκριβείας τῇ μὲν πηγῇ τὴν πηγῆν (...)* *τὸ δὲ ὕδωρ τῷ ὕδατι* (IX, 293,11-12). Die nivellierende Wirkung der Mystik kann nicht höher gehen. Vgl. (XII, 367,4-5): *φρέαρ γίνεται ὕδατος ζῶντος*, mit der Folge, dass die Braut den Durstigen den Logos (367,18) spendet, wie aus einem Brunnen.

Wenn die erwähnte Bilder ihre Gemeinschaftlichkeit stiftende Wirkung sozusagen durch die ganze 'Kette des Seins' — soweit von einem Mystiker gesehen: Gott, Logos, Natur, Mensch (Braut, Kirche) — verbreiten, so gilt dies erst recht für das Bild Aroma, das schon in den zwei ersten Paragraphen angeführt wurde. Die Wangen des Logos sind Gefässe des Aromas (XIV, 400,8). Der Logos ist ansonsten Aroma (404,1-4; er ist Lilie, *κρίνον*, *passim*). Wenn wir hier auf der Offenbarungsebene sind, so geht es herunter zur *διάδοσις* mit Paulus, *vas electionis*, *φιάλη* des Wohlgeruchs (403,21). In einem Zwischenterrain steht die kirchliche *διδασκαλία* (401,21: 403,12)¹¹. Die Braut steht in der Partizipation dieser Gnade auf derselben Ebene wie die Kirche. (Nur so, beiläufig: Braut, Menschheit, Kirche sind im Kommentar das eine und dasselbe). Wichtig ist die Mitteilung Or. VI, 176,2: 'sie — die Braut — erkennt das göttliche Wohlgeruch mit Hilfe der eigenen Narde', was eine Parallele zum Erkennen durch das Spiegel der Seele hindurch bewirft.

Bei der Auflistung dieser Bilder wurden nur die wichtigsten davon genannt. *Καρπός* muss abschliessend genannt werden, da hier die Reziprozität in der Beziehung Logos-Braut sehr plastisch zum Ausdruck kommt. *Καρπός* ist eine offenbarungsmässige, übernatürliche Grösse — der Logos selbst — (IX,

¹¹ Vgl. XIV, 405,3; die Stimme der Kirche auch als *κρίνον*.

283,4; 8); die Braut aber wird zu einer exquisiten Obstfrucht, die dem Gärtner (X, 304,7-9) (dem Logos) delectiert¹².

4. Seelen- und Logosmystik

4.a. Die Dramatik des Aufstiegs

Bekehrung, *μετάνοια*, ist der Anfang des Traktats Gregors: hierin beginnt Geschichte überhaupt, die Geschichte nach dem Fall, die in der Wiedereinbringung aller Dinge enden soll. Es stellt sich die Frage: wie bringt man Bewegung und Dramatik in die Aufstiegslinie, wenn man im weiteren Verlauf auf Bekehrung verzichtet?^{12a} Das Gekünstelte des Vorgangs fasziniert ebenso wie die beschworene Dramatik. Der Weg der Braut ist hart. Die gerade Linie gibt es nicht, sondern ein Hinauf und Herunter, ein Zig-Zag, was durch die metaphysischen Prinzipien bedingt ist. Die literarisch-dramaturgische Kunstgriffe Gregors, von den genannten Prinzipien unabhängig, beschwören die Schwierigkeiten des Weges. Sie machen klar, dass Mystik in ein System von Beziehungen eingehüllt ist. Der Meister glänzt durch seine Kunst. Als metaphysische Prinzipien, die durchgehend beim jeweiligen Neubeginn (*ἀρχή*) aus der verifizierbaren Nacktheit der Seele heraus proklamiert werden, zählen die bekannten Grössen: der Anspruch der *ὑπερκειμένα* (die jeweils aufschimmernde Weite der Transzendenz), die so eine Anpeitschung darstellen können wie das kategorische Imperativ nach Kant; in einer milderer Fassung zählen die Verheissungen — *ἀγαθαὶ ἐλπίδες* —; als metaphysisches *rien ne va plus* die Konstatierung, dass die Fähigkeit des Unendlichen auf Seiten der Seele mit der Unendlichkeit Gottes korrespondiert, obwohl dies zugleich die Grenze schlechthin ist ... So entsteht der wunderschöne Begriff von *πόθος*, Verlangen, Sehnsucht, was ein Schüler von Lévinas heute mit *le Désir infini* übersetzen würde. Und so wird kausal begründet das Diastema, die strahlenfunkenden Polen der Distanz, von einem Ende zum anderen.

Aber zurück zum Thema Dramaturgie: In der Oratio V wird die neue *ἀρχή* damit begründet, alles, was bis jetzt die Seele durchgemacht hatte, stünde

¹² Bilder sind Bild-Multiplikatoren, z.B. Aroma, das die ganze Üppigkeit der Blumen, Wälder, Gärten ... beschwört. Jede Pflanze ist durch eine symbolische Valenz gezeichnet. Nicht zu verkennen ist die Neigung, Gottes Welt als eine plurale, buntscheckige auszumachen. Die Schwärmerei Gregors für das *ποικίλον*, zuallererst für die Sophia (Oikonomia), aber dann auch für Bäume des Waldes, Tugenden, die Macht des Logos, in loser Folge — erinnert an den Satz des Sankara: 'Die Fülle aber besteht in der Lust. Im Geringen ist keine Lust. Die Fülle also muss man zu erkennen suchen. Denn die Fülle ist das Unsterbliche, das Geringe aber ist das Sterbliche' (Apud Rudolf Otto, *West-Östliche Mystik* (München 1971), S. 64).

^{12a} Ein zweites Mal spielt Bekehrung eine Rolle: als *ἀποστροφή* (aversio) τοῦ κακοῦ (IV, 103,9), aber der Herausgeber empfiehlt, 'Paideia as conversion' nach Werner Jaeger als Deutungsschema zu nehmen.

unter dem Vorzeichen der *φωνή* (die Stimme des Logos), noch nicht aber der *ῥρασις* (V, 138,8ff.). Dies aber ist keine Rekonstruktion des alexandrinischen Mysteriums, sondern literarisch geschickte Verzögerungstaktik. Der Meister arrangiert einen wohlgeordneten Aufstieg.

Bei der Schilderung der Peripetie Cant 3,6 (die Aufsteigende, wie eine Rauchsäule) erfindet Gregor eine Art Geresie — die Freunde des Bräutigams — (VI, 186,19), die wie in der Tragödie die böse Wendung feststellt, und dies nur so tun kann, weil sie von einer veränderten Perspektive hineinschaut: man sieht nurmehr 'woher sie heraufkommt', nämlich aus dem wüsten Land, wie nach Eliot. Ein zweites kommt zur Erklärung hinzu: Eine ganze Seite widmet Gregor der Metapher Plotins vom Welttheater und von der Seele als Schauspieler; diesmal sei der Schauspieler, die Seele, bei der Darstellung einer schmerzvollen Rolle, also ganz unten ertappt. Gregor hätte es sich leichter machen können mit dem Ausspruch des Rumi, der arme Liebender sei wie die Katze im Sack, sie sei mal oben, mal unten. (VI, 185,20-186,12).

Bei einem Passus kurz zuvor, wo der Seele die Gnade gewährt wurde, den Ersehnten — *ποθοῦμενον* — zu empfangen, 'erneut wie des Gutes bedürftig' *ὀδύρεται καὶ (...) ἀμηχανεῖ καὶ δυσχεραίνει* (VI, 179,16-17): die Braut macht Seelenturbulenzen wie die Medea des Euripides durch.

Beispiele weniger dramatischen Anläufe: die noch dürstige Braut begehrt, zum Hause des Weins gelangen zu können (IV, 199,18-120,2); von da aus macht sie eine neue *ἀρχή*: sie will nämlich umgehend in der *ἀγάπη* installiert werden. (IV, 120,16-17).

Diese Beispiele mögen belegen, dass Gregor das Spiel in seiner Mystik liebt. Das Spiel dürfte den Systematisierungsabsichten nicht fern sein. Nun aber: die diastematische Momente, die hier aufgezeichnet wurden, sind der systemimmanente Widerspruch zur Grazie des Spiels, sowie zu den vorhin im 3. Paragraphen zur Schau gestellten Nivellierungsbildern — Aroma, Frucht, etc. —. Mystik der unaufhebbaren Polaritäten ist ein sehr ernster Ludus.

4.b. Der Aufstieg

Nach der Seite der Gelungenheiten der Braut betrachtet, ist der Aufstieg das Werk eines umsichtig durchgeführten Planes. Von Kapitel zu Kapitel — manche zeigen die Tendenz zur Monothematik — kommt die Schönheit der Braut zum Aufblühen, bis sie Ende der Or. XV zum *θησαυρός*, Schatzkammer aller Tugenden und Mysterien, deklariert wird¹³. Das Buch ist als Mystik der Seele aufgefasst, weshalb Gregor bei seinen ständigen Rekapitulationen des durchgenommenen Stoffes die jeweils erworbenen Titel der Braut aufzählt. Die Seelenmystik ist in der Logos-Mystik überhöht. Von der Seite der Logos-Mystik betrachtet, ist der Diskurs eine Liebesintrige. Die Einstimmung des Buches als

¹³ *θησαυρός*, XV, 455 (4 Male); bei Konstatierung der *ὁμοιωσις*, IX, 270,9: *θησαυρός*; XI, 319,7-8 erschien schon die Braut geschmückt τοῖς ἰδίους *θησαυροῖς*.

Seelen-Mystik ist die vom aufsteigenden, agonalen Eros umflorte Umwerbung des Geliebten¹⁴, zu der der Logos in entscheidenden Situationen Entsprechung bietet. Eros findet eine dezidierte Korrektur in der ἀγάπη-Haltung des Logos¹⁵. Es passiert auch hier, dass mitten in einem konventionellen Diskurs schrecklich grosse Konzessionen und Gaben an die Braut gemacht werden, die innerhalb der Welt der Ökonomie Gültigkeit haben, obwohl in Hinblick auf die Mauer der Transzendenz auch diese Gelungenheiten verrelativiert werden.

Die Braut steht mitten im Geflecht der im Paragraph 3 genannten Beziehungen und Korrespondenzen, sozusagen Bereicherungen. Es lässt sich die Sorge des Autors nachspüren, die Braut, nach dem schweren Gang durch diese Buntheit der Beziehungen zum Grad der schlichten Schönheit zu führen, die sie in der Protologie besass. Ὁμοίωσις ist das Stadium der Entwicklung, wo das nur Moralische des Buches aufhört, fast so wie bei Kierkegaard das religiöse Stadium das Moralische auflöst. Πέρας der Arete, also des Strebens nach Tugenden ist die ὁμοίωσις, was die alte Literatur schon gesichert hatte¹⁶.

Das Schön-Werden der Seele steht in der Korrespondenz zum κάλλος der Gottheit — die kategoriale Bestimmung, die Plotin nicht sonderlich liebte und hier τὸ ἀγαθόν verdrängt¹⁷. Die Biographie der Braut besteht aus dem Kampf um die Erreichung dieser Schönheit — von μελαίνα zu καλή —¹⁸.

Signifikante Akte des Logos in seiner Intrige sind Aufmunterung¹⁹ zum Durchhalten im Kampf und Lob der Braut²⁰; der Logos spielt auch zwischendurch taktisch eine vorläufige Abwesenheit²¹. Es gibt nicht bloß Lob — ἔπαινος — der Braut von Seiten des Logos, sondern auch μαρτυρία, Zeugnis über diese Schönheit, was intensiver als das Lob wirken soll. Diese μαρτυρία kann sogar wiederholt werden, was einen doppelten Segen beinhaltet²². Um

¹⁴ Vgl. schon zu Beginn des Kommentars: I, 27,7: ἐρωτικὸν πάθος; 27,10: ἐρᾶν; 27,13: ζεῖν ἐρωτικῶς; II, 42,12: ἐρωτικοί; Ende des Kommentars, XV, 462-465, ein längerer Diskurs über Eros.

¹⁵ Vgl. Inkarnationsthematik und das Majestätische κατέβη XV, 436,11; 436, 15: τὸ ταπεινὸν τῆς φύσεως ἡμῶν.

¹⁶ Vgl. IX, 271,11-12 den klassischen Locus: πέρας γὰρ τῆς ἐναρέτου ζωῆς ἢ (...) ὁμοίωσις; vgl. die Reduktion der Tugenden πρὸς τὸ ἐν ἄρωμα ὁμοιώσεως (IX, 272,15-16).

¹⁷ IV, 102,2; IX, 293,10, etc.; τὸ ἀγαθόν ist selten vorhanden; vgl. dennoch IX, 277,11 und τὸ πρῶτον ἀγαθόν XV, 458,21.

¹⁸ Vgl. zum καλή-Werden der Braut II, 46,9-47,13; der Logos, protreptisch zum Schön-Werden der Braut: II, 66,19ff. Die Nähe zum Licht des Logos macht die Braut schön: IV, 104,12-14; vgl. V, 159,3.

¹⁹ Das Nennen des Logos: αὐτῆ προσφωνήσας (...) καὶ ὀνομάσας αὐτῆ καλήν (V, 151,4-5); τῆς πολλάκις (...) γεγεννημένης παρορμήσεως (VIII, 248, 17-18).

²⁰ Vgl. ταῖς πολυτρόποις τῶν ἐπαίνων ὑπερβολαῖς (IX, 278,2).

²¹ ἀφαρπάζων ἑαυτὸν τῶν ὄψεων: V, 139,12; ἀνέφικτος τῆ λαβῆ τῆς ποθοῦσης (XII, 362,19).

²² VII, 215,14-18 (Kirche als Braut).

das Bekunden des Lobes und des Zeugnisses gruppieren sich die knappen dramatis personae des Ludus: die Freunde des Logos, die eigentlich die Engel sind²³.

Lob durch den Logos verwandelt ontologisch die Braut: ἔργον ἔπαινος γίνεται²⁴. Hierin hätten wir die essentiell religiöse Komponente dieser Mystik, die nicht in Moral aufgeht. Das Moralische ist aber genug angesprochen, und zwar, terminologisch, im Synergismus, der sowohl von der Braut als auch vom Logos betätigt wird²⁵.

Das Parallel-Laufen mit dem Logos bereitet uns manche Überraschung. Es darf bekannterweise keine unio mystica bei Gregor geben. Dessen ungeachtet und sozusagen unangemeldet, lassen sich drei Stellen ausmachen, die diesem Sachverhalt sehr nahe kommen. 'Mein Geliebter ist mein und ich bin sein' (Cant 2, 16) — einige Exegeten nennen dies eine Mutualitätsformel, womit Distanz zur Identitätsformel mystischer Religionen markiert wird — gibt Gregor Anlass zu vermerken: εἶδον, φησί, πρόσωπον πρὸς πρόσωπον τὸν αἰεὶ μὲν ὄντα, ὅπερ ἐστὶ (V, 168,15-16). In einer Apposition spricht Gregor von der Einwohnung des Logos in der Braut — sie wurde αὐτῷ οἰκητήριον (168,18), was eigentlich schon eine Entschärfung des Visionären der hohen Begegnung ist. Man beachte wie deutlich auch die Grenze dieser Vision genannt wird: gesehen wurde nur das ὅτι ἐστὶ.

Die zweite Stelle ist eine Szene im Weingarten: καὶ τοῦτο γενομένου μεταχωρεῖ τὰ δύο εἰς ἄλληλα — beide durchdringen sich, oder gehen einander über — (VI, 179,6). Anlass zu diesem Satz gibt wieder die Stelle Cant 2,16, die wieder aufgenommen wurde. Gemessen an die frühere Formel — εἶδον πρόσωπον πρὸς πρόσωπον — ist die hiesige Aussage näher zur Ontologie der unio mystica herangertückt, obwohl die Szene wieder ins Sekundäre der Einwohnung Gottes in der Seele und verwandte Motive abgeleitet.

Ein dritter Passus. Der Text der Schrift lautet: 'Wie süß sind deine Brüste, meine Schwester, meine Braut' (Cant 4, 10). Es findet sich dennach bei beiden, 'in hochzeitlicher Ergötzung' — ἐν γαμικῇ θυμηδίᾳ — ein Austausch: δι' ἀμοιβῆς παρ' ἀμοτέρων ἀλλήλοις τὴν ἐρωτικὴν ἀντιχαριζομένων διάθεσιν — sie beide schenken sich gegenseitig, sich streichelnd, das Liebespiel (IX, 264,4-5). Eine Reflexion nächster Seite unterstreicht: ἡ ἀντίδοσις γίνεται, nämlich, vom Seiten des Logos in der Korrespondenz zu der Braut, die ihn Cant 1, 2-3 schon so apostrophiert hatte. Das hohe Ereignis wird umgelenkt in einigen Betrachtungen über Synergismus. Man beachte, dass die Steigerung des Geschehens der unio oder wie man es nennen will, der Entwicklung

²³ Vgl. VI, 189,16.

²⁴ IX, 279,16.

²⁵ Synergismus beim Logos: ὁ λόγος συνεργῶν (IX, 291,17); δύνανται ἐντιθέναι (IX, 279,7); IX, 280,4: χειραγωγούμενη ὑπὸ τοῦ λόγου. Zum Synergismus bei der Braut: IX, 263,14-15; 264,18-265,1.

im Ludus korrespondiert: es waren dies die Oraciones V, VI und IX. Diese Or. IX ist reich an erotischen Bekundungen. So z.B. ist die Seele dem Logos nunmehr begehrenswert, ποθεινή (269,24). Es ist die Oratio (293,8), wo die ὁμοίωσις — nunmehr als Ablösung vom tugendhaften Leben begriffen — als realiter daseiende genannt wird. N.B.: Eine sozusagen biographische Methode bei der Beschreibung der Seelen-Mystik ist realistischer als die vielerorts intendierte Einteilung etwa in drei Stadien.

4.c. Das Parallel-Laufen mit dem Logos und die Logos-Transzendenz

Der christliche Logos stellt eine grössere Lebendigkeit dar als die plotinische Seinspyramide oder jene der Systeme Indiens — bei letzteren trotz vermittelnden Tätigkeit des Isvara —, weshalb uns eine eigene Verlegenheit bereitet, einerseits Interventionen des Logos, die sich als unio mystica auslegen liessen, andererseits die Strenge der Logostranszendenz und seine Unnahbarkeit zusammenzureimen. Solche Transzendenz des Logos wird Anfang des Buches mit den Attributen, die ältere griechische Philosophie und Theologie für den agnostos theos erfand, sehr resolut markiert: wir sind in der absolut jungnizänischen, antiarianische Situation²⁶. Hat also das Parallel-Laufen mit dem Logos einen anderen Sinn, als Angabe der Richtung und Lokalisierung des Raumes — innerhalb der Welt der Oikonomia — zu sein, immer dessen eingedenk, dass die Parallelen sich nie treffen werden?²⁷ Der Logos läuft vorne selbstredend nicht allein wegen der Markierung der Route, sondern wegen des ganz anderen ontologischen Rangs (Transzendenz).

Erkenntnistheoretisch käme folgendes hinzu: Hat Selbsterkenntnis im Spiegel — κάτοπτρον —, die merkwürdigerweise in der christlichen Theologie bis Gregor nur selten und unentschlossen verwendet wurde, einen anderen Sinn als Reduktion und Ausgrenzung zu sein?²⁸ Nur das wird vom Logos und seiner Bewegung gesehen, was im Inneren der Seele sozusagen kartographisch aufgespeichert wurde. Im Bild vom Aroma, so abseitig dieses Zeugnis aussehen mag, findet man Bestätigung: die Braut 'erkennt das göttliche Wohlgeruch mit Hilfe der eigenen Narde' (VI, 176,2). H.U. von Balthasar neigte zu dieser engeren Auffassung von κάτοπτρον und stellte Mutmassungen über

²⁶ Die Logismen über den Logos sind wie die ὁμοιώματα τοῦ χριστοῦ, aber nicht das Gold selbst: III, 86,1-15; die Stelle Exod 33,30 auf den Logos bezogen: IV, 108,4; an den Logos angewandt, das nur ὅτι ἔστι (VI, 183,3); der Logos nicht ληπτόν (VI, 182,13); XIII, 379,12: μηδενί σημείω γνωριστικῶ.

²⁷ Vgl. das εἰς αἰεὶ διερχομένη (VIII, 250,6); ἐν πάσῃ τῇ αἰδιότητι τῶν αἰώνων κρεῖττον αἰεὶ εὐρισκόμενον (XII, 370,5-6).

²⁸ Vgl. II, 68,9-10; ἐν κατόπτρῳ βλέπει τὸν ἥλιον: III, 90,11-12; S. 90 macht klar, dass das Spiegel die nötige Abschirmung gegen die Verblendung durch die Transzendenz ist, zugleich aber die einzige Möglichkeit des Erkennens. Diese Position, sehr klar beim ἐνοπτριζόμενος III, 98,8-12. Vgl. auch XV, 440,1ff.

Leibnizens Monade an²⁹. Diese Überlegungen führen uns wie von selbst zum Thema der zwei Sphären bei Gregor: jene der absoluten Transzendenz und jene der Oikonomia. Lehrreich hierfür sind zwei Stellen im Kommentar. Die erste bezieht sich auf das Nichtwissen der Engel über den Ort, wo sich der Logos aufhält³⁰. Ist dieser Ort nicht die den Engeln auch unzugängliche Transzendenz? Die zweite Stelle ist noch klarer: den himmlischen Dynameis wurde erst die bunte, mannigfaltige Weisheit Gottes aufgetan, nachdem die Oikonomia lief³¹. Man darf dem Text unterstellen, dass die einfache, einförmige Weisheit Gottes die undurchdringbare Mauer der Transzendenz ist, die als solche auch für die Braut verschlossen bleiben wird. Die Sache mit den zwei Sphären — die innere ist die der Oikonomia, Sphäre des Logos, die sich an einer Stelle oben — die Logos-Transzendenz — überschneidet mit der grösseren, umwölbenden Sphäre der Trinitätstranszendenz, ein in Nyssa für die Fastenpredigten ausgeklügeltes Theologumenon — führt uns zum Vergleich mit der grossen Mystik des Hinduismus.

Wenn wir die Ökonomie des Logos an die Heilslinie des Isvara — im Funktionellen — angleichen, denn der Isvara ist die den Menschen zugewandte Gestalt der Transzendenz — er ist Schöpfer, Erlöser und Wiedereinbringer —, und ebenso den 'Brahman hinter den fünf Hüllen' mit der Transzendenz der Trinität vergleichend in Beziehung setzen — Daniélou meinte, die Transzendenz bei Gregor sei noch härter als die des Einen bei Plotin —, so hätten wir den Grund für weitere Überlegungen geschaffen, zumal über die Permeabilitätsmöglichkeiten der Transzendenz von Seiten der Logos-Sphäre.

Radhakrishnan, welcher die Isvara-Sphäre den kosmologischen Gott, und Brahman das Absolute nennt, auf dieser Frage abgeklopft, gibt uns zuerst als Ausleger der Bhagavad-Gita³² folgende Antwort: 'Wenn der Zweck des Kosmos erreicht, das Königreich Gottes eingerichtet ist (...), dann wird dieser kosmische Entwicklungslauf hineingenommen in das, was jenseits alle Entwicklungsformen liegt'³². Ein persönliches Bekenntnis aus einer eigenen Schrift des — N.B. — grossen Advaitins lautet noch vorsichtiger: 'Gott, der Schöpfer, Erhalter und Richter dieser Welt, ist nicht gänzlich ohne Beziehung zum Absoluten'³³.

Und wie steht mit den Sphären bei Gregor? Zwar ist Gregor ein Vertreter der Apokatastasis, früh genug in diesem Land von den Cambrider doctores mites als solcher in der Frage nach der Ewigkeit der Höllenstrafen entdeckt, und in diesem Kommentar zum Hohenlied gibt es am Schluss ein 'Gott alles in allen' in aller Form; aber die Braut, so sieht es aus, hat nur die Chance, mit

²⁹ H.U. von Balthasar, *Présence et Pensée* (Paris 1942), S. 96-100.

³⁰ VI, 182,10ff.

³¹ VIII, 254,15-256,12.

³² S. Radhakrishnan, *Die Bhagavadgita* (Baden-Baden 1958), S. 88.

³³ S. Radhakrishnan, *Meine Suche nach Wahrheit* (Gütersloh 1961), S. 345.

dem Logos parallel zu laufen, und dies in aller Ewigkeit. Dies macht die tiefe Dramatik dieses zuweilen nur ästhetisch anmutenden Ludus aus.

Habe ich ein Problem genannt, oder nur das Thema einer Preisfrage für eine Akademie suggeriert? Allerdings: falls man in diese Unterscheidung der zwei Sphären einwilligen würde, so ergäben sich Möglichkeiten hermeneutischer Art in Hinblick auf den Umgang mit einigen Aussagen dieses Buches. In der Tat, alles was auf die Oikonomia-Sphäre bezogen ist, kann in seiner relativen Gültigkeit gelten: so, Sachen wie Analogie, θεωρία, θεογνωσία, etc. Die Transzendenz-Sphäre verrelativiert alle Aussagen der Oikonomia-Sphäre, wie dies das Brahman hinter den fünf Hüllen mit dem kosmischen Gott, der Isvara-Welt tut. Und so hätten wir von dieser hohen Warte aus — von dieser absoluten Infragestellung durch die Transzendenz — keine Analogie, keine θεωρία, etc. Dessen muss man immer aber eingedenk bleiben, dass der Logos — also der Herr der Oikonomia — seine transzendente Aspekte hat, was die mathematische Trennung beider Sphären nicht gerade leichter macht.

Exhortations to Baptism in the Cappadocians

Everett FERGUSON, Abilene, Texas

The three great Cappadocians — Basil of Caesarea, Gregory of Nyssa, and Gregory of Nazianzus — each delivered an exhortation for catechumens to be baptized¹. These sermons were delivered at or immediately after Epiphany within a decade of one another — probably in 371 for Basil's sermon, 381 for the two Gregories' sermons². While reflecting the distinctive emphases and settings of each preacher, the three exhortations share much in common. There would be more similarities if account were taken of other works of the three authors, but this paper will limit its comparison to these three sermons.

Since all three sermons are exhortations to receive baptism, they share a protreptic style. The main themes in their appeals are quite similar. Since all three were delivered early in the calendar year as the season of preparation for the Pasch, when baptism was administered, approached, all refer to the appropriate season for baptism. All times are suitable, but the day of the Pasch on which the resurrection is celebrated is most appropriate³. Basil and Gregory of Nazianzus use Ecclesiastes 3:1ff. on a time for everything⁴, and Basil and

¹ Basil, *Hom. 13, Exh. ad s. bapt.* — PG 31.424-444; Engl. trans. by T. Halton in A. Hamman, ed., *Baptism: Ancient Liturgies and Patristic Texts* (Staten Island, 1967), pp. 76-87; studied by J. Gribomont, 'Saint Basile: Le protreptique au Baptême', in *Lex Orandi Lex Credendi: Miscellanea in onore di P. Cipriano Vagaggini*, ed. G.J. Békés and G. Farnedi (Studia Anselmiana 79; Rome, 1980), pp. 71-92 and E. Ferguson, 'Basil's Protreptic to Baptism' in a *Festschrift* for Thomas H. Halton, ed. John Petruccione (Washington: Catholic University of America Press, forthcoming). Gregory of Nyssa, *Adv. eos qui diff. bapt.* — PG 46.416-432. Gregory of Nazianzus, *Or. 40, In s. bapt.*, the longest and most elaborate of the three — PG 36.359-428 and *Sources Chrétiennes*, Vol. 358 (Paris, 1990), *Grégoire de Nazianze: Discourse 38-41*, ed. C. Moreschini and P. Gallay; Engl. trans. by C.G. Browne and J.E. Swallow in *Nicene and Post-Nicene Fathers*, Series Two, Vol. 7 (New York, 1894; repr. Peabody, MA, 1994), pp. 360-377 and by T. Halton in A. Hamman, *op. cit.*, p. 87ff.; it figures prominently in D. Winslow, 'Orthodox Baptism — A Problem for Gregory of Nazianzus', *SP 14* (1976), pp. 371-374. References to Basil will be by chapter number and Migne columns; to Gregory of Nyssa by Migne columns; to Gregory of Nazianzus by chapter numbers. I give my own translation for direct quotations.

² For Basil, J. Gribomont, pp. 71, 87-88; for Gregory of Nyssa, J. Quasten, *Patrology*, Vol. 3 (Utrecht: Spectrum, 1960), pp. 279-280; for Gregory of Nazianzus, C. Moreschini and P. Gallay, *Grégoire de Nazianze: Discourse 38-41*, pp. 16-22.

³ Basil, *Exh. bapt. 1* (PG 31.424C-D); Gregory of Nyssa, *Eos diff. bapt.* (PG 46.416C); Gregory of Nazianzus, *In s. bapt. 13-14*, 24.

⁴ Basil, *Exh. bapt. 1* (PG 31.424A-B); Gregory of Nazianzus, *In s. bapt. 14*.

Gregory of Nyssa both give an explicit invitation for catechumens to turn in their names to be enrolled as candidates for baptism⁵.

The principal concern of all three preachers in their exhortations is for the hearers not to delay receiving baptism until old age or the approach of death. Basil asks the rhetorical questions, 'Why are you waiting? Why do you hesitate?' He says, 'I know your procrastination'. Gregory of Nyssa gives the imperatives, 'Do not delay'. 'Do not provoke the baptizer by delay'. Gregory of Nazianzus too speaks of his hearers' 'procrastinations' and also gives the direct command, 'Do not put off grace'⁶. Whatever age one is in life, that is the time to be baptized⁷, for 'the funeral bier carries out every age' — the old, the one in the prime of life, the young⁸.

The uncertainty of life is prominent in the admonitions of all three sermons as a motivation for not delaying baptism. We do not know what tomorrow will bring. 'Who appointed for you a fixed time of old age? Do you not see babies being seized? Those being taken in the prime of life? Life has no one appointed time'⁹. 'Death is not defined by the appointed times of age'. Besides the misfortunes of famine and war, there may be 'madness, delirium, unexpected choking, impact of winds'. Death may come while one is traveling, eating, or sleeping¹⁰. 'Every time is suitable for your washing, since any time may be your death'¹¹. Gregory of Nazianzus mentions as unexpected misfortunes: war, earthquake, being snatched by a wild beast, drowning, illness, choking, drinking too much, wind storm, a runaway horse, reaction to a medicine, and human injustice¹². Basil warns of 'sudden destruction' and 'disaster like a sudden storm'¹³. Death comes unexpectedly as a treacherous thief¹⁴. 'The end will come suddenly'¹⁵.

The exhortations to baptism involve answering the excuses perceived to be the reasons given for procrastinating. Basil assumes to speak the words of the person who delays: 'Let sin first rule in me; and then the Lord will rule', and the words of the Devil: 'Today is mine; tomorrow is God's'. Basil responds with how improper it is to bring to God a life that is no longer useful. 'Con-

⁵ Basil, *Exh. bapt.* 7 (PG 31.440A); Gregory of Nyssa, *Eos diff. bapt.* (PG 46.417B). Both use the illustration of a new soldier enrolled in the army — Basil, *ibid.*; Gregory of Nyssa, *Eos diff. bapt.* (PG 46.429C).

⁶ Basil, *Exh. bapt.* 1; 5 (PG 31.425C); Gregory of Nyssa, *Eos diff. bapt.* (PG 46.417D and 421D); Gregory of Nazianzus, *In s. bapt.* 14; 24.

⁷ Basil, *Exh. bapt.* 5 (PG 31.342C-D); cf. Gregory of Nazianzus, *In s. bapt.* 14.

⁸ Gregory of Nyssa, *Eos diff. bapt.* (PG 46.420A).

⁹ Basil, *Exh. bapt.* 5 (PG 31.436C).

¹⁰ Gregory of Nyssa, *Eos diff. bapt.* (PG 46.417D; 420B).

¹¹ Gregory of Nazianzus, *In s. bapt.* 13.

¹² *Ibid.*, 14.

¹³ Basil, *Exh. bapt.* 8 (PG 31.441D).

¹⁴ Gregory of Nyssa, *Eos diff. bapt.* (PG 46.428A).

¹⁵ Gregory of Nazianzus, *In s. bapt.* 24.

tinence in old age is not continence but the inability to be licentious ... No one is righteous because of the inability to be bad'¹⁶. Gregory of Nyssa deals with an objection by also employing prosopopoeia: 'I was afraid of the inclination of our nature to sin and because of this I delay the grace of regeneration'. Gregory considers the excuse specious. If one is living without sin as a catechumen, then there will be no problem afterward. If one's life is impure beforehand, it is evident that the person prefers sin. Such persons 'fear baptism as the hindrance of pleasures'¹⁷. Gregory of Nazianzus deals with the greatest number of excuses. He too takes up the fear of losing the gift of baptism by later sin as a reason why some delay the cleansing. This, he says, is the evil one's sophistry to get a person to lose Christ¹⁸. Another individual may protest that his life in public affairs might stain him and he should not waste God's mercy. Gregory's response is 'Flee even the forum', but if that is impossible, it is 'better to be stained a little by your public affairs than to be deprived of grace altogether'¹⁹. Someone else will say, as Basil's objector did, that they will enjoy pleasure now²⁰ and will further use the laborers in the vineyard (Matt. 20.1ff.) as justification for waiting until the eleventh hour to respond. Gregory deals with the parable at length, among other things making the point that the laborers in the parable who responded at the eleventh hour still did so when they first believed²¹. Another excuse offered is that the desire for baptism will be treated by God as baptism, a position that Gregory roundly rejects. 'If desire in your opinion suffices for the power of baptism', then consider in the same way that your desire for glory will be the same as attaining it²². A further objection is that Christ was not baptized until he was thirty years old, but Gregory draws out the differences between Christ's circumstances and ours²³. All three thinkers give prominence to pleasure as the principal hindrance to the reception of baptism and call upon their hearers no longer to live for pleasure²⁴.

There are other prominent points in common among the three addresses. These recurring themes are more or less explicitly parts of the appeal to the hearers to receive baptism. All three sermons discuss clinical or sickbed baptism and do so in such a way as to make it undesirable for a person to put off baptism until

¹⁶ Basil, *Exh. bapt.* 5 (PG 31.436A-B); 6 (PG 31.437B).

¹⁷ Gregory of Nyssa, *Eos diff. bapt.* (PG 46.425B-D).

¹⁸ Gregory of Nazianzus, *In s. bapt.* 16. Basil too observes that 'No one rejects good things for the fear of being deprived of them' — *Exh. bapt.* 7 (PG 31.441A).

¹⁹ Gregory of Nazianzus, *In s. bapt.* 19.

²⁰ Gregory of Nazianzus, *In s. bapt.* 14: The evil one says, 'give to me the present and to God the future; to me your youth, and to God old age; to me your pleasures, and to him your uselessness'.

²¹ *Ibid.* 20-21.

²² *Ibid.* 22-23.

²³ *Ibid.* 29-30.

²⁴ Basil, *Exh. bapt.* 5 (PG 31.433B, 436A); Gregory of Nyssa, *Eos diff. bapt.* (PG 46.420C; 421A); Gregory of Nazianzus, *In s. bapt.* 14; 20.

the prospect of death is imminent. The rhetorical purpose accounts for the unfavorable descriptions, but there must be some truth behind the *topos* and not simply the borrowing of a common theme. Basil has two negative descriptions of the confusion present in a person's last hours. In one he vividly describes the dying person's shortness of breath, fever, sighs, feeble voice: 'Who will give baptism then?' Relatives are fainthearted, those in good health despise the sufferings, friends hesitate, the physician deceives about your condition. 'It is night, and there is an absence of helpers. The baptizer is not present'²⁵. Gregory of Nyssa speaks of the 'tumult and cry There is jostling, disorder, and mournful and indistinct noise when slaves, kinsmen, friends, children, the wife are entangled with one another as if in a night battle'²⁶. Gregory of Nazianzus too speaks of the undesirability of receiving baptism 'in distress and not freely'. He calls on his hearers to respond while not yet sick in body and mind, while the tongue is not stammering or parched, when they can receive baptism with congratulation and not pity; before wife and children are listening for the dying words, before the physician is powerless to help, and before there is a struggle between the baptizer and the one who seeks money and there is no time for both²⁷.

It is in the context of describing sickbed baptism that the most is said in these sermons relative to the ceremony of baptism. The *disciplina arcani*²⁸ prevented a detailed description to an audience that included catechumens, but from what is known from other sources, the reader can recognize many details. Basil speaks of the undesirability of sickbed baptism by describing what the seriously ill person cannot do: 'You are not able to utter the saving words nor are inclined to hear purely, ..., nor lift the hands to heaven nor stand upon the feet, nor to bend the knee in worship, nor to be taught profitably, nor to confess safely, nor to reach agreement with God, nor to renounce the enemy, nor to follow intelligently while being initiated'²⁹. Gregory of Nyssa speaks of the haste in seeking 'the vessels, the water, the priest, the word that makes ready for grace'³⁰. Gregory of Nazianzus warns of 'the tongue unable to speak the initiatory words'³¹.

²⁵ Basil, *Exh. bapt.* 7 (PG 31.441B-C).

²⁶ Gregory of Nyssa, *Eos diff. bapt.* (PG 46.425A).

²⁷ Gregory of Nazianzus, *In s. bapt.* 11-12.

²⁸ Gregory of Nazianzus, *In s. bapt.* 45; Gregory of Nyssa, *Eos diff. bapt.* (PG 46.421C) for the dismissal of the catechumens prior to the 'mysteries' in which 'initiated' Christians participate. Gregory of Nazianzus also speaks of catechumens 'at the porch of piety' (16) in contrast to being 'initiated' (28).

²⁹ Basil, *Exh. bapt.* 5 (PG 31.436C-D).

³⁰ Gregory of Nyssa, *Eos diff. bapt.* (PG 46.425A). In other passages he speaks of the sign of the cross (417B) and all water being suitable when it finds faith in the one being baptized and receives the blessing by the priest (which is possibly the 'word' in the quotation — 421D).

³¹ Gregory of Nazianzus, *In s. bapt.* 11. Elsewhere in the sermon he speaks of the preparation for baptism (31), exorcism (27), and confession of sins (27); he further says the baptizer may be anyone of the same faith (26) and refers to the use of the Triune name (41; 44-45), the baptismal garment (25), and the psalmody and the lighting of lamps that accompanied the newly baptized's entrance into the church (46).

In incidental remarks, each preacher indicates that there was some question about the validity of clinical baptism. Basil, not very clearly, alludes to those who are present being 'doubtful' and declares that 'when you receive the grace knowingly, then you ... do not threaten the activity'³². Gregory of Nazianzus is more explicit, calling on his hearers, while they can, to be made one of the faithful 'not in semblance but with open acknowledgement ... and there is no doubt'³³. These remarks may have been rhetorical touches to emphasize the importance of receiving baptism immediately, but the way in which they are alluded to in the midst of the larger discussion without special attention being called to them would seem to indicate that, although the preachers did not refuse the practice, they were aware of doubts concerning the practice of baptizing an unconscious person, doubts they did not seek to dispel.

All of these accounts of sickbed baptism emphasize the importance of the candidate being able to speak the words of faith. This emphasis accords with the summaries of the baptismal process given by each preacher: being taught, having faith in the heart, and receiving the seal of the Spirit (Basil)³⁴; faith and baptism (the Nyssene)³⁵; 'having spoken, be baptized; and being baptized, be saved' (Nazianzen)³⁶. This concern might seem to go counter to the practice of infant baptism, and Gregory of Nazianzus specifically addresses the issue. He urges that infants be brought for sanctification³⁷ and argues that if there is threat to their life 'it is better to be sanctified unconsciously than to depart unsealed and uninitiated'³⁸. This emphasis on the objective value of the sacrament is balanced, however, by the importance of conscious understanding and confession of faith. Gregory proceeds to give his advice that parents should wait until the end of children's third year 'when they are able to listen and to answer something about the mystery'³⁹.

These three exhortations express a rich theology of baptism, for they are full of statements about the meaning of baptism. These descriptions of what is accomplished in baptism are neatly summarized in various lists of the blessings received in baptism. Basil enumerates the benefits of baptism as 'a ransom to captives, a forgiveness of debts, the death of sin, regeneration of the soul, a

³² Basil, *Exh. bapt.* 5 (PG 31.436D-437A).

³³ Gregory of Nazianzus, *In s. bapt.* 11.

³⁴ Basil, *Exh. bapt.* 6 (PG 31.437A).

³⁵ Gregory of Nyssa, *Eos diff. bapt.* (PG 46.421D).

³⁶ Gregory of Nazianzus, *In s. bapt.* 26. Note his extensive summary of what must be believed in 45. C. Moreschini speaks of the orthodox faith as the *sine qua non* for admission to baptism according to Gregory in *Grégoire de Nazianze: Discourse 38-41*, p. 37.

³⁷ Gregory of Nazianzus, *In s. bapt.* 17.

³⁸ Gregory of Nazianzus, *In s. bapt.* 28. I have argued that this sentiment is behind the beginning of infant baptism — 'Inscriptions and the Origin of Infant Baptism', *JThS* n.s. 30 (1979), pp. 37-46.

³⁹ Gregory of Nazianzus, *In s. bapt.* 28. David F. Wright concludes his argument with this passage in 'The Origins of Infant Baptism — Child Believers' Baptism?', *SJT* 40 (1987), pp. 1-23.

shining garment, an unassailable seal, a chariot to heaven, a patron of the kingdom, the gift of adoption'⁴⁰. Gregory of Nyssa opens his address with a brief but similar summary, when he refers to the approaching 'day of salvation' (the Pasch), at which 'according to our custom (we) call strangers to adoption, those in need to participation in grace, those filthy in transgressions to the cleansing of sins'⁴¹. Gregory of Nazianzus gives a lengthy and impressive list near the beginning of his discourse: 'Illumination (the baptismal ceremony) is the splendor of souls, the conversion of the life, the pledge of a good conscience to God. It is the aid to our weakness, the renunciation of the flesh, the following of the Spirit, the fellowship of the Word, the improvement of the creature, the overwhelming of sin, the participation of light, the dissolution of darkness. It is the chariot to God, the dying with Christ, the bulwark of faith, the perfecting of the mind, the key of the kingdom of heaven, the exchange of life, the removal of slavery, the loosing of chains, the remodelling of the whole person ... (It) is the greatest and most magnificent of the gifts of God'⁴².

Gregory of Nazianzus follows his listing of the blessings of baptism with a list of its names: 'We call it gift, grace, baptism, illumination, anointing, clothing of immortality, bath of regeneration, seal, and everything that is honorable' and proceeds to explain each of these names⁴³. Illumination or enlightenment is the name with which Gregory begins his discourse, because 'Yesterday we kept festival on the illustrious day of the Lights'⁴⁴, and it continues to be frequently used throughout the sermon⁴⁵. 'Gift' is another favorite and distinctive word for Gregory of Nazianzus⁴⁶. He also likes to speak of baptism as 'grace'⁴⁷, a common term with his colleagues as well⁴⁸. Another important designation with Gregory is 'seal', used for baptism itself, or possibly the baptismal ceremony as a whole, and not for a separate part of it⁴⁹. 'Seal of the Spirit' is one of Basil

the Great's names for baptism⁵⁰. Although 'seal' is his common term, he uses 'marks' and 'signs' as equivalent⁵¹. Gregory of Nyssa too uses 'sealed' and 'signed' as synonymous⁵².

All three Cappadocians associate baptism with rebirth. For Basil, it is a 'spiritual rebirth' and the marvel of 'how a person is born again without a mother'⁵³. He quotes John 3.5, 'Unless one be born through water and the Spirit, he shall not enter the kingdom of heaven'⁵⁴. His brother cites John 3.3, 'Unless one be born again he cannot see the kingdom of God'⁵⁵. The Nyssene adopts also the phraseology of Titus 3.5, 'bath (or washing) of regeneration'⁵⁶. Gregory of Nazianzus speaks of baptism as a 'birth' and 'new birth' as well as a 'regeneration'⁵⁷. Of the three, he makes the most use of the 'bath' ('washing') or 'laver'⁵⁸.

Two of the preachers make much of the imagery of Galatians 3.27 and Romans 6 that baptism is being 'crucified with Christ'⁵⁹ or 'dying with Christ'⁶⁰, and being buried and raised with Christ⁶¹.

The motif of forgiveness, cleansing, or pardon of sins occurs in all three⁶². So does the theme of freedom from imprisonment or slavery⁶³. Also prominent is the use of the imagery of healing⁶⁴. The idea of escape from the devil is associated in the history of Christian thought especially with Gregory of Nyssa, but it is found in the other two Cappadocians⁶⁵. Even more characteristic of these exhortations is the warning about the deceitfulness of the devil, who

⁵⁰ Basil, *Exh. bapt.* 6 (PG 31.437A). Hence the title of G.W.H. Lampe's book studying the relation of the gift of the Spirit to baptism, *The Seal of the Spirit*, 2nd ed. (London, 1967).

⁵¹ Basil, *Exh. bapt.* 2 (PG 31.428C); 4 (PG 31.432C).

⁵² Gregory of Nyssa, *Eos diff. bapt.* (PG 46.424B).

⁵³ Basil, *Exh. bapt.* 1 (PG 31.424B); 5 (433A).

⁵⁴ *Ibid.* 2 (428A).

⁵⁵ Gregory of Nyssa, *Eos diff. bapt.* (PG 46.424A).

⁵⁶ *Ibid.* (PG 46.429C); cf. 'grace of regeneration' (425B) and 'benefit of the bath' (428B).

⁵⁷ Gregory of Nazianzus, *In s. bapt.* 27; 2; 4; 8.

⁵⁸ *Ibid.* 4; 10; cf. 17; 32.

⁵⁹ Basil, *Exh. bapt.* 7 (PG 31.440B).

⁶⁰ Gregory of Nazianzus, *In s. bapt.* 3.

⁶¹ Basil, *Exh. bapt.* 1; 2 (PG 31.424B-D; 428A); Gregory of Nazianzus, *In s. bapt.* 9; 24.

⁶² Basil, *Exh. bapt.* 4 (PG 31.432A-B) — whether the sins are many or few; Gregory of Nyssa, *Eos diff. bapt.* (PG 46.416C; 424B; 429C, D); Gregory of Nazianzus, *In s. bapt.* 3; 4; 7; 32; 34; 35.

⁶³ Basil, *Exh. bapt.* 3 (PG 31.429B); Gregory of Nyssa, *Eos diff. bapt.* (PG 46.417A, C; 424B); Gregory of Nazianzus, *In s. bapt.* 3; 13.

⁶⁴ Basil, *Exh. bapt.* 2 (PG 31.428A); 3 (429B); Gregory of Nyssa, *Eos diff. bapt.* (PG 46.417A, B); Gregory of Nazianzus, *In s. bapt.* 12; 26; 34.

⁶⁵ Gregory of Nyssa, *Eos diff. bapt.* (PG 46.417C); Basil, *Exh. bapt.* 2 (PG 31.428B); Gregory of Nazianzus, *In s. bapt.* 35.

⁴⁰ Basil, *Exh. bapt.* 5 (PG 31.433A).

⁴¹ Gregory of Nyssa, *Eos diff. bapt.* (PG 46.416C).

⁴² Gregory of Nazianzus, *In s. bapt.* 3.

⁴³ *Ibid.* 4.

⁴⁴ *Ibid.* 1.

⁴⁵ *Ibid.* 1; 3; 4; 6; 10; 22; 24; 34; 36-37; 38; 46. For the theme of light in Gregory of Nazianzus, see C. Moreschini, *Grégoire de Nazianze: Discourse 38-41*, pp. 62-70. Enlightenment is present in the other two works being studied — Basil, *Exh. bapt.* 1 (PG 31.424C), 'Ignorance of God is the death of the soul', and 'The one not baptized has not been enlightened'; and 'light' in 3 (429A); cf. 7 (441B); it is expressly connected with baptism in Gregory of Nyssa, *Eos diff. bapt.* (PG 46.424B; 432A).

⁴⁶ Gregory of Nazianzus, *In s. bapt.* 3; 11; 12; 16; 18; 21; 22; 23; 27; 31; 32; 34; 44.

⁴⁷ Gregory of Nazianzus, *In s. bapt.* 2; 4; 7; 11; 12; 20; 24; 25; 26; 27; 28; 34; 44.

⁴⁸ Basil, *Exh. bapt.* 1 (PG 31.425A); 3 (429B); 4 (432A); 5 (436A; 437A); 6 (437B); Gregory of Nyssa, *Eos diff. bapt.* (PG 46.416C; 420A,B,C — 'river of grace'; 424A,B,D; 425A,B; 428A; 429B,C,D — 'grace is a gift of the Master'; 432A).

⁴⁹ Gregory of Nazianzus, *In s. bapt.* 4; 7; 10; 15; 17; 18; 23; 26; 28; 45.

seeks to prevent one from being baptized⁶⁶ and after baptism continues to be the tempter⁶⁷.

The community of thought among the three great Cappadocians is revealed perhaps even more than in these major themes by the incidental points they share in common. Thus all three use the example of the Ethiopian treasurer in Acts 8 with the appeal to imitate his readiness to accept baptism immediately from Philip, for nothing but the devil 'hinders'⁶⁸. The parable of the talents (Matt. 25.14-30) is employed by all three: being baptized is putting one's talent to work in contrast to burying it in the ground⁶⁹. There is a common use of the 'sealed' or 'marked' sheep as an illustration of the identification and security of the baptized person⁷⁰. The danger of shipwreck before reaching a harbor is another illustration in common to the Cappadocians, but the preachers allow their warning to carry them beyond Christian doctrine, for the suggestion is made that one by delay may commit sins greater than can be forgiven⁷¹.

Finally, it is fitting to note that all three, while exhorting their hearers to receive baptism, also lay stress on the life expected of the person baptized. The blessings of baptism are directly related to the Christian life. Gregory of Nyssa, in keeping with his moral concerns⁷², emphasizes this theme, which may be summarized by the phrase 'life according to the Gospel', at both the beginning and end of his sermon⁷³. Basil describes the 'Gospel way of life': 'vigilance of eyes, control of tongue, enslavement of body, humble thinking, purity of thought, extinction of wrath; being pressed into service, do more; being defrauded, do not go to court; being hated, love; being persecuted, forbear; being blasphemed, comfort'⁷⁴. Gregory of Nazianzus devotes a long section toward the close of his sermon to an exhortation that the whole self is to be sanctified⁷⁵.

⁶⁶ Basil, *Exh. bapt.* 6 (PG 31.437B-C); Gregory of Nyssa, *Eos diff. bapt.* (PG 46.421A); Gregory of Nazianzus, *In s. bapt.* 14; 16.

⁶⁷ Gregory of Nazianzus, *In s. bapt.* 10.

⁶⁸ Basil, *Exh. bapt.* 6 (PG 31.437A-B); Gregory of Nyssa, *Eos diff. bapt.* (PG 46.421C); Gregory of Nazianzus, *In s. bapt.* 26-27.

⁶⁹ Basil, *Exh. bapt.* 5 (PG 31.437A); Gregory of Nyssa, *Eos diff. bapt.* (PG 46.429A-B); Gregory of Nazianzus, *In s. bapt.* 12.

⁷⁰ Basil, *Exh. bapt.* 4 (PG 31.432C); Gregory of Nyssa, *Eos diff. bapt.* (PG 46.417B); Gregory of Nazianzus, *In s. bapt.* 15.

⁷¹ Basil, *Exh. bapt.* 5 (PG 31.433C); Gregory of Nazianzus, *In s. bapt.* 11; 12. Gregory of Nyssa makes the same error but with the illustration of a long lasting illness stronger than the healing — *Eos diff. bapt.* (PG 46.417B).

⁷² E. Ferguson, 'Some Aspects of Gregory of Nyssa's Moral Theology in the Homilies on Ecclesiastes', in *Gregory of Nyssa, Homilies on Ecclesiastes*, ed. S.G. Hall (Berlin, 1993), pp. 319-336.

⁷³ Gregory of Nyssa, *Eos diff. bapt.* (PG 46.421A-B; 429B, D; 432A).

⁷⁴ Basil, *Exh. bapt.* 7 (PG 31.440A-B).

⁷⁵ Gregory of Nazianzus, *In s. bapt.* 38-41.

These three exhortations to baptism, as was customary with all sermons, close with a doxology. Gregory of Nazianzus's is a fitting close of this study: When we enter inside with the Bridgeroom, 'We all, both those who teach these things and those who learn, will share in the more pure and more perfect teachings in the same Christ our Lord, to whom be the glory and the kingdom for ever and ever. Amen'⁷⁶.

⁷⁶ Gregory of Nazianzus, *In s. bapt.* 46.

The Form of Gregory of Nyssa's Treatise *On the Inscriptions of the Psalms*¹

Ronald E. HEINE, Tübingen

Gregory of Nyssa's discussion in his treatise on the psalms is structured by the six topics listed, with the book and chapter numbers of the treatise, in Table 1.

TABLE 1

The Topics of Gregory's Treatise

- (1) The aim (σκοπός) of the Psalter (I.1-4)
- (2) The division (διαίρεσις) of the Psalter into sections, and their order (τάξις) (I.5-9)
- (3) The meanings of the inscriptions (ἐπιγραφαί) (II.1-7)
- (4) The reason some psalms have no inscriptions (II.8-9)
- (5) The meaning of διάψαλμα (II.10)
- (6) The divergence of the order of some psalms from the historical sequence of the events to which their inscriptions allude (II.11-16)

These six topics can all be found in the introductions to earlier commentaries on the Psalms, especially in those of Origen. My contention is that Gregory's treatise *On the Inscriptions of the Psalms* has the form of an introduction to a commentary on the Psalter. I shall show that he derived the topics, primarily, but not necessarily exclusively, from Origen's work on the Psalms, and that Origen had borrowed some of the topics of introduction from the philosophical schools.

I begin, however, with the commentaries on the Psalms by Eusebius, Athanasius, and Diodore of Tarsus, who were contemporaries, or near contemporaries, of Gregory, to show the widespread use of some, at least, of these topics in the introductions to Psalm commentaries.

Eusebius of Caesarea wrote a large commentary on the Psalms. While his discussion of some the later psalms is well preserved, the introductory portion of the commentary is only fragmentarily preserved². In these extant remarks of

an introductory nature, Eusebius discusses two of the above topics. He discusses the divergence of the order of the psalms from their historical sequence, and he has a brief discussion of the term διάψαλμα³.

Three works concerning the Psalter are attributed to Athanasius in Migne's *Patrologiae*⁴, but only the exposition of the Psalms has anything that relates to the topics of introductions⁵. The introduction to this exposition, which is dependent on Eusebius in many places, has two clear references to the topics. The author notes that the book of Psalms is divided (διήρηται) into five parts, and that the order (τάξις) does not follow the historical sequence. In close dependence on Eusebius, he then attributes the confused order of the psalms to their loss and random rediscovery.

Two additional topics of commentary introductions may also be mentioned by Athanasius. There is a brief consideration of some of the inscriptions, but only in the context of the discussion of the authorship of the psalms and the reason the whole collection is referred to David, which is very different from the way they are treated by Origen and Gregory. C. Schäublin, in discussing the introduction in the later commentary on the Psalms by Theodoret, considers the discussion of the inscriptions in the context of a discussion of authorship to belong to the category of the authenticity of the psalms, and consequently takes Athanasius' discussion of the inscriptions in the same way⁶. I think this is correct, and, therefore, I do not think this discussion of the inscriptions is a real parallel to what Gregory does⁷.

Athanasius may also refer to the σκοπός of the Psalter. At the end of the introduction he refers to David as a prophet, and says that because he knew that the evil spirits rejoiced at the fall of men and were vexed at their correction, he offered prayers against the spirits using the metaphor of physical enemies. Then he says that the 'σκοπός of the prophets' must be understood in this way. Schäublin understands this to be a reference to David's σκοπός in the Psalms, and perhaps it is⁸.

Eusebius and Athanasius both followed the Alexandrian school of Biblical exegesis, as did Gregory. Gregory's contemporary of the Antiochian school, Diodore of Tarsus, also wrote a commentary on the Psalms⁹. Schäublin claims

³ PG 23. 73, 76B.

⁴ The authenticity of all three has been questioned (See M.-J. Rondeau, *Les commentaires patristiques du Psautier I* (OCA 219; Rome, 1982), pp. 79-87).

⁵ PG 27. 57-545.

⁶ *Untersuchungen zu Methode und Herkunft der Antiochenischen Exegese* (Theophaneia 23; Cologne-Bonn, 1974), p. 69, 72.

⁷ There is also a discussion of the inscriptions in the context of the discussion of the question of the authorship of the Psalms in the Syriac fragment attributed to Hippolytus (*Hippolytus Werke* 1.2, ed. H. Achelis (GCS; Leipzig, 1897), p. 129).

⁸ *Untersuchungen*, p. 72.

⁹ A critical edition of Diodore's commentary on the Psalms is in process of publication, *Diodori Tarsensis Commentarii in Psalmos I* (CCG 6; Turnhout, 1980).

¹ I express my appreciation to Oxford University Press for permission to use material in this paper which appears in my book, *Gregory of Nyssa's Treatise on the Inscriptions of the Psalms* (Oxford Early Christian Studies; Oxford, 1995).

² PG 23. 71-6.

that Diodore treats the σκοπός of the Psalter in his discussion of its usefulness at the beginning of the introduction, although the term σκοπός does not appear. Diodore also treats the reason that the order of the psalms differs from their historical order, and explains it, like Eusebius and Athanasius, to be the result of the loss of the psalms in the exile and their later piecemeal rediscovery.

There are, then, in introductions to commentaries on the Psalms composed either contemporaneous with or before Gregory's treatise, excepting for the moment the commentaries of Origen, and allowing the possibility that the introduction to the exposition of the Psalms attributed to Athanasius is authentic, treatment of four, and possibly five, of the subjects which organize his treatise. I list them with the numbers that correspond to Table 1. (1) The aim (σκοπός) of the Psalter; (2) the division of the Psalter into sections, (3) (the inscriptions, though treated in a different manner), (5) the meaning of διάψαλμα, and (6) the divergence of the order of the psalms from their historical sequence.

TABLE 2

The Topics of Introductions in Contemporary and Earlier Psalm Commentaries (excepting Origen)¹⁰

Gregory	Eusebius	Athanasius	Diodore
(1)	—	[X]	[X]
(2)	—	X	—
(3)	—	X?	—
(4)	—	—	—
(5)	X	—	—
(6)	X	X	X

I turn now to Origen, who produced three commentaries on the Psalms, all of which have perished in their original form. Numerous fragments, however, have been preserved in the catenae, and his commentaries were used by various authors in both the East and West. So far as the introduction is concerned the most important sources are Hilary's Latin commentary on the Psalter, the catenae fragments on the Psalms, and some fragments attributed to Origen in some of the manuscripts, but edited by Achelis under the name of Ps.-Hippolytus.

Hilary's use of Origen's work on the Psalms in his own commentary has been known since the fourth century¹¹. É. Goffinet has shown the extent of Hilary's use of Origen in an extensive comparison between material in Hilary's commentary and fragments from Origen¹². Nautin thinks Hilary had access to

and used both Origen's commentary on the first twenty-five psalms done at Alexandria, and the larger commentary done later at Caesarea¹³. Hilary has a lengthy introduction to the Psalter which has extensive correspondence with the catenae fragments coming from Origen's introduction to the Psalter¹⁴.

G. Rietz produced a critical edition of the catenae fragments related to the introduction to Origen's commentary on the Psalter, and it is his edition that I cite in Table 3¹⁵. Nautin considers the fragments edited by Rietz to belong to Origen's Caesarean commentary. I do not cite the fragments of Ps.-Hippolytus as unquestionably from Origen. Rietz considered fragments seven and nine of Ps.-Hippolytus to be genuine fragments of Origen. I think it is possible that they derive from him, but if not from him certainly from someone who approached the Psalms in the same way that he did. In Table 3 the numbers under Gregory refer to the six topics listed in Table 1. The two fragments given in parentheses in the Ps.-Hippolytus column are not ascribed to Origen in the manuscripts, but what is said in them is very similar to the fragments edited by Rietz, and to the indirect testimony to Origen in Hilary.

TABLE 3

The Topics in Fragments of Origen's Psalm Commentaries

Gregory	Hilary	Rietz (ed.)	Ps.-Hipp.
(1)	—	—	Fr. VII
(2)	Prol. 1	V	(Fr. XIV)
(3)	Prol. 17-21	I	—
(4)	Prol. 21b	III	Fr. VII
(5)	Prol. 23	II	(Fr. XIII)
(6)	Prol. 8-16	I.15-16	Fr. IX

Topics 2-6 are attested in both Hilary and the catenae fragments of Origen. The first topic, however, is attested only in fragment 7 of Ps.-Hippolytus. That fragment is attributed to Origen in a Syriac version, but is anonymous in the three Greek manuscripts where it is found. As edited by Achelis, it begins with the words, 'And this is the aim (σκοπός) of the book and its usefulness, but the reason for the title is this'. It then proceeds to discuss the title of the Book of Psalms, and the question of Davidic authorship in ways that have parallels with passages in Hilary's introduction and the catenae fragments of Origen¹⁶. The actual discussion of the aim and the usefulness must have preceded this

¹⁰ Brackets indicate that the topic is not explicitly mentioned, but must be deduced.

¹¹ See Rondeau, *Les commentaires patristiques I*, pp. 147-9.

¹² *L'utilisation d'Origène dans le commentaire des psaumes de saint Hilaire de Poitiers* (SH 14; Louvain, 1965).

¹³ *Origène* (Paris, 1977), p. 279.

¹⁴ *S. Hilarii Episcopi Pictaviensis Tractatus super Psalmos*, ed. A. Zingerle (CSEL 22; Vienna, 1891), pp. 3-19.

¹⁵ *De Origenis prologis in Psalterium* (Jena, 1914).

¹⁶ Achelis 7.2-7 = Hilary 1; 7.7-11 = 4; 7.11-16 = 2; 7.16-27 = 3; 7.22-27 = PG 12.1056B.

fragment. K. Praechter noted this fragment in his discussion of topics of introductions to ancient philosophical commentaries on Aristotle. All three of these topics (aim, usefulness, and the reason for the title) are found in such commentaries. But because he thought the full schema of introductory topics was not to be found earlier than Ammonius in the late fifth century, he dismissed the possibility that three of the topics (or four if fragment 9 is included which also discussed order), could be found discussed together in the time of Origen¹⁷. B. Neuschäfer accepted Praechter's conclusion and thus does not consider this fragment in his discussion of the introduction to Origen's commentary on the Psalms¹⁸. I. Hadot, however, has argued that the topics can be found as early as Porphyry and Origen, though sometimes without the technical vocabulary, and I have offered a similar argument elsewhere concerning Alexander of Aphrodisias and Origen¹⁹. I think it quite possible, therefore, that this fragment derives from Origen, and that he did discuss the σκοπός of the Psalter.

The first two of these topics had been taken over by Origen from this commentary literature on Aristotle and Plato. These commentators commonly began their commentaries with a discussion of the six points listed in Table 4.

TABLE 4

*The Topics of Introductions in Philosophical Commentaries on Plato and Aristotle*²⁰

<i>Gregory</i>	<i>Philosophical Commentaries</i>
(1)	The aim (σκοπός) of the treatise
—	Its usefulness (τὸ χρησιμὸν)
—	Its authenticity (τὸ γνήσιον)
—	Its place in the order (τάξις) of reading
—	The reason for the title (ἐπιγραφή)
(2)	The division (διαίρεσις) into heads

To return to Gregory, a comparison of Tables 3 and 4 shows clearly that his primary dependence for the topics of introduction was on Origen and the Christian tradition of commentaries on the Psalms. While he discusses both the

¹⁷ 'Die griechischen Aristoteleskommentare', BZ 18 (1909), p. 531.

¹⁸ *Origenes als Philologe* (SBA 18/1; Basel, 1987), pp. 67-77.

¹⁹ I. Hadot, 'Les introductions aux commentaires exégétiques chez les auteurs néoplatoniciens et les auteurs chrétiens', in *Les règles de l'interprétation*, ed. M. Tardieu (Paris, 1987), pp. 99-122; R.E. Heine, 'The Introduction to Origen's Commentary on John Compared with the Introductions to the Ancient Philosophical Commentaries on Aristotle', in *Origeniana Sexta*, ed. G. Dorival and A. Le Boulluec (BETL 118; Leuven, 1995), pp. 3-12. Origen clearly discusses the σκοπός of the Holy Spirit in the Scriptures in *Princ.* 4.2.7, 8, 9, and 4.3.4, and in *Cant. Prol.* 1.8., in the context of discussing some of the other topics of introduction, he refers to love as *scripturae huius causa praecipua*, which must be a reference to the σκοπός.

²⁰ From CAG 4.3, p. 21.

meaning of the 'inscriptions', and the 'order' of the psalms, neither discussion parallels the discussion of the 'title' and 'order' in the philosophical commentaries. In the latter, the discussion of 'order' concerns in what order the works of Plato or Aristotle are to be read, and the discussion of the 'title' involves only the title of the particular book as a whole. In Gregory, the discussion of 'order' concerns both the order of the five divisions of the Psalter, and the divergence of the order of some of the psalms from the proper historical sequence, and the discussion of the titles is concerned with the meaning of the titles of the individual psalms²¹. Points 3-6 of Gregory's topics were specific topics of introduction in Christian commentaries on the Psalter.

In conclusion I note that although Gregory has taken over the six topics that structure his treatise from the introductions of earlier Christian commentaries on the Psalter, the way he treats these topics differs from his predecessors. Origen, for example, discussed the psalms without inscriptions in the context of how to attribute authorship to them. Gregory discusses them in the context of a quasi Jewish-Christian debate over their meaning in relation to Christ. Again, Gregory notes how his predecessors had understood διάψαλμα, and then formulates his own view of the meaning of the term which is in harmony with his understanding of the aim of the Psalter. He treats each of the topics in such a way that it contributes to his overall goal of showing how the teaching of the Psalms leads one progressively in the virtuous life.

²¹ Gregory's 'order' has some affinity with ancient commentaries on the poets, where the number and order of the individual poems which constituted a book, such as Virgil's *Eclogues*, were discussed. See *Virgilii vita Donatiana*, 11.200-1; 17.302-18, 325, and the discussion in Neuschäfer, *Origenes als Philologe*, p. 61.

Basil of Caesarea's Use of Romans 7 as a Reflection of Inner Struggle

Anne Gordon KEIDEL, Würzburg

Basil of Caesarea uses Romans 7 as an illustration of the condition of the human being, who is seemingly powerless against forces of sin and death. The following will be a discussion of the ways he uses this chapter through the verses that he cites, namely, verses 9, 14-20, and 24-25. Verses 14-17 are interpreted in different ways. In one context, he sees them as describing a condition of one who has not yet become a disciple of Christ, and in another context, as a condition of the baptised Christian, who is still struggling against sin. Basil is also clear in pointing out that succeeding verses in this chapter show that, through Jesus Christ, there is a way for those in either condition to win this struggle and be saved.

The subject of this talk first came to mind after reading a statement published in 1977 by Jean Gribomont in the St. Anselmiano monograph, *Commandements du Seigneur*, containing the talks and discussions held in 1976. Therein, Gribomont states, 'ou même que chez le Paul du ch. 7 des Romains; chapitre que, peut-on dire, Basile ne cite jamais'.¹ That sounded very definite, so definite that I had difficulty believing it, and I began to look out for Basil's references to this chapter of Romans. Gribomont himself, in subsequent articles of 1981² and 1983³, acknowledged Basil's citing of this chapter. In fact, he had, as early as 1961 referred to Basil's use of Rom. 7, 9 (which will be discussed below) in his article, 'Le Paulinisme de Saint Basile'.⁴

Six definite citations from Romans 7 have been found in Basil's writings, which reflect interior struggle, and one clear implication⁵. Basil's use of this chapter can here be divided into two principal sections. The first of these,

¹ 'St Basile', p. 98 in *Commandements du Seigneur et libération évangélique. Études monastiques proposées et discutées à S. Anselmo, 15-17 février 1976* (Studia Anselmiana 70; Rome, 1977).

² 'Notes biographiques' in *Basil of Caesarea, Christian, Humanist, Ascetic: A Sixteenth-Century Anniversary Symposium* (Toronto, 1981), p. 44.

³ 'Notes complémentaires' in *Il pensiero di Paolo nella storia del Cristianesimo antico* (Publicazioni dell'Istituto di Fiolgia classica e medievale dell'Università di Genova 82; Genova, 1983; reprinted in *St. Basile, Évangile et Église: Mélanges*, Spiritualité orientale 36; Bellefontaine, 1984), p. 207, hereafter cited as *Mélanges*.

⁴ In: *Studium Paulinorum Congressus Internationalis Catholicus 1961*, II (Rome 1963), p. 488; reprinted in *Mélanges*, p. 198.

⁵ In two other places Basil uses Rom. 7, 24, within a different context, and this will not be taken up here. See his *Homily on Psalm 33*.

found in his work *De Baptismo*, is his view that Romans 7 shows the condition of the person before baptism. In other works, namely, *Regulae morales* 23, and *Regulae brevius tractatae* 16, he sees this Scripture as applying to the practiced Christian. His *Homily on Psalm 1*, refers to verse 9 from this chapter without specific reference to Christ. The discussion which follows will first consider those texts in the *De Baptismo* and then take up the other texts.

The *De Baptismo* is divided into two books, the second being a series of questions related to the content of the first book. The first book is divided into three chapters, dealing respectively with discipleship, baptism and eucharist. In Chapter One, Basil uses Rom. 7, 14-20, in its implied and cited instance. This is the chapter dealing with discipleship, wherein Basil explains that one must first become a disciple of Christ before one can receive instruction which will lead to baptism. As an illustration of the pre-disciple condition, Basil cites the story of the rich young man who approached Jesus asking what he needed to do to obtain eternal life. In response to Jesus instruction to keep the commandments, the young man said, 'all these I have kept'. Then Jesus tells him to sell what he has, give to the poor and 'come follow me'. With this the young man went away sad. Citing 1 Jn 1, 7, Basil says that the young man responded this way because he 'had not yet received pardon for his sins, nor had he been cleansed by the Blood of Christ', but rather, and here is the implication to Rom. 7, 17, 'he was in the service of the devil and under the dominion of sin dwelling within him'. This condition, Basil says, made the young man unable to serve the Lord. Basil then reinforces this view with many other quotations from Scripture, the main point being that justice has no participation with injustice, nor light with darkness, nor the faithful with the unfaithful (2 Cor. 6, 14-16)⁶. Then, citing Rom. 7, 14-17 directly, Basil says:

Let us also recall what he (the Apostle) says in a passage which is meant to convey to us a still deeper sense of shame: 'I know that the law is spiritual, but I am carnal, sold under sin. For that which I work, I understand not. For I do not that good which I will; but the evil which I hate, that I do. If then I do that which I will not, I consent to the law, that it is good. Now then it is no more I that do it, but sin that dwells in me'.⁷

Basil is then quick to point out, by citing Rom. 7, 24-25, that there is hope. He adds:

And after he has developed more fully the idea that it is impossible for one who is in the power of sin to serve the Lord, he plainly states who it is that redeems us from such a tyrannical dominion in the words: 'Unhappy man that I am, who will deliver me from the body of this death? I give thanks to God through Jesus Christ, Our Lord'.⁸

Our successful struggle to be free is made possible by our redemption through the work of Jesus Christ. To access this help we need to accept it. This we do

⁶ *De Baptismo* I, 1, 2; SC 357, pp. 86, 88; *St. Basil: Ascetical Works*, trans. Monica Wagner (Fathers of the Church 9; Washington, D.C., 1963), pp. 341-342, given hereafter as: Wagner.

⁷ *De Baptismo* I, 1, 2; SC 357, p. 88; Wagner, p. 342.

⁸ *De Baptismo* I, 1, 2; SC 357, p. 88; Wagner, pp. 342-343.

by becoming disciples of Christ, and sealing our commitment with baptism.

The next place we find the citation of verses 24-25, is in Chapter Two of *De Baptismo*, towards the end of this chapter on baptism. Here Basil recapitulates the principal point of the first two chapters, that is, that one must first become a disciple of Christ before receiving baptism. For, he says, it is Christ's words exhorting us to deny ourselves, to take up our cross daily and to follow him, that makes clearly evident the bad deeds of evil and reveals the good actions done for the glory of God. This enables us, Basil says, to share the desire expressed by Paul in the sentiments of verses 24-25, the lament and acknowledgement that Jesus Christ is the one who saves us from this body of death⁹.

In Basil's *Homily on Psalm 1*, section 5, he is discussing the verse, 'Blessed is the one who has not stood in the way of sinners'. In focussing on the meaning of the words, 'has not stood', he uses verse 9 of Rom. 7, in the following explanation:

While we were in our first age, we were neither in sin nor in virtue ... But, when reason was perfected in us, then that happened which was written: 'But when the commandment came, sin revived, and I died'. Wicked thoughts, which originate in our minds from the passions of the flesh, rise up. In truth, if when the command came, that is, the power of discernment of the good, the mind did not prevail over the baser thoughts but permitted its reason to be enslaved by the passions, sin revived, but the mind died, suffering death because of its transgressions¹⁰.

The commandment is the sign of the advent of reason and thus the power of discernment. Sin results when reason allows the passions, the baser thoughts, to triumph and enslave. The powers of sin lure one by a way that is smooth, downward sloping through pleasure, but leads to destruction. Thus, the mind is 'dead', because it has given in to the passions. The means of struggling successfully against this, Basil says, is using reason's power to discern the good, passing quickly away from the sinful way (not standing still there), in a sense, detaching oneself from a sinful stance, and also, patient endurance and the leading of a pious life¹¹.

In considering how Basil saw Romans 7 as applying to the experience of the baptized and practicing Christian, we will first look at its use in Rule 23 of *Regulae morales*¹². Rule 23 is Basil's understanding of the meaning of the

⁹ *De Baptismo* I, 2, 26; SC 357, p. 184; Wagner, p. 384.

¹⁰ PG 29: 221 B-C; *St. Basil: Exegetical Homilies*, trans. Agnes Clare Way (Fathers of the Church 46; Washington D.C., 1950), p. 160, hereafter given as Way, p. 160.

¹¹ PG 29: 221 B - 224 C; Way, pp. 159-161.

¹² For Basil, the only true 'Rules' were the evangelical teachings or commandments found in the New Testament, either directly in the words of Christ, or indirectly in the words of Paul or the other disciples. Thus, *Regulae morales* is the only work of Basil's which can properly be called a Book of Rules. This work consists of 80 Rules, precepts in Basil's words, and each Rule, as well as each section of a Rule contains references to texts of the New Testament from which the Rule is derived. Later, Basil wrote out the Scripture texts in full.

cited text, Rom. 7, 14-20, the only Scripture citation given for this Rule, which is as follows:

That he who is drawn away by sin against his will ought to understand that he is being mastered by some other previous sin, which he serves willingly and is hence-forward led under its power even to things which he does not wish¹³.

In the struggle to do good, Basil taught the inter-relatedness, not only of the commandments, but also, of sinful acts. Being free from sin for him meant being free from all sin, not just selective sins. Therefore, when one is in the position of struggling not to do a particular evil, but without success, Basil implies that one must look for the cause of this impediment in other areas of one's life, to other ways one is being mastered by an earlier sin.

The last text to be examined that uses Rom. 7, 14-15, 17 as a reflection of interior struggle is *Regulae brevius tractatae* 16. Here Basil is dealing with the question of why one can feel compunction sometimes without any effort, but at other times not feel any compunction in spite of much effort. Basil responds by saying that compunction is a gift sent by God to stir up the soul to strive to cultivate it after 'having tasted the sweetness of such sorrow'. In explaining why one who tries to feel compunction but cannot, Basil says:

But to constrain oneself and yet not be able is at once a proof of our neglect at other times — for it is not possible for one having come to a thing suddenly to master it without much and frequent practice in company with others — and it shows that our soul is *dominated by other passions* and not allowed by them to be free in the directions in which it desires freedom, according to the principle laid down by the apostle: 'But I am carnal, sold under sin. For not what I would that do I practise, but what I hate, that I do'. And again: 'But now it is no more I that do it, but sin that dwells in me'. Indeed *God has allowed this to happen* to us for our good, if haply the soul through its involuntary sufferings many *come to perceive* who it is that dominates it, and *recognizing* the things in which it is involuntarily a slave to sin may *regain soberness* and *escape* from the snare of the devil, finding the mercy of God ready to help those who truly *repent*¹⁴.

Here Basil gives a similar interpretation of these verses to that which we have seen in *Regulae morales* 23, namely that one feels trapped, because one is trapped, that our soul is dominated by other passions, which prevent its being free to go in the direction it wants to go in. But here Basil carries this a step further. He says that this suffering and struggle is allowed by God, so that by this experience we will come to our senses, realize who is dominating our soul, and to what things we are involuntarily slaves. This suffering provides us with the means to struggle free from this situation, namely soberness and

¹³ PG 31: 742 C-D; *The Ascetical Works of St. Basil*, trans. W.K.L. Clarke (London, 1925), p. 108, hereafter given as Clarke, p. 108.

¹⁴ PG 31: 1092 D - 1093 B; Clarke, p. 236. The italics are mine.

repentance. For repentance opens the way to God's mercy and grace, thus enabling us to escape the snares of the devil.

After having examined Basil's use of Romans 7, we can better understand how he sees these verses as reflecting the experience of those not yet baptised, as well as of those who are baptised. In the first instance, one is struggling without Christ, that is without the knowledge that there is one who can help us. Success in this struggle comes from becoming a disciple of Christ, and accepting the salvation which comes from him. In the second instances, one has already become a disciple of Christ and been baptised, but acquired habits of sin which bind one, so that freedom requires repentance of all sin. Basil also explains that we can find ourselves dominated by sin when our reason allows the passions to rule, reversing this by using reason to discern the good. Basil shows, that even when things seem hopeless in the struggle against the forces of sin, there is still hope, and, through Jesus Christ, the possibility of salvation.

καιρός and χρόνος in Gregory of Nyssa

Vasiliki LIMBERIS, Philadelphia

Ammonius Grammaticus, who lived in the second century C.E., wrote a dictionary, 'On the similarity and differences of words'. For the entries καιρός and χρόνος, two kinds of time, he writes:

καιρός and χρόνος differ: καιρός is a portion of time, such as the organization of the divisions of the days. χρόνος, on the other hand, is the summation and inclusion of many καιροί (times). In other words, καιρός reveals the qualities of times, such as when a war occurred, whereas χρόνος is the quantity, such as before or after ten years¹.

The title of my paper needs some elaboration. Today I am dealing with καιρός and χρόνος in one specific tract of Gregory's, 'On Christ's three days', or as some have chosen to call it, 'On the Holy Passover'. Gregory of Nyssa is famous above all for his dazzling philosophical syntheses to explain the meaning of the Christian divine economy. When I first read 'On Christ's three days', what struck me was its subordination of Gregory's famous philosophical speculations both to the genre of a general Holy Week homily and to the historical events recorded in the Gospels about Jesus' death and resurrection. Yet Gregory's philosophical ideas are present, as he carefully weaves his ideas about time into his exposition. How Gregory of Nyssa fits his philosophical hypotheses of time into the explanation of the historic Christ-event intrigued me and is my topic today.

To begin I must review briefly Gregory's philosophical suppositions on καιρός and χρόνος and διάστημα intervals. In Gregory's metaphysics, time was created after the ideal world, simultaneously with the material world. The triune God is outside of time². Time itself in Gregory's estimation is the measure of all phenomena, not in fact different from Ammonius' definitions³. In a hierarchical descent Gregory includes first aeons, i.e. eternity, which is a created substratum, outside of time, but created by God, nevertheless, much like the ideal world⁴.

¹ Ammonius Grammaticus *de adfinium vocabulorum differentia*, ed. Klaus Nickau (Leipzig, 1966) p. 69, no. 260.

² Harold Fredrik Cherniss, 'The Platonism of Gregory of Nyssa', *University of California Publications in Classical Philology* 11 (1930) p. 27.

³ Ammonius, *op. cit.*

⁴ John R. Sachs, S.J., 'Apocatastasis in Patristic Theology', *Theological Studies* 54 (1993) p. 635, note 111.

From there he moves to the creation of the four elements, which, although I do not have time to pursue here, move in perpetual cyclical motion, in a determined succession (ἀκολουθία), by tendency (τροπή)⁵. This constant cyclical movement is the chief characteristic of the created cosmos. In Gregory's schematization of time, this cyclical repetition is *καιρός* quite akin to Ammonius' definition. Paradoxically the perpetual cycle of *καιρός* is termed *στάσις* by Gregory⁶. It is punctuated with *διαστήματα*, spatial and temporal extensions⁷. It is these 'extensions' that facilitate the paradox of a 'moving stasis' for human beings. This is how it occurs.

Human beings have a mixed nature: the divine is combined with the material. In other words the cosmic nature is mixed with the hypercosmic⁸. Human material nature is penetrated by the divine, in an 'equal dignity'⁹. Because of this interpenetration, the movement of human beings has a goal (*σκοπός*), besides a cyclical characteristic. For Gregory the phenomenal aspects of humanity (body and cyclical time) are comprehensible in the realm of movement and time as well. Human life translates, as it were, into the idiom of time and motion.

It works this way. Because of the divine likeness in humanity, created spirit, which has linear movement, or *χρόνος*, breaks into the cycle of *καιρός* and introduces teleological *progression* to humanity. This progress can lead, if the human will is inclined this way, to participation in God¹⁰. As a created entity, the created spirit is 'always limited by the capability of the creature'¹¹. The perpetual movement of humans is like an ever-widening spiral cycle, ever-expanding in a progression towards God. In terms of time, it is *χρόνος*, linear, goal-oriented time, that enters human cyclical time, *καιρός*, through the union of human nature with the divine likeness. Within the *καίρος* are spatial extensions, *διαστήματα*, ever-widened by the intrusion of *χρόνος*, for fuller capability to know more of God, and progress further towards him¹². 'The purposive tension between human mutability and divine immutability, between created finitude and the uncreated infinite, is everlasting'¹³.

In other words *χρόνος* — although a created entity — is the intermediate term that translates time and human beings into the timeless realm and to God. As time it penetrates *καιρός*, cyclical time, it widens the capabilities of the

⁵ Jean Daniélou, *L'être et le temps chez Grégoire de Nysse* (Leiden, 1970), p. 80.

⁶ Paul M. Blowers, 'Maximus the Confessor, Gregory of Nyssa, and the Concept of Perpetual Progress', *Vigiliae Christianae* 46 (1992) p. 158.

⁷ Richard Sorabji, *Time, Creation, and the Continuum* (Ithaca, 1983), pp. 123-124.

⁸ Daniélou, *op. cit.*, p. 83.

⁹ *Ibid.*

¹⁰ *Ibid.*, p. 108.

¹¹ *Ibid.*

¹² Blowers, *op. cit.*, p. 152.

¹³ *Ibid.*, p. 158.

διαστήματα for further knowledge of God, enabling human beings to stretch further (*ἔκτεινα*) towards the goal¹⁴.

This cursory philosophic review is, I am sure, a repetition for most of you, but it leads me now into Gregory's application of it to the story of Christ's three days in three places: hades, paradise, and in the hands of his father. Although Cherniss remarked, 'It is only natural that Gregory should not press his scientific theories in purely religious passages', ...¹⁵ I think he tries very hard to do so in this sermon. And he does so with great success. For Gregory, as we have seen in this example, time, space, matter, and motion are all interchangeable terms in their respective realms: the created realm and the uncreated. This ingenious hermeneutic enables Gregory to be remarkably faithful to his philosophical ideas when he explains the historical Christ-event, from the crucifixion to the resurrection. As we shall see, Gregory concentrates on the nature of Christ — in philosophical terms — to explain the paschal story rather than imbuing the Gospel narrative itself with the significance of *Heilsgeschichte*.

Gregory contrasts the creation of night and day in Genesis, darkness and light, which he refers to as *καιρός*, cyclical time, with the new creation in Christ, by which *χρόνος* is portioned out¹⁶. There is no night and day in this new creation. It is something completely different from *καιρός*.

The new creation begins with the conception of Jesus in the womb of the Theotokos. Through the conception the Logos enters created time. The new creation of incorruptible flesh was sealed in her womb in a plasmic form¹⁷. And the divine power was mixed with the human body and the human soul. In the mixture, says Gregory, death was removed from life. And just as sin entered the world in three beings, the snake, the woman and the man, so does the incarnate Logos take three chronological periods of time, three days, to bring harmony back to creation¹⁸.

Here we have a supreme example of Gregory's hermeneutic. Matter in the form of created animals, one snake and two human beings, was remedied by three units of time, in this case three days. Hence created entities, be they time, matter, or motion, are translatable and thus transferable. And so also in three days did Christ visit three places: the heart of the earth, called hades; paradise; and his father's hands.

The devil was beguiled by Christ's immortal flesh when he was in hades¹⁹. And he tries to conquer the flesh through death. Gregory says the devil swallows the 'bait of flesh by the fishhook of the Godhead', and was destroyed. It is the

¹⁴ Daniélou, *op. cit.*, p. 109.

¹⁵ Cherniss, *op. cit.*, p. 27.

¹⁶ 016.9.279.1-15.

¹⁷ 016.9.291.10-15.

¹⁸ 286.1-10.

¹⁹ 281.6-17.

very nature of Christ through his incorruptible flesh that prevails over the devil. Furthermore, in answer to his rhetorical question of how the Lord was in Hades and in paradise, he explains that the Logos through χρόνος came into the cyclical time, καιρός, and voluntarily died. When he went into hades, he kept the union of soul and body together; the incorruptible body destroyed death in hades and the soul makes inroads for humanity into Paradise²⁰.

But it is the vehicle of time, the short three days of time (τοῦ χρόνου)²¹ that provides the means for the uncreated Wisdom to enter the created world and restore it²². In a very interesting section (289.3-290.7) Gregory tries to harmonize the Matthean account of the three days from Holy Friday through the Anastasis with his philosophical divisions of time. He states quite clearly that the Gospel does not tell us the *hour* (ώρα) of the resurrection. He attempts to show that one cannot reckon the days to fit the days as we know them cyclically, in καιρός. But even χρόνος changes during the three days. Gregory says that because of the deeds Christ needed to perform, 'The measures of time were reinvented'²³, not to do away with the three days, but to enable the work to get done. He sums it up by saying, 'The creator was not a slave to time through works, but created time according to his deeds'²⁴.

Finally, Gregory tells his congregation that time (χρόνος) is interrupted in the Lenten and Paschal periods. It is the foretaste of heaven, not unlike the collapsing of time during the Divine Liturgy. Gregory has shown in this long homily that it was possible to interpret the Gospel message by use of his philosophic hermeneutic of time. Christ breaks into human cyclical time, καιρός, through created teleological time, χρόνος, in the Incarnation. The Paschal event enables humanity to approach God in a process of movement and stasis, since Christ's very incarnation widened the intervals, the διαστήματα, for attaining ever-closer spaces to God. Time, in all its forms, was entered into and experienced by the Incarnate Logos, so that ultimately for humans, it is suspended as they eternally pursue the vision of God.

²⁰ 293.3-16.

²¹ 280.14.

²² 283.2-9.

²³ 290.3-5.

²⁴ 290.14.

The Vision of God in St. Gregory Nazianzen

John Anthony MCGUCKIN, Leeds

In the preface to the Caillau-Clémencet edition of Gregory's works in Migne, the editors thought it necessary to take previous commentators to task for their impudence in raising theological criticism¹. Gregory's theological reputation has certainly waxed and waned in the West over the last two hundred years, but it is curious to see enduring disagreements as to the quality of his fundamental gift as theologian. In the larger historical frame we oscillate from Rufinus' estimate: 'Gregory, a man incomparable in all things ... who offered to the church the most radiant light of the knowledge of Christ'², to one of the most famous put-downs of modern patristic writing, G.L. Prestige's 'damnatio' of him as merely an 'inspired populariser'³, or Meijering's more recent claim that there are serious logical flaws at the heart of the Trinitarian doctrine which has to be seen as the very pillar of his theological achievement⁴.

Magisterial? or merely covering up fundamental theological deficiencies with a scintillating brocade of rhetoric⁵? This paper wishes to offer a brief discussion of one of Gregory's central theological concepts, the notion of the vision of God, and in so doing perhaps cast some light on this question of Gregory's basic skill as a systematician. It takes its starting point from Vladimir Lossky's criticism of Gregory in his book, *The Vision of God*⁶. Lossky⁷ is one of those who damns Gregory as theologian with faint praise when he says:

¹ 'Many have pushed themselves forward as Gregory's equal, and have even tried to damage him with their calumnious charges, and these not merely the heterodox (a thing not to be wondered at) but even Catholics too!' PG 35.33-34.

² cf. PG 35.305; or Theodore Studite: 'You (father Gregory) stabilised the world by your orations', Iambic 67. cf. PG 35.306.

³ G.L. Prestige, *God in Patristic Thought* (London, 1952), p. 234.

⁴ E.P. Meijering, 'The Doctrine of the Will and of the Trinity in the Orations of Gregory Nazianzen'. Eng. tr. in *God Being History* (Amsterdam, 1975), pp. 103-113.

⁵ The substance of Jerome's snifty sub-text criticising his exegesis while simultaneously claiming the reflected glory of having been his student. cf. Jerome, Ep. 52.8.

⁶ V. Lossky, *The Vision of God* (Leighton Buzzard, Beds, 1963).

⁷ Lossky is apparently sympathetic to Gregory's overall intent, for he generally lauds him as one of those who reduced the impact of the so-called 'super-intellectualistic mysticism of Alexandria', op. cit. p. 70.

'It is difficult to clarify the doctrine of St. Gregory of Nazianzus on the manner of the vision of God. Sometimes he denied the possibility of knowing the divine essence; refusing this knowledge even to the angels; sometimes he uses expressions which could lead us to think that the very nature of God can be known in the contemplation of the Trinity, in being 'united' with, or 'merged' entirely in the entire Trinity'⁸.

Lossky sees a fundamental inconsistency in Gregory's thought or at least a vacillation in regard to the question whether or not there can be an intellectual vision of God for creatures. When he concludes his review, taking Oration 40.41 as his key text⁹, he summarises as follows:

'This is not a vision of God. Nor is it properly speaking a speculation...' and he goes on:

'The contemplation of the Trinity — which for him replaced the vision of the Ousia — is the central theme in his doctrine of the Vision of God, if indeed we can speak of a 'doctrine' when the nature of the vision is so little clarified'¹⁰.

Our question now is to what extent is this a fair or representative critique; first of Gregory's doctrine *per se*, and secondly in so far as this represents his systematic ability on the wider front. Lossky is quite right in seeing Gregory's understanding of the vision of God as fundamentally a Trinitarian theology. This is the insight that dominates and interrelates so much of his theological work¹¹. He is quite unfair, however, in attributing a systematic disorder to him on this basis. The unresolved (or only partly resolved) tension within a doctrine that insists on the unknowability of a God who has chosen to make himself known while remaining unapproachable, is not some indigestible leftover from the systematics of Athanasius, it is rather a fundamental legacy of Christianity, and widely apparent in the scriptures themselves. The evangelist John even manages to express both elements of the paradox in the same phrase when he says:

'No man has ever seen God; it is the only-begotten god who is in the bosom of the Father who has made him known'. Jn. 1.18.

This latter text, moving seamlessly as it does from terms of vision to those of knowing serves to remind us that the categories of seeing and understanding are used almost synonymously in biblical and patristic thought. For Gregory

⁸ Lossky, *op. cit.* p. 69.

⁹ Where Gregory speaks of how he did not see the Trinity when Unity possessed him, and did not perceive Unity when the intimation of Trinity seized him. Orat. 40.41. PG 36.417.

¹⁰ Lossky, *op. cit.* p. 70; and again: 'St. Gregory Nazianzen, who speaks a great deal of the contemplation of the Trinity, did not develop a doctrine of contemplation. The very nature of contemplation is difficult to grasp in his writings, which are more like contemplative meditations than doctrinal expositions'. Lossky, *op. cit.* p. 89.

¹¹ cf. J.A. McGuckin, 'Perceiving Light from Light in Light. The Trinitarian Theology of St. Gregory The Theologian', *Greek Orthodox Theological Review*, vol. 39.1, (Commemorative volume for his 16th Centenary) (Brookline, Mass., 1994), pp. 7-32.

the issue is always one of a doctrine of the approach of God (not to God); the salvific encounter which is always initiated by the One who is other to us, and yet is recognised by human faculties of perception. To enshrine this unrelenting emphasis on the priority of God's action is why Gregory's thought on the vision is almost exclusively Trinitarian in character.

Donald Winslow, in his sensitive exposition of Gregory's soteriology¹², has recognised both Gregory's stress on the divine initiative and the essential interchangeability of his three key metaphors of: ascent, vision, and cognition¹³. Winslow subsumes all three metaphors to the overall concept of Theosis, and in so far as we can take this to embrace the double aspect of Gregory's soteriology: God's Καταβάσις to mankind, and humanity's Ἀναβάσις to the divine presence, then he is surely right in this hermeneutical perspective.

Gregory's doctrine retains these polarities but they are neither peculiar to him, nor inherently illogical. In the first place the modality is a biblical inheritance preserved by most of the major fourth and fifth century fathers. In the second place, to read Gregory's delight in juxtaposed paradoxes as evidence of unresolved thought is to make a fundamental misinterpretation of classical rhetorical dialectic. Since this is Gregory's consistent, and preferred, method of theologising — a deliberate application of rhetorical antitheses held in proximate tension to suggest a dynamic correlation¹⁴ — then not to recognise it constitutes a cardinal error on the part of the modern interpreter. In such rhetorical dialectic the juxtaposition of the two polarities does not so much leave them baldly unresolved but is meant to posit a suggested form of synthesis. This synthetic resolution, as befits a rhetorical intimation, may not be fully demonstrated (shall we say scholastically systematised?) but is nonetheless valid and powerful theology, especially as Gregory maintains it is demonstrably rooted in lived experience; and experience, even in normal discourse, frequently exceeds the human capacity for exact and precise analyses¹⁵.

In other words Gregory is insisting that the Unknowable can be known by creatures without thereby ceasing to be the Unknowable. In his revelation God is no longer the Unknown, certainly, but in so far as that revelation is conditioned by the limited capacity of his creatures, even in revealing himself fully (to those whom he chooses) he remains unknowable, in so far as that term 'fully' is always understood to refer 'κατ' οἰκονομίαν' to the measure of

¹² D.F. Winslow, *The Dynamics of Salvation* (Philadelphia, 1979).

¹³ cf. Winslow, *op. cit.*, p. 195.

¹⁴ cf. F.W. Norris, *Faith Gives Fullness to Reasoning: The Five Theological Orations of Gregory Nazianzen* (Leiden, 1991).

¹⁵ This is why, in the Theological Orations (esp. Orat. 27), Gregory sets out to overturn the certainties of Neo-Arian dialectics and chooses to approach theology as a matter of inspired perception, akin to the insights of poetry and resting fundamentally on the graceful illumination of God and the purified receptivity of the one who receives it, rather than on the force and range of human logic.

creaturehood, not to the divine reality in itself, and indeed takes its accuracy as a descriptor from this very fact (not in spite of it) since this 'full measure' of revelation to the chosen is not a misnomer (as it might be if it were denied that there could be a full revelation which was not a complete 'comprehension' of God in himself) rather a term that precisely connotes the promise and effect of the revelation, which is to elevate the creature to his or her own ontological fullness in the act of perceiving even a small glimpse of the absolute within the relative order.

This may seem to be an able but otherwise unremarkable re-statement of the basic axioms of the Alexandrian theological tradition, and so it is, though sharpened up in what we may call the 'Cappadocian synthesis'. There is nothing inherently contradictory or illogical about it, however, even though (as Lossky discovered) it is a systematic approach that resists scholasticisation because of its suggestive and dynamic nature.

Let us depict this in synoptic form in the detailed terms of Gregory's doctrine of the vision. In the first place Gregory clearly teaches that God is essentially unknowable. He never wavers in this. No created thought can penetrate to his Ousia or his Physis¹⁶. No created mind, not even the highest angelic powers, can comprehend the essence of God¹⁷. His nature is beyond all 'finding-out' and yet the intimation can be given as in a mystery to the perfect¹⁸, for others the dark veil of flesh obscures the possibility of any clear vision¹⁹. These negations are in the Absolute order — that is they refer to God's nature which can only be comprehended by God; a comprehension which constitutes the inner life of the Trinity²⁰ and its radiance, but a comprehension which of its own nature emits light. It is a light that draws the spiritual creation into the Kingdom, which is none other than the vision of that threefold light which shines as one²¹. There is, thus, simultaneously a dynamic of closure and disclosure in the fundamental way in which God relates to his creation, where it is the Trinity itself which is at once closed and disclosed. In the absolute order God is closed to Himself, yet not in Himself alone, for even in that closure he celebrates his own life in the full mutual knowledge that exists in the communion of the coequal Father, Son, and Spirit. In the relative order he is disclosed, as the God who saves, yet even in that disclosure of revelation — a process of illumination that serves to draw the elect into the communion of his own life (Gregory delights in applying the notion of *Mίξις*, 'mingling' with the deity) — the created intellect finds the sense of closure because of its very ontological limitations of consciousness. Gregory is thus arguing in a subtle dialectic that

¹⁶ Orat. 28.7. PG 36.48; Orat. 28.5. PG 36.32.

¹⁷ Orat. 38.8. PG 36.320.

¹⁸ Orat. 32.13. PG 36.189; Orat. 28.12. PG 36.40.

¹⁹ Orat. 28.12. PG 36.41.

²⁰ Orat. 28.3. PG 36.29.

²¹ Orat. 21.9. PG 35.945.

God is revealed in his mystery and yet simultaneously mysterious in his revelation: *Vere Deus absconditus es*.

Gregory's use of scripture is indicative of this 'Negative' approach to the vision of God. It is interesting to see how he applies Exodus 33.20 (No man shall see me and live)²², or Exodus 33.23 (how Moses saw only the hind parts of God not the reality)²³, or 1 Tim. 6.16 (which asserts the God which no man can see)²⁴. But nowhere in his entire corpus does he ever comment on, or cite, 1 Jn. 3.2: 'We shall see him as he is' — something that is equally true of the other Cappadocians too.

This apophaticism in the absolute order is, however, balanced by a vivid sense of revealed knowledge in Gregory's system. At one level he reapplies the standard patristic and philosophical doctrine that the created order manifests God. He accepts Plato's image that what the Sun is to the material world, so God is to the human Nous²⁵ and so even the pagans can gain some sense of God by means of the taxonomy of creation²⁶. God has also revealed himself through diverse other means within the created order. What for the scriptures is the doctrine of the glory of God made manifest²⁷ is, for Gregory, the dynamic manifestations (*ἐνεργεία*) of the deity, the 'splendour and the majesty' of God in the world²⁸. It is this which is comprehensible, in part, to the human mind: to know fully *that* God is, not *what* God is²⁹.

Gregory's kataphatic and apophatic utterances are not merely left in a state of irresolution. Once again his biblical exegesis demonstrates the key to his theology of the vision. Two texts are used over and over again in his work, even to become the synopsis and leitmotiv of his whole teaching about the vision and its economic modality. These are firstly the Pauline dictum: 'Now we see as in a glass, darkly, but then we shall see face to face. Now I know in part, then shall I know fully, even as I am known fully' (1 Cor. 13.12). This text he applies exhaustively, no less than nineteen times in his corpus³⁰. And secondly, he delights in applying the Matthaean beatitude: 'Blessed are the pure in heart, for they shall see God' (Mt. 5.8)³¹.

The vision of God is thus clearly possible, in part, to the creature. Returning to Plato's image of the Sun and the cave, Gregory admits that the very revelation

²² Orat. 28.3. PG 36.29; Orat. 28.19. PG 36.52; Orat. 45.11. PG 36.637.

²³ Orat. 28.3. PG 36.29; Orat. 37.3. PG 36.285.

²⁴ Orat. 19.12. PG 35.1057; Orat. 30.13. PG 36.120; Orat. 40.5. PG 36.364.

²⁵ Orat. 21.1. PG 35.1085; Orat. 28.30. PG 36.69; Orat. 45.5. PG 36.364.

²⁶ Orat. 28.16. PG 36.48.

²⁷ Is. 35.2; Is. 40.5; Is. 66.18; Jn. 11.40 et al.

²⁸ Orat. 28.3. PG 36.29.

²⁹ Orat. 28.5. PG 36.32.

³⁰ Carm. Hist. 2.3 & 2.4; Carm. Theol. 2.10; Orats. 2.55; 7.17; 12.4; 14.2; 14.23; 17.4; 20.1; 20.12; 24.19; 27.10; 28.17; 28.20; 29.11; 32.15; 38.7; 45.3.

³¹ We can note five separate instances, mainly in the poetic writings: Carm. Theol. 2.17, & 2.34; Carm. Hist. 1.1; 2.7; & Orat. 22.15.

of light amounts to a blinding of human perception certainly³², but degrees of perception there are, with the elect perceiving the light and the lesser perfect perceiving intimations of fire, a symbol of their judgement. Though the light may blind, it is a radiant illumination nonetheless, which demonstrates his premise of 'light being perceptible to light alone'. He adds his own image: the perception of the Sun, impossible to direct vision, becomes possible if we look at it glancing off water: these are the 'hinder parts' of God which our weakness is able to see³³. This theology does not elevate the concept of the revelatory darkness (γνόφος) in the manner of Gregory Nyssa. A dim perception it may be to earthly consciousness, but a perception it is for all that³⁴. Gregory speaks of the 'small beam' of divine cognition which mankind has in this life, and he insists on the difficulty of the perception, but it is in the context of commenting on the scriptural promise that we shall know as we are known (1 Cor. 13.12) and he sees that dim light giving way to a fuller radiance in the life of perfection when the limits of earthbound consciousness have fallen away³⁵, when the third creation (mankind) comes to have more kinship with the archetypal light which illumines it, in the manner of the first creation (the angelic orders). This process of revelatory ascent is synonymous, for him, with spiritual and intellectual katharsis. Only to the purified can God reveal himself, and that illumination involves continuing degrees of katharsis³⁶.

Gregory's stress on the central role of katharsis in the development of the vision of God makes his doctrine fundamentally a moral as well as a mystical conception, and in this he develops on the insights of Origen, his great inspiration. There is, however, a distinctively Gregorian element in this synthesis, and that is the way in which he attempts to sketch out what it is that energises the economy of the vision — the restless position of the human creature poised between dim perception and natural incapacity, just as it is poised between spiritual and material existence. For Origen, the soul's restless desire to seek and return to God was located in his doctrine of pre-existence. Gregory abandons this metaphysic and locates the movement instead within a doctrine of the mixed composite of the human Ousia. Again, the philosophical premise that man is a synthetic being, is nothing original, but Gregory's application of the notion to the doctrine of vision makes it function for him in the way the doctrine of Ἐπέκτασις serves for Gregory Nyssa.

So much of Gregory's work turns on the idea of the mixed condition of mankind that it occupies the position of a ground-bass to all his thinking. His doctrine envisages triadic taxonomy within the created order. There is the first creation (in dignity as well as temporal priority) made up of all the spiritual

³² Orat. 9.2. PG 35.821.

³³ Orat. 28.3. PG 36.29.

³⁴ Carm. 1.1.3. PG 37.415.

³⁵ Orat. 28.17. PG 36.48-49.

³⁶ Orat. 29.18. PG 36.97; Orat. 28.21. PG 36.53; Orat. 45.3. PG 36.625-628.

intellects that comprise the angelic orders. There is also the second creation, made after the first, which is the purely material order; and there is then the unique and fragile synthesis of the two creations, which is mankind; a third creation rooted in the material order but not limited by its terms, whose ultimate destiny is to rise beyond corporeal limitation to a spiritual union (Μίξις) with God which was promised to it in its original making, and restored to it in its economic redemption by Christ.

The first creation has a nature which is akin (Ὀϊκετιος) to God³⁷ and, correspondingly, sees God more directly and more accurately than human beings can ever imagine³⁸. Their natural condition is to be in communion with God, and as lesser lights they circle around the primal light³⁹. They are, as it were, direct emanations from the divine light⁴⁰. The second creation has a nature which is alien and foreign to God (Ξένοσ). The third creation, which originally celebrated a vital synthesis of embodied spiritual consciousness, has, since the fall and the concomitant ontological disharmony it introduced into the human race, become a synthetic compound of states that are often at war with one another, a fleshly chain around the spirit's essential desire to ascend to the divine presence, and this war either results in the progressive loss of the vision of God, or the spirit's purgative refinement through asceticism and labours, and, ultimately, divine illumination — the symbol of Moses ascending the sacred mountain⁴¹.

The key to this dynamic anthropology, as Gregory posits it, is that in making the essential synthesis, which is the human being, God set in the very terms of this restless nature the allure, the tensile pull, the irrepressible desire that moves the synthetic creature on to seek what it desires — at the deepest level the desire that constitutes its archetypal reality — the vision of God for which it searches and the union which results from that vision which stabilises its reality. For Gregory, even though God is beyond comprehension, the deepest sense of humanity tells it that he draws us to himself still by means of our 'desire' and our 'admiration' both of which result in glory⁴².

The very point and final goal of all human life, for Gregory, is thus to 'gravitate' to the vision of the three-fold light⁴³, and this is why in a very important analogy, one that joins together his theology and his anthropology in

³⁷ Orat. 38.10. PG 36.321.

³⁸ Orat. 28.3. PG 36.29.

³⁹ Orat. 18.42. PG 35.104.

⁴⁰ Orat. 40.5. PG 36.364. Gregory does not thereby mean an emanationist doctrine of the world, for he distinctly teaches the doctrine of creation *ex nihilo*, cf. Orat. 40.7. PG 36.365; *Ibid.* PG 36.424.

⁴¹ Orat. 45.11. PG 36.637.

⁴² Orat. 45.2-3. PG 36.625-628.

⁴³ Carm. 2.1.88. PG 37.1442.

creative synthesis, he describes the Trinity as our 'fulcrum', the still point of our otherwise unstable ontology⁴⁴.

What does all this tell us? I began with an attempt to sketch out this Gregorian doctrine of the vision to test the hypothesis of some critics that Gregory lacks consistency in his thought, a mere wordsmith devoid of rigour or originality. My conclusion from this test case, is one that is borne out from other wider readings of the theologian: here is a profound mind who offers significantly different and suggestive voices even to those of his close contemporaries in the Cappadocian circle. The doctrine of the vision of God in Gregory is neither incoherent, nor confused. On the contrary it emerges as a dynamic and profoundly mystical soteriology. The widespread neglect of his work in the English-speaking world, and the continuing refusal of many commentators to take him seriously except in the shadow of Basil, is perhaps one of the great and enduring mistakes of contemporary patristic analysis.

1 Cor 13, 12 in Gregory of Nyssa's Theological Thinking

Lucas F. MATEO-SECO, Pamplona

At the end of the thirteenth chapter of Saint Paul's First Epistle to the Corinthians, immediately following the hymn in praise of charity, we come across the contrast between two types of human knowledge of God: one being imperfect, as through a mirror, in shadows and in enigma; the other being direct and clear, face-to-face: βλέπομεν γὰρ ἄρτι δι' ἑσόπτρου ἐν αἰνίγματι, τότε πρόσωπον πρὸς πρόσωπον. The contrast between the two types of knowledge — which in the Epistle refer, respectively, to knowledge in this life and in the hereafter — is clear and is related to the difference in knowledge existing between a child and an adult to which the previous passage alluded: *When I was a child, I talked like a child, I had the intelligence, the thoughts of a child; since I became a man, I have outgrown childish ways.* Knowledge in enigma must thus be understood as analogous to child-like knowledge; face-to-face knowledge must be understood as analogous to adult knowledge.

Saint Paul's contrast has a clear meaning. To know as through a mirror is explained by the attached phrase; *in enigma*, that is, to know in an enigmatic, obscure, confused vision. At first sight it could come as a surprise that Saint Paul should compare obscure vision — in enigma — to sight through a mirror, which can perfectly reflect the object. It is not so surprising if we bear in mind the possible imperfection of the mirrors of his time and, above all, if we bear in mind that it is quite possible that Saint Paul is referring to magical mirrors, which were very widespread in ancient times. In those mirrors, images were projected over great distances, and this explains better the obscurity and imperfection of the vision¹. Face-to-face knowledge indicates intuitive, close, profound knowledge. The explanation immediately following offers no room for doubt: *Now, I have only glimpses of knowledge; then, I shall recognise God as he has recognised me* (1 Cor 13,12). Saint Paul is therefore speaking of a future vision of God, of a supreme union with God whose immediate and profound nature is affirmed with vigour: *then, I shall recognise God as he has recognised me.*

¹ Cf. J. Leal, 'Primera Carta a los Corintios', in J. Leal and J.I. Vicentini, *La Sagrada Escritura, Nuevo Testamento II* (Madrid, 1962), p. 442.

⁴⁴ Carm. 2.1.45. v. 314. PG 37.1375.

Gregory of Nyssa refers to this text on many occasions². He cites it abundantly in the Sermons glossing the *Canticles* and he applies it in different ways according to the demands of the passage being commented on; he uses it in his *Refutatio Confessionis Eunomii* and in his *In Meletium*. He uses it in an especially important passage at the culminating point of his exposition on the *Life of Moses*, precisely when he speaks of the infinity of God and, as a consequence, when he affirms the existence of progression towards infinity in the contemplation of God, that is, when he presents his thought on what scholars of Saint Gregory of Nyssa usually call *epéktasis*³. As is well known, this is clearly one of his themes, elaborated in line with the quotation of Phil. 3,12-14.

The study, therefore, of the intellection which Gregory has of this text of Corinthians and of the application which he makes of it will help to explain how Gregory understands knowledge in enigma, as through a mirror; the degree of importance he places on face-to-face knowledge; how he understands the opposite; if he believes that both types of knowledge can exist in this life and how he relates them with the indefinite progress in the knowledge of God.

A passage from 'In Meletium'

At the end of the Funeral Oration on Meletius, in a passage full of baptismal reminiscences and allusions to themes very dear to Gregory, such as the comparison of Meletius with Moses, Gregory says:

'But let me have all tears wiped away (...). Our Bridegroom has not been taken from us. He stands in our midst, though we see him not. The Priest is within the holy place. He is entered into that within the veil, whither our forerunner Christ has entered for us (cf. Hebrews 6, 19-20). He has left behind him the curtain of the flesh. No longer does he pray to the type or shadow of the things in heaven, but he looks upon the very embodiment of those realities. No longer through a glass darkly does he intercede with God (1 Cor 13, 12), but face to face he intercedes with Him (...). He has put away the coats of skins; no need is there now for the dwellers in paradise of such garments as these; but he wears the raiment which the purity of his life has woven into glorious dress (...). He has left Egypt behind, this material life. He has crossed, not this Red Sea of ours, but the black gloomy sea of life. He has entered upon the land

² Here is the list of explicit quotes presented by Prof. H. Drobner: *In Cantica Canticorum, Prol.*, GNO VI, 6, 9; *Orat. III*, GNO VI, 86, 17; 90, 11 ss; 98, 11 ss; *Orat. V*, GNO VI, 168, 15; *Orat. IX*, GNO VI, 267, 20; *Orat. XI*, GNO VI, 324, 17s; 336, 5; *De Vita Moysi*, II, GNO VII/I 110, 7 s; *In Meletium*, GNO IX 454 10-11 (Cf. H. Drobner, *Bibelindex zu den Werken Gregors von Nyssa* (Paderborn, 1988), 101).

³ Cf., for example, J. Daniélou, *Platonisme et Théologie mystique* (Paris, 1944), pp. 291-307.

of promise, and holds high converse (*προσφιλοσοφεῖ*) with God upon the Mound⁴.

This passage is the culminating point of his discourse and therefore it is the part where the speaker chooses his best words of consolation. This is a true Christian *consolatio* in which recourse is made to faith, since the truths of faith can console better than that which can be provided by human words. The key to these consolatory words is to be found in the presence of the Pastor in his Church, since Meletius is still living. Furthermore, he is still carrying out his pastoral duties with even greater force, since he intercedes without the presence of any veil, but rather face-to-face. Like Christ — the quotation from Hebrews 6,19-20 is significant — Meletius is still carrying out his priestly duties before God, since he is still interceding for his people.

The entire passage is an interwoven ensemble of biblical texts and themes treated in greater depth in other places, these reminiscences all hinging on the difference existing between intercession on our behalf on this earth as through a mirror, and face-to-face intercession in the celestial sanctuary. The theme of intercession and of entry into the sanctuary has been treated by Gregory in an identical sense, although more extensively, in his *Sermons on the Lord's Prayer*⁵. Intimacy with God, to converse with him face-to-face in the celestial halls as a friend would do with a friend — as Moses did with God — is, for Gregory, the clearest exponent of the priestly endeavour in heaven. The figures of Jesus Christ as reflected in the Epistle to the Hebrews and in Moses scaling the heights of Mount Sinai and entering into the celestial tabernacle⁶ are always present in the pages which Saint Gregory of Nyssa dedicates to his consideration of the priesthood⁷.

The paragraph describes the plenitude of life in which Meletius now finds himself and the plenitude with which he carries out his priestly functions: by interceding face-to-face. Along with this Gregory underlines the fact that Meletius, with his going into heaven, has attained the plenitude of his endowment

⁴ Saint Gregory of Nyssa, *In Meletium*, GNO IX, 454, 3-455, 9. PG 45, 861. (Cf. W. Moore, H. Austin, *Gregory, Bishop of Nyssa. Select Writings and Letters* (The Nicene and Post-Nicene Fathers, Series II, Vol. V), pp. 516-517).

⁵ 'But the spiritual Lawgiver, Our Lord Jesus Christ, strips the Law of its material veils and lays bare the types and allegories. First of all, He does not give communion with God only to one whom He separates from everyone else, but He bestows this honour equally on all, offering the grace of the priesthood as common to those who desire it. (...) We said that he who has prepared himself so that he may boldly call God his Father is precisely he who is clad in such a robe as described in this sermon. He rings with bells and is adorned with pomegranates; (...) he dwells in the supercelestial *adyta* which are *adyta* to all profane thought and truly inaccessible'. Saint Gregory of Nyssa, *Hom. III de oratione dominica*, PG 446, 1149 A-C. (Cf. H. Graff, *St. Gregory of Nyssa, The Lord's Prayer* (Ancient Christian Writers, 18; New York, 1954), pp. 56-57).

⁶ Cf., for example, Saint Gregory of Nyssa, *De Vita Moysi*, II, 177-183.

⁷ Cf. L.F. Mateo-Seco, 'Sacerdocio de los fieles y sacerdocio ministerial en los tres grandes capadocios', in various authors, *Teología del sacerdocio*, II (Burgos, 1970), pp. 49-92.

in baptism: the casting away of the coats of skins and the wearing of new raiment, that is the casting away of the old man and the putting on of the new man has been total and perfect. His exit from this world has been the authentic exodus prefigured in the exodus of the Israelites. In his definitive and authentic exodus, Meletius speaks with God face-to-face, he *philosophers* with God in the same way that Moses spoke with God face-to-face on Mount Sinai and penetrated into the tabernacle not made by human hands⁸. This is what Gregory calls passing away from knowledge through shadows and moving on to face-to-face knowledge.

From the *iter idearum* of the paragraph, Gregory does not deduce any direct allusion to the knowledge which Meletius experiences in heaven, but rather to the clarity of his intercession: as opposed to intercession carried out on earth — δι' ἑσόπτρου ἐν αἰνίγματι — there is face-to-face intercession: αὐτοπροσώπως ἐντύγγανει τῷ θεῷ. In the text there remains one last point of reference in order to grasp how Saint Gregory understands the depth of the face-to-face vision mentioned in 1 Cor. This is in reference to the phrase 'he looks upon the very embodiment of those realities', ἀλλ' εἰς αὐτὴν βλέπει τὴν τῶν πραγμάτων εἰκόνα. In one way or another, Meletius no longer contemplates beauty as it is reflected in things, but rather he contemplates the authentic reality of which things are a reflection. Jaeger's edition cites Hebrews 10,1 as the source of inspiration: *what the Law contains is only the shadow of those blessings which were still to come, not the full expression of their reality ...*, where the word ἐφ' εἰκόνα is used in a similar fashion⁹.

The Life of Moses

As has been said, in *The Life of Moses* 1 Cor. 13, 12 is adduced by Gregory at one of the culminating points of the book, precisely when he deals with man's ascension towards God as unlimited progress:

'(...) this hope constantly inflamed his desire to see what was hidden because of all that he had attained at each stage. Thus it is that the ardent lover of beauty, constantly receiving an image, as it were, of what he longs for, wants to be filled with the very impression of the archetype. The bold demand of the soul that climbs the hills of desire tends towards the direct enjoyment of Beauty, and not merely through mirrors or reflections. In refusing Moses' request, the voice of God in a sense grants it, by pointing out in a few words an infinite abyss of contemplation. For God in his bounty granted that his desire would be fulfilled; but He did not promise that his desire would ever cease or be fully satisfied. Indeed He would not have shown Himself to his

⁸ Cf. Gregory of Nyssa, *De Vita Moysi*, I, 49; II, 167-183.

⁹ The Word, εἰκὼν of God, is God himself.

servant if the vision would have been to terminate Moses' desire; for the true vision of God consists rather in this, that the soul that looks up to God never ceases to desire Him¹⁰.

It could be said that we find ourselves in the most intimate nucleus of the theological thought of Saint Gregory of Nyssa. The key to *epéktasis* is found in the very nature of the 'passion of love towards essential beauty'. Gregory here uses the word *eros* to define this loving passion. J. Daniélou writes: 'Eros defines the madness of love (...). We have to link this expression to those of sober inebriation and ecstasy in order to describe the state of the soul which is swept away by the most intense presence of God and sent into a sort of madness'¹¹. It is this *eros* which desires to contemplate face-to-face, and no longer in a figurative manner. And God, according to Gregory, grants this in as much as it can be granted, that is by denying it. He grants it in the experience of Beauty being experienced above and beyond all experience. Therefore, to see *face-to-face* as it is to be understood in 1 Cor 13, 12, as opposed to seeing through a mirror or in enigma, is equivalent to a type of knowledge in which God, so to speak, remains in a certain sense incapable of being grasped. To see God *face-to-face* consists of clearly understanding that God is above and beyond all knowledge.

According to Gregory, what Moses asks of God is 'that He should reveal Himself not in the manner in which his servant is capable of participating in it, but rather in the manner in which He is'¹². God grants this petition precisely at the same time as He denies it, since to see God face-to-face is nothing else but experiencing the fact that God is above and beyond. It is noteworthy that both seeing *through a mirror* and *in enigma* and seeing *face-to-face*, that is 1 Cor. 13, 12, are referred by Gregory to Moses' experience at the moment of his spiritual itinerary as described in Exodus 33, 18-20.

¹⁰ Saint Gregory of Nyssa, *Life of Moses*, II, 231-233. (Cf. J. Daniélou, H. Musurillo, *From Glory to Glory. Texts from Gregory of Nyssa's Mystical Writings* (New York, 1979), p. 146).

¹¹ J. Daniélou, 'Mystique de la ténèbre chez Grégoire de Nysse' in *D.Sp.*, II (1953), cols. 1880-1881. It is Gregory himself who puts forth the reason why he chose the word *eros*: 'Scripture, in order to make us understand its most elevated teachings, has taken as a symbol that which is the most violent within our passions; I refer to the passion of love (*erotiké páthos*), so that we may become aware of the fact that the soul which contemplates the inaccessible Beauty of divine nature falls in love with it in the same manner as the body feels passion for that which is co-natural to it, and changes passion into impassibility so that once all carnal passion has become extinguished, our soul lovingly burns with the sole flame of the Spirit, burning with that fire with our Lord came to spread over the earth (Luke 12, 49)'. (Saint Gregory of Nyssa, *Sermons on the Canticles*, I, PG 44, 773). It is an *eros* which Gregory defines in the same *Sermons* (XIII, PG 44, 1048) as 'intense charity (*agapḗ*)'.

¹² Saint Gregory of Nyssa, *Life of Moses*, II, 231-233.

The Sermons on the Canticles

The first quotation of 1 Cor 13, 12 is found in the prologue to the *Sermons on the Canticles*, in the middle of an inflamed defence of the allegorical interpretation of Scripture, precisely because Gregory plans to interpret many passages from the *Canticles* in an allegorical manner. *The written law inflicts death, whereas the spiritual law brings life*, he argues by quoting 2 Cor 3, 6. What gain is wrought for the virtue of the hearer by the fact that the prophet has engendered sons of fornication (Osee 1,2) or that Isaiah should have been in cohabitation with the prophetess (Isaiah 8,3)? The Lord himself trains the intelligence of his disciples by means of enigmas which He immediately explains, thereby dissipating their obscurity. Indeed, 'in some places there is given a more obscure intelligence and *partial knowledge*, which is known as *knowledge through mirrors and in enigma* (1 Cor 13, 12)¹³.

The only thing quoted from I Cor 13, 12 here is that which corresponds to partial knowledge. It is applied to those passages of Holy Scripture whose grasp is more difficult because in those passages that which is revealed is stated in enigma, as through a mirror. This paragraph of the prologue to the *Sermons on the Canticles* finds a parallel in the *Refutatio confessionis Eunomii*. There, however, the expressions *in enigma, as through a mirror* are applied to the Old Testament in so far as it is a figure of the New Testament¹⁴.

In this text of *Sermon IX in Canticum* Gregory also applies 1 Cor 13, 12 — of which he only quotes knowledge in enigma — to the language of the Old Testament:

'In antiquity there were many animal sacrifices. Although these things really happened, another thing is that which the law teaches you *in enigma*: that it is convenient to sacrifice vices and the disorderly motions of the soul that dwell in you'¹⁵.

Gregory likes to compare personal asceticism, above all that of monks, with the sacrifices of the Ancient Law in order to show the interior nature of the cult given to God in the New Law and, therefore, its superiority over the Ancient Law¹⁶. From this point of view, the text also contains thoughts which are very dear to Gregory. The reference to 1 Cor 13, 12 is minimal and has a clear meaning: *in enigma* means in a figurative manner, as an anticipation, in shadows. M. Canévet has pointed out that nonetheless for Gregory the topic of

¹³ Saint Gregory of Nyssa, *Sermons on the Canticles*, Prologue, GNO VI, 6, 9-10.

¹⁴ Saint Gregory of Nyssa, *Refutatio confessionis Eunomii*, GNO 2, 313, 2-3.

¹⁵ Saint Gregory of Nyssa, *In Canticum*, IX, GNO VI 267, 20-268, 3.

¹⁶ This is stressed, for example, in *De virginitate* and in *Sermons on the Lord's Prayer*.

vision through a mirror is mainly linked to the vision of the soul, that is to the human knowledge of God¹⁷.

Thus it is seen in three passages of *Sermon III in Canticum*, all linked to each other. The vision of the soul and the transcendence of God are joined together in these passages dedicated to the characteristics of contemplation:

'Divine nature is above and beyond knowledge and all knowledge which we have of it is only a semblance (*ὁμοίωμα*) of that which is sought since it does not show its true form, and nobody has seen it, nor can it be seen, but rather that as through a mirror and in enigma (1 Cor 13, 12) that which is sought is only described by means of a representation which is found in the soul'¹⁸.

Gregory here refers knowing through a mirror and in enigma to the knowledge of God which is made possible by any image formed by the mind, since there is no image capable of perfectly representing God. The equivalence of knowledge through a mirror with knowledge which man makes of God by means of an image is total. A bit further on he explains it thus by describing it as knowledge not only in obscurity, but indirect. In the following text knowledge through a mirror is applied to the knowledge man has of the Word, precisely because he contemplates the reflection of the Word in his own soul:

'If anyone were to gather from the fields of virtue all sweet-smelling flowers or their aroma, and were to convert his life into a unique perfume by the good odour of all his efforts and were perfect in everything, his nature could not direct his eyes towards the Word, in the same way that he can not direct them towards the sphere of the sun, but rather he contemplates the Word in himself as through a mirror. Indeed, the rays of that true and divine virtue, glowing in the purified soul by means of the impassibility which flows from them, makes the invisible sun visible in our mirror and makes us attain that which is unattainable'¹⁹.

As J. Daniélou writes, it is an essential theme within Gregory's mystical theology that the soul should attain the knowledge of God by penetrating within itself, for it is within itself that the image of God is found²⁰. A large part of Saint Gregory's ascetic exigency rests upon this: it is necessary to purify the soul in order to give back the true features to the image. When this purification has been achieved, that is, when it can be affirmed that the soul gathers a bouquet of all the virtues, then it sees the Word in itself as through a mirror.

¹⁷ 'En revanche, le thème du miroir est lié, chez Grégoire, à celui de l'âme quand il s'agit de voir; 1 Cor évoque en *Ref conf. Eun.*, GNO 2, 313, 2-3 l'enseignement obscur de l'Ancien Testament; en *In Cant Prol.*, GNO 6, 6-9, le même verset justifie la nécessité de l'allégorie. En somme, quand il s'applique à l'Écriture, il est cité surtout à cause de l'*énigme*, ce qui est un des emplois qu'en fait Origène'. (M. Canévet, *Grégoire de Nysse et l'herméneutique biblique* (Paris, 1983), p. 46).

¹⁸ Saint Gregory of Nyssa, *In Canticum*, III, GNO VI 86, 13-19.

¹⁹ Saint Gregory of Nyssa, *In Canticum*, III, GNO VI 90, 6-16.

²⁰ J. Daniélou, *Platonisme et Théologie mystique* (Paris, 1944), pp. 210-211.

A bit further on, near the end of the homily, Gregory concludes by applying this thought to the soul in which the Beauty of the Word is reflected:

'Given that He is true light and true life and true justice, as the book of *Wisdom* states (John 1,9; 1 John 5, 20), when somebody by means of his works converts himself into what He (Jesus) is, when he contemplates the state of his own conscience, in it he contemplates the Spouse, reflecting as a mirror the light of truth in a life that is luminous and without blemish'²¹.

The previous quotations of the *Sermons on the Canticles* only reflect one part of 1 Cor 13, 12, that is that which is stated there concerning knowledge as through a mirror and in enigma, and not that which concerns face-to-face knowledge. In *Sermon IV in Canticum*, Gregory quotes 1 Cor 13, 12 precisely in allusion to face-to-face knowledge. He does so by commenting on Cant. 2, 16: *My Lover is for me, and I am for my Lover; He shepherds among the lilies before the breeze comes and the shadows flee*.

Gregory comments: 'That is to say: I saw face-to-face Him who always remains and who, for my behalf, arose from my sister the Synagogue in human nature. In Him I rest and I become his dwelling place. This is the Good Shepherd who does not feed his flock with straw but rather with pure lilies'²².

The subject to whom this face-to-face visions refers is Christ, the Good Shepherd who, in his humanity, proceeds from the Synagogue. The richness of the Christological thought contained in the text is great due to the naturalness with which the divinity of Christ is affirmed; the Good Shepherd is he who always remains, says Gregory while evoking Exodus 3, 14²³. This is not, however, the matter we are dealing with here, but rather the interpretation of 1 Cor 13, 12. Here it is referring to Christ, something that obviously does not pose the difficulty that is involved in the face-to-face vision of God.

Gregory's last two quotations of 1 Cor 13, 12 are to be found in *Sermon XI in Canticum*. The first is found in a key text of Gregory's mystical theology in which he speaks of the *feeling of presence* with which the soul perceives the Lover who is at the door and knocking.

'The Word knocks at the door. We understand by the door the sagacious knowledge of arcane things by which that which is sought penetrates. Indeed, truth is outside our nature, it knocks at the door of our mind through partial knowledge, as stated by the Apostle (1 Cor 13, 12), in allegories and enigmas, saying: *Open*'²⁴.

Partial knowledge, in enigma, as through a mirror, appears here in its full worth. From one point of view — if we compare it with the infinite

²¹ Saint Gregory of Nyssa, *In Canticum*, III, GNO VI 98, 6-12.

²² Saint Gregory of Nyssa, *In Canticum*, V, GNO VI 168, 15-19.

²³ As is natural, the name of Jehovah in Exodus 3, 14 has warranted a rich comment from Gregory in his *Life of Moses*. In Jaeger's edition this important verse seems to be alluded to here (GNO VI, 168).

²⁴ Saint Gregory of Nyssa, *In Canticum*, XI, GNO VI 324, 13-19.

transcendence of God — this knowledge is modest and small; from another point of view — if we consider it as the first fruits of that superior knowledge which is called face-to-face knowledge — this partial knowledge is of great importance since it is the door at which truth knocks and through which it penetrates into the soul.

The last text of the *Sermons on the Canticles* in which the quotation of 1 Cor 13, 12 appears is the only one which offers a reading in which there is an explicit contrasting of both types of knowledge considered as knowledge of this earth and knowledge in heaven:

'Perhaps in the coming century, when all that which we now see will have disappeared in accordance to what the Lord says in that *heaven and earth shall pass away, but my words will stand*, (Matthew 24, 33), and we shall have passed on to that life which surpasses all that which we see, all that which we hear and all knowledge (1 Cor 2, 9), then we will no longer know only in part, through things which are made, as is presently the case; nor will we know Him who conserves all existing things by means of the operation of the things which we see, but rather we will grasp the image of inexpressible happiness in a different manner, and we will experience in a very different manner the form of joy, whose nature can not presently be conceived by the heart of man'²⁵.

We find ourselves before the authentic Pauline joy in that which no eye has seen, no ear heard by which it is stated that heaven is above all things (1 Cor 2, 9), applied precisely to *face-to-face* knowledge in order to explain the nature of the knowledge which is being referred to in 1 Cor 13, 12. Gregory's thought is coherent in all his negative theology: this seeing face-to-face, on the one hand, does not mean reaching a limit in the knowledge of God; on the other, it is so elevated that the human heart cannot even imagine the nature of this *philosophising* with God face-to-face, as a friend speaks with a friend. Gregory explains it with two sentences: this type of happiness is so inexpressible, so great is the joy of heaven, that here on earth it is not possible even to imagine it. Face-to-face vision is explained precisely in the clearest coherence with Saint Gregory's mystical theology: as the vision of God, the nature of which we can not even imagine.

We have come to the final point of our itinerary of Saint Gregory of Nyssa's theological thinking regarding 1 Cor 13, 12. This thinking has shown variations in the applications made of it. To see face-to-face is applied to the intercession of the priest in the celestial halls; to Moses' prayer on Mount Sinai,

²⁵ Saint Gregory of Nyssa, *In Canticum*, XI, GNO VI 336, 1-10.

precisely when he penetrates into the celestial tabernacle to ask God to be able to see Him as He is. It is applied to the Old Testament or to that language of Holy Scripture which must be interpreted in an allegorical manner. It is mainly applied, as M. Canévet has noted, to a twofold knowledge of the soul: that of this world and that of heaven. Gregory does not downgrade this modest earthly knowledge, which knocks at the door of the soul since it is the Word himself who knocks and when He enters the soul increasingly discovers an inexpressible intimacy which is called seeing face-to-face. Here not even Gregory dares to experiment with a description of this face-to-face vision. It is a matter of a way of seeing that is above and beyond that which the human eye can behold and that which can be conceived by the heart of man (1 Cor 2, 9).

Gregory of Nazianzus and Gregory of Nyssa on Basil

Anthony MEREDITH, SJ, London

Within a few years of Basil's death¹, both his friend and his brother had produced lengthy treatments of his life and work. But, despite the common theme, they differ markedly both in their genre and in the information they offer. Do these differences also reveal the influence on their respective portrayals of their own distinctive spiritualities? It is the aim of this paper to explore this possibility.

The not totally persuasive arguments of P. Maraval have put a possible question mark beside the year 379 as the date of Basil's death. It is not at all clear how long after this Gregory of Nazianzus' panegyric was delivered. The footnote at *PG* 36.493 suggests that it took place at Caesarea in September of 381, that is at least 2½ years after Basil's death. The introduction by Billius states that oration 43 was made *demonstrativo genere* and if so it serves to distinguish his (sc. Gregory of Nazianzus') address from that of Gregory of Nyssa, who at 130.13 explicitly disclaims any such intention. Nazianzen's panegyric is very lengthy, occupying 113 columns in Migne. It is, indeed, only surpassed in length by his bitter invective against Julian (= *PG* 35; 531-664; 133 columns). It is not improbable that both these 'sermons' fall into the class of pamphlets, meant to be read rather than heard, and if so they would bear comparison with similar literary works of Cicero and Libanius, many of whose speeches were meant to be read not heard².

By contrast, Gregory of Nyssa's oration is considerably shorter occupying only 30 columns in Migne (= *GNO* X.1.109-134). It opens with a clear reference to the celebration of the feasts of Christ, and then of Stephen and the apostles and then of Basil himself³. This suggests a cult of Basil at this (relatively) early date. There seems to be no more precise means of dating this work. No addressee is mentioned, but that is hardly surprising. What is surprising is that despite the fact that both Gregories owed much, though in differing ways, to the inspiration, education and forceful character of Basil, nevertheless a great difference separates their actual treatment of the material at hand. Gregory of

¹ P. Maraval, 'La date de la mort de Basile' in *REA* 34 (1988), pp. 25-38.

² So, Cicero, *Pro Milone*; on this see Asconius, *Comm.* 31; Plutarch, *Cicero*. 35, and for Libanius' regular practice cf. P. Petit, 'Recherches sur la publication et la diffusion des discours de Libanius', *Historia* 5 (1956), pp. 479-509.

³ *GNO* X.1.109.4.10; 14; 19.

Nazianzus' address contains 82 sections. Of these the first 2 take the form of a *captatio benevolentiae*, and the two final sections an address to the admirers of Basil and prayer to Basil himself to receive them into heaven with him. The rest of the oration divides in two at section 59. Up to that point there has been an elaborate account of the family, education and career of Basil, up to the time at which in 371 Valens divided the province of Cappadocia in two, with two separate capitals, at Caesarea, which remained under Basil; and at Tyana. Gregory ends this part of his panegyric (section 59) with a testy complaint, that, despite the many advantages to the church from the action of Valens and from Basil's reaction to it, he, Gregory, had not benefited, because he had surrendered, under Basil's pressure, the philosophic ease that suited him (PG 36.573A). Sections 60 to 79 discuss the great virtues of Basil in deeds (60-64) and in words (65-69), a section that concludes with a defence of Basil's reticence; *οἰκονομία* (a word be it noted, that Basil never uses of himself), on the divinity of the Holy Spirit. The final part of the second part of the sermon (70-77) compares Basil with the heroes of the Bible and concludes in 77 by asserting the superiority of Basil to them all. The final sentence reaches the heights of flattery when Gregory asserts that what Basil did 'on the side' or 'accidentally' surpassed what others did with full attention.

It is instructive to compare the structure of Nazianzen's speech with that of his friend. As we have noted Gregory of Nyssa specifically distinguishes his work from that of epideictic oratory. From the outset Nyssen makes it clear that what interests him is not the name and family of Basil, except in so far as they illustrate the grace and virtue of the man (GNO X.1.2.110.2). Thereafter, although it is possible to learn something about Basil, by a self imposed reticence we learn nothing whatever about their family, name or place of birth. In this respect Gregory's treatment of his brother differs quite markedly from his treatment of his sister Macrina, in whose *Life* we learn a good deal about the family⁴. By contrast, in the present work it would be hard, if not impossible, to discover that Gregory was Basil's brother. He refers to him regularly as 'teacher'⁵; and when he comes to deal with Basil's monachism, Gregory does not refer to his sister, Macrina as the source of this ideal, as he does in the *Life of Macrina*⁶, nor, for that matter, does he mention Eustathius of Sebaste, who is often credited with having inspired Basil in his monastic calling.

⁴ For the family of Basil and Gregory of Nyssa in the *Vita Sanctae Macrinae* (= *VSM*) section 5, on Basil himself in 8 and on Emmelia in 6 (though Gregory does not give us her name, which can only be discovered from Gregory of Nazianzus, *or* 43.10); the brief life of Naucratus is discussed in 8-9 and Peter (of Sebaste cf. *letters* 29 and 30) in section 12.

⁵ The term *διδάσκαλος* is used of Basil at least 15 times in the speech, at 110.3; 114.18; 117.6; 119.16; 120.6; 121; 14,122,4,24 etc. Basil is also, as elsewhere in Gregory, *ὁ μέγας* at 115.19; 118.20; 130.7.

⁶ The influence of Macrina on Basil, which goes unmentioned in the speech is at *VSM* 6.

But, over and above the formal differences, Gregory of Nyssa has composed his *Praise of his Brother* on chiasmic lines. From 112.1 to 116.17 Basil's growth to and defence of Christian truth is outlined to parallel that of six great predecessors. Abraham rose above the deceptive knowledge of the Chaldeans, astrology and the rest (112.1-112.5); Moses triumphed over the sorcerers (112.5-112.13); Samuel defeated any attempt to dilute the purity of Judaism by intermarriage (112.13-112.18); Elijah fought against Ahab and Jezebel's idolatry (112.19-113.10); John the Baptist overcame moral laxity by his brave preaching (113.11-113.19); finally Paul, once his eyes had been purified through baptism fell in love with divine beauty and was snatched up into the third heaven and led others to new life through the grace of baptism and conversion (113.20-114.18). A long section now follows in which Basil's combat with Arianism is chronicled, and in which Basil is portrayed as the descendant of Paul, but also of Elijah and John the Baptist (116.18-118.19).

Having outlined in this schematic way the intellectual virtue of Basil, Gregory now turns to his moral excellence, his *ἁρετή*, and again contrasts him with his predecessors, in the reverse order from his previous set of comparisons, though using, with the exception of Abraham, the same Old and New Testament figures. So, whereas Gregory began his first series with Abraham and ended with Paul, he begins the second series with Paul and ends, not with Abraham but with Moses. Paul becomes an example of charity and of devotion to the truth (118.20-119.15), John the Baptist of freedom of speech, *παρρησία* (119.16-122.2), — the parallel between Herod and Valens is frequently and overtly made. The comparison with Elijah (122.3-125.6) is both longer and more complex than any other. Gregory begins it by outlining the 'fioretti' of Elijah (or some of them) and admitting that Basil has nothing to offer in comparison with them. Instead he finds that both had a great zeal for the faith and austerity of life (122.25ff.). To this litany of moral similarities Gregory adds a particular incident in the lives of both, which gives a particularity to the somewhat generalized accounts of virtues that precede it. As Elijah had relieved the hunger of the widow and her son (cf. I Kings 17), so too Basil also had relieved the hunger of Cappadocia in the course of the serious famine of 368/369 (124.12ff.). Basil's generosity during this famine must have made a mark on his contemporaries. Gregory himself refers to it on two other occasions, while Gregory of Nazianzus discusses it in oration 43.34/35. After Elijah comes Samuel, whose miraculous birth is paralleled with that of Basil (125.7-22).

The synkrisis concludes with a lengthy passage (125.23-130.6) comparing Basil to Moses. It is instructive to compare the treatment of Moses with that given to him in *The Life of Moses*⁷. Clearly Moses was for the early Christians

⁷ *ἁρετή* is frequent as the expression of the christian ideal *passim* in *de vita Moysis* and occurs in the subtitle (Or Perfection in virtue). In part 2 it occurs in sections 2; 3; 4; 15; 20; 37; 39; 42; 44; 49; etc. in *VSM* 1; 2; 6; 9; 10; 12 etc. and in the speech at 111,2; 10; and, especially, at 125,23.

the exemplar par excellence for the virtuous life, and hardly surprisingly Gregory, in wishing to portray Basil as the completely virtuous man, finds it both convenient and necessary to contrast him with Moses. So he opens this part of his sermon with the statement that as Moses is the ὑπόδειγμα of virtue, it cannot be wrong to portray Basil as in all points like him. His secular education, his withdrawal to the desert, his enlightenment, his fight against the tyrant, his familiarity, his instruction of the people are all included in the lengthy parallel. At which point the synkrisis comes to an end, and we are left wondering why Abraham has not been mentioned.

Gregory concludes his address by excusing himself from offering the usual account of fatherland and family (130.13; 132.2). Such items of information are irrelevant and distracting in as much as they allow us to forget that Basil's true nobility was his fellowship with God and his real country, virtue (132.6)⁷.

A recent treatment of Basil illustrates the difference in method between the two Gregories very forcibly. In his construction of Basil's life Philip Rousseau relies heavily upon Gregory of Nazianzus' oration 43, citing it as evidence on at least 60 occasions. By contrast Gregory of Nyssa's *Praise of Basil* is mentioned in his notes on only four occasions: apparently much more is to be gleaned from Gregory's *Life of Macrina* than from his actual treatment of Basil. Does Gregory's silence on the details of his brother's life, and his subordination of what he does tell us to the illustration of Basil's 'virtue' indicate a decidedly cool attitude towards Basil?

Certainly Gregory of Nyssa's relationships with his brother were ambivalent. He always speaks of him with great respect, as the one to whom he owes his education⁸. Repeatedly Basil is the Διδάσκαλος⁹, in so many enterprises Basil had led the way, and Gregory had been at best a critical continuator. G. May's¹⁰ article in *EPEKTASIS* illustrates some of these modifications usefully. In Gregory's discussion of virginity, the Eunomian controversy and the Six days of creation, we find him treating the same themes as his brother, but in a suggestively different manner. Again, Gregory cannot have been ignorant of the fact that his brother found him wanting as a bishop, a fact well illustrated by letters 58 and 100 of Basil. It is, of course, true that Gregory of Nazianzus, no less than his namesake, had good reason to quarrel with Basil. In the matter of the retired life, whether at Iris in Pontus or at home, he had much to

⁷ For an account of the discussions of eulogy in the rhetorical handbooks of the later empire, cf. the discussion by J.H.D. Scourfield on p. 32 of his edition of letter 60 of Jerome in *Consoling Heliodorus* (Oxford, 1993). He cites a passage from Menander Rhetor, *epid.* 2.11, which lays down the rules for the funeral oration, among them the need to discuss family, birth and education, all of which are sedulously avoided by Gregory.

⁸ For Gregory's education by his brother cf. letter 13.4, which also refers to Basil as 'Libanius' pupil and his own father and teacher'. Apparently Gregory received no further formal education.

¹⁰ G. May, 'Einige Bemerkungen ueber das Verhaeltnis Gregors von Nyssa zu Basilius dem Grossen' in *EPEKTASIS* (1972), pp. 509-515.

complain of (cf. Nazianzus, *letter 4-6*; *oration 43.59*). He also seems to have thought Basil too 'economic' on the deity of the Holy Spirit (cf. *letter 58*; *oration 43.69*). Even so, Gregory of Nazianzus owed no particular debt of gratitude to Basil. At Athens they had been equals, and although Basil's reply to Gregory's reproof in his *letter* perhaps indicates a certain irritation with his friend's naivety, there is little to suggest the acerbity of Basil's letters to his own brother¹¹. Perhaps the coolness detectable in the attitude of Gregory of Nyssa to Basil is traceable to this very natural, fraternal tension.

It is instructive to compare Gregory of Nyssa's account of Basil with his warm appraisal of their sister Macrina, whose name, significantly, occurs nowhere in the correspondence of Basil. Again the difference in tone may be purely accidental, but the suggestion that there was a sort of 'axis' in the family, with the masterful Basil on one side, Gregory, Macrina and Peter on the other, may not be beside the point. Perhaps, also, by the time Gregory of Nyssa came to speak of his brother, the details of his life were already familiar enough to his audience.

At the beginning of this paper I suggested that it might be possible to detect in the two treatments something of the distinctive (and differing) theologies and spiritualities that have been supposed to differentiate the two Gregories. Gregory of Nyssa's motive in selecting items from Basil's life is clear enough. On several occasions he makes it clear that what is significant in Basil is virtue. It is open to debate what exactly Gregory meant by the word 'virtue'. Has he primarily moral virtue in mind or is he above all interested in something more all embracing? Is much stress laid upon the importance of θεωρία, or of Basil's pursuit of truth? Given Gregory's intense preoccupation with ἀρετή in all his ascetical writings, above all in the *Life of Moses*¹², it is hard to escape the conclusion that whatever the precise meaning to be attached to the idea of virtue, his actual choice of this particular word is significant and serves to distinguish his approach to the ascetico-mystical idealism from that of Origen and possibly of Gregory of Nazianzus.

There can, I think, be small doubt that Gregory of Nazianzus' attitude to the spiritual life, is at any rate verbally, far more traditional than that of Gregory of Nyssa. A case in point is his first theological oration (= 27.3), where he insists that moral purification is the necessary prerequisite for the understanding of theology. Nor is this an isolated example. Under ἀρετή Gregory clearly understands what Plato and Aristotle had meant by it, that is, the four cardinal moral virtues. Even if Gregory of Nyssa meant by 'virtue' something more all embracing than 'morality', his decision to define christian perfection in these terms and, furthermore, his unusual definition of God as 'virtue' cannot be written off as simply an accident.

¹¹ For Basil's severe attitude to Gregory for his 'simplicity', χρηστότης and ἀπλότης, in *letter 58* from which it emerges that Gregory had attempted a mild deception with his brother and been discovered. In *letter 100* a similar charge is levelled.

¹² Cf. note 7.

The question is, does the more traditional picture of Gregory of Nazianzus find any sort of echo in his own delineation of his friend's career and character? Two points at least point in favour of such a conclusion. 1. In the second portion of his sermon (= 59-80) Gregory does discuss the peculiar excellences of his friend, and in 60 he begins with the moral virtues of Basil, his austerity (60), virginity (61), his fusion (presumably in the *Rules*) of 'solitary' and the 'mixed' life (62), his care for the poor (63) and, finally, his lack of pride (64). From 65 onwards, however, he moves on to the more strictly intellectual achievements of Basil, above all in theology (66; 67). He begins with the *Hexameron*, *On the six days of creation* and concludes with his defence of Basil's 'economy'¹³ about the deity of the Holy Ghost. Basil, therefore, in the pages of Gregory of Nazianzus is portrayed as a moral and intellectual paragon, not unlike the pattern traced out by Plato and Origen.

2. The Origenist flavour in Gregory of Nazianzus' portrayal of Basil is further evidenced by a passage in section 65, where Basil is presented as enjoying the light of knowledge, 'by whose light he is enlightened', — an evident quotation from the LXX of Hosea 10.12, which has escaped the attention of the Migne editor. Although the text appears elsewhere in Nazianzen¹⁴, it is notably absent from Drobner's *Bibelindex* to the writings of Gregory of Nyssa. Origen, too, made considerable use of the text. It is to be found in the preface to his *de principiis* (10) and elsewhere. The comment of Gorgemanns and Karpp in their edition is worth recalling. 'Damit (sc. in diesem Zitat) ist die Quintessenz der Praefatio, ja das Ziel des ganzen Werkes ausgesprochen'¹⁵. We seem to be here in the presence of another example of Gregory of Nyssa's departure from the more 'orthodox' Origenistic tradition as instanced in the writings of Gregory of Nazianzus¹⁶.

This brief comparison of the two treatments of Basil by friend and brother conducted as they are on differing rhetorical principles, suggests the following conclusions.

1. Gregory of Nyssa's attitude to Basil is less sympathetic than his attitude to his sister¹⁷ and than that of Gregory of Nazianzus to Basil. 2. Gregory of Nyssa seems less interested in the life of his brother than in his exemplary

¹³ For Gregory of Nazianzus's use of the expression, again with reference to his reticence on the deity of the Holy Spirit, cf. his *letter* 58.11; 12.

¹⁴ Gregory of Nazianzus also uses more explicitly Hosea 10.12 (LXX) in *orr.* 32.12; 39.10.

¹⁵ For Origen's interest in Hosea 10.12 cf. *comm Jn.* 2.25.160; *contra Celsum* 6.5.

¹⁶ This stress on the absolute importance of virtue should be contrasted with the importance Jaeger lays upon the 'gnostic' element in his *Two Rediscovered Works of Ancient Christian Literature* (Leiden, 1954).

¹⁷ It is perhaps worth recording that Macrina seems to have been made of sterner stuff than either of her brothers. Gregory of Nazianzus relates in sections 78 and 79 that both Basil and his companions were overcome by excessive grief at his death, while Gregory of Nyssa in *Vita Sanctae Macrinae* 17 recalls his own tears at the thought of Basil's death, which Macrina did her best to control, she being untouched, as she had been on the death of her brother Naucratus (section 10). Clearly she was the Stoic heroine of the family.

character. 3. This fact by itself indicates his preference for virtue rather than vision, as the ultimate criterion against which the life not only of Basil but of the human race is to be judged.

Gregory of Nyssa and Christian Hellenism

Alden A. MOSSHAMMER, San Diego, California

In the homilies *On the Beatitudes*, Gregory recalls the Homeric myth of Circe. The passions that inevitably afflict human life in the world are like the drugs of which the Greek mythologists speak — suddenly changing a man's nature into the form of the beasts. Where before there was a man, you now see a wild boar, or a dog, or a panther. The lips grow cold and can neither articulate a word nor contain within the mouth the spittle that passion has aroused, but spew forth foam instead of speech. One man is thus transformed, while another by taking the advice of the Beatitude to be meek in these motions calms the disease with reason, keeping a steady gaze and a calm voice. Pitiably indeed is the beastly one, blessed the meek one who does not allow his neighbor's malice to disturb his composure¹.

On the Beatitudes is among Gregory's earliest works. His usage here of a pagan literary motif to help explain the second Beatitude does not represent merely a youth lapse. Gregory refers to the myth of Circe in two other works, dating from a period of more mature reflection in his intellectual development. In the third book against Eunomius, Gregory characterizes his adversary's teachings as a new kind of 'Homeric potion', refashioning to the form of beasts not the bodies of those he drugs, but the souls. For in the Homeric tale, Gregory points out, the mind of the victim remains unaffected, while his shape is changed to that of the beasts. Those who drink from this new Circe's bowl have their minds reduced to irrationality, reshaped in the form now of one doctrine, then another². The third reference appears in the *Life of Moses*, one of Gregory's most mature works. Here, he allegorizes the 'magic of Balaam', as the crafty deceit of this life, by which men are refashioned into the form of the irrational beasts, stepping out of their own proper nature as if drugged from Circe's bowl³.

Three references in a literary corpus as large as Gregory's are not very many. Nevertheless, the myth of Circe is one of the central motifs to which Gregory's whole treatment of man and his place in the cosmos responds. For Gregory, human nature is a special case of the fragility of all created substance.

As animated matter living below the firmament and with a sexual mode of reproduction, a human being has the outer form of the beasts. As mind, man belongs to the intelligible order above the heavens and has a special kinship with the divine nature. Indeed man alone among intelligent creatures bears the image of God. Thus, man stands on the borderline between God and the beasts, between mind and matter, sharing at once in two opposite and irreconcilable orders of reality which cannot otherwise meet or mix.

We have become accustomed to thinking of Christianity and Hellenism as opposites, their juxtaposition in the title of this paper being an impossible oxymoron. Especially in the latter part of the fourth century, in the wake of Julian's infamous, but short-lived and unenforceable decree prohibiting those who could not confess their faith in the gods who had inspired Greek literature from accepting a fee as teachers of that literature, Christianity and Hellenism came to be understood as irreconcilable enemies in the battle for possession of a culture. The rhetorical contrast has endured. A recent book on 'Hellenism in Late Antiquity' is devoted primarily to the proposition that paganism remained alive and well long after the so-called conversion of the Roman Empire and its eastern neighbors to Christianity⁴.

If by 'Hellenism' we mean something like Julian's elevation of Greek culture itself to the status of a religion, then the contrast with Christianity is justified. Gregory of Nyssa himself uses the term 'Hellenismos' to refer to traditional Greek polytheism and 'Hellene' for someone who adheres to that tradition⁵. If, on the other hand, by 'Hellenism' we mean not the mythic and literary tradition itself with all of its gods and heroes, but rather the human fears and aspirations to which they give expression, then perhaps at a more fundamental level we shall find that Christianity and Hellenism converge.

The 'Hellenization' of Christianity and the extent to which Christian doctrine has been influenced by the language and forms of Greek thought, perhaps to the detriment of the primitive Gospel, have been subjects of controversy since antiquity⁶. Even the Cappadocians, for all their love of Greek culture, all their outrage at Julian's attempt to steal it from them, thought they could disarm a theological opponent simply by accusing him of importing Greek ideas into the Gospel. Gregory charges Eunomius with being more of an Aristotelian than a Christian and characterizes his obsession with precision of doctrine as a feature of Hellenism, rather than of Christianity⁷.

For the historian of culture, there is a more interesting question. How is it that Christianity came to take root in the seemingly hostile soil of Greek culture at

¹ PG 44, 1215C-D. I cite Gregory's works by reference to the Jaeger-Langerbeck-Dorrie edition (*Gregorii Nysseni Opera*, Leiden 1920—), where available for the text in question, otherwise by reference to volumes 44, 45, and 46 of *Patrologia Graeca*.

² GNO II, 77.25-78.11

³ GNO VIII, 142.10-13

⁴ G.W. Bowersock, *Hellenism in Late Antiquity* (Ann Arbor 1990).

⁵ See for example the *Life of Gregory Thaumaturgus*, GNO X.i.2, 9.17, and the *Catechetical Oration*, PG 46, 12B.

⁶ On the controversy, see E.P. Meijering, *Die Hellenisierung des Christentums im Urteil Adolf von Harnacks* (Amsterdam 1985).

⁷ *Against Eunomius III*, GNO II, 286.19.

all? Was there something in the way that Greeks and the thoroughly Hellenized peoples of Asia Minor looked at the world to which Christianity responded in a new and powerful way? We should rather be asking how Greeks came to see the world through Christian eyes, than whether or how Christianity was corrupted by its encounter with Greek culture. Gregory of Nyssa can serve as a case in point. In his own intellectual development as an individual, he recapitulates the cultural process or, at least, a part of the process by which Christianity was received into a Greek environment. Gregory shows us how Christian language and Christian symbols give new expression to the myth of Circe and open up new possibilities for the fragile human community whose situation the myth addresses.

The general trend in Gregory's intellectual development is a movement away from a Platonizing and exaggerated dualism between mind and body, intelligibles and sensibles, in the earlier works, and towards a more specifically Christian understanding of reality in his later writings. While Gregory never abandons the language of Platonic dualism, in his later works this language addresses itself to a dualism between creator and creature rather than mind and body. In the earlier works, Christ is a teacher and example who shows the way to transcend the world of sense, while in the later works Christ becomes more of a savior and redeemer⁸. Several factors motivate this development, among which the dogmatic controversies in which Gregory became embroiled during the early 380's are especially significant. Without denying the importance of those immediate contextual considerations, what I want to suggest here is that one of the factors in Gregory's intellectual development is a tension between his thoroughly Greek understanding of the structure of reality and his conviction that Christianity somehow surmounts the barriers in that structure. At the heart of this tension is the anomalous status of mankind standing in the borderland between two opposite orders of reality, partaking of both, belonging to neither, liable like the men in Circe's den to exchange one form for another. The process by which Gregory comes to terms with the anomaly does not represent the victory of his Christianity over his Hellenism, or of the Biblical worldview over the classical. What we witness rather is a process whereby Greek culture comes to express itself in Christian terms and enriches Christianity in the bargain. To borrow a phrase from modern physics, Gregory was searching for a Grand Unified Theory that would explain both his Hellenic worldview and his Christian optimism and show their relationship to one another — a theory

⁸ On the chronology of Gregory's works see especially Jean Daniélou, 'La chronologie des sermons de Grégoire de Nysse', *Revue des sciences religieuses* 29 (1955) 346-372; 'La chronologie des oeuvres de Grégoire de Nysse', *Studia Patristica* 7 (1966) 159-69; Gerhard May, 'Die Chronologie des Lebens und der Werke des Gregor von Nyssa', *Écriture et Culture Philosophique dans la Pénée de Grégoire de Nysse*, ed. Marguerite Harl (Leiden 1971), 51-67. There is an excellent discussion of the differences between the earlier and the later Gregory in Reinhard Kees, *Die Lehre von der Oikonomia Gottes in der Oratio Catechetica Gregors von Nyssa* (Leiden 1995).

moreover that could accommodate the 'singularity' that is human life in the world.

While our focus must be on Gregory and his intellectual development, we cannot show how the classical worldview comes to expression within that development without saying first what we mean by that view of that world. The classical worldview is profoundly anthropocentric. This anthropocentrism lies at the source of classical Greek civilization in what is sometimes called the Homeric revolution in Greek religion. In the Olympic pantheon of gods and goddesses, the Greeks projected onto the very structure of reality their own consciousness of themselves as beings who are in the world and yet not of the world. Every action of the Homeric epic is the result of an interplay between human purpose and divine purpose. The wrath of Achilles is humanly motivated, and yet it is the plan of Zeus that is being accomplished. The central theme of both the *Iliad* and the *Odyssey* is the working out of design and purpose. Like the gods, human beings do not accept the world as it is given. The *Odyssey* in particular shows us a man whose cleverness and firmness of purpose can bend the world to his will. There is little difference between gods and men except that the gods can more easily accomplish their ends. The anthropomorphism of the Greek gods objectifies this drive for self-determination. At the same time, this projection of willful purpose onto an external screen confronts men with the disjunction between the reality of their own world and the ideal they have projected. Men are free, purposeful beings who are denied the power to realize their own nature. So profound is this sense of frustration that the Greeks depict even the gods as subject to the whimsical dictates of fate.

Closely related to this tension between human freedom and external necessity is a second theme. Just as the individual asserts his own identity against a world that would deny it, so the Greeks understood the city as a uniquely human self-created space carved out of the wilderness as a bulwark against chaos and bestiality. If the city requires a divine protector and its people a divine ancestry, that is again only a projection of the drive for purposeful self-determination. The poet of the *Odyssey* gives expression to this view of the city when he characterizes the island of the Cyclopes as a community that has not yet separated itself from the wilderness. Theirs is a land with a fair harbor and good bottom land that would put forth a good yield. Yet the Cyclopes dwell apart in caves, living off whatever the land provides of itself, with no ships to serve their heart's desire. Each one is a law unto himself, and they care not for their neighbors⁹. In the *Iliad*, the poet inscribes the life of the city on the shield of Achilles. The shield is itself a work of artifice, gold and silver and tin and bronze made to serve a human purpose on the anvil of an all too

⁹ *Odyssey* 9,105-150. It is interesting that the poet juxtaposes two contrasting pictures — one of the noble savage for whom the world provides, the other of the savage beast who knows not how to provide for himself.

human god. Upon that shield the god had wrought the image of two cities—one at peace and one at war, but both engaged in purposeful process¹⁰.

This theme of man engaged in a process of self-determination within the community of the city is one of the most recurrent motifs of Greek civilization. Men are differentiated from the beasts in that they need not accept the world as given, but are free to shape their own communities, their own identities, their own futures. On the other hand, men are also differentiated from the gods in that they lack the capacity to realize the ambitions by which they have defined themselves. This impotence is most frequently symbolized by the lack of power over death.

We cannot take the time to follow these motifs throughout the long history of Greek literature and civilization. To illustrate the classical view of man as suspended between freedom and necessity, on the frontier between the gods and the beasts, I have chosen four passages from fifth-century authors.

The first example comes from the Sixth Nemean Ode of the Theban poet Pindar, where the theme is quite explicit.

'One is the race of men, one the race of gods. Both have breath of life from a single mother. But a power wholly sundered divides us, so that the one is nothing, while for the other the brazen sky is established their sure citadel forever. We have some likeness in great intelligence or strength of nature to the immortals, though we know not what the day will bring, what course after nightfall destiny has written that we must run to the end'¹¹.

As in Gregory of Nyssa, what makes gods and men alike is their possession of intelligence. What separates them is the fact of man's uncertainty about everything except death. For the gods, their residence in the sky endures forever, while man's lot is totally unpredictable. Death is only a symbol of man's nothingness. What really separates men from the gods is that for all their intelligence and superiority of nature, men cannot control their own destiny. They are bound to obey forces outside of themselves, whether they will or no. Intelligence implies freedom and with freedom goes immortality. Man is possessed of the intelligence of the gods, yet he is denied the freedom of self-determination that is mind's natural right. He knows not by day or night what necessity he will be forced to accept.

This binding of mind by necessity is the theme of our second example, taken from the opening lines of Aeschylus' *Prometheus*. The myth of Prometheus himself, the story of the foresighted one whose gift of fire to the race of men is seen as a threat against the rule of heaven, expresses the fundamental theme of

which we are speaking. In Aeschylus' version, Prometheus himself symbolizes the plight of mankind as a naturally free intelligence unnaturally chained to the rock of necessity.

Might: 'This is the world's limit that we have come to; this is the Scythian country, an untrodden desolation. Hephaestus, it is you that must heed the commands the Father laid upon you to nail this malefactor to the high craggy rocks in fetters unbreakable of adamantine chain. ... There is nothing without discomfort except the overlordship of the Gods. For only Zeus is free'¹².

As the drama unfolds, we discover that Prometheus, although bound to the rock of necessity, refuses to accept his situation and is defiant to the end. This drive for freedom and self-determination is the theme of our third example, one of the best known passages in Greek literature, the central choral ode of Sophocles' *Antigone*, sometimes referred to as 'the ode to man'.

'Many the wonders, but nothing walks stranger than man. This thing crosses the sea in the winter's storm, making his path through the roaring waves. ... He controls with craft the beasts of the open air, walkers on hills. The horse with his shaggy mane he holds and harnesses. ... Language, and thought like the wind and the feelings that make the town, he has taught himself, and shelter against the cold, refuge from rain. He can always help himself. He faces no future helpless. There's only death that he cannot find an escape from'¹³.

Here again we meet the opposition between intelligence and death. For all his craft, man in the end is nothing, cheated by death of his seemingly boundless possibilities.

Our final example is the central choral ode of Sophocles' *Oedipus the King*. The myth of Oedipus, especially in Sophocles' treatment, addresses our theme in a number of ways. As an infant, Oedipus is rescued from the wilderness. As an adult, he rescues the city of Thebes from the forces of the wilderness as represented by the sphinx. Oedipus epitomizes the self-made man, whose intelligence can make him master of anything. Yet what he discovers in the end is that in his purposeful drive for self-mastery and self-definition he has fulfilled precisely the destiny he had sought to avoid. In the central ode, the chorus generalizes on this situation.

'Insolence breeds the tyrant, insolence if it is glutted with a surfeit, unseasonable, unprofitable, climbs to the roof-top and plunges sheer down to the ruin that must be, and there its feet are no service'¹⁴.

¹² Aeschylus, *Prometheus Bound*, 1-5, 50, translation of David Grene, *Greek Tragedies*, Volume 1 (Chicago 1960).

¹³ Sophocles, *Antigone*, 332-360, translation of Elizabeth Wyckoff, *Greek Tragedies*, Volume 1 (Chicago 1960).

¹⁴ Sophocles, *Oedipus the King*, 874-879, translation of David Grene, *Greek Tragedies*, Volume 1 (Chicago 1960).

¹⁰ *Iliad* 18, 490-540.

¹¹ Pindar, *Nemean* 6,1-8; translation of Richmond Lattimore, *The Odes of Pindar* (Chicago 1947).

To summarize briefly, we can say that in the classical view man by virtue of his intelligence shares a kinship with the gods. Yet the sovereign freedom that this kinship implies is a delusion. For man also shares a kinship with the beasts, in that he is bound by all the laws of physical necessity and subject to the decrees of an ineluctable fate. The human situation is tragic precisely because man's noblest ambitions inevitably bring him to ruin. When, like Oedipus, he has solved the riddle of the sphinx and climbed to the top of the tower of ambition, where he seems lord and master of all that he can survey, suddenly he loses his footing and plunges into the abyss below.

It is against this background that Plato and his perhaps unfortunate legacy must be understood. In his search for how virtue might be defined and, once defined, taught and inculcated, Plato is consciously reflecting on the problem of how to take the earthly material that men share with the beasts and refashion it in the form of the gods. In the famous words of the *Theaetetus*, the goal of man is likeness (*ὁμοίωσις*) to god¹⁵. For Plato, virtue is knowledge, and knowledge is power. Plato came to identify the forces that inhibit the free exercise of human intelligence with the earthly condition itself. Truth is intelligible, immutable, impalpable. The sensible world and the human beings who seek to fashion a community within it are limited by an irrefragable necessity inherent in matter itself.

For Plato the objective is not flight from the world of matter to a mystical communion with the Idea of the Good. The philosopher has a moral obligation to return to the cave and take up the task of human formation. Plato remains within the classical tradition, but his legacy degenerates into the kind of desperate world-denying dualism that E.R. Dodds in his now classic book on the 'age of anxiety' characterized as a loss of faith in the reality and significance of the historical process within the physical cosmos¹⁶. There are precedents for this world denying pessimism in the Orphic tradition, but it is largely a product of the Hellenistic age. Nothing could be further from the Homeric spirit of world-affirming human defiance against all obstacles than the lugubrious imitation that we meet in the sixth book of Vergil's *Aeneid*. When Odysseus during his visit to Hades congratulates Achilles on being a prince even among the dead, the shade responds in a justly famous line that he would rather be a day-laborer on the land of the poorest man on earth than to be a lord among the dead. Aeneas, by contrast, upon being told by the ghost of Anchises that the souls he sees are standing in line waiting for birth into new bodies, recoils in horror. 'Why', he asks, 'would anyone who has once known the sorrows of life in the body ever want to breathe the air again?'¹⁷

¹⁵ Plato, *Theaetetus*, 176B; for the theme in Christian literature see H. Merki, *OMOIΩΣΙΣ ΘΕΩ, Von der platonischen Angleichung an Gott zur Gottähnlichkeit bei Gregor von Nyssa* (Freibourg 1952).

¹⁶ E.R. Dodds, *Pagan and Christian in an Age of Anxiety* (Cambridge 1965), 1-36.

¹⁷ *Aeneid* 6, 719-721; cf. *Odyssey* 11, 488-491.

By the middle of the third century this attitude has found expression in such extremist dualisms as we meet in gnosticism, in the philosophy of Plotinus, and among Christian authors in Origen. Dodds perhaps exaggerates the extent to which these extremes are characteristic of the age, but the whole phenomenon of the degeneration of the classical ideal of man as an intelligent being shaping himself within an historical process is a significant aspect of the background against which the reception of Christianity must be understood.

Gregory of Nyssa enters into this phenomenon of degeneration during its latter stages. In his earlier works, Gregory shares the kind of pessimistic dualism characteristic of so much of late antique thought. In the course of his own intellectual development, however, he both Christianizes the theme and returns it to its classical roots. At the same time, Gregory's understanding of the Gospel undergoes a profound transformation, becoming more distinctly Christian than in his earliest writings. Gregory thus presents us with an interesting case of how Christianity and Hellenism can enter into a process of dialogue and negotiation in which each side rediscovers in the other its own most fundamental themes.

The most salient feature of Gregory's earlier works is a vertically structured universe divided into two entirely different orders of reality. The heaven above is the realm where intelligible truths can be beheld without the distortion of the senses and where intelligent beings like the angels live unencumbered by material bodies and therefore able to contemplate pure intelligence. The earth below is the realm of sensible objects. Such objects are good and beautiful in themselves, but they are subject to physical limitations that deny them the permanence and thus the higher order of reality that intelligibles enjoy.

The most direct statements of this scientific and philosophical worldview appear in the essay *On the Six Days of Creation*. Gregory glosses the firmament of heaven that divides the waters from the waters as being the impenetrable barrier that separates the intelligible from the sensible nature. Even the sun, although naturally inclined to rise, cannot pass that barrier. That is why the solar disk travels in a circle along the edge of the firmament¹⁸.

An interesting passage from the *Homilies on the Beatitudes* illustrates the moral consequences of this worldview. Gregory notes what appears at first to be an illogical order in the blessings pronounced, whereby heaven is promised to the meek in the first beatitude and earth to the poor in the second. The sequence of the beatitudes is like a ladder, Gregory says, each step leading easily to a higher one. Therefore, it is clear that the earth to which the second beatitude refers is a dwelling place higher than the heaven — namely, the paradise from which the first men had been ejected when they soiled the divine image. If we were able to let our reason take wing so as to stand on the back of the shell of

¹⁸ PG 44, 79C-D.

the heavens, there we would find that supercelestial land whose inheritance awaits those who live a life of virtue¹⁹.

In the worldview that Gregory reflects in these earlier works, the Platonic distinction between intelligibles and sensibles, mind and matter, divides existing things into two entirely separate orders of reality. The objective of the Christian life is indistinguishable from the Platonic goal of transcending sensible objects so as to be able to contemplate goodness and beauty in their intelligible forms and thereby to inculcate virtue in human life. Indeed, a passage in the essay *On Virginity* echoes the speech of Diotima in Plato's *Symposium*. Here Gregory urges the reader to look beyond the material substrate to the contemplation of beauty itself, by participation of which all things both are and are called beautiful²⁰. A consequence of this rise from and through sensible objects towards the unitary source of all being and goodness is that the individual restores the brilliance of the divine image after which human life was originally fashioned. The notion of man as created in the image of God is Biblically based, but Gregory's understanding of the idea is thoroughly Platonic. The divine image lies specifically in intelligence, and by virtue of belonging to the intelligible order of reality the human soul is akin by nature to God. Like a mirror polished of all taint, Gregory says, the soul that has purified itself of all attachment to the sensible world exposes itself to the purity of God and on the principle of like to like shares in the prototypical beauty and is refashioned after it. True virginity has no other goal than to see God²¹. The role of Christ in these earlier works is as a teacher, example, and guide, much like the philosopher who descends into Plato's cave. Gregory does understand the resurrection of Christ as a saving act, and in this respect his view is certainly Christian and not Platonic. But that salvation again is an example that teaches us what the future holds for all men, rather than an entrance into human life that fundamentally changes that life during the interim.

The general impression that these writings leave us with is of a Gospel that has been seen through such thoroughly Greek eyes that it is more of a Hellenized Christianity than it is a Christianized Hellenism. Yet Gregory is clearly uncomfortable with this worldview and struggling to find some way to try to understand why human intelligence, made in the image of God, should have come to dwell within an order of reality that is so hostile to intelligence. That Gregory assumes this condition to be a consequence of sin does not solve the problem, but only underscores the fact that he regards the sensible world as an alien and penal environment.

¹⁹ PG 44, 1209A.

²⁰ GNO VIII.i, 292.5-15.

²¹ *On Virginity*, GNO VIII.i, 296.1-297.8. Cf. the homilies *On the Beatitudes*, PG 44, 1269D-1272A.

In his short piece *On the Dead*, a work of relatively early date, Gregory takes a significant step towards solving the problem²². This essay contains some of Gregory's most negative comments about life within the sensible cosmos. The image of God resides in the human soul, since the soul like God belongs to the order of intelligibles and is unlimited by shape, space, differentiation, or any of the other qualities that define the sensible nature. The fact that mind is forced to live in linkage with matter is like a disharmonious mass of people of different cultures forced to live with one another in a single city, which will therefore always be wracked by civil war²³. Gregory asks why God should have clothed human souls in material bodies, since life without them would clearly be so much better. The answer is that this bodily life is related to the angelic life to which men properly belong as a blossom is to its fruit. By a necessary and orderly process, human life proceeds from seed to fruit. We have no more reason to complain of the intermediate stages than would a farmer who has to wait for the seed he has planted to sprout. The fruit of human life is the restoration of human nature to its original and intended state, namely the likeness to the divine nature. Had it not been for sin, men would not have needed to undergo this process. As it is, God foresaw that men would abuse their freedom of choice. He therefore provided the coats of skin so that man would learn by experience the undesirability of such a state and so return willingly to the good²⁴.

Gregory's explanation here is neither satisfactory nor entirely consistent. What is interesting about the passage is that it shows Gregory taking the first steps towards rotating the dimensions of his Platonic dualism. Instead of a vertical and spatial separation between the intelligible image of God as it was intended to be and the earthly condition of man in his fall from grace, Gregory here measures the distance horizontally across time. Time is God's dispensation for human salvation.

Gregory pursues this idea most extensively and famously in his dissertation on the creation of man. In a central and much discussed passage Gregory distinguishes between the perfected image of God in man and its development within time. Gregory is trying to explain how scripture can be correct in saying that God made man in his own image when the human condition as we know it seems to be quite the opposite of everything that we associate with the divine nature. There is a difference, Gregory points out, between a prototype and its image. In the case of man that difference lies not only in the fact that man is a creature and therefore subject to mutability, but also that man bears the image of the material nature as well as the image of God. Scripture teaches

²² On the date and content of *On the Dead*, see Monique Alexandre, 'Le 'De Mortuis' de Grégoire de Nysse', *Studia Patristica* 10 (1970) 35-43.

²³ GNO IX.i, 41.20-43.8.

²⁴ GNO IX.i, 49.3-55.23.

us this difference in its account of the matter. For the story says first that God created man — in his own image He created 'him'. This, Gregory says, is the end of the creation after the image. Then the text adds that God created 'them'. Since the apostle tells us that in Christ there is neither male nor female, it is clear that this differentiation is a departure from the divine image. The lesson here, Gregory concludes, is that man exhibits a share of two quite opposite natures. The incorporeal nature of God and the irrational life of the beasts are separated from one another as extreme opposites. Man is in the middle. For it is possible to observe in man a share of both natures. The rational and intelligent element is the divine part. From the irrational nature comes the bodily form with its sexual differentiation²⁵.

This passage is consistent with Gregory's description of man in the opening chapters of the work as the highest form of life beneath the heavens. With his mind he is to enjoy the beauties of God, with his senses the beauty of the material cosmos²⁶. Gregory is not content, however, merely to describe man as having a double construction. He goes on to suggest that God added the irrational and earthly element in man only in prevision of sin. Gregory explains that being in the image of God man was endowed with freedom. As a creature subject to the law of created mobility, man was liable to fall away from participation in the divine image. Foreknowing the tendency of this free movement, God devised for his image the distinction of male and female. Returning to the text of Genesis, Gregory again distinguishes between two moments or two aspects of God's creative act in the fashioning of man. By the use of the singular in saying that God created man in his own image, the text tells us that God foreknew the entire plenitude of mankind. For the divine image is the same in all human beings from the first to last, as evidenced by the fact that all persons have the gift of rational intelligence. Had it not been for God's foreknowledge of sin, the distinction into male and female would not have been necessary. The plenitude of mankind would have been generated in some other way, just as there is a multitude of angels. But God foreknowing that man would fall from the angelic condition added sexuality to his image in order that the previsioned number of human beings might not fall short²⁷.

After a brief discussion of paradise lost and the promise of its restoration at the end, Gregory takes up the question of why we must wait so long. He summarizes the previous argument and states that God foreknew the time that would be required for the generation of the full complement of human beings in their fallen state. He therefore created in his foreknowledge precisely that span of time. When time comes to an end, so also will end the cycle of birth and death. The trumpet will sound and all will be changed to incorruptibility. Therefore,

²⁵ PG 44, 181A-C.

²⁶ PG 44, 133B.

²⁷ PG 44, 180A-189D.

Gregory concludes, echoing the argument in the essay *On the Dead*, we must wait in faith for the fulfillment of that span of time that is necessarily made coextensive with the production of humanity²⁸.

This whole discussion is fraught with difficulties and riddled with inconsistencies. It has provoked no end of scholarly comment and debate²⁹. Fortunately, for the purposes of the immediate argument, that debate need not detain us. What is significant here is the dimensional shift whereby Gregory rotates the vertically oriented Platonic dualism between intelligibles and sensibles and superposes upon it a horizontal separation between beginning and ending. Men cannot in fact take wing so as to soar vertically and penetrate the shell of heaven. They can and must, however, move horizontally forward in time. As Gregory says here, time is limited, and when one reaches its verge birth and death will be no more³⁰.

Gregory's approach is problematic. On the one hand, Gregory holds Adam responsible for the loss of the original beauty of the divine image. On the other hand, the notion of the divine image as having been mixed with earth and sexually differentiated in prevision of sin, rather than as its chronological consequence, suggests that no men ever existed within time in whom the divine image shone pure and unmixed with earth. It therefore seems unfair to blame the protoplasts for the ruination of that image. Furthermore, the salvation that the resurrection will bring appears as a necessary and natural process, rather than as an intervention that alters the course of history.

For all of its problems, however, the suggestion that time is a process of development from seed toward fruit, rather than of degeneration from a prehistorical perfection, opens a whole new way of looking at reality, upon which Gregory will build in his later writings. Some scholars have suggested that the idea of change for the good that Gregory broaches here represents a complete break with Hellenism³¹. For a Platonist, change can be only for the worse, representing a departure from the archetype. For classical culture in general, history is either a process of degeneration after the model of Hesiod's myth of the four ages or at best a cyclical pattern of degeneration and renewal. This contrast between Gregory's Biblical model of linear development towards a divinely ordained goal and the classical model of eternal return is

²⁸ PG 44, 187C-189D.

²⁹ The bibliography on this passage is enormous. Reinhard M. Hübner provides an excellent summary of the history of the question in *Die Einheit des Leibes Christi bei Gregor von Nyssa: Untersuchungen zum Ursprung der 'physischen' Erlösungslehre* (Leiden 1974), especially pp. 3-25. See also the interesting essay of H.J. Oesterle, 'Probleme der Anthropologie bei Gregor von Nyssa', *Hermes* 113 (1985) 101-114.

³⁰ Compare *Dialogue on the Soul*, PG 46, 128B-C, 156C-157B.

³¹ See especially Jean Daniélou, 'Changement', *L'être et le temps chez Grégoire de Nyssa* (Leiden 1970), 95-115, and Brooks Otis, 'The Cappadocian Concept of Time', *Studia Patristica* 14 (1976) 327-357.

valid. Nevertheless, Gregory has not so much abandoned his Platonism as he has substituted one kind of dualism for another, rotating the axis of separation from the vertical to the horizontal. Furthermore, the notion that mankind can refashion itself within the dimension of time so as to cast off the image of the beasts and take on instead the brilliance of the divine beauty resonates as much with the classical view of the city and its ideals as with the Bible. The development that we can trace in Gregory's writings of this earlier period is motivated by the need to reconcile his Platonizing preference for the intellectual over the sensible with his Christian belief in the resurrection of the body³². At the same time, however, what comes to expression is a Christian retelling of the myth of Circe.

Throughout these works Gregory is fascinated by the plasticity of human nature, its ability to share in two opposite natures, to live both within time and beyond time, and most especially its protean capacity to exchange one image for another. A few examples will suffice to illustrate Gregory's interest in the ability of human beings to change their form at will. The reference to the myth of Circe with which we began appears in the homilies *On the Beatitudes*. Elsewhere in the same work Gregory expresses the idea more abstractly. Commenting on Jesus' saying that the 'Kingdom of God is within you', Gregory says that it is within each man's power to become whatever he wishes to be, with no external necessity constraining him. Thus Gregory internalizes Circe's bowl and identifies her potion as the human capacity for free self-definition. We are like mirrors, he says, reflecting whatever we choose to turn towards. The whole human race, from the first creation to the fulfillment of the whole complement, stands in the middle of two lives, between hope for the recovery of what we have lost and fear for the loss of what little we retain. The Lord blesses the peacemakers, because human nature is at war with itself. Persecution brings blessing, because we are chased by our own tendency to lose our kinship with the divine and become instead akin to the sensible nature. By choosing to flee, we regain our sovereignty³³. As a sensible being, man is not free. Yet he retains enough of the divine nature to rebel and demand his freedom.

The homilies *On the Lord's Prayer* belong to this same period of Gregory's literary activity. In a passage reminiscent of the shell of heaven in the homilies *On the Beatitudes*, Gregory asks who could ever hope to sprout wings so as to soar beyond the heavens and past the stars to find that heavenly father to whom we address our prayers. He answers that men can indeed regain their heavenly fatherland by changing their own form and disposition. For, he says, the interval that separates us is not spatial and we require no machine to raise

³² On this point, see especially Harold Cherniss, *The Platonism of Gregory of Nyssa* (Berkeley and Los Angeles 1930; reprinted New York 1971).

³³ PG 44, 1256C, 1261B, 1289C, 1300C-D.

us. The separation lies entirely within the will of man³⁴. In commenting on the prayer that the divine will should be done on earth as in heaven, Gregory anticipates one of his most interesting later ideas. Rational creatures, he says, are of two kinds — those without a body, and those with a body. The intellectual element naturally rises, and so the angels live in heaven. The bodily element naturally gravitates towards the earth, so it is upon the earth that human beings dwell. Gregory wonders what divine purpose this anomalous arrangement serves. He suggests that perhaps the reason for it is to unite the entire creation, so that neither the lower should be without a share in the upper nor the upper in the lower. In the composition of man, each element participates in the attributes of the other³⁵. This is not as positive a view as it first appears. In fact, at this stage in his thinking Gregory regards this union of the intelligible with the sensible as the cause of human fragility. For he also remarks that the senses are the windows of the soul that permit this commerce of mind with body. The danger is that through these windows can enter the bodily passions and even death itself, so that the very nature of mind as belonging to the intelligible order is debased³⁶.

Here Gregory has addressed the problem of metamorphosis quite literally and physically. Similarly, in the essay *On the Making of Man* he offers a sort of chemical explanation for the potential of human nature to change its form from the divine to the bestial. The mind, he says, being in the image of the most beautiful, so long as it participates in the likeness of its archetype, remains itself in the beautiful. If it goes outside of the archetype, then it is stripped naked of the beauty in which it had been clothed. The mind is like a mirror receiving the form of what it reflects. Even so, the nature which is governed by it has the same relationship to the mind. It is adorned by the adjacent beauty, becoming sort of a mirror of a mirror. As long as each of the two parts maintains the connection, the community with the truly beautiful runs proportionately through the whole, beautifying by means of the higher nature that which lies next to it. But when there is any rupture in this beneficial cohesion, then the shapelessness of matter, when its nature is isolated, reveals itself. For matter all by itself is formless and without structure. Reversing the chemical process, the ugliness of matter transmits itself through the nature to the mind itself, and the image of God can no longer be seen in its stamp³⁷.

In these texts we can see that underneath Gregory's obsession with the problem of the relationship between the intelligible and the sensible in man is the more ancient and fundamental question of human self-formation. As a self-conscious, rational, and purposeful being, man struggles to rise out of the bestial

³⁴ PG 44, 1140B, 1145B.

³⁵ PG 44, 1165B-C.

³⁶ PG 44, 1185B-C.

³⁷ PG 44, 161C-164A.

wilderness with which his physical body associates him and to establish for himself a special space within which to develop a distinctively human community and culture.

Some of the best examples of Gregory's concern for this struggle appear in the commentary *On the Inscriptions to the Psalms*. The human can never be at rest, he says, whether it rises towards the better or falls from participation in it. Just as it was because of the changeableness of human nature that it fell from the height of good onto the slippery slope of sin, so it is by change that man can return whence he fell. Men have the freedom to choose for themselves whatever they will, whether the good or the ugly³⁸. Although Gregory worries about the danger that the sensible nature will infect the mind and drag it down to the level of formless matter, he assures his reader that it is not the material nature as such that corrupts the soul, but the human experience of that nature. Indeed, it is human nature itself that both generates evil and suffers the corruption that results. In a wonderful analogy, Gregory says that evil is like a mule. It cannot generate itself, but results from the unnatural union of natural beings. So it is with man. We generate one kind of animal from another, 'whenever the proud and noble steed in our nature stoops to an irrational, asinine union'. The result is what Gregory calls the 'beastification' of man (*ἀποκτηνωθῆναι*)³⁹.

At the heart of Gregory's thinking here is that ancient view of man suspended precariously between the opposition of the gods and the beasts, struggling for the freedom and self-sufficiency of the divine, but slipping into the irrationality of the beast, totally mastered by material necessity. Gregory is fascinated by the image of the man-beast, and he takes every opportunity the text affords to indulge in it. Whenever someone takes on the likeness of passion, he loses his own natural form and becomes instead a wild animal. That is why the Psalmist (56,4 LXX) speaks of rescuing the soul from the whelps of lions⁴⁰.

The commentary concludes with an extended metaphor based on the text of Psalm 58 with its image of ravening dogs circling around the city in the nighttime. Whatever is useless for the life of the citizens, Gregory says, is thrown outside the city — dead things, rotting things, the stench of excrement. The dogs are forced by extremities of hunger to sustain life on the refuse of the city. The city stands for the well-ordered community inhabited by virtue. What is outside the city represents the contrasting evil, in which is all that the nobler life casts aside — the malodorous refuse of sin, which consists of the rot of bodies and filthy excrement. The dweller in the city is that fine and noble thing, the truly human, which retains throughout life the form stamped upon its

³⁸ GNO 5, 46.2-47.1

³⁹ GNO V, 131.22; 134.26-28.

⁴⁰ GNO V, 156.18-22

nature in the beginning. The one circling the city is dog and not man. Thus it is clear to everyone, Gregory says, how one must distinguish the dogs from the true men — not from the shape of the body's formation, but from the difference in their lives. The dweller of the city of virtue is truly man. But if anyone sets his desire on the stench of intemperance or personal greed — which one might well call dung — then that person crawling about on the outskirts of the city betrays himself as a beast, refashioned from the likeness of god to that of a dog⁴¹.

For all of his emphasis here and elsewhere on man's responsibility for shaping his own nature, Gregory's understanding of the structure of reality remains unable to accommodate it. In his earliest approach to the problem, man is simply trapped within the spatial boundaries of a vertically structured universe, unable to penetrate its shell to that supercelestial realm where intelligent beings enjoy the freedom that is properly theirs. In his wrestling with this problem, Gregory has rotated the axis of that opposition and set human nature within a chronological space the edges of which he will eventually cross. Nevertheless, time remains a trap for as long as it exists. Even the notion that time will necessarily come to an end contradicts the freedom of self-determination that Gregory is so anxious to explain and to preserve.

Gregory began to develop the ontological tools that he needed in the context of the dogmatic controversies that he inherited after the death of his brother in 379. The new insights that he gained respond specifically to arguments proffered by his archrival Eunomius. At the same time, however, these ideas move Gregory's anthropology in significantly new directions. It is unlikely that he would have been able to make exactly the counterarguments that he did in response to Eunomius had he had not already been wrestling with unresolved tensions in his approach to the status of man within the universe. It is unlikely also that he would have developed his anthropological thought as he did without the catalyst of the Eunomian controversy. His Trinitarian arguments and his anthropological speculations represent separate paths of intellectual development. They converge in the Eunomian debate, and the point of their convergence is the ancient problem of the status of man. More is at stake in the Trinitarian debates than the relationship of the Father to the Son. At the heart of the controversy is the status of man on the frontier between two orders of reality.

The significance of the Eunomian debate in Gregory's intellectual development is now well recognized⁴². Here, we must summarize briefly, with a view toward showing the relevance of the debate for the contacts between the Christian view of the divine economy and the Hellenic view of man. In each of Gregory's

⁴¹ GNO V, 173.6-174.5.

⁴² Ekkehard Mühlberg, *Die Unendlichkeit Gottes bei Gregor von Nyssa* (Forschungen zur Kirchen- und Dogmengeschichte, Band 16; Göttingen 1966); Mariette Canévet, *Grégoire de Nyssa et l'herméneutique Biblique* (Études Augustiniennes; Paris 1983).

three major essays against Eunomius we can identify one central point. In the first book against Eunomius, Gregory is responding specifically to the claim that there can be one and only one supreme being, existing forever in utter simplicity, without cause and therefore not only ungenerated but uniquely so. Accordingly, it is the very essence of the Father to be ungenerate, and this essence cannot be communicated to the Son, who is by definition and universal confession only begotten and therefore not ungenerate. It follows that the Nicene formula of sameness of essence between Father and Son must be rejected, and Christians must acknowledge that they are dissimilar in essence.

Gregory's counterargument consists in rejecting Eunomius' opposition between ungeneracy and generacy as being the most significant ontological distinction and substituting for it the opposition between creator and creature. He defines the difference between creature and creator as consisting not merely of the absence of motion and change, as he does in earlier works, but more fundamentally as the absence of any kind of differentiation whatsoever. Thus there can be degrees of more or less, sameness and difference among created essences or among different instantiations of the same created essence, but not within the uncreated, divine Trinity. Gregory had been moving toward such an account of the difference between creature and creator already in his homilies on the book of Ecclesiastes⁴³. It was in the first book against Eunomius, however, that he took the final step. The uncreated nature, he says, offers no marks by which it may be known. Creation is distinguished from the creator by just this fact — namely that there is differentiation of essence within the created order and a mode of analysis corresponding to that differentiation⁴⁴.

This manner of distinguishing between creator and creature has significant implications for Gregory's understanding of the status of man. Previously he had understood the difference between intelligibles and sensibles as the most fundamental ontological division and found it difficult to understand how the two orders could meet and coexist in the construction of man. Now, however, he realizes that mind and matter, although opposites from one perspective, nevertheless share the same structure of being as belonging to the created order. The result can be found in a very interesting passage that shows how Gregory has retained his Platonizing method of analysis, but applied it to a whole new way of understanding the structure of being.

The highest division of existing things, Gregory says, is that between the sensible and the intelligible. When all sensible qualities are removed, we are led naturally to infer that which is incorporeal and intelligible. Similarly, reason leads us next to differentiate within that which is intelligible between the uncreated nature and that which is created. Among sensible things our bodily

⁴³ See my paper, 'Time for All and a Moment for Each — The Sixth Homily of Gregory of Nyssa on Ecclesiastes', *Gregory of Nyssa, Homilies on Ecclesiastes*, ed. S. G. Hall (Berlin 1993).

⁴⁴ GNO I, 137.8-13.

organs of sense can easily differentiate kind and degree by reference to the definite qualities that the objects present. Within the intelligible nature, or at least that part of it which is created, some other method of differentiation must be discovered. Now the uncreated nature is the source and supply of all good, whereas created being only tends towards that good. It follows therefore that distinctions of greater and less can be made within the created, intellectual nature in accordance with the degree to which each thing, by its own free choice, approaches the good⁴⁵.

It is remarkable that Gregory here first divides existing things into the intelligible and the sensible, rather than the uncreated and all else. The argument would seem to require that the supreme division be made between the creator and the creation, with the creation further subdivided into intelligibles and the sensibles. Elsewhere, Gregory does make it clear that he regards the distinction of creature from creator as the most significant division of reality⁴⁶. In none of those instances, however, does he subdivide the created order into the intelligible and the sensible. Wherever Gregory brings the two antitheses together, the distinction between the created and the uncreated is always defined as if it were a subdivision of the intellectual nature as distinct from the sensible⁴⁷.

I have discussed this passage in detail elsewhere⁴⁸. The point I want to repeat and develop here is that this twofold division of being responds in a new and interesting way to the liminal status of man as a being in whom opposite natures meet. This text is significant precisely because Gregory is not addressing anthropological issues directly. It thus shows us what kinds of issues motivate Gregory's thinking beneath the surface of the argument. In effect, Gregory has divided existing things along two axes, on the criterion of their capacity for purposeful self-definition. The first division separates those beings that have some capacity for such free self-determination from those that have none whatsoever. Thus sensibles are distinguished from intellectual beings in that the former are completely defined by the measurable, spatial qualities by means of which they both subsist in the world and present themselves to sentient beings. For intellectual beings, as Gregory says, we find some other criterion by which to distinguish one from another. That criterion is the degree to which such beings by their own free purposeful motion choose to participate in the uncreated source of all being and goodness. The uncreated nature itself, since it possesses being and goodness intrinsically and not by participation is subject to

⁴⁵ GNO I, 105.19-107.23.

⁴⁶ See for example *Against the Macedonians*, GNO III.i, 104.8-11; *Against Eunomius III*, GNO II, 209.19-20; *Catechetical Oration* PG 45, 100A.

⁴⁷ Cf. *Homilies on the Song of Songs*, GNO VI, 173.7-174.9.

⁴⁸ 'The Created and the Uncreated in Gregory of Nyssa', *El 'Contra Eunomium I' en la producción literaria de Gregorio de Nisa*, ed. L.F. Mateo-Seco and J.L. Bastero (Pamplona 1988), 353-379.

no variation of essence, but is differentiated only by the individuating properties of the Father, the Son, and the Holy Spirit.

Human beings can be understood only by reference to both of these dualisms. Men are distinct from sensible objects and merely sentient beings by their membership in the intellectual order of being, whose distinguishing mark is freedom. They are distinguished from the uncreated nature in that they have no intrinsic being of their own and are therefore fragile. Finally, men are different from other intellectual beings, such as the angels, because they are bound to the spatial order and share the special limitations on the exercise of freedom that the sensible nature imposes. Gregory's double division of being, with that between creature and creator appearing as a subdivision of the Platonic distinction between intelligibles and sensibles, thus provides a far more appropriate model for the peculiar status of man than either of these polarities by itself could offer. The problem with Eunomianism is not just its impiety in denying the fullness of divine essence to the Son. That doctrine also fails to recognize the unique status of man on the borderline between freedom and necessity. As Gregory says later in this first book against Eunomius, setting the Son on the wrong side of the line separating creature from creator would amount to the tyranny of one created nature over others and deny man the freedom and responsibility that are rightfully his⁴⁹. This is the same sort of complaint that Prometheus makes against Zeus.

In the first book against Eunomius, then, we find that the ancient notion of man on the borderline between divine freedom and brutish subjection is one of the phenomena that valid theological language must preserve. Similar conclusions emerge from the second and third books as well. In the second book against Eunomius, the argumentative issue is the status of language. The central question is whether the divine essence can be revealed to men in language and known through a name and the concept associated with it. Eunomius had claimed that the divine essence reveals itself fully in the word and concept of ungeneracy. Gregory responds by carrying still further his application of Platonic modes of analysis to the new distinction between creator and creature. In Gregory's earlier works, we find the notion of differentiation (*διάστημα*) associated with the spatial qualities that distinguish sensibles from intelligibles. In the homilies on Ecclesiastes and especially in the books against Eunomius, Gregory generalizes the concept of differentiation and uses it as the distinguishing mark of all created being. Just as sensibles can be known only through the measurable qualities of the spatial 'diastema' in which they are embedded, so all knowledge and all language, even as applied to the intelligible order is possible only because of the differentiation — the distance, separation, diastema — that distinguishes

⁴⁹ GNO I, 178.16.

one being from another in space and time⁵⁰. It follows that the uncreated nature is inaccessible to thought and language. There is an impenetrable wall, he says, separating the created from the uncreated nature. The former is bounded, the latter has no limit. The former is circumscribed within the measures that it pleased its maker to set for it; the measure of the latter is infinite. The former stretches out along the differentiated extension of the space and time that enclose it; the latter leaves every notion of extension far below⁵¹.

The immediate point of this theory of thought and language as tied to the measured differentiation of the created order is to deny any possibility of a final knowledge of the divine essence. The significance of Gregory's strategy, however, reaches beyond his immediate polemical purpose. By giving the human mind full sovereignty over thought and language, Gregory has vested in man the capacity to structure for himself the world within which he lives and to define himself over against it. It is just this creative sovereignty that makes man an image of the divine being. It is also this capacity for purposeful self-determination that deceives man into thinking that he is an autonomous being and leads him to ruin. Again, we make contact with one of the root ideas of Greek religion. In a passage strongly reminiscent of Sophocles' ode to man in the *Antigone*, Gregory sings the praises of *homo artifex*. By belittling the faculties of human conception, Eunomius has degraded both God and man. He denies man the capacity for mathematics and physical science, for navigation and agriculture, for training the birds of the air and taming the beasts of the earth. At the same time, Eunomius degrades the divine nature by supposing that God must be bothered with every detail of human thought and language. Human intelligence and the human ability to invent and manipulate language are gifts of the divine grace. It would not be wrong to say that it is God who has invented the arts and sciences. Nevertheless, the faculties of thought once implanted in human nature proceed on their own initiative toward their own self-defined goals, whether for war or for peace, for good or for ill⁵².

The human capacity for purposeful thought and action remains a central issue also in the third book against Eunomius, written some time after the first two⁵³. This book takes the form of an exegetical analysis of a classic Arian proof-text, Proverbs 8,22, 'The Lord created me at the beginning of his work, the first of his acts of old'. The argumentative point of the book is to set the Son clearly on the divine side of what Gregory in the first two books has called the impenetrable barrier between the creator and the creature. Again we find that

⁵⁰ I have discussed this point in 'Gregory of Nyssa as Deconstructionist', *Studien zu Gregor von Nyssa und der christlichen Spätantike*, ed. H. Drobner, C. Clock (Leiden 1990), 99-123.

⁵¹ GNO I, 246.14-21.

⁵² GNO I, 277.7-279.14.

⁵³ On the chronology, see Richard Paul Vaggione, *Eunomius: The Extant Works* (Oxford Early Christian Texts; Oxford 1987).

for Gregory this teaching is necessary not only to secure the full divinity of the holy trinity, but also to preserve the definition of man as that being uniquely constructed so as to stand on the borderline between two realities, with the capacity to move in either direction.

The creature to whom the text of the Proverbs refers, according to Gregory, is not the Son eternally begotten before all the ages but the incarnation of the Son in a human person. Better still, Gregory says, we can understand the passage as referring to the new creation of every person in whom Christ is born by faith. This is the new man, recreated by the indwelling of Christ, who now becomes father not of wild and irrational beasts, but of men⁵⁴. Here again Gregory echoes that ancient theme of man suspended between the gods and the beasts, capable of transformation in either direction. Here too Gregory has discovered how the Christian Gospel responds to that primordial human anxiety. Christ is no longer a Hellenic teacher and guide as in the earlier works, but a savior whose incarnation provides the antidote to Circe's potion. Men who have been enslaved to bestiality are now set free once again to separate themselves from the wilderness and to create a human space conformed as far as possible to the divine image. Indeed it is in this third book against Eunomius that Gregory's second explicit reference to the myth of Circe appears. Eunomius is like a new Circe, Gregory says, drugging men into believing in a created savior. Thus, while their bodies retain a human form, their souls are transformed to the condition of brutes as they gobble up these deceptive words like swine grubbing for acorns⁵⁵. To accept a created savior, Gregory says elsewhere in the book, is to lose that capacity for human self-determination which Christ alone can restore to men in their fallen state. Either men will despise their fellow creature or by worshipping a creature will wind up worshipping themselves, having rejected that nature which alone is fully free⁵⁶.

Throughout the third book against Eunomius, Gregory is at pains to preserve the immutability of the divine nature, even when incarnate. One consequence of this argument is that Gregory also preserves the status of man as that being who uniquely stands on the borderline of opposite forms. Created intelligence, Gregory says, comes into being by participation in the divine life. It is therefore always in a state of beginning. Humanity is a borderline (μεθόριος) nature, capable of moving in either direction — toward being and life or non-being and death⁵⁷. Mankind stands in the middle of two lives. Although formed in the image of God and with the capacity for perpetual growth in that form, humanity by its own free act rejected that image and

refashioned itself in the image of sin and death⁵⁸. Here Gregory has taken the ancient Jewish idea of the choice between life and death, which derives from Deuteronomy 30.15 and finds expression in the early Christian text known as the *Didache*, and combined it with the Hellenic notion of man as a fragile being suspended between the gods and the beasts. He has also discovered the reason for the entrance of the second person of the trinity into human life. Christ is not, he says, a messenger like Moses or John the Baptist. He is rather the Good Shepherd who left behind the supercelestial flock to save the one who had been lost. Human nature could not return by itself. Therefore He who knew no sin became sin for us. By becoming what men are, he reunited mankind to God. The new man in whom the fullness of God dwelt bodily he joined into kinship with the Father. What happened in the human nature of the Christ became a common grace for us all⁵⁹.

We could follow the development of Gregory's understanding of the significance of the Christ-event through some of his sermons of the period and through his response to the issues raised in the controversy with Apollinarius. Our focus, however, is on Gregory's understanding of man in relationship to the themes of classical culture. We can bring the discussion to a close by looking briefly at a few central themes from three of Gregory's later works.

In the *Catechetical Oration*, which presumes that the reader has access to Gregory's dogmatic works and therefore dates to the latter half of the 380's, Gregory turns his attention for one last time to the anthropological issues on which he had speculated in his earliest works⁶⁰. He echoes many of the themes and much of the language of those earlier discussions, but now with significant differences of understanding. Earlier he had thought of human nature as a being in whom the intelligible and the sensible meet to do battle or as a member of the intellectual order for whom an earthly body represents a kind of exile, necessary as a provision for sin. Gregory now develops the suggestion he had first entertained in the *Homilies on the Lord's Prayer*. There, he had speculated that perhaps the reason for the juxtaposition of the intelligible with the sensible in man is to unite the entire creation, so that neither the lower should be without a share in the upper nor the upper in the lower⁶¹. In the *Catechetical Oration* Gregory combines this idea with the Biblical notion of man as having dominion over the created world. God created man as a mixed nature, Gregory says, so that the earthly might be raised up to the divine and beauty thereby be communicated equally to the whole creation. The union of the sensible with the intelligible in man is a harmony of opposites that unites the whole created

⁵⁴ GNO II, 21.25-22.8; 25.9-10.

⁵⁵ GNO II, 78.4-17.

⁵⁶ GNO II, 258.16-21.

⁵⁷ GNO II, 213.3-29; cf. 43.19-44.5.

⁵⁸ GNO II, 293.1-13.

⁵⁹ GNO II, 274.6-21, 293.16-294.4.

⁶⁰ On the date, see the excellent discussion of Reinhard Kees, *Die Lehre von der Oikonomia Gottes in der Oratio Catechetica Gregors von Nyssa* (Leiden 1995).

⁶¹ PG 44, 1165B-C.

order in a manner analogous to the harmony of opposites by which the material order itself is held in being⁶².

Consistent with this more positive understanding of the role of man within the created universe, Gregory approaches the question of the changes wrought in human nature as a prevision for sin differently in the *Catechetical Oration* as compared with the *Making of Man*. He no longer suggests that God bestowed the bestial attributes, including sexual differentiation, as a means of adapting His image to the conditions of sin. He interprets the coats of skin with which men were clothed metaphorically. They represent not the borrowing from the irrational nature of sexuality and other attributes of an earthly body, but rather 'that capacity for dying which is peculiar to the irrational nature'. In other words, man was designed and intended to raise the material nature towards the intellectual. Thus, man's body was immortal. But God created it in such a way that the human body would become mortal and subject to the law of decay if human nature failed in its mission. This is a providential gift. Sin deforms the link between mind and body. In death that link is dissolved, and in the resurrection the proper relationship between the intellectual and the sensible is restored⁶³.

While Gregory continues to associate the divine image in man specifically with the intellectual element, he no longer sees its juxtaposition with the sensible as a form of alienation or imprisonment, whether within space or within time. He emphasizes rather that the most significant aspect of the divine nature and of its human image is the possession of a sovereign freedom from all external necessity, symbolized especially by freedom from death. Conversely, the distinguishing mark of the irrational nature is its enslavement to physical necessity, represented especially by its capacity for dying. Furthermore, although Gregory does not explicitly say so, this new view of man as a being endowed with the free capacity for unifying all existing things with each other and with God makes man an image of God in the sense of possessing a creative power. As a created creator, however, human beings also have the capacity for failure, and it is from this failure of freedom that evil arises. Evil is a blight on being, a form of deconstruction that results from the distortion of created freedom⁶⁴.

Gregory has now moved from a Platonizing understanding of man as standing on the borderline between intelligence and matter to a more Christian and Pauline understanding of man as poised between freedom and slavery. At the same time that he has moved beyond his youthful and uncritical Platonism, he

⁶² PG 45, 25B-D. Compare the similar argument in *On the Death of Infants*, GNO III.ii, 78.16-25. See Marguerite Harl, 'La croissance de l'âme selon le *de infantibus* de Grégoire de Nysse', *Vigiliae Christianae* 34 (1980) 237-259.

⁶³ PG 45, 33B-C.

⁶⁴ PG 45, 24D-25A. See my comments in 'Non-Being and Evil in Gregory of Nyssa', *Vigiliae Christianae* 44 (1990) 136-167.

has also used the language and categories of Platonic analysis to develop his new understandings. Most interestingly, Gregory has given powerful new Christian expression to the ancient idea of man as suspended between the gods and the beasts, capable of transformation in either direction. As beast, he sinks back into bondage. As an image of the heavenly power, he creates for himself a unique identity as Lord of Creation, rising towards freedom and bringing the whole cosmos with him.

We can see some of the results of this new approach in Gregory's most mature works — the commentary on the *Life of Moses* and especially the *Homilies on the Song of Songs*. Again, we must limit the discussion to a few examples. In the *Life of Moses*, Gregory interprets the story of Pharaoh's decree for the slaughter of all the male children as a struggle between tyranny and freedom for possession of the human soul. The birth of Moses represents the human soul, which is always in process of being born. Such birth is not controlled by external force or accident, but by an interior act of purposeful free choice. 'We are our own fathers', Gregory says, 'siring ourselves to be of whatever sort we wish, whether a female child enslaved to a tyrant, or a male child who is the enemy of the tyrant'⁶⁵. Although Gregory reveals here and elsewhere that he is himself enslaved to the ancient association of the female with matter and the male with intelligence, he has identified the real struggle as being not that between the intelligible and the sensible, but between freedom and bondage. For Gregory, man in his fallen state is bound like Prometheus to the rock of necessity. He goes on to interpret the burning bush as a figure for the incarnation, by the power of which men can, like Moses, defeat the tyrant and march into freedom⁶⁶. It is worth recalling again that tyranny is precisely what Prometheus complains of. It is in this work that we find Gregory's third explicit reference to the myth of Circe. The sorcery of Balaam represents the beastification of man, as if poisoned from Circe's bowl. The friend of God frees himself from that tyranny and speaks with the liberty of a citizen in the city of God⁶⁷.

Some of the best examples of Gregory's new understanding of man as suspended between the creative freedom of God and the brutish enslavement of a beast appear in the *Homilies on the Song of Songs*. Frequently, throughout this work of truly prodigious length, Gregory speaks of man as on the borderline of two ways of life. In the sixth homily, for example, he says that human nature is receptive of whatever it wishes to be. Towards whatever the inclinations of its freedom lead it, that it becomes. Human nature is like a mirror, changing its form in accordance with the motions of its will. If it turn towards gold, gold it

⁶⁵ GNO VII.i, 34.11-14.

⁶⁶ GNO VII.i, 41.13-16.

⁶⁷ GNO VII.i, 142.10-144.20.

becomes. If it wishes, it can also take on the impression of a frog or a toad⁶⁸. This capacity for metamorphosis extends, consistent with Gregory's idea of man as responsible for the beautification of all earthly nature, to the very nature of the reality that human beings confront. Gregory uses the two trees planted in the center of the garden of Eden as an example of how scripture invites the reader to look beneath the surface of an apparently contradictory text. It is impossible for two trees to occupy the same center, he says. There is therefore but one tree — the tree of life and the tree of death. It becomes the one or the other according as men choose to construct it. When man rejected in disobedience the abundance of good things and became filled instead with the fruit of destruction, he immediately exchanged his divine life for that of the irrational beast⁶⁹. This image recurs again and again in the homilies. The leopards and lions of the text represent the bestialization of man. Mankind voluntarily doffed its divine form and was bestialized in the likeness of a leopard⁷⁰. That this loss involves rather submission to intellectual slavery than the acquisition of sexuality is clear throughout these homilies. In a particularly fine passage that recalls the binding of Prometheus and anticipates Dante's frozen lake of Hell, Gregory characterizes men as having become frozen in a deathly winter of immobility — rock, instead of man, lacking the capacity for self movement. Then the Sun of righteousness arose to melt the frost and bring springtime. Warmed by the Word of God, human nature becomes once again a running spring welling up to eternal life⁷¹.

A particularly striking passage in the sixth homily shows us both how much Gregory has transcended his earlier vertical structuring of reality and how much he retains the language in which that earlier view had been expressed. The supreme division of existing things, he says, is that between the intellectual and the sensible. The intellectual is unlimited and without boundary. The sensible is contained within definite limits of size, weight, and shape. The intellectual is free of such limits. He goes on, as in the first book against Eunomius, to subdivide the intellectual into the uncreated nature and the created. The uncreated nature remains always what it is. The created intellectual nature is always in the process of being created and of changing itself for the better as it rises without limit towards the unreachable source of all being⁷². At the end of the homilies, in a passage reminiscent of the discussions of time in the earlier works, but again with significant differences of understanding, Gregory says that God set a goal and perfection on each of his creatures. Human nature, however, fell away from that perfection. In its return to the good in the second

⁶⁸ GNO VI, 102.4-104.10.

⁶⁹ GNO VI, 348.12-351.2.

⁷⁰ GNO VI, 251.1-7.

⁷¹ GNO VI, 147.6-148.1.

⁷² GNO VI, 173.7-174.20.

creation that Christ has wrought, there is necessarily an extensional course measured differently for each soul⁷³. In these passages the spatial attributes that had differentiated the sensible from the intelligible in Gregory's earlier works have been transformed into the moral dimensions that measure man's use of his capacity for self-formation. The language is that of Platonic dualism. The conception of extensionality is that of Stoic physics. The expression is of Christian vocation. The underlying theme is of classical humanism, a response to Pindar's sad resignation in the face of death and denial.

In Gregory's well known doctrine of perpetual progress in the good, made possible by the quickening power of the indwelling Christ, we encounter a Christian counterpart to the myth of Circe. Trapped in the form of swine, enslaved to the tyranny of an external necessity, Odysseus' men plead in unintelligible grunts for their freedom and the restoration of their human form. Odysseus' only recourse is to charm Circe so that, again by external means, she will administer the antidote. The Christian Odysseus takes up residence within the bestialized form of man and restores to it the power for its own transformation.

By the time he had worked his way through the issues raised by the debate with Eunomius, Gregory had made the Christian language of life and death, sin and salvation, Adam and the new Adam, into a new myth for expressing the paradox of man as a being endowed with the intelligence of the gods, but deprived of the sovereign autonomy that is the birthright of the intelligent being. Moreover, he has made this language respond to the dilemma of Oedipus so as to transform human life from tragedy to comedy. The Christian myth ends not with a Hesiodic age of iron turning to rust, but with the restoration of the golden age. The story of man instead of being a tragedy about a fundamentally noble character who comes to an unhappy ending, as Aristotle defined it, is now a comedy in the Christian sense that Dante was to give to that genre. The being who had become unable to realize the ambitions of his nobility has been restored to freedom. That, according to Gregory, is why Christ said to his disciples (John 15.15), 'Now I call you no longer servants, but friends'. This is Christian Hellenism. Christian language addresses itself to an ancient theme and offers a new resolution for the tensions expressed in a pagan language. The process is mutual and dynamic. For the ancient pagan theme is one of the factors leading to a fully developed Christian understanding of the human situation.

⁷³ GNO VI, 457.21-459.1.

Le problème de la date de la mort de Saint Basile de Césarée

Elie MOUTSOULAS, Athènes

La vie et l'œuvre de Saint Basile de Césarée, Basile le 'grand', comme l'Église l'appelle, titre donné rarement et aux grandes personnalités comme l'empereur Constantin ou Saint Athanase, a depuis longtemps attiré l'intérêt des patrologues et plus généralement des philologues et des historiens. Un point sur lequel ils ne se sont pas mis d'accord est la date de sa mort.

La date traditionnelle du 1^{er} janvier 379, qui depuis Tillemont¹ et Dom Maran² fut acceptée presque unanimement, et qui même avant Tillemont n'avait pas provoqué de doute que seulement quand à l'année placée plus tôt ou plus tard³, date qu'on trouve même aujourd'hui presque dans tous les manuels de Patrologie est mis en doute par plusieurs patrologues. Parmi eux quelques uns ont considéré cette date comme jour de l'enterrement du grand docteur, faite un ou deux jours après sa mort, selon le Prof. Papadopoulos⁴ ou à peu près un mois avant (c.à.d. fin novembre, début décembre 378) selon le Prof. Callinicos⁵. Prof. Hauschild parle de la fin de 378 sans préciser la date de la mort⁶.

Mais il y a d'autres opinions plus extrêmes qui se sont exprimées. En 1981 Alan D. Booth dans un article consacré à la jeunesse de Jérôme a proposé le

¹ Lenain de Tillemont, *Mémoires pour servir à l'histoire ecclésiastique des six premiers siècles*, t. 9 (Venise, 1737), p. 278.

² Dom Maran, 'Vita S. Basili Magni', *Patrologiae Cursus Completus, Series Graeca* (Paris, 1857), p. CLXI.

³ Comme Prof. J.-R. Pouchet le remarque 'les supputations de C. Baronius, (*Annales ecclesiastici* éd. de Cologne 1609 t. 4 col. 408-410 et à sa suite de C.J. von Hefele, *Konziliengeschichte* Bd. 1, Teil 2 S. 743) en faveur du 1^{er} janvier 378 ainsi que celles de Clinton, en faveur du 1^{er} janvier 380, n'ont jamais fait l'unanimité chez les érudits'. Prof. J.-R. Pouchet se réfère aussi à G. Rauschen, *Jahrbücher der christlichen Kirche unter dem Kaiser Theodosius dem Grossen* (Freiburg im Briesgau, 1897), pp. 476-477. J.R. Pouchet, 'La date de l'élection épiscopale de Saint Basile et celle de sa mort', *Revue d'histoire ecclésiastique* 87 (1992), p. 5 n. 2.

⁴ S. Papadopoulos, *Basile le Grand, Vie et Théologie* (Athènes, 1981) (Gr.), p. 53 n. 19.

⁵ C. Callinicos, 'Contributions au problème concernant la date de la rédaction des lettres de St. Basile', *Ecclésiastikos Pharos* (Gr.) t. 61 (1979), p. 47.

⁶ Basilius von Caesarea, *Briefe*, Erster Teil, Eingeleitet, übersetzt und erläutert von Wolf-Dieter Hauschild (Stuttgart, 1990), p. 22, note 50. Basilius ... Dritter Teil ... (Stuttgart, 1993), pp. 28-29.

14 juin 377⁷ — le 14 juin c'est le jour de la fête du Saint par l'Église Catholique et de son élévation à l'épiscopat par le Martyrologe romain — comme date de la mort de Saint Basile. Influencé par cette opinion le Prof. Maraval dans un article paru en 1988 à la *Revue d'Etudes Augustiniennes* a proposé le mois d'août de 377 comme le moment de la mort de Saint Basile corrigeant seulement la date mais pas l'année⁸. Plus récemment Prof. Pouchet se distancie aussi l'opinion traditionnelle et bien qu'il se base sur plusieurs arguments du Prof. Maraval il le corrige quand à l'année et le mois. Il parle de la fin de septembre de 378 et plus exactement du 20 septembre de cette année⁹. Prof Pouchet arrive à ces conclusions car il combine le temps de la mort de Saint Basile avec le temps de son éléction épiscopale, qui, selon l'opinion traditionnelle depuis Tillemont a eu lieu le mois de septembre de 370, puisque nous savons que Basile fut huit années complètes évêque de Césarée. Je n'ai sur ce point que de rappeler l'un des douze épigrammes que Saint Grégoire de Nazianze a consacré à Saint Basile après sa mort. Il s'agit de l'épigramme 10 où nous lisons: 'Οκταετὲς λαοῖο θεόφρονος ἡνία τεΐνας, τοῦτο πόνων τῶν σῶν, ὃ Βασίλειε, ὀλίγον'. Pendant huit ans tu as fermement tenu les rênes d'un peuple pieux, et ce fut là, Basile, le moindre de tes travaux^{9a}. Nous ne pouvons pas ne pas mentionner le témoignage de Saint Grégoire de Nysse, qui dans son œuvre sur la 'Vie de Sainte Macrine' dit qu'ayant accompli huit ans comme évêque pendant la neuvième année de son épiscopat Basile émigra des hommes vers Dieu¹⁰. L'indication 'τῷ ἐνάτῳ ἐνιαυτῷ' devait être gardé par le Prof. Maraval dans sa traduction.

Parmi les opinions jusqu'à maintenant exprimées celle qui est la plus proche de la notre est celle du Prof. Pouchet. Malgré cela nous nous différencions un peu et cela à cause du fait que pour nous l'ordination épiscopale de Saint Basile n'a eu lieu au mois de septembre de 370 mais le 14 juin 370. Le plus grand argument est le témoignage du Martyrologe Romain que nous avons mentionné et qui parlant du 14 juin nous informe que St Basile 'qua die ordinatus fuit episcopus'. L'opinion du Prof. Callinicos selon laquelle ce témoignage est une invention par l'explication de la célébration du Saint à ce jour-là par l'Église Catholique¹¹ nous paraît sans fondement. Baronius déjà, qui avec précaution avait étudié les sources, se basant sur ce témoignage considère le 14 juin 370 comme jour de l'élection de Saint Basile au siège épiscopale. La différence est que comme il croit que l'évêque de Césarée est mort le 1 janvier 379, il précise que Saint Basile a gardé la chair de Césarée pour 8 ans 6 mois

⁷ Alan D. Booth, 'The Chronology of Jerome's Early Years', *Phoenix* 35 (1981), pp. 237-259.

⁸ P. Maraval, 'La date de la mort de Basile de Césarée...', p. 31.

⁹ J.-R. Pouchet, 'La date de l'élection...', p. 20, 32.

^{9a} Bibliothèque des Pères Grecs, Ed. Apostoliki Diakonia de l'Église Grecque t. 62 (Athènes, 1982), p. 290,21-22.

¹⁰ *Vie de Sainte Macrine* § 14, Ed. P. Maraval, Sources Chrétiennes 178, pp. 188-189.

¹¹ C. Callinicos, 'Contributions...', op. cit., p. 42.

et 16 jours¹². Comme nous essayerons de prouver terminus ante quem pour la mort de Saint Basile est le 15 septembre et étant donnée que sa mort a eu lieu pendant la neuvième année de son épiscopat celle-ci n'a eu lieu que très probablement pendant la première moitié de ce mois.

Bien que nous n'avons pas le temps de parler en détail pour le moment de son élection épiscopale nous devons souligner que l'opinion de Baronius n'a pas été exclue par des éminents historiens comme F. Loofs et J. Schäfer, le premier disant que l'élection de Saint Basile a eu lieu entre printemps et automne 370¹³ et le second en été 370¹⁴. Les arguments du Prof. Callinicos qui propose le janvier-février 370¹⁵ comme celle de la plupart des historiens, qui à partir de Tillemont proposent le septembre 370 ne me paraissent pas convainquants.

Dans la suite en me basant sur presque les mêmes arguments que les Prof. Maraval et Pouchet je tacherai de prouver que ma proposition est la plus probable.

Dans sa vie à Sainte Macrine et au § 15 Saint Grégoire écrit "Ενατος ἦν μετὰ τὸ πάθος τοῦτο μὴν ἢ μικρὸν ὑπὲρ τοῦτο καὶ σύνοδος ἐπισκόπων κατὰ τὴν Ἀντιόχου πόλιν ἠθροΐδετο, ἧς καὶ ἡμεῖς μετέσχομεν" et selon la traduction du Prof. Maraval 'neuf mois on guère plus, après ce deuil, se tint à Antioche un synode d'évêques auquel nous-mêmes prîmes part'¹⁶. La plupart des historiens plaçait le synode d'Antioche au mois de septembre de 379, prenant comme base le 1^{er} janvier comme jour de la mort de Saint Basile. Mais nous avons des raisons de déplacer avec les Prof. Maraval et Pouchet ce synode aux mois mai et juin et plus exactement à partir du 15 mai étant donnée qu'à cette année là Pâques tombait le 21 avril et qu'il fallait à peu près trois semaines, afin que les évêques puissent arriver de leur diocèse à Antioche.

Le synode a duré à peu près un mois car, comme Prof. Pouchet le souligne, le plus tard le 22 juin Grégoire devait quitter Antioche pour la Cappadoce¹⁷. Ce voyage a duré à peu près quinze jours. Et pour le voyage jusqu'au Pont il fallait encore dix jours, comme Grégoire même le souligne à sa 19^e lettre¹⁸. Grégoire arriva au Pont le 18 juillet, la veille de la mort de sa sœur. Ils avaient pendant toute la journée une longue conversation que Grégoire expose dans son œuvre 'Sur l'âme et la résurrection'¹⁹. Soulignons qu'en faveur de l'été

¹² C. Baronius, *Annales...*, op. cit., p. 281.

¹³ F. Loofs, *Eustathius von Sebaste und die Chronologie des Basilius-Briefe* (Halle, 1898) p. 51.

¹⁴ J. Schäfer, *Basilius des Grossen Beziehungen zum Abendlande* (Münster i.W., 1909), p. 31.

¹⁵ C. Callinicos, 'Contributions...', op. cit., p. 42.

¹⁶ *Vie de Sainte Macrine...*, op. cit., pp. 190-191.

¹⁷ J.R. Pouchet..., op. cit., p. 20.

¹⁸ *Gregorii Nysseni Epistulae*, Ed. G. Pasquali (Leiden, 1959), p. 65.

¹⁹ Ed. F. Oehler, *Gregor's Bischof's von Nyssa Gespräch mit seiner Schwester Macrina. Über Seele und Auferstehung* (Leipzig, 1858. Bibliothèque des Pères Grecs, t. 68; Athènes, 1989), pp. 319-377.

pour l'arrivée de Grégoire à Anessi parle un détail que Grégoire donne dans sa vie à Macrine, c.à.d. qu'il se reposa 'dans un jardinet, à l'ombre des treilles'²⁰. La fête de Sainte Macrine le 19 juillet est une preuve supplémentaire mais très importante pour la vérification de notre proposition sur la datation de l'itinéraire de Grégoire.

Un autre élément qui fortifie notre supposition que la mort de Saint Basile a eu lieu entre le 1 et le 15 septembre est que pendant ce temps là deux grandes fêtes étaient célébrées à Césarée. La première, le 2 septembre, on commémorait le martyr Mamas. Saint Basile lui a consacré un sermon, prononcé pendant cette fête²¹. Il conclut ce sermon en précisant que cette fête donne fin aux prières de l'année précédente et est la tête du nouvel an²². Pour Basile début du nouvel an est ici le mois de septembre.

La seconde fête est celle du martyr Euphrosinos, célébrée selon la lettre 100 de Saint Basile à Eusèbe de Samosate le 7 septembre²³. On peut comparer les lettres 176 et 200 à Amphiloche d'Ikonium dont la seconde parle du martyr Euphrosinos²⁴. La lettre 252 aux évêques du Pontos²⁵ combine les deux fêtes des martyrs Euphrosinos et Mamas et d'autres martyrs que l'Église de Césarée et des alentours célébraient au début du mois de septembre. Pendant ce temps là les évêques se réunissaient en synode pour régler les affaires ecclésiastiques. On peut expliquer par conséquent pourquoi l'église de Cappadoce a transféré la célébration de la fête de Saint Basile au début de l'année civile, au mois de janvier.

Venons maintenant aux deux oraisons funèbres de Grégoire de Nysse²⁶ et de Grégoire de Nazianze²⁷ prononcées selon la date presque unanimement acceptée au 1 janvier 381 et 382 réciproquement. Tous les deux ont un ton panégyrique et ne donnent aucun indice sur le jour de la mort de Saint Basile. La fête de Saint Basile se présente comme le couronnement d'une série de fêtes qui commence avec la 'fête des fêtes', Noël. Ensuite vient la fête de Saint Etienne, des apôtres Pierre et Jacques, de Saint Jean Baptiste et de Saint Paul. Comme Prof. Jean Bernardi le remarque en se référant spécialement au sermon de Saint Grégoire de Nysse 'ce discours relève d'une tentative de création liturgique

²⁰ *Gregorii Nysseni, Opera Ascetica*, Ed. V.W. Callahan, Ed. 3 (Leiden, 1986), p. 391, 11-13. Ed. P. Maraval (SC 78, pp. 202, 1-3; 203, 1-3), *BPG* 69, p. 111, 28-29.

²¹ *BPG* 54, pp. 212-216.

²² Op. cit., p. 216, 20-24.

²³ Saint Basile, *Lettres* t. I. Ed. Y. Courtonne (Paris, 1957), p. 219, 22-23. *BPG* 55, 133, 25-26.

²⁴ Saint Basile, *Lettres* t. II. Ed. Y. Courtonne (Paris, 1961), p. 165, 35-36. *BPG* 55, 229, 27-28.

²⁵ Saint Basile, *Lettres* t. III. Ed. Y. Courtonne (Paris, 1966), p. 93, *BPG* 55, 312.

²⁶ *Gregorii Nysseni Sermones*, Pars II. In *Basilium fratrem*. Ed. O. Lendle (Leiden, 1990), pp. 109-134. *BPG* 69, 352-367.

²⁷ F. Boulenger, Grégoire de Nazianze, *Discours funèbres en l'honneur de son frère Césaire et de Basile de Césarée* (Paris, 1908), pp. 58-230. *BPG* 60, 136-179.

pour la date du 1^{er} janvier' et il considère le culte rendu à la mémoire de Saint Basile comme une création collective de l'épiscopat cappadocien²⁸. Il est très probable que le 1^{er} janvier 380 le sermon à Césarée a été prononcé par l'évêque de la ville, Hélladios. Il faut remarquer qu'il y a une différence entre la fête d'un martyr, qu'on célèbre le jour de sa mort, qu'on appelle 'γενέδλιος ἡμέρα' car c'est le jour qu'il est né aux cieux, et la fête des saints en général, qu'on ne célèbre pas obligatoirement le jour de leur mort. Comme justement Prof. Bernardi le remarque 'en affirmant que Basile est apparu au moment précis où l'Église avait besoin de lui par combattre le fléau propre à l'époque — fléau qui consiste dans la renaissance de l'idolâtrie sous le visage de l'arianisme — en le comparant successivement à Saint Paul et Saint Jean-Baptiste, à Elie, Samuel et Moïse, Grégoire s'efforce d'égaliser Basile aux plus grands'²⁹.

Nous ne pouvons pas accepter l'opinion du Prof. Callinicos, selon laquelle c'est Basile lui-même qui a suggéré à Grégoire l'organisation de cette célébration. C'est clair que la phrase 'τόν διατεθέντα ἡμῖν τὴν παρούσαν πανηγυρίν'³⁰ — celui qui nous offre ce jour de joie — ne signifie pas 'il nous a ordonné' où 'il nous a conseillé la célébration de cette fête'³¹. La phrase indique seulement que Saint Basile fut la cause de cette célébration.

En concluant notre communication et sans prétendre avoir définitivement résolu le problème nous proposons comme date plus probable de la mort de Saint Basile les jours entre le 1^{er} et le 15^e septembre 378.

Narrative Dimensions in Gregory of Nyssa's *Life of Macrina*

M.B. PRANGER, Amsterdam

Recently Harold Bloom, in his book *The Western Canon*¹, put forward as one of the criteria for canonicity, — in addition to so obvious a requirement as originality — a certain enduring strangeness and, consequently, a certain inexhaustibility of the work of art. Surely, by strangeness and inexhaustibility he does not mean an unlimited proliferation of meaning to be read into the text by the interpreter. As far as Bloom is concerned, the latter mode of reading is exactly what his postmodern opponents — the School of Resentment as he calls them — try to do. For Bloom what makes art canonical consists rather of the text (in the case of literature) staying aloof and remote even after countless readings throughout the centuries. It is this proud containment of the text rather than its being part of a borderless textual pattern substituting for reality that guarantees the permanence of its attractiveness.

Unfortunately, Bloom spoils much of his argument by adding, at the end of his book, a list of works which, in his view, are to be considered canonical. Besides being arbitrary, this list is conspicuous for the absence of ancient and medieval Christian works. There is no mention whatsoever of any Greek-Christian writing and, as far as Latin is concerned, under the heading: 'The Middle Ages: Latin, Arabic and the Vernacular before Dante', only Augustine's *The City of God* and *The Confessions* are mentioned². It seems to be sheer ignorance on Bloom's part, which has prevented him from including in his list masterworks from the ancient Christian period³. Why, for instance, mention Augustine and none of the Cappadocians? What about Gregory of Nyssa? As both Lowther Clarke and Van der Meer have argued with regard to his *Life of Macrina*⁴, 'should this treatise'

¹ Harold Bloom, *The Western Canon. The Books and School of the Ages* (New York, 1994) ch. 1, pp. 27-51.

² Bloom, *The Western Canon*, p. 491.

³ For a masterly exposé of the literary world created by the Greek Fathers, see M. Harl, 'Le langage de l'expérience religieuse chez les Pères grecs', *Rivista di Storia e Letteratura religiosa* 13 (1977) pp. 5-34.

⁴ The following edition has been used: *Vie de Sainte Macrine*. Introduction, texte critique, notes et index par Pierre Maraval (Sources chrétiennes 178; Paris, 1971). In the Leiden edition of the complete works (*Gregorii Nysseni opera*, eds. W. Jaeger, H. Langerbeck, H. Dörrie and H. Hörner) it has appeared in volume 8/1: *Vita Sanctae Macrinae*, V. Woods Callahan ed. (Leiden, 1963) pp. 370-414. An excellent, modern English translation is *The Life of Saint Macrina by Gregory, Bishop of Nyssa*, translated with introduction and notes by Kevin Corrigan (Toronto, 1987, third edition 1995).

²⁸ J. Bernardi, *La prédication des Pères Cappadociens* (Paris, 1968), p. 314.

²⁹ Op. cit., pp. 313-314.

³⁰ Ed. O. Lendle..., op. cit., p. 110, 19-20. *BPG* 69, 353, 6-7.

³¹ C. Callinicos, 'Contributions...', op. cit., pp. 44-45.

— and, so one might add, a work such as *The Life of Moses*⁵ — ‘have been written in the fourth century before rather than in the fourth century after Christ, it would doubtlessly have become one of the world’s classics’⁶.

Now there is another reason why Gregory’s exclusion from Bloom’s list is to be regretted. However understandable Bloom’s anger with regard to the diminishing appreciation of quality in the arts and letters may be, efforts on the part of postmodern thinkers such as Derrida to link concepts borrowed from modern art and literature such as multidimensionality and the meaning of affirmation and negation in language to older texts seem to be legitimate and rewarding. In that respect it comes as no surprise that on several occasions Derrida has dealt extensively with the problem of ‘negative theology’, basing himself on an intensive reading of Pseudo-Dionysian texts⁷. Those texts apparently provide Derrida with the linguistic and philosophical dynamism he is looking for, both in their textual appearance as such and as tools to be applied to other texts.

In Gregory of Nyssa we have someone who might be able to bridge the gap between Bloom’s wish for the aloof articulateness of literature and Derrida’s efforts to unsettle clear cut textual boundaries in an ever expanding process of affirmation and negation. In his *Life of Moses*, for instance, Gregory electrifies the facts of history — which, as in the case of Moses, have a strength all of their own — through the dynamism injected in history by contemplation (θεωρία). The latter is in no way separated from the former, nor is the spiritualisation of the text which is brought about by θεωρία to be viewed as a duplication which, in fact, would be alien to the original. When Gregory, in his famous concept of ἐπέκτασις, describes the soul as continuously raising itself upward, driven by the desire for heavenly things, stretching itself toward the future, always bent on climbing higher mountain peaks and incessantly looking for new incitements to fly even higher after what has been achieved so far, he presents his reader with the picture of Moses who did not cease in his efforts to move on.

Paradoxically, Gregory shapes Moses’ burning desire hopefully to go on towards Beauty by once more summing up, in a staccato-like rhapsody, the basic, ‘historical’ facts from the latter’s life. In the enclosure of their pastness, those facts only help to emphasize the basic openness of ἐπέκτασις: ‘He

⁵ The following edition has been used: *La vie de Moïse*. Introduction, texte critique, notes et index par Jean Daniélou (Sources chrétiennes 1; Paris, 1965). In the Leiden edition of the complete works (*Gregorii Nysseni opera*, eds. W. Jaeger, H. Langerbeck, H. Dörrie and H. Hörner) it has appeared as volume 7/1, *De Vita Moysis*, ed. H. Musurillo (Leiden, 1964).

⁶ F. van der Meer and G. Bartelink, *Gregorius van Nyssa: Het leven van de heilige Macrina* (Utrecht, 1971), p. 7, quoting from W.K. Lowther Clark, *St. Gregory of Nyssa, The Life of St. Macrina* (London, 1916).

⁷ See especially J. Derrida, ‘Comment ne pas parler. Dénégations’, *Psyche. Invention de l’autre* (Paris, 1987) pp. 535-595.

refuses falsely to be known as the son of the Queen of Egypt. He revenges the Hebrew man. He withdraws to the desert where he stays untroubled by the life of men... He shines with glory. And, having raised himself to such heights, he still burns with desire and he is insatiable, always longing for more, still thirsting after what he has not yet achieved. And since he has not yet achieved full fruition, he implores God to manifest Himself to him, not through participation but such as He is’⁸.

Thanks to the works of Jean Daniélou the notion of ἐπέκτασις has been shown to reveal the dynamism of Gregory’s thought⁹. However, as the title of Daniélou’s first major publication about Gregory suggests (*Platonisme et théologie mystique*), it is the philosophical/theological discourse which is the object of his investigations and in which, accordingly, a concept such as ἐπέκτασις is embedded¹⁰. What I would like to propose in this paper, is to take Daniélou’s analysis one step further and examine whether the basic openness inherent in Gregory’s thought also figures in the text itself. In other words, we may ask whether not only Gregory’s thought as distilled from the text but also the rhetorical structure of the text itself contains elements of openness, unrest and striving for more and higher goals without ‘unhistorically’ evaporating into thin air¹¹. As for *The Life of Moses* I have indicated that the enumeration of historical facts right in the middle of θεωρία produces an effect of ἐπέκτασις. So, it is not only Gregory saying that Moses, in spite of his splendid achievements so far, wants to move on to higher things. The very way he puts it — the rhythm of the words, for instance, mimicking as it were a certain breathlessness — also contributes to the further intensification of desire.

Now I want to turn to the most ‘historical’ of Gregory’s writings, *The Life of Macrina*, and examine whether dynamism and openness can be maintained in the face of the most crudely historical of facts, physical death¹².

⁸ *Vie de Moïse*, pp. 105, 106.

⁹ *Platonisme et théologie mystique. Essai sur la doctrine spirituelle de saint Grégoire de Nyssa* (Paris, 1944) pp. 309-327.

¹⁰ For an analysis of Gregory’s symbolic and biblical language as different from a philosophical/theological approach, see M. Canévet, *Grégoire de Nyssa et l’herméneutique biblique* (Paris, 1983). The ‘historical’ nature of *The Life of Macrina* does not mean that biblical notions do not play an important part in the treatise (cf. E. Marotta, ‘La base biblica della Vita S. Macrinae di Gregorio di Nissa’, *Vetera Christianorum* 5 (1968) pp. 73-88). However, my focus is on the narrative aspects.

¹¹ Of course, it is possible to discern other aspects of Gregory’s thought in *The Life of Macrina*. Anthony Meredith, for one, describes Gregory’s main aim in this treatise as ‘seeking to recommend perfection of the life rather than the pursuit of truth... By the philosophic life he means primarily, if not exclusively, the life of moral virtue’. Anthony Meredith, ‘A Comparison between the Vita Sanctae Macrinae of Gregory of Nyssa, the Vita Plotini of Porphyry and the Vita Pythagorica of Iamblichus’, in A. Spira (ed.), *The Biographical Works of Gregory of Nyssa; Proceedings of the Fifth International Colloquium on Gregory of Nyssa* (Patristic Monograph Series 12; Cambridge, Mass., 1984) pp. 181-195. The quotation is to be found on p. 191.

¹² For a bibliography of works on *The Life of Macrina* see Maraval’s edition, pp. 13-18.

Right at the beginning Gregory uses rhetorical clichés to hint at the extraordinary nature of his subject-matter by announcing his treatise, though being written in the shape of a letter, to exceed the boundaries of that genre and almost turn into history writing because of the wealth (πλῆθος) of its material¹³. Thus the treatise in its formal appearance is set in the *epektatic* key. The next major feature of this treatise is its autobiographical nature. Of course, 'autobiographical' should not here be taken in a modern sense. It is rather linked to the concept of ἐπέκτασις in that Gregory, whilst giving an eyewitness account of his sister's death, shapes himself as another Moses, both as a bishop and priest and as a restless wanderer. It is the simultaneous occurrence of those different features, the brother by nature, the bishop by profession, that turns the text into an amalgam of ritual, historical and autobiographical elements. To those elements a third one should be added. The relative fixedness of the other two (brother and bishop) is broken into by the story being an account of a brief visit. Gregory is coming and going. On the one hand, this focuses the reader's attention entirely on the purpose of that visit: the witnessing of Macrina's death. But on the other hand, it introduces an elusive element into the narration. However glorious the event of Macrina's death may be, it is, or rather becomes, through Gregory's framing it as part of his own wandering existence, part of an ongoing history projected towards horizons as yet unknown.

This particular point is aptly illustrated by the way Gregory concluded his *Life of Macrina*. For the end of the funeral ceremony does not coincide with the end of the narration. In modern terms, one would be tempted to say that at the end of his account of Macrina's life and death Gregory has not yet come to terms with his own role in that story. Put in Gregorian terms proper, one might say that what is still lacking is a certain degree of θεωρία, an appreciation of the facts from a spiritual point of view. Admittedly, Gregory, both when telling the story of Macrina's life and when describing the death and funeral including his own participation in the events, maintains a strong sense of dignity and distance. Doing so, he intensifies the emotions involved in the story he is telling, busying himself, for instance, to calm down Macrina's fellow sisters, the loudness of whose laments is so disturbing as to call for firm action (an action, by the by, that quite handsomely diverts the attention from his own sorrow at that particular moment), next taking the organisation of the funeral in hand and, more generally, acting out the bishop rather than the brother¹⁴.

But that very same sense of dignity and distance also creates a feeling of suspense, not least with regard to Gregory himself both as a participant in the story and as its author. As a result, when all is said and done as far as the events are concerned, the reader knows that, just as the facts reported in the

treatise transcend the limitations of the letter genre, so Macrina's life and death have gone beyond nature: beyond the nature of her sex, beyond the common measure of men, beyond the common bond of family ties. Yet, paradoxically, the *structures de la parenté* keep underlying the narration. By their very permanence as well as by their being undermined by both death and forms of superior life, they help to highlight the extraordinary, the *epektatic* nature of the narration. An example. Occasionally, the reader does observe fraternal pangs of emotion — Gregory being on the brink of shedding tears — coming to the surface, just to be suppressed the next moment in view of higher duties. Yet, unlike Augustine's build up of his suppression of public mourning on the occasion of his mother's death culminating in a private, nocturnal outburst of tears, Gregory deftly sticks to the descriptive mode — and thereby to his episcopal dignity — till the very end. And even when, ultimately, he does mention his own sorrow and tears, it is in a matter-of-fact like and ceremonious way: 'When I had settled all things regarding the funeral according to custom and I had to depart again, I threw myself on the tomb and I kissed the dust. Then I set out on the journey back, despondent and in tears, realising the size of the good which my life had lost'¹⁵.

So far, so good. But what about the elusiveness mentioned above and the fact that the end of the funeral ceremony does not coincide with the end of the narration? When Gregory next proceeds to conclude his story with the account of a miracle performed by his sister, he seems to do what becomes standard procedure in the writing of saint's lives: the corroboration and confirmation of the saint's sanctity. Yet much more is at stake here. In the epilogue Gregory resumes what he has been telling so far, raising history to the level of θεωρία while remaining within the former's bounds.

On his way back — notice that what Gregory is about to tell is part of the resumption of his wandering existence — he meets a couple, more or less related to the family, on its way to the place of mourning. At this crossing point of journeys to and from the (former) centre of events, the man, a soldier from Sebastopol, tells Gregory the story of a miracle performed by Macrina¹⁶. What goes almost unnoticed in this shift from Gregory's own account to the story told by someone coming in from the outside — in modern terminology one might call this a shift of focalisation¹⁷ — is that, on their encounter and before Gregory having the soldier tell his story, the two men 'spontaneously' burst into tears. Gone are the episcopal dignity and the rhetorical remoteness of the narrator. At the end of his account receiving the gift of a story

¹⁵ *Vie de Macrine*, p. 256.

¹⁶ *Vie de Macrine*, pp. 256-257.

¹⁷ See M. Ball, *Narratology. Introduction to the Theory of Narrative* (Toronto, 1985); for an application of the (modern) concept of focalisation to ancient (Greek) texts, see I.F.J. de Jong, *Narrators and Focalizers. The Presentation of the Story in the Iliad* (Amsterdam, 1987).

¹³ *Vie de Macrine*, p. 136.

¹⁴ *Vie de Macrine*, pp. 228-257.

(προσέθηκε μοί τι διήγημα)¹⁸ from someone else, Gregory seems to put an end to his elusive dignity — he weeps freely — while at the same time becoming remother than ever by wrapping his own account in that of a ‘stranger’. Thus his own story is, retrospectively, retold and recharged.

Briefly the soldier’s story runs as follows. Once upon a time the couple visited the monastery where Macrina and her brother Peter were living, in the company of their little daughter who suffered from an eye illness. The monastery having separate quarters for men and women, the man joined Peter and the monks, the woman and the child Macrina and the nuns. They talked and dined, and time flew by. Macrina, being very sweet to the child, invited the woman for dinner offering to reciprocate the honour of the woman’s acceptance of her invitation with a cure for the little girl’s disease. However, both the man and the woman had such a good time in their respective quarters that they forgot all about the promise until, already on their way back — here again, the leitmotif of storytelling and wandering emerges —, they exchanged their experiences.

I told her what I had seen and heard in the monastery of the monks. But she told everything elaborately and in detail, like a historical account, for it was her considered opinion that nothing, not even the smallest detail, should be omitted. She recounted everything in order (ἀκολουθῶς) as in a narrative. And when she came to mention the moment the promise of the cure had been given she interrupted her story and exclaimed: ‘What has happened to us? How could we forget about her promise to provide the medication of the eye cream?’¹⁹

Notice that both Gregory’s ‘life of Macrina’ and the soldier’s story are entailed in yet another narration: the woman’s detailed account of her experience. In a biblical allusion (Matthew 11:4) the man talks about ‘seeing and hearing’, thus hinting at the θεωρία Gregory is in the process of establishing through a shift in focalisation (the perception of Macrina’s life in the eyes of other narrators). Next, the focus shifts once more, this time from the man to the even more detailed account given by the woman. In the meantime the woman’s story remains part of her husband’s report of events to Gregory, the latter, in turn, staying in place as the overall narrator. And of course, the subject of the soldier’s story being an eye illness fits in nicely with Gregory’s general search, in *The Life of Macrina*, for enlightenment. The theme of ‘light’ emerging at several places in the treatise, the interconnection of narrative elements is efficiently taken care of.

However, it is not θεωρία in its crudest form that produces a deeper insight into the meaning of Macrina’s virtuous life and death. Here it is rather the narrative frame containing and steering θεωρία that brings about new dimensions of seeing and light. Supreme irony: the woman can be observed to tell every-

¹⁸ *Vie de Macrine*, p. 256.

¹⁹ *Vie de Macrine*, pp. 260, 262.

thing in detail and in the right order (ἀκολουθῶς)²⁰ just to miss the essential point. Thus the attention focuses on the forgotten promise of the eye cream. In the meantime, however, the material aspect of that promise (the cream) has disappeared: when the couple, still annoyed with themselves because of their negligence, look at the girl, she turns out to be cured without material intervention. Thus the final *ordre du discours* is firmly established. Ultimately, the right narrative order appears to transcend the power of the narrator. Through a process of narrative (self)-estrangement Gregory, in the end, has his story be told by the silent prayer of his sister. That prayer produces θεωρία, while staying within the narrative. Accordingly, the soldier concludes his story as follows:

Why then should it be called out of the ordinary that God returns the sight to the blind when today his servant has wrought such cures through faith in Him and performed a miracle which equals the others (i.e. biblical ones)?²¹

Gregory has only to add to this an *epektatic* break down of the soldier’s — and by implication, his own — story into tears. Just as, from a rhetorical point of view, the size (πλήθος) of the story exceeds the genre of letter writing, so the soldier’s story is drowned in tears:

At those words his voice faltered and tears flooded his story.
That is what the soldier told me²².

As far as the wandering bishop is concerned, he is moving on like another Moses. As for the reader, however, he wonders who the narrator was that wrapped his own story and sorrow in the soldier’s tears, and vanished.

²⁰ For a discussion of the concept of ἀκολουθία in Gregory’s works, see J. Daniélou, ‘Akolouthia chez Grégoire de Nysse’, *Revue des sciences religieuses* 27 (1953), pp. 219–249.

²¹ *Vie de Macrine*, pp. 262, 264.

²² *Vie de Macrine*, p. 264.

La Magnanimité de David dans l'*In Inscriptiones Psalmorum* de Grégoire de Nysse

J. REYNARD, Aix-en-Provence

Grégoire de Nysse consacre, dans la seconde partie de son traité sur les inscriptions des psaumes, de longues pages au commentaire des titres des psaumes 56, 57 et 58. Ces titres sont les suivants:

— Ps 56: εἰς τὸ τέλος· μὴ διαφθείρης· τῷ Δαυὶδ εἰς στηλογραφίαν ἐν τῷ αὐτὸν ἀποδιδράσκειν ἀπὸ προσώπου Σαοὺλ εἰς τὸ σπήλαιον ('Pour la fin, ne fais pas périr, par David, pour une inscription sur une stèle lorsqu'il s'enfuit de devant Saül dans la grotte').

— Ps 57: εἰς τὸ τέλος· μὴ διαφθείρης· τῷ Δαυὶδ εἰς στηλογραφίαν

— Ps 58: εἰς τὸ τέλος· μὴ διαφθείρης· τῷ Δαυὶδ εἰς στηλογραφίαν, ὅποτε ἀπέστειλεν Σαοὺλ καὶ ἐφύλαξεν τὸν οἶκον αὐτοῦ τοῦ θανατῶσαι αὐτόν ('... quand Saül envoya des gens et fit garder sa maison afin de le tuer').

Ces trois titres forment un ensemble lui-même compris dans une série de titres qui traite des relations entre David et Saül, mais il se distinguent par la répétition des neufs premiers mots. Ces mots sont l'occasion d'un ample développement sur la magnanimité du prophète, vertu exemplaire digne de tous les éloges.

Ces trois titres, par la mention du mot τέλος, que Grégoire traduit par νίκη, font allusion à une victoire remportée sur l'adversaire. De quelle victoire s'agit-il? Pour la préciser, il faut scruter 'les énigmes de l'histoire' (τὰ τῆς ἱστορίας αἰνίγματα) relatives à des épisodes de la vie de Saül et de David. Une objection textuelle amène alors Grégoire à préciser son exégèse: si l'ordre chronologique n'est pas respecté puisque les titres des psaumes 51 et 53 rapportent des épisodes postérieurs à ceux mentionnés dans les titres de nos trois psaumes, cette incohérence se justifie si l'on sait que l'ordre chronologique est au service d'une visée spirituelle qui prime sur 'le hasard matériel des événements' (ἡ ὄλική συντυχία τῶν πραγμάτων). La place de ces épisodes historiques dans la série des titres est donc l'indice de leur valeur éminente du point de vue qui seul importe, celui de la perfection par la vertu.

Le titre du psaume 56 renvoie au récit de IReg 24, 1-17: la rencontre dans une grotte entre David et Saül (ἡ κατὰ τὸ σπήλαιον συνδρομή). L'enjeu est ainsi résumé: 'Le pouvoir de tuer s'inverse: celui qui était poursuivi pour être mis à mort se trouve en mesure d'assassiner celui qui cherche à le tuer, et alors qu'il a la possibilité de tirer vengeance de son ennemi, il retient son pouvoir

autant qu'il lui est possible, en tuant, au lieu de son ennemi, sa propre colère intérieure'. Grégoire amplifie considérablement le texte scripturaire pour mieux faire ressortir l'exemplarité de l'attitude de David qui devient, dans le contexte d'une métaphore militaire filée, une 'aristie'. Après que le décor eut été planté (le désert de Judée, une grotte spacieuse qui ne présente qu'une ouverture détail ajouté), l'action s'engage entre lumière et ténèbres: Saül, engagé seul, bien en vue, dans la grotte où se trouvent, invisibles, David et ses compagnons, enflamme le désir de vengeance des dits compagnons; David arrête leur élan et, dans l'ombre, à l'insu de tous, découpe un pan du manteau de Saül comme preuve de sa 'philanthropie' envers lui. 'Par là on voyait clairement comment David enseignait la longanimité (μακροθυμία)'. 'Il triompha par la raison de sa colère — νίκησας τῷ λογισμῷ τὸν θυμόν — et par la crainte de Dieu de la possibilité de frapper. C'est alors qu'il dit à son écuyer la parole du titre: "Ne fais pas périr" l'Oint du Seigneur'. La scène se joue alors en pleine lumière, à la grotte souterraine s'oppose la colline (γεώλοφος): David sort derrière Saül qui ignore tout et prend place avec assurance (ἀσφαλεία) sur une hauteur d'où il tend le trophée non maculé de sang (τρόπαιον ἀναίμακτον) en signe de triomphe. L'enseignement est clair: 'l'homme supérieur en vertu n'exerce pas son courage (ἀνδρίζεται) contre ses compatriotes, mais contre ses passions (πάθος)', la raison triomphe de la colère et la philanthropie de la méchanceté (GNO V, p. 151, 9-154, 14).

Si le psaume 57 présente le même titre que le précédent, c'est pour Grégoire non une simple répétition, mais l'indice d'un progrès spirituel. La reprise du titre redouble en quelque sorte la victoire acquise en étendant sa proclamation au monde céleste: ce n'est plus David, c'est l'Esprit Saint, la nature incorporelle et immatérielle qui reprend une parole qui excède les capacités humaines, car elle témoigne d'une libération par rapport aux passions. La situation pathétique de David est alors décrite, contraint sans cesse à la fuite par Saül. C'est dans ce cadre plus général que Grégoire replace alors l'épisode de la grotte en l'associant au récit de IReg 26 où David épargne à nouveau Saül, cette fois endormi dans sa tente, et lui dérobe sa lance. Il peut donc conclure à l'origine divine d'une parole qui interdit le meurtre: 'elle vient sans conteste de Dieu'. Mais la reprise du titre sert aussi une visée pédagogique: offrir comme modèle à imiter l'action d'un saint dont la parole est inscrite sur la stèle de notre mémoire (GNO V, p. 158, 22-161, 9).

En commentant le titre du psaume 58, Grégoire revient pour la troisième fois sur l'argument déjà amplement développé: la victoire supra-humaine dont témoigne une parole longanime. Dans cette ultime étape du développement, il y a cependant progression: la signification (διάνοια) à l'œuvre y est plus grande. Après avoir opposé l'homme magnanime (μεγαλόψυχος) qui répond par un bienfait à un léger tort, à l'homme mesquin (μικροφυής) qui ne songe qu'à se venger, Grégoire souligne le caractère incomparable de la longanimité de David qui imite l'impassibilité (ἀπάθεια) de la nature divine. Il rappelle ici

le récit de IReg19,9-17 qu'évoque le titre du psaume: Saül manque de peu de sa lance David qui s'enfuit et s'installe dans sa maison dont il s'échappe à nouveau. Puis évoque le récit de IReg26 où David surprend Saül endormi et l'épargne. Il retient sa main et celle de son écuyer. Ce n'est plus seulement faire grâce à son ennemi, explique Grégoire, c'est refuser d'attenter à la dignité de la royauté. L'évocation de IReg26 est commandée par la mention du 'Ne fais pas périr', celle de IReg19 par la proposition qui suit. L'incohérence chronologique — David ne peut avoir prononcé cette parole au moment des événements cités — cache un but spirituel: l'opposition de la magnanimité de David et de la cruauté meurtrière de Saül fait d'autant grandir l'admiration pour cette forme de divine philanthropie (GNO V, p. 166,14-169,2).

Cette notion de magnanimité a une histoire, comme l'a montré le P. Gauthier (*Magnanimité, l'idéal de la grandeur dans la philosophie païenne et dans la philosophie chrétienne*, Paris, 1951). L'idéal de la clémence est déjà soulignée par Aristote: 'l'homme magnanime est sans rancune: ce n'est pas une marque de magnanimité que de conserver du ressentiment, surtout pour les torts subis, il vaut mieux les dédaigner' (*Eth. Nic.* 1125 οὐδὲ γὰρ μνησικακος· οὐ γὰρ μεγαλοψύχον τὸ ἀπομνημονεύειν, ἄλλως τε καὶ κακά, ἀλλὰ μᾶλλον παρορᾶν). Le refus par David des honneurs royaux est à mettre au crédit de l'attitude désintéressée du magnanime évoquée par Aristote: 'En outre, il ne va pas chercher les honneurs ni les places où d'autres occupent le premier rang; il est lent, il tempore' (trad. Tricot, Paris, 1983; *Eth. Nic.* 1124 καὶ εἰς τὰ ἔτιμα μὴ ἰέναι, ἢ οὐ πρῶτεύουσιν ἄλλοι καὶ ἀργὸν εἶναι καὶ μελλητήν). Mais Grégoire dépend plus directement de la tradition stoïcienne (qui semble remonter à Panétius) qui divise la μεγαλαψυχία en courage (ἀνδρεία) et persévérance (καρτερία). (cf. Gauthier, *op. cit.* p. 141, 159). Cette triade est présente dans l'exégèse de Grégoire (la μεγαλαψυχία est citée une fois p. 167,1, Grégoire emploie plus généralement le terme μακροθυμία ou φιλανθρωπία): la persévérance de David (p. 160,3), son assurance (p. 153,18; 154,3) 'comme si personne ne cherchait à lui nuire', fondée sur la confiance (πεποίθησις), lui permettent de supporter l'adversité son courage (p. 154,6 'l'homme vertueux exerce son courage contre ses passions') lui donne l'énergie d'agir. Cette classification de l'Ancien Stoïcisme est reprise par Clément d'Alexandrie (*Str.* VII,3) et par Origène (*Contre Celse* II,42) qui voit dans le Christ un modèle de magnanimité, de courage et de persévérance. Dans la mesure où David est une figure christique pour Grégoire, sa magnanimité anticipe et figure celle du Christ.

Cependant il est intéressant de remarquer que dans le seul commentaire patristique qui nous reste, à ma connaissance, des mêmes passages du livre des Règles, les trois homélies de Jean Chrysostome sur David et Saül (PG 54,675-708), la triade stoïcienne n'est pas repérable. Cependant l'exégèse est très proche, même si certaines notions qui la soutiennent ne sont pas identiques. Épargner son mortel ennemi témoigne, par exemple, pour Jean Chrysostome,

de la 'plus haute philosophie'. Mais l'amplification oratoire est encore plus éloquente: col. 682,39: Καὶ γὰρ στάδιον ἦν τὸ σπήλαιον ἐκεῖνο, καὶ πάλῃ θαυμαστή τις ἐγένετο καὶ παράδοξος. Ἐπάλαιε μὲν γὰρ ὁ Δαυὶδ, ἐπύκτενε δὲ ὁ θυμὸς, καὶ ἔπαθλον ὁ Σαοῦλ ἔκειτο, καὶ ἀγωνοθέτης ἦν ὁ θεός. 'Cette grotte était un stade et il y eut un combat admirable et insolite. David luttait, l'emportement lui donnait des coups de poing, Saül était proposé comme prix de cette lutte, Dieu était l'agonothète. Ce n'était pas seulement contre lui-même et son propre désir qu'il lui faisait la guerre, mais c'était aussi contre les soldats présents'. Les images militaires et sportives sont constantes (col. 687,44 'David a lutté, a vaincu et a été couronné') et dessinent avant tout un combat intérieur (David lutte contre sa colère, il n'est pas insensible). Cet homme qui arrête ses compagnons, qui lui-même 'ne désirait pas le pouvoir' (col. 687,44) n'est plus tout à fait un homme: col. 685,5: Ἄρα ἄνθρωπον ἔτι τοῦτον ἐροῦμεν, τὸν ἐν ἀνθρωπείᾳ φύσει πολιτείαν ἀγγελικὴν ἐπιδειξάμενον; 'Appellerons-nous encore homme celui qui montra, dans une nature humaine, une conduite angélique?' Jean Chrysostome s'appuie sur les mêmes passages du livre des Règles que Grégoire (IReg 19,24,26) qu'il lui arrive de confondre comme dans le passage suivant: col. 686,26s.: Ταύτην οὖν ἕκαστος τὴν ἱστορίαν ἐπὶ τῆς κορδίας ζωγραφεῖτω τῆς ἑαυτοῦ, καθάπερ χειρὶ τοῖς λογισμοῖς ὑπογράφων διηνεκῶς τὸ σπήλαιον τὸ διπλοῦν, τὸν Σαοῦλ ἔνδον καθεύδοντα καὶ καθάπερ ἀλύσει τινὶ δεδεμένον τῷ ὑπνῷ καὶ ὑποκείμενον τῇ δεξιᾷ τοῦ τὰ μέγιστα ἠδικημένου· τὸν Δαυὶδ ἐφεστῶτα καθεύδοντι, τοὺς στρατιώτας παρόντας, καὶ παροξύνοντας πρὸς σφαγὴν· τὸν μακάριον ἐκεῖνον φιλοσοφοῦντα, καὶ τὸν οἰκεῖον καὶ τὸν τούτων θυμὸν καταστέλλοντα. (...) Ταῦτα μὴ μόνον ἐπὶ τῆς διανοίας γράφωμεν, ἀλλὰ καὶ ἐν συνεδρίοις διαλεγώμεθα πρὸς ἀλληλοὺς διηνεκῶς· ταῦτα καὶ πρὸς γυναῖκα, καὶ πρὸς παιδία συνεχῶς ἀνακινῶμεν τὰ διηγήματα. Εἴτε γὰρ περὶ βασιλέως διαλέγεσθαι βούλει, ἰδοὺ βασιλεύς· εἴτε περὶ στρατιωτῶν, εἴτε περὶ οἰκίας, εἴτε περὶ πολιτικῶν πραγμάτων, πολλὴν ἐν ταῖς γραφαῖς ὄψει τούτων τὴν εὐπορίαν. Ταῦτα μεγίστην ἔχει τὰ διηγήματα τὴν ὠφέλειαν. Ἀμήχανον γὰρ, ἀμήχανον, ψυχὴν ἐν ταύταις στρεφομένην ταῖς ἱστορίαις, δυνηθῆναι ποτε κραθῆναι τῷ πάθει. 'Que chacun peigne donc cette histoire en son propre cœur, comme s'il dessinait nettement de sa main, mentalement, la double grotte (on notera l'identification avec la double grotte de Gn 23,9,17,19; 25,9; 49,30; 50,13), Saül dormant à l'intérieur comme attaché au sommeil par une chaîne, soumis à la main de celui auquel il causa les pires maux; David au-dessus du dormeur, ses soldats présents qui l'incitent au crime; ce bienheureux philosophe, contenant son propre emportement et le leur. Ne nous contentons pas de la graver dans notre esprit, mais parlons-en continuellement entre nous dans les assemblées; ravivons sans cesse ces récits devant une femme, devant des enfants. Car si tu veux parler d'un roi, voici un roi; de soldats, d'affaires domestiques ou publiques, tu verras la riche abondance que

recèlent les Ecritures dans ces domaines. Ces récits sont d'une très grande utilité. Car il est impossible qu'une âme versée dans ce genre d'histoire puisse être vaincue, un jour, par la passion'. L'utilisation des mêmes récits, l'emploi des mêmes images (col. 688,45: 'Ici la raison fut tout, la victoire fut remportée sans armes, le trophée dressé sans effusion de sang'), la même visée morale, même si l'on note des différences comme l'insistance de Jean Chrysostome sur l'ἐπέικεια ou la πραότης, indiquent sans doute le recours à une même source commune, aujourd'hui disparue. Un emprunt direct de Jean Chrysostome à Grégoire de Nysse n'est pas à exclure, mais il me semble que Grégoire est ici dépendant d'une tradition qu'il amplifie. Iraient dans ce sens les développements qui suivent ces pages sur les rapports de David et de la fille de Saül et qui dépendent de sources cette fois identifiables.

Grégoire emprunte donc une notion chère à la pensée grecque, la magnanimité. Mais pour Grégoire, comme pour Aristote, ce n'est pas la notion qui est première, mais bien l'homme qui l'incarne, le maganime. Ce n'est plus un simple grand homme de l'histoire, mais bien quelqu'un aux limites de l'humain et du divin: David peut être cette figure exemplaire que Grégoire et Jean Chrysostome dessinent, parce qu'il est ce personnage intermédiaire.

Basil of Caesarea's Contacts with Syriac-speaking Christians

David G.K. TAYLOR, Birmingham

Upon his election as bishop of Caesarea in AD 369¹ St. Basil became metropolitan of Cappadocia and exarch of Pontus, and in the latter capacity his authority extended over half of Asia Minor with, amongst others, the metropolitan sees of Ancyra, Neocaesarea, and Tyana accepting (however reluctantly at times) his authority over them. His political and theological influence, however, was felt even further afield. Indeed, after his death his brother, St. Gregory of Nyssa, felt no compunction, or impropriety, in comparing his world-wide endeavours with those of St. Paul². St. Basil himself, in a letter sent to the Neocaesareans in AD 374, writes:

Our affairs (should) be judged ... by the multitude of bishops throughout the world who are united with us by the grace of the Lord. Let the Pisidians, Lycaonians, Isaurians, both Phrygians, as much of Armenia as is near you, the Macedonians, Achaeans, Illyrians, Gauls, Spaniards, all of Italy, the Sicilians, the Africans, the sound part of Egypt, whatever is left of Syria — let all, whoever both send letters to us and receive letters from us in return, be questioned³.

In this short paper I wish to concentrate upon those tantalising remnants of Syria, and the provinces to the East of Syria, and in particular I will focus upon the evidence for St. Basil's contacts with the Syriac-speaking Christians who lived there.

St. Basil's great popularity amongst Syrian Christians after his death is unquestionable. One need only glance at the Syriac version of the Pseudo-Amphilochian life of Basil⁴, or the Syriac *Vita* tradition of St. Ephrem⁵, with

¹ I am here following the revised dates for St. Basil's consecration and death proposed by P. Maraval, 'La date de la mort de Basile de Césarée', *REAug* 34 (1988), pp. 25-38.

² *In Basilium fratrem*, ed. O. Lendle in *Gregorii Nysseni Sermones* II, ed. G. Heil, J.P. Cavaros, O. Lendle, F. Mann (= *Gregorii Nysseni Opera* 10.1, ed. W. Jaeger, H. Langerbeck, H. Dörrie) (Leiden, 1990), p. 119 ll. 6-10.

³ Ep. 204, ed. Y. Courtonne, *Saint Basile, Lettres* (3 vols; Paris, 1957, 1961, 1966) II, pp. 179-180 § 77 ll. 1-10. English translation R.J. Deferrari, *Saint Basil, the Letters* (4 vols; LCL 190, 215, 243, 270; London, 1926-1934) III, pp. 171-73.

⁴ Cf. F. Nau, 'Les Vies Syriennes de Saint Basile' *ROC* 18 (1913), pp. 248-251, appendix to 'Catalogue sommaire des manuscrits du Père Paul Asbath', *loc. cit.*, pp. 241-251; and O. Rousseau, 'La Rencontre de S. Ephrem et de S. Basile', *Or Syr* 2 (1957), pp. 261-284, 3 (1958), pp. 73-90.

⁵ Cf. B. Outtier, 'S. Ephrem d'après ses biographies et ses œuvres', *Parole de l'Orient* 4 (1973), pp. 11-33; J.P. Amar, *The Syriac Vita Tradition of Ephrem the Syrian* (PhD Diss. at the Catholic University of America, Washington D.C., 1988); and J.P. Amar, 'Byzantine Ascetic Monachism and Greek Bias in the Vita Tradition of Ephrem the Syrian', *OCP* 58 (1992), pp. 123-156.

their popular and widely circulated accounts of the legendary encounter of the two saints and of their mutual admiration. It is also remarkable that more of St. Basil's works were translated into Syriac than into any other language of the ancient world⁶, and that of these the *Ascetica*⁷ and the *De Spiritu Sancto*⁸ have been dated to the late fourth/early fifth century, the *Hexaemeron* is preserved in a fifth century manuscript⁹ and a selection of the *Homilies* is to be found in a dated manuscript of 551¹⁰. Furthermore the translations of the *Hexaemeron* and the *Homilies*, like those of the *Ascetica* and the *De Spiritu Sancto*, contain citations of the New Testament which predate the standard Peshitta text¹¹, and so, presumably, were produced at a similar date. This in itself is undoubtedly of great interest, and one could discuss the influence of St. Basil upon Syriac Christianity at great length, but to circumscribe our investigation in this way would be to encourage those scholars who still cling, despite the repeated arguments of recent generations of scholars, to the old world-view in which the principal intellectual contact between 'East' and 'West' was thought to consist of 'oriental' theologians borrowing and bowdlerizing the arguments and writings of their great 'occidental' masters.

What then is known of St. Basil's contacts with Syrian Christians, and in particular those from predominantly Syriac-speaking regions, during his lifetime? It is conventionally supposed that his earliest contact occurred soon after his return from Athens in 356/357 when he apparently went on a voyage to Egypt via Syria. The evidence for this trip is to be found in two of his letters, Ep. 1 (written in 357) and Ep. 223 (written in 375). The former is addressed to 'Eustathius the philosopher'¹² and it is only in this letter (by far the earliest attributed to him) that such a voyage is mentioned, albeit with the bare minimum of detail¹³. Historians have thus been forced to supplement its account with the information contained in Ep. 223 which was written eighteen years later. Here he wrote that after having spent nearly all his youth in pursuit of the useless

⁶ Cf. P.J. Fedwick, 'The Translations of the Works of Basil Before 1400', in P.J. Fedwick (ed.), *Basil of Caesarea: Christian, Humanist, Ascetic* (Toronto, 1981) vol. 2, pp. 439-512.

⁷ J. Gribomont, *Histoire du texte des Ascétiques de S. Basile* (Bibliothèque du Muséon 32; Louvain, 1953), p. 147.

⁸ Cf. D.G.K. Taylor, 'The Syriac Versions of St. Basil of Caesarea's *De Spiritu Sancto*', in *Studia Patristica XXVII*, ed. E.A. Livingstone (Leuven, 1993), pp. 105-112, and my Oxford University D. Phil Dissertation of the same title, 1995.

⁹ BM Add. 17143. Cf. R.W. Thomson, 'The Syriac and Armenian Versions of the Hexaemeron by Basil of Caesarea', in *Studia Patristica XXVII*, ed. E.A. Livingstone (Leuven, 1993), pp. 113-117.

¹⁰ Cf. S.P. Brock, 'Basil's Homily on Deut. xv 9: Some remarks on the Syriac manuscript tradition', in J. Dummer (ed.), *Texte und Textkritik – eine Aufsatzsammlung* (TU 133; Berlin, 1987), pp. 57-66.

¹¹ Cf. my D.Phil. dissertation, *op. cit.*, n. 8, ch. III.

¹² Cf. the important article, by J. Gribomont, 'Eustathe le Philosophe et les voyages du jeune Basile de Césarée', *RHE* 54 (1959), pp. 115-24.

¹³ Ep. 1, Courtonne I, p. 4 ll. 21-30, Deferrari I, p. 5.

'wisdom of the princes of this world' his eyes were suddenly opened by reading the Gospel and by accepting its demands that a Christian should reject the things of this world. So, he continues¹⁴:

I prayed that I might find some one of the brethren who had taken this (ascetic) way of life, so as to traverse with him this life's brief flood. And indeed I found many men in Alexandria, and many throughout the rest of Egypt, and others in Palestine, and in Coele-Syria, and Mesopotamia... (and) I prayed that I myself also, in so far as was attainable by me, might be an emulator of these men.

Biographers of Basil have always presumed that the ascetic centres mentioned in this letter were those visited by Basil during his youthful 'grand tour'. Now, whilst the historical context provided for this passage is clearly Basil's sudden yet passionate rejection of non-Christian Greek philosophy in his youth, this letter does not specifically mention a journey abroad and neither does it state that Basil had actually visited these particular regions and communities. Nor indeed can it be argued that the Greek verb employed, εὑρον 'I found', requires such an interpretation, for it is regularly employed to express intellectual discovery, whether through logic, hearing, or reading¹⁵. It might, therefore, quite reasonably be argued that Ep. 223 implies no more than that Basil had heard of these communities by repute, thus leaving the question of whether he had actually visited any of them open to debate. A sceptical analysis such as this would seem to receive support from another of his letters, Ep. 207 (also written in 375) which reads¹⁶:

And now I hear that in Egypt there exists such (ascetic) virtue among men, and perhaps also some in Palestine successfully lead the life according to the Gospel. And I hear that there are some perfect and blessed men in Mesopotamian also.

I have no desire to exclude what is on the face of it a valuable piece of evidence for Basil's early contacts with Syriac-speaking Christians, but it seems to me that Ep. 1 and the arguments for its authenticity would benefit from being re-examined.

Although the details of this journey are highly problematic, there is no doubt that at a later date he did travel South, for it seems likely that he visited his close friend Eusebius, bishop of Samosata in Euphratensis, on several occasions¹⁷. Basil owed much to Eusebius for he had overseen his controversial

¹⁴ Courtonne III, pp. 10-11 § 72 ll. 16-35, Deferrari III, pp. 293-5.

¹⁵ Cf. H.G. Liddell and R. Scott, *A Greek-English Lexicon* (9th ed.; Oxford, 1940) 'εὐρίσκω' 729b, and Archimedes' famous cry of 'Eureka!'

¹⁶ Courtonne II, p. 185 § 72 ll. 14-18, Deferrari III, p. 185.

¹⁷ Cf. B. Gain, *L'Église de Cappadoce au IV^e siècle d'après la correspondance de Basile de Césarée (330-379)* (OCA 225; Rome, 1985), Appendix 2, 'Voyages de Basile'. All such journeys were of course facilitated by Caesarea's location at the crossroads of two major highways which provided it with direct routes into the Syrian and Mesopotamian hinterlands. Cf. D. Magie, *Roman Rule in Asia Minor to the End of the Third Century After Christ* (Princeton, 1950), pp. 491-2, and J.H.W.G. Liebeschuetz, *Antioch: City and Imperial Administration in the Later Roman Empire* (Oxford, 1972), pp. 73-83.

election to the see of Caesarea¹⁸ and proved to be a strong and loyal ally thereafter. Nineteen letters from Basil to Eusebius survive¹⁹, including one, Ep. 145, which refers to a visit made by Basil to Samosata in the Spring of 372, and others which promise (or postpone) such visits. It is also clear from the surviving texts that Eusebius had visited Basil in Caesarea, and it is reasonable to presume that other meetings took place which are no longer recorded. Again, Basil's short letter to Jovinus bishop of Perrhes in Euphratensis²⁰, written to encourage him to visit Caesarea, strongly implies that Basil had previously visited him in his own diocese. Other letters indicate that Basil had met various Eastern church leaders, possibly in their own cities although this is not specified, for example Pelagius bishop of Laodicea in Coele-Syria²¹, and Vitus bishop of Haran in Osrhoene²².

As part of his mission to strengthen the Nicene orthodox against the attacks of the Arians, Pneumatomachi, and other heretics, Basil appears from his extant letters to have initiated and fostered correspondence with allies, or potential allies, in neighbouring provinces, amongst whom were several bishops with responsibility for predominantly Syriac-speaking populations. Thus letters survive which are addressed to the bishops of Sarug²³, Haran²⁴, and Edessa²⁵ in the province of Osrhoene, Perrhes²⁶ and Samosata²⁷ in Euphratensis, Himeria²⁸ in Mesopotamia, and Beroea²⁹ and Chalchis³⁰ in Coele-Syria.

That Basil was successful in this policy of strengthening links with the Syriac-speaking churches is evident from several pieces of evidence. Sozomen records³¹:

Arianism met with similar opposition at the same period in Osrhoene and Cappadocia. Basil, bishop of Caesarea, and Gregory, bishop of Nazianzen, were held in high admiration and esteem throughout these regions.

Two of Basil's own letters further confirm this. The first is the famous letter written by him in AD 372 'to the Italians and Gauls'³² on behalf of the bishops of the churches in the East. The names of the Eastern bishops are listed at its

¹⁸ Cf. Ep. 47, which is not in fact by Basil, but which from the time of the Benedictine editors has been attributed to Gregory the elder, writing to Eusebius.

¹⁹ Epp. 27, 30, 34, 48, 95, 98, 100, 127, 128, 136, 138, 141, 145, 162, 198, 237, 239, 241, 268.

²⁰ Ep. 118.

²¹ Ep. 254.

²² Ep. 255.

²³ Ep. 132.

²⁴ Ep. 255.

²⁵ Epp. 264, 267.

²⁶ Ep. 118.

²⁷ In addition to the letters sent to Eusebius (*supra* n. 19) Epp. 105, 146, 157, 158, 168, 182, 183, 214, 219.

²⁸ Ep. 184.

²⁹ Epp. 185, 220, 221.

³⁰ Ep. 222.

³¹ *Historia ecclesiastica*, ed. J. Bidez and G.C. Hansen (GCS 50; Leipzig, 1960) VI.21.1-3.

³² Ep. 92.

beginning and include most of the addressees of the letters mentioned above (i.e. Eusebius, Pelagius, Abraamius, Vitus, Jovinus) but also several others who are unidentified but whose names suggest an origin in the territories of the Syriac (or possibly Armenian) churches, such as Barsumas, Narses, Maris, Chosroes, Iosaces (= Isaac?), Barachus, and a second Abraamius. The large numbers of Syriac bishops involved in this alliance indicate frequent and strong contacts between their churches and Basil in Caesarea. The second letter, Ep. 213, written in early 375, is perhaps even more striking and reads³³:

But know then that I am expecting to be summoned to the court in keeping with the spiteful feelings of the heretics, of course under the guise of peace; and that the bishop³⁴ here on hearing of this, wrote us to make haste to Mesopotamia, and, having gathered those there who are of like mind and are in control of the churches, to set out with them to the Emperor.

From this letter we discover that not only were the Syriac-speaking churches a key element of the anti-Arian alliance that he had worked so hard to forge, but that in an age when the churches in much of Syria and Asia Minor were bitterly divided the Syriac Christians were St. Basil's most stalwart and loyal supporters who, *in extremis*, could be relied upon to ride with him into the jaws of the enemy. No doubt this support reflects a politically astute decision to rally behind the strongest and most eloquent leader in the region, but it is also testimony to the close personal and theological links forged by St. Basil with the Syriac churches.

Explicit evidence for St. Basil's theological contact with Syriac Christians, and for their theological influence upon him, is to be found in a well-known pair of references in his writings. In the *Hexaemeron* II.6, whilst discussing the meaning of the term 'spirit (or wind) of God' in Gen. 1.2, he attributes his explanation to 'a Syrian who was as ignorant in the wisdom of this world as he was versed in the knowledge of Truth' and who had argued that 'the Syriac word (for Spirit) was more expressive, and that being more analogous to the Hebrew term it was a nearer approach to the scriptural sense'³⁵. The identity of this Syrian has been much discussed³⁶, but the importance of this reference, I

³³ Courtonne II, p. 201 § 72 II. 1-7, Deferrari III, p. 225. There is one small, but significant, variant reading in the printed texts of Courtonne and Deferrari, although it is not recorded in the apparatus of either. Courtonne (l. 5) reads τῶν ἐκεῖ and translates 'ceux de la région', whereas Deferrari reads τὸν ἐκεῖ and translates 'the bishop there'. I have followed Courtonne and emended my citation from Deferrari accordingly.

³⁴ W.D. Hauschild, *Basilios von Caesarea, Briefe* II (Bibliothek der griechischen Literatur, Abteilung Patristik 3; Stuttgart, 1973), pp. 331-4 argues that this letter should be dated to 375, and suggests that the bishop here referred to should be identified as Eusebius of Samosata rather than Meletius, as was argued by P. Maran, 'Vita Sancti Basili' PG 29, pp. v-clxxvii (rpt. of 1730).

³⁵ B. Jackson, *The Treatise De Spiritu Sancto, the Nine Homilies of the Hexaemeron, and the Letters of Saint Basil the Great, Archbishop of Caesarea* (NPNF 8; Oxford, 1895), p. 63.

³⁶ Names suggested have included Ephrem, Eusebius of Samosata, Theophilus of Antioch, Diodore of Tarsus and Eusebius of Emessa. The last two seem to be most favoured at present. Identification of the Syrian with Diodore was argued by J.R. Pouchet, 'Les rapports de Basile de Césarée

would argue, is firstly that Basil was in communication with Syriac-speaking theologians, and secondly that he was prepared to accept that the Syriac version of the Old Testament was, on occasion, potentially of greater exegetical value than the Greek, an extraordinary comment for a non-Syrian of his era, yet one which seems to have attracted little scholarly attention. The second reference is to be found in the *De Spiritu Sancto* XXIX.74.44 where Basil is arguing for the orthodoxy of his habitual form of the doxology by adducing the support of other theologians. He states³⁷:

I have heard from a certain Mesopotamian, a man at once well skilled in the language and of unperverted opinions, that by the usage of his country it is impossible for any one ... to express himself in any other way.

Again, the identity of this person is less important than the fact that it bears witness to St. Basil discussing theology with a Syriac-speaking theologian and suggests that it was a genuine dialogue in which Basil, with all of the Athenian training and erudition at his disposal, was still prepared to listen and learn.

Further research is clearly required to determine in greater detail the nature and extent of Syriac theological influence upon the thought of St. Basil and, indeed, upon the other Cappadocians, but that such research would potentially bring rich rewards is suggested by the results of a number of earlier studies. S.P. Brock in his study of St. Ephrem³⁸ drew attention to some intriguing theological points of contact between St. Ephrem and the Cappadocians, and R. Staats has not only written of St. Gregory of Nyssa's admiration for the wandering Mesopotamian ascetics he encountered³⁹, but has also demonstrated⁴⁰ that Gregory made use of one of the works of Ps.-Macarius, a bilingual Syriac/Greek author from Mesopotamia active in the 380s, who was imbued with Syriac theological thought⁴¹.

In conclusion, I hope that this preliminary study has demonstrated that St. Basil, and his fellow Cappadocian theologians, were far from isolated from the

avec Diodore de Tarse' *BLE* 87 (1986), pp. 262-68, and with Eusebius of Emessa by L. van Rompay, 'L'informateur syrien de Basile de Césarée: à propos de Genèse 1.2', *OCP* 58 (1992), pp. 245-51.

³⁷ B. Jackson, *op. cit.*, p. 47.

³⁸ S.P. Brock, *The Luminous Eye: The Spiritual World Vision of St. Ephrem* (Rome, 1985), pp. 119-23.

³⁹ R. Staats, ed., *Makarios-Symeon: Epistola Magna. Eine messalianische Mönchsregel und ihre Umschrift in Gregors von Nyssa 'De instituto christiano'* (Abhandlungen der Akademie der Wissenschaften in Göttingen, Philologisch-historische Klasse III.134; Göttingen, 1984).

⁴⁰ R. Staats, 'Die Asketen aus Mesopotamien in der Rede des Gregor von Nyssa *In suam ordinationem*', *VC* 21 (1967), pp. 165-79.

⁴¹ Cf. C. Stewart, 'Working the Earth of the Heart': *The Messalian Controversy in History, Texts, and Language to AD 431* (Oxford, 1991), pp. 70-71, 234-40. For the influence of the Cappadocians on Ps.-Macarius cf. V. Desprez, 'Les Relations entre le Pseudo-Macaire et Saint Basile', in J. Gribomont, ed., *Commandements du Seigneur et libération évangélique* (Studia Anselmiana 70; Rome, 1970), pp. 209-21; and R. Staats, *Gregor von Nyssa und die Messalianer* (PTS 8; Berlin, 1968).

Syriac-speaking theologians to the South. The two groups developed strong political links, they held each other in great admiration, and through the medium of bilingual theologians or translations they gained access to each other's works and ideas surprisingly rapidly. Further investigation of this relationship should thus not only throw further light upon the development of theological thought in the region, but should help tear down what tatters remain of the outdated belief in a Greek-speaking 'West' hermetically sealed against cultural influence from a Syriac-speaking 'East'.

Que reste-t-il des *Homélies sur l'Ecclésiaste* de Grégoire de Nysse dans les *Chaînes sur l'Ecclésiaste*?

Françoise VINEL, Strasbourg

Une réponse rapide à la question 'Que reste-t-il des *Homélies* de Grégoire de Nysse dans les *Chaînes sur l'Ecclésiaste*?' pourrait bien être: rien; il ne reste rien du riche contenu des huit homélies du Cappadocien dans les *Chaînes sur l'Ecclésiaste* (voir *CPG IV*, C 100-105) qui nous sont conservées et qui, pour certaines d'entre elles, sont éditées aujourd'hui. Il faut rappeler en effet que plusieurs de ces chaînes ont été récemment éditées par une équipe italienne dans la série grecque du *Corpus Christianorum*¹, la *Chaîne de Procope* par le Professeur S. Leanza, la *Chaîne (dite) des Trois Pères* par le Professeur Lucà, et la *Catena Hauniensis* par le Professeur Labate. Il faut y ajouter la *Chaîne* d'Olympiodore, publiée dans le tome 98 de la *Patrologie Grecque* sous le titre *Commentarius in Ecclesiasten*, et qui attend une réédition².

Le point de vue adopté ici n'est pas celui d'un éditeur de Chaînes, ni celui d'un spécialiste de l'histoire complexe de leur tradition manuscrite. Mais la lecture continue de ces différents textes parallèlement à celle des *Homélies* de Grégoire de Nysse, dont le texte, bien conservé, a été édité en 1962 dans le volume 5 des *Gregorii Nysseni Opera*³, suscite plusieurs pistes de réflexion.

Depuis les travaux de R. Devreesse sur les *Chaînes exégétiques grecques*⁴, les articles de M. Richard sur les Chaînes et la constitution de florilèges⁵, et plus récemment les publications de F. Petit⁶ concernant les chaînes sur la *Genèse* et l'*Exode* ou les mises au point de G. Dorival dans son histoire des Chaînes sur le psautier⁷, la complexité des questions posées par ce genre

¹ *Corpus Christianorum Series Graeca; Procopii Gazaei Catena in Ecclesiasten*, éd. S. Leanza, vol. 4 (1978); *Un nuovo Testimone della Catena sull'Ecclésiaste di Procopio di Gaza, il Cod. Vindob. Theol. Gr. 147*, éd. S. Leanza, vol. 4 suppl. (1983). *Anonymus in Ecclesiasten Commentarius, qui dicitur Catena Trium Patrum*, éd. S. Lucà, vol. 11 (1983). *Catena Hauniensis in Ecclesiasten in qua saepe exegesis servatur Dionysii Alexandrini*, éd. A. Labate, vol. 24 (1992).

² *PG* 93, pp. 477-628.

³ *Homiliae in Ecclesiasten*, éd. P. Alexander, *GNO* 5, pp. 197-442; traduction française de Fr. Vinel (*SC* 416; Paris, 1996).

⁴ *DBSuppl.* (1928), col. 1134-1139.

⁵ Voir en particulier les articles regroupés dans *Opera Minora*, 3, Louvain, 1997, art. n° 69-71.

⁶ *Catena graecae in genesim et in exodum*, I. *Catena Sinaitica* (*CCSG* 2; 1977) et II. *Collectio Coisliniana, In genesim* (*CCSG* 15; 1986) éd. F. Petit.

⁷ G. Dorival, 'Aperçu sur l'histoire des chaînes exégétiques grecques sur le psautier (Vè-XIVè siècles)', *St. Patr.* XV (1984), pp. 146-169; *Les Chaînes exégétiques grecques sur les Psaumes. Contribution à l'étude d'une forme littéraire* (3 vol., Louvain, 1986, 1989, 1992).

patristique tardif n'a fait pour ainsi dire que croître. Et ces pages ne feront qu'ajouter d'autres questions, pour justifier quelque peu la réponse donnée d'emblée: il ne reste rien des *Homélies* de Grégoire de Nysse dans les *Chaînes sur l'Ecclésiaste*. Ces questions sont de trois ordres:

1. Qu'en est-il de l'attribution des divers fragments à Grégoire de Nysse dans la *Chaîne* de Procope, la seule à fournir des noms d'auteur? Et, pour les Chaînes sans nom d'auteur, que penser des parallèles établis, suggérés par les éditeurs entre les *Homélies* et le texte transmis par les *Chaînes*?

2. D'un point de vue thématique, c'est-à-dire du point de vue du contenu, que reste-t-il des développements moraux, philosophiques et théologiques élaborés par le Cappadocien à la fin du IVème siècle, dans ces chaînes, postérieures de deux, trois ou quatre siècles⁸?

3. On est amené en dernier lieu à s'interroger sur les principes herméneutiques mis en œuvre explicitement par Grégoire de Nysse, et implicitement dans les chaînes. Les caténistes, auteurs ou compilateurs de ces textes, ne montrent-ils pas par leur choix la défaite d'une certaine conception de l'exégèse, peut-être d'ailleurs au bénéfice du texte biblique lui-même?

1. Les auteurs-sources dans les *Chaînes sur l'Ecclésiaste*

On s'intéressera surtout à la *Chaîne* de Procope, pour laquelle plusieurs manuscrits donnent des noms d'auteurs. Elle ne nous est que partiellement parvenue, jusqu'au chapitre 4 de l'*Ecclésiaste*, mais les *Homélies sur l'Ecclésiaste* de Grégoire, qui forment une œuvre complète, s'arrêtent au commentaire d'*Eccl.* 3,13. Quelle part du texte de Procope peut-on restituer à Grégoire?

— Huit fragments⁹ sont nommément attribués à Grégoire de Nysse dans l'œuvre de Procope, mais aucun ne peut être à proprement parler considéré comme une citation textuelle, même s'il y a des expressions communes, des parties de phrases, par exemple dans le commentaire retenu pour *Eccl.* 1,14¹⁰.

— De plus, l'indication de nom d'auteur n'est pas toujours fiable, comme le note régulièrement Leanza dans son appareil critique (par ex. pour les scolies attribuées à Didyme et à Denys d'Alexandrie pour le commentaire d'*Eccl.* 1,1;

⁸ La question de la date des chaînes est bien sûr loin d'avoir reçu une réponse définitive. Nous nous en tenons ici aux propositions avancées par S. Lucà dans son introduction à la *Chaîne des Trois Pères* (*CCSG* 11, p. XXIII).

⁹ Les fragments attribués à Grégoire de Nysse portent sur les versets suivants: *Eccl.* 1,4.5.9-11.12-13.14; *Eccl.* 3,2a.2b.8. Il est notable qu'aucun texte n'est emprunté à Grégoire dans le commentaire d'*Eccl.* 1,14 à *Eccl.* 3,2; ainsi rien des homélies 3,4,5 et 7 n'apparaît dans la Chaîne.

¹⁰ Comparer *GNO* 5, p. 303, 1,4-11 et *Chaîne de Procope*, p. 12, 1,121-125; on retrouve la même citation du *Ps.* 13,2-3 et les mêmes expressions-clefs: 'οὐκ αἴτιος ... θεός, ἀλλ' ἡ ἀνθρώπινη προαίρεσις ἣν ὠνόμασε πνεῦμα...'

de même pour la scolie attribuée à Didyme pour *Eccl.* 3,14). Et, à l'inverse, même là où le nom de Grégoire de Nysse n'apparaît pas, comme dans l'*Hypothèse*, la présentation placée en tête de la chaîne de Procope, on peut reconnaître une image développée au début de la première homélie pour illustrer la difficulté du livre de l'*Ecclésiaste*¹¹. De même, et on retrouve la complexité déjà signalée de la tradition manuscrite, on constate des confusions sur le nom des auteurs-sources: le passage commentant *Eccl.* 2, 14-16 porte deux noms d'auteurs, Denys d'Alexandrie et Nil d'Ancyre, mais les premières lignes offrent plutôt des rapprochements avec le texte de Grégoire.

— Enfin, il convient de l'ajouter, dans la mesure où ces rapprochements textuels portent sur de très faibles portions de texte (tout le reste étant réécrit), le doute s'installe parfois: ainsi pour le commentaire d'*Eccl.* 3,2a: 'Il y a un moment pour enfanter et un moment pour mourir'. L'expression *συζυγία ἀναγκαία*, 'conjonction nécessaire', est employée par Grégoire de Nysse pour justifier le rapprochement du texte biblique entre la naissance et la mort, et il l'illustre par le fait que Moïse écrit successivement la *Genèse* — naissance — et l'*Exode* — mort. La *Chaîne* de Procope reprend ces deux éléments — mais est-ce bien un emprunt à Grégoire de Nysse? Cela ne serait-il pas tout aussi bien un lieu commun de l'interprétation, lié au jeu de mots sur les titres grecs des deux premiers livres de l'Ancien Testament, qui pourrait se trouver par exemple dans les homélies d'Origène sur l'*Ecclésiaste*?

La même remarque vaut pour le commentaire d'*Eccl.* 3,8 'Il y a un temps pour aimer': le bref commentaire attribué à Grégoire est un parallèle avec le verset du *Deutéronome*: 'Tu aimeras le Seigneur de tout ton cœur...' (*Dt* 6,5). On peut se demander en effet si le rapprochement entre les deux versets n'appartient pas aux parallèles obligés, évidents pour tout commentateur de cette période.

Si les attributions proposées par la *Chaîne* de Procope sont si problématiques, la distinction entre les chaînes avec noms d'auteurs et celles sans noms d'auteurs n'est peut-être pas si opératoire. Mais bien sûr le travail de réécriture, d'abrègement et de collage d'extraits d'origines diverses est plus important dans la *Chaîne des Trois Pères* et dans la *Catena Hauniensis*. Cette dernière, composée sans doute au VII^e siècle, puise d'ailleurs largement dans l'œuvre de Procope. Les éditeurs ne peuvent alors que proposer une mosaïque de parallèles possibles, fondés ici encore sur des identités de termes ou d'expressions. Et pour Grégoire de Nysse, les rapprochements suggérés ne sont pas toujours convaincants, ne serait-ce que par leur multiplicité¹². Donc, du point de vue d'une comparaison strictement textuelle, l'œuvre de Grégoire de Nysse, réduite à quelques emprunts, disparaît dans les *Chaînes sur l'Ecclésiaste*.

¹¹ Il s'agit de l'image des efforts exigés pour la compréhension de ce livre comme pour les exercices de la palestre (comparer *GNO* 5, p. 277,4-5 et 278,5-12 et la *Chaîne de Procope*, p. 5, 1,6-9).

¹² Voir les index des sources données pour chacune des *Chaînes*.

2. Comparaison thématique

Grégoire de Nysse commente comme un tout les trois premiers chapitres de l'*Ecclésiaste*, et le fait qu'il s'agisse d'une œuvre complète, hautement élaborée, et bien transmise par plusieurs manuscrits, rend évidente la perte de matière, de contenu: mise à part la brève définition de la 'vanité' comme 'ce qui est inexistant' — ἀνύπαρκτον —, et l'interprétation de l'expression biblique προαίρεσις πνεύματος, 'choix de vent' comme une critique de la liberté humaine, aucune allusion n'est gardée aux développements-clefs des *Homélies*. Quelques exemples: le thème de l'apocatastase, qui clôt la première homélie en reliant ainsi le commentaire biblique à une des affirmations théologiques fondamentales de l'œuvre de Grégoire, n'est pas repris; le long chapitre 2 de l'*Ecclésiaste* n'est plus interprété comme le discours-confession de Salomon, la distinction entre χρόνος et καιρός, présente au début du chapitre 3 (*Eccl.* 3,1-8), n'est pas non plus mentionnée alors qu'elle est l'objet d'une réflexion développée sur le temps et la mesure du temps dans l'Homélie VI. De même enfin, *Eccl.* 3,5, 'un moment pour amasser des pierres et un moment pour jeter des pierres', donnait lieu dans l'homélie VII à un développement original sur la compréhension de la loi du sabbat — il n'en reste aucune trace. L'examen du matériau biblique mis en œuvre dans les *Homélies* et de ce qu'il en reste chez Procope conduirait aux mêmes remarques. Ainsi — et nous nous en tiendrons à cet exemple —, le commentaire d'*Eccl.* 1,13 ('C'est une agitation mauvaise que Dieu a donnée aux fils des hommes') appelait dans l'homélie 2 (*GNO* 5, p. 302) tout le dossier scripturaire se rapportant au thème de l'endurcissement du cœur; rien n'en est gardé dans le texte de la *Chaîne* et le fragment attribué à cet endroit à Grégoire de Nysse par le manuscrit M présente une citation de *Gen.* 3,19 ('Tu mangeras ton pain à la sueur de ton front') qui est absente des *Homélies*.

Bien sûr, on peut dire que faire un tel procès aux auteurs de chaînes n'est pas pertinent et que la comparaison entre deux genres littéraires aussi éloignés, l'homélie et la chaîne, n'a rien de légitime. Ce n'est qu'en partie vrai, me semble-t-il, et il convient de faire place à une troisième série de remarques — qui serviront de conclusion.

3. Divergence des présupposés herméneutiques

La *Chaîne* de Procope et, sans doute à sa suite, la *Chaîne des Trois Pères* mentionnent dans leur titre le nom de Grégoire de Nysse¹³. Mais on vient de

¹³ Titre de la *Chaîne de Procope*: 'De Procope, savant chrétien, abrégé d'extraits exégétiques, d'après les paroles de Grégoire de Nysse, de Denys d'Alexandrie, d'Origène, d'Evagre, de Didyme, de Nil (et d'Olympiodore)'.

voir les difficultés que cela soulève, quant à l'attribution d'extraits à cet auteur et à la perte de contenu, qui semble si totale. Il faut alors poser deux types de questions, de nature différente, mais complémentaires et inséparables les unes des autres:

— d'abord, on est encore renvoyé à l'histoire de ces chaînes, non seulement à leur tradition manuscrite, mais à l'histoire même de leur fabrication, de leur constitution, donc plus largement de la naissance d'un genre littéraire nouveau. Si l'on suppose que les auteurs des chaînes sur l'*Ecclésiaste* avaient une bonne lecture des textes qui leur servaient de base, il est difficile de ne pas penser qu'il doit y avoir plusieurs étapes entre les *Homélies* même de Grégoire de Nysse et les *Chaînes* de Procope ou des Trois Pères. On connaît d'ailleurs au moins l'existence d'extraits, ces ἐκλογαὶ ἐξηγητικαί, œuvre de Procope lui-même¹⁴, mentionnés dans le titre de la *Chaîne* de Procope. Et des commentaires postérieurs aux homélies de Grégoire de Nysse, comme celui de Grégoire d'Agriente sont aussi des maillons à ne pas négliger — et, de fait, S. Leanza renvoie fréquemment à ce dernier dans son édition de la *Chaîne de Procope*. Car ce serait en quelque sorte un affront fait aux caténistes de penser qu'ils ont pu à ce point manquer la portée de l'œuvre du Cappadocien.

Le corollaire, c'est peut-être une question pour les éditeurs de chaînes: comment présenter les comparaisons, les parallèles avec les auteurs-sources, est-il possible d'éviter l'approximation qui semble inhérente à tout rapprochement direct entre le texte donné par les chaînes et les œuvres patristiques?

— Mais on est aussi tenté d'aborder ces *Chaînes sur l'Ecclésiaste* avec une autre question: n'est-ce pas au nom de principes herméneutiques radicalement différents que les caténistes ont — sciemment? — procédé à des coupes sombres dans les œuvres de Pères? Dans les *Homélies sur l'Ecclésiaste* de Grégoire de Nysse, le principe d'ἀκολουθία est omniprésent et rend compte à la fois de la compréhension que le Cappadocien a du texte biblique et de la composition de ses homélies. La mise en évidence du texte biblique dans les chaînes, et son découpage verset par verset (ou parfois par groupe de quelques versets) ne laisse aucune place à l'ἀκολουθία ni aux développements philosophiques et théologiques, qui apparaissent comme des digressions. Renoncer à de tels développements suppose, et en tout cas réalise une rupture radicale entre exégèse et théologie, à l'encontre des fondements de l'herméneutique nysséenne.

¹³ Titre de la *Chaîne des Trois Pères*: 'Interprétation paraphrastique de l'*Ecclésiaste*, collectée d'après les interprétations, pour ce livre, de saint Grégoire de Nysse, de la paraphrase dite du Théologien et d'après diverses pensées de saint Maxime'.

¹⁴ Sur l'interprétation du génitif Προκοπίου en tête du titre, voir G. Dorival (*Les Chaînes exégétiques...*, vol. I, Deuxième partie, pp. 104-105) discutant la position de P. Nautin (dans *Ori-gène, Sur la Pâque* (Paris, 1979), pp. 94-95).

Les chaînes ne marquent-elles pas alors le triomphe de l'exégèse littérale, souvent proche de la paraphrase? Le grand cas que la *Chaîne des Trois Pères* fait de l'œuvre de Grégoire le Thaumaturge, la *Metaphrasis in Ecclesiasten*, pourrait en être le signe.

Ces interrogations sont sans aucun doute à lier — dernière question ... — à notre méconnaissance, aujourd'hui encore, de l'usage qui a été fait de ces chaînes sur l'*Ecclésiaste*. La description de nouveaux manuscrits, comme a pu le faire P. Géhin dans ses travaux sur les *Scholies* d'Evagre¹⁵, apportera peut-être des éléments de réponse.

Ματθαῖος Ἀλέξανδρος
 Γρηγόριος ὁ Θεολόγος
 Πάππος ὁ Ἐρημίτης
 Νικόλαος ὁ Πανόμοιος
 Πάππος ὁ Ἐρημίτης
 Ἰωάννης ὁ Ἀσκητής
 Νικόλαος ὁ Θεολόγος
 Γρηγόριος ὁ Θεολόγος
 Βασίλειος ὁ Μεγάλος
 Νικόλαος ὁ Πανόμοιος
 Νικόλαος ὁ Θεολόγος
 Νικόλαος ὁ Θεολόγος
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 Νικόλαος ὁ Θεολόγος

¹⁵ Evagre le Pontique, *Scholies à l'Ecclésiaste*, editio princeps de P. Géhin (SC 397; Paris, 1993).

...the vision of God to light... the writings of Symeon...

...the vision of God to light... the writings of Symeon... the vision of God to light...

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The Patristic Background of St. Symeon the New Theologian's Doctrines of the Divine Light

Hilarion Alfeyev, Editor

XIII. OTHER GREEK WRITERS AFTER NICAEEA

The vision of God to light... the writings of Symeon... the vision of God to light...

- Hilarion Alfeyev
- Wolfgang A. Bienert
- Paul M. Blowers
- Marie-Odile Boulnois
- Peter Bruns
- Isabel de Andia
- Roland Delmaire
- Hamilton Hess
- Valerie A. Karras
- Jacques Lison
- Andrew Louth
- Simon C. Mimouni
- John J. O'Keefe
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The Patristic Background of St. Symeon the New Theologian's Doctrine of the Divine Light

Hilarion ALFEYEV, Oxford

The vision of God as light is definitely the most characteristic component of the mysticism of Symeon the New Theologian. This theme is touched upon in almost all of his poetical and prose works, and the terminology related to it is much more developed in him than in any other Byzantine writer of the preceding period¹. This theme is also one of the most personal in him, thoroughly indebted to his extraordinarily intense mystical life, and he speaks of the vision of light primarily as a matter of his own experience. Tens of pages in his writings are devoted to the descriptions of his visions of the divine light: needless to say, all these descriptions are fully original and independent of any other literary source.

Though Symeon was the first Byzantine author who put such a strong emphasis on the vision of light, this theme was discussed in Eastern patristic literature long before him. From the fourth century onwards monastic sources provide us with many examples of such discussions, clearly indicating that the vision of light was the common experience of many generations of monks and ascetics. We shall look briefly at how this experience is reflected in Evagrius Pontikos, the author of the *Makararian Homilies*, Maximos the Confessor and Isaac the Syrian as the writers whose doctrines are close to Symeon's².

The theme of light is a *cantus firmus* of the writings of Evagrius³. One autobiographical passage from his Ἀντιρρητικός is devoted to the 'holy light'

¹ The term φῶς, the verb ὁράω, as well as other terms connected with the vision of light (φωτίζω, φωτισμός, ἐλλάμπω, ἔλλαμψις, θέα, θεάομαι, δρασις etc.) are widely employed by Symeon in his writings. As K. Krumbacher noticed, the terms connected with vision and light are especially characteristic of Studite literature: see *Geschichte der byzantinischen Literatur* (München, 1897), 677 (note 4). Even taking into account the traditional background of this terminology, one can claim that Symeon's extensive usage of it is rather exceptional.

² None of these authors created a developed theory of the vision of the divine light and none of them speaks so constantly and precisely of this vision as Symeon does; rather, they allude to it only occasionally. However, it is clear that, when referring to the divine light, they speak of the same kind of experience as Symeon, as will be illustrated below.

³ For Evagrian writings, the following abbreviations have been adopted: *Antirr.* = *Antirrhetikos*, in W. Frankenberg, *Evagrius Pontikos* (Berlin, 1912); *Gnost.* (The Gnostic) = Évagre le Pontique, *Le gnostique*, ed. A. and C. Guillaumont (SC 356; 1989); *Gnost. Chapt.* (Gnostic Chapters) = A. Guillaumont, 'Les six siècles des "Kephalaia gnostica" d'Évagre le Pontique', *PO* 28 (1958); *Pract.* (The Practic) = Évagre le Pontique, *Traité pratique ou Le moine*, ed. A. and C. Guillaumont, t. II (SC 171; 1971); *Prayer* (153 Chapters on Prayer) = *De oratione capitula*, PG 79, 1165-1200;

(ܠܘܟܐ ܠܝܡܐ)⁴ which is seen by the 'eyes of the intellect'.

I and the servant of God Ammonios wanted to learn about this light: where is it from. We, therefore, asked Saint John of Thebais whether the nature of the intellect (ܠܘܟܐ ܠܝܡܐ) is radiant and the light proceeds from the intellect itself or something else appears from outside and illumines it. He answered and said: 'Man is unable to distinguish this; however, without the grace of God the intellect cannot be illumined during prayer' ...⁵

Evagrius posed to John the question of crucial importance: was the light that appeared to the ascetics a manifestation of the initial luminosity of the human intellect or was it rather a super-natural light of divine origin? In his other writings Evagrius answers this question himself. According to him, there is firstly 'the blessed light of the Holy Trinity' (τὸ μακάριον φῶς τῆς ἁγίας Τριάδος)⁶, since 'God is light by His nature' (οὗτος ܠܝܡܐ ܡܢ ܗܘܘܐ)⁷. At the same time there is also the light of the human intellect, its proper radiance (τὸ οἰκεῖον φέγγος τοῦ νοῦ)⁸. Between the two lights, divine and human, there is a 'kinship': as the intellect is created after the image of God, its light is 'related to Him' (αὐτῷ τὸ συγγενὲς φῶς)⁹.

At the time of prayer, the intellect of the one who has achieved dispassion (ἀπάθεια) is able to contemplate its own initial state of luminosity, becoming 'like light' (ܠܝܡܐ ܡܝܢ ܠܝܡܐ)¹⁰, 'like a star' (ἀστεροειδής)¹¹ and 'somewhat like a sapphire or heavenly colour' (σαπφείρω ἢ οὐρανίῳ χρώματι παρεμφορῆ)¹². When 'the inner man' becomes a 'gnostic'¹³, he contemplates the light of his own beauty (ܡܘܫܐ ܠܝܡܐ ܠܝܡܐ, 'the light of the beauty of his soul')¹⁴. At the same time Evagrius constantly insists upon the possibility of the vision of the trinitarian divine light¹⁵. He describes the encounter of the intellect with this

Ps.-Suppl. = *Pseudo-Supplement zu den Kephalaia Gnostika*, in Frankenberg, *Evagrius* (see above); *Skemm.* = *Skemmata*, in J. Muyldermans, *Evagriana et Nouveaux fragments inédits* (Paris, 1931), 38-44; *Thoughts* (On Different Evil Thoughts) = *De diversis malignis cogitationibus (recensio longior)*, in J. Muyldermans, 'À travers la tradition manuscrite d'Évagre le Pontique', *Bibliothèque du Muséon* 3 (Louvain, 1932), 47-55.

⁴ Here and below we cite some Syriac terms for those Evagrian texts which are preserved only in the Syriac version.

⁵ *Antirr.* VI, 16 (525).

⁶ *Thoughts* XLII (55).

⁷ Cf. *Gnost. Chapt.* 1,35 (33).

⁸ *Gnost.* 45 (178). Cf. *Pract.* 64 (648-649). Cf. also *Prayer* 74 (1184 B).

⁹ *Skemm.* 2 (374).

¹⁰ *Gnost. Chapt.* 5,15 (183).

¹¹ *Thoughts* XLIII (55).

¹² *Ibid.* XXXIX (55).

¹³ Syr. ܠܘܟܐܢܐ, equivalent of the Greek γνωστικός.

¹⁴ *Ps.-Suppl.* 50 (462-464).

¹⁵ Thus, in *Skemm.* 4 (374) we find the following definition of this vision: 'The (initial) state (κατάστασις) of the intellect is the intelligible elevation (ὑψος νοητόν), somewhat like heavenly colour; also the light of the Holy Trinity is imparted (ἐπιγίνεται) to the intellect in the time of prayer'. Cf. *Skemm.* 27 (377): 'Prayer is the state of the intellect when it becomes totally under

divine light in terms of 'mingling' between the soul and the light of the Trinity¹⁶.

The Evagrian concept of light can be reduced to the following basic ideas: 1/ the intellect sees its natural light in the time of prayer; 2/ the intellect sees the divine light, which is the light of the Holy Trinity; 3/ it sees the beauty of the soul; 4/ it is mingled with the light of the Trinity. Each of these four notions was to become very important for the development of patristic doctrine of the vision of light.

Turning to the *Makararian Homilies*¹⁷, we encounter in them several passages with references to the vision of the divine light. In one such passage, the question is about how man participates in the Holy Spirit and his soul is transformed in the divine light through illumination by the face of Christ¹⁸. Another important passage is devoted to the different types of the vision of the divine light: sometimes, Makarios says, the holy cross appeared as light, and in other times, 'the very light itself shining in the heart opened up an interior, profound and hidden light'¹⁹. Elsewhere Makarios states that the Invisible One may be seen by worthy souls, who may 'taste His sweetness and enjoy in actual experience the goodness of the light of ineffable enjoyment'²⁰. This motif of 'enjoyment' and 'sweetness' was to appear in later monastic writers. If Evagrius spoke of the 'eyes of the intellect' as the mystical organ which sees the divine light, Makarios speaks also of the 'eyes of the intellect' (νοεροὶ ὀφθαλμοί)²¹, 'eyes of the heart' (ὀφθαλμοὶ τῆς καρδίας)²² and the inner 'eyes of the soul' (ὀφθαλμοὶ τῆς ψυχῆς)²³.

the light of the Holy Trinity (ὑπὸ φωτός μόνου γινομένη τῆς ἁγίας Τριάδος). According to another Evagrian definition, 'the divine intellect (ܠܘܟܐ ܠܝܡܐ) is the intellect that is calm from all movements and is clothed in the light of the vision of the Trinity (ܠܘܟܐ ܠܝܡܐ ܠܝܡܐ)'; *Gnost. Chapt.* 53 (464-465).

¹⁶ 'As fire (ܠܝܡܐ) possesses its own body with power, so the intellect will possess the soul with power when it is totally mingled (ܠܘܟܐ ܠܝܡܐ) with the light (ܠܝܡܐ) of the Holy Trinity'; *Gnost. Chapt.* 2,29 (73).

¹⁷ For Makarian writings, we use the following abbreviations: *Hom.* (Spiritual Homilies 1-50) = *Die 50 geistlichen Homilien des Makarios*, ed. H. Dörries, E. Klostermann, M. Kroeger (PTS 4; 1964); *Hom. (III)* (Homilies from Collection III) = Pseudo-Macaire, *Œuvres spirituelles (Homélies propres à la Collection III)*, ed. V. Desprez (SC 275; 1980).

¹⁸ *Hom.* 1,2 (2), which contains an allegorical interpretation of *Ezekiel* 1,1-2,1: 'For the soul that is counted worthy to participate in the Spirit of the Lord's light and illumined by the beauty of His unspeakable glory..., becomes all light, all face, all eye... Like the sun that is the same all over, without any part behind or imperfect, but is completely all light..., and like the fire, or the very light of fire, which is also entirely full of light..., in the same manner the soul that is completely illumined with the unspeakable beauty of the glory of the light of Christ's face and perfectly participates in the Holy Spirit..., becomes all eye, all light, all glory, all spirit'. Cf. also *Hom. (III)* 22,3,1-2 (258-260).

¹⁹ *Hom.* 8,3 (78-79). The concept of the interior light of the heart is close to the Evagrian notion of the light of the intellect.

²⁰ *Hom.* 4,11 (36).

²¹ *Hom. (III)* 26,6,36 (308).

²² *Hom. (III)* 16,8,14 (206). Cf. Clement of Rome, *I Cor.* 36,2; 59,3.

²³ *Hom. (III)* 15,1,14-15 (172).

In Maximos the Confessor²⁴, the notion of the vision of the divine light plays a significant rôle. He describes the state of the intellect when it, being full of the 'desire of love' (ἔρως τῆς ἀγάπης) for God, goes out of itself and has no perception of itself and of creatures; 'for once illumined by the divine and infinite light, it remains insensible to any created being...'²⁵. The highest state of the intellect is when it finds itself in the light of the Holy Trinity, Maximos states²⁶.

Mystical illumination by the divine light takes place during prayer: in this Maximos is close to Evagrius. The highest type of prayer, according to Maximos, is when 'at the very onset of prayer the intellect is taken hold of by the divine and infinite light and is conscious... only of Him Who through love illumines it'²⁷. Having reached this stage of prayer, the intellect becomes totally transfigured: 'by an enduring participation in the divine illumination it has become altogether shining bright', so that its passible element is transformed into 'a never-ending divine desire and unceasing love'²⁸. The transfiguration of the intellect is described in Maximos in terms of 'mingling': 'the intellect is totally mingled with the light of the Spirit' (ὁλῶ γὰρ τῷ φωτὶ τοῦ πνεύματος ὁ νοῦς ἐγκραθείς)²⁹.

On the example of Evagrius, Makarios and Maximos one can see how important was the theme of the vision of light for Byzantine theological and monastic tradition³⁰.

The theme of the divine light was extensively discussed by the Syriac mystical writers of the seventh and eighth centuries, especially by Isaac of Nineveh,

²⁴ For the writings of Maximos, the following abbreviations have been used: *Love* (Chapters on Love) = Massimo Confessore, *Capitoli sulla carità*, ed. A. Ceresa-Gastaldo (*Verba seniorum* 3; Rome, 1963); *Quest.* (The Questions) = Maximus Confessor, *Quaestiones et dubia* (CCG 10; 1982).

²⁵ *Love* 1,10 (52).

²⁶ *Ibid.* 1,97 (86).

²⁷ *Ibid.* 2,6 (92).

²⁸ *Ibid.* 2,48 (116).

²⁹ *Quest.* 80,68-70 (62). This is the Evagrian concept of the mingling between the intellect and the divine light.

³⁰ Among other Byzantine authors who speak of the vision of the divine light, let us mention also Diadochos of Photike, Hesychios of Sinai and John Klimakos. The latter remarks that the truly obedient monk 'often suddenly becomes full of light and exultant during prayer'; *Ladder* 19 (PG 88,937 C). Once he alludes to his own vision of light, making it clear, however, that it was the vision of an angel; *Ibid.* 27 (1109 BD). According to Hesychios, the guarding of the intellect leads one to such a state that one sees a glorious light of God; all ascetics who have reached this state 'bathe in a sea of pure and infinite light, touching it ineffably and living and dwelling in it'; *To Theodoulos* 171, in *Φιλοκαλία τῶν ἱερῶν νηπτικῶν*, vol. 1 (Athens, 1957), 168. Cf. *Ibid.* 175 (168-169). Diadochos says, among other things, that 'the intellect, when it begins to be strongly energized by the divine light, becomes so completely translucent that it sees its own light vividly'; *Chapter 40* in Diadoque de Photicé, *Œuvres spirituelles*, ed. E. des Places (SC 5-bis; 1955), 108. This is again a reminiscence of the Evagrian distinction between the two levels of light.

Joseph Hazzaya and John of Dalyatha³¹. In the works of Isaac the Syrian³² the term 'light' (Greek φῶς, Syriac ܠܝܡܘܬܐ) occurs frequently, and the doctrine of the vision of light is generally close to the Evagrian; for instance, he also distinguishes between the two levels of light. There is, on the one hand, the divine light³³, which is the light of the Holy Trinity³⁴. On the other hand, there is the light of the human soul³⁵, or of the intellect³⁶. The illumination of man by the divine light takes place during prayer³⁷ or during the reading of the Scriptures³⁸.

The most striking writing of the 'Greek Isaac' devoted to the theme of the divine light, *Homily 43*, belongs in fact to John of Dalyatha, in the writings of whom the theme of light occupies an even more prominent place than in Isaac. John speaks there of the divine light, which is the light of the Holy Trinity³⁹. The divine light is sometimes described as 'the light from the Father'⁴⁰, or the light of the Holy Spirit⁴¹; at other times the question is of Christ, 'the light from the light of the Father'⁴². This light illumines the intellect⁴³. When one is illumined by the divine light, one is filled with joy, contemplating at the same time one's own beauty⁴⁴. One perceives remarkable closeness between the concept of the divine light in *Homily 43* of the 'Greek Isaac' and the *Makarion Homilies*⁴⁵.

³¹ The analysis of those Syriac writings which were definitely unknown in the Greek-speaking world of the Byzantine epoch, in particular, the writings by Joseph Hazzaya and John of Dalyatha (except four homilies by the latter under the name of Isaac), falls beyond the scope of the present paper. We would wish to point out, however, that the doctrine of the vision of light as expressed by Symeon the New Theologian is very close to similar doctrines of Joseph Hazzaya and especially of John of Dalyatha.

³² For the writings of Isaac, the following abbreviations are used: *Hom.* (Homilies, Greek version) = Ἰσαὰκ τοῦ Σύρου εὐρεθέντα ἀσκητικά, ed. N. Theotokis (Athens, 1895); *Syr. Hom.* (Homilies, Syriac version) = Mar Isaacus Ninivita, *De perfectione religiosa*, ed. P. Bedjan (Leipzig, 1909).

³³ Cf. *Syr. Hom.* 68 (474).

³⁴ Cf. *Ibid.* 22 (174).

³⁵ Cf. *Ibid.* 53 (379); 80 (557).

³⁶ Cf. *Ibid.* 69 (482); 80 (560).

³⁷ Cf. *Ibid.* 13 (124-125); 45 (326).

³⁸ Cf. *Ibid.* 1 (6).

³⁹ 'Greek Isaac', *Hom.* 43 (177). Cf. Isaac, *Hom.* 32 (140) = *Syr. Hom.* 22 (174).

⁴⁰ *Hom.* 43 (179).

⁴¹ *Ibid.* (178).

⁴² *Ibid.* (177).

⁴³ *Ibid.*

⁴⁴ Cf. *Hom.* 43 (177-178): 'The sun that shines within him is the light of the Holy Trinity... Christ, the light of the Father's light, is (his) life, joy and happiness. Such a man is gladdened at all the times by the divine vision of his soul, as he is enthralled by his own beauty which is truly a hundredfold more resplendent than the brilliance of the sun itself... This realm is a cloud of God's glory into which only the pure in heart may enter to behold the face of their Master and to have their intellects illumined by the ray of His light'.

⁴⁵ In particular, in both texts the light appears as the sun shining from within rather than from outside; it fills man entirely, giving him joy and happiness; it makes man see the beauty of his soul; it transforms man himself into light; it allows him to contemplate the 'face' of the Lord.

Apart from the patristic tradition as such, we find many references to the vision or appearance of the divine light in hagiographical literature. In particular, Anthony the Great, before hearing the voice of Christ, 'saw the ray of light descending unto him'⁴⁶. Another Egyptian ascetic, Paul, three days before his death, tells his listeners: 'The light (of God) never forsook my heart; being lightened by it, I needed no sleep, but the desire to see Him always flamed up within me... This intellectual light (*lux mentis*) has never been extinguished in me'⁴⁷.

We should now look at Symeon's visions of the divine light⁴⁸. Two visions of his youth are described by Symeon himself in his *Catechetical Discourses*; following the tradition that derives from Paul⁴⁹, Symeon uses the third person when speaking of his experiences. The first of them took place when Symeon was about twenty years old: while he was once praying in his cell, 'suddenly an abundance of divine radiance appeared from above and filled all the place'; the youth forgot all the world, lost consciousness, became filled with tears and spiritual joy and 'thought that he himself became light'⁵⁰. The second vision, described in *Cat.* 16, has many details in common: the hero of the narration is suddenly moved to tears while he is standing in prayer; he falls down and sees a great immaterial light; he loses consciousness of himself and forgets the earth⁵¹.

The same sort of experience is described by Symeon in his two *Thanksgivings*, which represent a kind of mystical autobiography, where Symeon speaks of his visions in the first person, with remarkable openness. In *Euch.* 1, after the description of his first two visions of light (identical to those from *Cat.* 22 and 16), Symeon speaks of his subsequent visions, giving us to understand that they were numerous throughout his life. Symeon distinguishes here between the vision 'from outside' and vision 'from within', the latter being the most powerful and delightful: in both cases, however, the question is about the divine and uncreated light (rather than of the natural intellectual light)⁵².

⁴⁶ Athanasios, *Life of Anthony* 10,1; in Athanasie d'Alexandrie, *La vie de saint Antoine*, ed. G.J.M. Bartelink (SC 400; 1994), 162.

⁴⁷ Rufinus, *Hist. Mon.* 10,8,11-12; in Rufinus, *Historia monachorum*, ed. E. Schulz-Flügel (PTS 34, Berlin - New York, 1990), 324-325.

⁴⁸ For Symeon the New Theologian's writings, the following abbreviations have been adopted: *Cap.* (Theological, Gnostic and Practical Chapters) = Syméon le Nouveau Théologien, *Chapitres théologiques, gnostiques et pratiques*, ed. J. Darrouzès (SC 51-bis; 1980); *Cat.* (Catechetical Discourses) = Syméon le Nouveau Théologien, *Catéchèses*, ed. B. Krivochéine and J. Paramelle, tt. I-III (SC 96, 104, 113; 1963-1965); *Eth.* (Theological and Ethical Discourses) = Syméon le Nouveau Théologien, *Traité théologiques et éthiques*, ed. J. Darrouzès, tt. I-II (SC 122, 129; 1966-1967); *Euch.* (The First and Second Thanksgivings) = *Action de grâces* 1-2 (SC 113; 1965); *Hymn* (The Divine Hymns) = Syméon le Nouveau Théologien, *Hymnes*, ed. J. Koder, J. Paramelle and L. Neyrand, tt. I-III (SC 156, 174, 196; 1969-1973).

⁴⁹ Cf. 2 *Cor.* 12,2.

⁵⁰ *Cat.* 22, 88-100.

⁵¹ *Cat.* 16, 78ff.

⁵² 'I have frequently seen light, sometimes within me..., and sometimes it appeared externally, from afar, or even it was completely hidden, and by its hiddenness caused me unbearable pain,

In *Euch.* 2 Symeon shows that the divine light, which regularly appeared to him, gradually became more and more recognizable⁵³. Like the preceding authors, Symeon refers to the vision of the 'face' of Christ in the light⁵⁴: it is still, however, an experience of pure luminosity rather than the appearance of the 'face' in any form or shape. Perhaps the new element in Symeon is that the dynamics of mystical experience include periods of abandonment by God as a necessary, though painful, element, references to which accompany many of his descriptions of the vision of light⁵⁵. The theme of abandonment was widely discussed in ascetical literature before Symeon⁵⁶, but not in such a mystical and personal way as Symeon treats it.

Let us now indicate some most important characteristics of Symeon's doctrine of the vision of light, deriving primarily from his *Hymns*, in order to reveal the points of correspondence and difference between Symeon and preceding writers.

First of all, it is clear that for Symeon the divine light is not an angel or any created being or phenomenon⁵⁷. According to Symeon, the divine light is God Himself in His revelation to the human person. 'Your light is You, O my God', he says in one of his hymns⁵⁸. As in Syriac mystics, the light is sometimes identified in Symeon with the Holy Trinity⁵⁹; at other times it is identified with the Holy Spirit⁶⁰. Quite regularly Symeon also speaks of the vision of Christ as light⁶¹. However, as we said, Symeon never speaks of Christ as appearing in a visible image⁶², but only of the light and sometimes the voice of Christ⁶³.

because I thought I would never see it again. But when I again lamented and wept..., it appeared like the sun which penetrates through the thickness of the clouds and gradually shows itself as a gently glowing sphere'; *Euch.* 1,172-180.

⁵³ 'From then on... You came to me more frequently... and made me see more clearly the light of Your face. Yet immediately You flew away... Coming at times and then going away in such a manner, You gradually appeared to me more and more fully..., granting me to see (You) more obviously, and giving me more light'; *Euch.* 2, 137-146.

⁵⁴ Cf. *Euch.* 2,141 ('to see the light of Your face').

⁵⁵ See *Hymn* 11,88-94 *et al.*

⁵⁶ See, for example, Evagrius, *Gnost.* 25 (134-142); Makarios, *Hom.* 54 (38-41); Diadochos, *Chapt.* 87 (146-147); Isaac, *Hom.* 46 (287) = *Syr. Hom.* 39 (302); Maximos, *Love* 4,96 (237).

⁵⁷ Cf. *Hymn* 17,238ff.: 'It is not anything belonging to the world, nor a creature; for it is uncreated and beyond all creatures...'

⁵⁸ *Hymn* 45,6.

⁵⁹ Cf. *Hymn* 12,19-23: 'The three of Them are light: the Father, Son and Holy Spirit... The three are seen to me as in one countenance...'; cf. *Hymn* 1,226; 2,86-94; 21,147; 24,248ff., 25,33-48; 33,1ff. *et al.*

⁶⁰ Cf. *Hymn* 44, 114: 'The Spirit shines in the Light'; cf. *Hymn* 17, 36; 22, 177 *et al.*

⁶¹ Cf. *Hymn* 51,15ff.: 'Little by little You shone upon me Your divine light..., O Christ, my God'; cf. *Hymn* 25,145-151; *Eth.* 4,263 *et al.*

⁶² This distinguishes Symeon's visions from those visions of Christ which are characteristic of hagiographical literature. Incidentally, let us mention that Symeon never describes a vision of the Mother of God, and only once does he mention the vision of a saint, namely his spiritual father Symeon the Studite, near the divine light; cf. *Cat.* 22, 102-104.

⁶³ In this Symeon's visions of Christ might be compared with Paul's vision as recounted in *Acts* 9,3-4. In the case of Paul's vision, the light and the voice of Christ appeared at the same

Next, the light which Symeon describes is not a physical or material phenomenon: it is characterized as 'immaterial' (ἄυλος)⁶⁴, 'simple, formless, altogether non-composite, bodiless and inseparable'⁶⁵. Using apophatic expressions, Symeon emphasizes that the divine light is beyond any categories of matter or form, as well as beyond human speech and understanding: it is 'like a treasure which is ineffable, unspeakable, without quality or quantity, without image or matter or form, which is formed in overwhelming beauty, which is all simple as the light that transcends all light' (ὅλον ἀπλοῦν ὡσπερ φῶς τὸ ὑπὲρ πᾶν φῶς)⁶⁶.

Being immaterial, the divine light is 'intelligible'⁶⁷, which means that it has an effect firstly upon the intellect (νοῦς)⁶⁸, shining in it⁶⁹, illumining it⁷⁰, purifying it⁷¹, catching it up in mystical rapture to God⁷². Unlike Evagrius and other preceding writers, Symeon does not usually speak of the natural light of the intellect, but only of the divine light which illumines the intellect from outside or from within.

The divine light, Symeon says, is invisible to one's bodily eyes⁷³, but is seen with the intellect or rather with what Symeon calls 'the eye of the intellect' (ὀφθαλμὸς τοῦ νοῦς)⁷⁴, 'the noetic eye of the intellect' (νοερὸς ὁ τοῦ νοῦς ὀφθαλμὸς)⁷⁵, 'the intelligible eyes of heart' (ὀφθαλμοὶ νοεροὶ τῆς καρδίας)⁷⁶, 'the eyes of the soul' (ψυχῆς οἱ ὀφθαλμοί)⁷⁷, 'the intelligible eyes of the soul' (νοεροὶ τῆς ψυχῆς ὀφθαλμοί)⁷⁸ etc. Sometimes Symeon even asserts that the divine light is 'inaccessible to the intelligible eyes of the heart' (ἀπρόσιτον τοῖς νοεροῖς ὄμμασι τῆς καρδίας)⁷⁹; at other times he says otherwise,

time. Symeon, when describing his first visions of light in *Euch.* 1, emphasizes that he was not immediately granted to hear the voice of Christ: see *Euch.* 1,159-161; it is only later that Symeon heard Christ speaking to him: see *Euch.* 2,225ff.

⁶⁴ *Hymn* 38,64; cf. *Hymn* 51,141; *Eth.* 11,176 et al.

⁶⁵ *Hymn* 13,41-42.

⁶⁶ *Eth.* 11,174-177.

⁶⁷ Cf. *Hymn* 33,64 (φῶς νοερόν); 16,2; 23,222 (φῶς νοητόν).

⁶⁸ Symeon often uses the terms δῖα νοῦα (mind) and καρδία (heart) as synonyms of νοῦς, when speaking of the mystical vision of light. Both terms are of biblical origin and occur in the Septuagint, being also widely used in Christian ascetical literature. In particular, καρδία is one of the key anthropological terms in *Makarion Homilies*. The term νοῦς derives from ancient Greek philosophical anthropology and is also used by Christian authors from Paul onwards.

⁶⁹ Cf. *Hymn* 34,79; 40,11 (in both cases the light shines in the intellect and the heart).

⁷⁰ Cf. *Hymn* 11,42; 17,338; 18,82; 20,236 et al.

⁷¹ Cf. *Hymn* 30,579 et al.

⁷² Cf. *Hymn* 9,33; 48,23 et al.

⁷³ Cf. *Hymn* 38,83.

⁷⁴ *Hymn* 11,46.

⁷⁵ *Hymn* 38,86.

⁷⁶ *Hymn* 32,82.

⁷⁷ *Hymn* 22,108.

⁷⁸ *Eth.* 10,673-674.

⁷⁹ *Hymn* 38,84.

namely that the Inaccessible One becomes 'accessible to my intelligible eyes' (προσιτός ... ὄμμασι νοεροῖς μου)⁸⁰. Symeon also speaks of the spiritual 'mouth' and 'hands' by means of which the ascetics participate in the divine light:

They see in abundance the simple light of God's divinity with their intellectual eyes (νοεροῖς ὀφθαλμοῖς); they touch it with immaterial hands in irresistible love (ἀκατασχέτω τῷ ἔρωτι); they eat it without eating with the spiritual mouth of their intellect and soul, without being able to grow satiated by the contemplation of its beauty and sweetness⁸¹.

The mystical vocabulary of this passage is remarkably close to that of the preceding Fathers quoted above, who also speak of the divine light as seen by the 'eyes of the intellect' (Evagrius, Makarios), of its unspeakable beauty (Makarios), of its being touched in an ineffable manner (Hesychios), of the sweetness that is tasted and joy that is experienced during the vision (Makarios, 'Greek Isaac'), of the loving desire (ἔρωτος) which accompanies the vision (Maximos). Employing the unusual images of 'touching' and 'eating' the light, Symeon points to the total and intimate union between the mystic and the light during the vision, emphasizing the all-embracing and all-absorbing character of this experience. In another instance, when speaking of the transformation of the soul by the light, he employs the language of 'embrace' by the light or 'immersion' in it:

God becomes for those who are worthy
Like a divine and luminous pool (ὡς κολυμβήθρα θεία φωτοειδεστάτη),
Embracing them all...
The divine Spirit...
Being Himself light without sunset,
Transforms all those in whom He lives
Into light...⁸²

In Symeon the patristic notion of the transformation and transfiguration of human nature by virtue of the vision of the divine light has undergone considerable development. As we indicated above, some earlier Fathers asserted that, during this vision, the intellect sees its own natural light (Evagrius), the mind shines brightly (Maximos), the soul becomes all fire and light (Makarios), and the transfigured man contemplates his own beauty (Evagrius, 'Greek Isaac').

⁸⁰ *Hymn* 15,52-53.

⁸¹ *Eth.* 4,862-867.

⁸² *Hymn* 44,349-375. Cf. a similar notion, which uses the language of 'immersing', in John of Dalyatha: 'The soul sees the light which shines in it and transforms it into the likeness (of the light)... The soul is united with the formless light, which is the light of the Holy Trinity that shines in its creature. The soul is plunged into the waves of the beauty (of this light) and remains in wonder for a long time... It (remains) in the cloud of the light'; *Hom.* 8 (unpublished), quoted in R. Beulay, *L'enseignement spirituel de Jean de Dalyatha* (Paris, 1990), 388-389. The expression 'the cloud of light' (φωτὸς νεφέλη) occurs also in Symeon: see *Hymn* 17,326.

The experience of Symeon proves that the whole of human nature, including the intellect, the soul and even the body, is transfigured by the divine light. This is one of the central ideas of Symeon, to which he constantly returns. When you see the divine light, he says, 'your body shines, and so does your soul, for your soul then... becomes as resplendent as God Himself'⁸³. Elsewhere Symeon describes how he contemplates his own beauty when seeing the divine light⁸⁴.

To summarize what has been noted, we can specify some of the more important characteristics of the light in Symeon: 1/ this light is not the natural light of the intellect, but the uncreated, divine light of the Holy Trinity; 2/ it is non-material and is not perceived through the sensible eyes, but through the spiritual 'eyes of the intellect'; 3/ it is formless and shapeless, being totally beyond human categories of shape and form; 4/ it transfigures the human person, including the intellect, soul and body; 5/ the 'face' of God is seen inside the light, but in a spiritual manner rather than in any visible form.

As far as the link between Symeon and preceding Fathers is concerned, we can state that Symeon's doctrine of the vision of light definitely had its pre-history in patristic literature, particularly in the writings of Evagrius, Makarios, Maximos and Isaac the Syrian. Being close to these writers in many ideas, Symeon was generally independent of any of them in his treatment of the theme of vision of light, always basing himself primarily upon his own experience. He was also the first Byzantine author for whom the vision of light was the main and only goal of all ascetical exploits and good deeds and who claimed with such decisiveness that

We practise all this asceticism and all these actions only in order to partake of the divine light, like a lamp, so that we may bring our souls as a single candle to the inaccessible light⁸⁵.

⁸³ Hymn 50, 238-246.

⁸⁴ '(The light) shines in my poor heart, illumining me from every side by His immortal radiance, lightening all my members by His rays... I partake of His light, I participate in His glory, and my face shines as the face of my Beloved and all my members become light-bearing. I become then more beautiful than the most beautiful..., and much more precious than all visible things...'; Hymn 16, 24-37. Cf. John of Dalyatha, Letter 27, 1-2, in *La collection des lettres de Jean de Dalyatha*, ed. R. Beulay, PO 39, fasc. 3, No. 180 (1978), 388-389: 'I see (the Trinity) like one single light, and I myself shine like it. I marvel about myself and rejoice spiritually, for the Source of life is in me'.

⁸⁵ Hymn 33, 130-133.

Origenes im Werk des Epiphanius von Salamis

Wolfgang A. BIENERT, Marburg

1. Epiphanius als Häresiologe des 4. Jahrhunderts

1.1. Zu Person und Werk des Epiphanius

Unter den Häresiologen der Alten Kirche — neben Irenäus, Hippolyt und Tertullian — nimmt der aus dem Mönchtum Palästinas stammende spätere Bischof Epiphanius von Konstantia (Salamis) auf Zypern (ca. 315-403)¹ eine Sonderstellung ein. Auf der einen Seite beeindruckt sein großes und einflußreiches Werk, das vor allem seine literargeschichtliche Bedeutung begründet, das *Panarion*, der 'Arzneikasten' (κιβώτιον ἰατρικόν), wie er es selbst nennt², weil es zur Heilung der vom Schlangenbiß der Häresien Verwundeten dienen soll — nicht zuletzt wegen seines beachtlichen äußeren Umfangs³. Auf der anderen Seite heißt es jedoch, daß Epiphanius in diesem Werk 'auf Grund von allen möglichen, für uns vielfach verlorenen Geschichtswerken wie mündlichen Ueberlieferungen', 'kritiklos und beschränkten Geistes 80 Häresien' zusammenstellte und zugleich bekämpfte — 'von den griechischen Philosophen bis zu den Irrlehrern seiner Zeit', wobei als eigentliche Quelle des Unheils der Gegenwart und schlimmster Vertreter des Hellenismus Origenes erscheint⁴.

¹ *Epiphanius von Salamis. Werke*: Karl Holl (Hg.): *Epiphanius I: Ancoratus, Panarion, haer. 1-33* (GCS 25; 1915). — II²: *Panarion, haer. 34-64*, hg. v. J. Dummer (GCS; 1980). — III²: *Panarion, haer. 65-80. De fide*, hg. v. J. Dummer (GCS; 1985). — Übersetzung (engl.): F. Williams, *The 'Panarion' of Epiphanius of Salamis, Book I (sects 1-46)* (NHS 35; 1987); *Book II-III (Sects 47-80, De Fide)* (NHS 36; 1994). — Die letzte ausführliche Lebensbeschreibung bei P. Nautin, *Épiphane (saint) de Salamine*, in: *DHGE* 15 (1963), Sp. 617-631. — Nach P. Nautin starb Epiphanius bereits im Jahre 402; vgl. auch A. Pourkier, *L'hérésiologie chez Épiphane de Salamine* (CAnt 4; Paris, 1992), S. 29 mit Anm. 1.

² *Pan. Prooem. I 1, 2.* — Die aus diesem Werk geschöpfte Zusammenfassung ('*Anakephalaïosis*') stammt wohl nicht von Epiphanius selbst; vgl. K. Holl, *Die handschriftliche Überlieferung des Epiphanius (Ancoratus und Panarion)* (TU 36,2; 1910), S. 95-98; W. Schneemelcher, *Epiphanius von Salamis*, in: *RAC* 5 (1962), S. 919 u.a.; anders H.J. Vogt, *Warum wurde Origenes zum Häretiker erklärt?* In: *Origeniana Quarta* (1985), hg. v. L. Lies (ITS 19; 1987), S. 78-99; *Seminar I: Texte zum Hauptreferat*: Sp. 100-111; S. 83. Sie wurde aber schon früh zusammengestellt, denn sie war Augustin bereits — vor 428 — in lateinischer Übersetzung bekannt (vgl. H. Drobner, *Lehrbuch der Patrologie* (Paderborn, 1994), S. 256).

³ In der Ausgabe von K. Holl umfaßt das Werk rd. 1500, in der Übersetzung von F. Williams etwa 1000 Druckseiten (s. o. Anm. 1).

⁴ K. Müller / H.v. Campenhausen, *Kirchengeschichte I/1* (Tübingen, 1941), S. 634.

Beeindruckend ist ohne Zweifel der Fleiß, mit dem Epiphanius dieses riesige (Sammel)Werk zusammengestellt hat. Und die Nachwelt ist trotz aller Kritik im einzelnen dankbar für viele Quellen(schriften), Zeugnisse und Informationen aus der Alten Kirche, die nur auf diese Weise erhalten sind. Das gilt gerade auch im Hinblick auf zahlreiche Schulen, Gruppen, Strömungen und Richtungen im frühen Christentum, über die Epiphanius berichtet. Dabei zitiert er manchmal ausführlich aus den eigenen Schriften und Überlieferungen der verschiedenen 'Häresien' oder 'Sekten'⁵ und schreibt Werke aus, die sonst verlorengegangen sind⁶. Ihre 'kritiklose' — oder besser vielleicht: ihre unkritische, auf die praktische Überwindung der Häresien abzielende Zusammenstellung der Zeugnisse, in der von einer geistigen Auseinandersetzung mit der gegnerischen Seite oft wenig zu spüren ist, irritiert jedoch manchen modernen Leser, auch wenn er meint, daß das unkritische Vorgehen des Epiphanius immerhin den Vorteil habe, daß es wenigstens für die Zuverlässigkeit des Überlieferten spreche⁷. Die Tatsache, daß dem Epiphanius in der neuen *Theologischen Realenzyklopädie* kein eigener Artikel gewidmet ist, deutet darauf hin, daß die Herausgeber seinen Beitrag zur Kirchen- und Theologiegeschichte nicht als besonders bedeutend eingeschätzt haben⁸.

Für W. Schneemelcher⁹ ist Epiphanius 'ein typischer Vertreter einer kirchlich-theologischen Richtung, die im 4. Jahrhundert, d.h. in der nachkonstantinischen Reichskirche, das kirchliche Leben und Denken vielleicht stärker bestimmt hat als die großen theologischen Denker' dieser Zeit. Als besondere Kennzeichen dieser Richtung nennt er: a) 'einen starken asketischen Zug'. b) Dogmatische Fragen werden 'nicht theologisch durchdacht und weitergeführt, sondern sie gelten als gelöst; ein massiver Traditionalismus wird hier maßgebend'. Und c) 'eine nicht zu überbrückende Distanz zum Heidentum' wird spürbar. 'Rezeption antiken Denkens und Häresie werden weitgehend identifiziert'. Insofern spiegeln sich im Werk des Epiphanius nicht nur die innerkirchlichen Kämpfe um Orthodoxie und Häresie im ausgehenden 4. Jahrhundert wider, sondern auch die damit verbundenen Auseinandersetzungen zwischen Kirche und Heidentum angesichts der sich inzwischen abzeichnenden

Reichskirche. Ohne Kenntnis dieses Hintergrunds, bei dem es um eine neue Besinnung auf das Wesen des christlichen Glaubens ebenso ging wie um eine entsprechende Verwirklichung des christlichen Lebens, was u.a. zu einem verstärkten Aufbruch des Mönchtums in einer geistig und politisch veränderten Situation innerhalb des römischen Reiches führte, ist sein Werk jedenfalls nur schwer verständlich.

Nicht zufällig trägt die Darlegung der orthodoxen Lehre, die der Bischof von Konstantia (Salamis) auf Bitten von Freunden im Juli 374 verfaßte¹⁰, den sprechenden Titel: *Der Festgeankerte* (*Ἀγκυρωτός*)¹¹. Sie soll in unruhiger Zeit, die der Situation in einem Seesturm gleicht¹², gegenüber den Verfälschungen des 'apostolischen und prophetischen Glaubens' durch den 'Teufel' den Gläubigen Halt, Festigkeit und Zuversicht geben. Bei dieser Schrift, die zeitlich dem *Panarion* (375-377) unmittelbar vorausgeht und sachlich eng mit ihm verbunden ist, handelt es sich zwar eher um eine dogmatische Schrift, wenn auch nicht um ein 'Kompendium der kirchlichen Dogmatik'¹³. Aber da sie sich auf weite Strecken mit Häretikern und ihren Anschauungen kritisch auseinandersetzt, wird deutlich, daß auch hier das antihäretische Interesse im Vordergrund steht. Im Unterschied zum *Panarion* spricht es jedoch sehr viel unmittelbarer als dieses in die Situation der Kirche hinein und macht damit stärker auf die aktuelle kirchengeschichtliche Situation im Umfeld seiner Entstehung aufmerksam. Im Vordergrund steht dabei — nicht zufällig in der zweiten Hälfte des 4. Jahrhunderts — die Frage nach dem Verständnis der göttlichen Trinität, wobei Epiphanius die nicänische Orthodoxie in der Tradition des Athanasius von Alexandrien (nach 362), d.h. die Lehre von der Homousie des Sohnes und des Geistes (!) in Verbindung mit der Lehre von den drei Hypostasen im Vorfeld des Konzils von Konstantinopel (381) gegenüber Arianern, Sabellianern und nicht zuletzt den Pneumatomachen nachdrücklich verteidigt (vor allem in den Kapiteln 2-75). Behandelt werden aber auch Fragen der Christologie, die in dieser Zeit ebenfalls neu aufbrechen (im Zusammenhang mit dem Auftreten Photins von Sirmium und des Apollinaris von Laodicea), wobei das Bekenntnis zur Menschwerdung des Gottessohnes als Leitlinie dient (cc. 27-38 und 75-82). Dabei distanziert sich Epiphanius auch von den Anschauungen des Apollinaris von Laodicea, ohne diese jedoch selbst namentlich zu nennen¹⁴. Ein weiterer wichtiger Streitpunkt ist die Lehre von

⁵ Vgl. z.B. den Brief des Ptolemaios an die Flora, *pan.* 33, 3-7.

⁶ Dazu gehört wohl auch das verlorene *Syntagma* Hippolyts, das nach Photius (*Bibl. cod.* 121) 32 Häresien von Dositheos bis Noët behandelt; vgl. R.A. Lipsius, *Zur Quellenkritik des Epiphanius* (1865); A. Pourkier (s. Anm. 1), S. 53-75. — Auf die von P. Nautin übernommene Hypothese zu Hippolyt gehe ich hier nicht weiter ein; kritisch dazu u.a. K.-H. Uthemann, in: *ByZ* 86/87 (1994), S. 135-136.

⁷ Vgl. N. Bonwetsch (s. Anm. 8) 1898, S. 420. — Diese Annahme dürfte allerdings von Fall zu Fall zu überprüfen sein!

⁸ Vgl. demgegenüber N. Bonwetsch, *Epiphanius von Constantia*, in: *RE*³ (1898), S. 417-421. — Das moderne Urteil über Epiphanius könnte aber vielleicht auch mit einem allzu intellektualistisch gefaßten Theologiebegriff zusammenhängen. — Jedenfalls sollte der Einfluß des Epiphanius auf die Beurteilung der Häresien in der Kirchengeschichte nicht unterschätzt werden.

⁹ *RAC* 5 (1962), Sp. 909.

¹⁰ Vgl. *Ancor.* 60, 4; 119, 1. — Vgl. A. Pourkier (s. Anm. 1), S. 49 Anm. 79; irrtümlich: H.J. Vogt (s. Anm. 2), S. 83 ('373!').

¹¹ Zum Namen vgl. *pan.* 69, 27, 2f.

¹² Ebd.; vgl. Basilius von Cäsarea (*De spir. s. c.* XXX), der das gleiche Bild für die Situation der Kirche seiner Zeit (374/5!) verwendet.

¹³ So: O. Bardenhewer, *Geschichte der altkirchlichen Literaturen*, Bd. 3, S. 296.

¹⁴ Vgl. bes. *Ancor.* 76, 79. — In *pan.* 77 ist von den 'Dimoiriten' bzw. 'Apollinarianern' die Rede, die behaupteten, Christus habe nur 'Fleisch' angenommen (vgl. Joh 1, 14), aber keine menschliche Seele (*Ancor.* 76) bzw. keine Vernunft. Apollinaris v. Laodicea († ca. 390) wird in *Pan.* 77 zwar

der Auferstehung des Fleisches (cc. 83-100). Vor allem in diesem Zusammenhang kritisiert Epiphanius dann auch Origenes und die Origenisten. Aber auch schon vorher ist von ihnen in dem wenig systematisch aufgebauten Werk die Rede¹⁵. Darauf wird noch zurückzukommen sein. Deutlich ist jedenfalls die enge zeitliche und sachliche Verbindung zwischen dem *Ancoratus* und dem *Panarion*, was auch daran erkennbar wird, daß Epiphanius im *Panarion* ausdrücklich auf seine früheren Ausführungen in diesem Werk verweist oder sogar daraus zitiert¹⁶. Häufig steht allerdings dieses Werk im Schatten des umfangreicheren *Panarion* und unterliegt damit noch mehr dem verbreiteten Vorurteil von der geistigen 'Beschränktheit', der 'Maßlosigkeit' und dem 'glühenden, aber unerleuchteten Eifer' ihres Autors¹⁷, was dazu geführt hat, daß der *Ancoratus* in der patristischen Forschung in der Regel noch weniger beachtet wird als das *Panarion*¹⁸.

Mit Recht aber betont W. Schneemelcher: 'Die modernen Urteile ... treffen nur zum Teil den Sachverhalt; sie müssen ergänzt werden durch eine Einordnung dieses Mannes in den Zusammenhang seiner Zeit, d.h. des Jahrhunderts, in dem der Kampf um die rechte Lehre in der Kirche und die Auseinandersetzung zwischen Kirche und Heidentum mit unerbittlicher Schärfe durchgeführt wurden'¹⁹.

erwähnt, aber wegen seiner engen Beziehung zu Athanasius und den Nicänern sowie zu Epiphanius selbst von diesem sehr schonend behandelt; 77, 2, 1f.; vgl. A. Pourkier (s. Anm. 1), S. 44f.

¹⁵ *Ancor.* 13. — *Ancor.* 54-63; 87-92; besonders: *Ancor.* 52, 62: Allegorisierung des Paradieses; die Frage der 'Fellkleider' (Gen. 3, 21). — *Ancor.* 63: Die Subordination des Sohnes und des Hl. Geistes. — *Ancor.* 87: leibliche Auferstehung der Toten. — *Ancor.* 92, 3ff.: Leibliche Auferstehung Christi; vgl. *pan.* 64, 65.

¹⁶ *Pan.* 74, 2-10 (Pneumatomachen) wiederholt wörtlich *Ancor.* 64-73; vgl. auch *pan.* 64, 4, 11 (Apparat: Holl II, S. 413) mit *Ancor.* 54-62.

¹⁷ B. Altaner, *Patrologie* (1958), S. 281 (vgl. W. Schneemelcher, S. 910); B. Altaner / A. Stuber (1978), S. 315f. (vgl. H. Drobner, S. 254).

¹⁸ Vgl. dazu die Bemerkung von Fr. Young 1982: 'The work of Epiphanius is best known because it has proved a quarry for material needed by the textual critic of the New Testament and the historian of the early church. ... (But) very little work has treated Epiphanius as interesting in himself' (S. 199). — Das bedeutet, daß das *Panarion* vor allem als literarischer Steinbruch gesehen und ausgewertet worden ist.

¹⁹ W. Schneemelcher, S. 910; vgl. H. Drobner (1994), S. 253f. Drobner (S. 253) zählt Epiphanius unter den Kirchenvätern des 4. Jahrhunderts zu der 'Gruppe von Bischöfen, die eine ausschließlich christliche, biblische Bildung erhalten hatten, von den profanen Wissenschaften nicht nur wenig kannten, sondern auch nichts hielten', deren kirchliche Bedeutung aber nicht unterschätzt werden dürfe. — Immerhin wird Epiphanius wegen seiner Gelehrsamkeit von seinen Zeitgenossen bewundert und gelegentlich als 'fünfsprachig' gerühmt (Hieronymus, *Adv. Ruf.* 2, 22; 3, 6; hebräisch, syrisch, koptisch, griechisch, lateinisch), auch wenn dieses Urteil vielleicht etwas eingeschränkt werden muß; vgl. *pan.* 19, 4, 3; 31, 2, 8 (W. Schneemelcher, S. 910). — Auch dürfte Drobner ein etwas zu harmonisches Bild von der Kirche des 4. Jahrhunderts zeichnen, wenn er schreibt: 'Beide Richtungen (unter den Kirchenvätern), die philosophierende und die rein biblistische, haben einander nie (!) verteuft, sondern geachtet und akzeptiert' (aaO. S. 254).

1.2. Zum Häresiebegriff des Epiphanius

'Wußte Epiphanius (eigentlich), was er unter Häresie verstand?' fragte vor einigen Jahren F. Young²⁰ auf der Patristischen Konferenz in Oxford etwas provozierend. Der Häresiebegriff des Epiphanius ist in der Tat merkwürdig. Im *Panarion* behandelt Epiphanius nämlich keineswegs nur christliche Gruppen und 'Ketzer', die in ihren Anschauungen von der kirchlichen Lehre abweichen, sondern auch vorchristliche Schulen und Richtungen aus Judentum und Hellenismus wie: Stoiker, Platoniker, Pythagoräer und Epikureer — sowie aus jüdischer Tradition: Samaritaner, Essener, Sebuäer, Gerathener, Dositheer, Sadduzäer, Schriftgelehrte, Pharisäer u.a. bis zu den Herodianern. Insgesamt nennt Epiphanius 20 vorchristliche 'Häresien'. Ihnen folgen 60 Häresien nach dem Kommen Christi (ἐνσαρκος παρουσία): von den Simonianern (*pan.* 21) bis zu den Messalianern (*pan.* 80). Die Zahlen spielen dabei eine besondere Rolle. Epiphanius hat sie nach eigener Darstellung dem Hohenlied Salomos entnommen (Cant. 6, 8 LXX)²¹, wo von 80 Nebenfrauen des Bräutigams (Christus) die Rede ist, die der einen vollkommenen Braut, der 'Taube' (= der Kirche; Cant. 6, 9 LXX), gegenüberstehen²² und von denen 60 Königinnen sind.

Der Zwang, diese Zahlen auszufüllen, führt dazu, daß Epiphanius den Häresiebegriff nicht nur sehr weit faßt und dabei sehr unterschiedliche Schulen, einzelne Häretiker (Paul von Samosata, *pan.* 65), Sekten und schismatische Gruppen (Melitianer, *pan.* 68; Audianer, *pan.* 70) aneinanderreicht, sondern anscheinend auch neue Richtungen oder zumindest Namen für sie erfindet wie z.B. die 'Aloger' (vgl. *pan.* 51, 3), 'Antidikomarianiten' (*pan.* 78) oder 'Kollyridianer' (*pan.* 79). Auffallend ist allerdings, daß im *Ancoratus* eine fast identische Liste aller 80 Häresien begegnet (*Ancor.* 12-13)²³, wobei auch die verschiedenen Zahlen eine gewisse Rolle spielen — 20 Häresien vor Christus und 60 nach seiner Geburt —, daß jedoch ein direkter Bezug auf das Hohelied Salomos (Cant. 6, 8f.) fehlt. Stattdessen unterscheidet Epiphanius hier innerhalb der vorchristlichen Häresien noch einmal zwischen solchen, die nach dem Gesetz des Mose auftraten (insgesamt 11), und neun vormosaïschen Häresien, die wiederum aufgeteilt werden in die fünf 'Mütter' — Barbarismus, Skythismus,

²⁰ Fr. M. Young, *Did Epiphanius Know What He Meant by Heresy?* In: *StPatr* 17/1 (1979), 1982, S. 199-205. — Vgl. auch P. Fraenkel, *Histoire sainte et hérésie chez s. Épiphane de Salamine d'après le tome I du 'Panarion'*, in *RThPh* 3. Ser., 12 (1962), S. 175-191; E. Moutsoulas, *Der Begriff "Häresie" bei Epiphanius von Salamis*, in: *StudPatr.* VII (TU 92; 1966), S. 362-371; C. Riggi, *Il termine "Hairesis" nell'accezione di Epifanio di Salamina (Panarion, t. I, De fide)*, in: *Salesianum* 29 (1967), S. 3-27.

²¹ *Pan.* Prooem. I 1, 3; 35, 3, 5ff.; *de fide* 6, 4.

²² Entsprechend endet das *Panarion* mit einem kurzen Traktat 'De fide'.

²³ Am Schluß (13, 8) werden nach den Messalianern zusätzlich noch genannt die Martyrianer (*pan.* 80, 2, 4), die Euphemiten (vgl. *pan.* 80, 1, 3) und die Satanianer (*pan.* 80, 3, 1ff.), die im *Panarion* als Gruppe (!) zusammengefaßt werden (vgl. *Anaceph.* 80).

Hellenismus, Judaismus und Samaritismus — und die schon erwähnten vier hellenischen Philosophenschulen²⁴.

Die Einheit des Glaubens wie die Einheit der Menschheit gründet für Epiphanius in Adam. Nach ihm haben sich in der Geschichte der Menschheit viele unterschiedliche Gruppen gebildet, die von Epiphanius entweder nur kurz erwähnt oder auch etwas ausführlicher vorgestellt, aber keineswegs immer heftig bekämpft werden. Andere, vor allem die zeitgenössischen Gruppen werden je nach den vorhandenen Quellen und Berichten ausführlicher behandelt (z.B. Marcion in *pan.* 42), um dann als giftsprühende Schlangen oder wilde Tiere bekämpft zu werden. Abhängig von den jeweiligen Quellen und Berichten über die verschiedenen Häresien, die Epiphanius wenig systematisch herangezogen, untersucht und oft nur oberflächlich ausgewertet hat, z.T. auch abhängig von dem in ihnen vermittelten Häresieverständnis (etwa des Hippolyt), schillert dann auch sein eigener Häresiebegriff.

In aller Kürze läßt sich feststellen: Generell versteht Epiphanius unter Häresie Abweichung und Trennung von der ursprünglichen Religion, die Adam mit der Schöpfung mitgegeben wurde. Sie ist für ihn zugleich identisch mit dem Glauben der 'einen, heiligen, katholischen und orthodoxen Kirche'²⁵. Der Einheit der Menschheit und der Einheit in Christus entspricht die Einheit der Kirche. Alle Abweichungen davon, Spaltungen, Trennungen usw. stehen im Widerspruch dazu und müssen von der dafür verantwortlichen Krankheit der Häresie mit Hilfe der Medizin des orthodoxen (nicänischen!) Glaubens aus dem 'Arzneikasten' geheilt werden. Eine genauer reflektierte, kohärente Theorie der Häresie läßt sich bei Epiphanius nicht finden²⁶.

1.3. Zu den Quellen des Epiphanius

Der Wert des *Ancoratus* liegt, so meinte N. Bonwetsch²⁷, vor allem darin, daß Epiphanius deswegen, weil er 'keine selbständige Theologie besaß, einen Einblick in die Theologie der Zeit gibt'. 'Ungleich wertvoller als der *Ancor.*' ist jedoch 'das *Panarion*' vor allem wegen des umfangreichen Quellenmaterials. Dazu gehören u.a. namentlich zitierte Texte aus Irenäus, Hippolyt, Klemens von Alexandrien und Euseb von Cäsarea. — In seiner grundlegenden Untersuchung aus dem Jahre 1865 hatte R.A. Lipsius durch einen Vergleich verschiedener altkirchlicher Ketzerkataloge²⁸ den bis heute weithin anerkannten

²⁴ Vgl. die Übersicht bei F. Young, 1982, S. 203f.

²⁵ F. Young aaO. S. 202: 'In very general terms his (sc. Epiphanius') usage (of heresy) is clear, if various: heresy means division which generates further division, and it is all the result of the initial rebellion of mankind; heresy is false religion and includes all that is outside the unity of the one, holy, catholic and orthodox Church'.

²⁶ So auch F. Young ebd.

²⁷ S.o. Anm. 8, S. 420.

²⁸ R.A. Lipsius (s.o. Anm. 6) S. 4-10. — Zum Aufbau der *Refutatio* Hippolyts vgl. u.a. K. Koschorke, *Hippolyt's Ketzerbekämpfung und Polemik gegen die Gnostiker. Eine tendenzkritische*

Nachweis erbracht, daß für *pan.* 13-57 das von Photius (*Bibl. cod.* 121) erwähnte *Syntagma* Hippolyts die Hauptquelle bildete. K. Holl hat in seiner Textausgabe darauf aufgebaut und in seinem Apparat reiches Vergleichsmaterial für eine kritische Quellenanalyse des *Panarion* bereitgestellt. Darüber hinaus gibt es zu einzelnen Themen und Überlieferungen kritische Detailuntersuchungen. Aber noch immer dürfte die Feststellung von W. Schneemelcher aus dem Jahre 1962 zutreffen: 'eine umfassende Quellenanalyse (des *Panarion*) steht noch aus'²⁹.

Epiphanius war zwar im allgemeinen bemüht, zuverlässige Informanten zu finden. Aber nicht immer gelang ihm dies, und manchmal verfuhr er auch recht unkritisch bei der Auswertung seiner Informationen, so daß die einzelnen Kapitel jeweils für sich auf ihren Quellenhintergrund untersucht werden müssen. Das gilt nicht zuletzt auch für das Kapitel über Origenes (*pan.* 64)³⁰.

Wie schwierig dies im Einzelfall sein kann, hat R.M. Hübner mit seinen Untersuchungen zu *pan.* 65 (Paul von Samosata) und 62 (Sabellianer) gezeigt. Hübner spricht vom 'Eindruck eines Flickenteppichs, den das Sabellius-Kapitel im *Panarion* bietet'³¹ und fügt hinzu: 'Offenbar verfügte Epiphanius weder für Sabellius noch für Paul von Samosata über genügend verlässliches Material, so daß er sich veranlaßt sah, ihnen Thesen ihres späteren geistigen Nachfahren Photin zu unterschieben, um seine Kapitel zu füllen'³². Epiphanius, der zur Zeit seiner Abfassung des *Panarions* enge Kontakte zu Apollinaris von Laodicea und seiner Gemeinde in Antiochien (Vitalis) unterhielt, scheint von dort das entsprechende Material erhalten und recht unkritisch verwendet zu haben.

Untersuchung seiner 'Refutatio omnium haeresium' (GOF VI/4; 1975), S. 82ff.; G. Vallée, *A Study in Antignostic Polemics. Irenaeus, Hippolytus, and Epiphanius* (SCJud 1; 1981). — Zu Hippolyt vgl. zuletzt C. Scholten, *Hippolytos II (von Rom)*, in: *RAC* 15 (1991), Sp. 492-551.

²⁹ W. Schneemelcher, S. 917; P. Nautin (s. Anm. 1), S. 626f.; R.M. Hübner, *Die Schrift des Apollinaris von Laodicea gegen Photin (Pseudo-Athanasius, Contra Sabellianos) und Basilius von Caesarea* (PTS 30; 1989), S. 176; vgl. ders.: *Die Hauptquelle des Epiphanius (Panarion, haer. 65) über Paulus von Samosata: Ps.-Athanasius, 'Contra Sabellianos'*, in: *ZKG* 90 (1979), S. 201-220.

³⁰ Vgl. dazu vor allem die grundlegende Arbeit von J.F. Dechow, *Dogma and Mysticism in Early Christianity: Epiphanius of Cyprus and the Legacy of Origen* (PatMS 13; 1988).

³¹ R.M. Hübner (s. Anm. 28) 1989, S. 183 — zu *pan.* 62.

³² Ebd. 186. — Gemeint sind außer *pan.* 65 vor allem c. 57 und 62. Betroffen sind aber wohl alle Informationen über Sabellius, Noët und Paul von Samosata, deren Namen in der 2. Hälfte des 4. Jahrhunderts oft für Markell von Ankyra bzw. Photin von Sirmium stehen. — Hinter der immer wieder von Epiphanius verwendeten und unter dem Namen des Athanasius überlieferten Schrift *Contra Sabellianos* verbirgt sich nach Hübner in Wahrheit ein von Apollinaris gegen Markell bzw. dessen Schüler Photin gerichteter Traktat.

2. Origenes im Werk des Epiphanius

2.1. Allgemeiner Überblick

Origenes und die Arianer gelten häufig als die 'Hauptgegner' des Epiphanius, und 'die auf sie bezüglichen Abschnitte (*pan.* 64-80) sind daher das eigentliche Herzstück des Werkes'³³. Dieser Eindruck entsteht vor allem dann, wenn man das *Panarion* aus der Sicht des *Ancoratus* betrachtet. Denn in dieser Schrift steht die Frage nach der orthodoxen Trinitätslehre deutlich im Vordergrund. Allerdings fällt auf, daß sich die Kritik an Origenes dort nur indirekt auf Berührungen mit dem Arianismus bezieht, z.B. auf die Frage der Subordination des Sohnes unter den Vater³⁴. Im Vordergrund der Auseinandersetzung mit Origenes und dem Origenismus steht dort die Kritik an der allegorischen Deutung des Paradieses und der Auferstehung³⁵. Im *Panarion* wird die Beziehung zwischen Origenes und dem Arianismus schon etwas enger gesehen³⁶. Von Origenes als 'Vater des Arius' ist aber erst in *ep.* 51 (überliefert bei Hieronymus) ausdrücklich die Rede³⁷.

Im Kontext des gesamten 'Arzneikastens' gegen alle Häresien fallen die Ausführungen über Origenes (*pan.* 64) dagegen nicht allzu sehr aus dem Rahmen der allgemeinen Häresiologie des Epiphanius. F. Williams schreibt in dem Vorwort zu Bd. I seiner Übersetzung des *Panarions*³⁸: 'Epiphanius respected Origen's scholarship, and the *Hexapla*, but considered his doctrine Gnostic in character, the source of Arianism, and a danger to the church'. Wesentlich zurückhaltender äußert sich H. Drobner³⁹: 'Vermutlich, weil er in Ägypten in einem anti-origenischen Kloster erzogen worden war, hatte er in seinem 374-377 entstandenen 'Arzneikasten' gegen die Häresien auch Origenes aufgenommen'.

Anders, so scheint es, wird es erst, als Epiphanius bei einem Besuch in Jerusalem (wohl 393) mit dem dortigen Bischof Johannes, einem Anhänger des Origenes, in Streit geriet, weil er in seiner Predigt Origenes scharf angegriffen hatte. In dem bereits genannten Brief an den Jerusalemer Bischof vom Jahr 394 werden zunächst die früheren Angriffe gegenüber Origenes wiederholt,

³³ W. Schneemelcher (s. Anm. 2), S. 917; vgl. N. Bonwetsch (s. Anm. 8), S. 618f.; K. Müller/H.v. Campenhausen (s. Anm. 4) aaO. S. 634.

³⁴ *Ancor.* 63.

³⁵ *Ancor.* 58 (zu dem Ort des Paradieses und den Paradiesesströmen); *Ancor.* 62 (zur Deutung der Fellkleider in Gen 3, 21). — Zur Frage der Auferstehung des Fleisches: *Ancor.* 82. Hier schlägt er eine Verbindung zu den Hierakiten.

³⁶ Am deutlichsten in *Pan.* 64, 8; vgl. auch 64, 4, 2. In *pan.* 76, dem Kapitel über Aëtius und die Anhomöer, werden als ihre geistigen Vorfahren Origenes und Lukian genannt (cap. 3, 5).

³⁷ *Ep.* 51, 3 (Hieronymus) nennt er ihn: 'Arii patrem, et aliarum hereseon radicem et parentem' (ed. J. Labourt II, 1952, S. 156-172; Zitat: S. 161. 5ff).

³⁸ F. Williams (s. Anm. 1) 1987, S. XIV.

³⁹ H. Drobner, *Patrologie* (1994), S. 254f.

werden dann aber noch deutlich erweitert⁴⁰. Epiphanius erscheint hier nun in der Tat als 'der Führer einer Reaktion gegen Origenes...', welche nicht mehr bereit ist, von diesem trotz aller Gegnerschaft zu lernen (wie einst Methodius), sondern direkt gegen das Recht hellenischer Wissenschaft in der Kirche ankämpft⁴¹.

Wenn man von dieser Perspektive aus *pan.* 64 liest, rückt das Interesse an Origenes sehr viel deutlicher ins Zentrum, so daß der Eindruck entstehen muß, Epiphanius sei Anführer und vielleicht sogar der Urheber des Kampfes gegen Origenes am Ende des 4. Jahrhunderts gewesen. Aus dieser Sicht schreibt N. Bonwetsch dann auch: 'Insbesondere erblickte Ep(iphanius) in Origenes den Vater aller Häresie und ihn zu bekämpfen hat er sich geradezu zu einer Lebensaufgabe gesetzt... Origenes ist dem Ep(iphanius) verhaßt, weil auf ihn der Ursprung des Arianismus zurückgehe (*haer.* 64, 8). Überhaupt aber gereicht ihm die 'Ελληνική παιδεία des Origenes zum Anstoß (*haer.* 64, 73), dem durch sie bedingten Spiritualismus setzt er einen massiven Realismus entgegen (vgl. besonders die Wiedergabe der gegen Origenes gerichteten Verteidigung der leiblichen Auferstehung durch Methodius, *haer.* 64, 12ff.)⁴². — Die letzte Bemerkung weist aber bereits auf ein Problem hin, das in der Regel dort, wo man sich mit dem Text von *pan.* 64 nicht genauer befaßt hat, übersehen oder das zumindest in seiner Bedeutung unterschätzt wird, nämlich die außerordentlich dürftige Quellenlage, aus der Epiphanius schöpft.

Wie ungenau Epiphanius über Origenes und den Origenismus informiert ist, zeigt bereits *pan.* 63. Dieses voraufgehende Kapitel ist auch 'Origenisten' gewidmet, ohne daß Epiphanius jedoch sagen kann, ob und wie diese mit dem alexandrinischen Theologen zusammenhängen. In der Zusammenfassung der *Anakephalaïsis* heißt es von ihnen: 'Die Origenianer, die sich von einem gewissen Origenes herleiten, verüben häßliche Schandtaten, tun Unaussprechliches und geben ihre Leiber dem Verderben preis'. Von den anderen lautet die spätere Zusammenfassung: 'Die anderen Origenianer, die sich von dem Schriftsteller (τοῦ συντάκτου) Origenes mit dem Beinamen Adamantius herleiten, leugnen die Auferstehung der Toten, rechnen Christus und den Hl. Geist unter die Geschöpfe, verstehen das Paradies, die Himmel und alles übrige allegorisch und behaupten, das Reich Christi werde ein Ende haben'⁴³.

⁴⁰ *Ep.* 51 (Hieronymus), 4-7; ed. Labourt II, S. 161-170.

⁴¹ N. Bonwetsch (s. Anm. 8), S. 419, 11ff. — Allerdings bekämpft Epiphanius in diesem Brief nicht so sehr das 'Recht hellenischer Wissenschaft in der Kirche'. Ihm geht es vielmehr um einen biblisch und in monastischer Tradition begründeten Heilsrealismus, der sich gegen eine auf Origenes zurückgeführte Spiritualisierung der Überlieferung wendet.

⁴² N. Bonwetsch aaO. S. 418, 60 - 419, 11.

⁴³ Die letzte Formulierung, die im Bekenntnis von Konstantinopel 381 verworfen wird, wird in der Regel mit der Theologie Markells von Ankyra in Verbindung gebracht; vgl. E. Molland, 'Des Reich kein Ende haben wird'. Hintergrund und Bedeutung einer dogmatischen Aussage im nicäno-constantinopolitanischen Glaubensbekenntnis, in: Ders., *Opuscula Patristica* (Oslo, 1970), S. 235-253; E. Schendel, *Herrschaft und Unterwerfung Christi* (BGBE 12; 1971).

— Interessant ist auch, daß beide Gruppen bereits im *Ancoratus* nacheinander genannt werden, wobei das Grundgerüst des *Panarion* hier bereits erkennbar ist⁴⁴.

Äußerlich betrachtet gehört *pan.* 64 zwar zu den umfangreichsten Kapiteln des *Panarions*; es umfaßt rd. 120 Seiten in der Edition K. Holls. Davon entfallen jedoch fast 80 Seiten auf einen längeren Auszug aus der Schrift des Methodius von Olympus, 'Über die Auferstehung', die sich ihrerseits kritisch mit Lehren des Origenes auseinandersetzt und damit daran erinnert, daß die Geschichte des Antiorigenismus lange vor Epiphanius begann und in ihren Wurzeln bis in die Lebenszeit des Origenes zurückreicht⁴⁵. Darüber hinaus sind die Informationen über Leben und Werk des Origenes, die Epiphanius zusammengetragen hat, mehr als dürftig und verlangen zugleich nach einer kritischen Überprüfung⁴⁶. Lediglich in *pan.* 64, 6-7 zitiert Epiphanius einmal einen Text des Origenes selbst, und zwar aus einem Kommentar zu Psalm 1,5⁴⁷. Die Ausführungen im *Ancoratus* beruhen dabei offensichtlich auf dem gleichen Material. So findet sich der einzige dortige Hinweis auf eine Stelle in 'De principiis' auch im *Panarion*⁴⁸. — Vor diesem Hintergrund erscheint Origenes keineswegs als Zentralfigur unter den Häresien des Epiphanius. Dazu wurde er erst im Zusammenhang mit den origenistischen Streitigkeiten. Interessant ist dabei auch, daß dort neben Origenes auch die Schüler des Apollinaris als besonders zu meidende Häretiker erwähnt werden⁴⁹.

⁴⁴ *Ancor.* 13, 6. Die Rede ist dort von den 'Origenisten, welche auch die Schamlosen heißen' und 'Origenisten des Adamantius'. — Diese Liste spricht dafür, daß Epiphanius zu dieser Zeit (374) bereits Material für das *Panarion* gesammelt hatte.

⁴⁵ Vgl. W. Bienert, *Dionysius von Alexandrien* (PTS 21; 1978), S. 3-25.

⁴⁶ Wie ungenau Epiphanius unterrichtet ist, zeigt sich u.a. auch daran, daß er die Lebenszeit des Origenes in die Zeit des Kaisers Decius verlegt (*pan.* 64, 1, 1; vgl. auch *De mens. et pond.* 18, 19) und seine hellenische Bildung mit einem Aufenthalt in Athen verbindet (*pan.* 64, 1, 2). Von einem solchen Aufenthalt des Origenes wird sonst in anderem Zusammenhang berichtet (Euseb, *h.e.* VI 12, 2; Hieronymus, *vir. ill.* 54; vgl. Holl II, S. 403).

⁴⁷ Ed. Holl II, S. 415-417. — Gewährsmann dafür ist wohl auch Methodius; vgl. *pan.* 64, 10, 2-7, wo Origenes von Methodius zitiert wird. — Vgl. dazu H.J. Vogt (s. Anm. 2), S. 91: 'Zum Glück hat Epiphanius etwa ein Kapitel (*Panarion* 64, 10, 2-7) direkt aus Origenes zitiert, so daß wir sein Ziel mit dem des Methodius vergleichen können; das Ergebnis ist erschreckend. Methodius hat rund 10 Halb- oder Ganzzeilen gestrichen; man ahnt, wie die Gegner mit den Texten des Origenes umgegangen sind. Außerdem wird man, wenn man Epiphanius so verfahren sieht, kaum glauben, daß er selbst sehr viele Origenes-Texte parat hat, auch nicht, daß er sehr viele gelesen hat; man wird ihn kaum für eine Origeneskennner ansehen dürfen'.

⁴⁸ *Ancor.* 63ff. (vgl. *De princ.* I, 8). — Ferner: *Pan.* 64, 4, 3ff.; *ep.* 51, 4, 2 (Hieronymus). — Eine genaue Zuordnung dieses Hinweises im Werk des Origenes stößt jedoch auf Schwierigkeiten.

⁴⁹ Vgl. Epiphanius, *ep.* 91 (Hieronymus), ed. J. Labourt IV, 1954, S. 147.

2.2. Das Origenesbild des Epiphanius in seiner geschichtlichen Entwicklung

Um das Bild des Origenes im Werk des Epiphanius genauer zu fassen, erscheint es von daher sinnvoll und notwendig, nicht von einem zusammenfassenden Gesamtbild auszugehen, das aus der Rückschau gewonnen wurde, sondern den Entwicklungsprozeß zu beobachten, dem dieses Bild bei Epiphanius unterliegt. Mit Recht hat E.A. Clark⁵⁰ methodisch diesen Weg beschritten und die verschiedenen Vorwürfe des Epiphanius gegenüber Origenes in ihrer chronologischen Entwicklung untersucht, um die komplexen Zusammenhänge bei der Entstehung und dem Verlauf der origenistischen Kontroverse genauer und zutreffender als bisher zu erfassen⁵¹.

a) Im *Ancoratus*, dem ältesten erhaltenen Werk des Epiphanius vom Juli 374, das unser Thema berührt, wird Origenes, abgesehen von der etwas vagen Bemerkung in 13, 6, wo zwei verschiedene Gruppen von 'Origenisten' erwähnt werden, über die Epiphanius wenig Genaueres zu wissen scheint, zuerst in c. 54, 2 namentlich genannt. Origenes wird dort als 'Schwärmer' (θεήλατος) bezeichnet, der — wie viele andere (!) — das Paradies 'allegorisch' ausgelegt habe⁵². Epiphanius verbindet damit die Frage nach der Realität der Schöpfung und ferner die nach der Realität der Gottebenbildlichkeit des Menschen.

Auf der gleichen Ebene der allegorischen Auslegung der Schrift liegt dann auch die Kritik an der Deutung der Fellkleider (Gen 3, 21) als Leiber für die gefallenen präexistenten Seelen durch Origenes (c. 62). Belegt wird die Ansicht des Origenes leider ebenso wenig wie die zuvor genannte Allegorisierung des Paradieses aus Schriften des Origenes selbst. Als Begründung wird lediglich auf die Äußerung des Origenes verwiesen: 'Gott sei doch kein Lederarbeiter'⁵³.

Ein konkreter Bezug zum Werk des Origenes wird erst in c. 63 hergestellt. Dort wird zu der Lehre des Origenes, der Sohn könne den Vater nicht sehen

⁵⁰ Elizabeth A. Clark, *The Origenist Controversy: The Cultural Construction of an Early Christian Debate* (Princeton/NJ, 1992). — Darin liegt der einzige kritische Einwand gegenüber der ansonsten außerordentlich wertvollen Untersuchung von J. Dechow (s. Anm. 30); vgl. Clark, S. 87 und 86 mit Anm. 2-3.

⁵¹ E.A. Clark (aaO.) zeichnet die Entwicklung der Vorwürfe gegenüber Origenes nicht nur bei Epiphanius nach (S. 86-104), sondern auch bei Theophilus von Alexandrien (S. 105-121), Hieronymus (S. 121-151) und Schenute (S. 151-158). Bekanntlich haben Theophilus und Hieronymus ihre Ansichten im Verlauf der Auseinandersetzungen geändert, wobei offenbar auch unterschiedliche Auffassungen über die Bedeutung von Askese und Mönchtum eine wichtige Rolle spielten.

⁵² Vgl. *pan.* 64, 47. Gewährsmann ist dort Methodius von Olympus.

⁵³ Diese mehrfach wiederholte Bemerkung (vgl. *pan.* 64, 63, 5ff.; *ep.* 51, 5, 2 (Hieronymus)) scheint zwar echt zu sein, sagt aber über das Verständnis des Origenes von Gen 3, 21 wenig. Insgesamt zielt die Darstellung des Epiphanius wohl darauf ab, Origenes mit der gnostischen Auslegung dieses Verses in Verbindung zu bringen (vgl. Irenäus, *Adv. haer.* I, 5, 5; Hippolyt, *ref.* X, 13, 4), mit der dieser sich selbst jedoch kritisch auseinandergesetzt hat. — Zu Origenes selbst vgl. PG 12, 101 und PG 80, 140C-141A (Theodoret); vgl. zu dem Problemfeld und den dazugehörigen Quellen: H.J. Vogt (s. Anm. 2) S. 85ff.; 100ff.; J. Dechow (s. Anm. 30), S. 315-333.

wie auch der Hl. Geist nicht den Sohn und die Engel nicht den Hl. Geist, ausdrücklich auf *De princ.* verwiesen. Dieser Vorwurf, der im übrigen bei Origenes selbst nicht leicht zu belegen ist⁵⁴, gehört zur Zeit des Epiphanius schon zu den Standardvorwürfen, die in der Folgezeit immer wiederholt werden, um Origenes in die Nähe des Arius bzw. der arianischen Lehren zu rücken.

Schließlich werden als Anhänger des Origenes im *Ancoratus* auch Menschen erwähnt, die die Auferstehung der Toten bzw. des Fleisches (oder Leibes) leugnen (*Ancor.* 87). Die Diskussion wird zum Teil in *pan.* 64 (71, 6ff.; vgl. 74, 2-13) auf der Basis des ausführlich zitierten Traktates über die Auferstehung des Methodius (*pan.* 64, 12-69) weitergeführt, die auch hier bereits die Grundlage für die Argumentation des Epiphanius zu bilden scheint.

Zur Person des Origenes verlautet im *Ancoratus* nichts. Er gehört wie Arius, Mani, Sabellius zu jenen einflußreichen Häretikern, die es in der Kirche zu meiden und zu bekämpfen gilt. Deutlich kann man bei aufmerksamer Lektüre die Auseinandersetzungen dieser Jahre in der Schrift erkennen. Es ist die Zeit der Herrschaft des homöischen Kaisers Valens († 378) kurz nach dem Tod des Athanasius und des Ephrem Syrus (373). In Antiochien gab es verschiedene Gemeinden und Bischöfe, die miteinander konkurrierten — Melitianer, Eustathianer unter der Leitung des Paulinus, Anhänger des Apollinaris, die in der Schrift des Epiphanius auch deutlich kritisiert werden, in Kleinasien den Konflikt zwischen Basilius und Eustathius von Sebaste (374/5). Der Zustand der Kirche ist alles andere als übersichtlich. Der Sieg der Nicäner erfolgt erst unter dem Einfluß des Kaisers Theodosius I. (379-395) — nach 378.

Die Vorwürfe, die in diesem Zusammenhang gegenüber Origenes erhoben werden, bleiben zwar weiterhin lebendig, gerinnen aber mehr und mehr zu Stereotypen. Wie aktuell die jeweiligen Problemfelder waren, ist nicht immer leicht zu sagen. Spürbar ist bei Epiphanius, aber auch bei anderen, eine wachsende Kritik an der allegorischen Biblexegese im Sinne einer Verflüchtigung biblischer Heilszusagen in der origenistischen Tradition⁵⁵ und die Hinwendung zu einer stärkeren Betonung des Wort- und Geschichtssinnes der Bibel⁵⁶.

⁵⁴ I, 8; vgl. *Pan.* 64, 4, 3ff.; *ep.* 51, 4, 1ff. (Hieronymus). — Zur Überlieferung des Textes vgl. H. Görgeanns/H. Karpp, *Origenes. Vier Bücher von den Prinzipien* (TzF 24; 1976), S. 119 mit Anm. 25; dazu kritisch H.J. Vogt (s. Anm. 2), S. 105f.

⁵⁵ Vgl. aber auch den Origenisten Didymos, der gegenüber Apollinaris kritisch äußern kann: 'Wer sagt, daß der Gott-Logos als körperloser gekreuzigt worden sei, der allegorisiert das Kreuz. Wenn aber das Kreuz allegorisiert wird, wird auch die Auferstehung allegorisiert. Und wenn die Auferstehung allegorisiert wird, dann ist alles, was geschehen ist, nur ein Traum gewesen' (*PsT* 73, 19ff.); vgl. W. Bienert, 'Allegoria' und 'Anagoge' bei Didymus dem Blinden von Alexandrien (PTS 13; 1972), S. 125. — Das Interesse am Wortsinn und die Betonung der Realität biblischer Aussagen nimmt in dieser Zeit generell zu.

⁵⁶ Vgl. etwa die Kritik des Eustathius von Antiochien an der Allegorese des Origenes in seiner Auslegung von 1. Sam. 28 (ed. E. Klostermann, Kl. Texte 83, 1912, S. 16-62); ferner: W. Bienert, *Dionysius* (s. Anm. 45), S. 15f.

b) Das Bild des Origenes, das Epiphanius im *Panarion* entwirft, ist zwar etwas plastischer als im *Ancoratus*, weil anscheinend auch Informationen aus Eusebs *Kirchengeschichte* über das Leben des Origenes mit verarbeitet sind⁵⁷. Aber es setzt andere Akzente. Gemeinsame Grundlage für die Auseinandersetzung mit seiner Theologie ist auf weite Strecken der Traktat des Methodius *Über die Auferstehung*⁵⁸, nicht aber das Werk des Origenes selbst, wie *pan.* 64 deutlich zeigt.

Als Leitbild zum Verständnis der Person des Origenes dient vor allem der Beiname Adamantius, der 'Eherne'. Ihn deutet Epiphanius zunächst durchaus positiv einerseits als Ausdruck des besonderen Fleißes, mit dem sich Origenes der Auslegung der Bibel gewidmet habe, sowie auch einer strengen und konsequenten Askese. Als Beispiel dient im ersten Falle die Erarbeitung der *Hexapla*. Doch was auf den ersten Blick durchaus sinnvoll und positiv verstanden werden kann, kann leicht in sein Gegenteil umschlagen. Das zeigt sich im Bemühen des Origenes, 'keine der heiligen Schriften unausgelegt zu lassen'. Darin wird ein krankhafter Ehrgeiz sichtbar, der zu irreführenden, ja, 'tödlichen Exegesen' geführt habe⁵⁹.

Auch gegen die Askese des Origenes hat der Mönch Epiphanius grundsätzlich nichts einzuwenden. Aber strenges Fasten habe, wie man erzählt, dazu geführt, daß sich Origenes seinen Magen ruinierte⁶⁰. Als Ausdruck der übertriebenen Askese erscheint auch die Selbstkastration des Origenes, von der gelegentlich die Rede ist und über die Epiphanius ausführlich berichtet. Dabei nennt er verschiedene Gerüchte darüber, wie das geschehen sein könnte, durch einen chirurgischen Eingriff oder durch Medikamente, läßt die Antwort auf diese Frage aber letztlich offen. Über den historischen Origenes zeigt sich Epiphanius auch in diesem Fall nicht besonders gut informiert⁶¹. Insgesamt zeichnet Epiphanius von Origenes ein ambivalentes Bild, das auch die Nachricht einschließen kann, Origenes werde u.a. auch als Gegner Manis neben einer Reihe von Kirchenmännern wie Euseb von Cäsarea und Athanasius gerühmt⁶².

In *pan.* 64, 4, 3-11 stellt Epiphanius in der Zusammenstellung von J. Dechow einen Katalog von sieben Vorwürfen gegenüber der Theologie des Origenes zusammen⁶³. Sie betreffen:

⁵⁷ Allerdings bedarf dies noch einer kritischen Überprüfung im einzelnen; vgl. z.B. o. Anm. 46.

⁵⁸ Dechow (s. Anm. 30), S. 248ff.

⁵⁹ *Pan.* 64, 3, 8ff.

⁶⁰ *Pan.* 64, 5, 8. — Die polemischen Auslassungen über die Häresie des Origenes am Anfang von *pan.* 65, 1, sein 'prahlerisches Geschwätz und die vom Teufel eingegebenen Erkenntnisse' klingen wie nachträglich eingefügt.

⁶¹ *Pan.* 64, 3, 11ff.; vgl. Euseb, *h.e.* VI 8, 3. — Dechow (s. Anm. 30), S. 128-135 prüft den historischen Sachverhalt sehr gründlich.

⁶² Vgl. *Pan.* 66, 21, 3.

⁶³ Vgl. dazu Dechow (s. Anm. 30), S. 246ff. — Die Zusammenstellung lehnt sich z.T. aber auch an *ep.* 51, 4-7 (Hieronymus) an. — Vgl. auch den Katalog von acht Punkten bei Hieronymus, *Contra Joannem* 6-7, PL 23, 376D - 377A (Vogt aaO. S. 91f.).

1) die innertrinitarischen Beziehungen zwischen Vater, Sohn und Geist; u.a. mit dem Hinweis, daß nach Origenes einerseits der Sohn nicht den Vater sehen könne, der Geist nicht den Sohn, die Engel nicht den Geist und die Menschen nicht die Engel — und andererseits, daß der Sohn nicht aus dem Wesen des Vaters sei, sondern geschaffen (κτιστόν) und in allem anders als der Vater. Epiphanius verbindet auf diese Weise die Lehre des Origenes mit der des Arius bzw. des Arianismus, ohne jedoch genauer zu differenzieren.

2) Kritisiert wird die komplizierte Seelenlehre des Origenes, die Frage nach der Präexistenz der Seelen, dem vorgeburtlichen Sündenfall und die Frage nach der Auferstehung des Leibes. Was bedeutet aber das Bekenntnis der Kirche zur leiblichen Auferstehung, wenn die Einkörperung der Seelen als Strafe betrachtet wird?⁶⁴

3) Die Frage nach Adams Verlust der Gottebenbildlichkeit.

4) Die Auslegung von Gen 3, 21 (die Deutung der Fellkleider im Paradies)⁶⁵ —

5) die Frage nach der Auferstehung der Toten —

6) die allegorische Auslegung der Schrift, vor allem des Paradieses und der Gewässer — und

7) die allegorische Deutung der Wasser über den Himmeln und unter der Erde.

Von den hier genannten Vorwürfen stehen bei Epiphanius zwei im Vordergrund⁶⁶: a) der erste betrifft das trinitarische Problem, das eng verknüpft ist mit der Polemik gegen Origenes als Vater des Arianismus. Epiphanius verstärkt dieses Element dadurch, daß er in *pan.* 64 aus dem Kommentar des Origenes zu Psalm 1 zitiert⁶⁷ und die dort gefundene Bezeichnung für Christus als γενητός θεός streng arianisch interpretiert, obwohl ihm durchaus die Diskussion darüber bekannt ist, daß γενητός ('geworden') bei Origenes auch im Sinne von γεννητός ('gezeugt') gemeint sein kann⁶⁸. Offensichtlich liegt ihm daran, Origenes in die Nähe des Arianismus zu rücken. Und obwohl das trinitätstheologische Argument in der Folgezeit durch die weitere theologische Debatte sich ein Stück weit überlebt und veraltet⁶⁹, behält es doch seine Bedeutung für die Ketzerpolemik, nicht zuletzt auch deshalb, weil nach den Voraussetzungen und Hintergründen der Trinitätslehre des Origenes, ja seiner Theologie überhaupt, längst nicht mehr gefragt wird⁷⁰.

⁶⁴ Die Kritik an der Seelenlehre des Origenes begegnet schon früh; Epiphanius übernimmt sie offensichtlich aus der Tradition des Methodius von Olympos.

⁶⁵ Vgl. o. Anm. 53.

⁶⁶ Vgl. E. Clark (s. Anm. 50), S. 90ff.

⁶⁷ *Pan.* 64, 6-7.

⁶⁸ *Pan.* 64, 8, 4.

⁶⁹ Vgl. E. Clark (s. Anm. 50), S. 90: 'By the turn to the fifth century, subordinationism would appear more an archaizing motif than an issue of contemporary concern'.

⁷⁰ Das unterscheidet diese Debatte deutlich von der Haltung des Athanasius gegenüber Origenes; vgl. W. Bienert, *Athanasius von Alexandrien und Origenes*, in: *StPatr* 26 (Leuven, 1993), S. 360-364.

Der andere Aspekt betrifft die Lehre der Bedeutung des Körpers vor dem Hintergrund der Lehre des Origenes von der Körperlosigkeit Gottes und der Frage nach der Bedeutung der Körper für die gefallenen Geistwesen. Je mehr die Frage nach der Realität des Körperlichen gestellt wird — bis hin zur Diskussion über die Anthropomorphismen im biblischen Gottesbild — und weiterhin zur Frage nach dem Verlust der Ebenbildlichkeit Adams durch den Sündenfall, umso mehr entwickelt sich der Streit um die Lehren des Origenes zu einem Streit um die Frage nach dem Verhältnis von Geist und Leib, von Intellektualität und Askese, aber auch zur Diskussion über den Sinn und den Wert der Jungfräulichkeit gegenüber dem ehelichen Leben⁷¹. Hier, so scheint es, werden am Ende des 4. Jahrhunderts neu aufbrechende Streitfragen mit dem Erbe des Origenes in Verbindung gebracht, die ursprünglich damit nicht zusammenhängen. Das zeigt sich auch daran, daß es vor allem verschiedene Kreise innerhalb des Mönchtums waren, unter denen dieser Streit zuerst ausbrach⁷². Epiphanius erscheint dabei als genuiner Vertreter des Mönchtums, der schon mit 20 Jahren ein Kloster im heimischen Eleutheropolis in Palästina gründete und später (367) Bischof von Salamis auf Zypern wurde. Zu seiner Zeit war er ein weit hin anerkannter Bischof der nicänischen Orthodoxie.

2.3. Epiphanius in den anti-origenistischen Streitigkeiten an der Wende vom 4./5. Jahrhundert

Wer Epiphanius als Anführer der antiorigenistischen Bewegung am Ende des 4. Jahrhunderts betrachtet, belegt dies vor allem mit dessen Brief an Johannes von Jerusalem, den Hieronymus überbrachte und der deshalb in seiner Briefsammlung überliefert ist. Er ist so etwas wie ein Schlüsseltext — nicht nur, weil er am Beginn des in der Folgezeit immer heftiger werdenden Kampfes gegen das Erbe des Origenes und seine Anhänger steht. Er enthält auch eine Zusammenfassung der Vorwürfe gegen Origenes aus der Sicht des Epiphanius und enthüllt zugleich einige der Hintergründe, die zum Verständnis dieses Streites und dem besonderen Engagement des Epiphanius wichtig sind⁷³.

Zunächst fällt auf, daß zwischen dem *Panarion* c. 64, das wohl im Jahre 376 verfaßt wurde, und diesem Brief vom Jahre 394 rund 18 Jahre liegen, in denen sich die Situation der Kirche im Osten nachhaltig verändert hatte. Epiphanius gehörte zu den führenden und angesehensten Bischöfen dieser Zeit, auch wenn

⁷¹ Vgl. die Auseinandersetzung des Hieronymus mit Jovinian; dazu: E. Clark (s. Anm. 50), S. 98-99, 129-132 u.ö.

⁷² Eine besondere Rolle scheint dabei Hieronymus gespielt zu haben, der einerseits ein 'Origeneskennner' war, sich andererseits jedoch 'in der Auseinandersetzung geradezu hinter Epiphanius und Theophilus von Alexandrien versteckt' (H.J. Vogt, s. Anm. 2, S. 93; vgl. 91ff.).

⁷³ Dazu gehört auch die Tatsache, daß er zunächst (*ep.* 51,1-2) seinen Eingriff in die Kompetenzen des Ortsbischofs zu rechtfertigen versucht, als er Paulinian, den Bruder des Hieronymus, im Bethlehemer Kloster zum Priester geweiht hatte.

seine Versuche, zwischen den Eustathianern und den Anhängern des Apollinaris zu vermitteln und das antiochenische Schisma zu überwinden, gescheitert waren. Reisen nach Rom zu Papst Damasus halfen, die Kontakte zwischen den Kirchen in Ost und West zu fördern. Sie unterstreichen das Interesse des Epiphanius an der Einheit der Kirche und führten auch zu einem dauerhaften Kontakt zwischen ihm und Hieronymus, der bald darauf nach Bethlehem in Palästina übersiedelte.

Es ist nicht möglich, auf die Einzelheiten der Entwicklung, die z.T. auch noch genauer erforscht werden müßten, hier weiter einzugehen. Über die Zeit zwischen einem Besuch in Palästina im Jahre 385 und dem Beginn des Konflikts mit Johannes von Jerusalem im Frühjahr 393 ist wenig bekannt⁷⁴. Das Urteil des Epiphanius über Origenes hat sich in dieser Zeit kaum verändert. Sein Respekt gegenüber der *Hexapla* des Origenes ist noch erkennbar, auch wenn sie nach seiner Meinung nahezu der einzig konstruktive Beitrag des Origenes sei⁷⁵.

Stärkere Beachtung verdient in diesem Zusammenhang die Haltung des Epiphanius in der Bilderfrage. Denn die vielfach bezeugte Bilderfeindlichkeit des Epiphanius, die durch das Ereignis in Anablata unterstrichen wird, wo Epiphanius kurz vor einem Besuch in Jerusalem in einer Kirche einen Vorhang mit einem Christusbild bzw. dem Bild eines Heiligen von der Wand gerissen hatte⁷⁶, steht wohl nicht zufällig im Zusammenhang mit seinem Anti-Origenismus⁷⁷.

Bei der Zusammenstellung der gegen Origenes gerichteten Vorwürfe (*ep.* 51, 4-7) knüpft Epiphanius zunächst an seine Ausführungen in *pan.* 64, 4 an, daß nach Ansicht des Origenes — der Sohn nicht den Vater sehen könne und der Hl. Geist nicht den Sohn. Er kritisiert wie dort die Lehre von der Präexistenz der Seelen und dem vorgeburtlichen Sündenfall, die allegorische Deutung der Fellkleider in Gen 3, 21 mit dem Hinweis auf Gen. 2, 23, wo Adam von Eva sagt: 'Das ist Bein von meinem Bein und Fleisch von meinem Fleisch' und darüber hinaus die allegorische Interpretation des Paradieses. Auch die leibliche Auferstehung wird gegenüber Origenes noch einmal unterstrichen.

⁷⁴ Vgl. Dechow (s. Anm. 30), S. 392-397.

⁷⁵ Vgl. Epiphanius, *De mensibus et ponderibus* 19. Das Werk stammt wohl aus dieser Zeit; vgl. c. 20.

⁷⁶ Er berichtet darüber selbst in dem genannten Brief an Johannes von Jerusalem; *ep.* 51, 9 (Hieronymus).

⁷⁷ 'Epiphanius' iconoclasm displays the same spirit as his anti-Origenism. Both iconoclasm and anti-Origenism are in turn part of an anti-heretical and anti-pagan attitude against idolatrous creature-worship', Dechow (s. Anm. 30), S. 396. — Vgl. auch H.G. Thümmel, *Die bilderfeindlichen Schriften des Epiphanius von Salamis*, in: *ByzSl* 47 (1986), S. 169-188; ders.: *Die Frühgeschichte der ostkirchlichen Bilderlehre* (TU 139; 1992). — Interessant ist in diesem Zusammenhang auch die Bilderfeindlichkeit des Arianismus; vgl. H.G. Thümmel, *Eusebios' Brief an Kaiserin Konstantia*, in: *Klio* 66 (1984), S. 210-222.

Neu sind jedoch, wie E. Clark betont⁷⁸, drei Vorwürfe, die z.T. zwar an *pan.* 64 anknüpfen, aber dann doch darüber hinausgehen:

a) daß die Lehre von der ursprünglichen Körperlosigkeit der Menschen und ihrer nachträglichen Einkörperung nicht nur die Leiblichkeit herabsetze, sondern auch eine Herabsetzung der menschlichen Zeugung bedeute⁷⁹;

b) daß auch der Teufel gerettet werden könne und damit den Gerechtfertigten im Himmel gleichgestellt würde⁸⁰ — und

c) daß Adam seine Gott-Ebenbildlichkeit verloren habe⁸¹.

In allen diesen Fällen handelt es sich um Streitpunkte, die nicht auf Origenes selbst zurückgehen, sondern deutlich die Diskussionen über Sinn und Grenzen mönchischer Askese am ausgehenden 4. Jahrhundert widerspiegeln. Das bestätigt noch einmal, wie sehr gerade bei Epiphanius aktuelle Fragen seinen Anti-Origenismus bestimmen, ohne daß jedoch die älteren Vorwürfe aufgegeben würden. Insofern erweist sich der zypriotische Bischof als Traditionalist und zugleich als Anwalt der 'Simpliciores' in der Kirche⁸².

Über Person und Werk des Origenes war Epiphanius offensichtlich nur unzureichend informiert. Im allgemeinen schöpfte er aus Sekundärquellen, ohne diese kritisch zu prüfen, und vertraute auf seine Informanten im Umkreis der Eustathianer und Apollinaristen und zuletzt wohl vor allem auch auf Hieronymus. Es scheint, als sei Origenes im Laufe der Zeit immer mehr zu einer Symbolfigur geworden für den Einfluß gnostischen oder auch philosophischen Denkens auf die Lehren sowie übertriebener asketischer Praxis auf das Leben der Kirche. Vermutlich ist Epiphanius mit dem Streit um Origenes im ägyptischen und palästinischen Mönchtum aufgewachsen, so daß sein Origenesbild von dort bereits vorgeprägt war. In den Auseinandersetzungen um das Erbe des Origenes hat er dann durch sein allgemeines Ansehen, aber auch durch eine gewisse Naivität eine wichtige Rolle gespielt. Die tieferen Hintergründe des Streites um Origenes hat Epiphanius wohl allenfalls geahnt. Durchschaut

⁷⁸ E. Clark (s. Anm. 50), S. 95ff.

⁷⁹ Vgl. dazu den göttlichen Auftrag: 'Seid fruchtbar und mehret euch' (Gen 1, 28; vgl. 9, 7), auf den ausdrücklich hingewiesen wird. Dieser Hinweis überrascht, wenn man davon ausgeht, daß die Auseinandersetzungen im monastischen Umfeld anzusiedeln sind. Eher deuten sie hin auf die Auseinandersetzungen zwischen Hieronymus und Jovinian über den Wert der Ehe. Origenes erscheint in diesem Brief als Vertreter einer Leibfeindlichkeit, die Hieronymus zunächst selbst mit seinem Lob auf die Überlegenheit der Keuschheit gefördert hatte, die aber nun zu verwerfen sei. — Zur Diskussion darüber vgl. E. Clark (s. Anm. 50), S. 98f. — Für die Nähe zwischen Hieronymus und Epiphanius spricht auch, daß Hieronymus diesen Brief des Epiphanius sehr rasch ins Lateinische übersetzte und verbreiten ließ.

⁸⁰ *Ep.* 51, 5, 1 (Hieronymus). Dieser Gedanke findet sich bei Epiphanius in den früheren Schriften nicht.

⁸¹ Dieser Vorwurf begegnet auch früher schon; vgl. *pan.* 64, 4, 9. Er erinnert aber zugleich an den Anthropomorphiten-Streit, der zu unrecht mit Origenes in Verbindung gebracht wurde. — Dazu: J. Dechow (s. Anm. 30), S. 302-315.

⁸² Vgl. dazu Hieronymus, *vir. ill.* 114: 'Epiphanius ... scripsit adversus omnes haereses libros et multa alia, quae ab eruditis propter res, a simplicioribus propter verba quoque lectantur'.

hat er sie nicht. — Eine der tieferen Ursachen für diesen Konflikt liegt gewiß auch in der Veränderung des origenistischen Erbes durch Evagrius Pontikos⁸³.

3. Zusammenfassender Rückblick

Wer nach der Bedeutung des Origenes im Werk des Epiphanius fragt, sollte nicht von einem Gesamtbild ausgehen, das in der Regel aus der Rückschau gewonnen ist. Er sollte auch nicht nur nach seinem Anteil an den origenistischen Streitigkeiten am Ende des 4. Jahrhunderts fragen, sondern mit Elizabeth Clark die Entstehung des Origenesbildes in seinen verschiedenen Entwicklungsstufen im Auge behalten. Es scheint, als sei Epiphanius in seinem Urteil immer sehr stark beeinflusst gewesen — sowohl von den ihm jeweils zugänglichen Quellen und Überlieferungen als auch von unmittelbaren Erfahrungen und Erlebnissen. Hinzu kommt seine Abhängigkeit von den unterschiedlichsten Informanten und fremden Einflüssen, denen er sich oft recht unkritisch gegenüber verhielt.

Die Behandlung der zeitgenössischen Häresien im *Ancoratus*, aber auch im *Panarion* tragen darüber hinaus deutliche Spuren der kirchlichen Auseinandersetzungen in den 70er Jahren des 4. Jahrhunderts — vor (!) der endgültigen Durchsetzung der nicänischen Orthodoxie — und sind mit davon geprägt. Bisweilen kann der Leser die engagierte Leidenschaft des asketisch bestimmten Kirchenmannes deutlich spüren.

Die Tatsache, daß Hieronymus ihn in seiner Schrift *De viris illustribus* vom Jahre 392 als bereits sehr alt bezeichnet⁸⁴ — zu einer Zeit, als Hieronymus selbst noch ein Verehrer des Origenes und Didymus des Blinden war⁸⁵, — sollte im übrigen nicht allein aus biographischem Interesse im Auge behalten werden. Sie deutet auch darauf hin, daß der Ausbruch der origenistischen Streitigkeiten nicht einfach das Ergebnis einer Intrige des Epiphanius war. Hier hat eine ganze Reihe von Faktoren eine Rolle gespielt⁸⁶, nicht zuletzt tiefgreifende Konflikte innerhalb des ägyptischen und palästinischen Mönchtums über das Erbe des Origenes und ausgehend vielleicht noch von Rivalitäten zwischen Ägypten und Palästina, die sich bis in die Lebzeiten des Origenes zurückverfolgen lassen und wohl auch damit zusammenhängen, daß Origenes einst aus Alexandrien nach Cäsarea vertrieben wurde⁸⁷.

⁸³ Vgl. A. Guillaumont, *Les 'Kephalaia Gnostica' d'Evagre le Pontique et l'histoire de l'origénisme chez les Grecs et chez les Syriens* (PatSorb 2; Paris, 1962); E. Clark (s. Anm. 50).

⁸⁴ '... in extrema iam senectute' (*vir. ill.* 114).

⁸⁵ Vgl. *vir. ill.* 54 (Origenes); 56 ('Ambrosius, primum Marcionites, dein ab Origene correctus...'); 109 (Didymus); vgl. ferner: Hieronymus, *ep.* 33.

⁸⁶ Eine wichtige Rolle hat nicht zuletzt auch Hieronymus gespielt; vgl. o. Anm. 72 und 79.

⁸⁷ Vgl. zu diesem Konflikt u.a. W. Bienert, *Dionysius* (s. Anm. 45), S. 95ff.

Vor diesem Hintergrund ergeben sich für die weitere Erforschung des origenistischen Erbes im 4. Jahrhundert und die Frage nach dem Ausbruch der origenistischen Streitigkeiten am Ende dieses Jahrhunderts folgende genauer zu untersuchende Problemfelder:

a) Die Frage nach dem Verhältnis von Arianismus, Neuarrianismus und Origenismus. Ein wichtiger Aspekt dürfte in diesem Zusammenhang die Frage nach den Beziehungen zwischen den sog. Pneumatomachen und dem Erbe des Origenes sein.

b) Die Frage nach der Bedeutung des Origenes innerhalb des ägyptischen⁸⁸ und des palästinischen Mönchtums — sowie auf ihre Beziehungen zu Gnosis und Manichäismus. Die Rolle des Pachomianers Schenute für die weiteren Auseinandersetzungen um Origenes innerhalb des ägyptischen Mönchtums ist ebenfalls zu beachten und wird auch bereits beachtet⁸⁹.

c) Außer den kirchenpolitischen Implikationen beim Ausbruch des sog. 1. origenistischen Streits⁹⁰, den Rivalitäten zwischen Alexandrien, Jerusalem und Konstantinopel, sind nicht zuletzt die Aspekte des Origenismus im Auge zu behalten, die vor allem auf Evagrius Ponticus († 399) zurückgehen, worauf A. Guillaumont bereits hingewiesen hatte⁹¹.

Die Frage, wie Origenes zum Häretiker wurde⁹², läßt sich nicht einfach mit einem Hinweis auf Epiphanius beantworten. Sie erweist sich im übrigen auch nicht erst für die Zeit Justinians im Umkreis des Konzils von 553 als außerordentlich kompliziert. Auch die Vorgeschichte — bis zum Ausbruch der origenistischen Streitigkeiten am Ende des 4. Jahrhunderts — weist Verschiebungen und immer wieder neue Interpretationen des origenistischen Erbes auf, die noch einer genaueren Untersuchung bedürfen. Das gilt auch und nicht zuletzt für die Frage nach dem historischen Wert des Origenesbildes, das Epiphanius gezeichnet hat. Denn es hat eine erstaunliche Verbreitung erfahren und steht bis heute oft noch ungebrochen in Geltung.

⁸⁸ Vgl. J. Dechow (s. Anm. 30), S. 139-240; ferner die wichtige Untersuchung von S. Rubenson, *The Letters of St. Antony. Origenist Theology, Monastic Tradition and the Making of a Saint* (BHEL 24; Lund, 1990).

⁸⁹ Vgl. E. Clark (s. Anm. 50), S. 151-158.

⁹⁰ Vgl. dazu die Übersicht bei J. Labourt, *St. Jérôme. Lettres*, Bd. IV (Paris 1954), S. 189-194.

⁹¹ Vgl. auch hier die Untersuchung von E. Clark (s. Anm. 50), die vor allem auf den grundlegenden Arbeiten von A. Guillaumont (s. Anm. 83) zur Entstehung des Origenismus aufbaut; 43-84 (u.a. zur Anthropomorphimusdebatte innerhalb des Mönchtums).

⁹² Vgl. H.J. Vogt (s. Anm. 2).

Realized Eschatology in Maximus the Confessor, *Ad Thalassium* 22

Paul M. BLOWERS, Johnson City, Tenn.

In Maximus the Confessor's thought, speculation into the nature of time, and more specifically into the dialectical relation between quantifiable or historical time (*χρόνος*) and the transcendent extension of creaturely movement in a sublime eternity beyond history but short of God's pure timelessness, is fundamental as concerns his philosophical rebuttal of the teleology of the Origenists¹. In one of the *Quaestiones ad Thalassium*, however, the issue of times and ages is raised in a different (non-polemical) key, no less theological and indeed 'eschatological'² in interest. The context now is monastic *lectio divina*. Thalassius the Libyan hegumen, Maximus's close confidant, puts a question to him from his meditation on ostensibly discrepant scriptural language about the consummation of time: 'If (according to Eph 2:7) *in the ages to come* (ἐν τοῖς αἰῶσι τοῖς ἐπερχομένοις) God will show his riches, how is it that (according to 1 Cor 10:11) *the end(s) of the ages has (already) come upon us* (εἰς ἡμᾶς τὰ τέλη τῶν αἰώνων κατήνησεν)?'³ The question in effect

¹ See in particular *Cap. theol.* 1.5-7 (PG 90.1085A-B); *ibid.* 1.68-70 (1180C-1109A); and *ibid.* 2.86-2.88 (1165A-1168B) on God's freedom from temporal or aeonic limitation and on the trans-temporal 'extension' of human existence. Maximus's metaphysics of time and eternity, particularly in its polemical context, is analyzed in detail in the studies of Polycarp Sherwood, *The Earlier Ambigua of St. Maximus the Confessor and His Refutation of Origenism* (Studia Anselmiana 36; Rome, 1955), esp. pp. 92-154; and Hans Urs von Balthasar, *Kosmische Liturgie: Das Weltbild Maximus' des Bekenner* (2nd ed., Einsiedeln, 1961), esp. pp. 132-138, 343-359, 558-560, 603-604, 607-609.

² Only in recent scholarship has there been a serious attempt to articulate more precisely the 'eschatological' dimension of Maximus's theology. Alain Riou, in his *Le monde et l'église selon Maxime Le Confesseur* (Théologie historique 22; Paris, 1973), esp. pp. 123-200, describes Maximus's eschatology in the broad sense of the whole ('kairological') achievement of the divine kenosis in Christ, viz. a new mode of human existence adopted in the Spirit, the perfection of which is prefigured in the ecclesial, liturgical and sacramental life of the Church. J.M. Garrigues, in his *Maxime le Confesseur: La charité, avenir divin de l'homme* (Théologie historique 38; Paris, 1976), similarly focuses on the 'eschatological' mystery of deification opened up through the incarnation. Lars Thunberg, in his *Man and the Cosmos: The Vision of St. Maximus the Confessor* (Crestwood, N.Y., 1985), pp. 144-148, also asserts that while eschatology in the classic sense of speculation into the nature of the last times plays a minor role in Maximus, one can virtually equate Maximus's eschatology with his theology of divinization, his properly mystical theology.

³ *Qu. Thal.* 22 (CCG 7.137,2-3). 1 Cor 10:11 was normally cited by the Fathers to justify spiritual exegesis of the Old Testament, since the ancient truth had now in the 'end of the ages' come upon the faithful in all its eschatological newness: e.g., Origen, *Hom. in Exod.* 7.4 (SC 321.218); Basil of Caesarea, *Bapt.* 2.8.2 (SC 357.248); Gregory of Nyssa, *De virg.* 6 (GNO 8, pt. 1., 280); *ibid.*

points up the classic tension in Pauline thought between future hope and a 'realized' eschatology, a tension of which early Christian readers were hardly ignorant⁴.

Maximus in his response does not embark on a grammatical analysis; yet his theological interpretation clearly turns on the homonymy of the term 'ages' (αἰῶνες) in these two scriptural texts. Speculation on the multiple meanings of 'the ages' in Scripture was doubtless known to Maximus from his critical reading of earlier authorities. Origen, in a striking passage in the *De principiis* concerning the foundations of the cosmos, had discerned in Scripture a threefold sense of 'the ages': (1) the world now as a *saeculum* (αἰών) and the end of many αἰῶνες insofar as the passion of Christ has consummated those ages (Heb 9:26); (2) the definitely future 'ages to come' (Eph 2:7); and (3) the final consummation that will take place beyond all ages, evinced in the Psalmist's allusions to an age beyond the present one (Ps 113:26; 120:8; 124:2, LXX), in Jesus's references to the future state in which his unity with the Father will also embrace the faithful (Jn 17:21, 24), and in Paul's projection of a trans-aeonic state in which 'God is all in all' (1 Cor 15:28)⁵. Gregory of Nyssa closely associated αἰών/αἰῶνες and χρόνος with διάστημα (interval or distention) as designating the ontological and epistemological limits of created being, transcended by the infinite God whom the Psalmist praised as King before the age of time (πρὸ αἰῶνος, Ps 73:12, LXX) and Ruler forever (εἰς τὸν αἰῶνα) in a pure eternity (Ps 9:37; 28:10, LXX)⁶. Pseudo-Dionysius had determined that αἰών was frequently used in the Bible of the whole course of earthly time, distinct from χρόνος, which evoked the process or regularity of change reflected in birth, death, and differentiation. Yet Scripture also held the promise of a share in the unchanging 'eternity' that is beyond the limits of time, and even spoke of God himself as the very time and eternity, the 'King of the ages' (ὁ βασι-

18 (GNO 8, pt. 1, 322); *idem*, *Cant. prol.* (GNO 6.4); *Hom. in Cant.* 3 (GNO 6.76); *Hom. in Cant.* 7 (GNO 6.231); *Hom. in Cant.* 9 (GNO 6.267); Maximus, *Qu. Thal.* 52 (CCG 7.425,173ff).

⁴ Cf. Thalassius's similar quandary in *Qu. Thal.* 9 (CCG 7.79,2-7): 'Why does St. John say, "Brothers, we are children of God now; what we shall be did not yet appear" (1 Jn 3:2)? If what we shall be did not appear yet, how is it that St. Paul says that "God has revealed to us through the Spirit. For the Spirit searches everything, even the depths of God" (1 Cor 2:10)? How also does Paul treat such things concerning "what we shall be"?' On the intermittent appearance of the tension of realized and futurist eschatology in patristic literature, see Brian Daley, *The Hope of the Early Church: A Handbook of Patristic Eschatology* (Cambridge, 1991), esp. pp. 15-17, 42-43, 71-72, 77-78, 130, 218.

⁵ *De princ.* 2.3.5 (SC 252.260-262).

⁶ *Contra Eunomium*, Bk. 1 (PG 45.364A-368B, 456C-457A). Creation, says Gregory, is commensurate with the 'duration of the ages' (τὸ τῶν αἰώνων διάστημα: 364D) or 'spaces of time' (τῶν χρονικῶν διαστήματα: 365B); indeed αἰών designates precisely the 'boundary of the movement and operation of human thought' (ὄρος τῆς τῶν ἀνθρώπων λογισμῶν κινήσεως, καὶ ἐνεργείας). God's eternity (τὸ αἰδίον), however, is an infinity which defies all diastemic limitations.

λεὺς τῶν αἰώνων, 1 Tim 1:17) and 'predecessor of the ages' (ὁ ὑπάρχων πρὸ τῶν αἰώνων, Ps 54:20, LXX), in whom all creatures participate⁷.

Elsewhere in his own works, Maximus acknowledges the theologically fertile language of time and eternity in the Bible. For our purposes an important parallel text is found in his *Capita theologica et oeconomica*, where he clarifies that Eph 2:7 and kindred passages refer to future aeons beyond historical time, while texts like Heb 9:26 (and he could have included 1 Cor 10:11 in question here) allude to the cosmic ages that have already come to term through the work of Christ⁸. Maximus presumes this basic distinction between completed and future aeons in answering Thalassius's query here, but as is typical of his exegesis in the *Ad Thalassium*, he offers more than one possibility of interpretation without favoring any one insight as exhaustive. The upshot is an exceptional example of Maximus's method of working through a scriptural ἀπορία dialectically and anagogically at the same time.

In his first proposed interpretation, recalling the dual-dimensional mystery of incarnation and deification that is well-grounded in patristic tradition and already so central to his own theology, Maximus draws a distinction between the 'ages of incarnation' and the 'ages of deification' in the divine pre-cosmic plan and applies it to the texts in question. Accordingly, 1 Cor 10:11 indicates that the 'ages of incarnation' have already reached their conclusion (πέρας) for us in the coming of Jesus Christ, while Eph 2:7 signals the future 'ages of deification' that have not yet (οὐπω) arrived, when God will finish the work of his incarnation by elevating and divinizing humanity by grace⁹.

Temporal language, the language of continuity and consecutiveness in the divine *oikonomia*, is decisive for Maximus since it conveys the prophetic drama of revelation; but it is likewise limiting in its capacity for disclosing the truths of *theologia*. The phrase τὰ τέλη τῶν αἰώνων in 1 Cor 10:11 bears this out. These are 'ages', Maximus notes, obviously not as we normally conceive them (οὐχ ἀπλῶς παρ' ἡμῶν νοουμένων τῶν αἰώνων) but ages purposed 'for the outworking of the mystery of God's embodiment' (ἐπ' ἐνεργεία... τοῦ τῆς ἐνσωματώσεως μυστήριου)¹⁰. Paul means that the incarnation is a final goal (τέλος) of the totality of time, not that the incarnation has put an end to a series of ages, simply to be followed sequentially by a new series. Moreover, the aorist tense in 1 Cor 10:11 (τὰ τέλη...κατήντησεν) and (we can imply) the futurity of the ages indicated in Eph 2:7 are relativized in the pure *simultaneity* of the incarnational mystery itself. Maximus clarifies this in his second proposed interpretation, when he says that Jesus Christ is the

'beginning, middle, and end of all the ages, both those that have transpired and those yet to come' (ἀρχὴ καὶ μεσότης καὶ τέλος ἐστὶ πάντων τῶν αἰώνων τῶν τε παρελθόντων καὶ ὄντων καὶ ἐσομένων ὁ κύριος ἡμῶν Ἰησοῦς ὁ Χριστός)¹¹. Thus it follows that 'specifically the "end (τέλος) of the ages"¹² which will *in actuality* (ἐνεργεία) come about *by grace* for the deification of the worthy "has come upon us" *in potency* (δυνάμει) *through faith*¹³. Elsewhere Maximus speaks of the Kingdom of God as already near or 'within' (cf. Matt 3:2; Lk 17:21) those who are worthy of it through a 'disposition of relation' (διάθεσις σχέσεως)¹⁴. In the unfolding mystery of divinization, the 'realized' and future dimensions of the 'end of the ages' remain dialectically juxtaposed; yet they are coextensive so far as the spiritual life in Christ is concerned.

In his third interpretation, Maximus posits that in 1 Cor 10:11 and Eph 2:7 we have the difference between the 'ages of activity (τὸ ποιεῖν)' and the 'ages of passivity (τὸ πάσχειν)' (or between 'ages of the flesh' and 'ages in the Spirit')¹⁵. This is his most philosophically adventuresome proposal since it takes the issue both of the distinction and the 'overlap' of time and eternity, of the realized and yet-to-be-realized goal of human deification, to a new mystical level.

Existing here and now, we arrive at the 'end of the ages' (1 Cor 10:11) precisely as active agents (ποιοῦντες), and reach the end of the exertion of our power and activity. But in the 'ages to come' (Eph 2:7) we shall undergo transformation into the grace of deification, and no longer be active but passive (πάσχομεν); and, for this reason, we shall not cease from being deified. At that point our passivity (τὸ πάθος) will transcend our nature and there will be no limit to the divine activity in infinitely deifying the worthy¹⁶.

Polycarp Sherwood, commenting on this text as illustrative of Maximus's doctrine of 'ecstasy', remarked that the contrast here between activity and passivity is stark and appears at first sight to lack nuance¹⁷. Indeed Maximus further intensifies the contrast of 'active' and 'passive' modes of human existence

¹¹ Ibid. 22 (CCG 7.139,60-62); cf. ibid. 19 (CCG 7.119,28-30): πάντων γὰρ τῶν ὄντων καὶ λεγομένων καὶ νοουμένων ἐστὶ καὶ ἀρχὴ καὶ μεσότης καὶ τέλος, ὡς δημιουργός, ὁ λόγος.

¹² Paul uses the plural τὰ τέλη in 1 Cor 10:11, but Maximus projects as a singular, specific (κατ' εἶδος) goal of the incarnation the mystery of deification.

¹³ *Qu. Thal.* 22 (CCG 7.139,62-65); emphasis added. Cf. *Cap. theol.* 2.92 (PG 90.1169A): 'The Kingdom of our God and Father is present in potency (δυνάμει) in all who believe, and is present in actuality (ἐνεργεία) in those who have by disposition wholly put off the natural life of the soul and of the body, and grasped only the life of the Spirit, being thus able to say, "It is no longer I who live, but Christ who lives in me" (Gal 2:20)'.

¹⁴ *Cap. theol.* 2.91 (PG 90.1168D-1169A); emphasis added. Von Balthasar (*Kosmische Liturgie*, 513), finds here a probable dependence on Origen, *Comm. in Matt.* 12.14, who says that the Kingdom approaches not temporally but ἐπὶ τὰς πράξεις καὶ τὴν διάθεσιν.

¹⁵ *Qu. Thal.* 22 (CCG 7.139,66-141,99).

¹⁶ Ibid. (CCG 7.141,74-82); cf. *Amb.* 7 (PG 91.1088C-1089A).

¹⁷ Sherwood, *The Earlier Ambigua*, pp. 133-134.

⁷ *Div. nom.* 10.2-3 (PG 3.937B-940A); ibid. 5.4-5 (817C-820A).

⁸ *Cap. theol.* 2.85 (PG 90.1164C-D). With good reason von Balthasar (*Kosmische Liturgie*, p. 558) finds in this text a probable critical reminiscence on Origen's comments on 'the ages' in Scripture in *De princ.* 2.3.5.

⁹ *Qu. Thal.* 22 (CCG 7.137,4-139,59).

¹⁰ Ibid. (CCG 7.137,23-27).

by pairing it with the dialectic of nature and grace. Here and now, he writes, human beings enjoy *by nature* a rational faculty productive of virtues, and a higher spiritual faculty ultimately capable of receiving all knowledge and of traversing creaturely nature and going even beyond the ages of time. In the future aeon of passivity, however, we will transcend human nature because our nature has no faculty capable of deifying itself; we will be *utterly passive to divine grace*¹⁸. Yet just when the contrast between activity and passivity, nature and grace, seems most pronounced, Maximus adds the crucial caveat that in such a state of sublime grace, human nature, rather than being annihilated, is actually illuminated and elevated beyond its limits 'in excess of glory' (κατὰ τὴν ὑπερβολὴν τῆς δόξης)¹⁹. The passivity or 'passion' of divinization is really for Maximus an eternal perfection of the active faculties in human nature that are primed for divine communion.

This point is especially significant in view of the temptation of some contemporary scholarship to find already in Maximus a quasi-Thomistic dialectic of nature and grace. Though a clear delineation of the two principles certainly appears in Maximus, the overall thrust of his thought, as I have argued elsewhere, is toward viewing human 'nature' in a neo-Cappadocian manner as actualized in the graced 'frontier' between time-bound creation and the uncreated eternity of God. The true dialectic is that of continuity (with creation) and transcendence (of the creation). Inspired by Gregory of Nyssa, Maximus projects a zone of eternal sabbatical motion or 'moving rest' in which the features of spatio-temporal extension are gradually collapsed, and in which activity and passivity compenetrate²⁰. The only dimensional measure, as it were, becomes the reciprocity and relation (σχέσις) of creatures to the Logos-Christ who is their singular τέλος. To ascribe such a state of being purely to a future glory

¹⁸ *Qu. Thal.* 22 (CCG 7.141,74-94).

¹⁹ *Ibid.* (CCG 7.141,94-98); cf. also *Opusc. theol. et pol.* 1 (PG 91.33C-36A). See also Maximus's Greek monastic contemporary, Anastasius Sinalta (*Viae dux* 2, PG 89.77B-C), who similarly insists that 'Deification is the elevation to the higher, by no means involving a diminution of human nature or its mutation.... To be divinized means to be uplifted to a greater glory, and certainly not to be altered from one's proper nature' (Θέωσις ἐστίν, ἢ ἐπὶ τὸ κρεῖττον ὑψώσις, οὐ μὴν φύσεως μείωσις, ἢ μετάστασις.... θεωθὲν γέγεται τὸ, πρὸς μείζονα δόξαν ἀνυψωθὲν, οὐ μὴν τῆς οἰκείας φύσεως ἀλλοιωθὲν).

²⁰ Cf. *Amb.* 67 (PG 90.1401A) and *Qu. Thal.* 59 (CCG 22.53,130-134) on the timeless extension ('moving rest' or 'reposing motion') that characterizes the frontier between creaturely history and God's pure timelessness and infinity. See also Paul Plass, "'Moving Rest" in Maximus the Confessor', *Classica et mediaevalia* 35 (1984), pp. 177-190; idem, 'Transcendent Time in Maximus the Confessor', *The Thomist* 44 (1980), pp. 259-277. On the precise connections of Maximus's speculations to Gregory of Nyssa's doctrine of perpetual progress and of the 'openness' of human 'nature', see P.M. Blowers, 'Gregory of Nyssa, Maximus the Confessor, and the Concept of "Perpetual Progress"', *Vigiliae Christianae* 46 (1992), pp. 151-171 (and esp. 162-165). On the compenetration of the categories of activity and passivity in Maximus's eschatological perspective, see P.M. Blowers, 'Gentiles of the Soul: Maximus the Confessor on the Substructure and Transformation of the Human Passions', *Journal of Early Christian Studies* 4 (1996), pp. 81-82.

beyond death, however, would be inaccurate, for this is in fact a mystery that spans the whole 'natural' life of human creatures. Ontologically speaking, the mystery of deification coincides with the full 'history' of human nature, a nature which receives definition precisely by its ongoing openness to gracious restoration and transformation.

Returning to our text in the *Ad Thalassium*, Maximus does not here overburden his friend with the deeper philosophical ramifications of his realized eschatology. Instead, his conclusion brings his various interpretative insights into spiritual and pastoral focus. Though it does not seem (experientially) that the 'end of the ages' has already 'come upon us' since we have not yet received that grace which defies time and nature, its benefits are already pre-figured in the divinely revealed modes (τρόποι) of virtue and principles (λόγοι) of creation. These being the objects of the active and contemplative life, they are the media through which God is 'ever willing to become a human being in those who are worthy' (ἀεὶ θέλων ἐν τοῖς ἀξίοις ἀξίοις ἄνθρωπος γίνεται). The future mystery of deification is once again understood through the mystery of incarnation, here and now realized as the divine indwelling of the pious²¹. Given the centrality of the Pauline theology of the recapitulation of creation in Christ (Eph 1-2; Col 1) in Maximus's thought²², it is not surprising that such becomes the hermeneutical lens through which he resolves an ostensible ἀπορία in Paul's terminology concerning the 'ages' of and beyond time. As Maximus sees it, the dramatic gospel behind Paul's realized eschatology is the divine penetration of time and eternity at all levels, in all dimensions, through the gracious — and eschatologically *simultaneous* — action of God's 'incarnation': supremely in Jesus Christ, yet also in the cosmos, in the word of Scripture, and, at last, in the virtuous Christian²³.

²¹ *Qu. Thal.* 22 (CCG 7.141,99-143,116). Divine 'incarnation' in the virtues is a substantial theme in the Confessor's spiritual doctrine. See Lars Thunberg, *Microcosm and Mediator: The Theological Anthropology of Maximus the Confessor* (Lund, 1965), pp. 342-351; idem, *Man and the Cosmos*, pp. 108-112.

²² See in particular *Qu. Thal.* 60 (CCG 22.73-81).

²³ On the 'incarnations' of Christ the Logos as eschatologically 'simultaneous', see P.M. Blowers, *Exegesis and Spiritual Pedagogy in Maximus the Confessor: An Investigation of the 'Quaestiones ad Thalassium'* (Studies in Christianity and Judaism in Antiquity 7; Notre Dame, Ind., 1991), pp. 117-122; idem, 'Theology as Integrative, Visionary, Pastoral: The Legacy of Maximus the Confessor', *Pro Ecclesia* 2 (1993): p. 226; cf. von Balthasar, *Kosmische Liturgie*, pp. 288-312; Thunberg, *Man and the Cosmos*, pp. 159-166.

Platon entre Moïse et Arius selon le *Contre Julien* de Cyrille d'Alexandrie

Marie-Odile BOULNOIS, Nantes

Cyrille d'Alexandrie déclare dans le *Contre Julien* que les philosophes grecs n'ont pas ignoré la sainte Trinité et ont été jusqu'à employer le terme de τριάς¹. L'objectif de cette conférence sera donc d'examiner quels auteurs il cite pour appuyer cette thèse et comment il justifie qu'ils aient eu accès à une part de vérité, puis sur quels aspects leurs opinions concordent avec le christianisme et dans quelles limites. Pour comprendre l'enjeu du *Contre Julien*, il faut commencer par rappeler que cette œuvre apologétique vise principalement à réfuter l'accusation de Julien selon laquelle les chrétiens sont doublement traîtres: aux juifs et aux grecs². Le signe majeur de la trahison des chrétiens par rapport à Moïse est l'abandon du précepte monothéiste: 'un seul Dieu tu adoreras', que Julien ne cesse de décliner à travers des listes de citations bibliques³. Pour Julien, les chrétiens sont clairement en désaccord avec ce dogme, puisqu'ils introduisent deux ou trois dieux, comme en témoigne le prologue de l'évangile de Jean⁴. Quant à l'incompatibilité entre christianisme et hellénisme, Julien la tire de son postulat initial selon lequel la religion païenne et la culture grecque vont de pair, autrement dit que seuls ceux qui croient aux dieux païens peuvent légitimement user du patrimoine grec⁵. Tels sont donc les deux fronts sur lesquels Cyrille doit combattre.

1) Les grandes lignes de l'argumentation

Pour plus de clarté dans l'exposé, je distinguerai ces deux fronts, bien qu'ils soient en fait constamment rapprochés dans l'argumentation cyrillienne. Afin de prouver que les chrétiens n'ont rien inventé et ne contredisent pas le monothéisme juif, Cyrille analyse la foi d'Abraham et de Moïse. Or l'un comme l'autre, tout en confessant un Dieu unique, ont été plus loin dans la subtilité

(ισχνός) et la plénitude (πλήρωμα) de leur connaissance de la nature divine⁶. Dans le cas d'Abraham, cet apprentissage a eu lieu lors de la théophanie de Mambré (*Gn* 18), grâce à la pédagogie des figures (ἐν τύποις), car son esprit n'était pas encore apte à saisir le concept si subtil de la Trinité. Et Cyrille s'appuie à cette occasion sur le témoignage de Porphyre pour montrer la nécessité d'une initiation par le biais des symboles (δι' αἰνιγμάτων), quand il s'agit de parler des premiers principes⁷. Puisque Abraham a employé non le pluriel, mais le singulier (μοναδικῶς) pour s'adresser à ses trois visiteurs, c'est bien la preuve qu'il les considérait comme une seule divinité unie par la consubstantialité⁸. Quant à Moïse, il a lui aussi proclamé un Dieu unique en nature, sans méconnaître les hypostases du Verbe et de l'Esprit, comme en témoignent les nombreux textes bibliques utilisant le pluriel⁹. Le plus souvent cité est *Gn* 1, 26: 'Faisons l'homme à notre image et ressemblance', par lequel Moïse a voulu réfuter d'avance les erreurs futures, en donnant une claire représentation de la Trinité consubstantielle¹⁰. Dieu n'a pas parlé à des dieux inférieurs, comme le suggère Julien, mais s'est adressé à son Fils et à l'Esprit. De même en *Gn* 11, 7, lorsque Dieu dit: 'Venez et descendons confondre leurs langues', il ne demande pas l'aide d'autres dieux, mais ce pluriel indique à mots couverts (ὑπεμφαίνει) le mystère de la Trinité¹¹. La doctrine trinitaire est donc sous-jacente dans l'Ancien Testament et les chrétiens sont les seuls véritables héritiers de la foi d'Abraham. Affirmer l'unicité de Dieu n'empêche pas que le Fils et l'Esprit soient de nature divine, mais a seulement pour but de réfuter l'erreur polythéiste¹². S'il y a bien unanimité, et non désaccord, entre Moïse et les évangélistes, qui conservent la même méthode théologique (ὁ αὐτὸς ἐν πᾶσι τῆς θεολογίας ὁρᾶται τρόπος), c'est parce qu'ils ne créent pas d'eux-mêmes leur doctrine, mais la reçoivent de la bouche de Dieu (*Jérém* 23, 16)¹³. On trouve dans cette notion d'accord entre tous un des critères fondamentaux de la vérité que Cyrille ne cesse d'opposer à son adversaire¹⁴.

En effet, à l'unanimité des voix chrétiennes s'opposent les contradictions des systèmes philosophiques pour lesquels Julien manifeste tant d'admiration¹⁵. Sur ce deuxième front, celui de l'hellénisme, Cyrille s'emploie à retourner contre

⁶ *CJ* I, 24, 529CD. Sur l'importance de la subtilité et de la plénitude dans l'étude des problèmes trinitaires, voir I, 529C, 529D (ισχνός) et I, 529C, 540B (πλήρωμα).

⁷ *CJ* I, 24, 532AB cite Porphyre, *Vie de Pythagore*, 48-49 (Les Belles Lettres, p. 59, 3 - 60, 1).

⁸ *CJ* I, 26, 532C.

⁹ *CJ* I, 28, 533D.

¹⁰ *CJ* I, 32, 537D. Voir aussi *CJ* IV, 725C.

¹¹ *CJ* IV, 725C. Voir aussi 725AB.

¹² *CJ* VIII, 924C.

¹³ *CJ* I, 34, 540C.

¹⁴ *CJ* VIII, 913B.

¹⁵ *CJ* II, 13, 569D: 'Julien est saisi d'émerveillement devant les idées des sages grecs en ce domaine, et, plus que tout autre, il couronne d'acclamations et d'applaudissements la doctrine de Platon'.

¹ *CJ* VIII, PG 76, 913D. Pour les livres I et II, nous disposons de l'édition et de la traduction de P. Burguière et P. Evieux: Cyrille d'Alexandrie, *Contre Julien*, SC 322, mais pour les autres livres, il n'existe encore que l'édition de Migne.

² *CJ* I, 3, 512C. L'accusation de double trahison est accompagnée de celle d'innovation.

³ *CJ* VIII, 885B; 900D-901C.

⁴ *CJ* VIII, 901C.

⁵ J. Bouffartigue, *L'Empereur Julien et la culture de son temps* (Paris, 1992), p. 642sq.

Julien les auteurs mêmes dont il se réclame, en adoptant une double stratégie. La première consiste à déconsidérer les philosophes en indiquant qu'ils se contredisent tous et que même entre maître et disciple, leurs doctrines sont incompatibles (ἀσύμβατοι): ainsi Platon, qui a pourtant toutes les faveurs de Julien, a été réfuté par son propre disciple Aristote, dont Cyrille dit qu'il était d'une terrible acribie dogmatique et logique¹⁶. Il s'agit là d'un argument *ad hominem* qui n'est pas beaucoup développé sauf dans le deuxième livre. En revanche, la deuxième tactique, sur laquelle nous nous attarderons plus, vise à prouver que même les auteurs qui sont les maîtres (διδάσκαλοι)¹⁷ de Julien sont d'accord avec les enseignements chrétiens. Julien est ainsi convaincu d'ignorance ou de contradiction sur son propre terrain, et la théologie chrétienne apparaît comme plus fidèle au platonisme que celui qui s'en réclame le plus. Si même l'élite des grecs reconnaît qu'il existe 'trois hypostases principales', selon le titre donné à l'*Ennéade* V, 1 de Plotin, la position de Julien se trouve isolée et ne peut plus s'expliquer que par une arrogance invincible¹⁸. Néanmoins l'utilisation de ces deux tactiques, l'une critique et l'autre concordiste, oblige Cyrille à opérer une sélection parmi les philosophes et à justifier que les meilleurs d'entre eux aient pu percevoir une brîbe de vérité, ou selon une image typiquement cyrillienne, 'humecter leur fange du plus embaumé des parfums'¹⁹.

2) Les philosophes platoniciens en accord avec Moïse

Reprenant un lieu commun de l'apologie chrétienne, Cyrille montre que tout ce que les sages de la Grèce ont de meilleur vient de Moïse. Cette dépendance est prouvée à la fois par l'antériorité chronologique de Moïse²⁰ et par les voyages des plus illustres philosophes en Egypte. Si Pythagore et Platon²¹ ont eu sur Dieu des conceptions plus acceptables que les autres, c'est parce que leur curiosité d'esprit les a poussés, en Egypte, à prendre connaissance des

¹⁶ *CJ* IV, 676B. Sur l'opposition des doctrines de Platon et Aristote, voir aussi I, 39, 545B et surtout II, 573C où Cyrille oppose leurs deux théories des principes.

¹⁷ En *CJ* IV, 725B, Cyrille parle des maîtres de Julien en général; en *CJ* III, 648D: Platon est appelé le 'père et maître de Julien'; en *CJ* III, 645B: Porphyre est présenté comme celui qui 'partage (κοινωνός) les pensées de Julien'.

¹⁸ *CJ* IX, 953A. La critique de l'arrogance des grecs, et de Julien en particulier, revient très souvent et utilise fréquemment l'image du haussement de sourcil. Cf. *CJ* I, 37, 544C; VIII, 913C; 916B.

¹⁹ *CJ* I, 17, 524A.

²⁰ *CJ* I, 4-17, 513A-524B. Il dépend ici largement de la *Cohortatio ad Graecos* et de Clément, *Stromate* I, XXI, 101-147.

²¹ *CJ* I, 18, 524CD et 525A. La présence de Solon en Egypte est même attestée par une citation de Platon, *Timée* 22b4.6-9, 23c2-3.

écrits de Moïse²². Grâce à ce contact avec l'Écriture sainte, ils échappent ainsi aux deux chefs d'accusation que Cyrille porte contre les autres philosophes: l'aberration et la divergence de leurs opinions²³. Il est donc légitime pour un chrétien de recourir aux écrivains grecs dont le témoignage concorde avec les Écritures, et loin de trahir le judaïsme et l'hellénisme, la doctrine de la Trinité conduit à leur plénitude des idées déjà en germe chez Moïse et Platon²⁴.

J'ai déjà mentionné Platon à plusieurs reprises, parce que le platonisme, au sens large, est la philosophie qui trouve le plus de faveur auprès de Cyrille. Deux raisons justifient ce choix: d'une part, la réfutation cyrillienne est d'autant plus efficace qu'elle prouve l'infidélité de Julien à son propre maître; d'autre part, le contact de Platon avec les écrits mosaïques justifie qu'il n'ait pas totalement échoué dans la connaissance de la Trinité²⁵. La démonstration de Cyrille s'appuie à la fois sur des citations explicites de Platon ou sur des résumés de doctrine qu'il lui attribue, et sur des citations de philosophes du moyen ou du néo-platonisme. Concernant Platon lui-même, Cyrille cite des passages du *Timée*²⁶, de l'*Epinomis*²⁷, et de la *Lettre VI*²⁸. Généralement, ses références sont exactes, mais à deux reprises au moins, il attribue à Platon un texte dont le vocabulaire trahit clairement la postériorité; pour l'un d'eux il s'agit en l'occurrence d'un fragment de Numénius²⁹. Cette tendance à relire Platon à travers ses commentateurs se retrouve dans plusieurs exposés de la triade dont Cyrille attribue la paternité à Platon lui-même. N'en citons qu'un exemple:

'Platon dit que le Dieu suprême est le Bien, que l'Intelligence est sortie de lui en resplendissant et qu'elle est le démiurge contigu au monde, alors que le premier, lui, est dans l'immobilité. Enfin, il introduit en troisième l'âme, par laquelle il dit que tout est mû et animé'³⁰. C'est donc à travers des philosophes comme Numénius, Plotin et Porphyre que Cyrille réinterprète la doctrine platonicienne,

²² *CJ* I, 40, 548A.

²³ *CJ* I, 20, 525C: les hommes ne peuvent atteindre la vérité et donc l'unanimité que s'ils reçoivent leur doctrine de Dieu lui-même, ce qui suppose un contact avec l'Écriture inspirée. Cf. aussi *CJ* I, 50, 566CD.

²⁴ *CJ* I, 30, 537A; I, 45, 552A; VIII, 908B; IX, 953A.

²⁵ *CJ* VIII, 916A; 920C.

²⁶ Platon, *Timée* 27d5-28a4: *CJ* I, 537A (Le Créateur est distinct de la créature); *Timée* 31a1-5: *CJ* VIII, 908CD (Dieu est unique); *Timée* 40d6-e3: *CJ* VIII, 913A (la divinité étant ineffable, il faut s'en rapporter à ce que nous en disent les anciens). De manière plus générale, le *Timée* est le dialogue platonicien le plus souvent cité dans le *Contre Julien* (une vingtaine de fois, en comptant les allusions).

²⁷ Platon, *Epinomis*, 986c1-7: *CJ* VIII, 916D.

²⁸ *Lettre VI*, 323c7-d5: *CJ* VIII, 916D-917A.

²⁹ Numénius, fragment 15, éd. E. des Places (Les Belles Lettres, 1973): *CJ* III, 649BC. Nous n'avons pu encore identifier le texte cité en III, 649A sous le nom de Platon. Néanmoins, la terminologie laisse penser qu'il s'agit d'un commentaire médio-platonicien ou néo-platonicien.

³⁰ *CJ* IV, 725B. Voir aussi *CJ* III, 648BD.

ce qui est confirmé par la manière dont il introduit leurs citations, en précisant qu'ils exposent là moins leur propre pensée que celle de Platon³¹.

Voyons maintenant à quels aspects du dogme s'étend cette harmonie entre Moïse et Platon. Les deux exposés les plus fournis sur la définition de la nature divine se lisent dans le livre I qui en présente les lignes générales, et dans le livre VIII qui développe les thèmes de cette ouverture. Malgré cette différence d'amplitude, l'un comme l'autre suivent un plan semblable: Cyrille commence par rassembler des citations de Pythagore, Porphyre, Platon (*Timée*) et Plutarque (*Sur l'E de Delphes*) sur l'unicité de Dieu et son caractère ineffable — les deux thèmes étant étroitement liés³². Sur ce premier point, Cyrille peut alors conclure: 'Dieu est un par nature et en vérité, transcende tout esprit et toute raison, est inconcevable, sans forme, vivifiant, principe de toute chose, il ignore la naissance comme la corruption et a créé l'univers. Voilà qui est clairement attesté et par les Ecritures qu'il a inspirées et par les voix des poètes et écrivains grecs'³³. Mais là ne s'arrête pas l'accord, car les philosophes ont aussi soupçonné que l'unique divinité s'élargit (κατευρύνεται) en trois hypostases, comme le prouve le titre de l'*Ennéade* V, 1 de Plotin: *περὶ τῶν τριῶν ἀρχικῶν ὑποστάσεων* et surtout un fragment de l'*Histoire philosophique* de Porphyre: 'Exposant la doctrine de Platon, Porphyre professe que "la substance du divin a procédé jusqu'à trois hypostases. Le dieu suprême est le Bien, après lui et à la seconde place, est le démiurge, et en troisième lieu est l'âme du monde, car la divinité a procédé jusqu'à l'âme"'³⁴.

Les philosophes ont même été plus précis dans leur description des hypostases divines. Ils n'ont pas ignoré l'existence du Verbe créateur, comme en témoignent un autre texte de Porphyre³⁵, et des extraits de l'*Epinomis* et de la *Lettre VI*³⁶. Mais il est remarquable que dans le livre VIII, Cyrille pousse plus loin encore son analyse des rapports entre la triade philosophique et la Trinité chrétienne. Non contents d'avoir professé l'existence du Verbe divin, des

³¹ Porphyre: *CJ* I, 552BC (Porphyre est dit commenter un texte de Platon sur le Bien) et *CJ* I, 553B-C. La deuxième citation est même reprise par Cyrille dans les termes suivants: 'Platon a montré et mis en relief...' (I, 48, 553D). Plotin: *CJ* IV, 724A. Numenius: *CJ* VIII, 917B (Cyrille déclare qu'il n'y a aucun inconvénient à citer d'autres auteurs qui ne s'opposent en aucune manière aux opinions de Platon).

³² *CJ* I, 42, 548D; Pythagore; 549AB; Porphyre, *Histoire philosophique* IV, frgt. XV (éd. A. Smith, Leipzig, 1993, n° 220F); 548D-549A; Platon, *Timée* 28c3-5. *CJ* VIII, 908B; Plutarque, *Sur l'E de Delphes*; 908CD; Platon, *Timée*, 31a1-5; 912D-913A; *Timée* 40d6-e3.

³³ *CJ* I, 45, 552. Cf. aussi VIII, 908B.

³⁴ *CJ* I, 47, 553B. Cette citation est aussi reprise en *CJ* VIII, 916B. Mais alors que dans le premier cas, Cyrille a certainement tiré sa citation de Didyme, *De Trinitate*, PG 39, 760B, dans le livre VIII, des modifications textuelles et la précision supplémentaire que ce passage est tiré du livre IV de l'*Histoire philosophique* semblent prouver que Cyrille a été consulter le texte même de Porphyre.

³⁵ Porphyre, frgt. XVIII (Smith n° 223F): *CJ* I, 552BC.

³⁶ Platon, *Epinomis* 986c1-7; *CJ* VIII, 916D et *Lettre VI* 323c7-d5: *CJ* VIII, 916D-917A.

auteurs comme Numenius et Plotin, ont précisé ses relations avec le premier dieu: selon la lecture de Cyrille, Numenius affirme l'unité indivisible des trois, ils sont même l'un (ὁ εἷς) et le premier dieu est appelé le 'père du démiurge'³⁷; quant à Plotin, il décrit lui aussi la très grande immédiateté (προσεχέστατα) des hypostases entre lesquelles rien ne s'interpose³⁸. Cyrille retrouve ainsi chez Plotin une idée fondamentale de sa triadologie, à savoir que l'engendré et l'engendrant se distinguent non par leur nature, mais par le seul fait que l'un engendre et que l'autre est engendré³⁹. Précisons que dans sa présentation de Plotin, Cyrille l'avait justement décrit comme 'un homme aimant beaucoup la recherche et particulièrement subtil (ἰσχνός)'⁴⁰.

Après l'hypostase du Verbe, c'est la présence de l'Esprit Saint qui est à son tour traquée dans les écrits de Porphyre⁴¹ et de Plotin⁴²: ceux-ci témoignent qu'il existe un troisième dieu, ou une troisième cause identifiée à l'âme du monde qui vivifie toute chose, sans être elle-même confondue avec qui est mû, ni être fragmentée (ἀμερίστως). S'avançant plus encore dans la description des relations intra-triadiques, un texte de Plotin présente l'âme comme 'l'image (εἰχλόν) de l'intelligence' et recourt aux métaphores de la parole proférée et de la chaleur qui sort du feu⁴³. On touche sans doute dans ce texte et dans l'analyse qu'en fait Cyrille la plus grande proximité entre la triade philosophique et la Trinité chrétienne, si l'on a dans l'esprit l'importance que Cyrille accorde à ces mêmes images pour exprimer les relations entre les hypostases⁴⁴.

Mais si Plotin est l'auteur qui donne lieu aux analyses trinitaires les plus fines, il est aussi celui qui fournit le plus d'occasions à Cyrille de marquer les limites du concordisme. De fait, cette réflexion critique est un aspect majeur de son œuvre apologétique et sur lequel il se distingue de ses prédécesseurs, en particulier d'Eusèbe qui est pourtant une de ses sources principales⁴⁵. Non seulement Cyrille analyse davantage les textes et transpose plus souvent les

³⁷ Numenius, Fragments 11 et 12: *CJ* VIII, 917C.

³⁸ Plotin, *En*, V, 1, 6, 50-53: *CJ* VIII, 920C.

³⁹ Cyrille, *Thesaurus* VIII, PG 75, 100 D. Cyrille distingue entre les propriétés communes qui sont de l'ordre de la nature, et les propriétés hypostatiques qui définissent chacune des personnes. Cf. M.O. Boulnois, *Le paradoxe trinitaire chez Cyrille d'Alexandrie. Herméneutique, analyses philosophiques, et argumentation théologique* (Paris, 1994), p. 325.

⁴⁰ *CJ* VIII, 917D. Or c'est la qualité principale que requiert toute réflexion sur des concepts aussi délicats que celui de la Trinité (VIII, 921B).

⁴¹ Porphyre, frgt. XVI et XVII (Smith n° 221F et 222F): *CJ* I, 553B et 553C.

⁴² Plotin, *En*, V, 1, 2, 1-9: *CJ* VIII, 921BC; *En*, V, 1, 2, 27-38: *CJ* VIII, 921D-924A.

⁴³ Plotin, *En*, V, 1, 3, 4-10: *CJ* VIII, 924B.

⁴⁴ Cf. *Le paradoxe trinitaire...*, p. 121-146 et p. 548-562.

⁴⁵ Cependant, il faut nuancer ce que dit R.M. Grant, 'Greek literature in the treatise *De Trinitate* and Cyril *Contra Julianum*', *Journal of Theological Studies*, 15 (1964), p. 269-270, car Cyrille ne dépend pas uniquement d'Eusèbe pour ses citations de Platon et de Plotin. Certaines viennent de la *Cohortatio ad Graecos* ou de Clément d'Alexandrie, d'autres semblent propres à Cyrille lui-même.

termes philosophiques en termes chrétiens que l'évêque de Césarée, mais il n'hésite pas non plus à mettre en évidence les erreurs des doctrines platoniciennes.

3) Platon accusé d'arianisme

Même si les philosophes platoniciens sont ceux qui se sont le plus approchés de la vérité, ils n'ont pu empêcher leur vue d'être trouble (ἀθόλωτος) et de loucher (παραβλώψ)⁴⁶. Ils ont parlé des choses divines certes avec finesse (λεπτῶς), mais non de manière irréprochable (ἀμωμήτως)⁴⁷. La critique fondamentale que leur oppose Cyrille est d'avoir introduit à la fois une hiérarchie (ὑπόβασις, ὑφεςις) et une division (διαίρει) entre les hypostases. Platon n'est donc pas totalement fidèle à Moïse et préfigure déjà l'hérésie d'Arius, puisque, selon les termes de Cyrille, 'il divise et subordonne (les hypostases) à l'égal des sectateurs de l'arianisme'⁴⁸. C'est pourquoi, à chaque fois que Cyrille analyse les textes platoniciens et reprend les termes 'premier', 'deuxième', ou 'troisième', il prend bien soin de préciser qu'il s'agit là de leur manière de parler⁴⁹ et qu'il n'y a aucune infériorité ou secondarité du Fils par rapport au Père ou de l'Esprit par rapport au Fils⁵⁰.

Outre ces travers trithéistes⁵¹ et subordinatens⁵², Cyrille critique également l'idée plotinienne selon laquelle l'intelligence et l'âme auraient besoin de contempler l'hypostase qui les précède pour atteindre la perfection⁵³. Or pour Cyrille, le Père, le Fils et le Saint-Esprit sont parfaits en eux-mêmes, de par leur propre nature (αὐτοφυῶς)⁵⁴ et non en raison de leur relation extrinsèque (σχέσει) à un terme supérieur⁵⁵. Il n'aurait donc rien manqué aux philosophes

⁴⁶ *CJ* I, 50, 556CD. La raison donnée par Cyrille est que Platon a eu peur de la ciguë et n'a pas eu le courage d'aller jusqu'au bout de la profession de foi en un Dieu un et trine.

⁴⁷ *CJ* VIII, 913B.

⁴⁸ *CJ* I, 48, 553D. Séparation et subordination sont aussi les deux reproches que Cyrille oppose aux philosophes platoniciens en *CJ* IX, 953A.

⁴⁹ *CJ* III, 649B. Voir aussi *CJ* VIII, 917D: 'Parler d'un deuxième et d'un troisième n'est pas correct'. C'est sur ce type de textes que D. Petau, *De Trinitate* s'appuie pour prouver que Platon est la source de toutes les erreurs et particulièrement de l'arianisme. Cf. A. Le Boulluec, 'Anti-platonisme et théologie patristique. Quelques acteurs et témoins des controverses trinitaires aux XVIIe et XVIIIe siècles', *Contra Plato. T. 1: Le Platonisme dévoilé*, Textes réunis par M. Dixsaut (Paris, 1993), pp. 415-436.

⁵⁰ *CJ* VIII, 916C: ἐν μείοσι.

⁵¹ *CJ* VIII, 913D: τρισχιδές; *CJ* VIII, 916C: τρεῖς θεοῦς.

⁵² Ces deux accusations sont précisément celles que Cyrille lance contre l'arianisme. Cf. *In Ioannem* I, 3, 21bc; *Dialogues sur la Trinité*, III, 465c (trithéisme). *Dial. Trin.* VI, 636c: 'Toute espèce de référence à une supériorité (τῆς εἰς τὸ ἄμεινον ἀναφορᾶς) est absolument superficielle'.

⁵³ *CJ* VIII, 913D et 920A.

⁵⁴ *CJ* VIII, 920B.

⁵⁵ *CJ* VIII, 916A.

s'ils avaient le concept de consubstantialité⁵⁶ qui leur aurait évité de tirer les hypostases vers la 'dissemblance des natures'⁵⁷.

En conclusion, contrairement aux allégations de Julien, la doctrine de la Trinité n'est pour Cyrille ni contradictoire avec le monothéisme de Moïse ni totalement innovatrice par rapport à l'hellénisme, puisque Platon, à la suite de Moïse, affirme que la substance divine s'étend jusqu'à trois hypostases. Néanmoins, la tâche de l'apologiste n'a pas privé Cyrille de tout son sens critique en matière théologique⁵⁸ et la triade philosophique ne décrit pas avec une parfaite exactitude le paradoxe de l'unité de nature dans la triade des hypostases. On pourrait résumer, de manière lapidaire, cette mise en rapport de la triadologie philosophique et de la Trinité chrétienne en disant que, pour Cyrille, Platon se situe en quelque sorte entre Moïse et Arius, au sens où il a hérité des intuitions du premier et où il préfigure certaines erreurs du second.

⁵⁶ *CJ* VIII, 913D.

⁵⁷ *CJ* VIII, 920A.

⁵⁸ Il diffère ainsi d'Eusèbe de Césarée, dont il reprend certains textes, mais avec un sens critique plus développé. De ce point de vue, l'hypothèse de R.L. Wilken selon laquelle le rôle d'apologiste d'Eusèbe aurait influé sur ses thèses triadologiques est séduisante. Cf. R.L. Wilken, 'Pagan criticism of christianity: greek religion and christian faith', *Early christian literature and the classical intellectual tradition*, éd. W.R. Schoedel, R.L. Wilken (Paris, 1979), pp. 117-134, en particulier, pp. 133-134.

Das Offenbarungsverständnis Theodors von Mopsuestia im Zwölfprophetenkommentar

Peter BRUNS, Bochum

Der nordafrikanische Bischof Facundus von Hermiane nennt in seiner Verteidigungsschrift der Drei Kapitel¹ drei Anklagepunkte, die gegen Theodor von Mopsuestia vorgebracht werden:

- er sei in der Trinitätslehre dem Sabellianismus verfallen und habe die Dreieinheit der Personen geleugnet;
- er habe in seiner Christologie zwei Söhne angenommen und damit die Trinität zu einer Quaternität erweitert;
- und schließlich habe er die über Christus gemachten prophetischen Weissagungen verstümmelt und sich damit des Judaismus bzw. des Manichäismus schuldig gemacht².

Wenngleich die Darlegung und Verteidigung der Theodorschen Christologie das Hauptanliegen des nordafrikanischen Bischofs ist, so ist sich Facundus stets auch der Eigenart der Propheten- und Psalmenauslegung Theodors³ bewußt gewesen. Denn offensichtlich bestehen zwischen der Exegese und dem christologischen Ansatz des Bischofs von Mopsuestia enge Beziehungen, die Gegnern wie Freunden gleichermaßen nicht verborgen bleiben konnten⁴. So geht etwa Kaiser Justinian in seiner *sententia*, die er den vierzehn Anathemata

¹ Ausg.: J.M. Clément/R. Vander Plaetse, *Facundi episcopi Ecclesiae Hermianensis opera omnia* (= CCL 90A; Turnholt, 1975).

² Vgl. *defens.* 9,1,2: 'Der dritte Punkt aber ist, daß sie behaupten, er habe alle über Christus gemachten Prophezeiungen abgeschnitten, was das Kennzeichen des manichäischen Irrtums ist. Diese sind, wie wir wissen, in übler Weise dem jüdischen Unglauben entgegengesetzt. Denn die Juden verachten das Neue (Testament), nehmen aber das Alte, wie sie sagen, an; die Manichäer verwerfen das Alte, nehmen, wie sie sagen, aber das Neue an'. (CCL 90A,262).

³ Theodor rechnet auch die Psalmen unter die Propheten. Ausg.: H.N. Sprenger, *Theodori Mopsuesteni Commentarius in XII Prophetas* (= GOF 5/1; Wiesbaden, 1977); R. Devreesse, *Le commentaire de Théodore de Mopsueste sur les Psaumes I-LXXX* (= StT 93; Rom, 1939); L. De Coninck, *Theodori Mopsuesteni Expositionis in Psalmos Juliano Aelclanensi interprete in Latium versae quae supersunt* (= CCL 88A; Turnholt, 1977).

⁴ Die exegetische Methode des Bischofs von Mopsuestia ist Gegenstand zahlreicher Monographien: R. Bultmann, *Die Exegese des Theodor von Mopsuestia* (Stuttgart 1984 [Marburg 1910]); R.A. Greer, *Theodor of Mopsuestia, Exegete and Theologian* (London, 1961); H. Kihn, *Theodor von Mopsuestia und Junilius Africanus als Exegeten* (Freiburg, 1880); L. Pirot, *L'œuvre exégétique de Théodore de Mopsueste* (Rom, 1913); K. Schäferdiek, *Das Johannesverständnis des Theodor von Mopsuestia* (Diss., Bonn, 1958).

über die Drei Kapitel vorausschickt, auch kurz auf die Exegese Theodors ein und wirft ihm vor, die über Christus gemachten Weissagungen abgelehnt und dadurch das Mysterium des göttlichen Heilswaltens aufgelöst zu haben⁵. Ohne Zweifel trägt Theodors Exegese eine polemische Handschrift, er versteht sie als Gegenstück zur allegorischen Methode der Origenisten⁶. Und es war gerade der Kreis um den origenistischen Hoftheologen Theodor Askidas, der ein lebhaftes Interesse an der Verurteilung des Bischofs von Mopsuestia zeigte⁷. Mit Theodor von Mopsuestia sollte nicht nur eine bestimmte Christologie, sondern auch der wohl bedeutendste Repräsentant der antiochenischen Exegenschule⁸ getroffen werden.

In den katechetischen Homilien verweist Theodor auf den Umstand, daß die alttestamentliche Prophetie gleichsam nur im rätselhaften Gleichnis (αἰνιγμα) und Symbol (σημεῖον, σημαντικόν) existierte⁹. Dies hat für die Christologie zur Folge, daß die Juden von der Gottheit des Messias keine Kenntnis besaßen und lediglich einen Menschensohn als Heilsbringer erwarteten. Die Essenz der prophetischen Verkündigung, so resümiert der Bischof von Mopsuestia weiter, bestehe in der Anerkennung der Einheit und Einzigartigkeit der göttlichen Natur, die über allen Wandel erhaben sei und alles aus dem Nichts erschaffen habe¹⁰. Von einer Dreifaltigkeit hätten die Propheten noch nichts gewußt, sie sei erst mit dem Missionsbefehl Jesu (Mt 28,19) gegeben. Diese Sicht der Dinge wird auch an anderer Stelle, etwa im Psalmenkommentar¹¹, mit Vehemenz vertreten. Diese dogmatischen Erwägungen fließen zu einem nicht geringen Teil in den Zwölfprophetenkommentar¹² ein. An drei Stellen befaßt sich Theodor mit dem Problem einer vermeintlich trinitarischen Offenbarung der

⁵ *Prophetias enim, quae de Christo sunt, reiiciens, festinavit dispensationis pro nostra salute magnum mysterium, quantum ad se pertinet, reprobare*: J. Alberigo (u.a.), *Conciliorum aecumenicorum decreta* (Bologna, 1973), S. 109; vgl. auch: J.M. Vosté, 'L'œuvre exégétique de Théodore de Mopsueste au IIe Concile de Constantinople': *RB* 38 (1929), S. 382-395, 542-554.

⁶ Facundus, *defens.* 3,6,13 (CCL 90A,95f) erwähnt ein gegen Origenes gerichtetes Werk *De allegoria*, von dem allerdings nur Fragmente überkommen sind. Vgl. dazu L. Van Rompay, *Fragments syriaques de commentaire des Psaumes* (CSCO 435; Louvain, 1982), S. 1-14.

⁷ Nach Facundus, *defens.* 1,2,4 (CCL 90A,8f), geht der ganze Skandal der Drei Kapitel auf die Rache des Origenisten Theodor Askidas zurück.

⁸ Vgl. C. Schäublin, *Untersuchungen zur Methode und Herkunft der Antiochenischen Exegese* (Theoph. 23; Köln/Bonn, 1974), S. 84-155; M. Simonetti, 'Note sull'esegesi veterotestamentaria di Teodoro': *VetChr* 14 (1977), S. 69-102; A. Vaccari, 'La θεοπία nella scuola esegetica d'Antiochia': *Bib.* 1 (1920), S. 3-36; D. Zaharopoulos, 'Theodore of Mopsuestia: Views on prophetic inspiration': *GOTR* 23 (1978), S. 42-52.

⁹ Vgl. *hom.* 1,14. Syr. Text bei R. Tonneau/R. Devreesse, *Les homélies catéchétiques* (StT 145; Rom, 1949), S. 22; dt. bei P. Bruns, *Theodor von Mopsuestia. Katechetische Homilien I-II* (Freiburg, 1994/95), S. 85.

¹⁰ Vgl. hierzu *hom.* 1,14-17, *hom.* 2,1-4 (85-93 Bruns).

¹¹ Vgl. *comm. in Ps* 32,6b (146-149 Devreesse).

¹² Vgl. dazu die Einleitung bei H.N. Sprenger, *Commentarius* 115-149; R. Devreesse, *Essai sur Théodore de Mopsueste* (StT 141; Rom, 1948), S. 78-93.

Propheten: *comm. in Joel 2,28* und *comm. in Agg 2,5* beschäftigen sich mit der Aussendung des Geistes, *comm. in Za 1,8* mit der Frage, ob der dort erwähnte Reiter auf dem Feuerroß mit dem Gottessohn identisch sei. Bei allen Einzelinterpretationen zeigt sich Theodor bemüht, die Weissagungen der Propheten aus ihrem historischen Kontext heraus, d.h. von ihrer Stellung innerhalb der Geschichte des Alten Testaments her, zu lesen. Für die Ausgießung des Geistes in Joel 2,28 heißt dies, daß hier weniger eine pneumatologische Darstellung vorliegt als vielmehr eine Beschreibung der göttlichen Gnade. Πνεῦμα θεοῦ, so argumentiert Theodor, habe im Alten Testament nicht den Sinn einer eigenständigen göttlichen Person (ὑπόστασις), sondern meine ganz allgemein das Gnadenhandeln (χάρις) bzw. die Heilssorge (κηδεμονία) Gottes für sein Volk¹³. Zu dem gleichen Ergebnis kommt er auch bei seiner Auslegung von Hag 2,5, wenn er sagt, daß 'Geist' und 'Gnade' in diesem Falle identisch seien. An keiner der beiden genannten Stellen sei 'Geist Gottes' im Sinne von 'Heiligem Geist', d.h., als dritte göttliche Hypostase zu verstehen, da eine solche Sicht alttestamentlich nicht möglich sei¹⁴. Die theologische Begrifflichkeit ist in Theodors Schrifttum, im Prophetenkommentar wie auch etwa in den katechetischen Homilien¹⁵ hoch entwickelt. So spricht er von Wesen und Natur (οὐσία, φύσις), wenn er auf die ontische bzw. natürliche Einheit in Gott zu sprechen kommt, ὑπόστασις bzw. πρόσωπον verwendet er, wenn er auf die unterschiedlichen Personen in der Gottheit eingeht. Es fällt auf, daß im Prophetenkommentar wie in den Homilien ὑπόστασις und πρόσωπον weitgehend synonym verwendet werden. Darin zeigt sich die Angleichung in der Terminologie zwischen dem altnizänischen und jungnizänischen Flügel in Antiochien. Theodor, von seiner eigenen theologischen Herkunft eher dem jungnizänischen Flügel zuneigend, hat doch immer wieder die Brücke zu den Altnizäern zu schlagen versucht. Möglicherweise ist es gerade dieses Bemühen, welches in der engen Verflechtung des ὑπόστασις- mit dem πρόσωπον-Begriff zum Ausdruck kommt, gewesen, das ihm, wie Facundus berichtet, völlig zu Unrecht den Verdacht auf Sabellianismus eingetragen hat. Denn sowohl im Prophetenkommentar als auch in den Homilien lassen sich bei beiden Termini leichte Nuancen erkennen. So verweist πρόσωπον eher, wobei hier

¹³ Vgl. *comm. in Joel 2,28* (95,16-21 Sprenger).

¹⁴ Dieser Gedanke deckt sich im wesentlichen mit den Ausführungen Theodors in *hom. 2,2* (89f Bruns). Vgl. *comm. in Agg 2,2-5*: 'Den Heiligen Geist also in eigenständiger Seinsweise (ἐν ἰδίῳ ὑποστάσει) aus Gott konnten sie nicht kennen. Weder war nämlich der, der solchermaßen einzig (μοναδικόν) war, den dienstbaren Geistern zuzurechnen, noch behaupten sie (die Propheten), ihn als eigene Person (ἐν ἰδίῳ προσώπῳ) Gott beizuordnen (συντάττειν), da sie nichts dergleichen wußten. Dies hat uns der Herr Christus gelehrt, der seinen Jüngern überlieferte... (Mt 28,19)... Der Alte (Bund) glaubte, wie ich bereits sagte, den Heiligen Geist nicht in eigener Person (ἐν ἰδίῳ προσώπῳ) und eigener Seinsweise (ἐν ἰδίῳ ὑποστάσει) von Gott geschieden...' (311,4-18 Sprenger).

¹⁵ Vgl. dazu Bruns, *Katechetische Homilien*, S. 42-44.

noch die ursprüngliche Bedeutung 'Antlitz' durchschimmert, auf die offenbarungstheologische Seite der einzelnen göttlichen Person, während ὑπόστασις mehr die immanente Subsistenzweise meint, obgleich sich eine exakte Grenzziehung nicht in allen Fällen durchführen läßt. Für den alttestamentlichen Zusammenhang ist dies auch weniger von Belang, da es Theodor hier nur auf das Handeln Gottes in der Geschichte seines Volkes ankommt, nicht aber auf die innergöttlichen Relationen. Die Unterscheidung von Sein und Sendung des Geistes, wie sie sich bereits alttestamentlich andeutet, ist für die Interpretation des Neuen Testaments im Zuge der pneumatomachischen Kontroverse nicht unerheblich, gibt sie doch dem Bischof von Mopsuestia ein Gegenargument gegen die Eustathianer in die Hand, die von der heilsgeschichtlichen Sendung des Geistes durch den Sohn auch auf die seinshafte Unterordnung des Geistes unter den Sohn geschlossen haben¹⁶. Freilich, eine Deutung verbietet sich bereits schon für das Alte Testament: den Geist oder die Gnade Gottes unter die geschaffenen und dienstbaren Geister zu rechnen¹⁷. Die Folgen, die sich daraus für die Gnadentheologie ergeben, sind von der Forschung richtig erkannt worden: Der Bischof von Mopsuestia scheint tatsächlich so etwas wie eine 'ungeschaffene Gnade'¹⁸ zu kennen.

In eine ähnliche Richtung geht die Argumentation Theodors bezüglich der Vision in Sach 1,8, welche gemeinhin auf den künftigen Gottessohn ausgelegt wird. Auch hier setzt sich der Bischof von Mopsuestia in derb-polemischer Weise von anderen Deutungen ab¹⁹. Eine christologische Auslegung sei schon allein deshalb unmöglich, weil vor dem Kommen Christi keine Kenntnis von Vater und Sohn vorhanden gewesen sei. Wenn nämlich das Alte Testament von Vater und Sohn spricht, dann sei dies eben nicht ontologisch in bezug auf die göttlichen Personen zu verstehen, sondern, ganz analog zur Rede vom Geist Gottes, rein relational in bezug auf Gott Vater und seine Schöpfung. Es gehe, so Theodor, gar nicht um den wesensmäßigen Sohn Gottes, sondern um die vielen Söhne, die *per adoptionem* der Hausgenossenschaft (οἰκειώσις) Gottes gewürdigt worden sind. Eine tiefere Deutung ließ der damalige Stand der Offenbarung auch nicht zu. Die Propheten kannten vor Christus nur den einen Gott und die Schöpfung, die wesenhaft voneinander geschieden sind.

¹⁶ Vgl. dazu *hom. 10,8-10* (225-228 Bruns) mit Rekurs auf Joh 7,39. Der Geist existierte immer schon gleichewig mit dem Vater und dem Sohn, bevor er dann durch den Sohn tätig wurde. Joh 7,39 ist daher nicht auf die Hypostase und Natur des Geistes, sondern auf sein Wirken zu beziehen: *non personam Spiritus Sancti eiusque naturam designare, sed eius operationem eiusque gratiam* (CSCO 116,115).

¹⁷ Vgl. *comm. in Agg 2,2-5* (310f Sprenger).

¹⁸ Zur Gnadentheologie vgl. J. McWilliam Dewart, *The Theology of Grace of Theodore of Mopsuestia* (SCA 16; Washington, 1971). Die geschaffene Gnade kommt dann in Blick, wenn man den Geist nicht nur alttestamentlich als Gnade Gottes betrachtet, sondern neutestamentlich als Spender einzelner, kreatürlicher Gnaden, vgl. dazu G. Koch, *Die Heilswirklichkeit bei Theodor von Mopsuestia* (MThS.H 31; München, 1965), S. 103-114, 141-158.

¹⁹ Vgl. *comm. in Za 1,8* (325 Sprenger).

Gott ist als ewige Wesenheit die Ursache aller Dinge, und unter Schöpfung versteht Theodor die Gesamtheit all jener einzelnen Seienden, die aus dem Nichts ins Sein gelangt sind²⁰. Den Offenbarungsvorgang selber begreift Theodor als einen Akt göttlicher 'Pädagogik'²¹, die dem Menschen 'Erkenntnis' (γνώσις) mitteilen will. Und es liegt ganz im Sinne dieser Erziehung, den Stoff gleichsam auf mehrere Etappen der Heilsgeschichte zu verteilen. Die entscheidende Zäsur kommt dabei der Auferstehung und dem nachösterlichen Missionsbefehl zu; hier liegt der Wendepunkt vom bloßen Eingottglauben zum Dreifaltigkeitsglauben²². Für die Apostel heißt dies, daß sie sich zwischen den Testamenten bewegen. Denn auch ihre Gotteserkenntnis ist während des irdischen Lebens Christi unvollkommen, von seiner Gottheit sind sie erst nachösterlich überzeugt²³. Dahinter verbirgt sich ein Schluß vom Größeren zum Kleineren: Wenn schon die Apostel die Gottheit des Messias erst so spät erkannten, um wieviel weniger konnten dann die Propheten des Alten Bundes davon gewußt haben!²⁴

Entsprechend seiner heilsgeschichtlichen Schau, die zwischen dem gegenwärtigen und dem künftigen Äon²⁵ unterscheidet, kennt Theodor zwei Stufen der Offenbarung: die erste ist die des Alten Testamentes und betrifft die Einheit und das Schöpfersein Gottes, wie es die Propheten verkündigten, die zweite ist die des Neuen Testamentes und betrifft die Sendung Christi und die Ausgießung des Geistes, wie sie von den Aposteln überliefert wird. Doch wie verhalten sich nun beide Stufen zueinander? In *hom.* 12,2 führt der Bischof von Mopsuestia aus, daß Gesetz und Propheten Schatten des Künftigen (σκιά τῶν μελλόντων) seien. Der Schatten bietet im Unterschied zum Bild (εἰκόν) kein genaues Abbild des Gegenstandes, sondern zeichnet nur die äußeren Umrisse eines nahenden Körpers. Für die Exegese des Alten Testamentes und

²⁰ Vgl. *comm. in Za* 1,8-11 (325 Sprenger). Zur Gotteserkenntnis in den katechetischen Homilien vgl. Bruns, *Katechetische Homilien*, S. 35-44.

²¹ Vgl. *comm. in Za* 1,8-11 (325,11-15 Sprenger). Theodor spricht von der Erziehung (παίδευσιν) des Gottesvolkes und der Erkenntnis (γνώριζειν) der göttlichen Wesenheit. Nach *comm. in Ps* 44,7a (288 Devreesse) ist die Kirche 'Braut Gottes' und 'Gott durch Erkenntnis zugeignete Versammlung'.

²² Ich stimme der Einschätzung von Sprenger, *Einleitung*, S. 126, nicht zu, daß Theodor einen dreistufigen Offenbarungsvorgang angenommen habe. Dies ist nicht nur aus formalen Gründen mit dem dualen Denken Theodors in zwei heilsgeschichtlichen Ordnungen nicht zu vereinbaren, vgl. dazu Devreesse, *Essai*, S. 89, sondern auch inhaltlich nicht, da die Apostel keine eigene Erkenntnisstufe haben, vielmehr beiden gleichzeitig angehören. Als Angehörige des jüdischen Volkes sind sie Hörer der Propheten und Empfänger messianischer Weissagung, als Schüler Christi werden sie der Offenbarung des dreifaltigen Gottes gewürdigt.

²³ Philippus' Aufforderung 'zeig uns den Vater' (Joh 14,8) wäre, so argumentiert Theodor, unverständlich, wenn der Apostel um die volle Gottheit Christi gewußt hätte, vgl. *comm. in Za* 1,8-11 (325f Sprenger).

²⁴ Vgl. *comm. in Za* 1,8-11 (326 Sprenger).

²⁵ Vgl. dazu U. Wickert, *Studien zu den Pauluskommentaren Theodors von Mopsuestia* (BNZW 27; Berlin, 1962).

speziell der Propheten bedeutet dies, daß nur sehr wenige Stellen von Theodor ausdrücklich als τύπος verstanden werden, denen ein neutestamentliches Gegenstück (ἀντίτυπος) entspricht²⁶. So konnte etwa die Jona-Christus-Typologie kaum ignoriert werden, war sie doch im Neuen Testament von Jesus selbst angewandt worden²⁷. Mithin bleiben die heilsgeschichtlichen Kategorien von Verheißung (ἐπαγγελία) und Erfüllung (ἀλήθεια) auch für Theodors Exegese konstitutiv²⁸. Der Offenbarungsweg führt allerdings weniger direkt vom Alten zum Neuen Testament, vielmehr fällt umgekehrt von der endgültigen Offenbarung in Christus Licht auf die frühere, auch seinsmäßig niedrigere Stufe, die einen Abglanz (μίμησις, μήνυσις) der höheren enthält²⁹. Dies ist die innere Kontinuität der beiden Testamente, die äußere Einheit wird durch die Person des einen Schöpfers garantiert³⁰. Doch in Analogie zur dyophysitischen Christologie³¹ zeigt sich Theodor auch in der Exegese noch vor der Darlegung der Einheit an der Zweiheit der Testamente interessiert.

Zusammenfassend läßt sich sagen:

Theodors historisch-grammatische Exegese der Zwölf Propheten versteht sich als Gegenentwurf zum extremen Allegorismus der Origenisten, schließt aber eine maßvolle typologische Betrachtung der Heiligen Schrift keineswegs aus. Sie resultiert aus einem gestuften Offenbarungsverständnis, wonach Gesetz und Propheten lediglich als Schatten des Künftigen zu werten sind. Diese heilsgeschichtliche Schau sichert dem Alten Testament eine gewisse Eigenständigkeit gegenüber dem Neuen und führt zu einer Zurückdrängung der christologischen und pneumatologischen Interpretation einschlägiger Prophetentexte. Das christologische Schema der 'Zweiheit vor der Einheit' spiegelt sich in dem Verhältnis der beiden Testamente zueinander wider.

²⁶ Zur typologischen Exegese bei Theodor vgl. auch Sprenger, *Einleitung*, S. 97-110.

²⁷ Vgl. *praef. in Ionam* (169-176 Sprenger). Ähnliches läßt sich auch von der paulinischen Adam-Christus-Typologie sagen, vgl. dazu Devreesse, *Essai*, S. 92f.

²⁸ Vgl. dazu Sprenger, *Einleitung*, S. 129. Vor allem geht es in Theodors apologetischen Denken um die Abwehr eines alten heidnischen Vorwurfes, wonach das Christentum eine Neuerung sei, die aus dem Aufstand gegen die jüdische Überlieferung hervorgegangen sei.

²⁹ Vgl. dazu auch Devreesse, *Essai*, S. 176.

³⁰ Vgl. *praef. in Ionam* (169 Sprenger).

³¹ Vgl. dazu auch P. Bruns, *Den Menschen mit dem Himmel verbinden. Eine Studie zu den katechetischen Homilien des Theodor von Mopsuestia* (CSCO 549; Louvain, 1995).

La Théologie trinitaire de Denys l'Aréopagite

Ysabel DE ANDIA, Paris

Quelle est la théologie trinitaire de Pseudo-Denys l'Aréopagite? Quelles sont ses sources? Comment la situer par rapport à la tradition de théologie trinitaire grecque antérieure et en particulier par rapport à la doctrine des Cappadociens? C'est à ces trois questions que je voudrais répondre en montrant l'influence du néoplatonisme sur la théologie trinitaire de Denys.

La théologie trinitaire de Denys a été relativement peu étudiée. Bernard Brons lui consacre un chapitre dans son livre *Gott und die Seienden*¹, Salvatore Lilla un article dans l'*Augustinianum*² et Werner Beierwaltes expose l'Unité et la Trinité (*Einheit und Dreiheit*)³ selon Denys et Jean Scot. La discussion moderne a davantage porté sur la christologie de Denys que l'on a caractérisée par rapport au monophysisme. La question trinitaire est restée dans l'ombre car elle ne semblait pas centrale.

Pourtant ce n'est pas en vain que la *Théologie mystique* commence par une invocation à la Trinité: 'Ô Trinité suessentielle, plus que divine et plus que bonne'⁴ (MT 559 C) et que les *Noms divins* considèrent, au second chapitre, la théologie trinitaire avant la procession des noms divins. Denys traite de la théologie trinitaire dans la 'théologie affirmative' qu'il distingue, au troisième chapitre de la *Théologie mystique*, de la 'théologie négative'⁵ et dans la 'théologie unie et distinct', l'une concernant le Dieu un et l'autre, le Dieu trine, au second chapitre des *Noms divins*.

¹ B. Brons, *Gott und die Seienden. Untersuchungen zum Verhältnis von neuplatonischer Metaphysik und christlicher Tradition bei Dionysius Areopagita* (Göttingen, 1976), II. Kapitel: Gott: Einheit, Dreiheit und Vielheit in Gott, pp. 78-130.

² S. Lilla, 'Terminologia trinitaria nello Pseudo-Dionigi l'Aréopagita. Suoi antecedenti e sua influenza sugli scrittori successivi', *Augustinianum* 13 (1973), pp. 609-623. Voir aussi C. Pera, 'Denys le mystique et la Theomachia', *RSPT* 25 (1936), pp. 1-75.

³ W. Beierwaltes, *Eriugena, Grundzüge seines Denkens* (Frankfurt, 1994), Kapitel: Einheit und Dreiheit, pp. 204-261.

⁴ Cette triple invocation de la Trinité avec des noms en *hyper* s'adresse à elle en tant qu'Unité car 'ce qui de la Dèité toute entière est uni (τὰ ἡνωμένα), c'est l'au-delà du Bien, de la Dèité, de l'Être, du Vivant et du Sage et tout ce qui appartient à la Négation transcendante' (ὑπεροχική ἀφαίρεσις, DN II, 640 B).

⁵ Au chapitre III de la *Théologie mystique*, Denys divise la théologie en 1. 'théologie affirmative' qui traite de toutes les affirmations sur Dieu — que ce soient les affirmations sur la Trinité, le Christ et la création, dont il a parlé, dit-il, dans les *Esquisses théologiques*, les noms de Dieu qu'il 'explique' dans les *Noms divins* ou les métaphores de la *Théologie symbolique* —, et en 2. 'théologie négative' qui s'élève de négations en négations jusqu'à l'union avec l'Ineffable.

C'est la distinction entre ἔνωσις et διάκρισις qui est au fondement de la théologie trinitaire de Denys et c'est elle qui va être au centre de notre réflexion: d'où vient cette distinction? Comment est-elle le principe non seulement de la théologie trinitaire de Denys, mais aussi de sa théologie des noms divins? Permet-elle de rendre compte du mystère trinitaire? Ou bien s'écarte-t-elle de la tradition de la théologie grecque antérieure et ouvre-t-elle une nouvelle tradition? Nous étudierons donc

- I. la théologie trinitaire de Denys dans les *Noms divins*,
- II. ses sources néoplatoniciennes, en particulier Proclus,
- III. et enfin sa comparaison avec la théologie des Cappadociens.

I. La théologie trinitaire de Denys dans les *Noms divins*

L'ordre des chapitres des *Noms divins* indique la méthode de Denys: après avoir défini le but (σκοπός)⁶ du traité des *Noms divins*, au premier chapitre, il pose, au second, la question fondamentale: Τίς ἡ θεία ἔνωσις καὶ διάκρισις; Sa réponse développe toute une théologie trinitaire. Il faut d'abord faire apparaître la structure du texte de Denys (DN II, 640 A 10 - 644 D 2) avant de s'interroger sur les sources de sa pensée.

Ce texte se divise en deux parties qui traitent

- I. de l'hénade au-delà de toute unité (§ 1)
 - II. et de l'union et de la distinction (§ 2 à 5),
- d'abord 'selon l'union', au § 4, puis 'selon la distinction', au § 5.

Je voudrais seulement faire une remarque de vocabulaire avant d'exposer la théologie trinitaire de Denys.

Denys fait une distinction entre quatre termes pour dire l'Unité de la Trinité: l'hénade: ἑνάς⁷, l'unité: ἐνότης, l'union: ἔνωσις, la permanence: μονή.

1. D'abord 'l'Hénade au-dessus de toute unité (ἡ ὑπερῆνωμένη ἑνάς) qui est dite de la Dèité toute entière' (ἡ ὅλη θεότης) (DN 637 A 2),
2. 'l'Unité au-delà du principe d'unité' (ἡ ὑπὲρ ἐναρχίαν ἐνότης) qui ne fait qu'un (ἡνωμένον ἔστι) avec la Trinité' (DN 641 A 7-8),

⁶ Le but (σκοπός) du traité est l'explication des noms divins intelligibles. Le verbe σκοπέω / σκέπτομαι, signifié à la fois celui qui guette, le guetteur, et ce que l'on vise, la cible (cf. M. Harl, 'Le guetteur et la cible', *REG* 74 (1961), pp. 455-456). C'est un terme technique de l'exègèse néoplatonicienne et chrétienne: cf. les deux articles de M.-J. Rondeau, 'Exègèse du psautier et anabase spirituelle chez Grégoire de Nysse', *Epektasis. Mélanges J. Daniélou* (Paris, 1972), pp. 517-531, et: 'D'où vient la technique exégétique utilisée par Grégoire de Nysse dans son traité *Sur les titres des Psaumes*', *Mélanges d'histoire des Religions offerts à Henri-Charles Puech* (Paris, 1974), pp. 263-287, surtout pp. 264, 267 et 286-287, ainsi que l'article de I. Hadot, 'Les introductions aux commentaires exégétiques chez les auteurs néoplatoniciens et les auteurs chrétiens', *Les Règles de l'interprétation*, éd. M. Tardieu (Paris, 1987), pp. 99-122.

⁷ ἑνάς est employé en CH 212 C; DN 588 B2; 589 D; 593 D; 637 A; 892 D.

3. l'Union divine (ἡ θεία ἔνωσις) concerne les réalités de la 'théologie suressentielle' et s'oppose à la 'distinction' qui apparaît avec la distinction en Dieu des trois Hypostases. Elle est l'Union suressentielle' ou l'Union transcendante' (ἡ πάντων ὑπερηρμένη ἔνωσις: DN 641 C) des Hypostases.

4. enfin la Permanence — ou la 'Manence', selon la traduction de Trouillard⁸ — et le Fondement (μονὴ καὶ ἰδρυσις), des Hypostases les unes dans les autres,

L'ἐνότης caractérise l'ὑπαρξις. Μονὴ καὶ ἰδρυσις caractérisent les Hypostases 'les unes dans les autres', l'ἔνωσις ὑπερούσιος caractérise l'unité des Hypostases au-delà de toute essence. Donc la relation entre les Hypostases est pensée comme unité d'une double manière: soit comme μονή, permanence des unes dans les autres, soit comme ἔνωσις, unité semblable à la lumière des lampes qui est fondue dans une unique lumière, et pourtant c'est une unité 'sans mélange', ni confusion.

La distinction entre ἐνάς et τριάς ne correspond pas à la distinction entre ἔνωσις et διάκρισις qui est à la fois intérieure à la Trinité (la distinction des Hypostases) et extérieure à Elle (la distinction des processions). La première distinction est 'selon l'union même' (κατ' αὐτὴν τὴν ἔνωσιν). C'est la 'distinction divine' (θεία διάκρισις)⁹ des Hypostases, à l'intérieur de l'Union divine, du point de vue de la Fécondité divine (θεογονία). Cette distinction entre les trois Hypostases divines 'sans confusion et sans mélange' est aussi celle des propriétés qui ne sont nullement interchangeables. Les deux autres distinctions, 'convenant au Bien' (ἀγαθοπρεπής), concernent la procession 'la procession de l'union convenant au Bien' (ἡ ἀγαθοπρεπὴς πρόοδος τῆς ἐνώσεως) et 'l'action, convenant au Bien, de Dieu à l'égard des hommes' (ἡ ἀγαθοπρεπὴς εἰς ἡμᾶς θεουργία).

Enfin, dernière remarque, il n'a pas été question de l'Un (ἔν)¹⁰ qui ne caractérise pas l'unité de la Trinité, mais une 'propriété de la Dêité'. L'Un est le dernier dans des noms divins par lequel le traité s'achève, au chapitre XIII. On peut dire que le mouvement des *Noms divins* va de l'union et de la distinction, principe de procession des noms divins, au chapitre II, à l'Un, au chapitre XIII. De l'ἔνωσις à l'ἔν.

Après ces quelques remarques, je voudrais étudier les six passages trinitaires du second chapitre que posent les six problèmes suivants:

⁸ Selon la traduction de J. Trouillard. Voir, par exemple, *L'Un et l'Âme selon Proclus* (Paris, 1972), p. 92.

⁹ J. Trouillard traduit διάκρισις par 'déploiement', dans son article sur 'La notion de δύναμις chez Damascios', *REG* 85 (1972), p. 355. Il faudrait, dans la question trinitaire, garder les deux sens de 'division' et 'déploiement'.

¹⁰ Noter les trois adjectifs κοινὸν καὶ ἠνωμένον καὶ ἔν pour caractériser la 'propriété commune et unie, ne faisant qu'un avec la Dêité toute entière' et le premier emploi de ἔν en DN 644 A.

- 1° l'attribution des noms divins à la Dêité toute entière (§ 1),
- 2° la distinction de 'ce qui est uni' et de 'ce qui est distinct' (§ 3),
- 3° les propriétés des unions divines (§ 4),
- 4° les propriétés des Hypostases théarchiques (§ 5),
- 5° le secret de la génération en Dieu (§ 7)
- 6° l'appropriation aux trois Hypostases des trois 'dois' de paternité, filiation et divinisation (§ 8).

Nous allons examiner ces six passages pour pouvoir caractériser la théologie trinitaire de Denys¹¹.

1) Attribution des noms divins à la Dêité tout entière (§ 1)

'Parce que la Dêité toute entière possède la Seigneurie de l'Univers, il n'est même pas possible de dire, à mon avis, d'une part au sujet de la Dêité génératrice ou de la Dêité filiale, combien de fois dans la théologie, le titre de Seigneur est répété pour le Père et pour le Fils; et l'Esprit lui aussi est Seigneur¹².

D'autre part les titres de 'beau' et de 'sage' sont aussi célébrés de la Dêité toute entière, et 'lumière' et 'déifiant' et 'cause' et tout ce qui appartient à la Théarchie toute entière, les *Oracles* les attribuent à toute l'hymnodie théarchique, d'une façon globale, comme quand ils disent: 'Tout vient de Dieu'¹³, mais encore en détail, comme quand ils disent: 'Tout a été créé par lui et pour lui et tout subsiste en lui'¹⁴ et 'Tu enverras ton Esprit et (tout) sera créé'¹⁵. Et pour le dire en un mot, le Verbe théarchique lui-même a dit: 'Le Père et moi sommes un'¹⁶, et 'Tout ce qu'a le Père est à moi'¹⁷ et 'Tout ce qui est à moi est à toi et tout ce qui est à toi est à moi'¹⁸.

Et de nouveau tout ce qui est au Père et à Lui, il l'attribue à l'Esprit théarchique en communion et union: les œuvres divines, l'adoration, et, comme une source inépuisable, la causalité et la répartition des dons qui conviennent à la Bonté.

Et je pense qu'aucun de ceux qui ont été nourris dans les divins *Oracles* par des pensées qui ne sont pas dévoyées ne contredirait ceci: tout ce qui convient à la Dêité s'applique à la Théarchie toute entière, sous le rapport de la parfaite Dêité' (DN 637 ABC).

Il s'agit du titre divin de 'Seigneur' par lequel sont nommés, dans l'Écriture, le Père, le Fils et l'Esprit, et, dans le Credo de Nicée-Constantinople, à la fois le Fils qui est dit κύριος et l'Esprit, κύριον. Pour montrer, d'une manière générale, que tout ce qui est dit du Père peut être dit du Fils et réciproquement, Denys s'appuie sur Jn 10, 30, 16, 15 et 17, 10 et sur les affirmations du 'Verbe théarchique' qui attribue à l'Esprit théarchique, 'en communion et union'

¹¹ La traduction française des *Noms divins* est ma traduction qui doit paraître dans *Sources chrétiennes*.

¹² I Co 3, 17.

¹³ I Co 11, 12.

¹⁴ Col 1, 16.17.

¹⁵ Ps 103, 30.

¹⁶ Jn 10, 30.

¹⁷ Jn 16, 15.

¹⁸ Jn 17, 10.

(κοινωνικῶς καὶ ἡνωμένως), les mêmes noms. Les noms divins qualifient donc la Dèité toute entière, car, dit Denys: 'Ces dénominations qui conviennent à Dieu sont toujours célébrées par les Oracles non de façon partielle (οὐ μερικῶς)', mais selon 'toute l'intégrité de la Dèité entière et complète' (636 C). L'adverbe μερικῶς, 'de façon partielle', s'oppose à l'adjectif ὅλη, qui caractérise la Dèité qui est qualifiée dans sa totalité ou son intégralité. En revanche les deux adverbes περιληπτικῶς - διεξοδικῶς ne s'opposent pas car un nom peut être à la fois attribué de façon globale (περιληπτικῶς) à la Théarchie toute entière et 'en détail' (διεξοδικῶς) à chaque Personne divine (DN 637 B).

2) Distinction de ce qui est uni et de ce qui est distinct (§ 3)

D'une part, ce qui de la Dèité toute entière est *uni*, comme nous l'avons montré plus longuement dans, les *Esquisses théologiques*, d'après les Oracles, c'est l'Au-delà du Bien, de la Dèité, de l'Être, du Vivant et du Sage et ce qui appartient à la négation transcendante et, avec cela, toutes les qualités causatrices: le Bien, le Beau, l'Être, le Vivifiant, le Sage et toutes ces dénominations que reçoit la Cause de tous les biens d'après les dons qui conviennent à sa bonté.

D'autre part, ce qu'il y a de *distinct*, c'est la dénomination et la réalité suessentiels de Père, celles de Fils et celles d'Esprit, sans qu'il soit possible le moins du monde d'introduire entre elles une réciprocité ou un caractère commun. Il y a encore en plus de cela, comme chose *distincte*, l'existence humaine parfaite et sans altération de Jésus et tous les mystères essentiels de son amour des hommes, selon son existence humaine' (DN II, 3, 640 BC).

Dans ce chapitre 'sur la théologie unie et distincte', Denys développe toute une réflexion sur l'unité.

1. Ce qui est uni (τὰ ἡνωμένα),

c'est ce qui qualifie la Dèité tout entière, c'est-à-dire les termes en ὑπερ, comme dans le Prologue de la *Théologie mystique*, et 'toutes les qualités causatrices' (τὰ αἰτιαλογικὰ πάντα), c'est-à-dire les noms divins qui procèdent du Bien: le Beau, l'Être, le Vivifiant et le Sage.

2. D'autre part, Denys place dans 'ce qui est distinct' (τὰ δὲ διακεκριμένα) aussi bien

a) 'la dénomination et la réalité (ὄνομα καὶ χρῆμα) suessentiels de Père, celles de Fils et celles d'Esprit'; b) que 'l'existence humaine de Jésus' (ἡ ὑπαρξις καθ' ἡμᾶς Ἰησοῦ).

Le fait que Denys caractérise la Dèité comme ὑπερούσιος pose ici deux problèmes trinitaire et christologique et, d'une manière générale, une question sur le statut ontologique des noms divins.

1. ὑπερούσιος-ὁμοούσιος

Le premier problème est celui de l'incompatibilité de la caractérisation de la Dèité comme ὑπερούσιος et de la relation entre le Père et le Fils ὁμοούσιος

au Père. Le Père est dit 'source unique de la suessentielle Dèité' et non source de la génération du Fils et de la spiration de l'Esprit (Denys n'emploie jamais le terme de 'procession' (πρόοδος) pour les relations trinitaires ni celui de génération (γέννησις) du Fils par le Père). Le Père n'est pas 'source' dans l'ordre des relations trinitaires, qui sont définies par leur origine, mais source de la Dèité suessentielle.

La définition de la θεότης comme ὑπερούσιος lui interdit de parler de 'substance' (οὐσία) divine et, par là même, de 'consubstantialité' du Père et du Fils. Il y a donc une éviction du 'consustantiel' du symbole de Nicée au profit du 'suessentiel' néoplatonicien. La doctrine de Denys est cohérente: son silence sur le 'consustantiel' ne signifie pas qu'il ne confesse point le symbole de Nicée, mais qu'il ne veut pas employer le terme de 'consustantiel' car il a vu la contradiction entre l'*hyperousios* et l'*homoousios*.

Cette contradiction philosophique ne sera pas vue ou retenue par des théologiens qui, à la fois, invoquent la Trinité comme 'suessentielle' et confessent le 'consustantiel' nicéen. Ainsi Sophrone de Jérusalem¹⁹ reprend l'invocation du Prologue de la *Théologie mystique* de Denys²⁰ dans un ordre différent:

'Ô Trinité, au delà du Bien, de l'Être et de Dieu, toute-puissante et toute-connaissante, illumine-moi, ton indigne serviteur'.

'Τριάς ὑπερούσιε, ὑπεράγαθε, ὑπέρθεε, παντοδύναμε, παντεπίσκοπε, ἀόρατε, ἀκατάληπτε... λάμπων κἀμοὶ τῷ ἀναξίῳ δούλῳ σου'.

2. τὸ ὑπερούσιον- ἡ ὑπαρξις

La seconde question qui se pose est une question christologique: que signifie cette distinction dans le Christ

a) de la réalité suessentielle de Fils (τὸ ὑπερούσιον χρῆμα υἱοῦ)²¹

b) et de l'existence 'selon nous' ou humaine de Jésus (ἡ ὑπαρξις καθ' ἡμᾶς Ἰησοῦ)?

Ce texte n'a pas été l'objet de beaucoup de commentaires.

L'opposition τὸ ὑπερούσιον - ἡ ὑπαρξις καθ' ἡμᾶς indique pourtant qu'il y a une double 'réalité' du Christ: il est 'suessentiel', comme Personne divine, et a une 'existence' comme la nôtre. La distinction entre la divinité et l'humanité du Christ correspond donc à celle de ὑπερούσιον-ὑπαρξις. Denys parle ici (640 C) d'une ὑπαρξις καθ' ἡμᾶς de Jésus, et, au paragraphe suivant (§ 4), d'une ὑπερούσιος ὑπαρξις (641 A) de la Dèité. Il y a donc une 'existence humaine' de Jésus et une 'existence suessentielle' de la Trinité. (Denys

¹⁹ Sophrone de Jérusalem, *Sancti Sophronii Oratio*, PG 87, Pars Tertia, 4001 C-D.

²⁰ MT 997 A: Τριάς ὑπερούσιε καὶ ὑπέρθεε καὶ ὑπεράγαθε. Sophrone ne reprend pas les καὶ.

²¹ Noter le caractère vague du terme χρῆμα qui sert ici seulement d'appui à l'adjectif ὑπερούσιον.

parle d'une 'nature' (φύσις)²² divine et jamais d'une 'nature' (φύσις) humaine de Jésus, mais d'une 'nature selon nous' (οὐσία καθ' ἡμᾶς) de Jésus.

c) Ce passage du 'suressentiel' divin de la seconde Personne de la Trinité à l'existence humaine de Jésus est réalisé dans l'Incarnation où 'le Verbe suressentiel a pris entièrement et véritablement de nous une essence conforme à la nôtre' (οὐσιωθῆναι καθ' ἡμᾶς) (DN II, 6, 644 C). Le terme important ici est οὐσιωθῆναι, 'être substantifié' ou 'prendre essence'. C'est un terme technique néoplatonicien, comme l'a bien montré Pierre Hadot²³ à propos du *Commentaire sur le Parménide*. Denys emprunte encore une fois au vocabulaire néoplatonicien un terme ontologique pour dire l'Incarnation du Verbe.

3) Les propriétés des unions divines (§ 4)

Lorsque Denys, au § 4 du ch. II, se propose d'exposer le mode parfait de l'union et de la distinction divines, il se fixe trois buts:

- a) le point de vue synoptique: εὐσύνοπτος ὁ λόγος
- b) l'absence de toute équivoque ou d'absence de clarté: ἀσαφές
- c) et la définition des propriétés: τὰ οἰκεῖα (DN 640 D 3-6).

Denys définira d'abord les propriétés des unions divines, au § 4, puis, au § 5, celles des Hypostases.

Tout d'abord, il définit, d'après 'les saints initiés' de 'notre tradition théologique', les 'propriétés' des unions divines:

'Ils disent, à la suite des saints oracles, qu'il y a des qualités propres (ἴδια) à la susdite union, mais qu'en revanche, il y a des unions et des distinctions propres (τινας ἰδικὰς ἐνώσεις καὶ διακρίσεις) qui appartiennent à la distinction.

Ainsi, dans le cas de l'union divine, c'est-à-dire de la Suressentialité, ce qui ne fait qu'un avec la Trinité, principe d'unité, et lui est commun, c'est l'Existence suressentielle, la Dêité plus que divine, la Bonté plus que bonne, l'Identité au-delà de tout de l'entière Propriété qui est au-delà de tout, l'Unité au-delà du principe d'unité, l'Ineffable, la

²² Denys emploie le terme φύσις à la fois pour la nature divine, dans la *Théologie mystique*: 'Comment la nature divine et bonne est dite une (πῶς ἡ θεῖα καὶ ἀγαθὴ φύσις ἐνικῆ λέγεται) et comment elle est dite trine' (1033 A) —, et pour la nature des choses, dans les *Noms divins*. Il définit le mal comme ce qui est 'contre nature' (παρὰ φύσιν) et le bien, comme ce qui est 'conforme à la nature' (κατὰ φύσιν). Il parle de la résurrection comme ce qui est 'supérieur à la nature visible qui est la nôtre (ὕπερ φύσιν δὲ τὴν καθ' ἡμᾶς φημι τὴν ὁραμένην), non à (la nature) toute puissante de la vie divine (οὐ τὴν πανσθενῆ τῆς θείας ζωῆς); car pour cette nature (φύσει), en tant qu'elle est celle de toutes les vies et surtout des vies les plus divines, aucune vie n'est contre nature ou supérieure à la nature (παρὰ φύσιν ἢ ὑπὲρ φύσιν)' (DN 857 A). Ce texte pose un problème théologique car on attendrait le terme 'grâce' là où Denys écrit 'supérieur à la nature'.

²³ Cf. P. Hadot, *Marius Victorinus. Recherches sur sa vie et ses œuvres* (Paris, 1971), vol. II. *Textes. Porphyre sur le Parménide*, p. 102 et 103, note 5: *Fragm. XII*, 6 (οὐσιωθῆναι) et 9 (οὐσιωμένον); Porphyre, *Sentences* 39 (οὐσιωθῆναι) et 41 (οὐσιωμένον), p. 47 et 52 de l'édition de E. Lambertz (Leipzig, 1975).

Multiplicité des noms, l'Inconnaissance, l'absolue Intelligibilité, l'Affirmation de tout, la Négation de tout, l'Au-delà de toute Affirmation et Négation, la Permanence et le Fondement, pour ainsi dire, des Hypostases principes d'unité²⁴ les unes dans les autres, d'une façon entièrement surunifiée, mais sans confusion en aucun point, comme les lumières des lampes — pour user d'exemples sensibles et familiers —, étant dans une unique maison, sont aussi toutes entières chacune en chacune toute entière et gardent l'exacte distinction, subsistant selon son caractère propre, des unes par rapport aux autres, (les lumières) étant unies dans la distinction et distinctes dans l'unité' (DN 640 D - 641 A).

Bernhart Brons comprend cette Permanence comme la 'périchorèse' entre les trois Hypostases: 'Die unvermischte Einheit (Perichorese) der drei Hypostasen, die durch einen Vergleich aus dem Bereich des sensiblen veranschaulicht wird (Lampenvergleich)'²⁵. Denys ne parle pas de 'périchorèse', mais il emploie un vocabulaire philosophique néo-platonicien: la 'Permanence' et le 'Fondement'. Cependant il parle bien d'une Permanence ou d'un fondement des Hypostases les unes dans les autres (ἢ ἐν ἀλλήλαις μονὴ καὶ ἴδρυσις: DN 641 A), ce qui indique bien l'idée de la perichorèse, même si le terme est absent.

L'interprétation de l'Union transcendante' comme Périchorèse trinitaire se fonde sur l'exemple des lampes: ce serait 'le fait, pour les Hypostases principes d'unité, de demeurer et d'être fondées les unes dans les autres', dans une Union suressentielle, comme les lumières de plusieurs lampes, rassemblées dans une seule pièce, sont fondues dans une unique lumière.

Là encore l'image est déroutante: les trois Hypostases sont-elles trois sources distinctes d'une unique lumière? Et l'Union des Trois serait-elle seconde par rapport aux Trois Hypostases, comme l'unique lumière qui serait la fusion de lumières venues de trois sources différentes? Il est clair que telle n'est pas la théologie trinitaire de Denys qui réserve le terme 'source', πηγή (DN 641 D), pour le Père et ne saurait admettre une antériorité des Hypostases par rapport à l'Union divine. Il serait plus juste de parler avec la liturgie byzantine d'une 'lumière au triple éclat'. Ou d'invoquer un vers des *Poemata Theologica*²⁶ de Grégoire de Nazianze:

'Fuyons à toute vitesse au ciel où de multiples
splendeurs jaillissent de la lumière ineffable autour des Trois'.

Προτροπάδην φεύγωμεν εἰς οὐρανὸν ἧχί τε πολλὰ
κάλλεα μαρμαίροντα φάος περι τρισσὸν ἄφραστον.

²⁴ τῶν ἐναρχικῶν ὑποστάσεων μονὴ καὶ ἴδρυσις ὀλικῶς ὑπερνωμένη: l'emploi du terme néo-platonicien μονὴ (premier terme de la trilogie 'Permanence-Procession-Conversion', est accompagné par l'expression 'si l'on peut dire' (εἰ οὕτω χρὴ φάναι) qui apparaît aussi en DN 645 B 20, 648 B 20, 648 B 19 et 697 B 14. Dans tous les cas, cela semble être une manière d'excuser le langage néo-platonicien.

²⁵ B. Brons, *Gott und die Seienden*, p. 91 n° 73 et p. 92.

²⁶ Grégoire de Nazianze, *Theol. Carminum, Liber II: Poemata Historica* II, 30, 55-56; PG 37, col. 1304-1305.

4) *Les propriétés des Hypostases divines (§ 5)*

'Mais il existe également, dans les théologies suessentiels, une distinction qui ne consiste pas seulement, comme je l'ai dit, en ce que chacune des Hypostases principes d'unité, selon l'union même, est établie sans mélange ni confusion (ἀμιγῶς καὶ ἀσυγχύτως), mais encore en ce que les (propriétés) de la Fécondité divine suessentielle (τῆς ὑπερουσίου θεογονίας) ne sont pas interchangeables entre elles.

Or la Source unique de la suessentielle Déité, c'est le Père, le Père n'étant pas Fils, ni le Fils, Père, mais les hymnes réservant pieusement à chacune des Hypostases théarchiques leurs propriétés. Ce sont là les unions et les distinctions selon l'union et l'existence ineffables' (DN 641 D).

Il s'agit maintenant des propriétés des Hypostases théarchiques' (τὰ οἰκεῖα τῶν ὑποστάσεων θεαρχικῶν) (641 D 8) qui caractérisent chacune d'entre elles.

Nous pouvons faire trois remarques de vocabulaire:

1. *Sur l'emploi de différents termes* pour qualifier les qualités propres (ἴδια) à l'union, celles propres (ἰδικὰς) à l'union et à la distinction et les propriétés (τὰ οἰκεῖα) des Hypostases: 'Il y a des qualités propres (ἴδια) à la susdite union, mais, en revanche, il y a des unions et des distinctions propres (τινας ἰδικὰς καὶ ἐνώσεις καὶ διακρίσεις)' (DN 641 A 1-2) et des 'propriétés des Hypostases divines' (τὰ οἰκεῖα τῶν ὑποστάσεως θεαρχικῶν) (DN 641 D 8-9). Qu'indiquent ces différences de vocabulaire? Pour Denys, le terme approprié pour dire les 'propriétés' des Hypostases est τὰ οἰκεῖα et non ἰδιότης comme pour Basile.

2. *Sur la distinction des Hypostases:*

a) Le premier trait de la distinction entre les Hypostases est donc 'l'absence de mélange et de confusion': 'Selon l'union, chacune des Hypostases est établie sans mélange ni confusion' (ἀμιγῶς καὶ ἀσυγχύτως).

b) Le second est le caractère non interchangeable de leurs propriétés: 'Les (propriétés) de la Fécondité divine suessentielle ne sont pas interchangeables entre elles' (ἀλλ' ὅτι καὶ τὰ τῆς ὑπερουσίου θεογονίας οὐκ ἀντιστρέφει πρὸς ἄλληλα) (DN II, 5, 641 D).

3. *Sur l'emploi de l'expression 'la Fécondité divine suessentielle'* (ἡ ὑπερούσιος θεογονία ou γονιμότης) qui est à la fois

a) comme la source féconde des trois Personnes divines, en DN I, 4, 592 A 1-3: la Théarchie est célébrée 'comme Trinité à cause de la manifestation en trois Hypostases de la Fécondité suessentielle (ὑπερούσιου γονιμότητος), de laquelle toute paternité, au ciel et sur terre, reçoit son être et son nom'²⁷.

b) et comme la relation même du Père et du Fils, en DN II, 5, 641 D 4-7:

'Les (propriétés) de la Fécondité divine suessentielle (ὑπερουσίου θεογονίας) ne sont pas interchangeables entre elles. Or la source unique de la suessentielle Déité, c'est le Père, le Père n'étant pas Fils, ni le Fils, Père'.

Ainsi d'une part, la Fécondité divine englobe ou est l'unité des trois Hypostases dont les propriétés ne sont pas interchangeables, et, de l'autre, le Père

²⁷ Ep. 3, 15.

est la 'source unique de la suessentielle Déité', cette propriété du Père le plaçant à l'origine non seulement de la génération du Fils, mais également de la 'suessentielle Déité' (DN 641 D: Μόνη δὲ πηγὴ τῆς ὑπερουσίου θεότητος ὁ πατήρ et DN 645 B: πηγαία θεότης ὁ πατήρ).

5) *Le secret de la génération en Dieu (§ 7)*

Πάλιν, ὅτι μὲν ἐστὶ

πηγαία θεότης ὁ πατήρ,

ὁ δὲ υἱὸς καὶ τὸ πνεῦμα

τῆς θεογόνου θεότητος,

εἰ οὕτω χρὴ φάναι,

βλαστοὶ θεόφυτοι καὶ οἶον ἄνθη

καὶ ὑπερούσια φῶτα,

πρὸς τῶν ἱερῶν λογίων παρειλήφμεν.

Ὅπως δὲ ταῦτά ἐστιν,

οὔτε εἰπεῖν οὔτε ἐννοῆσαι δυνατόν.

'En outre nous avons bien reçu des saints Oracles que,

d'une part, le Père est la divinité fontale²⁸,

le Fils et l'Esprit, d'autre part,

les pousses divines²⁹,

si l'on peut dire,

de la Déité génératrice de Dieu

et, en quelque sorte,

ses fleurs et ses lumières suessentielles³⁰.

Mais comment cela est on ne peut le dire,

ni le penser' (DN II, 7, 645 B).

²⁸ L'image de la 'source' se retrouve dans un grand nombre de passages du *Corpus dionysien*: πηγαῖος: CH 260 D; EH 480 AB; DN 637 C; 645 B; 696 B; 701 AC; 704 A; 909 C; πηγὴ: EH 373 C; DN 641 D; EP 9, 1104 B; 1105 A; πηγαία: DN II, 1, 645 B. 'La Trinité est la source vivifiante' (EH 373 C). 'Dans la suessentielle Déité, le Père seul est source' (DN 641 D). 'Cette source de vie qui s'épanche en soi-même et qui demeure en soi-même' (EP 9, 1104 B). Le Scholiaste commente ainsi: 'Il est dit dans le Psaume: "près de toi est la fontaine (πηγὴ) de la vie" (Ps. 35,10) et dans Jérémie: "Ils m'ont abandonnée, moi, la Fontaine d'eau vive" (2, 13). Par conséquent Dieu est dit "Source", une sorte de matrice, Principe et Cause de toutes les choses qui apparaissent et viennent à l'existence. En fait, les divines Écritures appellent "Cause fontale" les choses que quelques-uns ont l'habitude d'appeler universelles, générales, totales et comprenant tout, en tant qu'elles embrassent les Processions partielles qui dérivent d'elles: ainsi justement on appelle l'Esprit Saint Cause fontale, parce que toutes les choses qui existent par le moyen de l'Esprit existent grâce à sa puissance créatrice qui est continue, et parce que l'Esprit Saint est lui aussi cause de (tous) les êtres, comme il est dit dans le *Livre de la Sagesse* (12, 1; 15, 11). La continuité du fait de créer, comprends-la à partir ces paroles: "Mon Père n'a jamais fini de travailler jusqu'à maintenant et moi aussi je travaille" (Jn 5, 17). Ainsi aussi l'Esprit Saint, avec le Père et le Fils, depuis toujours, œuvre incessamment. En fait, il est dit: "Envoie ton Esprit et ils seront créés" (Ps. 103, 30)" (PG 4, 213 A-C). Les 'opérations divines' (DN II, 1, 637 C) sont les miracles que Jésus Christ accomplit avec l'Esprit Saint, comme lorsqu'il dit: 'Je chasse les démons dans l'Esprit Saint' (Lc 11, 20; cité en PG 4, 213 A).

²⁹ ὁ δὲ υἱὸς (texte établi par B.R. Suchla et non ὁ δὲ Ἰησοῦς, comme dans la Patrologie grecque de Migne) καὶ τὸ πνεῦμα, τῆς θεογόνου θεότητος βλαστοὶ θεόφυτοι: l'expression 'pousses de la divinité (θεότητος βλαστοὶ)' peut provenir des *Oracles Chaldaïques* à travers Proclus: cf. H.-D. Saffrey, 'Nouveaux liens objectifs entre le Pseudo-Denys et Proclus', *RSPT* 63 (1979), p. 13. Cependant θεότητος βλαστοὶ peut aussi avoir une source scripturaire: 'ἐκ βλαστοῦ, υἱέ μου, ἀνέβης' (Gn 49,9); c'est pourquoi Denys parle des métaphores bibliques des 'bourgeons' et des 'fleurs' dans la *Lettre* 9, 1105 A.

³⁰ Proclus, *De malorum subsistentia* (XI. 26-34, Isaac): '... et nihil aliud entes quam entium unitates et metra et bonitates et summitates, si velis, et velut flores et supersubstantialia lumina et omne quod tale, participabiles quidem sunt secundum enter ens et primam substantiam...'

Denys établit au paragraphe 7 une opposition entre le Père, qui est la 'divinité fontale', et le Fils et l'Esprit, qui sont les 'pousses divines' de la 'Déité génératrice de Dieu'. Est-ce que cela voudrait dire qu'il y a une identité entre le Père, 'Divinité fontale', et la 'Déité génératrice de Dieu'?

Denys parle, en DN 641 D comme en EP 9, 1104 C, d'une 'Théogonie suressentielle' (ἡ ὑπερούσιος θεογονία) et, en DN 645 B, d'une 'Déité génératrice de Dieu' (ἡ θεογόνος θεότης). Mais la première expression qualifie la Déité toute entière, la seconde, le Père. Donc il y a à la fois une fécondité de la Déité en tant que telle, et à l'intérieur de la Trinité, une priorité du Père qui est la source de toute fécondité. Le Père est toujours caractérisé comme Source, ici, comme au paragraphe 5 où Denys dit que 'la Source unique de la suressentielle Déité, c'est le Père' (641 D).

Denys reprendra sous forme métaphorique les images de la génération en Dieu dans la *Lettre IX*:

'En ce qui concerne, par exemple, la génération suressentielle de Dieu, les Écritures nous représentent le "ventre de Dieu" engendrant Dieu de façon corporelle (Οἶον ἐπὶ μὲν τῆς ὑπερουσίου θεογονίας γάστρα θεὸν σωματικῶς θεὸν γεννῶσαν ἀναπλαττούσης) (Ps. 118, 3) et le Verbe même sortant comme un "souffle d'air" d'une poitrine humaine (Ps. 44, 1). Elles nous décrivent l'Esprit comme "expiré" par la bouche (Ps. 32, 6). Elles parlent du "sein divin" (κόλπους θεογονοϊκούς) qui engendre le Fils de Dieu, nous le représentant sous forme corporelle par des images physiques. Elles usent d'images telles que celles d'arbres, de bourgeons, de fleurs, de racines ou encore de fontaines d'eaux jaillissantes, de sources lumineuses, et toutes ces autres allégories (ἱερογραφίας)³¹ par lesquelles l'Écriture révèle les mystères de Dieu suressentiel' (EP 9, 1104 C-1105 A).

La 'théogonie suressentielle' est exprimée par des images telles que le 'ventre de Dieu', le 'sein divin', et d'autres allégories. L'Écriture use d'images physiques pour exprimer la 'génération suressentielle de Dieu' et les 'mystères du Dieu suressentiel'. Quant à l'image des 'pousses divines', elle se trouve bien dans l'Écriture, mais également chez Proclus, comme l'a montré le Père Saffrey, et dans les *Hymnes* de Synésios³².

³¹ Traduction de M. de Gandillac. Le mot ἀλληγορία est absent des *Indices* de van Daele, ce qui est un indice!

³² Synésios de Cyrène, t. I, *Hymnes*, texte établi et traduit par C. Lacombrade (Paris, 1978). — *Hymne III*, 4-11: 'C'est dans les ineffables desseins du Père qu'a germé la naissance du Christ. L'auguste enfantement de l'Épouse a révélé sous sa forme humaine celui qui est venu dispenser la lumière issue de la source (φωτὸς παγαίου). Et pourtant ton (il s'agit du Père) ineffable *surgeon* a connu la racine des siècles (ἀδ' ἄρρητός σευ βλάστα αἰώνων οἶδεν ῥίζαν)' (p. 70). — *Hymne V*, 25-36: 'L'unique source, l'unique racine rayonne sous la forme d'une triple clarté, car, là, où se trouve l'abîme du Père, là se trouve aussi le Fils glorieux, mystérieux enfantement de ce cœur, sagesse artisan de l'univers; et là rayonne également la lumière unifiante de l'Inspiration sainte. L'unique source, l'unique racine produit au jour la profusion de ses bienfaits avec le *surgeon suressentiel* (ὑπερούσιόν τε βλάσταν) qui bouillonne en élans créateurs' (p. 81). Cet hymne s'achève par le souhait suivant: 'Que, prenant, au contraire, un libre essor, je puisse danser autour des très ineffables mystères du *surgeon issu de toi*' (V, 89-91, p. 83).

6) L'appropriation des 'dons' aux trois Hypostases divines (§ 8)

'Mais à cela se borne toute la puissance de notre activité intellectuelle: toute paternité et filiation divine nous a été donnée, à nous et aux puissances supra-célestes, à partir de la paternité principielle et de la filiation principielle séparées de tout, grâce auxquelles les intellects déiformes deviennent dieux, fils de dieux et pères de dieux et sont ainsi nommés, cette paternité et cette filiation se réalisant bien sûr d'une manière spirituelle, c'est-à-dire incorporelle, immatérielle et intelligible, l'Esprit théarchique étant établi au-dessus de toute divinisation intelligible et immatérielle, et le Père et le Fils séparés de toute paternité et filiation divine, d'une manière éminente' (DN 645 C).

Le dernier passage trinitaire du chapitre II, 8 des *Noms divins* concerne la divinisation. En effet, dans l'œuvre de la divinisation de l'homme, Denys attribue aux différentes Personnes divines un rôle qui correspond à leurs propriétés personnelles. Les intellects déiformes deviennent 'dieux', 'fils de dieux' et 'pères de dieux', cette paternité ou cette filiation spirituelle étant données par le Père et le Fils, l'Esprit étant celui qui accomplit la divinisation elle-même.

Mais dans la divinisation, la filiation et la paternité, l'Esprit reste 'établi au-dessus' (ὑπεριδρυμένον) de toute divinisation intelligible, et le Père et le Fils, séparés de toute paternité et filiation divine de manière éminente. Denys insiste ici, comme dans la participation, sur le fait que Dieu demeure au-delà de ses dons et de ses participations. La conjonction des deux termes ὑπεροχικῶς ἐξηρημένων (645 C) souligne encore la transcendance de Dieu dans la divinisation de l'homme.

Enfin ce passage du § 8 ne s'oppose pas à celui du § 1 où Denys affirme:

'Tout ce qui est au Père et à lui, il l'attribue à l'Esprit théarchique en communion et union: les œuvres divines, la vénération et, comme une source inépuisable, la causalité et la répartition des dons qui conviennent à sa bonté' (DN 637 C).

Les 'œuvres divines' (θεουργία) sont faites 'en communion et union' par les trois Personnes divines, et ce qui est dit de 'façon globale' (περιληπτικῶς) de la Déité peut être dit 'en détail' (διεξοδικῶς) de chacune des trois Personnes ou Hypostases, cependant on peut rapporter par appropriation à chacune d'elles une œuvre ou un don qui correspond à sa 'propriété': au Père, la paternité, au Fils, la filiation, à l'Esprit Saint, la sanctification ou la divinisation.

Pour caractériser la théologie trinitaire de Denys, reprenons ses propres termes. Sa position est double: d'une part il affirme se situer dans 'notre tradition théologique' (640 B), mais, d'autre part, il est conscient de la nouveauté de son langage, c'est pourquoi il ajoute un 'si l'on peut dire' (εἰ οὕτω χρῆ φάναι) avant l'emploi de termes néoplatoniciens comme μονή et ἴδρυσις, Permanence et Fondement, (DN 641 A) ou d'images comme celle de 'pousses

La comparaison avec Synésios se borne à cet emploi de la métaphore de 'pousse' ou de 'surgeon' car il n'a pas du tout la même théologie trinitaire que Denys, l'Esprit étant, pour lui, 'le centre du Père et du Fils'.

divines, de fleurs et lumières essentielles' (βλαστοὶ θεόφυτοι καὶ οἶον ἄνθη καὶ ὑπερούσια φῶτα) (DN 645 B) pour parler des Hypostases divines.

Nous allons engager notre réflexion dans cette double direction: tout d'abord en voyant la nouveauté de son langage trinitaire à partir de ses sources néoplatoniciennes et, ensuite, en nous demandant s'il est dans la ligne de cette 'tradition théologique' dont il se réclame.

II. L'Union et la distinction chez Proclus

Quels sont les lieux où Proclus expose sa doctrine sur l'union (ἔνωσις) et la distinction (διάκρισις)? Eugenio Corsini³³ signale le *Commentaire sur le Parménide* et la *Théologie platonicienne* VI, 12. Nous voudrions ajouter le *Commentaire sur le Timée* (Livre III) où Proclus reprend la question de l'union et de la distinction des Genres de l'Être et donne l'exemple des lampes qui sera repris par Denys dans les *Noms divins*.

1) Le *Commentaire sur le Parménide*

Proclus a été amené à penser la relation de l'union et de la distinction à propos soit de la communauté des Genres entre eux soit des hénades entre elles. Nous trouvons ces deux idées exposées aux Livres II et VI du *Commentaire sur le Parménide*.

1° Au **Livre II**, Proclus commente le passage sur la communauté des Genres dans *Parménide* 129 d:

'Socrate, dit-il, est remonté à l'hypothèse la plus parfaite concernant la communauté des espèces, en disant qu'elles sont toutes mêlées ensemble; car ces deux choses existent à la fois dans les choses divines, à savoir l'union sans confusion et la distinction sans séparation, afin qu'elles soient à la fois les unes dans les autres et gardent leur propre pureté. C'est donc celui-là qu'il admire, c'est-à-dire celui qui peut démontrer que les espèces intelligibles sont unifiées et distinguées (ἡνωται καὶ διακέκτριτα), et qu'elles ne perdent ni leur pureté sans mélange par suite de leur union (διὰ τὴν ἔνωσιν), ni leur communauté divine par suite de leur distinction (διὰ τὴν διάκρισιν), mais qu'elles sont à la fois et distinguées et mélangées entre elles par le lien d'un divin amour (δεσμῷ ἔρωτος ἀγαπητοῦ), selon l'Oracle: (*De l'Amour*) "qui s'est élancé le premier de l'Intellect, ayant revêtu de feu son feu, dont la nature est de conjoindre

³³ 'La dottrina della ἔνωσις e della διάκρισις è sviluppata da Proclo specialmente nel II Libro del *Commento al Parmenide* 768, 34 sgg., Cousin, e nella *Teologia Platonica* VI, 12. Per la identificazione della διάκρισις con la πρόοδος, cfr. *Inst. Theol.* 35, p. 38, 12, Dodds', E. Corsini, *Il Trattato De divinis Nominibus dello Pseudo-Dionigi e i commenti neoplatonici al Parmenide* (Torino, 1962), p. 40, n. 3.

(ἔσάμενος πυρὶ πῦρ συνδέσμιον), afin de faire le mélange dans les Coupes Sources, en ajoutant la fleur de son propre feu" (ἐοῦ πυρὸς ἄνθος ἐπισχῶν)³⁴.

Voilà donc l'espèce de *mélange accompagné de distinction*, que Socrate veut voir dans les hypostases indivisibles et intelligibles; c'est vers lui qu'il provoque l'attention des personnages; c'est cette théorie qu'il admire, à savoir celle qui à la fois unit et distingue les puissances intellectuelles et intelligibles, c'est-à-dire la ressemblance intelligible et la dissemblance, la pluralité intelligible et l'un, le repos divin et le mouvement' (*In Parm.* II, 768-769)³⁵.

L'hypothèse que Socrate défend ici est celle d'un mélange (σύγκρασις) des espèces intelligibles, car dans les choses divines existent à la fois 'l'union sans confusion et la distinction sans séparation (ἔνωσιν τε ἀσύγχυτον καὶ διάκρισιν ἀδιαίρετον), afin qu'elles soient à la fois les unes dans les autres et gardent leur propre pureté'. Ce mélange se fait par le lien de l'Amour dont Proclus parlera dans le *Commentaire sur le premier Alcibiade*.

La doctrine néoplatonicienne de l'union entre les intelligibles dérive de la théorie stoïcienne du 'mélange'³⁶ et Proclus fait largement usage de cette doctrine lorsqu'il éclaire les relations entre les formes-idées dans l'intelligence, entre les différentes facultés de l'âme et entre les hénades.

2° Au **Livre VI**, Proclus parle de 'l'union sans confusion' et de la 'distinction' également à propos des hénades suessentiels:

'C'est hénades hypersubstantielles sont, comme quelqu'un l'a dit, les sommets et les fleurs (de substances) (ὑπερούσιοι γὰρ αἱ ἐνάδες αὐταὶ καὶ, ὡς φησὶ τις, ἄνθη καὶ ἀκρότητες). Or, puisqu'il y a en elles, comme nous l'avons dit union et distinction (καὶ τῆς ἐνώσεως καὶ τῆς διακρίσεως), Parménide se proposant précisément de dérouler au grand jour toute leur procession en partant d'en haut, de l'hénade séparée des choses et élevée au-dessus d'elles, pose pour hypothèse l'un qui lui est propre, c'est-à-dire celui qui est perçu dans les êtres et vu tantôt en tant que un, tantôt en tant que participé. Il conserve toujours la même majeure³⁷ en l'envisageant sous plusieurs points de vue; mais la conséquence varie, afin de montrer par l'identité de la majeure, l'union des hénades divines, (car quelle que soit celle que tu prendras, tu la prends identique aux autres, parce qu'elles sont toutes les unes dans les autres, qu'elles ont

³⁴ Cf. Proclus, *In Alcib.*, p. 65, l. 4-7, *Sur le premier Alcibiade de Platon*, t. I, Texte établi et traduit par A. Ph. Segonds (Paris, 1985), p. 53: 'Et de fait le lien (δεσμὸς) est unification (ἔνωσις), mais avec davantage de distinction, raison pourquoi les Oracles ont dénommé unissant le feu de cet amour: Lui qui, de l'intellect, le premier jaillit, Vêtant son feu unissant du feu'. Voir *Oracles chaldaïques* 42, 1-2 des Places (p. 25 Kroll) et le commentaire de H. Lewy, *Chaldean Oracles and Theurgy*, Nouvelle édition par M. Tardieu (Paris, 1978), p. 127 et 128 n. 235: 'As πῦρ συνδέσμιον is the substance of Eros himself' et p. 180 et n. 14.

³⁵ Traduction de A.E. Chaignet, Proclus le Philosophe, *Commentaire sur le Parménide*, t. I (Paris 1901), pp. 227-228.

³⁶ Cf. SVF II, 471-473 et H. Dörrie, *Porphyrios' Symmikta*, pp. 25-27.

³⁷ τὸ ἡγουμένον indique la proposition qui contient le 'si' de l'hypothèse envisagée par Parménide.

leur racine enfoncée dans l'un; car de même que les arbres par leurs têtes³⁸ ont leur fondement dans la terre, et par elles sont terrestres, de même les choses divines, par leurs propres sommités, ont leur racine dans l'un, et chacune d'elles est hénade et un, par son union avec l'un, quoiqu'elle ne se confonde pas avec lui) et de démontrer et par la variété et le changement de la conséquence, où il prend tantôt le tout, tantôt la figure, tantôt quelque autre caractère, et cela par des propositions ou affirmatives ou négatives, la distinction de ces hénades et la propriété caractéristique de chacun de ces ordres divins; enfin de prouver, par l'argument hypothétique tout entier, à la fois la communauté de ces ordres divins et la pureté sans mélange de chacun d'eux' (*In Parm.* VI, 1050)³⁹.

Proclus distingue ici:

- l'hénade séparée des choses et élevée au-dessus d'elles,
- l'union des hénades divines, qui ont leur racine enfoncée dans l'un; *chacune d'elles est hénade et un, par son union avec l'un, quoiqu'elle ne se confonde pas avec lui* (καὶ ἕκαστον αὐτῶν ἑνὰς ἐστὶ καὶ ἓν διὰ τὴν πρὸς τὸ ἓν ἀσύγχυτον ἔνωσιν),
- la distinction de ces hénades et la propriété caractéristique de chacun de ces ordres divins (τὴν διάκρισιν αὐτῶν καὶ τὴν ιδιότητα τῶν θεῶν τάξεων ἑκάστης);
- la communauté (κοινωνία) de ces ordres divins et la pureté sans mélange de chacun d'eux.

L'union entre les hénades est due à leur unité dans l'Un et au fait qu'elles sont les unes dans les autres:

'Car toutes les hénades sont les unes dans les autres et unies les unes aux autres (πᾶσαι γὰρ αἱ ἑνάδες ἐν ἀλλήλαις εἰσὶ καὶ ἡνῶνται πρὸς ἀλλήλαις); et leur union est beaucoup plus grande que la communauté et l'identité qu'on trouve dans les êtres: car dans ceux-ci, il y a mélange des espèces, ressemblance, amitié, participation mutuelle; mais l'union de celles-là étant une union d'hénades, est le beaucoup plus uniforme, ineffable, et au-dessus de toute autre union' (*In Parm.* VI, 1048, l. 11-14)⁴⁰.

Nous retrouvons les divisions que Denys avait introduites dans sa réflexion trinitaire:

- Au sommet l'hénade (ἑνάς) divine
- puis l'union et la distinction des Hypostases divines qui sont les unes dans les autres (ἐν ἀλλήλαις), selon la *perichorèse* qu'il y a entre elles,
- la distinction des Hypostases selon leurs propriétés caractéristiques (τὰ οἰκεία),
- leur 'union sursentielle' (Denys ne parle pas de κοινωνία) et le fait qu'elles soient sans confusion (ἀσύγχυτος). Dans le contexte dionysien, ce

³⁸ Les têtes (κορυφαῖς) sont ici les racines par lesquelles les arbres s'enfoncent dans la terre.

³⁹ Traduction de A.E. Chagnet, Proclus le Philosophe, *Commentaire sur le Parménide*, t. II (Paris 1901), pp. 251-25).

⁴⁰ *Ibid.*, p. 249.

terme ne renvoie pas à la définition dogmatique de Chalcédoine, mais à Proclus.

La théorie proclienne des hénades⁴¹ a donc servi de modèle pour la réflexion trinitaire de Denys l'Aréopagite. Cependant H.-D. Saffrey a raison de dire que Denys 'ne pouvait naturellement pas recevoir comme telle la doctrine des hénades et qu'elle ne devait apparaître dans son œuvre qu'en filigrane'⁴².

2) Le Commentaire sur le Timée (Livre Γ)

1° Dans le passage du *Commentaire sur le Timée* sur la composition de l'Âme du Monde⁴³, Proclus traite des Genres constitutifs de l'Âme (4e point): ce sont les cinq Genres de l'Être selon le *Sophiste* de Platon: l'Essence, le Même, l'Autre, le Mouvement et le Repos.

Et c'est à propos de la formation de l'Âme selon le Même et l'Autre et de la mixtion des cinq Genres de l'Être (5e point), que Denys prendra l'exemple des lampes.

La mixtion des deux Genres du Même et de l'Autre (*In Tim.* Γ, 254)⁴⁴.

Si l'Âme est formée des deux cercles du Même et de l'Autre, l'objection qui se présente est alors celle de l'homéométrie de l'Âme: comment l'Âme peut-elle être homéomère si elle est formée du mélange du Même et de l'Autre?

Cette objection est l'objection classique du mélange des Genres à laquelle Syrianus, avant Proclus, avait déjà apporté une solution. Celui-ci distinguait deux sortes de mixtions: la mixtion immatérielle où les composants demeurent unis et distincts, mélangés et non-mélangés, et la mixtion matérielle où les éléments ne sont plus distincts l'un de l'autre.

C'est alors qu'il donne l'exemple des lampes multiples qui, bien qu'elles ne produisent qu'une seule lumière, demeurent distinctes les unes des autres.

'Notre Père (Syrianus) a estimé qu'il fallait considérer le mélange des Genres d'une manière appropriée aux réalités immatérielles et incorporelles. Or ce mélange-là ne se fait pas en vertu d'une confusion des essences ni d'une destruction simultanée des puissances, mais résulte, les unes et les autres se conservant, de leur union et interpénétration...

⁴¹ La contribution la plus importante sur le rôle de la théorie des hénades sur la formation du système dionysien est l'article de I. Sheldon-Williams, 'Henads and Angels: Proclus and the ps.-Dionysius' (*Texte und Untersuchungen*, Band 108, Berlin 1972), pp. 65-71. L'auteur montre qu'il y a une analogie entre la procession des dieux hénadiques chez Proclus et celle des puissances du Dieu unique chez Denys.

⁴² H.-D. Saffrey, 'Nouveaux liens objectifs entre le Pseudo-Denys et Proclus', in: *Recherches sur le néoplatonisme après Plotin* (Paris, 1990), p. 247 et C. D'Ancona, 'Proclo: Enadi e nell'ordine sovrassensibile', *Rivista di Storia della filosofia* 2 (1992), p. 294.

⁴³ Procli Diadochi, *In Platonis Timaeum commentaria*, edidit E. Diehl (Diehl), t. II (Amsterdam, 1965) *In Tim.* Γ, p. 119, 25 à p. 155: *La composition de l'Âme*, traduction par A.-J. Festugière, *Commentaire sur le Timée*, t. III, Livre III (Paris, 1967), pp. 158-197. Les majuscules sont celles du texte de Festugière.

⁴⁴ Cf. Proclus, *In Tim.* Γ, Diehl, t. II, p. 254; trad. Festugière, t. III, p. 297.

C'est en effet le propre de la *mixtion immatérielle* que les composants demeurent identiquement *unis et distincts*, mélangés et non mélangés, mais de la mixtion matérielle que les éléments mélangés ne soient plus distincts l'un de l'autre: car la mixtion se fait alors en vertu d'une destruction simultanée. Et qu'il y ait possibilité qu'existent des mixtions immatérielles telles que celles dont nous parlons, il est aisé de s'en rendre compte par les sciences, les principes créatifs physiques, *le luminaire que constitue une grande quantité de lampes. Car ces lampes multiples, bien que ne produisant qu'une seule lumière, demeurent distinctes les unes des autres*, et les principes créatifs multiples, bien que ne faisant tous qu'un même ensemble, n'en sont pas moins *séparés l'un de l'autre* selon la propriété physique de chacun d'eux, et les sciences multiples, malgré leur compénétration, n'en restent pas moins non mêlées l'une à l'autre. (Proclus, *Commentaire sur le Timée*, Tome III, 254, 13-31)⁴⁵.

J'ai cité longuement ce texte car il est la source de *l'exemple des lampes* que Denys donne au § 4 du Chapitre II des *Noms divins* (641 B) à propos de l'union des trois Personnes ou Hypostases divines:

'Ainsi, dans le cas de l'union divine, c'est-à-dire de la Suressentialité, ce qui ne fait qu'un avec la Trinité, principe d'unité, et lui est commun, c'est l'Existence suressentielle, la Dêité plus que divine, la Bonté plus que bonne, l'Identité au-delà de tout de l'entière Propriété qui est au-delà de tout, l'Unité au-delà du principe d'unité, l'Ineffable, la Multiplicité des noms, l'Inconnaissance, l'absolue Intelligibilité, l'Affirmation de tout, la Négation de tout, l'au-delà de toute Affirmation et Négation, la Permanence et le Fondement, pour ainsi dire, des Hypostases principes d'unité les unes dans les autres, d'une façon entièrement surunifiée, mais sans confusion en aucun point, *comme les lumières des lampes — pour user d'exemples sensibles et familiers —, étant dans une unique maison, sont aussi tout entières chacune en chacune tout entière et gardent l'exacte distinction, subsistant selon son caractère propre, des unes par rapport aux autres*, (les lumières) étant *unies* dans la distinction et *distinctes* dans l'unité.

Et de fait nous voyons, quand il y a de nombreuses lampes dans une maison, les lumières de toutes *unifiées en une seule lumière* (πολλῶν ἐνότων λαμπτήρων πρὸς ἓν τι φῶς ἐνούμενα) et rayonnantes d'un seul éclat sans distinction (καὶ μίαν αἴγλην ἀδιάκριτον ἀναλάμποντα), si bien que personne, je crois, ne saurait distinguer la lumière de cette lampe-ci de celle des autres, d'après l'air qui enveloppe toutes ces lumières, ni voir l'une en dehors de l'autre, toutes se mélangeant en toutes sans mélange; mais si l'on enlève de la pièce un des flambeaux, toute sa lumière s'en ira avec lui, sans rien entraîner en elle des autres lumières, ni rien laisser aux autres de la sienne propre. En effet, comme je l'ai dit, *l'union parfaite qu'il y avait entre elles*, de totalité à totalité, était absolument sans mélange, sans la moindre part de confusion, et ceci réellement dans un corps, à savoir l'air, la lumière dépendant du feu qui est matériel' (DN II, 4, 641 B-C).

L'exemple des lampes multiples ne produisant qu'une seule lumière, tout en demeurant distinctes les unes des autres, est, pour Proclus, celui des Genres de l'Être qui se compénètrent dans l'Âme, tout en conservant leur propre forme.

Le Genre commun aux différents Genres c'est l'Être, mais tantôt le Même domine, tantôt l'Autre.

Denys prend les 'lumières des lampes' pour se servir d'exemples sensibles et familiers' (αἰσθητοῖς καὶ οἰκείοις παραδείγμασιν), pour montrer que, comme plusieurs lampes (πολλῶν λαμπτήρων) dans une maison sont unifiées sans être confondues en une seule lumière (πρὸς ἓν τι φῶς), ainsi les trois Hypostases divines sont unifiées sans être confondues dans l'unique Dêité. Le problème platonicien du passage du multiple à l'Un (πρὸς ἓν) se trouve maintenant transposé au niveau trinitaire. L'exemple des différentes lampes ou flambeaux dont les lumières sont fondues en une seule lumière n'est plus ici le paradigme de l'unité des Genres dans l'Âme, mais de l'Unité en Dieu des trois Personnes divines.

Denys l'Aréopagite et Damascius

Damascius est-il également une source de la théologie trinitaire de Denys? Salvatore Lilla⁴⁶ l'affirme⁴⁷ tout en reconnaissant que les influences de Proclus et Damascius sont conjuguées. Cependant, à part une comparaison de termes semblables, la seule 'convergence' explicite est l'affirmation de Denys, au chapitre XIII des *Noms divins* et de Damascius, dans le *Traité des Premiers Principes*, de la transcendance de Dieu ou du premier Principe qui ne peut être nommé ni Monade ni Triade:

— DN XIII, 3 (Suchla, p. 229, l. 6-8): 'διὸ καὶ μονὰς ὕμνουμένη καὶ τριάς ἢ ὑπὲρ πάντα θεότης οὐκ ἔστιν οὐδὲ μονὰς οὐδὲ τριάς'.

— *De prim. princ.* 117 (III, 133, 22-23): 'οὐδὲν γὰρ ἔστιν ἐκεῖ τῶν τοιούτων ... οὐ τριάς, οὐ μονὰς'.

'Les trois sont-ils donc la même chose ou sont-ils différents, et la monade est-elle triade? — se demande Damascius — Rien de cela n'est conforme à la vérité, car il n'y a là-haut aucune chose de ce genre, ni identité, ni altérité, ni triade, ni monade opposée à une triade (οὐ τριάς, οὐ μονὰς ἢ πρὸς τριάδα ἀντικειμένη); car aucune opposition n'est dans l'intelligible'⁴⁸.

⁴⁶ Cf. la communication écrite de S. Lilla sur 'Pseudo-Denys l'Aréopagite, Porphyre et Damascius' au *Colloque sur Denys l'Aréopagite et sa postérité en Orient et en Occident* (à paraître en 1996).

⁴⁷ La 'convergence' entre Denys et Damascius se laisserait voir, d'après Lilla, surtout (1) dans la conception de l'Un-tout, (2) l'emploi de la 'méthode négative', (3) la comparaison entre le premier Principe de Denys et l'Ineffable de Damascius et (4) enfin 'l'influence de la conception trinitaire de Damascius concernant la première triade intelligible'. 'Comme la Trinité de Denys, dit Lilla, la première triade intelligible de Damascius formée par l'Un-tout, la puissance et l'unifié (ἓν-πάντα, δύναμις, ἡνωμένον) est profondément marquée par l'unité'.

⁴⁸ Damascius, *Traité des Premiers Principes*, texte établi par G. Westerink et traduit par J. Combès, CUF, tome III. *De la Procession* (Paris, 1991), p. 133.

⁴⁵ Cf. Proclus, *In Tim.* Γ, Diehl, t. II, p. 254, 13-31; trad. Festugière, t. III, pp. 297-298.

Malgré 'certaines analogies entre la doctrine mystique de Denys et celle de Damascius', c'est plutôt leur divergence qui apparaît face à l'Unité-Trinité: Denys ne partage pas, dit Lilla, le 'scepticisme total de Damascius concernant la correspondance entre la conception humaine de l'Un qui est simultanément trine et la nature même de l'Un: selon Damascius, les concepts d'unité et de trinité ne correspondent pas au caractère véritable de l'Un ou des trois premiers Principes, mais sont simplement des raisonnements inadéquats que l'esprit humain emploie pour expliquer des réalités qui restent au-dessus de toute intelligence'⁴⁹.

Après avoir montré l'influence de la doctrine proclienne des hénades sur la doctrine dionysienne de l'union et de la distinction des Hypostases, il nous reste à nous demander si cette doctrine dionysienne est dans la 'tradition théologique' grecque dont il se réclame.

III. Comparaison avec la doctrine trinitaire des Cappadociens

Deux auteurs ont indiqué une comparaison entre la théologie trinitaire de Denys et les Cappadociens: Ceslas Pera qui, dans son article de 1936 sur 'Denys le Mystique et la ΘΕΟΜΑΧΙΑ'⁵⁰, a voulu montrer que le mystérieux auteur du *Corpus Areopagiticum* est issu du milieu des Cappadociens⁵¹ et Endre von Ivanka qui, dans *Plato christianus*, compare Denys et Grégoire de Nysse.

Je voudrais reprendre brièvement cette comparaison tout d'abord avec Grégoire de Nysse et ensuite avec Basile.

1) Grégoire de Nysse et Denys l'Aréopagite

1. La Lettre 38

Tout l'argumentation de Ceslas Pera sur l'identification de Denys et d'un disciple de Basile repose sur la *Lettre 38*⁵² longtemps attribuée à Basile, mais qui maintenant est attribuée à son frère Grégoire de Nysse⁵³. Pera a essayé de le prouver à propos des trois questions de la connaissance de Dieu, de la question

⁴⁹ S. Lilla, *art. cit.*, p. 151.

⁵⁰ C. Pera, 'Denys le Mystique et la ΘΕΟΜΑΧΙΑ', *RSPT* 25 (1936), pp. 5-75.

⁵¹ 'Il semble donc légitime de conclure que, si l'on explique et défend là une doctrine de famille, cette exigence nous conduit en même temps à la famille d'origine, au milieu d'opposition, au temps de la composition', *Ibid.*, p. 49.

⁵² Basile, *Lettres*, t. I, CUF (Paris, 1957).

⁵³ Cf. R. Huebner, 'Gregor von Nyssa als Verfasser der sog. Ep. 38 des Basilius. Zum unterschiedlichen Verständnis der "ousia" bei den kappadokischen Brüdern', *Epektasis. Mélanges patristiques offerts à J. Daniélou*, publiés par J. Fontaine et Ch. Kannengiesser (Paris, 1972), pp. 463-490.

des propriétés des Hypostases divines⁵⁴ et de celle de la distinction unie et de l'union distincte. Prenons le troisième point.

Lorsque, en DN II, 4, 641 B, à propos 'des choses unies selon la distinction et des choses distinctes selon l'union' (ἡνωμένα τῇ διακρίσει καὶ τῇ ἐνώσει διακεκριμένα), Denys fait appel aux auteurs 'de notre tradition théologique' (τῆς καθ' ἡμᾶς θεολογικῆς παραδόσεως, 640 D), Pera pense qu'il s'agit de Basile et cite le passage de la *Lettre 38,4* où 'Basile' affirme que, dans la Trinité

'On saisit à la fois en eux une *communauté de nature et une distinction* quasi inexpriables et incompréhensibles, *sans que la différence des hypostases* rompe la continuité de la nature, *sans que la communauté selon l'ousia* élimine la particularité des marques distinctives, et ne t'étonne pas si nous disons que le même est à la fois uni et séparé, et si nous concevons, comme dans une énigme, une sorte de nouvelle et extraordinaire *distinction unie en même temps qu'union distincte*' (τινὰ ... καινήν καὶ παράδοξον διάκρισιν τε συνημμένην καὶ διακεκριμένην συνάφειαν) (p. 87, l. 83-91)⁵⁵.

Remarquons que l'auteur de la *Lettre 38*, à savoir Grégoire⁵⁶ et non Basile, n'emploie pas le terme ἔνωσις, mais συνάφεια pour dire l'union distincte' des Hypostases.

2. Le Discours catéchétique

D'autre part, c'est Endre von Ivanka qui, dans *Plato Christianus*⁵⁷, a établi une comparaison entre Grégoire de Nysse et Denys sur la question de la distinction ἔνωσις - διαίρεσις ou διάκρισις. Grégoire de Nysse, en effet, oppose 'l'unité de nature' (ἡ τῆς φύσεως ἐνότης), et 'la distinction des Hypostases' (ἡ κατὰ τὰς ὑποστάσεις διάκρισις)⁵⁸.

⁵⁴ Ainsi, d'après C. Pera, 'Denys répondant à une accusation de sabellianisme, le fait d'une façon et avec un accent qui rappellent étonnamment la manière et l'accent de saint Basile. De celui-ci, il emploie la terminologie trinitaire: "Dans les *Institutions théologique*, nous avons expliqué ... ce que d'après la théologie affirmative on appelle paternité (Πατρότης) et filiation (Υιότης)".

⁵⁵ Cette doctrine remonte à la *Legatio pro Christianis* (c. 12) d'Athénagore qui avait posé la question τίς ἡ τῶν τοσοῦτων ἔνωσις καὶ διαίρεσις ἐνωμένων.

⁵⁶ Parallèlement à la *Lettre 38*, il faudrait reprendre l'étude des *petits traités trinitaires* de Grégoire de Nysse, faite par: T. Ziegler, *Les petits traités trinitaires de Grégoire de Nysse. Témoins d'un itinéraire théologique (379-383)*. Thèse 3e cycle dactylographiée de l'Université de Strasbourg, Faculté de Théologie protestante, 1987). Sur les petits Traités trinitaires, voir la thèse de S. Gonzales, *La formula 'mia ousia treis upostaseis' en San Gregorio de Nisa* (Diss., Rome, 1939) et son article: 'La identidad de operación en las obras exteriores y la unidad de la naturaleza divina en la teología trinitaria de S. Gregorio de Nisa', *Gregorianum* 19 (1938), pp. 280-301. Il faudrait reprendre toute la question trinitaire chez Grégoire de Nysse, ce qui n'est pas l'objet de cette étude.

⁵⁷ E. von Ivanka, *Plato Christianus. La réception critique du Platonisme chez les Pères de l'Église* (Paris, 1990), p. 226, n. 2.

⁵⁸ (3) 'Gardons de la conception juive la notion de l'unité de nature, et de la croyance païenne retenons seulement la distinction des personnes, en corrigeant de part et d'autre l'impiété par le remède correspondant. Le dénombrement de la Trinité est, pour ainsi dire, le remède de ceux qui s'égarèrent au sujet de l'unité, et la doctrine de l'unité, celui des esprits que disperse leur croyance à la pluralité', Grégoire de Nysse, *Discours catéchétique 3*, Texte grec, traduction française par L. Méridier, coll. *Textes et Documents*, H. Hemmer et P. Lejay (Paris, 1908), pp. 19-21; PG 45, 17 C.

Mais l'opposition que font les Cappadociens entre l'unité (ἐνότης) de la substance et la distinction des Personnes ne correspond pas à celle qu'établit Denys entre l'union (ἔνωσις), qui n'est pas l'unité de la substance, et la distinction des Personnes. L'opposition pour Denys — et c'est là ce qui me semble le point fondamental — n'est pas entre l'unité ou la communauté de nature et les trois Personnes divines, mais entre l'union et la distinction des Personnes ou Hypostases divines.

On peut m'objecter que les termes ἐνότης et ἔνωσις pourraient être équivalents dans le vocabulaire trinitaire de Denys (bien que ma longue étude des textes et des termes de Denys tende à montrer la spécificité des emplois de ces termes) et que, dans ce cas, l'unité divine est identique à l'union entre les Personnes; mais l'unité divine, pour les Cappadociens, est une unité de nature ou de substance (οὐσία) et, là où il n'y a pas de nature commune, il n'y a pas de communauté de nature, et c'est cette κοινωνία caractéristique de la théologie trinitaire des Cappadociens (mot absent dans la théologie trinitaire de Denys) qui différencie leur théologie trinitaire de celle du Pseudo-Denys l'Aréopagite.

C'est cette différence d'approche entre ces deux théologies trinitaires que je voudrais montrer (la démonstration ne peut être développée ici) à partir du *De Spiritu sancto* de Basile de Césarée.

2) *Le Traité sur le Saint Esprit de Basile*

Je voudrais seulement indiquer quatre points de comparaison entre la théologie trinitaire de Basile dans son *Traité sur le Saint Esprit* et celle de Denys, dans les *Noms divins*:

1. la propriété des Hypostases (ἡ ιδιότης τῶν ὑποστάσεων),
2. la communion de la Divinité (κοινωνία τῆς θεότητος),
3. l'absence du terme 'procession' (πρόοδος) pour exprimer la relation du Fils ou de l'Esprit au Père,
4. la différence de signification du terme 'union' (ἔνωσις).

1. la propriété des Hypostases (ἡ ιδιότης τῶν ὑποστάσεων)

Denys semble ignorer tout le développement théologique de la notion d'ιδιότης par Basile, depuis le *Contre Eunome* jusqu'au *Traité du Saint Esprit*, qui est un effort pour penser les relations trinitaires à partir de leurs propriétés communes et de leurs propriétés distinctes. Pour dire les 'propriétés⁵⁹ des Hypostases' (τὰ οικεῖα τῶν ὑποστάσεων), Denys n'emploie pas le terme ιδιότης, mais τὰ οικεῖα et il les caractérise seulement en disant que ces propriétés ne sont pas 'interchangeables'. Quant au terme ιδιότης⁶⁰, il l'emploie

dans le sens d'identité (641 A)⁶¹. Cependant, Denys, comme Basile, affirme que le Père est Source, mais sans reprendre le terme de 'Monarchie'⁶².

2. la communion de la Divinité (κοινωνία τῆς θεότητος)

De même il ignore le développement de la théologie trinitaire de Basile qui conduit celui-ci à passer de la considération de 'ce qui est commun de la nature' (τὸ κοινὸν τῆς φύσεως) à la 'communion de la Divinité' (κοινωνία τῆς θεότητος). C'est à partir des 'propriétés des Hypostases' que Basile considère la 'communion' de Celles-ci dans la Divinité.

Or le terme κοινωνία⁶³, 'communauté' ou 'communion', n'apparaît pas dans la théologie trinitaire de Denys qui n'est pas une théologie de communion; celui-ci emploie les adjectifs ou adverbes κοινωνικός - κοινωνικῶς⁶⁴, 'en communion', et κοινός⁶⁵, 'commun': il parle de ce qui est d'une manière 'commune et unie' (κοινωνικῶς καὶ ἡνωμένως), en DN 637 C, ou de ce qui est 'un et commun' (ἐν καὶ κοινόν), en DN 644 A.

Denys est donc resté étranger au développement théologique trinitaire d'avant le *Concile de Constantinople I* (381) qui, selon Zizioulas⁶⁶, a été rendu possible par deux 'émergences' dans la pensée théologique: a) la distinction entre la 'théologie' et 'l'économie', b) le passage d'une réflexion sur l'Essence (οὐσία) divine à une réflexion sur la Personne (ὑπόστασις) divine c) et, par conséquent, d'une contemplation de l'unité ou de la 'nature' de la Divinité à celle d'une 'communauté' de la Divinité.

3. l'absence du terme 'procession' (πρόοδος)

De même Denys ne fait pas — et il ne peut pas faire — la distinction entre l'οὐσία divine et les relations trinitaires, ce qui l'empêche également de parler de 'procession' des Personnes divines au sein de la Trinité, le terme 'procession'⁶⁷ étant réservé à la procession des noms divins *ad extra*.

⁶¹ Identité des étants (952 B), des mobiles (952 C), de l'éternité (937 C) ou 'propriétés dans les intelligibles sortis de Dieu' (EP 9, 1105 A).

⁶² DN 641 D.

⁶³ κοινωνία: DN 588 D; 644 C; 684 A; 704 ABC; 717 A; 892 C; EP 9, 1112 D.

⁶⁴ κοινωνικός-ῶς: DN 637 C; 708 A; 709 D; 713 B; EP 8, 1085 D.

⁶⁵ κοινός: DN 641 A; 644 A; 649 AD; 652 A.

⁶⁶ J.D. Zizioulas, 'The teaching of the 2nd Ecumenical Council on the Holy Spirit in Historical and Ecumenical Perspective', *Credo in Spiritum Sanctum, Atti del congresso teologico internazionale di Pneumatologia* (Vatican, 1983), pp. 32-55.

⁶⁷ Le terme de 'procession', πρόοδος ou ἐκπόρευσις, du Fils et de l'Esprit à partir du Père est absent du vocabulaire de Denys qui n'emploie le verbe ἐκπορεύομαι que dans la citation de Jn 15,26, à propos de l'Esprit qui procède du Père: 'ὁ παρὰ τοῦ Πατρὸς ἐκπορεύεται' (DN 637 A) et les verbes προέιμι (cf. DN 597B, 704D, 705B, 713A, 721D, 824D, 825B, 892C, 916C, 937B, 949B, 952A, 956B), 'provenir' ou 'sortir de', et διήκειν (cf. DN 697 C et 952 A), 'se répandre', pour parler des processions *ad extra*.

⁵⁹ DN 641 D, voir aussi les autres emplois de τὰ οικεῖα: DN 640 D; 641 ABD; 645 AC.

⁶⁰ ἡ ιδιότης: DN 641 A; 696 B; 937 C; 952 BC2; EP 9, 1105 A.

4. la différence de signification du terme 'union' (ἔνωσις)

Quant au terme d'ἔνωσις, il n'a pas du tout la même signification chez Basile et chez Denys. Ce terme n'apparaît qu'une seule fois dans le *Traité du Saint Esprit*, à la fin du chapitre XVIII. La question posée était celle de la non contradiction de la confession du 'caractère propre des Hypostases' et de la fidélité à la 'doctrine de la Monarchie divine', c'est-à-dire l'affirmation face aux Juifs et aux païens du mystère du Dieu Un et Trine. Et la réponse de Basile était la suivante: 'C'est dans la communauté de la Dèité que réside le principe d'unité (ἐν τῇ κοινωσίᾳ τῆς θεότητος ἔστιν ἔνωσις)' (XVIII, 45). Donc l'ἔνωσις divine est trouvée dans la 'communauté de la Divinité'.

Telle n'est pas la réponse de Denys pour qui l'ἔνωσις n'est pas une κοινωσία.

Conclusion

De cette brève comparaison entre la théologie trinitaire de Basile et celle de Denys, on pourrait conclure que la première est une théologie de la relation et de la propriété (ιδιότης) des Hypostases, d'une part, et de la communion (κοινωνία) de la Divinité, de l'autre. Celle de Denys, au contraire, est fondée sur la distinction entre l'union et la distinction (ἔνωσις-διάκρισις) des Hypostases, du caractère commun (κοινόν) de 'ce qui est uni' et des propriétés (οἰκεῖα) des Hypostases. L'une est une théologie de la κοινωσία, l'autre du κοινόν.

Il faut souligner que la théologie trinitaire de Denys est restée dans le cadre néoplatonicien car, non seulement Denys a emprunté au néoplatonisme, pour caractériser les Hypostases, des termes procliens comme les 'pousses divines' — ce qu'a bien vu le Père Saffrey —, mais aussi parce que sa réflexion théologique sur les Hypostases est tout à fait différente de celle des Cappadociens: ceux-ci partent d'une réflexion sur les propriétés communes et distinctes des Hypostases pour arriver à la considération de la κοινωσία de la Divinité, celui-là part de l'opposition entre l'union divine et la distinction des Hypostases pour s'interroger sur l'attribution des noms divins 'globalement' à la Dèité toute entière et 'en détail' à chaque Hypostase. D'autre part, l'image même des 'pousses divines' montre que Denys a envisagé les relations trinitaires dans le cadre d'une 'théogonie suessentielle', mais non d'une théologie dogmatique qui réserve la notion de 'génération' à la relation du Père et du Fils, mais non à celle du Père et de l'Esprit, que Grégoire de Nazianze nommera ἐκπόρευσις.

La 'procession' qui intéresse les Cappadociens est celle du Fils et celle de l'Esprit à partir du Père, la 'procession' qui envisage Denys est celle des noms divins. La pensée de Denys demeure dans le cadre néoplatonicien de la μονή-πρόοδος-ἐπιστροφή; la théologie des Cappadociens aboutira au Concile de Constantinople I.

Concluons: nous avons relevé deux phrases de Denys pour caractériser sa théologie trinitaire, la prétention de se situer dans 'notre tradition théologique' et l'aveu: 'Si l'on peut dire...' pour excuser son usage du vocabulaire proclien pour dire le mystère trinitaire. L'une marque son originalité dont il a conscience, l'autre, sa volonté de demeurer dans la tradition de la théologie grecque. Est-il demeuré dans cette tradition ou a-t-il ouvert une voie nouvelle qui sera suivie par son traducteur Jean Scot? Et ce doute sur l'audace de son langage n'est-il pas dépassé par sa théologie négative qui le conduit, à la fin des *Noms divins* comme dans la *Théologie mystique*, à s'unir à celui qui est au-delà de tout langage, l'Ineffable?

L'invocation 'Ô Trinité suessentielle, plus que divine et plus que bonne' est l'affirmation de cet Au-delà divin qui, dans son éminence, ne peut être dit 'ni Monade, ni Triade'.

Jean Chrysostome et ses 'amis' d'après le nouveau classement de sa Correspondance

Roland DELMAIRE, Lille

Dans un travail publié en 1991, j'ai tenté de reprendre l'étude de la chronologie des lettres écrites par Jean Chrysostome durant son second exil, de 404 à 407¹. Rien n'avait été fait sur ce sujet depuis Tillemont (1706), Montfaucon (1738) et Stilling pour les *Acta Sanctorum* (1753). Or, il s'avère qu'un reclassement des lettres par ordre chronologique, rompant avec l'ordre tout à fait arbitraire des éditions actuellement disponibles, permet une nouvelle et fort instructive vision des relations entre Jean et ses correspondants.

Le premier point à souligner est la répartition très irrégulière et déséquilibrée des lettres durant la période qui va du départ de Constantinople le 20 juin 404 à la mort de Jean le 14 septembre 407. Nous avons au total 220 lettres *ad diversos*: les 242 de la *Patrologie*, moins les 17 à Olympias, 5 dues au prêtre Constantius (237-241), 2 inauthentiques (125, 233) mais plus la lettre II à Innocent et la lettre aux évêques, prêtres et diacres en prison². Sur ces 220 lettres, 5 sont écrites avant d'arriver à Cucuse, 97 entre septembre et novembre 404, 40 durant l'hiver de cette année, 24 en 405, 43 en 406 (dont 29 pour plaider sa cause devant les Occidentaux), enfin une seule en 407. On voit déjà par ces chiffres que les liens se distendent vite entre Jean et ses correspondants et que peu de relations ont survécu à l'hiver de la première année d'exil. Outre le temps qui passe, il faut en rendre responsables les difficultés croissantes à trouver des messagers à partir de 405, quand les brigands isauriens se font menaçants autour de Cucuse, et surtout à partir de l'hiver 405/406 qui voit Jean fuir Cucuse pour errer dans les montagnes, se réfugier à Arabissos avant qu'une nouvelle fuite l'amène finalement dans une citadelle indéterminée. Il était difficile de trouver des volontaires prêts à risquer leur vie sur des routes peu sûres pour porter des lettres à un exilé dont on n'était même plus certain de l'adresse du moment.

En tenant compte de ces réserves, on peut néanmoins étudier l'évolution des relations épistolaires en classant les correspondants en six catégories (évêques, clergé de Constantinople, clergé de Syrie, laïcs d'Asie mineure, laïcs de Constantinople, laïcs de Syrie) et en essayant de voir le comportement de chacune.

I. Les évêques

A son arrivée à Cucuse, Jean apparaît encore décidé à lutter. A peine installé, il expédie deux séries de lettres pour rallier à sa cause les évêques de Palestine d'une part (85-90), ceux de Cilicie d'autre part (108-112, 235). Au début de novembre, il pense encore que ceux de Palestine et de Phénicie sont avec lui (204). Mais toutes ces lettres restent sans suite: aucun de ces évêques ne recevra une seconde lettre par la suite. Pas plus de succès auprès de Magnus, d'une cité indéterminée, sans doute en Syrie, que Jean relance en vain en octobre au nom d'une vieille amitié (25), d'Heorthisus contacté à la fin de l'automne (30) et de Callistrate d'Isaura durant l'hiver (200). Un évêque Domnus lui envoie bien en octobre un prêtre avec une lettre (27) mais il n'apparaît plus par la suite. Ce silence s'explique par la loi du 18 novembre 404 (*Code Théodosien XVI,4,6*) obligeant les membres du clergé à communier avec Arsace, Théophile et Porphyre: les évêques fidèles à Jean jusque là durent se soumettre et rompre toute relation avec lui ou se démettre: c'est ainsi que Cyriacus de Synnada et Palladius d'Helenopolis, qui reçoivent encore des lettres en Asie mineure durant l'automne (64, 202; 113), devront fuir à Rome où les rejoignirent Eulysius d'Apamée et Demetrius de Pessinonte (148). Deux évêques de cités indéterminées (Galatie ou Cappadoce) ont encore des contacts avec Jean durant l'hiver 404/405, Seleucus qui lui rend visite à Cucuse (37) et Tranquillinus qui lui envoie des nouvelles et un messenger qui d'ailleurs n'arrive pas jusqu'à Jean (47, 63). En fait, un seul évêque — hormis les exilés — reste fidèle à Jean et correspond avec lui jusqu'au bout; il s'agit d'Helpidius de Laodicée qui préféra renoncer à son siège épiscopal plutôt que de renier son ancienne amitié.

II. Le clergé de Constantinople

L'édit impérial du 18 novembre 404 marque ici aussi une rupture dans les rapports épistolaires. Nous avons 16 lettres adressées aux membres du clergé (sans compter les diaconesses), mais aucune n'est postérieure à novembre 404. Le principal lot (203-218) qui est envoyé dans la seconde quinzaine de novembre probablement, contient encore des incitations à résister, qui prouvent que Jean ne connaît pas encore l'édit du 18 novembre car, à partir de cette date, les clercs fidèles doivent eux aussi se soumettre ou se démettre et s'exiler; Palladius, dans son *Dialogue sur saint Jean Chrysostome*, XX, 68 sq en cite quelques-uns dont trois sont parmi les correspondants de l'automne (Theophilus, Philippus, Sallustius). En dehors de Theophilus (3 lettres) et d'Hypatius (2 lettres), il s'agit toujours pour ces prêtres d'une lettre unique et Jean s'y plaint généralement de n'avoir rien reçu d'eux depuis son départ (101, 208, 211, 213, 214, 216). A notre avis, cet envoi d'un nombre important de lettres

¹ R. Delmaire, 'Les Lettres d'exil de Jean Chrysostome. Etudes de chronologie et de prosopographie', *Recherches augustiniennes*, 25, 1991, pp. 71-180.

² PG 52, 541*-542*.

à des clercs et des laïcs influents de la capitale (122, 180, 199, 203-218) se place au moment où Jean apprend la mort de l'impératrice Eudoxie, survenue le 6 octobre (et donc connue à Cucuse environ un mois après), qui lui rend espoir dans la mesure où les rapports tendus qu'il avait avec l'impératrice pouvaient apparaître comme la cause première de son exil. Il relance donc ceux sur qui il croit pouvoir compter; il sera déçu du côté des nobles, comme on le verra plus loin, et l'édit du 18 novembre l'empêchera de poursuivre toute approche du côté du clergé de la capitale car s'opposer à la teneur d'un édit impérial est un crime de lèse-majesté. Fatalement, aucun clerc de la capitale ne pouvait continuer à rester en relation avec Jean après cet édit.

Du côté des diaconesses, trois sont restées en relations avec Jean: Amprucla reçoit trois lettres en septembre-octobre 404, Pentadia trois aussi jusqu'au début de 405 (date à laquelle elle semble quitter Constantinople) et surtout Olympias en recevra 17 durant tout l'exil, jusqu'au printemps 407. L'arrêt des relations avec les deux premières est sans doute dû à leur fidélité à Jean qui les obligea à s'exiler. On sait par Palladius que ce fut le cas pour Pentadia (*Dialogue*, X, 51); pour Amprucla, si elle est bien à identifier avec celle que les biographes de Jean appellent Procla ou Procula, elle semble être une occidentale (sa langue maternelle n'est pas le grec: 103) et elle a pu regagner l'Occident.

En conclusion, après novembre 404, Jean n'a plus aucun ami dans le clergé de la capitale; ses partisans sont en fuite ou en prison et ceux qui sont restés se sont ralliés à Arsace et ont rompu tout contact avec Jean.

III. Le clergé de Syrie

Le 4 juillet 404, avant de quitter Nicée, Jean écrit une longue lettre au prêtre Constantius à Antioche, avec des recommandations sur la manière d'agir à l'égard des païens et des Marcionistes (221). Comme nous l'avons souligné par ailleurs, cette lettre semble indiquer que, dans l'esprit de Jean, Constantius est appelé à succéder prochainement à Flavien — que celui-ci soit mort ou qu'il soit à sa dernière extrémité — et Palladius indique que c'était aussi l'opinion des fidèles d'Antioche (*Dial.* XVI, 63 sq.). On sait que, finalement, ce ne fut pas le cas car un coup de force mené par surprise par les ennemis de Jean durant l'été plaça Porphyre sur le siège d'Antioche. Le clergé d'Antioche ne se rallia pas d'emblée au nouvel évêque sacré avec l'appui des autorités officielles. Constantius lui-même vint rejoindre Jean à Cucuse où il resta jusqu'à la fin de l'automne (114, 224, 237-241). Obligé de rentrer à Antioche pour se défendre, il fut soumis à des vexations sans doute conséquences de l'édit de communion du 18 novembre qui l'oblige à communier avec Porphyre (60, 62, 76) et il finit par fuir à Chypre, probablement vers février-mars 405 lors de la réouverture de la navigation.

Peu après son arrivée à Cucuse, Jean reçoit l'appui de quatre autres prêtres d'Antioche, Castus, Valerius, Diophantes et Cyriacus (222), amis de Constantius qui leur écrit également durant son séjour à Cucuse (239-241). Les relations épistolaires avec ces quatre prêtres vont se poursuivre jusqu'au printemps 406. Durant l'automne 404, quelques autres clercs d'Antioche ou de sa région manifestent leur solidarité avec l'exilé: Libanius, envoyé par une noble dame d'Antioche, Carteria, passe quelques jours auprès de Jean (225, 229-232, 239); à la demande de Castus, Jean entre en rapports avec le prêtre Romanus qui semble lui rester fidèle ensuite malgré les pressions (91, 23, 78), comme le furent Castus et ses compagnons. Un autre clerc de l'entourage de Carteria, le diacre Theodotus, garde aussi des rapports amicaux: ses lettres vont d'octobre 404 au printemps 405, mais surtout Theodotus rend visite à Jean à l'hiver 405/406, avant que l'évêque ne soit contraint de fuir Cucuse à cause des Isauriens, et Jean recevra encore deux lettres de lui avant l'été 406 (68, 67). Un autre Theodotus, simple lecteur, est aussi avec Jean durant l'hiver 405/406 et obligé de le quitter pour les mêmes raisons. En revanche les tentatives pour nouer en octobre 404 des relations avec les prêtres Basilius et Constantius (un homonyme de celui mentionné plus haut) restent sans suite.

Il semble donc que Jean a pu compter sur plus de fidélité et d'amitié dans le clergé d'Antioche que dans celui de Constantinople. Nous ne savons pas si — à part Constantius — les clercs de Syrie furent contraints à renoncer à leur charge en cas de fidélité à Jean ou si Porphyre fut plus accommodant à leur égard qu'on le fut à Constantinople, le récit de Palladius sur les événements dans cette cité étant passablement perturbé et peu sûr en matière de chronologie des faits (*Dial.* XVI, 64 sq.; arrestation de Cyriacus et Diophantes signalée en XVI, 95-97 mais placée durant l'été 404, au moment du coup de force de Porphyre; rien dans les lettres de Jean ne semble indiquer qu'ils soient emprisonnés pendant les années 405-406).

Le même sentiment de fidélité à Jean apparaît à l'intérieur de deux communautés monastiques que l'on peut, grâce à l'*Historia religiosa* de Théodoret, situer à Zeugma et Apamée-de-l'Oronte. A Zeugma, Jean conserve le soutien et l'amitié de Nicolas, Theodotus, Chaereas et Aptonius qui s'occupent sur sa demande de poursuivre l'évangélisation de la Phénicie et gardent un contact épistolaire jusqu'au printemps 406. Le prêtre Theodotus qui rend visite à Jean durant l'été 405 est — à notre avis — à identifier avec ce Theodotus et le Rufinus que Jean exhorte à reprendre la tâche en Phénicie en 405, probablement lui aussi un moine de Zeugma (il faudrait corriger en ce sens nos notices prosopographiques: Theodotus 1 = Theodotus 5, Rufinus 2 = Rufinus 3). A Apamée, Jean écrit en hiver 404/405 à des moines également impliqués dans les missions de Phénicie (55-56). A la même date, d'autres moines de localisation inconnue reçoivent une lettre qui restera sans suite (36, 92).

L'application de l'édit impérial de communion n'a dû être mis en application en Syrie qu'au début de 405, compte tenu des délais de transmission et

d'enregistrement qui sont toujours très longs comme on le voit par les souscriptions des lois des codes théodosien et justinien. Contrairement à Constantinople, où toute relation épistolaire avec le clergé fut interrompue par cet édit, Jean va cependant garder en Syrie des amis fidèles jusqu'en 406, et la communauté monastique — comme ce fut souvent le cas en matière religieuse — n'a guère suivi les injonctions des autorités officielles. L'interruption de la correspondance en 406 est due au fait que Jean tombe de nouveau malade puis doit quitter Arabissos pour une nouvelle forteresse, à l'abri des Isauriens mais probablement trop isolée pour permettre des relations épistolaires normales.

IV. Les laïcs d'Asie mineure

Au cours du voyage de Constantinople à Cucuse, Jean s'est arrêté à Nicée, à Ancyre et à Césarée. Il y a fait la connaissance de quelques notables locaux. Si les deux premières villes sont éloignées de Cucuse, Césarée est assez proche; aussi Jean tenta-t-il d'inciter les gens rencontrés dans cette ville à rester en correspondance avec lui (groupe de lettres probablement déposées à leur retour par les *praefectiani* qui l'ont escorté jusqu'à Cucuse). Carterius était gouverneur de Cappadoce, Hymnetius chef des médecins de la cité, Firminus peut-être le sophiste ancien élève de Libanius connu à cette date à Césarée, Helladius probablement un des notables de ce nom cités à Césarée à la fin du IV^e ou début du V^e siècle. Ces appels resteront sans suite: manifestement, aucun d'eux n'a jugé bon de poursuivre plus loin des relations de passage; seul le médecin Hymnetius recevra une seconde lettre mais très distante, dans laquelle Jean lui recommande un évêque malade (38). Un autre médecin de Césarée avait manifesté son désir de le rejoindre à Cucuse (IV à Olympias). Jean y a-t-il cru sérieusement? En tout cas, vers la fin de septembre ou le début d'octobre, Theodorus s'excusa de ne pouvoir venir, retenu par ses occupations, et Jean se contente d'espérer en vain des lettres de lui (228). Aucune des relations nouées brièvement sur le chemin de l'exil ne survit plus de quelques semaines.

V. Les laïcs de Constantinople

Jean pouvait espérer trouver chez les Grands de la capitale des amis assez influents pour faire rapporter son exil, obtenir un nouvel examen de sa cause ou, à défaut, un lieu d'exil plus agréable et moins éloigné. Il n'est donc pas étonnant qu'à l'automne 404 il ait multiplié les démarches pour solliciter un certain nombre de ces nobles susceptibles de l'aider. Nous ne connaissons pas toujours leur position à cette date mais les qualificatifs utilisés prouvent qu'il s'agit de hauts dignitaires présents ou passés.

Peu après son arrivée à Cucuse, il écrit cinq lettres qui furent probablement ramenées à Constantinople par son escorte, à Brison, cubiculaire de l'impératrice qui avait lutté aux côtés de Jean contre les Ariens de la capitale et l'avait ramené de son premier exil (234), à Paeanius (193), Gemellus (194), Aetius (196) et Hesychius (223), demandant à chacun de lui écrire le plus souvent possible. Un peu plus tard — fin septembre/début octobre — une seconde série de lettres est envoyée à Alypius (en réponse à une lettre de lui: 186), Procopius qui est sans doute un parent par alliance de l'ancien empereur Valens (187), Marcellinus (188), les cubiculaires Antiochus (189) et Brison de nouveau (190), ainsi qu'à Hesychius (198). Jean leur reproche leur silence, réclame de nouveau des lettres et des nouvelles. Ces démarches resteront vaines: à part Gemellus et Paeanius, aucun ne réapparaît par la suite dans la correspondance et il est clair qu'ils ont préféré leur carrière à l'amitié.

Au mois de novembre, Jean envoie une troisième série de lettres dont nous avons déjà parlé à propos du clergé de la capitale; à côté des clercs, on trouve parmi les correspondants le préfet de la ville Studius, Paeanius (qui a regagné la ville avec une promotion), Anatolius, Salvio, Theodorus, le tribun Marcianus, Arabius, Valentinus (qui a été nommé maître de la milice d'Orient), Euthalia, Romula et Severina. Cette nouvelle tentative de renouer les liens avec des 'amis' restés silencieux (Valentinus, Salvio) ou de les inciter à des échanges épistolaires fréquents n'aura pas plus de succès que les deux précédents: la plupart des correspondants ne reçoit plus aucune lettre par la suite. Même Paeanius, qui semblait un ami sûr, disparaît et a dû privilégier sa carrière de fonctionnaire. Le cas de Valentinus est particulièrement caractéristique de la position de ces 'amis': Jean a appris sa promotion, il l'en félicite mais pour le 'punir' de son silence lui donne un gage, celui de s'occuper des veuves et des orphelins privés de leurs subsides par le nouvel évêque parce qu'ils sont restés attachés à Jean (116, 217). Valentinus ne répondra jamais aux lettres de Jean, mais celui-ci apprendra plus tard qu'il a agi selon son désir. Nous savons par Palladius que Valentinus, après avoir pris sa charge à Antioche, aida Porphyre à lutter contre les amis de Jean (*Dial.* XVI, 123 sq): tenaillé entre ses devoirs de chrétien, une ancienne relation avec Jean et un souci de carrière, Valentinus s'est donc finalement rallié à la ligne officielle et a rompu avec Jean pour ne pas déplaire au pouvoir, tout en assurant à la demande de l'évêque exilé un devoir de charité qu'il ne pouvait refuser d'assumer.

L'échec des démarches de novembre 404 semble avoir marqué Jean; après cette date, il cesse pratiquement tout contact avec la capitale. La lettre 42 à Candidianus est de date incertaine (405 peut-être, mais elle pourrait aussi s'insérer à l'automne 404). Deux lettres de circonstance sont encore expédiées à l'été 405 pour féliciter Gemellus devenu préfet de la ville (124) et Anthemius nommé préfet du prétoire (147). Le premier reste en contact avec Jean jusqu'en 406 mais sa charge ne lui donne aucune influence au palais. En revanche,

le préfet du prétoire d'Orient était le vrai maître de la politique: la lettre de félicitations de Jean, pompeuse et unique en son genre dans la correspondance, prouve qu'il a dû nourrir quelque espoir dans cette nomination. Il sera cruellement déçu: Anthemius ne se contenta pas de laisser Jean en exil; il fera rejeter les demandes de conciliation des Occidentaux, infliger de cruels traitements aux évêques restés liés à Jean et, en 407, il aurait donné des instructions pour que l'exilé meure durant son déplacement vers un nouveau lieu d'exil (Palladius, *Dial.* XI, 101 sq).

Ainsi, à de rares exceptions près, Jean fut totalement abandonné par les gens de la capitale; la plupart de ceux auxquels il s'adresse encore à l'automne 404 ne lui ont pas écrit depuis son départ et presque personne ne répond à ses lettres. Il est probable que la plupart des notables et dignitaires, excédés des troubles qui ont agité la ville pendant un an, avaient été soulagés de le voir partir et n'avaient nul désir de le voir revenir pour provoquer de nouvelles querelles. La position des clercs et laïcs de Constantinople montre aussi que Jean n'a pas réussi à se faire réellement adopter par les gens en place, qu'il n'avait pas la souplesse nécessaire pour s'intégrer dans un milieu de courtisans que ses diatribes contre le luxe avaient dû éloigner de lui encore plus.

VI. Les laïcs de Syrie

Il s'agit ici de notables, hommes ou femmes, que Jean connaissait avant de quitter Antioche pour Constantinople, avec lesquels il avait donc des relations d'amitié fort anciennes et à priori plus solides que celles qu'il avait pu nouer dans la capitale. Seule Severa (229) ne lui est pas connue personnellement et Jean entre en contact avec elle à la demande du prêtre Libanius. A son arrivée à Cucuse, il écrit à une dizaine de ces anciens amis pour signaler son arrivée, les inviter à lui écrire fréquemment, voire à venir à Cucuse puisque le trajet n'est pas très long et la saison encore bonne. Mais Jean se fait au fond peu d'illusions et, souvent, il prévoit les excuses de ses correspondants: difficulté du chemin, santé fragile, crainte de l'hiver qui approche, 'affaires' qui retiennent en ville et surtout la peur des brigands répandus dans la région entre Césarée et Cucuse (133, 20, 72, 75, 134, 242, 224, 65). Effectivement, aucun des amis espérés ne fera le voyage, même si quelques-uns lui délèguent un prêtre ou un diacre ou lui font parvenir des cadeaux qu'il refuse. Les échanges épistolaires vont se poursuivre plus longtemps qu'avec les laïcs de Constantinople, en gros jusqu'à l'hiver 404/405. Ils se raréfient avec l'année 405. Aucune des quatre dames qui avaient mené en 404 des échanges assidus ne poursuit cet échange en 405; Adolia, qui était gravement malade, est peut-être morte (52, 33), Carteria est partie pour une destination lointaine (44), Chalchidia et Asyncritia — qui étaient liées au prêtre Constantius (Tillemont suggère qu'elles pourraient être sa mère et sa sœur) ont peut-être fui à Chypre avec lui.

Du côté des hommes, il ne reste en 405 que les frères Marcellinus et Marcianus, un Diogenes dont nous ignorons la position et l'adresse (il ne doit pas habiter Antioche) mais qui doit être un haut dignitaire d'après la terminologie employée. Une lettre de 405 au consulaire de Syrie Theodorus reste sans suite. En revanche, l'an 406 voit apparaître de nouveaux correspondants (Theodotus, Polybius, Marinianus) mais l'absence de tout renseignement sur eux empêche de savoir s'il s'agit aussi d'anciens amis ou de relations nouvelles, par exemple des notables possédant des terres à Cucuse ou à Arabissos et qui auraient pu entrer en contact avec Jean à une date récente.

Conclusion

Le reclassement chronologique des lettres de Jean permet de mieux comprendre la situation de l'évêque exilé et, dans une certaine mesure, comprendre la raison de ces lettres répétitives que nos prédécesseurs jugent sans intérêt.

Déjà condamné une fois à l'exil et rapidement rappelé, Jean a quitté Constantinople sans avoir perdu espoir. Jusqu'en novembre 404, il apparaît prêt à lutter et à réagir. Il incite ses amis de Constantinople — ou ceux qu'il croit être ses amis — à tenir bon contre les attaques et les pressions; il invite des évêques qu'il croit être avec lui à résister; il attend de chacun des lettres, beaucoup de lettres, qui lui permettront de supporter l'exil (101 demandes dans 142 lettres écrites avant la fin de l'hiver). Il croit avoir à Constantinople et à Antioche des amis sûrs dans le clergé comme chez les nobles, il espère la visite de ses amis syriens (incitations à venir à Cucuse: 19, 20, 24, 47, 56, 57, 65, 72, 74, 75, 92, 133, 134, 176, 179, 224, 226, 242). Il reçoit des visites de prêtres et de moines: Constantius en septembre, Libanius en octobre, un prêtre inconnu envoyé par l'évêque Domnus, la diaconesse Sabiniana (la tante de Jean?), le prêtre Sallustius durant l'hiver (219). Mais cette période d'illusions dure peu. L'édit impérial du 18 novembre amène la plupart des correspondants de Constantinople à interrompre leurs relations, qu'ils abandonnent Jean ou qu'ils soient contraints à l'exil. La reprise des brigandages des Isauriens et la neige interrompent les contacts avec Cucuse: Jean éprouve alors une impression d'affreuse solitude et d'abandon. Longtemps malade, il ne reprend que tard et péniblement les relations épistolaires à la fin du printemps 405, et seulement avec quelques amis fidèles. Désormais le ton est désenchanté et le pessimisme règne: maladie, brigandage, solitude reviennent le plus souvent. Après les 'amis' de Constantinople, ceux d'Antioche se font plus rares et il ne reste guère qu'une dizaine de correspondants. La fuite à Arabissos et l'errance dans les montagnes d'Arménie à la fin de 405 vont interrompre presque toute relation. L'espoir de la tenue d'un concile à Thessalonique en 406 va encore amener Jean à écrire des lettres adressées à des évêques d'Occident et de Macédoine qui sont maintenant ses ultimes espoirs. L'échec de cette démarche

a dû être durement ressenti: à partir de l'été 406, Jean n'a plus que deux amis à qui écrire, Olympias et Helpidius de Laodicée. L'éloge des vertus de la souffrance supportée par le juste dans la dernière lettre à Olympias est révélatrice de la résignation de Jean. Plus que sa destitution et son exil, c'est peut-être l'indifférence de ceux qu'il croyait ses amis qui a peiné Jean au plus profond de lui-même. Pour cet homme d'une profonde sincérité, homme de la ville habitué aux contacts humains et qui ne trouve son épanouissement que dans la lecture et l'écriture, chacune de ses lettres était comme la bouteille jetée à la mer par un naufragé, mais peu de ses amis ont compris la détresse de ces appels au secours.

A) EVÊQUES	été 404	sept/octobre	octobre	fin 404	hiver 404/405	printemps 405	printemps 406	printemps 407
174 (en prison)	64 Cyriacus *202 Cyriacus	114 Helpidius 230 Helpidius *26 Magnus 27 Domnus	*30 Heorthisus 113 Palladius	25 Helpidius 37 <i>Tranquillinus</i> 200 Callistrate	138 Helpidius	131 Helpidius	142 Helpidius	
	Palestine: (85 Lucius (86 Mares (87 Eulogius (88 Johannes (89 Theodosius (90 Moïse Cilicie 108 Urbicius 109 Rufinus *(110 Bassus (111 Anatolius 112 Theodoros 235 Porphyrius							
B) CLERCS DE CONSTANTINOPE	115 <i>Theophilus</i> (97 Hypatius	*101 Severus (180 Hypatius (190 Daniel 203 Sallustius (206 Theodolus (207 moines goths *208 Acacius *211 Timotheus 212 Theophilus *213 Philippus 214 Sebastianus *216 Musonius 218 Euthymius	vers mi-novembre					
*119 Theophilus								

en gras: lettre unique
Domnus : réponse de Jean à
en italiques : une lettre reçue
* : plaintes sur le silence du correspondant
(: invitation à venir à Cucus
((: incitation à lutter

Soteriological Motifs in the *Catechetical Lectures* of St. Cyril of Jerusalem

Hamilton HESS, San Francisco

St. Cyril of Jerusalem is one of the more intriguing episcopal figures of the fourth century. Born in Palestine, perhaps in Jerusalem, in about 315, consecrated bishop of the mother church of Christendom in about 350, generally held in high esteem by his peers, exiled from his see three times, and in attendance at the Council of Constantinople in 381, the whole of Cyril's career with the exception of the last few years before his death in 386 was contained within the tumultuous period of the Arian controversy. The extent of his contribution to the settlement at Constantinople is debated, but Reinhart Staats has plausibly argued that Cyril played a central role¹.

The extant works of Cyril are unfortunately few in number. They are the pre-baptismal *Catechetical Lectures*, the *Homily on the Paralytic*, a *Letter to Constantius*, and possibly another sermon and another letter presently under appraisal for their authenticity². The *Mystagogical Lectures*, given to the recently baptized, are less certainly from the single hand of Cyril³.

The *Catechetical Lectures* provide the material for the present essay. Although their dating is indeterminate (between 343 and 350), and while it is open to question whether the received text represents one series of lectures or has been drawn from several, they are generally regarded as presenting Cyril's own teaching, and are described by Johannes Quasten as 'one of the most precious treasures of Christian antiquity'⁴.

The *Lectures*, eighteen in number in their present form, preceded by a *Protocatechesis*, consist of an explanatory exposition of the Creed of Jerusalem⁵.

¹ 'The Eternal Kingdom of Christ: The Apocalyptic Tradition in the "Creed of Nicaea-Constantinople"', *Patristic and Byzantine Review* 9 (1990), pp. 19-21.

² See M. Aubineau, 'Un "Sermo acephalus ineditus" — CPS 4272: "Sévérien de Gabala?" — restitué à Cyrille de Jérusalem', *Vigiliae Christianae* 41 (1987), pp. 285-289; and P. Wainwright, 'The Authenticity of the Recently Discovered Letter Attributed to Cyril of Jerusalem', *Vigiliae Christianae* 40 (1986), pp. 286-293.

³ A recent brief review of this question is given by A.-G. Hamman in *Cyrille de Jérusalem. Les Catéchèses baptismales et mystagogiques* (Paris, 1993), p. 21.

⁴ *Patrology*, III, p. 363.

⁵ The primary text used for this study is the critical edition of W.C. Reischl and J. Rupp, *Cyriilli Hierosolymitarum achiepiscopi opera quae supersunt omnia* (2 vols., 1848 and 1860; reprint, Hildesheim, 1967). Except as otherwise noted, the English translation is that of L.P. McCauley, S.J. and A.A. Stephenson in Vols. 61 and 64 of *The Fathers of the Church* series. References are given by lecture and paragraph numbers.

Cyril's treatment throughout is rooted in salvation history with constant reference and allusion to the meaning within that history of the saving work of God in Christ⁶.

Cyril's soteriology lies at the heart of his catechesis. It is pervasively presented in his lectures by means of a variety of motifs, mainly biblical, which are expressed in three ways: first, a listing in Lecture 12 of the reasons for Christ's coming among us; second, titles attributed to the incarnate Son; and, third, statements regarding the ways in which the world's salvation from sin and death have been effected. While not at all systematized by Cyril — apart from his general adherence to the outline provided in his exposition of the Jerusalem creed — the many motifs are capable of being drawn together into a smaller number of themes, and of being further organized into the three aspects of Christ's saving work: deliverance from the power and penalties of evil, restoration to communion with God, and the exalted state of the redeemed.

Cyril's stated reasons for Christ's coming are as follows:

1. 'Jesus Christ ... came in the flesh (ἐν σαρκί) and was made man (ἐνανθρωπήσαντα); for we could not receive him otherwise' (12.13).
2. 'He became what we are, that we might be allowed to enjoy (ἀπολαῦσαι, or better, "receive benefit from") him' (12.13).
3. 'that men might be taught more easily' (12.14).
4. 'that he might be baptized and might sanctify baptism' (12.15).
5. 'that he might work wonders, walking upon the waters of the sea' (12.15)⁷.
6. 'Through Eve, yet a virgin, came death; there was a need that through a virgin, or rather from a virgin, that life should appear' (12.15).
7. 'Men, having abandoned God, fashioned images like men. Since, therefore, the image of man was falsely worshipped as God, God became truly man that the falsehood might be destroyed' (12.15).
8. 'We have been saved by the very weapons (the flesh) which the devil used to conquer us. The Lord took from our likeness that through (our) humanity⁸ we might be saved' (12.15).
9. 'He assumed our likeness that he might bestow the greater grace on that which was lacking, that sinful humanity⁹ might be made partaker (κοινωνός) of God' (12.15).
10. 'It behoved the Lord to suffer on our behalf' (12.15).

⁶ See Pamela Jackson, 'Cyril of Jerusalem's Use of Scripture in Catechesis', *Theological Studies* 52 (1991), pp. 431-450.

⁷ Cyril further explains here that while the sea formerly fled and Jordan turned back at the sight of God (Ps 113.3), with the taking of a human body the Jordan might receive him without fear. This reason for the Lord's coming is made clear by reference to 3.11, in which we are told that the heads of the dragon of death in the Jordan (Job 40 and 41 (*Septuagint*)) were crushed as he descended into the Jordan at his baptism.

⁸ ἀνθρωπότητος: the English translations inaccurately render this as 'human nature'.

⁹ The same case as in note 8 above.

We note that the first, second and ninth of these reasons for the Lord's coming are variants of the familiar patristic theme initiated by Irenaeus that the divine Son became what we are that we might become what he is.

Cyril established the identity of the Saviour in the minds of his hearers in twenty-three functional titles, many of which he does not present in absolute terms, but simply as images or descriptive symbols of the Lord's saving powers or activities which are limitless in number and available to all. In 10.5 Cyril tells us that 'The Saviour comes in various forms to each man for his profit ... He becomes all things to all men, remaining in his own nature (φύσιν) what he is'.

In order of occurrence the titles are: **Life** (giver of life, 3.11); **Judge** (of the living and dead at his final coming, 4.15); **Door** (a spiritual, living, discerning door to the Father, 10.1, 3.5); **Way** (leading to the Father, 10.3); **Sheep** (whose blood cleanses the world of sins [blood purification imagery] 10.3, and as a sacrifice for 'those who sin', 10.5); **Shepherd** (because of the loving-kindness of the Godhead, 10.3); **Lion** (10.3 — under three aspects: first, as kingly, steadfast and confident; second, as in opposition to 'our adversary the lion' of I Peter 5.8; third, as Lion of Judah); **Stone** (as chief corner stone, 10.3); **Christ** (as anointed by the Father to the high priesthood, 10.4, 11); **Dead** (as alone 'free among the dead' [Ps. 88.5], 10.4); **Son** (as 'coming upon the clouds of heaven' as judge, 10.4); **Son** (as naturally (φυσικῶς) begotten, 10.4); **Vine** (to those who lack joy, 10.5); mediating High-Priest (for those who offer prayers, 10.5); **Physician**¹⁰ (of soul and body, 10.5, 13; 12.1, 8); **Teacher** (as a child among children to instruct the unwise, 10.5; 12.1); **Bread of Heaven** (12.1); **King** (12.1); **Head** (13.23 — in three different ways: head of the Church, head of every man, head of every principality and power); **Bridegroom and Suitor of Souls** (the beloved of the women who sought the Lord at the tomb, 14.12). Each of these is pertinent to the dimensions of Cyril's theology of Salvation.

Among the deliverance motifs employed by Cyril the cross is central. The cross is the greatest cause for glory among the actions of Christ, for 'The glory of the cross has at one and the same time led into the light those blind through ignorance, has delivered all bound in sin, and has ransomed¹¹ all mankind (13.1). The cross is the 'saving emblem (τρόπαιον) of Jesus' (13.40), which Cyril sees as typologically prefigured in many ways in the Old Testament¹².

¹⁰ For a treatment of the widespread use of this title in New Testament apocryphal and early Christian writings see G. Dumeige, 'Le Christ Médecin', *Revista di Archeologia Christiana* 48 (1972), pp. 115-141.

¹¹ A more fitting translation of ἐλυτρώσατο than 'redeemed' because of its consistency with *Proto.* 16, cited below.

¹² See 13.2, 19, 20, and 21. See also 'The Cross in the Old Testament According to Athanasius, Cyril of Jerusalem and the Cappadocian Fathers' in C. Andresen and G. Klein, *Theologia Crucis - Signum Crucis. Festschrift für Erich Dinkler zum 70. Geburtstag* (Tübingen, 1979), pp. 23-24.

Christ was crucified for us (13.23, 24), and 'He stretched out his hands on the cross to encompass the ends of the world, for this Golgotha is the very center of the earth' (13.28). Cyril rejoices in the site of the crucifixion, which was within the precincts of the church where his lectures were given: 'The Head was crucified in "the place of the skull". O great and prophetic appellation!' (13.23).

Our deliverance from sin by the cross is attributed or clearly implied by Cyril in a number of passages. The concepts employed in these texts — explicitly stated, for instance, in 13.28 and 33 — are the familiar Pauline notions that sin has brought the penalty of death to the human race, that Jesus bore in his own humanity the sins of all, and that the sins of all died and the penalty of death was cancelled by his suffering and death on the cross.

Cyril makes imaginative and significant use of the ransom motif, expressed by various forms of the verb λυτρόω. When Christ descended into the nether world, he tells us, death 'fled away' and all the just whom death has swallowed up were ransomed (14.19, 4.11). On the cross, Christ used the flesh, which the devil had used 'as an instrument against us', as the 'bait to death' for the release of those whom he had already devoured (12.15). Cyril's statement in *Proto.* 16, 'the prize set before you in baptism: ransom for captives...' indicates a direction in his imagery that was certainly his intent in 13.1 (see above), and might well have been his intent in 3.10, 4.13, 13.2 and 13.4, calling for a translation of the forms of λυτρόω in these passages as 'ransom' rather than their rendering in the English translations as 'redeem'. This suggestion is further strengthened by Cyril's citation of the I Tim 2.6 reference to Jesus as a 'ransom' in 13.2 (here abbreviated): 'Do not wonder that the whole world was redeemed (ἐλυτρώθη — more properly, 'ransomed'?), for it was ... the Only-begotten Son of God who died for it ... shall not Jesus, who ... "gave himself a ransom (ἀντίλυτρον) for all" take away God's wrath against man?'

A motif of purification from sin by Christ's blood is expressed in 2.5, 10.3 (the blood of Christ the Sheep), 13.33 and 14.20. In a single occurrence, Cyril provides a motif regarding the piercing of Christ's side for the redemption of women, the woman having been formed from the side of man (13.21). The resurrection also is treated as a deliverance motif in the statement that he who wore the crown of thorns 'has risen to crown himself with the band (διάδημα) of victory over death' (14.1).

For the most part, Cyril is fairly conventional for his period in his treatment of the themes of restoration and exaltation. It is made clear in the *Protocatechesis* 16 and 17.12 that Cyril understands the restored and exalted state to begin partially, but in a true sense, with baptism and with the gift of the Holy Spirit. Again in order of occurrence, the motifs are as follows. Salvation brings a new birth of the soul (*Proto.* 16, 1.2 and 3.4); illumination or enlightenment (numerous occurrences exemplified in *Proto.* 1, 11.9, 16.16-18); a holy or spiritual seal, or seal of the Holy Spirit (*Proto.* 16; 3.3, 4, 12; 4.16; 5.6; 16.24,

et alia); delight of Paradise (*Proto.* 16); adoption as sons of God (*Proto.* 16, 3.14, 7.7, 11.9, 19, *et alia*), and the same motif under different images: heir of God and joint heir with Christ (3.15) and kinsman of the master (3.16). Further motifs of restoration and exaltation are holy and spiritual flock of Christ (1.2); set apart on his right hand (1.2); heirs of eternal life (1.2; 4.32); grafted into the good olive tree and partaker of the holy vine (1.4); united to the spiritual bridegroom (3.1); enrolled in the army of the great king (3.3); ineffable crowns (4.21); crown of the kingdom (15.1); partaker of God's title, 'faithful' (5.1); raised in righteousness (13.28); raised from dead sins (14.30); the names of the saved will be written in the book of the living (14.30).

Cyril makes considerable use of clothing or garment imagery in connection with a variety of motifs¹³: 'our physician girded himself with the cloth of our humanity' (12.1); 'in his second coming, Christ will be "robed with light as with a garment (ἱμάτιον)"' (15.1); 'you will rise clothed in your sins or in your just deeds' (15.25); he who is clothed by the gift of Christ's grace is completely enfolded by his robe (στολή) (17.12); with the coming of the Holy Spirit the apostles were clothed with a 'divine and saving vesture' (17.15); he who believes his body will rise again is careful of his robe (18.1).

In Lecture 14 on Jesus' resurrection and ascension, and in Lecture 15 on the final judgement and the kingdom, Cyril dwells repeatedly on the motif of renewal: 'The things that are seen, therefore, will pass away and there shall come things to be looked for, a fairer world'. (14.4); as spring time was the season of creation and the season of the Pasch, it is also the season of the expulsion from Paradise and the season of restoration (14.10). In 15.3 we are told that the created world is to be made anew; that the Lord will 'fold up the heavens ... to raise them up more beautiful'; and that 'we look for the resurrection, as it were, of the heavens also'. In Lecture 18.15-18 Cyril speaks at length of the transformation of the present body into a spiritual, immortal and eternal body which will rise into 'the new world which will come into being'.

For Cyril, the Holy Spirit is centrally involved in the process of salvation. The Spirit is a divine being, living and intelligent, the sanctifying principle of all things made by God through Christ (16.3); the Holy Spirit comes to save, heal, teach, admonish, strengthen, exhort, and enlighten the mind (16.16); he is the ruler from God, the teacher, the sanctifier (16.23).

In summary analysis, Cyril's soteriology is fundamentally rooted in and formed by biblical texts and teaching, and it is expressed in a rich array of motifs and imagery. It shows heavy indebtedness to the teachings of Paul, but diverges from Paul, and also from the mainstream of Patristic soteriology, in

¹³ Clothing metaphor was used during the fourth century especially in the Syriac tradition, and most particularly by St. Ephrem. (See S.P. Brock, 'Clothing Metaphors as a Means of Theological Expression in Syriac Tradition' in M. Schmidt (ed.), *Typus, Symbol, Allegorie bei den östlichen Vätern und ihren Parallelen im Mittelalter* (Eichstätter Beiträge 4; 1982), pp. 11-40). Syrian influence on its use by Cyril seems likely.

its virtual omission of sacrificial imagery and the sacrificial motif in its treatment of the deliverance theme. Cyril only once (in 10.5) invokes the sacrificial motif, and then almost incidentally. His soteriology also diverges from Paul in the emphasis which it places on the ransom motif, which he may have assimilated from Origen, but with his own distinctive approach¹⁴. Cyril's emphasis on the renewal of creation is of course Pauline, but likely draws on Methodius and perhaps also directly on Irenaeus.

¹⁴ For Origen it is the soul (life) or blood of Christ that is offered in ransom (*Com. in Mt.* 16.8, *GCS* 10, 498-499; *Com. in Joh.* 6.53, *SC* 157, 338), whereas for Cyril it is Christ's body. Although it is probably inaccurate to attribute literalism to Origen, he is more graphic in his treatment of the ransom (*Com. in Rom.* 2.13, *PG* 14, 911), whereas Cyril is more clearly metaphorical.

The Incarnational and Hypostatic Significance of the Maleness of Jesus Christ according to Theodore of Stoudios

Valerie A. KARRAS, Brookline, Mass.

St. Theodore, abbot of the monastery of Stoudios in Constantinople in the early ninth century, found himself leading the intellectual defense of the icons during the second phase of iconoclasm. His response to state-sponsored iconoclastic theology was a series of three treatises known as the *Antirrhetics*, which used Aristotelian terminology and logic to support the depiction of Christ and the saints in images and the veneration of those images. The first *Antirrhetic*, structured as an imaginary debate with an iconoclast over the issue of whether Christ can be circumscribed, and the third (more loosely organized) are most relevant to the topic of this paper. In contrast to the pragmatic and didactic approach to icons espoused by the Carolingian court in the *Libri Carolini*, Theodore — like his opponent the Byzantine emperor Constantine V before him — recognized that iconoclasm was an extension of the christological controversies of the fifth through seventh centuries¹. Thus, the heart of Theodore's argument is a systematic and theological defense of the depiction of the person of Jesus Christ.

To support the validity of Christ's depiction, Theodore articulates a complicated yet coherent christology, part of which touches on the maleness of Jesus. It is that aspect which I find interesting as another thread in a tapestry of Greek patristic views on gender, a project with which I have been concerned for some time in an attempt to derive a theology of gender faithful to the past which nonetheless speaks to our modern situation. Theodore is almost unique among the Byzantine fathers in dealing with the question of Jesus Christ's gender, yet his anthropology and christology are consonant with those of the Cappadocians, John Chrysostom and Maximus the Confessor.

Theodore's christology consists of two major components. First, — consistent with Cyril of Alexandria and the Fifth Ecumenical Council — he explicates what Georges Florovsky would have called an asymmetrical christology. His firm adherence to this christology allows him to refute charges of both Nestorianism and monophysitism. The Studite abbot declares that the Son of God did not

become a mere human being², which, he explains, means that Christ is not simply another human being among many, but rather is God become human: '... οὐ ψιλὸς ἄνθρωπος· οὐ γὰρ εἰς τῶν πολλῶν, ἀλλὰ θεὸς ἀνθρωπισθεὶς'. In other words, the *person* of Jesus Christ is the person of the Son of God, who takes on human nature. Theodore thus denies the Nestorian notion that the divine Son of God subsists in a *particular* human person or hypostasis; rather, the Son 'assumed man in general, or the whole human nature'³.

But the absence of a separate, human hypostasis in Christ does not for Theodore mean that the Son's assumption of humanity is generic or docetic in nature, as some of the iconoclasts would have it. At its core, iconophile christology is incarnational⁴. Thus, Theodore, with language similar to that of Leontius of Byzantium and Maximus the Confessor⁵, sets forth as the second component of his syllogism the proposition that the human nature the Son took on is manifested in an individual manner⁶. The individualized manner is necessary because otherwise Christ's humanity would not be perceptible⁷. In fact, Christ's humanity, if not subsisting in an individualized manner, could not exist. As Theodore argues:

Generalities have their existence in particular individuals If the particular individuals did not exist, man in general would be eliminated. Therefore humanity is not in Christ, if it does not subsist in Him as in an individual, and in that case we would have to say that He became incarnate in fantasy...⁸.

Although Theodore does not explicitly refer to it, this argument about the relationship of Christ's human nature to His person is derived from an earlier debate. The Studite has applied Cappadocian trinitarian theology — that the essence (οὐσία) of the Godhead does not exist apart from the three hypostases of the Trinity — to christology, with the crucial distinction mentioned earlier. The hypostasis of Jesus Christ is the Son of God, who becomes incarnate.

Theodore is insistent on Christ's possession of the full properties — ἰδιότητες — of both divinity and humanity, as paradoxical as this becomes⁹. For example, Christ is uncircumscribed (ἀπερίγραπτος) in His divinity but He can be portrayed in images because he is circumscribed (περιγραπτός) in

² *Antirrhetic* I, 4 (P.G. 99, 332D).

³ 'μηδὲ γὰρ τῶν τινα ἀνθρώπων ἀναλαβεῖν φαίη ἂν τις τῶν εὐσεβοῦντων· τὸν δὲ καθ' ὅλου, ἦτοι τὴν ὅλην φύσιν', *ibid.* Translation in St. Theodore the Studite, *On the Holy Icons*, trans. Catharine P. Roth (Crestwood, N.Y., 1981), p. 23.

⁴ Cf. Henry, *op. cit.*, pp. 177-183.

⁵ Leont. Byz., *adv. arg. Sev.* (P.G. 86, 1917A); Max. Conf., *Ep.* 12 (P.G. 91, 488B).

⁶ 'Οὐκοῦν εἰ καὶ τὴν καθόλου φύσιν ἀνέλαβεν, ἀλλὰ μὴν τὴν ἐν ἀτόμῳ θεωρουμένην'. *Antirrhetic* III, 17 (P.G. 99, 397C).

⁷ 'ἀλλὰ μὴν τὴν ἐν ἀτόμῳ θεωρουμένην· πῶς γὰρ ἂν καὶ ὄπται'; *Antirrhetic* I, 4 (P.G. 99, 332D-333A).

⁸ *Antirrhetic* III, 15 (P.G. 99, 396D-397A); Roth, p. 83.

⁹ *Antirrhetic* III, 34-38 (P.G. 99, 405A-408B). See, too, *Ep.* 2, 199 (P.G. 99, 1612C).

¹ Ep. 2, 21 (P.G. 99, 1181CD). See Patrick Henry, 'Theodore of Studios: Byzantine Churchman' (Ph.D. dissertation, Yale University, 1968), p. 178, n. 2.

His humanity. Theodore's exposition of these contradictory attributes is neither Nestorian in the sense of dividing the person of Jesus Christ nor monophysite in terms of conflating the two natures, because the full and particular properties of each nature are united in the *person* of Jesus Christ. The one hypostasis of the Son of God incarnate possesses all the attributes of both of His natures. As the saint explains, 'Christ is circumscribed in respect to His hypostasis, though uncircumscribable in His divinity'¹⁰. Ultimately, the reality of the incarnation is denied if one denies any aspect of human nature because of its contradiction with divine nature. The two mutually exclusive natures, incorporeal divinity and corporeal humanity, subsist in a paradoxical tension, united in the person of the Son of God incarnate¹¹.

Another attribute of the somatic nature of humanity is gender. Theodore applies to the question of Christ's maleness the same line of reasoning he used with respect to His circumscription: Christ is male because gender is an attribute of physical human nature¹². In fact, the Studite monk argues that Christ's maleness is *proof* of his full and complete humanity since, 'if Christ were uncircumscribable, as being without a body, He would also be without the difference of sex'¹³. Theodore here uses the specific instance of gender to support the same argument his contemporary, Patriarch Nikephoros, makes on a more general level against the iconoclasts: 'What, I ask you, gives you this power to disregard the other specific properties (ιδιώματα) of Body...? (The) humanity of Christ if bereft of one of its properties is a defective nature, and Christ is not a perfect (human being) at all, but is lost altogether if He cannot be circumscribed and represented in art'¹⁴. For Theodore, Christ's maleness is thus a necessary element of His incarnation and a proof of the reality of that incarnation.

But Christ's maleness *per se* is significant to Theodore only in one respect. As with Gregory of Nazianzus, the Studite alludes to a common Messianic proof text, Is. 8:3: 'And I went to the prophetess, and she conceived and bore a son'¹⁵.

¹⁰ 'Περιγραπτὸς ἄρα ὁ Χριστὸς καθ' ὑπόστασιν, κἄν τῇ θεότητι ἀπερίγραπτος', *Antirrhetic* III, 34 (P.G. 99, 405C); Roth, p. 91. Migne, in n. 20, has missed the significance of the priority of the *person*, interpreting the phrase καθ' ὑπόστασιν as 'proprietas exteriores Christum distinguentes a reliquis hominibus'.

¹¹ Patriarch Nikephoros makes substantially the same christological arguments. For an examination of them, see John Travis, *In Defense of the Faith: The Theology of Patriarch Nikephoros of Constantinople* (Brookline, Mass., 1984), ch. 7, pp. 66-86.

¹² *Antirrhetic* III, 45 (P.G. 99, 409CD).

¹³ 'Οὐκοῦν εἰ ὁ Χριστὸς ἀπερίγραπτος, ὡς ἔξω σώματος, ἔξω ἂν εἴη καὶ τῆς προδηλουμένης διαφορᾶς', *ibid.* (P.G. 99, 409D); Roth, p. 94.

¹⁴ Nikephoros, *Antirrhetic* I, 20 (P.G. 100, 244 BC). English translation in Paul Alexander, *The Patriarch Nicephorus of Constantinople* (Oxford, 1958), pp. 198-199.

¹⁵ Theodore states, 'Ἀλλὰ μὴν ἄρσιν τεχθεῖς, ὡς φησὶν Ἡσαΐας, ἐκ τῆς προφήτιδος οὐκοῦν καὶ περιγραπτὸς', *Antirrhetic* III, 45 (P.G. 99, 409D). Cf. Greg. Naz., *Second Oration on Easter* (Or. 45), 13 (P.G. 36, 641A). However, Gregory also interprets Christ's maleness typologically in terms of the Paschal lamb and allegorically in terms of power over the sin of Adam. See Verma Harrison, 'Male and Female in Cappadocian Theology', *J.T.S.*, n.s., 41 (1990), pp. 457-458.

Other than fulfilling Scripture, Christ's maleness has no significance for Theodore beyond a general notion of proving the personal manner of His assumption of human nature — in other words, that the Son of God took on all the personal properties of a human being. This is clear from the statement quoted above, that 'if Christ were uncircumscribable, as being without a body, He would also be without the difference of sex'¹⁶. Moreover, in his introductory sentence to this paragraph, Theodore declares that '(m)aleness and femaleness are sought only in the forms of bodies, since none of the differences which characterize the sexes can be recognized in bodiless beings'¹⁷.

Thus, Theodore — while Aristotelian concerning the relationship of image to prototype — here concurs with Platonic thought and the anthropology of the Cappadocians and other Greek church fathers¹⁸. Gender is not simply a property of human nature, but it is a property of only the *physical* element of human nature, that is, a property of physical bodies. In this, gender corresponds to the ability to circumscribe or depict the human person, which Theodore notes applies to the physical body but not to the soul¹⁹. We do not deny the ability to depict a human being simply because we cannot depict his or her formless soul. At the same time, our depiction of the physical body of a person cannot be construed to imply that we can depict or circumscribe the human soul. We must recognize the properties appropriate to each aspect of each nature. These properties are, to use Chalcedonian terminology, united unconfusedly in each person or hypostasis.

Reapplying this to christology, it is clear that, for Theodore, Christ's assumption of a male human body was necessary in the sense that a gendered body was necessary to the Son's complete assumption of human nature. Because of the hypostatic union, Theodore emphasizes that Jesus Christ is male, while recognizing that His gender is a property of His human, not divine, nature. In similar fashion, the Church calls Mary the Mother of God because of the hypostatic union, but this in no way implies that she is the mother of Christ's divine nature. Even more analogous is the theopaschite formula (that one of the Trinity suffered). Leontios of Jerusalem, defending the formula, avers, 'The Word is said to have suffered according to the hypostasis, for within his hypostasis he assumed a passible essence beside his own

¹⁶ *Antirrhetic* III, 45 (P.G. 99, 409D); Roth, p. 94.

¹⁷ 'Ἄρσιν καὶ θῆλυ, μόνοις ἐν τοῖς τῶν σωμάτων ζητεῖται σχήμασι μηδεμιᾶς ἐν τοῖς ἀσωμάτοις διαφορᾶς γνωριζομένης, τῆς χαρακτηριζούσης ἀμφοτέρω', *ibid.* (409C); Roth, *ibid.*

¹⁸ See, e.g., Harrison, *op. cit.*, pp. 441-471; Rosemary Radford Ruether, 'Misogynism and Virginal Feminism in the Fathers of the Church', in *Religion and Sexism. Images of Woman in the Jewish and Christian Traditions*, ed. Rosemary Radford Ruether (New York, 1974), pp. 151-183; Valerie Karras, 'Patristic Views on the Ontology of Gender', in *Personhood: Orthodox Christianity and the Connection between Body, Mind, and Soul*, ed. John T. Chirban (Westport, Ct., 1996), pp. 113-119.

¹⁹ *Antirrhetic* III, 34 (P.G. 99, 405B).

impassible essence, and what can be asserted of the passible essence can be asserted of the hypostasis²⁰. So, the qualities of Christ's human nature, including gender, may be said to belong to the person of Jesus Christ. However, the hypostatic union cannot be misunderstood to confuse the properties of the two natures. Theodore's own reasoning categorically excludes any attempt to extrapolate back from Christ's male humanity to some sort of maleness in the Son of God. Therefore, it would be wrong to ascribe to Theodore any notion that it is important or necessary for Jesus Christ to be male *per se*. Christ's maleness has incarnational and hypostatic significance for Theodore since it supports the fullness of the Son's assumption of human nature, in particular the physical aspect. However, given his beliefs that the Son of God took on human nature generally (though in an individualized manner) and that gender has no existence beyond the physical level, Theodore gives Christ's maleness no more ontological significance than the color of His eyes.

L'Esprit comme amour selon Grégoire Palamas: Une influence augustinienne?

Jacques LISON, O.P., Ottawa

Dans ses *Chapitres*¹, Grégoire Palamas décrit Dieu comme un Intellect (νοῦς) de la bonté duquel naissent un Verbe (λόγος) qui l'exprime et un Souffle (πνεῦμα) qui accompagne nécessairement ce Verbe. Ce Souffle est comme un éros indicible (οἷον τις ἔρωσ ἐστὶν ἀπόρητος) du Père envers le Verbe engendré, et dont le Fils, qui est ce Verbe, se sert (χρῆται) envers le Père. L'éminent byzantiniste Martin Jugie voyait là 'une théorie *identique* à celle de saint Augustin et de saint Thomas'², et il pensait que 'l'idée-mère' de cette théorie était venue à Palamas 'de saint Augustin par la traduction du *De Trinitate* de Maxime Planude, peut-être de saint Thomas par la traduction du *Contra gentes* de Démétrius Cydonès, terminée la veille de Noël 1354'³. L'hypothèse d'une influence augustinienne était depuis communément admise⁴; mais elle a quand même suscité des réserves⁵, et Robert E. Sinkewicz vient de

¹ Voir *Chap.*, 35-37; (*Chap.* = *Chapitres physiques et théologiques*; édités par R.E. Sinkewicz (éd.), *Saint Gregory Palamas. The One Hundred and Fifty Chapters, A critical Edition, Translation and Study* (Pontifical Institute of Mediaeval Studies, 'Studies and Texts', 83; Toronto, 1988), XI-288 p.; voir pp. 118-125).

² M. Jugie, art. 'Palamas Grégoire', dans *DTC*, 11 (1932), col. 1766; nous soulignons.

³ *Ibid.*

⁴ Signalons B. Bobrinskoy, *Le Mystère de la Trinité. Cours de théologie orthodoxe* ('Théologies', Paris, 1986), p. 304; L. Bouyer, *Le Consolateur. Esprit-Saint et vie de grâce* (Paris, 1980), p. 321; O. Clément, 'Aperçu sur la théologie et l'expérience de l'Esprit Saint dans l'Orient Chrétien', dans *Viens Esprit Saint, Rencontre spirituelle et théologique 1987* 'Centre Notre-Dame de Vie, Spiritualité', 4, Venasque, 1988), p. 109; M.-J. Le Guillou, 'Lumière et charité dans la doctrine palamite de la divinisation', dans *Istina*, 19 (1974), pp. 337-338; G.I. Mantzaridis, 'La doctrine de saint Grégoire Palamas sur la déification de l'être humain', traduction par M.-J. Monsaingeon, dans *Saint Grégoire Palamas. De la déification de l'être humain*, traduit par M.-J. Monsaingeon et J. Paramelle, suivi de *Georges I. Mantzaridis. La doctrine de saint Grégoire Palamas sur la déification de l'être humain* ('Sophia', Lausanne, 1990), p. 59. Voir aussi Y. Congar, *Je crois en l'Esprit Saint*, t. 3- *Le Fleuve de Vie (Ap 22, 1) coule en Orient et en Occident*, deuxième édition révisée, Paris, 1985, p. 132 (où l'influence augustinienne n'est cependant pas clairement affirmée).

⁵ Voir A. Radovic, 'Le "Filioque" et l'énergie incréée de la Sainte Trinité selon la doctrine de saint Grégoire Palamas', *Messenger de l'exarchat du patriarche russe en Europe occidentale*, no 89-90, pp. 37-39, qui argumente en faveur d'une influence d'Augustin sur cette image psychologique de l'éros (en n. 115; ce que ne semble pas avoir remarqué J.-C. Larchet dans sa recension de notre ouvrage en *Contacts*, 46 (1994), p. 233), mais qui souligne combien son emploi par Palamas diffère radicalement de celui qu'en fait Augustin. Voir aussi M.E. Hussey,

²⁰ *Adversus Nestorianos* VII, 9 (P.G. 86(1), 1768hA). Translated in Leo Donald Davis, *The First Seven Ecumenical Councils (325-787): Their History and Theology* (Collegeville, Minn., 1983, reprint 1990), p. 232.

la réfuter carrément dans la préface de son édition des *Chapitres*⁶. L'argumentation de cette dernière intervention emporte à première vue l'adhésion⁷, mais un examen plus attentif nous semble devoir la nuancer quelque peu. Elle s'appuie sur deux observations principales: premièrement, la ressemblance entre la figure trinitaire de Palamas et celle d'Augustin n'est qu'apparente; en second lieu, les fondements qui ont inspiré Palamas se trouvent sans trop de peine dans sa propre tradition, ce qui rend le recours à Augustin superflu. Nous commencerons par l'étude de cet argument-ci.

L'arrière-fond patristique

Le dossier que Sinkewicz constitue prouve que l'idée d'une image trinitaire de Dieu en l'être humain est déjà au moins ébauchée dans certains écrits des Pères grecs. Il apparaît quand même que ce rapprochement entre l'analogie trinitaire et l'image de Dieu n'a pas trouvé grand écho en Orient avant le XIV^e siècle byzantin⁸. Selon Sinkewicz, deux raisons expliquent ce fait. D'une part, les discussions patristiques sur l'image de Dieu, qui se développèrent abondamment avant les grands débats trinitaires du IV^e siècle, étaient plutôt préoccupées par la localisation de cette image en l'être humain et par l'identification

⁶ 'The Palamite Trinitarian Models', dans *St. Vladimir's Theological Quarterly*, 16 (1972), pp. 85-88, qui plaide pour une influence seulement indirecte d'Augustin; et à sa suite J. Meyendorff, 'The Holy Trinity in Palamite Theology', dans M.A. Fahey et J. Meyendorff, *Trinitarian Theology East and West. St. Thomas Aquinas - St. Gregory Palamas* ('Patriarch Athenagoras Memorial Lectures', Brookline, 1979), p. 40 (voir déjà Id., *Introduction à l'étude de Grégoire Palamas* (Patristica sorbonensia, 3, Paris, 1959), p. 316).

⁷ Voir R. E. Sinkewicz, *Saint Gregory Palamas...* pp. 16-34.

⁸ Nous l'avons suivie spontanément en J. Lison, 'L'Énergie des trois hypostases divines selon Grégoire Palamas', dans *Science et Esprit*, 44 (1992), p. 70; et en Id., *L'Esprit répandu. La pneumatologie de Grégoire Palamas*, préface de J.M.R. Tillard, o.p. ('Patrimoines. Orthodoxie', Paris, 1994), p. 89.

⁹ Nous n'avons pas à reproduire ici tout le dossier qu'on trouve en R.E. Sinkewicz, *Saint Gregory Palamas...*, pp. 21-24. Signalons au moins que les premières tentatives pour expliquer la doctrine trinitaire au moyen des analogies humaines se trouvent dans la distinction des apologistes entre *Noûs* et *Λόγος*. La crise pneumatologique conduisit les cappadociens à intégrer le Πνεῦμα dans cette analogie. L'idée que cette même analogie trinitaire se fonde dans la création de l'être humain à l'image de Dieu (Gn 1, 26-27) ne trouve que quelques rares attestations dans la tradition patristique: voir notamment Théodore de Cyr, *Quaestiones in Genesim*, I, 20, PG 80, col. 108AB; Ps.-Grégoire de Nysse, *Ad imaginem dei et ad similitudinem*, PG 44, col. 1329CD, 1333B-D, 1340CD, 1341B (que R.E. Sinkewicz, *Saint Gregory Palamas...*, p. 24, n. 69 identifie à Anastase le Sinaïte, *Homilia I de creatione hominis*); ps.-Anastase, *In hexaemeron*, 6, PG 89, col. 931A; Maxime le Confesseur, *Ambigua*, PG 91, col. 1088A et 1196A; Jean Damascène, *De imaginibus*, III, 20, dans B. Kotter (éd.), *Die Schriften des Johannes von Damaskos*, t. 3- *Contra imaginum calumniatores orationes tres* ('Patristische Texte und Studien', 17, Berlin/New York, 1975), p. 128.

de ses principales caractéristiques⁹. D'autre part, l'affirmation eunomienne d'une pleine intelligibilité de l'essence divine avait conduit les cappadociens à insister sur l'attitude apophatique face au mystère de Dieu. Cela rendait suspecte toute spéculation qui aurait tenté de retrouver les traces des processions trinitaires dans l'image de Dieu en l'être humain. Mais, toujours d'après Sinkewicz, lorsque Barlaam développa au XIV^e siècle une position tout à fait opposée à celle d'Eunome, en refusant à l'être humain la moindre possibilité d'une connaissance directe de Dieu, il était normal que Palamas retrouvât et développât la doctrine, latente dans sa tradition, de l'image trinitaire. Il le fit pour souligner 'la haute dignité de l'homme, qui le place au-dessus des anges et qui lui accorde un accès direct à Dieu'¹⁰.

Cette démonstration est probante. Mais elle nous semble conclure un peu trop rapidement que les fondements de l'enseignement palamite sur l'image trinitaire de Dieu sont 'entièrement (thoroughly)'¹¹ patristiques; autrement dit, qu'ils ne sont pas augustiniens, puisque Sinkewicz se réfère visiblement au dossier de patristique grecque qu'il vient d'exposer. N'est-il pas même permis d'argumenter au contraire, en faveur d'une influence de la traduction du *De Trinitate*, qu'aucun des passages du dossier patristique invoqué n'identifie l'Esprit à l'amour comme le fait Augustin¹²? En réalité, l'enquête de R.E. Sinkewicz réserve sur ce point une nouvelle surprise.

Deux parallèles contemporains de Palamas

L'éditeur et traducteur des *Chapitres* repère des développements sur l'image triadique de Dieu en l'être humain sous la plume de deux auteurs qui exercèrent fort probablement une influence directe sur le cheminement de Grégoire Palamas. Il s'agit de Grégoire le Sinaïte et de Théolepte de Philadelphie. Une analyse serrée de tout ce dossier ne laisse à peu près aucun doute sur l'inspiration

⁹ Voir J. Kirchmeyer, art. 'Grecque (Église)', dans *DS*, 6 (1967), col. 813-819; H. Merki, art. 'Ebenbildlichkeit', dans *Reallexikon für Antike und Christentum*, 4 (1959), col. 459-479.

¹⁰ R.E. Sinkewicz, *Saint Gregory Palamas...*, p. 24. Selon Palamas, l'image de Dieu en l'être humain est supérieure à celle qui se trouve dans les anges, parce que ceux-ci sont incorporels et ne peuvent donc refléter que la Trinité immanente; tandis que l'être humain peut refléter en outre la Trinité économique. En effet, contrairement aux anges, l'esprit de l'être humain est vivifiant (ζωοποιόν), capable de communiquer sa vie grâce au corps auquel il est uni; il peut donc refléter aussi la communication de la vie trinitaire dans l'économie du salut (voir *Chap.*, 38; 63).

¹¹ R.E. Sinkewicz, *Saint Gregory Palamas...*, p. 24.

¹² Il est vrai que M.E. Hussey mentionne, sans l'identifier précisément, un passage du *Traité du Saint-Esprit* de Didyme l'Aveugle (récemment édité par SC, 386) qui parlerait de l'Esprit 'as the first gift of the Father and the Son because he is love' (*Art. cit.*, pp. 87-88). Nous n'avons pas trouvé ce passage. Il y a bien ici et là un lien entre la *caritas* divine et l'Esprit (voir Didyme l'Aveugle, *Traité du Saint-Esprit*, 49, 50, 75, 77, 78, 80), mais cela nous semble être plutôt pour dire que l'amour est un don ou un fruit de l'Esprit.

que Palamas a pu trouver chez ces deux maîtres pour sa conception de l'image trinitaire de Dieu. Surtout, l'identification de l'Esprit à l'*érôs* est clairement attestée dans les Discours monastiques de Théolepte¹³. Cela résoudrait donc la difficulté que représentait ce point de l'analogie: Palamas aurait emprunté la notion de l'Esprit comme amour à Théolepte plutôt qu'à Augustin.

Cette observation renforce la conviction d'un enracinement de l'analogie palamite dans sa propre tradition. Cependant, elle laisse entière la question d'une éventuelle influence augustinienne, puisque Grégoire le Sinaïte et Théolepte de Philadelphie ont très bien pu connaître la traduction du *De Trinitate* de Maxime Planudès¹⁴. La chose est particulièrement plausible pour Théolepte. Celui-ci se distingua en effet par sa résistance farouche à l'Union des Églises, établie au Concile de Lyon (1274) et défendue par Michel VIII (†1282). C'est précisément dans ce contexte que Planudès traduisit le *De Trinitate* d'Augustin. Il est difficile d'imaginer alors que Théolepte n'aurait pas eu en mains cette traduction qui semble avoir bénéficié d'un grand retentissement.

Tout cela signifie au moins que, jusqu'à preuve du contraire, l'identification de l'Esprit à l'amour n'apparaît pour la première fois dans la tradition grecque que sous la plume de Théolepte, après la diffusion de la traduction du *De Trinitate* augustinien dans les milieux byzantins. Grégoire Palamas peut donc très bien avoir subi l'influence d'Augustin au moins par l'intermédiaire de Théolepte. Autrement dit, la question qui nous occupe reste nécessairement ouverte: aucun argument passé en revue jusqu'à présent ne parvient à ruiner l'hypothèse de cette possible influence augustinienne. Celle-ci n'est évidemment prouvée pour autant. Peut-être la comparaison directe entre les doctrines palamite et augustinienne apportera-t-elle d'autres lumières.

¹³ Voir d'abord Grégoire le Sinaïte, *Homélie sur la Transfiguration*, 18-21 (publiée par D. Balfour, 'Saint Gregory the Sinaïte: Discours On the Transfiguration', dans *Θεολογία*, 52 (1981), pp. 631-681; et Id., *Chapitres acrostiches*, 30-31, PG 150, col. 1248b (traduit par Philocalie des Pères neptiques, fasc. 10, Introduction, traduction et notes par Jacques Touraille, Bégrolles-en-Mauges, 1990, p. 66); selon l'analyse de R.E. Sinkewicz, *Saint Gregory Palamas...*, pp. 27-28. Voir ensuite Théolepte de Philadelphie, *Discours monastiques*, 23, 1-2.7.13-15.18.55-59; voir aussi *Discours monastiques*, 1, 23-25 (voir R.E. Sinkewicz (éd.), *Theoleptos of Philadelpheia. The Monastic Discourses, A Critical Edition, Translation and Study* (Pontifical Institute of Mediaeval Studies, 'Studies and Texts', 111; Toronto, 1992), VIII-418 p.); selon l'analyse de R.E. Sinkewicz, *Saint Gregory Palamas...*, pp. 29-33. Pour le lien de Palamas à Grégoire le Sinaïte, voir D. Balfour, 'Was St Gregory Palamas St Gregory the Sinaïte's Pupil?', dans *St. Vladimir's Theological Quarterly*, 28 (1984), pp. 115-130. Quant à l'influence de Théolepte sur Palamas, elle est démontrée par R.E. Sinkewicz, *Saint Gregory Palamas...*, pp. 33-34.

¹⁴ Sur ce savant philologue byzantin, voir M.H. Congourdeau, art. 'Planudès (Manuel)', dans *Catholicisme*, 11 (1988), col. 488-490. L'influence de la traduction du *Contra Gentiles* sur Grégoire le Sinaïte et sur Théolepte est à exclure, puisque celle-ci n'apparut qu'en 1354, c'est-à-dire après la mort de Théolepte (1322) et probablement de Grégoire.

Aucune ressemblance avec la doctrine trinitaire augustinienne?

Dans le détail, l'analogie palamite révèle de profondes différences par rapport à la doctrine trinitaire augustinienne. Dans ses *Chapitres* (35 et 36), Grégoire Palamas élabore des distinctions entre le verbe comme parole proférée (προφορικὸς λόγος), parole immanente et parole pensée ou innée; et entre le souffle (πνεῦμα) en tant qu'il accompagne la parole des lèvres, en tant que parole intérieure passant incorporellement par la pensée, et en tant qu'éros. Selon l'Hésychaste, le Verbe et l'Esprit ne sont analogues respectivement qu'à notre parole innée et au souffle éros. Cette épuration des concepts est sans rapport avec les spéculations incessantes d'Augustin sur les actes mentaux pour y discerner la triade qui reflète le plus parfaitement possible l'image de la Trinité divine¹⁵. R.E. Sinkewicz remarque surtout que, contrairement à Augustin, Palamas ne conclut pas très clairement, 'que le Saint Esprit est la relation d'amour entre le Père et le Fils'¹⁶. Si l'on suivait la démonstration de Radovic, on pourrait même envisager que Palamas ne rapporte pas l'éros à l'Esprit en tant qu'hypostase, mais en tant qu'énergie divine¹⁷.

Cependant, même dans le cas de cette différence extrême entre les deux positions, une certaine identification de l'Esprit à l'éros est bien attestée dans les *Chapitres* de Palamas, et elle rappelle spontanément l'affirmation continue d'Augustin selon laquelle le Saint Esprit est le lien, l'amour ou la communion consubstantielle du Père et du Fils¹⁸. D'ailleurs, l'apparition de la représentation de l'Esprit comme un certain éros au *Chap.* 36 marque une transition abrupte par rapport à l'image antécédante de l'Esprit souffle. Ce pourrait être l'indice d'un enchevêtrement dans l'exposé de Palamas entre une représentation plutôt 'ontologique' de l'association du souffle au verbe et une représentation 'psychologique' de l'interaction entre la connaissance et l'amour. Cette observation de M.E. Hussey semble argumenter en faveur d'une influence augustinienne au moins indirecte. Comme l'écrit le même auteur, 'il semble que Grégoire a combiné ici une représentation, commune dans la patristique orientale, de l'Esprit comme "souffle de la bouche du Père" (...), avec une

¹⁵ Voir surtout la recherche de l'image trinitaire la plus parfaite inscrite dans le *mens*, à travers la progression ascendante suivante: 'amans, et quod amatur, et amor' (*De Trin.* VIII, x,14); 'mens, notitia, amor' (voir *De Trin.* IX); 'memoria sui, intelligentia sui, voluntas sui' (*De Trin.* X); 'memoria Dei, intelligentia Dei, amor in Deum' (*De Trin.* XIV, VIII,11-XII,16). Sur le *De Trinitate* d'Augustin, et en particulier sur le thème de l'image de Dieu dans cet écrit, voir D.J. Merriell, *To the Image of the Trinity. A Study in the Development of Aquinas' Teaching* (Pontifical Institute of Mediaeval Studies, 'Studies and Texts', 96, Toronto, 1990), pp. 13-35.

¹⁶ R.E. Sinkewicz, *Saint Gregory Palamas...*, p. 18.

¹⁷ Voir A. Radovic, *Art. cit.*, pp. 37-39. Sur cette distinction entre l'Esprit en tant qu'Hypostase et en tant qu'énergie, voir J. Lison, *L'Esprit répandu...*, pp. 63-71, notamment.

¹⁸ On trouve un inventaire des références augustinienes concernant l'Esprit comme amour en F. Cavallera, 'La doctrine de Saint Augustin sur l'Esprit-Saint à propos du "De Trinitate"', dans *Recherches de théologie ancienne et médiévale*, 2 (1930), pp. 382-386.

représentation "augustinienne" de l'Esprit comme amour mutuel du Père et du Fils¹⁹.

Quoi qu'il en soit, le développement sur l'image trinitaire de Dieu en l'être humain est très circonscrit dans l'ensemble de l'œuvre de Grégoire Palamas²⁰. Surtout, ce dernier garde sans faille toute la cohérence de sa théologie trinitaire, selon sa tradition. Notamment, la quasi-identification de l'Esprit à l'éros ne l'oriente nullement vers une position *filioquiste*, tant s'en faut. D'ailleurs, la première préoccupation de l'Hésychaste, dans sa réflexion où apparaît l'analogie de l'éros, est d'insister sur la nature de l'image de Dieu en l'homme, pour contrer le scepticisme de ses adversaires à propos de la possibilité de connaître Dieu²¹. On est donc dans un tout autre climat que celui du *De Trinitate* d'Augustin. Celui-ci cherche en l'occurrence à distinguer la personnalité propre de l'Esprit par rapport au Père et au Fils, dans l'intime de la vie trinitaire surtout. Ses affirmations abondantes sur l'Esprit comme amour sont alors étroitement liées à sa doctrine de l'origine de l'Esprit *a Patre Filioque*. S'il y a donc une influence augustinienne sur la représentation palamite de l'Esprit comme éros, elle est assez superficielle.

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* *

Notre reprise à nouveaux frais du dossier de la représentation palamite de l'Esprit comme amour chez Palamas ne pouvait que confirmer l'erreur du P.

¹⁹ M.E. Hussey, *Art. cit.*, p. 88. La transition abrupte que cet auteur remarque est en réalité plus complexe que ce que nous rapportons en centrant notre attention sur la notion d'Esprit éros. On lit: 'But the unexplained and abrupt transition from "word" to "knowledge" in Chapter 35, and the equally abrupt and unexplained transition from "breath" to "love" in Chapter 36, suggest that Gregory has interwoven an "ontological" word-breath figure and a "psychological" knowledge-love figure' (*Ibid.*, pp. 85-86). Cette argumentation vise en réalité à prouver que, contrairement à ce que pense l'opinion dominante, l'influence augustinienne n'est pas la seule; c'est-à-dire que Palamas a aussi puisé dans sa propre tradition la figure, commune dans la patristique orientale, de l'Esprit comme souffle de la bouche du Père. Mais l'analyse de Hussey indique quand même aussi une influence de la figure, peut-être augustinienne, de l'Esprit amour; comme nous le soulignons.

²⁰ En plus des *Chap.*, 36-37, auxquels nous nous sommes surtout attardé, voir l'homélie pour la fête des lumières (*Hom.*, 60, 3-4; voir Grégoire Palamas, *Ἀπαντα τὰ ἔργα*, t. 11, édité et traduit par P.K. Chrèstou ("Ἑλληνογενεὶς Πατέρες τῆς Ἐκκλησίας", 79, Thessalonique, 1986), pp. 510-512; reproduite et traduite par R.E. Sinkewicz, *Saint Gregory Palamas...*, pp. 25-26; signalons aussi la traduction vulgarisée de Grégoire Palamas, *Douze homélies pour les fêtes*, Introduction et traduction de Jérôme Cler ('L'Échelle de Jacob', Paris, 1987, pp. 67-68), qui est à notre connaissance le seul autre passage où Grégoire Palamas développe sa conception triadique de l'image de Dieu, mais sans y identifier l'Esprit à l'amour. Cette identification n'apparaît qu'une seule autre fois, et seulement furtivement, en *Contre Beccos*, 2 (voir Grégoire Palamas, *Συγγράμματα*, t. 1, édité par P.K. Chrèstou, Thessalonique, 1988, p. 164, l. 14-15).

²¹ Sur cette préoccupation polémique des *Chap.*, voir J. Lison, *L'Esprit répandu...*, pp. 13-14.

Jugie lorsqu'il identifiait sans plus cette théorie à celle d'Augustin. Mais notre analyse nuance l'argumentation de Sinkewicz qui risque d'être trop radicale en sens inverse. Aucun argument ne nous semble en tout cas infirmer la possibilité d'une influence augustinienne. Certains indices suggèrent même cette influence, sans pour autant la prouver: surtout le fait que la notion d'Esprit amour n'apparaît dans la tradition grecque avant Palamas que sous la plume de Théolepte; et aussi le hiatus qui apparaît dans le texte même des *Chapitres* de Palamas entre les notions de souffle et d'amour. Quoi qu'il en soit, même s'il n'y avait effectivement aucune influence augustinienne, les courts développements de Théolepte et de Palamas sur l'Esprit éros, entre autres, 'suffisent, comme l'écrivait le regretté P. Y. Congar, à créer un lien (entre l'Orient et l'Occident), à manifester une ouverture. "Les murs de séparation ne montent pas jusqu'au ciel!"²².

²² Y. Congar, *Op. cit.*, p. 132, qui cite en fait aussi des expressions de l'Esprit comme amour trouvées sous la plume de Boulgakov et d'Evdokimov; en reconnaissant toutefois que 'ces témoignages ne suffisent pas à constituer une tradition théologique' (*Ibid.*).

St. Maximus the Confessor between East and West

Andrew LOUTH, London

According to Hans Urs von Balthasar, Saint Maximus the Confessor is 'the philosophical-theological thinker between East and West' — 'der philosophisch-theologische Denker zwischen Ost und West'¹. It is a view often echoed in the scholarly literature on Maximus, though with a more restricted meaning than that intended by the great Swiss theologian. For Balthasar goes on to say: 'he (Maximus) shows in his humble serenity, and also in the daring of his truly free spirit, how and whence both come together. And East means not only Byzantium and West not only Rome, but East really means Asia and West *das Abendland* — the whole of the West'. Few scholars attempt such a world-historical breadth of canvas: between East and West mostly means between the Greek East and the Latin West. Even in the Western Middle Ages when Maximus was perceived as little more than the scholiast of Dionysius the Areopagite, he was respected as someone who linked in his person Byzantium and the West. As Dom Polycarp Sherwood affirms, such veneration for Maximus in the West was due in part to 'his belonging to the "Catholic", that is ecumenical tradition of an earlier period when East and West were still part of one undivided church'². More recently there has been a tendency to stress parallels between Maximus and St Thomas Aquinas: a tendency that seems to have begun in 1907 with an article by Straubinger³ and became very popular in the 1970s in a series of books by Catholic scholars, mainly Dominicans, especially Juan Miguel Garrigues who spoke of 'eastern and western tradition being united in the persons of their most important witnesses, Maximus and Thomas Aquinas'⁴. Maximus became a kind of honorary Byzantine Dominican, or Thomist, at any rate. This idea of a spectrum between East and West that Maximus evokes, and on which he represents a significant position, accessible

¹ Hans Urs von Balthasar, *Kosmische Liturgie* (Einsiedlen, 1961), p. 12.

² As reported by D.J. Geanakoplos, 'Some aspects of the influence of the Byzantine Maximus the Confessor on the theology of East and West', *Church History* 38 (1969), pp. 150-63; here 160.

³ H. Straubinger, 'Die Lehre des Patriarchen Sophronius von Jerusalem über die Trinität, die Inkarnation und die Person Christi. Mit besonderer Berücksichtigung seiner Beziehungen zu Maximus Confessor in ihren Hauptpunkten zugleich verglichen mit den Sätzen des hl. Thomas', *Der Katholik*, dritte Folge, 35 (1907), pp. 81-109, 175-98, 251-65.

⁴ J.M. Garrigues, *Maxime le Confesseur. La charité avenir divin de l'homme* (Paris, 1976), p. 7.

from both ends, so to speak, is clearly very compelling, and often the source of striking shafts of illumination. To return to Balthasar — he finds in Maximus a decisive point in the development of a tradition which makes the oriental at home in western consciousness, something he finds again in the Russian novelist, Dostoevsky:

A supracosmic and mystical conformity with God on the one hand, and nature envisaged as sin on the other: there are here two aspects that constitute an essential rhythm of the oriental religious sentiment, a rhythm that we unquestionably find in *The Brothers Karamazov* and *The Devils*, but which is already there in Origen, in the two Gregories and in Maximus... The rhythm of such a vision of the world can only be an ecstatic rhythm, let us say even irrational and emotional, because the object of final approbation is absolutely the same as the object of repudiation, because it carries in its very essence as if engraved with red-hot iron, the mark of grace and reprobation. The ecstatic joy over the world in Gregory of Nyssa and his mental flight beyond the sensible are an exact anticipation of Alyosha's ecstatic kissing of the earth and his angelic character, liberated from sense⁵.

It is not, however, such world-historical parallels, exhilarating though they are, that I wish to pursue in this lecture. As an historical theologian, I have set myself the rather more prosaic task of trying to take this notion of a spectrum between East and West back into the historical reality of Maximus' own earthly life. Even in such an investigation I think we shall find some surprises.

'May you live in interesting times': that is said to be a Chinese curse. But Maximus himself certainly lived in 'interesting times'. He was born in 580 in a Roman Empire that was still basking in the successes that had been achieved during the reign of the Emperor Justinian. Justinian, who had died fifteen years earlier, had sought to restore to the Roman Empire something of its former glory as a Mediterranean empire, and to some extent he had succeeded: he had reconquered North Africa and Italy and even established Roman rule in the south of Spain. He had also rebuilt much of Constantinople, including the Great Church, the cathedral of the Holy Wisdom, that still stands today. But by the time of Maximus' death, in 662, the Empire had lost its Eastern provinces — Syria, Palestine and Egypt — to a newly-established Arab Empire that had its capital in Damascus and already stretched East as far as the valley of the Oxus. Asia Minor was regularly subject to raids by the Arabs and Constantinople itself was soon to face an Arab blockade. The reigning Emperor, Constans II, had settled in Sicily and was in fact contemplating moving his court there permanently. The Arab conquest, however, was only a further blow to the Roman Empire. Constantinople had already lost its Eastern provinces for some twenty

⁵ Taken from the French translation of the first German edition (the only access to that which I have): H.U. von Balthasar, *Liturgie Cosmique* (Paris, 1947), pp. 136-8. It is somewhat modified in the second edition, and related much more closely to Maximus as mediator with the Asian East: *op. cit.* (n. 1), pp. 187-89.

years between 610 and 630 to its traditional Eastern neighbour and enemy, the Persian Empire. The latter half of the sixth century had seen repeated outbreaks of plague in Asia Minor and Constantinople, and consequent depopulation. The first two decades of Maximus' life had seen the over-running of the Balkan peninsula by the Slavs and the Avars, with a consequent break-down of land-communications between Constantinople and Italy, with the result that Justinian's new Empire was split in two. Alongside all this — as consequence, or maybe cause — the traditional basic unit of the civilisation of the Mediterranean world, the city, had decayed, and with it the traditional educational and career structure. Constantinople — and a weakened Constantinople, at that — came to dominate what remained of a once-great Roman Empire, that had felt in contact with its traditional greatness not all that long ago. All this must have raised huge questions of identity for the inhabitants of the Roman or Byzantine Empire: and these questions were to remain, at least until the ninth century, and maybe for the rest of its long life. But it is in the seventh century, the century of Maximus' maturity, that these questions are first posed with their full force. This is my first main observation: that the seventh century is not a century where people felt at home with a comfortable tradition; it was a century where there were few, perhaps no certainties, and where a sense of identity (or of identities) needed to be fashioned afresh.

This must lead us to question some of the assumptions that lie behind the kind of judgments about Maximus 'between East and West' that I quoted at the beginning of this lecture: at least if these judgments are to be taken as reflecting anything of the historical reality of the seventh century. Let us take, to begin with, the idea that veneration of Maximus in the Western Middle Ages had to do with his belonging to a period 'when East and West were still part of one undivided church'. If there was any period when the Church was 'undivided' it can hardly have been the seventh century. This was a century in which an Ecumenical Council anathematized not only four patriarchs of Constantinople and a patriarch of Alexandria, but also the bishop of Rome, Pope Honorius!

Or take an appellation that all ascribe to Maximus, wherever they place him on the East-West spectrum: 'Byzantine'. In the context of the seventh century that would be a decidedly odd term to apply to Maximus. He may have been born in Byzantium, that is Constantinople, and have been 'byzantine' in that sense, but the 'byzantine theologians' of the seventh century were the Monothelite theologians of Constantinople, those who brought about his condemnation, mutilation and death, and maybe even managed to make sure that when Maximus' teaching was finally vindicated in Constantinople at the Sixth Ecumenical Council in 680-1, that vindication did not extend to his person. Though having said that, one thinks of a curious passage towards the end of the account of Maximus' first trial in 655. Maximus was asked by the sacellarius 'Why do you love the Romans and hate the Greeks?', meaning why has he

cast his lot with the church of Rome and the Lateran Council that had condemned monothelism in 649, and refused to enter into Eucharistic communion with his fellow-Greeks in Constantinople? But it is a puzzling question, for the Greeks of Constantinople, the new Rome, thought of themselves as Romans, 'Ῥωμαῖοι', and later on even adopted the Latin word, *Romani*, into Greek to designate those who belonged to the city of Rome (so Constantine Porphyrogenitus, in his *de administrando imperio*)⁶. And yet here a highly-placed Roman official uses his own proud self-appellation of those he regards as traitors. Maximus' reply was: 'We have a precept, not to hate anyone: I love the Romans as sharing the same faith, and the Greeks as sharing the same language'. Perhaps in that reply Maximus was defining Roman — Byzantine — in terms of faith in a way that foreshadows its later use. At any rate this exchange gives some impression of confusion of identity in seventh-century Constantinople.

Or finally, take the very notion of a spectrum between East and West, that Maximus is said somehow to bridge in his own person and theology. It seems to me that to talk of East and West in the context of the seventh century is to allow oneself too few points of the compass. West may be Rome, but what about North Africa (not to mention Spain)? It was only a few decades earlier that the North African Church had anathematized Pope Vigilius for his subservience to the Emperor Justinian over the matter of the Three Chapters. And where is the East? Constantinople? Syria? Palestine? Egypt? Armenia? The Church of the East itself — the so-called 'Nestorian' Church — mainly in Iraq? No single point of the compass will embrace all the differences represented by these geographical areas (and even the geographical designations obscure local differences). I am not simply suggesting that it is all more complicated than convenient labels indicate: you would all expect that to be the case. What I really want to argue is that the seventh century was a period in which historically important understandings of (different) Christian identities were being fashioned, and in particular that Maximus the Confessor played a decisive role in the fashioning of one of these senses of identity, that which has come to be called 'Byzantine' or (though unfairly, so far as many Oriental Christians are concerned) 'Eastern Orthodox'. Maximus' apparent accessibility to many Western Christians is not because he in some way stands aside from the 'Byzantine' tradition, thus understood: rather it says something about the richness of that theological synthesis, the lineaments of which he and others forged in the 'interesting times' of the seventh and eighth centuries, in Maximus' case, at the cost of his life.

Perhaps the easiest way to pursue this will be to take that last point — about the need for more points of the compass than just East and West. Let us move around clockwise: from New Rome to Old Rome.

⁶ E.g., op. cit. 29: in Constantine Porphyrogenitus, *de Administrando Imperio*, ed. G. Moravcsik (ed. 2, Dumbarton Oaks Texts, 1; 1967), p. 122.

First, Constantinople. As a recently published volume of Grillmeier's massive and impressive work has revealed — part 2 of vol. 2 of his *Jesus der Christus im Glauben der Kirche*⁷ — Constantinople played an enormously important role in the development of Christology in the sixth century. This was mainly because of the lead taken by the Emperor in such matters, and especially the emperor Justinian. For the Council of Chalcedon had left the Christian Emperor with a divided Empire on his hands. Many Christians in the East felt that that council had betrayed Saint Cyril of Alexandria, veneration for whom was such that he was later to be known as the 'Seal of the Fathers': they were called monophysites (that is, those who believed that Christ had one sole nature) by their enemies, and for convenience, but with some reluctance, I shall so call them. What took place in Constantinople in the sixth century was a serious attempt to allay their anxieties. The condemnation of passages from three theologians of the Antiochene School, Theodore of Mopsuestia, Theodoret of Cyrus and Ibas of Edessa, two of whom had been accepted as orthodox by the council of Chalcedon — the so-called condemnation of the 'Three Chapters', which was endorsed at the Fifth Ecumenical Council — was part of this attempt to reassure the monophysite followers of Cyril. More important, however, was the endeavour to read the Definition of Chalcedon in terms of the theology of Cyril — it had, after all, been acclaimed by the Fathers of the Council as faithful to Cyril — an attempt sometimes called Neo-Chalcedonianism, though better called, following Jean Meyendorff, Cyrilline Chalcedonianism⁸. This involved making clear that the hypostasis that had become incarnate was indeed the eternal hypostasis of the Son, something that it can be argued is not crystal clear in the Chalcedonian Definition. But Justinian went further than this. One of the flash-points between the monophysites and the Chalcedonians had been the so-called Theopaschite addition to the Trisagion. This hymn — Holy God, Holy Strong, Holy Immortal, have mercy on us — had become part of the liturgy of Constantinople and the East in the fifth century. In Syria it was understood as addressed to the Second Person of the Trinity, and the Syrian monophysites had added to it the clause 'who was crucified for us'. In Constantinople, however, the Trisagion was understood to be addressed to the Trinity as a whole, and such an addition would imply the heretical notion of the passibility of the divine substance. Despite this, the theopaschite addition became the badge of monophysite piety, and Justinian's predecessor but one, Anastasius, had signalled his monophysite sympathies by ordering the monophysite form of the Trisagion: this provoked a riot and

⁷ Alois Grillmeier, *Jesus der Christus im Glauben der Kirche*, Band 2/2: Die Kirche von Konstantinopel im 6. Jahrhundert (Freiburg-Basle-Vienna, 1989). The English translation has just appeared (1995).

⁸ See, e.g., John Meyendorff, *Byzantine Theology. Historical trends and doctrinal themes* (London, 1975), pp. 34-5.

nearly cost him his throne. Gibbon, as you might expect, devotes a splendid page to this incident:

The Trisagion, with or without this obnoxious addition, was chanted in the cathedral by two adverse choirs, and, when their lungs were exhausted, they had recourse to the more solid arguments of sticks and stones; the aggressors were punished by the emperor, and defended by the patriarch; and the crown and mitre were staked on the event of this momentous quarrel⁹.

Justinian did not compromise over the Trisagion, but he did accept the theopaschite formula — 'One of the Trinity suffered in the flesh' — incorporating it in the canons of the Fifth Ecumenical Council, and perhaps more significantly in the hymn 'Ὁ μονογενῆς υἱός', ascribed to the Emperor himself, and now a fixed part of the Byzantine liturgy, which includes the words: 'You were crucified, Christ God, by death trampling on death, being one of the Holy Trinity, ... save us!'¹⁰

This Christological development was fully accepted by Maximus. But not the further developments that were essayed in the seventh century. For Justinian's efforts had made little impact on the monophysites. On the contrary, by the time of Justinian's death there was a separate monophysite hierarchy of bishops serving the needs of those who refused to accept Chalcedon: they were strong especially in Syria and Egypt, and the persecution they had suffered at the hands of the imperial forces can hardly have strengthened their loyalty to the imperial throne. When Chosroes, the Persian Shah, invaded the Eastern provinces of the Roman Empire at the beginning of the seventh century, he tried to capitalize on these religious differences. The response from Constantinople was to try again to make Chalcedonian orthodoxy acceptable to the monophysites. Sergius, the patriarch of Constantinople, took some care over this, approaching one of the monophysite bishops of Egypt, George Arsas, for theological ammunition. The proposal this time was what has come to be called monenergism: the doctrine that in Christ there are two natures of divinity and humanity, united in one person and expressed through a single activity, or energy. It must have seemed a brilliant solution, for not only would it allay monophysite fears about Chalcedon undermining Christ's unity, it was also a formula that could be accepted by the Church of the East, those Christians who had refused to accept the condemnation of Nestorius at the council of Ephesus in 431 and had found a home in the Persian empire. When Heraclius returned from defeating the Persian empire at Ctesiphon in 628 and recovering the true Cross, that had been taken from Jerusalem after its surrender to the Persians in 614, it was his doctrine of monenergism — and the possession of the relic of

⁹ Edward Gibbon, *The History of the Decline and Fall of the Roman Empire*, ch. 47 (World Classics ed., vol. 5, 1904, p. 155).

¹⁰ Translation taken from *The Divine Liturgy of our Father among the Saints John Chrysostom* (Oxford, 1995), p. 11.

the Cross — that formed the basis for the incorporation of the Armenian Church into the Imperial Church in 630, and union with some monophysites at least in Syria and Mesopotamia a little later.

It is not then surprising that Constantinople became attached to monenergism, and later to the refinement of that doctrine called monothelitism, according to which the two natures of Christ were united in one person and one will. Although it lost imperial support in 680, when the sixth Ecumenical Council was convened, and monothelitism condemned (without, as we have seen, any mention of the confessors who had opposed it with their lives, Pope Martin and the monk Maximus), it again became imperial policy at the beginning of the eighth century and gained support from distinguished Byzantine churchmen, including the future patriarch Germanus and St Andrew of Crete. Monothelitism, then, became the hallmark of the theology of the capital in the seventh century. Apart from that we know little. But we do know from Maximus that theologians in the capital were criticizing Rome over the matter of the *filioque*: and that Maximus defended the Roman doctrine, arguing that it does not make the Son a source (αἰτία) of the Spirit, but simply means that the Spirit proceeds through (διὰ) the Son, and citing Cyril of Alexandria in support. Two centuries later a theologian in Constantinople — Photius the patriarch — was to accuse Rome of heresy over the *filioque* clause in the course of the heated exchanges between Rome and Byzantium during the so-called Photian schism: one wonders if there was not here the resurfacing of a long-standing tradition about the errors of Rome from the theologians of the Byzantine court.

Let us now move round the compass to Syria. We have already learnt something about the theological situation here. For a few years Antioch had provided a patriarchal throne for Severus, the greatest monophysite theologian, and indeed the greatest theologian of his age. But Syria produced another theologian, whose works survive under the name of St Paul's convert and disciple, Dionysius the Areopagite. These works were destined to exercise a vast influence on Christian theology, both in the East and the West, but they first appear on the historical stage in Constantinople in 532, cited by the Severan monophysite theologians in support of their argument that, as there was a single divine-human (theandric) energy in Christ, so there must be a single nature (φύσις). This reading is found in none of the Greek manuscripts of the fourth letter of Dionysius, which all read 'a certain new theandric energy'. But that leads us further round the compass to Palestine.

For Palestine was a centre in the East of loyalty to Chalcedon. This is largely due to the monks, but is also doubtless due to the importance of Jerusalem as a centre for pilgrimage and a place that enjoyed much imperial patronage. It is important for Maximus, for though he may never have set foot in Palestine (though according to the Syriac life he was born in Samaria and began his monastic life at the Old Lavra), his spiritual father was Sophronius, originally a monk of the monastery of St Theodosius, and later patriarch of

Jerusalem. It is the Palestinian experience — of monasticism and attachment to Chalcedonian orthodoxy — that lies behind Maximus. It was Sophronius who first raised the alarm about monenergism, initially by his personal protests, and then by his *Synodical Letter*, his confession of faith sent to the other patriarchal sees after his election as patriarch of Jerusalem in 634. But Palestine is important for Maximus in another respect. For the works of Dionysius the Areopagite were edited by the learned bishop of Scythopolis, John, who published the *Corpus Areopagiticum* in a critical edition, with a prologue and scholia. The purpose of this edition — as will become clear in Beata Suchla's eagerly-awaited edition of the prologue and scholia to the Dionysian Corpus, and in the English translation and discussion of John's scholia prepared by Paul Rorem and John Lamoreaux — the purpose of this edition was to present Dionysius as a Cyrilline Chalcedonian, and wrest him from the hands of the monophysites. Maximus continued this work of commentary on Dionysius, and indeed the scholia and prologue were eventually all ascribed to him. What Dionysius gives to Maximus is a vision of the whole created order as a cosmic liturgy celebrating the love of God. But Palestine is not only important to Maximus as providing perhaps the firmest anchor of his spiritual and intellectual life, it is also important as building on the work of synthesis that we find in Maximus. But more of that later.

If we move further round the compass, we come to Alexandria. At the beginning of the seventh century, a friend of Sophronius, John the Merciful, had been the much-loved Chalcedonian patriarch of Alexandria: after his death, Sophronius and another friend, John Moschus, had written his life. But John had served a small minority of the Christians of Egypt: most of them were monophysites and rejected his authority. In 631, however, Cyrus, a native of Lazica on the Black Sea, where Maximus finally ended his life, and a friend of the Constantinopolitan patriarch, Sergius, was appointed Patriarch of Alexandria and Augustal Prefect of Egypt with the job of reconciling the local monophysites to the imperial policy of monenergism. He achieved a remarkable success, and in 633 published a pact of union, a carefully worded statement of monenergist orthodoxy, and presided over the reconciliation of many monophysite clergy. But it was this statement, denounced as Apollinarian by Sophronius, that sparked off the Christological controversy that was to end in Maximus' exile and death.

If we move still further round the compass, we come to North Africa. The North African Church, that had been restored to the bosom of the Roman Empire as a result of the overthrow of the Vandal occupation by Justinian's general, Belisarius, in 534, still remembered its greatest luminary, Augustine, and regarded itself as a pillar of orthodoxy. As we have seen, a century earlier it had excommunicated a pope, Vigilius, for his participation in the condemnation of the Three Chapters. Maximus lived there for at least fifteen years, after his flight from the monastery at Cyzicus on the Sea of Marmara before

the Persian advance on Constantinople in 626. When the monothelite controversy finally broke out after the publication of the imperial edict, the *Ecthesis*, in 638, the North African Church supported Maximus and the cause of orthodoxy in a series of synodical acts. It was with this support that Maximus made his way to Rome in 645 or early 646. Maximus' relation to the Church of North Africa is a puzzle. It was a Latin-speaking Church, and Maximus lived in North Africa in a Greek monastery founded by his spiritual mentor, Sophronius. But it is hardly likely that he was ignorant of Latin (he even seems to have had some knowledge of Slavonic: the only source I can think of for his occasional pun on the name Severus as indicating something northern, frozen and deprived of light)¹¹, and yet he never mentions Augustine by name, and there is no absolutely convincing evidence of any kind of Augustinian influence on the theology of Maximus. It was, however, the North African Church that first supported Maximus in his fight against Monothelitism.

We had better let our compass swing round rather quickly through Spain and Gaul, not that there was nothing of theological interest going on in that corner of the compass, far from it. There may even be a Maximian connection, in that it is possible, even likely, that Theodore of Tarsus, Archbishop of Canterbury (668-690), had come to know Maximus during the Lateran Council of 649¹². But that brings us to Rome, where our compass comes to rest. It was there that Maximus went, as we have seen, in 645 or 646 and there that the Lateran Council took place in 649, which condemned monothelitism. Earlier (and later) Rome did not stand so firm. It was Pope Honorius in his reply to Sergius who had first used the phrase 'one will of our Lord Jesus Christ', the key term of the monothelite confession. Curiously, Maximus is resolute in his defence of Honorius, arguing that the pope meant simply that there was a single undivided human will in Christ, in contrast to the divided will found in fallen humanity¹³. And later, after the deposition of Martin by the Emperor, his successors, Popes Eugenius I and Vitalian, seem to have compromised and entered into communion with the monothelite patriarch of Constantinople, Peter, who had presided at the trial of Martin. It was the same patriarch, Peter, who challenged Maximus' ecclesial standing in terms of the theory of the Pentarchy, since by then, with the defection of Rome, he was no longer in communion with any of the five patriarchates¹⁴.

¹¹ See *opusc.* 3 (PG 91.52A); *opusc.* 7 (ibid. 72A). This pun would make sense if Maximus was aware of the Slavonic word for the north, *sever*. Such knowledge is not perhaps impossible. If Maximus was protoascetic from 610, he may have picked up some words of the language of the Slav tribes who had by then settled in the Sklavinae, and with whom diplomatic sources in the capital will certainly have had some contact and presumably knowledge of their language.

¹² See Michael Lapidge in idem, *Archbishop Theodore. Commemorative Studies on his Life and Influence* (Cambridge, 1995), pp. 22-3.

¹³ In the *Dialogue with Pyrrhus*: PG 91.329AB.

¹⁴ PG 90: 132A.

This almost literal *tour d'horizon* has depicted a world of complex and shifting religious allegiances. What was it that Maximus created out of his life and witness? There are some odd features, not least what seems at first sight a startling contrast between Maximus and his spiritual father, Sophronius: whereas Sophronius immediately denounces monenergism when he encounters it in 633 (and if he had spent most of the previous decade in North Africa, it may well have been his first encounter with it), Maximus does not begin to raise his voice against the imperial religious policy until after the publication of the *Ecthesis* in 638. And it is not that he had no occasion, or that he was in some way unqualified. So far as qualification is concerned, even before he arrived in Africa (sometime, therefore, between 626 and 630), he was already known as a champion of Chalcedonian orthodoxy, for while on the island of Crete he had engaged in discussions with Severan bishops¹⁵. So far as occasion is concerned, in late 633 or early 634 Maximus had replied to a letter of Pyrrhus, later patriarch, about Sergius' patriarchal judgment, in response to Sophronius' protest — the *psephos* — that forbade mention of either one or two energies in Christ, and supported Sergius' *psephos* as a rejection of the Alexandrian pact of union. This is almost as extraordinary as his attitude towards Pope Honorius, for Sergius' *psephos* was no repudiation of the Alexandrian pact, but rather covert support. Nevertheless, the actual exposition of Christological doctrine that this letter contains is entirely consistent with his later teaching. There is then no question that Maximus in any way failed to recognize the error of monenergism and monothelitism from the beginning, but it was not until the promulgation of the *Ecthesis* that he began to speak out.

I think there are two points to make about this reluctance. The first has to do with any approach to the history of Christian doctrine from a Catholic or Orthodox perspective: from such a perspective we know where we are going, so that it is often difficult for us to realize that to those whom we are studying it may not have been so clear. The christological issues of the sixth and seventh centuries separated various Christians one from another, but the differences were often very slight — a matter of words and phrases in which were concentrated centuries of deeply felt allegiance. It is not, indeed, obvious that Cyrus' pact of union is wrong: it is very carefully phrased, and if crucial terms are ambiguous — notably the key term, ἐνέργεια — it is not least because such terms had only recently come to bear the weight of theological reflection. It is just this point that Maximus makes in his letter to Pyrrhus. Just how close streams of christological reflection can run emerges from his nearly contemporary *Ambigua ad Thomam*. The fifth of that later set of difficulties discusses Dionysius' notorious fourth letter that includes the phrase about a 'theandric energy'. In that discussion Maximus gives an interpretation of Christ's walking on water: 'Clearly water is unstable, and cannot receive or support material

¹⁵ As Maximus himself says: *opusc.* 3 (PG 91.49C).

and earthly feet, but by a power beyond nature it is constituted as unyielding. If then with unmoistened feet, which have bodily bulk and the weight of matter, he traversed the wet and unstable substance, walking on the sea as on a pavement, he shows through this crossing that the natural activity of his own flesh is inseparable from the power of his divinity¹⁶. This is reminiscent of Severus' own interpretation of the same episode: 'For how will anyone divide walking upon the water? For to run upon the sea is foreign to the human nature, but it is not proper to the divine nature to use bodily feet. Therefore that action is of the incarnate Word, to whom belongs at the same time divine character and humanity indivisibly¹⁷. Perhaps the strength of Maximus' theological synthesis lies partly in his capacity to sense the truths affirmed by those with whom he ultimately disagrees, and to accommodate that in his own more careful formulation. That, too, might explain his caution and apparent reluctance to engage in controversy.

But there may be something deeper here that could emerge if we put this caution in speaking out in the context of his whole writing life. Maximus' writings fit into a relatively short span: apart from documents connected with his trial in 655, everything is contained in the period from 624 to 649, twenty-five years. His earliest writings are all spiritual exhortation — either letters or treatises like his *Centuries on Love*. His main theological works — the *Mystagogia*, *Ambigua*, *Quaestiones ad Thalassium* — belong to half-a-dozen years from the late 620s to 635, and most of his controversial theological tracts belong to the first half of the 640s. All his non-controversial theology comes first, and virtually all of this takes a form that is suited to catechesis, especially monastic catechesis — it is rooted in his life as a monk, and it is directed towards the monastic life, or let us say more directly the Christian life. His *Centuries*, such as his *Centuries on Love*, take over a genre that was especially popular in monastic circles: a hundred brief paragraphs, mainly exhortatory, sometimes capturing the essence of some aspect of Christian teaching, presented as food for pondering, for meditation. His favoured theological genre is not the traditional one of the commentary (though he wrote commentaries on Ps 59 and the Lord's Prayer), but of discussion of difficult passages — in Scripture or the Fathers (in fact, overwhelmingly Gregory of Nazianzus, the Theologian). In the case of the earlier *Ambigua*, or 'Difficulties', we are told that they grew out of discussion with the local bishop, John of Cyzicus. It is theology as conversation, though conversation with one possessing a well-stocked memory and very sharp mind. The *Ambigua* are interesting, for not only are they *about* tradition, in the form of passages from the Fathers, but they are often *composed* of tradition, in that Maximus endlessly quotes (often

very freely) and alludes to those he calls 'the saints'. In this Maximus is part of a tradition: a tradition that reaches back through the *florilegia* of the fifth and sixth centuries to the *Philokalia* put together by Basil the Great and Gregory of Nazianzus, and continues in the painstaking efforts of the councils of the seventh and eighth centuries (the sixth Ecumenical Council has been called 'the council of antiquarians and palaeographers')¹⁸ and scholars such as Saint John Damascene. Such theology is about tradition, the preservation and identifying, as well as the rethinking of tradition. It is essentially unsystematic, though it may, as it does with Maximus, serve the articulation of a vision of God, creation and the human person. Explicit theological controversy is much less important: to be engaged in reluctantly, and only when matters of fundamental importance are at stake.

Maximus' connection with Sophronius is significant: for Sophronius belongs to the tradition of Palestinian monasticism, a tradition that in the great monasteries around Jerusalem kept the patriarchate a beacon of Chalcedonian orthodoxy, even if sometimes tarnished in the person of the patriarch himself. I have already suggested that it was the monasteries of Palestine that kept faith with Maximus: it was certainly through John Damascene, that monk of the Great Lavra, that several of Maximus' insights became the property of the Church as a whole. But the importance of the link with Palestine is this: it was in Palestine that Christians committed to Chalcedonian orthodoxy, as interpreted at the sixth and seventh ecumenical councils, worked out what Byzantine orthodoxy stood for, in this taking Maximus as their guide (so that such Christians were known, by their enemies, as 'Maximians')¹⁹. For after the Arab conquest, Chalcedonian Christians found themselves stripped of power: no longer able to rely on the secular arm, they had to defend their beliefs against monophysites, monothelites, Nestorians, not to mention Jews and eventually Muslims. Controversy with the monothelites, especially, spawned an interest in logic, for as is evident from Maximus' tracts against the monothelites, much turned on definitions of terms. It was for these purposes that hand-books of logic, evidently intended for Christians, were produced in the seventh century (some of them masquerade as some of Maximus' 'theological opuscula')²⁰. They had to scour the tradition for support for disputed questions, and in this they built on the already existing *florilegia*. All these tendencies reach their apogee in John Damascene's 'Fount of Knowledge'. It is not until the ninth century that the Queen City of Constantinople became interested in all this, once it had finally repudiated iconoclasm. How late Maximus

¹⁸ N.G. Wilson, *Scholars of Byzantium* (London, 1983), p. 62, citing an unnamed authority.

¹⁹ See, e.g., A. Guillaumont, *Les 'Kephalaia Gnostica' d'Évagre le Pontique* (Patristica Sorbonensia, 5; 1962), p. 176.

²⁰ See Mossman Roueché, 'Byzantine Philosophical Texts of the Seventh Century', *Jahrbuch der Österreichischen Byzantinistik* 23 (1974), pp. 61-76 and other articles by the same scholar.

¹⁶ PG 91.1049BC.

¹⁷ Severus, *Ep. 1 ad Sergium* (trans. in Iain R. Torrance, *Christology after Chalcedon. Severus of Antioch and Sergius the Monophysite* (Norwich, 1988), 154).

came to be known in Constantinople is evident from Photius' *Bibliotheca*: codices 192-5 deal with various works of Maximus that he has read, and absent from them is perhaps the most important of Maximus' works, the earlier *Ambigua ad Joannem*.

It is only then, in the ninth century, it seems to me, that we can begin to speak of 'Byzantine' orthodoxy, and we need to recognize that the lineaments of that orthodoxy were hammered out by Palestinian monks faithful to Maximus and their Christian heritage, living under the rule of the caliphs.

Hans Urs von Balthasar began the first edition of his work on Maximus with these words:

The vision of the world that Maximus the Confessor has left us in his writings is, from more than one perspective, the final achievement and the full maturity of Greek mystical, theological and philosophical thought. It appears at that happy and fugitive moment which unites for the last time, before the decomposition that is already close at hand, the riches patiently acquired and developed by the effort of an entire culture: like a rose in full bloom which awaits only the next breath of air to shed its petals, or the serenity of a cloudless autumn day, whose decline is already proclaimed by the gathering shades and a light mist²¹.

And Balthasar goes on to speak of the 'decadence and sterility of Byzantine scholasticism' with 'its dead and mechanical accumulation of the past in florilegia, anthologies, encyclopaedias, that Maximus multiplied in the margin of his works'. On the contrary, it seems to me that Maximus is not so much the end as a beginning, and that he is most faithfully understood by those who appreciate his method of rethinking the fruits of the tradition by commentary and pondering. What are these florilegia to which Balthasar referred so scornfully? They should be taken as including some of the finest liturgical poetry of the Byzantine church, much of which is composed as a kind of catena of citations from patristic sermons²². And later on these Byzantine compilations include the remarkable *Evergetinos*, compiled in the eleventh century by Paul Evergetis, and the even more remarkable *Philokalia*, compiled in the eighteenth century by St Nikodimos of the Holy Mountain and St Makarios of Corinth (the fourth volume of the English translation of which has just appeared)²³. It is a tradition that is far from dead thirteen centuries after the time of its demise as announced by Urs von Balthasar, and if it is true that this vast tradition — not least the Byzantine liturgical tradition — is not much studied, that is at least in part because there are better things to do with it than subject it to scholarly scrutiny.

²¹ Hans Urs von Balthasar, *Liturgie cosmique* (Paris, 1947), p. 11. Omitted from the second edition, but quoted by L-H. Dalmais in his preface to Maximus the Confessor, *Selected Writings*, trans. G.C. Berthold (Mahwah and London, 1985), p. xi.

²² See St Nikodimos of the Holy Mountain, *Ἑορτοδρόμιον* (most recent edition: 3 vols., Thessaloniki, 1987).

²³ Both first published in Venice: the *Evergetinos* in 1783, the *Philokalia* in 1782.

Among the names of those scholars cited as having brought about what is often called a 'Maximian renaissance' in this century, there is one glaring omission, that of the great Romanian theologian, Fr Dumitru Staniloae — may his memory be eternal! Fr Dumitru devoted his life to the study of Maximus *in the spirit of Saint Maximus*: to translation, commentary, elucidation. Some of that vast work is now becoming available in the West: his commentaries on the *Ambigua* were published in French translation only last year²⁴. This, I would suggest, is the way we should approach Maximus: not as the end of some distant historical epoch, but as one who played a supreme role in shaping a tradition of Christian reflection and prayer that embraces not only East and West, but several other points of the compass: the tradition of Byzantine or Eastern Orthodoxy that was formed in the crucible of political defeat and reaches up to the present day.

²⁴ Saint Maxime le Confesseur, *Ambigua*, introduction par Jean-Claude Larchet, avant-propos, traduction et notes par Emmanuel Ponsoye, commentaires par le père D. Staniloae (Paris-Suzesnes, 1994).

L'*Hypomnesticon* de Joseph de Tibériade: une œuvre du IV^e siècle?

Simon C. MIMOUNI, Paris

L'*Υπομνηστικὸν βιβλίον Ἰωσήπου* est un écrit qui prétend, sous forme de questions et réponses, faire connaître ce qu'il importe de savoir du christianisme à une certaine époque, de sa littérature comme de son histoire.

Malgré un important article de Jacques Moreau — remontant aux années cinquante — à qui nous devons la redécouverte relativement récente de cette œuvre, l'intérêt des chercheurs, fort curieusement, ne s'est guère porté, au cours de ces dernières décennies, sur l'*Hypomnesticon*¹.

Dans toute la littérature chrétienne ancienne, J. Moreau ne voit qu'un seul genre auquel on puisse rattacher ce *Libellus memorialis*: celui des *quaestiones et responsiones* ou Ἐρωταποκρίσεις, qui a connu un grand développement à partir du IV^e siècle². Mais, un tel rattachement est à peine acceptable: l'*Hypomnesticon*, en effet, contrairement aux *quaestiones et responsiones*, envisage les problèmes de manière simpliste et mécanique, se refusant à aborder des questions controversées ou discutables. Cet ouvrage est donc véritablement une sorte d'*harax* (selon l'expression de J. Moreau), ce qui permet de comprendre, en partie, les difficultés rencontrées par les savants qui ont voulu lui assigner une datation et une attribution. On pourrait se demander, tout contexte et proportion mis à part, si l'*Hypomnesticon* ne relève pas du même genre littéraire que les *Hypomnemata* d'Hégésippe, qui ne nous sont accessibles que par les trop rares extraits conservés dans l'*Histoire ecclésiastique* d'Eusèbe de Césarée³.

L'*Hypomnesticon* n'est connu que par un seul manuscrit datant du X^e siècle, il s'agit du Cambridge, University Library 1157, f. 104-196⁴. Il a été édité pour la première fois par J.A. Fabricius, en 1741, à la suite de la seconde

édition de son *Codex pseudepigraphus Veteris Testamenti*⁵. Gallandi accueillit l'ouvrage dans sa *Bibliotheca* parmi ceux du X^e siècle. Migne, dans sa *Patrologia Graecorum*, le suivit dans cette voie, en le faisant figurer dans un volume consacré à des œuvres tardives. Ce qui explique que depuis lors l'*Hypomnesticon* n'ait que fort rarement suscité l'intérêt des chercheurs⁶.

L'*Hypomnesticon* se compose actuellement de 167 chapitres qui fournissent des renseignements très divers, notamment sur l'Ancien et le Nouveau testament⁷, mais aussi sur des sujets apparemment éloignés des préoccupations chrétiennes comme par exemple la philosophie et la mantique grecques au chapitre 144. Parmi la masse d'érudition que l'on trouve dans l'*Hypomnesticon*, certains chapitres sont d'un intérêt considérable pour l'historien: en particulier, ceux dans lesquels l'auteur dresse la liste des persécutions (au chapitre 139) et celle des hérésies (au chapitre 140). C'est pourquoi, il est avant tout important de situer exactement cette œuvre dans le temps si ce n'est dans l'espace. En effet, l'interprétation de certains de ses chapitres dépend, dans une large mesure, de sa datation et, dans une bien moindre mesure, de son attribution.

Les limites imparties à cette contribution obligent à une simple mise au point sur les délicates questions de datation et d'attribution. Même si ces deux questions sont évidemment liées, il ne paraît pas inutile, en bonne méthode, de les examiner séparément.

I. Datation de l'*Hypomnesticon*

Les critiques ne sont pas d'accord quant à la datation de l'*Hypomnesticon*, dont les dates proposées varient d'entre la seconde moitié du IV^e siècle et le XI^e siècle.

J.A. Fabricius datait l'*Hypomnesticon* du XI^e siècle, à cause de la mention, dans cet ouvrage, d'Hippolyte de Thèbes, lequel cite lui-même Syméon le

Des chapitres isolés sont conservés dans plusieurs manuscrits des X^e et XI^e siècles (cf. F. Diekamp, *Hippolytos von Theben. Texte und Untersuchungen* (Münster, 1898), p. 147 et p. 149, n. 1). La comparaison entre les numéros affectés aux chapitres du Cambridge et ceux dont sont pourvus les chapitres isolés, reproduits dans ces divers manuscrits, montre que 47 chapitres au moins ont disparu au cours du temps — c'est du moins l'avis de F. Diekamp.

⁵ J.A. Fabricius, *Codex pseudepigraphus Veteris Testamenti*, t. II: *Accedit Josephi Veteris Christiani Hypomnesticon* (Hambourg, 1741).

⁶ Actuellement le texte est communément accessible en PG 106, col. 15-176. Migne a repris l'édition de Gallandi que non pas celle de Fabricius.

⁷ En réalité, l'*Hypomnesticon* ne compte que 166 chapitres car le chapitre 136 est un extrait de la *Chronique* d'Hippolyte de Thèbes.

Sur ces 166 chapitres, 131 concernent l'Ancien Testament et le judaïsme, 35 le Nouveau Testament et le christianisme.

¹ Cf. J. Moreau, 'Observations sur l'*Υπομνηστικὸν βιβλίον Ἰωσήπου*', in *Byzantion* 25-27 (1955-1957), pp. 241-276.

² Au sujet de ce genre littéraire, cf. G. Bardy, 'La littérature patristique des *Quaestiones et Responsiones* sur l'Écriture sainte', in *Revue biblique* 41 (1932), pp. 210-236, pp. 341-362, pp. 515-537 et 41 (1933), pp. 14-30, 211-229, 328-352.

³ Au sujet des *Hypomnemata* d'Hégésippe, cf. N. Hyldahl, 'Hegesipps Hypomnemata', in *Studia theologica* 14 (1960), pp. 70-113.

⁴ Une copie du Cambridge, faite au XVIII^e siècle, se trouve à la Bibliothèque universitaire d'Utrecht.

Métaphraste⁸. Mais I. Vossius en 1680 et G. Cave en 1699 avaient précédemment proposé de fixer la composition de cette œuvre vers 380 pour le premier et vers 420 pour le second⁹. En revanche, Gallandi, en 1781, suivi par Migne, en 1863, plaçait l'*Hypomnesticon* au X^eme siècle¹⁰. La position de Gallandi reposait sur le scepticisme de Le Nain de Tillemont à l'égard de la proposition de Vossius¹¹. En 1898, F. Diekamp démontrait que le manuscrit unique postulait un archétype remontant au plus tard à la fin du IX^eme siècle¹². D'après ce même critique, le passage le plus tardif de cet écrit ne saurait être postérieur à la fin du V^eme siècle. Cependant, il préférerait ne lui assigner aucune date précise entre ces deux *termini*: fin V^eme et fin IX^eme¹³. En 1903, H. Hurter se prononçait en faveur d'un écrivain inconnu de la fin du IV^eme siècle, postérieur à Epiphane de Salamine¹⁴. Une hypothèse semblable avait déjà été proposée d'une part par C. Oudin en 1722¹⁵, d'autre part par P. Lambeck et A.F. Kollar en 1776¹⁶. En 1955-1957, J. Moreau, se fondant sur une analyse serrée de certains chapitres, notamment ceux sur les hérésies et les persécutions, parvenait à assurer une datation relativement haute: aux environs de 380¹⁷.

Comme les arguments de J. Moreau nous paraissent convaincants, il n'est pas inutile de les reprendre rapidement. Après avoir démontré que le chapitre 136 de l'*Hypomnesticon* n'est qu'un extrait de la *Chronique* d'Hippolyte de Thèbes¹⁸, J. Moreau confirme sa datation à partir notamment d'une étude des

⁸ Cf. J.A. Fabricius, *op. cit.*, t. II: *Accedit Josephi Veteris Christiani Hypomnesticon* (Hambourg, 1741), p. 289, n. a.

⁹ Cf. I. Vossius, *De Sibyllinis Oraculis* (Oxford, 1680), p. 18 et G. Cave, *Scriptorum ecclesiasticorum historia litteraria* (Genève, 1699), pp. 83-84.

¹⁰ Soulignons que J.B. Galliccioli, l'éditeur du volume XIV de la *Bibliotheca Gallandiana* — paru après la mort de Gallandi — mais non pas de la préface, avait pris position en faveur d'une datation remontant au IV^eme siècle et même d'une attribution à Joseph de Tibériade. Sur ce point, cf. J. Moreau, *op. cit.*, in *Byzantion* 25-27 (1955-1957), p. 243.

¹¹ Cf. S. Le Nain de Tillemont, *Mémoires pour servir à l'histoire ecclésiastique des six premiers siècles*, t. VII (1696), p. 299.

¹² Cf. F. Diekamp, *op. cit.* (Münster, 1898), pp. 145-151.

¹³ Pour F. Diekamp, *op. cit.* (Münster, 1898), p. 149, l'emploi du titre *Theotokos* dans l'*Hypomnesticon* (sans compter le chapitre 136, on le rencontre deux fois: en 1, 5 et en 16, 8) était la preuve que sa date de composition ne saurait être antérieure au concile d'Ephèse de 431. Une telle assertion ne paraît plus fondée, on sait maintenant que ce titre était usuel au IV^eme siècle: il a même été utilisé par Apollinaire de Laodicée.

¹⁴ Cf. H. Hurter, *Nomenclator literarius Theologiae Catholicae*, vol. I (Innsbruck, 1903), col. 210.

¹⁵ Cf. C. Oudin, *Commentarius de scriptoribus Ecclesiasticis*, vol. II (Leipzig, 1722), col. 1060-1062.

¹⁶ Cf. P. Lambeck et A.F. Kollar, *Petri Lambecii Hamburgensis Commentariorum de Augustissima Bibliotheca Caesarea Vindobonensi Liber III* (Vienne, 1776), p. 85, n. C.

¹⁷ Cf. J. Moreau, *op. cit.*, in *Byzantion* 25-27 (1955-1957), pp. 242-254.

¹⁸ Sur ce point, J. Moreau ne fait que reprendre la démonstration de F. Diekamp, *op. cit.* (Münster, 1898), p. 150, qui considérait que le fragment d'Hippolyte de Thèbe est en réalité une note marginale introduite dans le texte de l'*Hypomnesticon*.

chapitres 139 et 140: il montre, par exemple, que la présentation du règne de Julien comme un temps de persécution, absente de l'*Hypomnesticon*, est postérieure à 380¹⁹. A noter en particulier qu'il fait aussi appel, entre autres, à des arguments contenus au chapitre 122, celui consacré aux traductions grecques de la Bible.

Au chapitre 122, l'auteur de l'*Hypomnesticon* énumère donc les versions connues de son temps, elles sont au nombre de six: la Septante, celles d'Aquila, Symmaque et Théodotion, la *πέμπτη* anonyme découverte à Jéricho et l'*ἕκτη* semblablement anonyme provenant de Nicopolis. Cette notice est assez proche de celle que l'on trouve dans le *De mensuris et ponderibus* d'Epiphane de Salamine. Dans de nombreux manuscrits grecs de la Bible, il est vrai, on rencontre, en guise de préface ou de postface, une notice assez semblable à celles figurant dans l'*Hypomnesticon* ou le *De mensuris et ponderibus*. Cependant, il y est question, non point de six mais de sept traductions, la dernière étant celle de Lucien d'Antioche. Selon J. Moreau, si l'auteur de l'*Hypomnesticon* n'a pas connu cette dernière version, c'est qu'il écrit bien avant l'époque des discussions sur la valeur relative des recensions origénienne, hésychienne et lucianéenne, dont l'écho se trouve chez Jérôme²⁰. En effet, toujours selon J. Moreau, l'auteur de l'*Hypomnesticon* écrit à une époque antérieure à la crise origénienne, représentant le *background* de cette discussion, qui devait conduire, en Palestine, à l'abandon de la version d'Origène au profit de la version de Lucien — il n'a pas connu, au sujet de cette dernière, la tradition de son invention à Nicomédie, sous le règne de Constantin, dont l'émergence date de l'extrême fin du IV^eme siècle²¹.

Il est donc possible de se rallier à la datation proposée par Jacques Moreau, déjà retenue par Isaac Vossius, à savoir les environs de 380 — plutôt avant qu'après cette date.

Un autre argument, avancé par F. Diekamp et retenu par J. Moreau, intervient, par ailleurs, en faveur d'une telle datation: il s'agit de l'opinion doctrinale de l'auteur de l'*Hypomnesticon*²². A partir d'une étude du chapitre 140 de l'*Hypomnesticon*, qui fournit une liste des hérésies du temps, et de celle du *Panarion* d'Epiphane, F. Diekamp avait conclu que l'auteur de l'*Hypomnesticon* était

¹⁹ Dans l'*Hypomnesticon*, il est certes question, au chapitre 140, d'une douzième persécution due à Julien, mais l'auteur précise que l'empereur ne persécuta pas, qu'il combattit les chrétiens seulement par ses écrits. Les sources mentionnant des martyrs sous Julien (à ce sujet, cf. B. De Gaiffier, 'Sub Iuliano Apostata dans le *Martyrologe romain*', in *Analecta Bollandiana* 74 (1956), pp. 5-7) seraient donc postérieures à la composition de l'*Hypomnesticon*.

²⁰ Cf. J. Moreau, *op. cit.*, in *Byzantion* 25-27 (1955-1957), pp. 250-252.

²¹ Le chapitre 25, concernant la liste des livres de l'Ancien Testament comptant 22 occurrences, représente un état relativement ancien de la discussion relative à la place de l'épisode de Ruth et au caractère du livre d'Esther, c'est-à-dire le IV^eme siècle.

²² Cf. F. Diekamp, *op. cit.* (Münster, 1898), pp. 147-148 et J. Moreau, *op. cit.*, in *Byzantion* 25-27 (1955-1957), pp. 247-248.

apollinariste, ou qu'il utilisait des documents provenant de cette tendance²³. Le fait qu'il passe sous silence les Dimoerites et les Antidicomarianites, hérétiques cités par Epiphane, pourrait être considéré, en effet, comme un élément en faveur de cette hypothèse, d'autant que dans le *Panarion*, les Apollinaristes sont désignés sous le nom de Dimoerites et que les Antidicomarianites paraissent tirer leur doctrine de l'apollinarisme. De plus, au chapitre 139, qui fournit une liste des persécutions, l'auteur de l'*Hypomnesticon* mentionne l'hérésie des Anthropolâtres qui ne figure pas au chapitre 140²⁴. Pour J. Moreau, autre argument en faveur de l'hypothèse de F. Diekamp, cette appellation était utilisée par les Apollinaristes pour désigner leurs détracteurs, elle ne peut donc avoir été utilisée que par un auteur apollinariste de la fin du IV^e siècle, surtout qu'à partir du V^e siècle ce même vocable sera employé pour désigner les Nestoriens, dont l'absence est à souligner²⁵. Ces dernières précisions permettent de penser que l'*Hypomnesticon* est certainement antérieur au *Panarion*.

D'autre part, l'auteur de l'*Hypomnesticon*, de par les informations rapportées au chapitre 144, avait des compétences certaines en philosophie et en mantique grecques. Ses connaissances en ces domaines, notamment de Porphyre et de Jamblique, renvoient aussi au IV^e siècle²⁶ — en tout cas la rédaction d'une telle notice est impossible aux X^e ou XI^e siècles.

L'auteur de l'*Hypomnesticon* était, selon toute vraisemblance, apollinariste, il devait donc être nécessairement un farouche opposant à l'arianisme. Une telle thèse renforce, d'une certaine manière, une datation proche des environs de 380.

Il n'est pas possible, en tout cas, de considérer que ce texte date des X^e ou XI^e siècles, ni même des V^e ou VI^e siècles: les informations, sur lesquelles il se fonde, remontent dans l'ensemble au IV^e siècle, et ignorent les problématiques postérieures²⁷.

²³ Le *Panarion* compte 60 hérésies chrétiennes alors que l'*Hypomnesticon* en énumère 62. La différence entre ces deux listes provient du fait que l'auteur de l'*Hypomnesticon* commence son catalogue par les Hérodéens et l'achève par les Anthropomorphites alors que l'auteur du *Panarion* mentionne les premiers parmi les hérésies juives que non pas chrétiennes et ne parle aucunement des seconds.

L'*Hypomnesticon* signale des hérésies sous d'autres noms que le *Panarion*: Marianites (H) = Collyridiens (P); Macédoniens (H) = Pneumatomaques (P); Novatiens (H) = Cathares (P); Elkasaites (H) = Sampséens (P). Figurent dans l'*Hypomnesticon* et non dans le *Panarion*: Theudien, Mage d'Égypte, Byrilliens (Bérylliens), Artémiens. Figurent dans le *Panarion* et non dans l'*Hypomnesticon*: Dimoerites (c'est le nom donné par Epiphane aux Apollinaristes), Antidicomarianites, Encratites, Noétiens.

²⁴ Dans la notice 12 du chapitre 139, celle concernant la persécution de Julien, l'auteur renvoie dos-à-dos, en tant qu'ennemis de l'Église, les hérésies arienne et anthropolâtre.

²⁵ Au chapitre 139, 43, l'auteur de l'*Hypomnesticon* rappelle qu'Origène a faibli devant la persécution. Apollinaire a combattu certaines des idées d'Origène. Rien d'étonnant qu'un partisan des tendances apollinaristes s'attaque, en passant, au célèbre docteur.

²⁶ A ce sujet, il faudrait signaler, au chapitre 144, 58, une brève citation du §27 de la lettre de Porphyre à Anébon, qui en est apparemment la seule attestation en grec.

²⁷ Étant donné la date de l'unique manuscrit connu, les X^e ou XI^e siècles sont de toute façon à exclure parmi les hypothèses à envisager.

Il resterait encore à déterminer si l'*Hypomnesticon* est antérieur ou postérieur au *Panarion* d'Epiphane de Salamine. Dans l'état actuel de la recherche, il est difficile de répondre de quelconque manière pour l'ensemble de l'œuvre. Toutefois, un point est relativement certain: la liste des hérésies, figurant au chapitre 139, paraît antérieure à celle d'Epiphane — elle serait d'ailleurs à comparer avec celle de l'*Anacephalaisios*, avec qui elle entretient nombre d'affinités²⁸.

II. Attribution de l'*Hypomnesticon*

Dans le seul manuscrit connu, l'œuvre est attribuée à un certain Joseph, sans plus de précision. Contrairement à la question de la datation, qui relève de la critique interne, la question de l'attribution repose essentiellement sur la critique externe.

Isaac Vossius, en 1680, est le premier à avoir proposé d'identifier le Joseph, auteur de l'*Hypomnesticon*, avec Joseph de Tibériade, qui avait le titre de comte. Jacques Moreau, dans ce même article des années 1955-1957, reprend et partage l'opinion d'Isaac Vossius²⁹.

Joseph de Tibériade n'est pas autrement connu que par un récit conservé dans la *Panarion* d'Epiphane de Salamine³⁰. Les études sur Joseph de Tibériade ne sont pas abondantes en dehors de celles de F. Manns et de T.C.G. Thornton, qui ignorent tout d'une quelconque attribution de l'*Hypomnesticon* à ce personnage³¹. Dans le récit d'Epiphane, en aucune façon, il n'est question de l'*Hypomnesticon*.

Le récit sur Joseph de Tibériade se trouve en *Panarion* 30, 4-12. La notice 30 du *Panarion* d'Epiphane de Salamine contient une longue et confuse description

²⁸ Dans l'*Anacephalaisios*, tout comme dans l'*Hypomnesticon*, il est, par exemple, question des Elkasaites et non pas des Sampséens, comme dans le *Panarion* (en fait l'auteur de l'*Hypomnesticon* connaît les deux appellations). Ce qui pourrait remettre en question la thèse de l'antériorité du *Panarion* par rapport à l'*Anacephalaisios*.

²⁹ Cf. J. Moreau, *op. cit.*, in *Byzantion* 25-27 (1955-1957), pp. 254-259.

³⁰ Joseph de Tibériade, apparemment un grand personnage de la Palestine du IV^e siècle, fut ignoré après sa mort.

Bien qu'il n'existe aucune attestation de son culte dans l'Antiquité, au XVI^e siècle, il fut inscrit au 22 juillet du *Martyrologe romain* par Baronius, qui se fondait uniquement sur le récit d'Epiphane dans le *Panarion*.

Ce personnage a fort peu retenu l'attention des éditeurs des grands dictionnaires théologiques de notre époque en dehors de la courte notice de R. Gazeau, 'Joseph (saint) de Scythopolis', in *Catholicisme* 6 (1967), col. 1007.

³¹ F. Manns, 'Joseph de Tibériade, un judéo-chrétien du quatrième siècle', in G.C. Bottini, L. di Segni, E. Alliata (Ed.), *Christian Archaeology in the Holy Land. New Discoveries* (Jérusalem, 1990), pp. 553-559; T.C.G. Thornton, 'The Stories of Joseph of Tiberias', in *Vigiliae Christianae* 44 (1990), pp. 54-63.

du groupe judéo-chrétien des Ebionites³². En plein milieu de cette description, apparaît une parenthèse sur un certain Joseph de Tibériade. Cette digression fourmille d'informations aussi curieuses que précieuses, à laquelle même les archéologues s'y réfèrent parfois puisqu'il y est question de la construction des premières églises de Galilée.

Joseph de Tibériade n'ayant rien d'un Ebionite, on peut déjà se demander pourquoi Epiphane a inséré ce récit en plein milieu de cette notice. Selon F. Manns, le but principal de cette digression est d'éclaircir le problème de l'origine des livres hébreux en usage chez les Nazoréens et les Ebionites dont il est question en aval, en 30, 3, 9 et dont il sera encore question en amont, en 30, 13, 1 — il s'agit en fait des livres utilisés chez les Nasaréens et non pas chez les Nazoréens³³.

Après quelques éléments de critique littéraire et de critique historique sur le récit d'Epiphane concernant Joseph de Tibériade, la question de l'attribution de l'*Hypomnesticon* à ce dernier est abordée.

Éléments de critique littéraire.

Epiphane, après avoir indiqué que de nombreux juifs possèdent des traductions hébraïques des Évangiles et des Actes, commence son récit sur Joseph de Tibériade.

A la mort d'Hillel, patriarche juif qui s'était fait baptiser sur son lit d'agonie, Joseph fut chargé de la tutelle de son fils Judas, son successeur. Guéri de façon miraculeuse par l'intervention du Christ, sauvé de graves dangers par la même entremise, Joseph, qui avait exercé d'importantes fonctions dans la communauté juive, entre autres en Cilicie où Judas l'avait envoyé comme *apôtre* — c'est-à-dire שליח — afin de collecter l'impôt pour le patriarcat, se convertit au christianisme. Il se rendit à la cour impériale, gagna l'amitié de Constantin, reçut le titre de comte (*comes*) et des lettres l'autorisant à bâtir des églises à Tibériade, Diocésarée (= Sepphoris), Nazareth, Capharnaüm et dans

Il est aussi question du récit sur Joseph de Tibériade dans M. Avi-Yonah, *The Jews under Roman and Byzantine Rule. A Political History of Palestine from the Bar Kokhba War to the Arab Conquest* (Jérusalem, 1984), pp. 167-169.

On trouve des éléments de critique chez les nombreux auteurs qui se sont intéressés au judéo-christianisme ancien. On en rencontre aussi chez les spécialistes d'Epiphane de Salamine et des Évangiles judéo-chrétiens.

³² Sur cette notice, cf. en particulier A.G. Koch, *A Critical Investigation of Epiphanius Knowledge of the Ebionites: A Translation and Critical Discussion of 'Panarion' 30* (Londres, 1976; Thèse de Doctorat inédite).

Les éléments contenus dans la notice sur les Ebionites ont souvent été considérés dans leur ensemble comme non-historiques depuis l'ouvrage de R.A. Lipsius, *Zur Quellenkritik des Epiphanius* (Vienne, 1865) — position qui demande à être nuancée depuis l'étude de A.G. Koch.

³³ La confusion entre ces deux groupes est courante, même les copistes des manuscrits du *Panarion* la commettaient parfois.

d'autres villes habitées uniquement par des juifs. A Tibériade, il rencontra une telle résistance de la part des juifs qu'il y laissa l'église inachevée et se retira à Scythopolis. Là, il se révéla comme l'un des plus fermes soutiens de l'orthodoxie face au parti arien alors tout puissant grâce à l'influence de l'évêque Patrophile — il donna asile à l'évêque Eusèbe de Verceil, un des plus célèbres opposants à l'arianisme occidental.

Malgré quelques inévitables digressions, classiques dans l'œuvre d'Epiphane, le récit sur Joseph de Tibériade forme une unité littéraire assez bien construite. Mais contrairement à ce qu'affirme F. Manns, il est peu vraisemblable qu'elle ait eu précédemment une forme indépendante³⁴, d'autant qu'Epiphane indique explicitement qu'il reçut tous les éléments y figurant de la bouche même de Joseph.

Éléments de critique historique.

Ce n'est pas le lieu d'examiner en détail l'authenticité historique de tous les événements rapportés dans ce récit, aussi se limite-t-on à de simples notules sur l'origine et la valeur du récit.

1. L'origine du récit.

Dans une digression figurant au milieu du baptême d'Hillel (en *Panarion* 30, 5, 1-8), Epiphane rapporte qu'il entendit ce récit de Joseph lui-même alors que ce dernier était septuagénaire et vivait à Scythopolis. L'évêque de Salamine affirme aussi que Joseph était un chrétien orthodoxe, opposé à l'arianisme. Il s'agit donc d'une source orale dont l'orthodoxie de son auteur est incontestable aux yeux d'Epiphane. De plus, il semble que Joseph était encore en vie — mais très âgé, aux alentours de 90 ans — au moment où l'évêque de Salamine écrit le passage qui lui est consacré³⁵.

Le récit a été raconté par Joseph à Epiphane, lors de sa visite à Eusèbe de Verceil, alors qu'il était âgé d'environ 70 ans (donc entre 355 et 360). Les événements rapportés sont vieux de 20 à 30 ans (donc entre 324 et 337). Epiphane, dans son *Panarion*, les relate quelques 15 à 20 ans après son séjour à Scythopolis, et de mémoire (donc vers 375).

2. La valeur du récit.

Le récit sur Joseph de Tibériade n'est pas d'un grand intérêt théologique: il illustre simplement la foi, la morale et la piété du personnage central. Outre certaines raisons particulières sur lesquelles on reviendra, il est rapporté à des fins

³⁴ Cf. F. Manns, *op. cit.*, in G.C. Bottini, L. di Segni, E. Alliata (Ed.), *Christian Archaeology in the Holy Land. New Discoveries* (Jérusalem, 1990), p. 554.

³⁵ D'aucune façon, dans le récit, il n'est fait allusion à la mort de Joseph.

d'instruction et d'édification. Ces caractéristiques ne l'empêchent nullement de refléter aussi une réelle connaissance du *background* juif au IV^e siècle.

Les détails historiques sont dans leur ensemble considérés comme authentiques par F. Manns et T.C.G. Thornton, en dehors peut-être de ceux figurant dans le passage concernant les patriarches Hillel et Judas.

Dans ce passage, il est notamment question de la conversion du patriarche Hillel (*Panarion* 30, 4, 4-7 et 6, 1-5). Les historiens ont donné des interprétations divergentes — toutes peu satisfaisantes d'ailleurs — de ce passage dont l'originalité est de ne pas cadrer avec les données générales de l'histoire (au IV^e siècle, aucun Judas n'a succédé à un Hillel dans l'ordre de succession des patriarches juifs)³⁶. F. Manns et T.C.G. Thornton ne se prononcent nullement sur l'authenticité de la conversion au christianisme du patriarche Hillel, au sujet de laquelle les sources juives sont du reste absolument silencieuses³⁷.

Le passage relatant la tentative de séduction — par l'intervention de pratiques magiques — d'une dame chrétienne par le jeune patriarche Judas aux bains de Gadara, dont il est largement question (*Panarion* 30, 7, 5-8 et 8, 1-10), même s'il sert l'apologétique chrétienne, pourrait être historique en ce IV^e siècle³⁸ — en tout cas les détails sur le rituel magique paraissent authentiques (*Panarion* 30, 8, 1-10)³⁹.

Pour T.C.G. Thornton, le récit sur Joseph de Tibériade apporte deux informations historiques majeures: 1. les grandes villes de Galilée (Tibériade, Dioscésarée (= Sepphoris), Nazareth et Capharnaüm), au début du IV^e siècle, étaient habitées uniquement par des juifs; 2. l'attitude de Constantin à l'égard des juifs, officiellement tolérante, était officieusement encourageante quant à la conversion des juifs par les chrétiens.

³⁶ A.G. Koch, *op. cit.* (Londres, 1976), p. 374, considère qu'Epiphane parle en fait de Judas II (250-295) et de son frère Hillel qui a été patriarche sous le nom de Gamaliel IV (295-320). La littérature rabbinique, il est vrai, a conservé le souvenir de ces deux frères dont la vie aurait été scandaleuse (cf. Tosefta Mo'ed Qatan 2, 15-16, TJ Pes 30d, TB Pes 51a et TJ Qid 64a).

Joseph étant né vers 285, il apparaît difficile de penser qu'il ait été chargé de la tutelle du fils de Judas II, décédé en 295. En revanche, il se peut fort bien que ce fut le cas à la mort de Gamaliel IV en 320, dont le fils, Judas III, a été patriarche de 320 à 345. Si une telle hypothèse s'avérait, il faudrait considérer qu'Epiphane aurait retenu dans son récit le prénom du père de Judas [III], Hillel, et non pas son nom de patriarche, Gamaliel [III]. N'y aurait-il pas un rapprochement à faire avec la tradition sur la conversion au christianisme de Gamaliel le maître de Paul, qui fait son apparition au cours de la première moitié du IV^e siècle?

³⁷ C'est le problème historique le plus difficile que pose le récit sur Joseph de Tibériade. A noter l'hypothèse de B. Wallach, 'The Textual History of an Aramaic Proverb', in *Journal of Biblical Literature* 60 (1941), pp. 403-434, qui, à partir de TJ Sab 116a, considère la conversion du patriarche juif comme une création légendaire provenant des milieux ébionites. Il serait plus simple de penser qu'Epiphane aurait omis de rapporter le caractère secret de cette conversion, qui aurait figuré dans le récit oral de Joseph — mais ce n'est là évidemment qu'une hypothèse.

³⁸ Selon TJ Qid 64a, Hillel ben Gamaliel, le frère de Judas II, aurait fréquenté les bains de Gadara — très renommés dans l'Antiquité — en compagnie d'un certain Jonathan ben Eléazar.

³⁹ Ce rituel magique, qui est un envoûtement à des fins sexuelles, n'a jamais retenu l'attention des spécialistes de ce domaine.

En ce qui concerne la première assertion, il serait plus exact de dire que ces villes étaient habitées à cette époque non seulement par des juifs mais aussi par des judéo-chrétiens⁴⁰.

Mais le grand intérêt de ce récit est de raconter la conversion de Joseph de Tibériade, un riche notable juif proche de la cour patriarcale. Cette conversion repose sur celle du patriarche Hillel, et sur quatre apparitions du Christ dont a bénéficié Joseph dans ses rêves — en accord d'ailleurs avec ce que disait Origène au sujet des rêves qui étaient une source fréquente de conversion⁴¹. Il convient aussi de relever l'importance des informations concernant le pouvoir du nom de Jésus et le pouvoir du signe de la croix dans les exorcismes — en accord avec les croyances du IV^e siècle.

Une dernière précision est à souligner. Contrairement à ce qu'avance F. Manns dans sa contribution, il n'est pas possible de considérer Joseph de Tibériade comme un judéo-chrétien. C'est uniquement un juif converti au christianisme. Si Epiphane l'évoque dans la notice consacrée aux Ebionites, ce n'est pas qu'il le considère comme un judéo-chrétien, c'est pour de tout autres raisons dont nous allons à présent nous occuper.

Selon F. Manns, c'est donc à propos des livres hébreux utilisés par les Nasaréens et les Ebionites qu'Epiphane insère le récit sur Joseph de Tibériade⁴². En effet, c'est au cours de recherches dans le *trésor* d'une synagogue de Tibériade — c'est-à-dire dans la genizah — que Joseph découvre des livres chrétiens écrits en hébreux. Ces livres hébreux sont l'Évangile selon Jean, les Actes des Apôtres et l'Évangile selon Matthieu — ces derniers n'ont rien en commun avec les livres canoniques, nous précise Epiphane⁴³. T.C.G. Thornton s'étonne que l'on puisse trouver des ouvrages chrétiens dans une synagogue juive. Il se demande s'ils ne devaient pas servir à la controverse entre juifs et chrétiens. F. Manns, considérant que ces livres sont ébionites, note qu'il est curieux qu'ils aient été retrouvés dans la genizah d'une synagogue judéo-chrétienne de Tibériade alors que les ébionites — aux dires d'Epiphane — semblent absents de Galilée.

⁴⁰ Nous laissons de côté la question des églises construites par Joseph dans les villes de Galilée. Le récit d'Epiphane n'est d'ailleurs pas très explicite sur ce point. Il signale seulement, au sujet de Tibériade, que Joseph pensa convertir en église un temple, dédié à l'empereur Hadrien, et qui n'avait pas été achevé.

⁴¹ Cf. Origène, *Contre Celse* 1, 46.

⁴² Il s'agit des livres utilisés par les nasaréens de la notice 18 du *Panarion* et non pas par les nazoréens de la notice 29.

A. Schmidtke, *Neue Fragmente und Untersuchungen zu den Judenchristlichen Evangelien* (Leipzig, 1911), a mis en évidence les relations littéraires entre la notice 18 sur les Nasaréens et la notice 30 sur les Ebionites. Sans aller jusqu'à prétendre qu'Epiphane a divisé en deux ce qui n'était à l'origine qu'un seul groupe (c'est la thèse de A. Schmidtke que l'on trouve déjà dans F.J.A. Hort, *Judaistic Christianity* (Londres, 1894)), il est possible d'envisager que le groupe juif des Nasaréens a constitué le *background* du groupe chrétien des Ebionites; d'autant que ces deux groupes partagent des affinités rituelles, notamment les pratiques baptistes.

⁴³ Si une telle affirmation vaut peut-être pour l'Évangile selon Matthieu en hébreu ou en araméen (documentée par ailleurs), elle paraît absolument gratuite pour les deux autres ouvrages.

Il est possible que ces livres, qui sont des traductions réalisées à partir du grec (c'est Epiphane qui l'affirme), aient été en usage non pas chez les Ebionites, encore moins chez les Nasaréens qui étaient des juifs hétérodoxes, mais plutôt chez les Nazoréens⁴⁴. Leur présence dans la genizah d'une synagogue n'implique pas que celle-ci soit judéo-chrétienne. Il se peut fort bien qu'ils aient été utilisés par des juifs à des fins d'information, et rangés là afin de ne pas être divulgués⁴⁵.

En résumé, Joseph de Tibériade, qui naquit aux alentours de 285 et mourut après 375, est un juif converti au christianisme durant le règne de Constantin (entre 324 et 337). Après avoir assuré la charge d'apôtre pour le compte du patriarche juif, il reçut le titre de *comte* de la part de l'empereur⁴⁶.

Que penser de l'attribution de l'Hypomnesticon à Joseph de Tibériade?

Divers éléments sont, on l'a vu, en faveur d'un auteur palestinien, écrivant avant 380, et même vraisemblablement bien avant 375. Cet écrivain s'intéresse particulièrement à l'Ancien Testament dont la connaissance de l'hébreu lui permet d'avoir un savoir aussi étendu que profond, mais aussi au Nouveau Testament. D'autre part, la philosophie et la mantique grecques ainsi que les hérésies et les persécutions chrétiennes retiennent son attention. Enfin, ses tendances doctrinales l'opposent à l'arianisme et le rapprochent de l'apollinarisme. Pour sa part, Joseph de Tibériade était un notable juif, converti au christianisme — ce n'était pas un judéo-chrétien⁴⁷. Il était d'une grande érudition, connaissant le grec comme l'hébreu. Son orthodoxie était incontestable; de par son opposition virulente à l'égard de l'arianisme, il aurait très bien pu être un partisan des idées antiariennes d'Apollinaire de Laodicée. Sans pouvoir aboutir à une conclusion définitive, ces éléments paraissent former néanmoins le tissu d'une argumentation en faveur de l'attribution de l'*Hypomnesticon* à Joseph de Tibériade.

Evidemment, il est difficile de ne pas penser que le Joseph figurant dans le titre soit le fruit d'une interpolation faisant simplement référence à Flavius Josèphe et n'ayant rien à voir avec Joseph de Tibériade. Mais est-il possible qu'un copiste connaissant l'œuvre de Flavius Josèphe ait pu croire qu'un écrit parlant de l'empereur Julien pouvait être attribué à cet auteur?

⁴⁴ Il est douteux, par exemple, que les Ebionites, qui étaient antipauliniens, aient accepté parmi leur Ecritures saintes les Actes des Apôtres dont plus de la moitié est consacrée à Paul. Il en est de même pour l'Evangile selon Jean dont la présentation du caractère divin de Jésus ne pouvait qu'aller à l'encontre de leur doctrine qui n'acceptait strictement que son caractère humain.

⁴⁵ Comme on sait, ils ne pouvaient pas être détruits car contenant le nom de Dieu.

⁴⁶ A noter que le titre de *comes* était accordé, entre autres, aux fonctionnaires du fisc. C'est exactement la charge qu'exerçait Joseph pour le patriarcat juif, selon les prérogatives édictées par l'Empire.

⁴⁷ La confusion entre Ebionites et Nazoréens, commise par l'auteur de l'*Hypomnesticon*, en 139, 6, montre qu'il n'était pas judéo-chrétien.

Conclusion

Quoi que l'on pense de l'attribution de l'*Hypomnesticon* à Joseph de Tibériade, il est certain que l'ouvrage a été composé avant 380⁴⁸. Ce document, malgré son ancienneté n'a pas été jusqu'ici exploité par les historiens du christianisme ancien, en dehors des seuls spécialistes des persécutions — il mérite par conséquent d'être pris en considération⁴⁹.

J. Moreau espérait qu'à la suite de sa contribution, l'*Hypomnesticon* ne serait plus négligé. Tel ne fut pas le cas. Nous osons penser que ce texte, dont une nouvelle édition est nécessaire, n'attendra pas encore une quarantaine d'années avant qu'un autre chercheur s'intéresse de nouveau à lui⁵⁰.

⁴⁸ A relever que J. Moreau, *op. cit.*, in *Byzantion* 25-27 (1955-1957), p. 258, n. 2, proposait de comparer l'*Hypomnesticon* de Joseph de Tibériade aux *Quaestiones Veteris et Novi Testamenti* de l'Ambrosiaster, à condition que ce soit bien l'œuvre du juif converti Isaac de Rome.

⁴⁹ La courte notice 49 du chapitre 140 de l'*Hypomnesticon*, concernant les Marianites, est absolument nécessaire pour comprendre la longue notice 79 du *Panarion*, concernant les Collyridiens. Au sujet de l'identification Collyriens = Marianites, cf. F.X. Dolger, 'Die eigenartige Marienverehrung der Philomarianiten oder Kollyridianer in Arabien', in *Antike und Christentum*, I (Münster, 1929), pp. 107-142 et p. 160 (l'auteur ne connaît pas l'*Hypomnesticon*).

De plus, si la datation retenue de l'*Hypomnesticon* se trouvait confirmée, dans la notice 49 du chapitre 140, on aurait la plus ancienne attestation de l'assomption de Marie (καὶ φασιν αὐτὴν εἰς οὐρανὸν ἀνελήφθαι — une telle précision est absente de la notice du *Panarion* qui, pourtant s'intéresse au sort final de Marie), qui était alors considérée comme une croyance hérétique. Auquel cas, on pourrait se demander si l'on ne serait pas en présence de l'origine des traditions et croyances sur le sort final de Marie, autrement dit: à l'origine de la Dormition serait une Assomption aux normes considérées comme hérétiques, celle-ci aurait été reprise plus tard avec des normes tout autres. Ne connaissant pas cette courte notice de l'*Hypomnesticon*, une telle éventualité n'avait pas été soulevée dans notre ouvrage (cf. S.C. Mimouni, *Dormition et Assomption de Marie. Histoire des traditions anciennes*, Paris, 1995).

⁵⁰ Notre contribution est largement redevable à l'étude de J. Moreau, dont la consultation demeure toujours nécessaire, surtout pour son analyse pénétrante du chapitre 139 sur les persécutions.

Kenosis or Impassibility: Cyril of Alexandria and Theodoret of Cyrus on the Problem of Divine Pathos

John J. O'KEEFE, Omaha, Nebraska

I. Introduction

Many text book accounts of the christological debates of the fifth century continue to propagate a caricature with considerable influence¹: Alexandrian christology, they imply, missed the point of the incarnation by denying the Word a full human nature, while Antiochene christological thought really grasped the essentials. Antiochene theologians were the cool-headed exegetes who resisted allegorical readings of the text, refused to allow philosophy to dominate their christology, and insisted on the historical significance of Jesus as a human being. The Antiochenes, according to this view, appear surprisingly modern, almost anticipating contemporary christology from below².

Although most recent scholarly studies of the christological debates of the fifth century do not make this mistake, it seems to me that we have not yet put enough distance between ourselves and this distortion. One reason for this is that we still tend to think that a desire to defend the full humanity of the Word exclusively defines the Antiochene position. As a result we have not focused sufficient attention on the similar, and I think more central, Antiochene desire to defend the impassibility of God. Both issues are central to the christological debate, but if we forget to talk about impassibility, we will be tempted to interpret the controversy along the lines outlined above.

Contrary to what we may think, the impassibility of God was not taken for granted in the patristic period, even by many 'orthodox' theologians. One recent study demonstrates convincingly that a significant number of patristic authors made surprisingly 'theopaschite' remarks, including Clement, Tertullian, and

Origen³. Likewise, studies of the fourth century have noted that divine suffering raised serious theological questions during the theological debates of the fourth century⁴. After the council of Nicaea, with the Son's divine status assured, the questions become more difficult: to what extent did the human suffering of the Son touch the divine nature? If Jesus Christ is God as Nicaea said, and if Jesus Christ suffered, as Scripture said, does this not imply that God suffered in some way? Not surprisingly, God's impassibility remained a key issue throughout the christological debates of the next century⁵.

If we assume, as we often do, that all ancient authors embraced the doctrine of divine impassibility without question, we can easily fail to notice the significant amount of attention the primary literature of the controversy devotes to it. To understand the debate, however, we must do more than note that the key theologians were concerned about impassibility; we must also recognize that concerns about impassibility go to the heart of the controversy itself. Although I do not want to press this point too far, the basic problem is a conflict between the Scriptural narrative and certain philosophical presuppositions about what God can and cannot be like. The Alexandrians wanted to say that when philosophy and the biblical narrative collide, preference ought to be given to the narrative. Antioch did the reverse. In any case, the problem of divine suffering gets priority attention from both camps.

To illustrate the extent to which the problem of divine suffering permeated this debate I will, in the remaining pages, focus attention briefly on the christologies of Cyril of Alexandria and Theodoret of Cyrus, arguably the best theologians on each side of the controversy. Cyril, I suggest, while affirming the impassibility of God, defers to the scriptural narrative: God is poured out in Jesus (kenosis), and in some way can, and must, be said to have made human suffering his own. For Cyril, the Bible interprets the philosophy. In contrast, the Antiochene christology of Theodoret derives its primary energy from his desire to defend the impassibility of God. For him, the Cyrillian, or 'monophysite' position dangerously compromised Nicene orthodoxy by implying that the Son was somehow affected by passion and thereby reduced in divine status. In a way, Theodoret's philosophical commitments drive his reading of the biblical text.

³ J.M. Hallman, *The Descent of God: Divine Suffering in History and Theology* (Minneapolis, 1991).

⁴ R.P.C. Hanson reviews the evidence in *The Search for the Christian Doctrine of God* (Edinburgh, 1988), pp. 109-116.

⁵ H. Chadwick has observed how important this issue was for the Antiochenes, 'Eucharist and Christology in the Nestorian Controversy', *Journal of Theological Studies*, n.s. 2 (1951), pp. 145-164. Likewise, M. Anastos says that Nestorius was primarily concerned with protecting God from suffering, 'Nestorius was Orthodox', *Dumbarton Oaks Papers* XVI (1962), p. 140. Cf., J. Pelikan, *The Christian Tradition: A History of the Development of Doctrine*, vol. 1, *The Emergence of the Catholic Tradition* (Chicago, 1971), p. 231; F. Young, *From Nicaea to Chalcedon: A Guide to the Literature and its Background* (London, 1983), pp. 274-275.

¹ Cf., T. Bokenkotter, *A Concise History of the Catholic Church*, revised ed. (New York, 1990); D. Carmody and J. Carmody, *Christianity: An Introduction*, 3rd ed. (Belmont, CA, 1995), p. 47; J. González, *The Story of Christianity*, vol. 1, *The Early Church to the Dawn of the Reformation* (San Francisco, 1984), pp. 252-257; T. Helm, *The Christian Religion* (Englewood Cliffs, NJ, 1991), pp. 75-77.

² This tendency is noted by J.A. McGuckin, *St. Cyril of Alexandria: The Christological Controversy. Its History, Theology, and Texts* (Leiden, 1995), p. 190; cf. R. Wilken, 'Exegesis and the History of Theology: Reflections on the Adam-Christ Typology in Cyril of Alexandria', *Church History* 35 (1966), p. 140.

II. Cyril

One of the most interesting documents illustrating Cyril's perspective on the conflict survives as his *Second Letter to Succensus*⁶. Composed between 434 and 438 'when Cyril is engaged in combating the continuing opposition of such Antiochenes as Theodoret'⁷, the letter contains a remarkably succinct assessment of what he thought the Antiochenes found unacceptable in his theology. As Cyril explains it, they pressed him with four basic objections: 1) the phrase 'one incarnate nature of the word' implies that Emmanuel suffered in his own nature; 2) his notion of one nature implies mixture and confusion, 'with the human nature in (the Word) being diminished or stolen away'; 3) if there is no enduring human nature, can the Word be said to be consubstantial with us? and finally, 4) if the Lord suffers only at the level of the flesh, then his suffering is mindless and involuntary.

According to Grillmeier, this letter underscores Cyril's vulnerability to the charge of Apollinarianism⁸. Undeniably Cyril's opponents suspected Cyril's orthodoxy on this point. However, it seems to me odd to focus attention only on Antiochene concerns about the complete humanity of the incarnate Word when a careful reading of the text reveals that Cyril understood the charges to be equally rooted in Antiochene fears that he was a theopaschite. The charges themselves imply such a fear, and Cyril's response to them confirms it.

If we consider the charges carefully, it is clear that on the 'flip side' of the anti-Apollinarian rhetoric rests a theological concern to keep the divine nature safe from contamination. The first objection reflects a fear that the Word suffered in his own nature, not just that the humanity was overrun. The theologians behind the second objection worry about watering down the divine nature by mixing with humanity. Likewise, the third objection indicates not only that the Antiochenes feared eradication of the human nature, but also that without the presence of a complete human nature, only the divinity would be left to absorb the suffering of Jesus. Even the fourth objection — that Cyril's conception of the incarnation makes the Son's suffering mindless and involuntary — seems to come back around to protecting God from suffering. If the suffering of the Lord was voluntary 'there is nothing to prevent one from saying that he suffered in the nature of the manhood'⁹; by implication, suffering is kept safely away from God.

⁶ References are to the critical text of L.R. Wickham, *Cyril of Alexandria: Select Letters* (Oxford, 1983), pp. 84-93. All translations are taken from McGuckin, *St. Cyril of Alexandria*, pp. 359-363.

⁷ McGuckin, p. 352, n. 1.

⁸ A. Grillmeier, *Christ in Christian Tradition*, vol. 1, *From the Apostolic Age to Chalcedon*, trans. J. Bowden (Atlanta, 1975), pp. 472-478. However, few scholars would still agree with with the notion that Cyril was a secret Apollinarian. See Young, pp. 259-263.

⁹ Wickham, 92.1.

In this way, the *Second Letter to Succensus* suggests that divine impassibility lurked at least as an important subtext in the objections of Cyril's opponents, and it would be an easy matter to produce examples of similar concerns from a cross section of Cyril's corpus, both exegetical and doctrinal. The most interesting aspect of this letter, however, is the way Cyril chooses to defend himself. He scoffs at the notion that his christology denies Christ a full humanity: 'If anyone took away from the Son his perfect humanity', he wrote,

'he could rightly be accused of throwing the economy overboard, and of denying the incarnation. But if, as I have said, when we say that he was incarnated this is a clear and unambiguous confession of the fact that he became man, then there is nothing at all to prevent us from thinking that the same Christ, the One and Only Son, is both God and man, as perfect in humanity as he is in deity'¹⁰.

Again and again he denies any validity to the charges that he secretly espoused Apollinarian views. However, the charge that his doctrine implied divine suffering strikes closer to home.

Drawing on some of his favorite texts (e.g. John 1.14, Philippians 2.7, Hebrews 2.16), Cyril turns the accusations upside down: his opponents erred not in their instance on the full humanity of the incarnate Word, but in their exaggerated fear of attributing suffering to God. 'They do not', he complains, 'understand the economy, and make wicked attempts to displace the sufferings to the man on his own, foolishly seeking a piety that does them harm'¹¹. True, Cyril himself did not attribute suffering directly to the Word in his own nature, but for him, such distinctions fade to insignificance after the incarnation: 'we recognize two natures in him..., but we divide them only at a theoretical level (ἐν ψιλαῖς διελόντες ἐννοίαις), and by subtle speculation (ἐν ἰσχυαῖς θεωρίαις), or rather we accept the distinction only in our mental intuitions (νοῦ φαντασίαις)...'¹². When we encounter Christ, we encounter a single subject, the Word made flesh¹³. Hence, Cyril explains, 'we do not rule out the legitimacy of saying that he suffered...'¹⁴.

Cyril's fascination with God's kenosis provides the basis for his critique of his opponents objections. In the economy, in the arena where the mystery of God's salvific plan for human life is manifest and encountered, we meet God emptied out in, to quote Philippians 2, 'the form of a slave'¹⁵. Cyril's commitment to the implications of the biblical narrative led him to speak awkwardly

¹⁰ *Ibid.*, 91.4-10.

¹¹ *Ibid.*, 91.17-20.

¹² *Ibid.*, 92.14-16.

¹³ McGuckin, p. 175-226, contains an excellent discussion of Cyril's defense of the single subjectivity of Christ and its place in his christological thought.

¹⁴ Wickham, 86.24-25.

¹⁵ *Ibid.*, 86.21.

about 'impassible suffering'¹⁶. But failure to allow the text to speak is, he implies, precisely the reason that the theology of his opponents fails:

The God-inspired scripture tells us that he suffered in the flesh (1 Pet. 4.1) and it would be better for us to speak this way rather than [say he suffered] in the nature of the manhood, even though such a statement (unless it is said uncompromisingly by certain people) does not damage the sense of the mystery ... And so they are simply splitting hairs when they talk about him suffering in the nature of the manhood, which serves only to separate it from the word...¹⁷

According to Cyril, the Antiochenes imply that the great gulf separating God and the World has not been bridged after all and this 'shakes the whole rationale of the fleshly economy'¹⁸. In the *Second letter to Succensus*, these are the concerns Cyril returns to his critics.

This is, of course, Cyril's point of view. We may well ask, is his assessment fair? Were his Antiochene opponents as concerned with the problem of impassibility as Cyril seems to think? For a representative counter voice, it will be useful to consider the mature Antiochene theology found in Theodoret's *Eranistes*.

III. Theodoret

Eranistes, written in 447 or 448¹⁹, probably represents Theodoret's response to Eutyches and the growing chorus of more strident monophysite voices emerging in the years leading up to the council of Chalcedon. Nevertheless, Frances Young has argued convincingly that Theodoret's christology did not really change much from the days when he was contending with Cyril, and I personally am not convinced that Eutyches was the only single-nature theologian Theodoret had in mind when he was writing this text. In any case, *Eranistes* represents Theodoret's mature thought. Clearly he has read and understood the arguments of his opponents; he even gives them a fair hearing, despite the sarcastic title²⁰. But what does this treatise tell us? Is Theodoret's primary concern the protection of the full humanity of the Word or is it the protection of the impassibility of God? While both are clearly present, divine impassibility seems to be the more dominant theme²¹. Theodoret was obviously worried that any compromise in the language referring to the divinity of the Son would lead

¹⁶ See Cyril's *Scholia*, pp. 33-35.

¹⁷ Wickham, 92.21-29.

¹⁸ *Ibid.*, 90.24.

¹⁹ References are to the critical text of G.H. Ettliger, *Theodoret of Cyrus: Eranistes* (Oxford, 1975). All translations are from NPNF, vol. 3. On the dating of *Eranistes*, see Ettliger, p. 4.

²⁰ Young, p. 275.

²¹ Young, p. 277, observes that 'the emphasis of Theodoret's work is much more pointedly and consistently directed towards the preservation of God's Godness'.

inevitably back to Arianism²². While these concerns permeate the entire treatise, they are embedded with particular force in the titles of the three dialogues that comprise the *Eranistes*: the immutable (ἀτρέπτος), the unconfused (ἀσυγχυτος), and the impassible (ἀπαθής). These titles hardly reflect the mind of a man preoccupied with the humanity of Jesus.

In the first dialogue, 'the immutable' Theodoret's mouthpiece, Orthodoxus, attempts to point out the silliness of Eranistes' efforts to claim that God the Trinity cannot change while at the same time clinging to an overly literal interpretation of John 1.14: 'the Word became flesh'. Eranistes wants to stick with the biblical language, but Orthodoxus presses the point, insisting that the passage must be understood to mean that the Word took a complete humanity. Without this qualification, he reasons, the Word is either changed into flesh — which would compromise his immutable nature as God — or he only appeared to be human — which is docetism. In a similar way, Orthodoxus suggests, we must interpret a variety of texts, including Philippians 2. Undeniably, the dialogue does indicate that Theodoret feared a one nature christology would overwhelm the humanity of the incarnate word. However, he fears at least as much that such a christology leaves God defenseless against mutability, change and suffering. The dialogue makes clear that Theodoret is asking a very basic question: if we accept as a point of departure the conclusion that God the Word cannot change, what kind of Christology must we have?²³ In other words, his commitment to divine apatheia pushes his christology in a certain direction. The problem for Theodoret, or at least Orthodoxus, is that this full humanity must not be allowed to come too close to the immutable God.

In the second dialogue (the unconfused), Theodoret seems to give the monophysite position of Eranistes a fair hearing. Both agree at the beginning that any christological synthesis must avoid the twin perils of Arius and Apollinarius. For Orthodoxus, however, only uncompromising insistence on the two-nature formula will accomplish this; he seems especially worried about degrading the dignity of the Godhead. 'Is it not impious and shocking', he declaims,

'while maintaining that a soul united to a body is in no way subject to confusion, to deny to the Godhead of the Lord of the universe the power to maintain its own nature unconfounded or to keep within its proper bounds the humanity which he assumed? Is it not, I say, impious to mix the distinct, and to commingle the separate? The idea of one nature gives ground for suspicion of this confusion'²⁴.

In this dialogue Orthodoxus and Eranistes really do not disagree about the full humanity of the Word incarnate, but, in Theodoret's view, Eranistes fails to protect the divine nature from mutation or contamination.

²² This point is made quite explicitly in the prologue, Ettliger, pp. 61-62.

²³ Ettliger, 65.

²⁴ *Ibid.*, 139.33-140.4.

The final dialogue, 'the impassible', cuts, as Frances Young says, 'nearer the bone'²⁵. Clearly Orthodoxus understands that suffering must be attributed to the one Christ, but he recoils at Eranistes' willingness to say that God suffered, even when he does so with qualification. When challenged to explain how he could say this, Eranistes falls back on the old formula of Cyril: 'we say that the Word suffered impassibly'. To this Orthodoxus retorts:

Who in their senses would ever stand for such foolish riddles? No one has ever heard of an impassible passion or an immortal mortality. The impassible has never undergone passion, and what has undergone passion could not possibly be impassible²⁶.

Theodoret simply cannot understand what Eranistes could possibly mean. According to John McGuckin, for Cyril, affirming that the impassible suffered impassibly was his way to 'deliberately (state) both sides of the paradox with equal force and absolute seriousness of intent, refusing to minimize either reality'²⁷. For Theodoret, this could only be a foolish intellectual sloppiness that blasphemed the Trinity and compromised God's transcendence. Theodoret's intellectual commitment to divine impassibility made it impossible for him to rest in the paradox of the incarnation. This, not a deep concern for the history and humanity of Jesus, best accounts for the form and shape of his christology.

Clearly then, the issue of divine impassibility figured prominently in the debate between Cyril and Theodoret in particular and between Alexandrian and Antiochene thought in general. On the one hand, this conclusion does no more than draw attention to a detail of doctrinal history that has already been well-mapped, even if insufficiently explored; the essential contours of the debate remain the same. Still, even though scholars have noted the attention Antiochene thinkers gave to this issue, we have failed to appreciate how close to the center of the debate it actually was. Why? It seems to me that despite our best efforts we always find in ancient texts something that reminds us of ourselves. For years Antiochene christology has appealed to us for the same reason that Antiochene exegesis has appealed to us: it seems to be more attentive to the importance of history, be it the history of the human Jesus or the historical detail of the biblical text. Similarly, to those of us committed to classical theistic statements, Antiochene defense of divine impassibility would seem so obviously correct that its central role in the debate could easily be missed, resulting in a distorted understanding of the debate. Focusing attention on the central role the doctrine of impassibility played in the controversy can help correct this misunderstanding.

While trying to make such a correction we may, of course, be gazing backward in time only to see reflected there the image of how we ourselves have changed. In the last few years, the dominance of the historical critical model

²⁵ Young, p. 282.

²⁶ Ettliger, 218.30-34.

²⁷ McGuckin, p. 185.

has been giving way to a new interest in traditional exegesis and to a more literary approach to ancient texts. Recent studies of patristic exegesis have revealed that classical rhetoric, not historical consciousness, powered the biblical criticism of Diodore, Theodore, and, to a lesser degree, even Theodoret. Cyril's exegesis, which attempted to see the whole Bible as the single narrative of the economy of the Logos, is less constrained by the rule associated with the rhetorical schools, but is no less, and no more, interested in history.

In just this way, I think we must rethink the standard distinction between Antiochene and Alexandrian christology. For the Antiochenes, a prior commitment to the impassibility of God drives their two nature formula. Cyril's christology, on the other hand, develops from the narrative of the economy of the Word, a narrative that implies the Word experienced suffering. The Antiochene position interprets the text in the light of philosophy, the Alexandrian position interprets the philosophy in the light of the text.

When viewed through a more 'post-modern lens', the standard portrait depicting Alexandrian Christology as dominated by philosophical concerns and Antiochene thought as dominated by historical concerns is turned upside down. The Antiochenes, not the Alexandrians, both in their exegesis and in their christology, are the theologians more firmly ensconced in philosophy. As modern theology becomes more interested in the hermeneutics of narrative²⁸ and less interested in 'salvation history'²⁹ it seems to me inevitable that Alexandrian thought will be more and more attractive. I think the time is long past for a renewed appreciation for the depth of the Alexandrian christological vision.

²⁸ For an interesting example of this see D. Burton-Christie, *The Word in the Desert: Scripture and the Quest for Holiness in Early Christian Monasticism* (New York, 1993), pp. 3-32. Cf. D. Dawson, *Allegorical Readers and Cultural Revision in Ancient Alexandria* (Berkeley, California, 1992).

²⁹ 'Salvation History' is an important theme in Grillmeier's *Christ in Christian Tradition*, and his reading of the source material is heavily influenced by his commitment to it; see, for example, vol. 1, 33, 95, 102, 308, 554.

John Moschus as a Source for the Lives of St. Symeon and St. Andrew the Fools

José Simón PALMER, Barcelona

It has been pointed out¹ that some stories from the *Spiritual Meadow* (henceforth, *Pratum*)², the well-known ascetic work written by John Moschus in the second or third decade of the seventh century, consist of a narrative development of certain *Apophthegmata*. The aim of this paper is to show that there are also stories and motifs in the *Spiritual Meadow* that, in their turn, represent the basis of a later narrative development in Byzantine hagiography. I shall take as examples two of the most original saints' Lives ever written in Byzantium, especially the first one: The *Life of Symeon the Fool*, by Leontius of Neapolis, from the mid-seventh century (henceforth, *VSS*)³, and the *Life of Andrew the Fool*, from the mid-tenth century, according to L. Rydén (henceforth, *VAS*)⁴.

There are two episodes in the second part of *VSS*, where Symeon's deeds and virtues (πράξεις καὶ ἀρεταί) in Emesa are vividly described, which seem to be based on the *Pratum*⁵. The first one is an appearance of Symeon's former

higumen, Nikon (155.4 ff.). We learn that Symeon asked for his help every time the demon of fornication assailed him in the desert, 'so that he (*sc.* Nikon) would relieve him from the battle with unchastity' (ἵνα κουφίση αὐτὸν ἐκ τοῦ πολέμου τῆς πορνείας, 155.6). One day Nikon appeared to him and, after smiling, took some water from the holy Jordan and put it beneath Symeon's navel (ὑποκάτω τοῦ ὀμφαλοῦ, 155.10), while making the sign of the cross. From that moment on, the saint did not experience further 'bodily arousal' (κίνησις σωματική, 155.12). This miracle was very important for his activity as a 'holy fool' in Emesa, because, thanks to it, he was able to consort with loose women without being sexually aroused (148 f.; 154 f.).

The origin of this episode seems to be John the Baptist's appearance to Conon in the *Pratum* (chap. 3), the scene being the same: near the Jordan river. Conon is a priest who, in spite of having the responsibility of administering baptism in his monastery⁶, has withdrawn from his community, because every time he tries to anoint a beautiful woman he feels sexually aroused. John the Baptist tells him in a gentle voice to go back to his community, promising 'to relieve him from his struggle' (κουφίσω σε τοῦ πολέμου, 2856, A6; see also 2853, D4-5). Then he makes him sit down, strips him of his clothes and makes the sign of the cross three times beneath his navel (ὑποκάτω τοῦ ὀμφαλοῦ, 2856, A11-12). Thanks to this, Conon can safely return to his monastery, where he anoints and baptises many women until his death, without suffering any physical arousal (μήτε κινηθεῖς τὸ σῶμα, 2856, B5).

The motif of the miraculous salvation of an innocent man condemned to the gallows, which was very popular in the iconography and literature of the Middle Ages, can be found already in a preliminary stage in the *Pratum* (ch. 72, 2924, D1-2925, B10)⁷. Here an old pagan commits a murder and, when captured, falsely accuses a Christian young man of being his accomplice. The innocent man is condemned to die at the gallows with the old man, but, when the soldiers are hanging the pagan, a horseman (ἰδοὺ καβαλλάριος...) sent by the prefect arrives and tells the soldiers to release the young man (2925, B1-4).

In *VSS* (159.16 ff.) John the deacon is also falsely accused of murder and condemned to the gallows, but when he is about to be hanged (the verb used here is φουρκίζω, as in the *Pratum*)⁸, Symeon's prayers are heard. Some horsemen (ἰδοὺ καβαλλάριοι...) arrive and order John's release because the true murderers have been discovered (160.5). It is remarkable that Moschus

¹ Vid. R. Maisano, 'Tradizione orale e sviluppi narrativi nel *Prato* di Giovanni Mosco', *BBGG* xxxviii (1984), p. 11.

² John Moschus, *Pratum Spirituale*, PG lxxxvii, ter., 2847-3116. For the supplementary chapters, vid. Ph. Pattenden, 'The Text of the *Pratum Spirituale*', *JThSt*, N.S., xxvi (1975), p. 39.

³ References to Vita S. Symeonis Sali are by page and line of L. Rydén's edition, *Das Leben des heiligen Narren Symeon* (Uppsala, 1963), reproduced with a simplified apparatus in Léontios de Néapolis, *Vie de Syméon le Fou et Vie de Jean de Chypre*, ed. A.-J. Festugière (Paris, 1974). On Symeon as an *alter Christus* and an *alter Diogenes* at the same time, vid. D. Krueger, *Symeon the Holy Fool: Leontius' Life and the Late Antique City* (Berkeley, California, to appear in 1996).

⁴ L. Rydén's edition of *VAS* not yet being published, references to Vita S. Andreae Sali are by column nos. of PG. cxi, 627-888. On the date of *VAS*, vid. L. Rydén, 'The Date of the *Life of Andreas Salos*', *DOP* xxxii (1978), pp. 127-155; for C. Mango the most likely time of composition is between 674 and 695, vid. 'The Life of Andrew the Fool Reconsidered', *RSBS* ii (1982) (*Miscellanea A. Pertusi*, vol. ii), p. 309.

⁵ For parallels of language and content between the *Pratum* and *VSS*, see L. Rydén, *Bemerkungen zum Leben des heiligen Narren Symeon von Leontios von Neapolis* (Uppsala, 1970), pp. 39, 48, 55, 87, 91 fn. 1, 113, 129, 131 and esp. 111 and 117-8; see also A.-J. Festugière, *op. cit.*, pp. 172, 185, 192, 196, etc. A 'holy fool' appears in the *Pratum*, ch. 111 (2976, A13, B1: σαλός). As for Emesa, it is remarkable that in a story attributed to Moschus by F. Nau (*ROC* vii (1902), p. 605) and published by L. Clugnet (*ROC* x (1905), pp. 51-54), this city is the scene of a nightmare. It appears crowded with horrible Ethiopians who celebrate a wedding with trumpets, kettle-drums and castanets.

⁶ Very little is known of Conon's monastery of Penthoucla. It was near the Jordan river (vid. Th. Nissen, 'Unbekannte Erzählungen aus dem *Pratum Spirituale*', *BZ* xxxviii (1938), p. 368.26) and not far from Jericho (*Pratum* 14, 2861, C5).

⁷ Vid. B. de Gaiffier, 'Un thème hagiographique: le pendu miraculeusement sauvé', *Revue belge d'archéologie et d'histoire de l'art* xiii (1943), pp. 123-148. The presence of the miraculous element is more evident in B. de Gaiffier's examples.

⁸ *Pratum* 72, 2924, D10-11; 2925, B1; *VSS* 159.20, 24 and 160.5.

and Leontius are, with the historian Evagrius, the only examples quoted in Lampe's *Patristic Lexikon* for the noun *καβαλλάριος* (s.v., 2)⁹.

We can thus conclude that it seems very probable that Leontius used the *Pratum* not only (as O. Kresten has shown)¹⁰ in the *Life of John the Almsgiver*, which he conceived as a supplement to the biography of this Patriarch written by Moschus and Sophronius¹¹, but also in *VSS*.

* * *

When the author of *VAS* described the first vision of his saint (633, A8-637, A1), which determined his vocation as a 'holy fool', he probably had in mind chapter 66 of the *Pratum* (2917, A/B)¹². We learn here that a monk called Theodosius decided to become a hermit after having a vision of a struggle between the devil, represented by a gigantic ugly Ethiopian, and himself. The struggle takes place in a theatre crowded on one side with Ethiopians dressed in black, and on the other with distinguished spectators dressed in white. A young man of resplendent appearance encourages Theodosius to fight against the giant, then helps him to obtain the victory and eventually gives him the crown. The mass of Ethiopians disappears moaning and groaning, while the other faction acclaims Theodosius¹³.

All these elements are present in Andrew's vision, which is much more detailed: the fight in a theatre against the devil, represented by a terrible, gigantic Ethiopian; the two factions of black and white spectators; the handsome young man who encourages the new David to fight against the new Goliath (cf. I Sam. 17), and then helps him to obtain the crown; the sudden disappearance of the Ethiopians and the acclamation of the winner by his distinguished supporters, dressed in white. The end of the vision, however, is completely new in *VAS*: the young man, that is, Christ, promises Andrew the wealth of the heavens if he runs the 'beautiful race' of the *ἄσκησις* naked (cf.

I *Ep. Ti.* 6,12; *Ep. Hebr.* 12,1) and becomes a 'holy fool' for his sake (*σαλός δι' ἐμέ*, 636, D9).

The origin of the grave robber episode in *VAS* (744, C1-748, B13) is also to be found in the *Pratum*. In *VAS* the young daughter of a rich couple dies and a robber follows the cortège (*ἐξόδιον*, 744, C10) to find out where she is going to be buried. At night he breaks into the tomb and strips the corpse of the outer garments; but at the last moment, when he is about to leave, the devil persuades him to take the shroud (*ὀθόνη*, 745, C1-2, D4; 748, A2) as well, thus leaving the body completely naked. At this stage, the dead girl comes to life and slaps him in the face, leaving him blinded. After reproaching him severely for his misdeed, she puts all her funereal garments on and lies down again to sleep forever.

The Bollandist C. Van der Vorst pointed out at the beginning of the century that this story is based on chapters 77 and 78 of the *Pratum*, although he did not specify in what measure¹⁴. The author of *VAS* takes from chapter 77 (2932, B2-C17) the reference to the following of the cortège (*ἐξόδιον*, B9) by the grave robber, the plunder of the shroud (*ὀθόνη*, B14, C2,4) at the last moment, the blindness of the bandit caused by the hand of the resurrected victim and the telling of the story by the grave robber himself; from chapter 78 (2933, C1-2936, C8), the reference to the sex, age, and social condition of the deceased person, the moral exhortation of the naked young girl and her recovery of the funereal garments¹⁵.

* * *

The fact that the authors of both *Lives* had recourse to the *Pratum* as a source of inspiration for their stories shows that Moschus' work was highly appreciated, not only from the religious point of view — especially because of his defence of the dogma of Chalcedon and the worship of the icons of the Virgin and the saints —¹⁶, but also because of its literary value. The intrigue and the astonishing, often macabre content of some of its stories, the detailed descriptions of the *μονομαχία* or single combat that some monks wage against

¹⁴ Vid. *AB* xxxii (1913), p. 80, in a review of Sara Murray, *A Study of the Life of Andreas, the Fool for the Sake of Christ* (Borna-Leipzig, 1910), as noted by L. Rydén, 'The Life of Basil the Younger and the Date of the Life of St. Andreas Salos', in *Okeanos: Essays Presented to Ihor Ševčenko on His Sixtieth Birthday*, ed. C. Mango, O. Pritsak (*HUKSt.* vii; Cambridge, Mass., 1984), p. 582, fn. 54. See also J. Grosdidier de Matons, 'Les thèmes d'édification dans la Vie d'André Salos', *TM* iv (1970), p. 319 and fn. 173.

¹⁵ As L. Rydén observed, in the *Pratum* the dead body is buried outside the city, according to antique custom, whereas in *VAS* it is in a chapel located in the vineyard of a *προάστειον*. *VAS* reflects thus 'Middle Byzantine circumstances', vid. L. Rydén, 'The Life of Basil...', 582. On the 'motif itinérant' of the grave robber, vid. I. Ševčenko, 'L'Agiografia bizantina dal IV al IX sec.', in *La civiltà bizantina dal IV al IX secolo* (Bari, 1977), p. 105.

¹⁶ J. Simón Palmer, *op. cit.*, pp. 317-27.

⁹ Vid. J. Simón Palmer, 'Latinismos en el léxico del *Pratum spirituale* de Juan Mosco', in *Oriente y Occidente en la Edad Media*, ed. P. Bádenas, J.M. Egea (Vitoria, 1993), pp. 9-21.

¹⁰ Vid. O. Kresten, 'Leontios von Neapolis als Tachygraf? Hagiographische Texte als Quellen zu Schriftlichkeit und Buchkultur im 6. und 7. Jahrhundert', *Scrittura e civiltà* i (1977), pp. 161-2 and 170 fn. 45; see also A.-J. Festugière, *op. cit.*, pp. 597-99.

¹¹ As expressed in the Greek title of Leontius' *Vita S. Ioannis Eleemosynarii* (Εἰς τὰ λειπόμενα τοῦ βίου..., ed. Festugière, p. 342.1) and explained in the prologue (p. 342.30 ff.). Vid. C. Mango, 'A Byzantine Hagiographer at Work: Leontios of Neapolis', in *Byzanz und der Westen*, ed. I. Hutter (Vienna, 1984), pp. 33-35. The first fifteen chapters of the *Life* by Moschus and Sophronius have been edited by H. Delehay, *AB* xlv (1927), p. 5 ff. An epitome from another manuscript has been published by E. Lappa-Zizicas, *AB* lxxxviii (1970), pp. 265-278.

¹² Vid. L. Rydén, *Bemerkungen...*, p. 26, and C. Mango, 'The Life of St. Andrew...', p. 299.

¹³ On the Ethiopians in the *Pratum*, cf. J. Simón Palmer, *El monacato oriental en el Pratum Spirituale de Juan Mosco* (Madrid, 1993), p. 361 (reviewed by H. Chadwick, *JThS*, N.S., xlv (1994), pp. 759-60).

the devil in the desert, the use of the ἀπροσδόκητον or the unexpected, and, in short, Moschus' art as story-teller, are probably some of the keys to the extraordinary popularity of the *Pratum*, both in Eastern and Western Christendom¹⁷.

Vision of God according to Theodoret of Cyrus

J.L. STEWARDSON, Adrian, Mich.

What does one actually see when one is said 'to see' or 'to have a vision' of God? Theodoret of Cyrus deals with this question when as an exegete he must explain the prophets' accounts of their visions. His distinctive explanations of the prophetic oracles take us to the very heart of his Antiochene theology. According to the Bishop of Cyrus, there are no visions of the nature or essence of God itself; it is indeed impossible for a creature, heavenly or human, to behold God as he is. What the prophets saw in their visionary experiences were divine creations which accommodated their human limitations. Such a view is part and parcel of the Antiochene School's metaphysical framework which features a fundamental duality between God and creation. This is a point that Günter Koch has underscored as the basis for the 'problematic' of Antiochene theology¹.

Theodoret's interpretation of Biblical visions of God may be seen primarily in several of his works such as the early apologetic work *Graecarum affectionum curatio* written before 431 A.D., several commentaries on prophetic books written in the 440's, and in his main Christological work entitled *Eranistes* written in 447-448 A.D.

In his apology Theodoret says that although God could have displayed his power openly, he showed the justice of his providence by revealing himself in ways which the limited capacities of humans could understand. Since they were not able to comprehend the divine nature itself, God made 'appearances commensurate with (or proportionate to) those who saw' (ζυμμέτρους τοῖς ὁρῶσι τὰς ἐπιφανείας)². Theodoret's concept of vision appears more clearly in his interpretation of the prophet's temple vision in Isaiah 6:1. The prophet's description of the Lord on the throne does not mean, says Theodoret, that the prophet saw the nature of the Lord. He goes on to say that the prophet 'witnessed to the different forms of the visions (τὰ διάφορα τῶν ὁφείων σχήματα), since no one has ever seen the divine nature. For he was seen in one manner by Abraham and in another manner by Moses, in (yet) a different manner by Micah and in another manner by Daniel, and indeed Ezekiel saw another

¹ Günter Koch, *Strukturen und Geschichte des Heils in der Theologie des Theodoret von Kyros* (FTS, 17; Frankfurt am Main, 1974) pp. 64-69, 232-235, 257-260.

² Théodoret de Cyr, *Thérapeutique des maladies helléniques*, ed. Pierre Canivet Vol. I (SC, 57; Paris, 1958) p. 282, no. 79.

¹⁷ Vid. H. Chadwick, 'John Moschus and His Friend Sophronius the Sophist', *JThSt.*, N.S., XXV, Pt. 1 (1974) p. 41 ff. On the editions of the *Prado espiritual* in Spain, cf. J. Simón Palmer, *op. cit.*, pp. 62-78.

form (ἕτερον ... σχῆμα). Theodoret hastens to clarify this statement by indicating that God is not polymorphous but is invisible, formless, uncompounded, simplex, unseen and unattainable. 'For as he (God) desires he forms visions' (σχηματίζει τὰς ὄψεις)³. Such a passage leads Jean-Noël Guinot in his *Sources chrétiennes* edition of the Isaiah Commentary to say that such an explanation of visions is 'almost a "topos" in the exegesis of Theodoret'⁴.

The same concept of vision and similar phraseology crops up in other commentaries such as the *Commentary on Ezekiel*. Commenting on the phrase in 1:5 — 'and in the midst as a likeness of four living beings' — Theodoret says: 'For he (the prophet) did not simply say that he saw four living beings nor indeed the likeness (ὁμοίωμα) of living beings, but "as a likeness of four living beings"; thus it is to be clear that the marvelous prophets did not behold the very natures (αὐτὰς ... τὰς φύσεις) of the invisible ones but certain likenesses (εἰκόσματα) and figures in relief (ἐκτυπώματα) shown by the munificent one to each need (χρεία); therefore he speaks to us of the forms (σχήματα) of the living beings seen by him'⁵.

Elsewhere in this commentary Theodoret touches on the same cluster of ideas involving human weakness, divine transcendence, and God's use of forms to create visions⁶. The Bishop of Cyrus constantly stresses that these visions are *not* revelations of God's nature or essence. 'Everywhere the divine prophet portrays the likeness (ὁμοίωμα) teaching us to view a certain sketch (σκιαγραφίαν) of the divine and not the nature of the invisible itself'⁷. At the beginning of chapter two, he makes this point again very strongly⁸.

The commentaries on Daniel, Hosea, and Zechariah express the same understanding of prophetic visions in much the same language. In Daniel 7:9-10 which speaks of the vision of the Ancient of Days, the God who is formless and uncircumscribed is said to 'fashion visions many times suitable to the use

³ Théodoret de Cyr, *Commentaire sur Isaïe*, Vol. I (sections 1-3), ed. Jean-Noël Guinot (SC, 276; Paris, 1980), p. 254.

⁴ *Ibid.*, pp. 258-259.

⁵ PG 81, 824C.

⁶ a.) PG 81, 832C διὰ τὴν φύσεως ἀσθένειαν (on Ez. 1:26); 832D-833A χρεῖαν (on Ez. 1:27-28), 833D.

b.) 833D 'When therefore you hear of the different visions of God, do not understand the divine as having many forms. For (it is) completely bodiless (ἀσώματον) and formless (ἀνειδειον), simple (ἁπλοῦν), uncompounded (ἀσύνθετον), shapeless (ἀσχημάτιστον), invisible (ἀόρατον), unseen (ἀθέατον), and circumscribed by no limit (οὐδενὶ περιγραφόμενον ὄρω)'; 832C.

c.) 832A ὁμοίωμα, σκιαγραφίαν; 832B εἰκόνοσ; 832C εἶδος; 832D-833A ὁμοίωμα; 836C-D σχηματίσας τὴν ὄψιν. Also vide supra 824C: εἰκόσματα, ἐκτυπώματα, σχήματα.

⁷ 832A.

⁸ Commenting on the phrase in verse one 'This is the vision of the likeness of the glory of the Lord', Theodoret says: 'And he (Ezekiel) did not say this is the nature of the Lord, nor the glory of the Lord, but "a vision of a likeness of the glory of the Lord". For thus he (God) willed, he said, when he (God) shaped the vision, he made me worthy of the spectacle'. 836-D.

(χρήσιμον) as he chooses'⁹. A key text for Theodoret is the prophetic oracle in Hosea 12:10 in which God says: 'And I spoke to the prophets, and I multiplied visions, and in the hands of the prophets I was compared'¹⁰. Part of this text also appears in quotation in the commentaries on Isaiah and Zechariah¹¹. Clearly the Bishop of Cyrus sees this text as a substantiation for his understanding of the phenomenon of prophetic vision. He paraphrases his understanding of the passage in God's words, saying: 'I also used different revelations not showing my nature (for it is invisible) but fashioning the spectacle in relief suitable to the need. For I was not seen by all in the same way'¹². Citing the passage from Hosea 12:10 in the Daniel Commentary, Theodoret wants to make clear that God said 'I was compared' (or I was made a comparison — ὁμοιώθην) by the prophets, not 'I was seen' (ὄφθην)¹³. Even the invisible powers which were seen by the prophet Zechariah in the vision of the man and the horses (1:8-11) were not seen in their natures. 'But it was not their natures which are seen, for they are bodiless; but according to each need, the Lord of these things and of all things fashions in relief (ἐκτυποῖ) the contemplation of them. And this the divine Scripture wisely teaches us, by giving a glimpse of the difference of their forms'¹⁴.

Theodoret's explanation of the phenomenon of vision in these passages accounts for the differences in the experiences of various Old Testament worthies. In fact, in each text cited, he gives a short list of names, each of which contains most of the same persons: Abraham, Moses, Micah, Daniel, Ezekiel, Isaiah¹⁵. However, lest one draw the wrong conclusion from these varied visions, Theodoret is quick to make clear that the differences in each case do not mean that the Divine is polymorphous¹⁶.

Turning to the Christological dialogue *Eranistes* written in 447-448 A.D., we see that the Bishop of Cyrus has recourse to an explanation of visions of God again, this time to maintain his dyophysite Christology against his monophysite opponent. In reply to scriptural references which speak of persons seeing God, Theodoret's mouthpiece Orthodoxus replies: 'They saw what it was possible for them to see'. Citing John 1:18 'no one has ever seen God', he goes on to say 'they did not see the divine nature but certain visions conformed to their capability (ὄψεις τινὰς τῆ σφῶν δυνάμει συμμέτρους)'. Even the angels of

⁹ *In Danielis*, PG 81, 1421B-C.

¹⁰ *In Osee*, PG 81, 1620C-D.

¹¹ *Commentaire sur Isaïe*, T. I, p. 258; *In Zachariae*, PG 81, 1880C-D.

¹² *In Osee*, 1620C-D.

¹³ 1412C-D.

¹⁴ *In Zachariae*, PG 81, 1880C-D. A few lines further he stresses that things seen in various prophetic visions are actually 'bodiless intelligible natures' (ἀσώματοι αἱ νοηταὶ φύσεις).

¹⁵ *Commentaire sur Isaïe*, T. I, p. 256 — Abraham, Moses, Micah, Daniel, Ezekiel; PG 81, *In Dan.*, 1421 B.C. — Moses, Isaiah, Ezekiel; *In Osee*, 1620C-D Hosea, Daniel, Ezekiel, Isaiah, Micah, Moses, Abraham; *In Zach.*, 1880C-D — Daniel, Ezekiel, Isaiah, Micah.

¹⁶ *Comm. sur Isaïe*, T. I, p. 258.

Matt. 18:10 who are said to see the face of the father do not see the divine essence but rather 'a certain glory commensurate with their nature'¹⁷. The reference in I Timothy 3:16 to the one 'who was manifested in the flesh, justified in the spirit, seen by angels', etc. is taken to refer to the *incarnate* Lord who is visible, since the divine nature is invisible¹⁸. When Stephen at his martyrdom saw the Son of Man standing at the right hand of God (Acts 7:56), what he saw was 'the visible not the invisible nature'¹⁹. Thus when the Apostle Paul speaks of finally 'seeing face to face' in I Cor. 13:12, he means: 'we will not see his unseen nature invisible to everyone, but that nature taken from us'²⁰.

What we see in these passages is how Theodoret's theory of visions is parallel with — and indeed undergirds — his Christological dualism. As the forms of the Biblical visions convey divine reality indirectly, so Christ's visible human nature conveys divine reality also indirectly. What is divine in Christ remains unchangeably divine; what is human remains human²¹.

Theodoret's understanding of the nature of visions is by no means an original idea with him. The concept has roots deep in the tradition of Antiochene theology. A very brief comparison with one work by John Chrysostom proves this point. Chrysostom's *On the Incomprehensible Nature of God* is a series of five homilies which he delivered in Antioch during 386 A.D.²². The theme of these homilies is that God cannot be seen or comprehended by any of his creatures, not even by heavenly beings. God can only be known by the divine Son and Holy Spirit. This argument, of course, is directed against the Anomoeans who claim to be able to grasp and define the essence of God²³.

¹⁷ Theodoret of Cyrus, *Eranistes*, ed. Gerard H. Ettliger (Oxford, 1975), p. 75.28-29; δόξαν τινά τῆ αὐτῶν φύσει συμμετρομένην (p. 76.2-3). Later in the dialogue Theodoret hearkens back to Isaiah's vision with slightly different wording: 'The prophet of God did not see the essence of God itself but a certain vision which corresponded (συμβαίνουσιν) to his capability (or power-δυνάμει)' p. 150.4.

¹⁸ *Ibid.*, p. 73.26-27.

¹⁹ *Ibid.*, p. 150.13-14.

²⁰ *Interpretatio epist. I ad Cor.*, PG 82, 336D-337A.

²¹ For Theodoret even the resurrection body of Christ remains a body with bodily characteristics, even though it is glorified, incorruptible, and impassible. *Eranistes*, p. 260.2-14; p. 148.15ff.; p. 149. Also Ep. 146, 'To the Monks of Constantinople' in Théodoret de Cyr, *Correspondance*, T. III, ed. Y. Azéma (SC 111; Paris, 1965) p. 184. The resurrection body of Christ remains a major problem for Theodoret's theological consistency, namely, his concern to maintain a sharp distinction between the divine and human natures. J.L. Stewardson, *The Christology of Theodoret of Cyrus According to his Eranistes* (Diss., Northwestern University, 1972) pp. 273-280. As Günter Koch says, salvation comes through the *human* part of Christ; *Strukturen und Geschichte des Heils*, pp. 238-240.

²² Jean Chrysostome, *Sur l'incompréhensibilité de Dieu*, T. 1 (Hom. I-V), 2^e ed., intro. de Jean Daniélou, Texte crit. et notes de Anne-Marie Malingrey, trad. de Robert Flacelière (SC 28 bis; Paris, 1970) pp. 92-322; St. John Chrysostom, *On the Incomprehensible Nature of God*, trans. by Paul Harkins (FC 12; Washington, D.C., 1984) pp. 22-23.

²³ I refer primarily to Homily III which condenses his thoughts about visions. *Sur l'incompréhensibilité de Dieu*, p. 190.53-59; p. 208.266-268. See also Homily V — pp. 272-276, 290-292, 298, etc.

In the case of Isaiah's vision, Chrysostom says in Homily III that the seraphim covered their faces because they could not endure looking at God. 'And indeed they did not see the pure light itself nor the unmixed essence itself, but that which was seen was a συγκατάβασις (a condescension or accommodation). But what is a συγκατάβασις? When God appears not as he is, but as one is able to see him, like as he is, thus he may show himself, measuring out to the weakness of those who see the exhibition of the vision'²⁴. It is clear from the words, says Chrysostom, that Isaiah saw exactly such a condescension, for to say that the Lord was seated on a throne is a 'configuration' (σχηματισμός). 'So even if you hear the prophet saying, "I saw the Lord", do not suspect that he saw that very essence, but the condescension itself and more indistinctly than the powers above, for he was not able to see as well as the cherubim'²⁵. The rest of Homily III attempts to explain the visionary accounts of Daniel and Ezekiel, making use of the idea of vision as accommodation to human weakness.

The parallels in thought and vocabulary on the subject of visions between Theodoret and Chrysostom should be obvious. However, the dominant term in Chrysostom συγκατάβασις (condescension) is not found in the passage of Theodoret's which we have examined. The only reference I have found using a related word with similar meaning is in the *Eranistes*; in this case the participle of συμβαίνω — συμβαίνουσιν — which means that the vision is 'fitting' or 'corresponding to' the prophet's capability²⁶. For Chrysostom the term συγκατάβασις is the chief expression which explains what God does in creating a vision. Theodoret uses different terms to convey the same idea, except that his focus is more on the actual forms, models, or images featured in the visions. Chrysostom's term stresses more the act of God in reaching *down* to humans beings, but it also refers obliquely to the content of the vision.

It is clear that Theodoret's concept of a vision of God is indebted to the great Chrysostom and most likely to other patristic forbears as well²⁷.

²⁴ *Ibid.*, p. 200.

²⁵ *Ibid.*, p. 200. For other passages containing the word συγκατάβασις: Hom. IV, p. 128.314-315; Hom. III, p. 212.308 (ref. to Ez. 1:4-28); p. 314.332; Hom. IV, p. 234.79-82 (ref. to Ez. 1:28); pp. 242-244.181-185; p. 246.228-234. The verb συγκαταβαίνω is used with the same meaning: Hom. IV, p. 244.191-192 (Hosea 12:11), p. 246.228-233; Hom. V, p. 288.198-200.

²⁶ *Eranistes*, p. 150.3-4. Two other passages apply the term to the correspondence between type and reality in the history of salvation (209.25; 210.9).

²⁷ Both church fathers use the same array of texts to refer to limitations in human knowledge of God. *Sur l'incompréhensibilité de Dieu*, pp. 274-298 (and elsewhere). Compare Theodoret's *Isaiah Commentary*, previously cited, and his *Interp. epist. I ad Cor.*, PG 82, 332C-D - 337A.

Isidore of Pelusium and the Grammaticus Ophelius

Ursula TREU, Berlin

Isidore of Pelusium was born around 370, probably in Alexandria, and died after 431: the last known date of his life is his letter to the emperor Theodosius II, in which he warns him against disorder during the Council of Constantinople. Isidore studied in Alexandria and later became priest in Pelusium, a harbour in the East-Delta of the Nile, half way between Jerusalem and Alexandria. From there he was expelled by the bishop Eusebius, a Monophysite, and his supporters. Isidore went then into a monastery in the mountains in the hinterland, where he lived till his death. There, he was an important person, but he was not abbot. Nothing is known about his family: whether he was a Christian from birth, as for instance Origen was, or was baptized later in his life, like Clement.

He does not belong to the group of eminent church-fathers in his time, such as for instance the Cappadocians, the Alexandrines or John Chrysostom with his friends. He is not first of all a theologian, but more a parish priest, who has always to care for his sheep: but this function alone cannot give a true picture of him.

In contrast to the Orthodox churches, where Isidore is a saint and a bishop of importance, to us he is mainly known through his letters. He wrote no books as far as we know, he left no homilies, but a big collection of letters, from which more than 2,000 are preserved: there must have been more than 3,000 in all. More than 300 people are known by name, who received one or more letters: a great number of letters are without any name of the recipient. The only edition till now is that in the Patrology of Migne, from 1855, which goes back to the seventeenth century. A new edition is being prepared by Dr Éviéux. The letters are divided into 5 books of different size. Their sequence is in chaos: Dr Éviéux has tried to put them in order. But without a new edition of the letters the new order is of little use.

The letters are very different in length, from two lines to 4 columns (Migne). The name of the addressee is given in the beginning of the letter, if there is an addressee; often a letter begins without. Sometimes there is an indication of his position or status, for instance, bishop, deacon, soldier, and so on. Isidore himself names two single writings of his own, which may possibly be identified with two extremely long letters: if not, they must have been lost.

There is no time to speak about technicalities, as for writing — or maybe dictating? — copying and sending letters, of such a different size too. Remember:

there was no official postage except the imperial one. Therefore it must be enough to know that letters could be written and received by the addressees.

Isidore was well educated. He was a good theologian; he knew the books of the fathers by heart and liked to quote them. But he also knew the works of Greek literature and philosophy and quoted them also. The list of authors he quotes is very long, and not all his quotations have been identified. As was usual, he does not give the name of the author, if he quotes a book, or very rarely. Isidore uses Greek literature in the same way as Christian texts. He corroborates his words with Christian and Hellenic evidence.

Here only a short example of his method can be given. There is a small packet of letters, distributed all over the whole book of his letters, directed to a certain Ophelius, who is mostly called Grammaticus by profession, sometimes also Scholasticus — this means almost the same. Ophelius remains unknown as a person, as is almost always the case with the addressees of Isidore, except such well-known persons as the emperor or the patriarch Cyril, of course. Nothing is said about the life of Ophelius, his whereabouts, or his relations to Isidore. He was an old friend or disciple; he seems to have been a Christian, too.

There are more than 25 letters written to Ophelius. A few of them are too short to be of any use; they have only one sentence. So only 20 letters remain. 9 of them have a Christian character; 11 are written without any trace of it.

Quite unusual for Isidore is one letter (II 42) about his Christian ideal, John Chrysostom. There is first a short eulogy of him; then Isidore quotes a short letter — maybe only part of it — almost as evidence for his words, written by the famous orator and teacher of John, the Greek Libanius, who extols the eloquence of John and concludes with a short summary of Attic rhetoric. This letter is unusual for several reasons: it is the only quotation of a contemporary writer (or nearly contemporary); this letter to Ophelius is written after the death of John († 407), when Libanius had been dead for some years († 393), and the writer's name is given: the praise of a Greek writer is of such a great importance for the Christian Isidore. And this letter shows, like quite a lot of them, the interest of the writer in grammar and philology. In a letter about an exegetic problem (III 31) about the word (and its sense) *πρωτότοκος* that means 'firstborn' (Gen. 4,4; Col. 1,15 'the firstborn of all creatures'), Isidore changes the stress of this word *πρωτότοκος*. This changes also its sense; now it means 'who gives first birth'. As proof of this — very rare — use Isidore gives a verse of the *Iliad* (17,5) where this is said of a mare, also not of a human being. He explains a definite Christian expression with Greek literature.

Isidore writes always as a Christian, of course, but Christian thought is not prominent in the letters to Ophelius. So he gives him, for instance (III 97) advice for a coming discussion with a Jew, what Biblical text shall be used (Num. 18,15). Here he is surely answering a request of Ophelius, how to proceed.

In an exegetic letter (IV 162) about Ex. 12,11 'you must eat in urgent haste', Isidore refers to a piece of Isocrates (*ad Dem.* 1,1). Isidore likes Isocrates very much, and most of all his works the treatise to Demonicus for its pedagogic value. He could not know that this treatise was not written by Isocrates at all, but put later into the *Corpus Isocrateum*.

Another letter to Ophelius defines the three steps of philosophy: *πρακτική*, *λογική*, *θεωρητική*, but for Isidore the peak of philosophy is *εὐσέβεια*, 'piety' as a Christian quality (II 201). As this shows, here again is a mixture of Greek literature and Christian thought.

In two short letters to Ophelius, Isidore declares *αἰτιολογία* as most important for history and for contemplation (V 430; 544): he was never afraid to repeat himself, but he did it mostly in a different way.

Some letters deal exclusively with grammatical questions, the necessity of a concise style (for instance V 133) and the right way of speaking (V 121).

A longer letter (II 273) speaks about problems which cannot be solved by the human mind. But this must not trouble you, because this does not matter at all. The only important thing is what is necessary for the salvation of men. It does not matter how the sky is formed, if it is a sphere or an hemisphere, how the stars are moving, how the earth is formed — all these questions are of no use. Justice, courage, understanding, self-control, that is what brings real happiness. This could mean a direct negation of the science of this time as it was taught in Alexandria. In one most personal letter to Ophelius (III 70) Isidore complains, as he often does in letters to other addressees, about the evil deeds of Zosimus, who is the right hand man of the bishop Eusebius of Pelusium, the most bitter enemy Isidore ever had. In this letter Isidore bases his complaints on a quotation of the *Odyssey* (XII 238/39). His quotation is not quite correct, but we have to remember that most quotations did not come out of books, but from memory. But the sentences, used by Isidore in wrath and grief are very sophisticated, his style here is very rhetorical. It is clear that the person to whom he is writing is a man of especially high erudition, but also of friendly attitude and kind interest. As this letters shows, Ophelius is very well instructed about Isidore's long fight against the bad bishop and his bad clergy of Pelusium. It seems likely that Ophelius was not only addressee, but a real friend, maybe a fellow-student of old time in Alexandria. None of Isidore's letters let us know anything about his personal life.

There are also some letters to Ophelius about special problems of the Christian community, as (V 517) about the danger for the Christians of going to the theatre or the hippodrome, not a new problem at all, and surely not a warning for Ophelius personally. Isidore wishes not so much to warn the Christians against plays or performances because they were things of the heathen and irreligious. This was self-evident and people did know this. But people are losing their dignity, their self-esteem at such things — and maybe laughing at them.

In another letter to Ophelius (V 200) Isidore speaks against the use of jewellery by women. He does not begin explaining this from the Bible, where plenty of examples are to be found, but from the history of Sparta, where the law forbade the use of jewellery for honest women. It was only allowed for prostitutes and loose women, who tried to catch young men. But a biblical explanation follows in the same letter (I. Tim. 2,9). It might astonish you, but this small survey of letters to Ophelius as a single person is a survey also — in a very small way, of course — of the whole corpus of Isidore's letters. Nearly all his themes are to be found in these letters to Ophelius.

The Earliest Slavonic Translations of John Chrysostom

Andrius VALEVIČIUS, Sherbrooke

After excellent advances during the second half of the 19th century, the work of studying patristic texts in Slavonic translation and of compiling descriptive catalogues has experienced a sixty-year interruption in this century. In Russia alone, there are thousands of patristic texts in Slavonic translation and until recently, very little scholarly research had been done on them. Tat'jana Čertorickaja in the Introduction to her catalogue of Old Church Slavonic homilies¹ offers some reasons for this delay:

... the great number of manuscripts and their dispersion over the immense territory of Russia, the Balkans and Western Europe, and secondly, the fact that these manuscripts are in the museums and archives of Slavic states where, for a long time, conditions for the study of old texts were not favourable and where manuscripts of a patristic, theological, or of a general religious content were not compatible with the common ideology and were not considered to be a part of science or culture².

A first combined catalogue was published in 1984 covering the 11th to 13th centuries³. It was twenty-four years in the making. Further catalogues covering up to the 18th century are planned and the catalogue covering the 14th-15th centuries is near publication, but this is still only touching the tip of the iceberg, since relatively little textual work or critical editions have appeared considering the large number of manuscripts. Notwithstanding, some excellent work has been done such as the edition of the *Uspenskij sbornik*⁴ which is noted in the *Clavis Patrum Graecorum*⁵ or the *Izbornik of 1076*⁶, a compilation of texts with

¹ Tat'jana Čertorickaja, *Vorläufiger Katalog kirchenslavischer Homilien des beweglichen Jahreszyklus. Aus Handschriften des 11. - 16. Jahrhunderts vorwiegend ostslavischer Provenienz* (Abhandlungen der Nordrhein-Westfälischen Akademie der Wissenschaften Band 91. Patristica Slavica Band 1; Opladen, 1994).

² *Ibid.*, p. 33.

³ *Сводный каталог славяно-русских рукописных книг хранящихся в СССР 11-13 вв.* С.О. Шмидт (главный редактор) (Москва, 1984).

⁴ *Успенский сборник 12-13 вв.*, О.А. Князевская, В.Г. Демянов, М.В. Ляпон (Москва, 1971).

⁵ Maurice Geerard, editor, vol. II (Turnhout, 1974).

⁶ *Изборник 1076 года*, С.И. Котков редактор (Москва, 1965). It has also been published in English translation with a history of the text: *The Edificatory Prose of Kievan Rus'*, translation and introduction by William R. Veder (Harvard Library of Early Ukrainian Literature, English Translations: volume VI; Cambridge, Mass., 1994).

excerpts from Basil the Great, Athanasius of Alexandria and John Chrysostom and for which no Greek equivalent is known.

The work of the pioneers in this field of 'Slavic Patristics' such as M.S. Arkhangel'skii with his *Fathers of the Church in Old Russian Writing*⁷, N.I. Petrov⁸, A.I. Ponomarev⁹ and M.N. Speranskii¹⁰ and others, all 19th century authors, almost drifted into oblivion until Evgenia Granstrem dared to call for a return to pre-Revolutionary scholarship in her 1970 article 'Byzantine Manuscript Heritage in Old Slavic-Russian Literature'¹¹ and her 1974 article 'John Chrysostom in Old Russian and South Slavic Manuscripts of the 11th-14th Centuries'¹².

When E. Granstrem called for a return to the study of patristic texts (from the point of view of the Russian cultural and philological heritage), perhaps she chose to concentrate her efforts on John Chrysostom because he is the most important author in Slavonic. In Tat'jana Čertorickaja's *Vorläufiger Katalog*, 1729 texts are indexed of which more than 40% of them are written under the name of John Chrysostom. What E. Granstrem wanted to do was to create an index of John Chrysostom in Slavonic and then separate the Slavonic pseudo-Chrysostom from the authentic Chrysostom and from the pseudo-Chrysostom found in J.-P. Migne¹³ and as listed in J.A. De Aldama¹⁴. Her main interest was in locating and identifying original Russian compositions in order better to understand the history of Old Russian literature. In 1980, as a follow-up to her 1974 article, she published an index of 121 Chrysostom, but not belonging to him¹⁵. Here she attempted to identify the works of Slavic authors such as Clement of Ochrida (9th century), who imitated John Chrysostom quite successfully in style and content, Bishop Cyril of Turov (11th century) and others.

⁷ А.С. Архангельский, *Творение отцов церкви в древне-русской письменности*, 4 вып., Казань, 1889-1890.

⁸ Н.И. Петров, *О происхождении и составе славяно-русского Пролога. Иноземные источники*, Киев, 1875.

⁹ А.И. Пономарев, *Памятники древнерусской Церковно-учительной литературы*, вып. 1-4, СПб., 1894-1898.

¹⁰ М.Н. Сперанский, *Переводные сборники изречений в славяно-русской письменности* (Москва, 1904).

¹¹ Е.Е. Гранстрем, 'Византийское рукописное наследие и древняя славяно-русская литература' in *Пути изучения древнерусской литературы и письменности*, Ленинград, 1970, стр. 141-148.

¹² 'Иоанн Златоуст в древней русской и южнославянской письменности (11-14 вв.)', *ТОДРЛ (Труды отдела древне-русской литературы)* 29 (1974), (Ленинград) стр. 186-193.

¹³ *Patrologia Graeca* (Paris, 1859).

¹⁴ *Repertorium Pseudochrysostomicum*, Éditions du centre national de la recherche scientifique (Paris, 1965).

¹⁵ 'Иоанн Златоуст в древней русской и южнославянской письменности (11-14 вв.)', *ТОДРЛ* 35, (1980), стр.

In the process of searching for old Slavonic compositions E. Granstrem began to put together a remarkable, although incomplete index of John Chrysostom in Slavonic. This index was never published and its existence was not even known until the author of this article discovered it, comprised of some 700 handwritten and typed pages, among the many boxes of Dr. Granstrem's personal archive which was given to the St. Petersburg daughter house of the Institute of History of the Russian Academy of Sciences after her death about three or four years ago. The manuscript is currently being revised and edited for future publication¹⁶.

The sermons of John Chrysostom in manuscripts of the 11th-14th centuries were united into collections called the *Zlatousty* (Chrysostomos), *Zlatostrui* (The Golden Stream), *Zlataja tsep* (The Golden Chain), *Izmaragd* (The Emerald), *Margarit* (The Pearl) and others. The distinction between the *Zlatousty* and the *Izmaragd* is not easily definable. It seems that the first were collections of readings around the Sunday Gospel or on feast days. The second is of a mixed character not having any special systematic content. It seems that they were meant for the private use of the laity in their own homes and not for use in churches¹⁷. The *Zlatostrui* is a collection of 136 Chrysostomian homilies translated in Bulgaria during the reign of Symeon (893-927). This collection of homilies in its compilation does not have a Greek equivalent either. There is reason to believe that Symeon selected the texts himself and then had them translated¹⁸. This collection, originally from the 12th century, contains any extracts from authentic Chrysostom texts (*In epistolam ad Ephesios homilia ii, iii, iv; In epistolam ad Romanos homilia xxiii; In Genesim homilia xiii, Sermo vi in Genesim, In epistolam primam ad Corinthios homilia xi*, and many more) but also a number of unidentified texts for which no Greek original has been found. Today, there is no complete copy of the *Zlatostrui*; it has been pieced together from different versions ranging from the 12th to 17th centuries.

In the *Izbornik of 1076*, the third oldest Slavonic book in existence, there are numerous sentences taken from John Chrysostom. Most are one sentence long quotations integrated into other texts. There are, however, several larger extracts ranging from a paragraph to two pages in length taken from the following works: *De predicatione oratio ii; Homilia 13 in Matthaem; Homilia 86 in Johannem*¹⁹.

In her 1974 publication, E. Granstrem located 82 manuscripts from the 11th-14th centuries containing about 287 homilies. In the 15th century the number

¹⁶ *The Homilies of St. John Chrysostom in Slavonic: Repertoire*, E.E. Granstrem, O.V. Tvorogov and A. Valevičius. Publication is planned by Dmitrij Bulanin Publishing House, St. Petersburg.

¹⁷ Arkhangel'skii, op. cit.

¹⁸ For a complete analysis of the sources of the *Zlatostrui* see Francis J. Thomson, 'Chrysostomica Paleoslavica. A Preliminary Study of the Sources of the Chysorrhoas (Zlatostruy) Collection' in *Cyrillo-Methodianum*, vol. 6 (1982) pgs. 1-65.

¹⁹ For complete information see William R. Veder, *The Edificatory Prose of Kievan Rus'*.

of manuscripts increases greatly with collections of the so-called *Margarit* and *Adriantis* (the *Homiliae 21 de statuis ad populum Antiochenum habitae* CPG 4330) although the *Adriantis* was known to the Slavs well before the 15th century.

Out of these 287 homilies the results were the following: 65 were uncertain texts not bearing the name of any author. From the 222 that remained, 48 were compositions of Russian-Slavic and Bulgarian authors attributed to John Chrysostom, as, for example, Clement of Ochrida; 73 were paraphrased selections from the works of John Chrysostom; 87 were pseudo-Chrysostom homilies known in Greek literature (based on De Aldama); 8 were texts attributed to John Chrysostom due to a mix up of name or due to some other unclear reason. For example, John Chrysostom is sometimes confused with John Damascene or with John, Bishop of Constance and disciple of Epiphanius of Cyprus. John Chrysostom was the Patriarch of Constantinople and John the disciple of Epiphanius was the bishop of Constance which is on Cyprus. Lastly, 6 were authentic compositions of John Chrysostom. They are as follows: *De s. hieromartyre Phoca*²⁰, although the title is 'On Phoca the Dishonest Emperor' who lived 200 years after John Chrysostom, but the text which follows is the right one; *De ligno, an ex eo cognitionem boni et mali Adamus adeptus est (In Genesim sermo VI)*²¹; *De paenitentia homilia II*²²; *Ejusdem oratio de elemosyna, et in decem virgines (De paenitentia homilia III)*²³; *Contra Judeos in tubas paschatis eorum (Adversus Iudaeos orationes IV)*²⁴; and *De justo et beato Iob (In Iob sermones 1-4)*²⁵. Later, in her 1980 publication, Dr. Granstrem added one more authentic Chrysostom homily, *De ss. martyribus*²⁶.

Thus, the Slavs translated even pseudo-Chrysostomian homilies, some texts of which were written by enemies of John Chrysostom such as Severian of Gabala or by heretics such as Nestorius. These texts were part of the standard Byzantine ecclesiastical heritage and no one seems to have known the difference.

As far as selections or extracts from the works of John Chrysostom were concerned, many were prepared by Konstantin Preslavskii (9th-10th century). It is interesting to note that when John Chrysostom is preaching on one or another topic of sacred history on the basis of Sacred Scripture, it is that part of the homily which concerns morality that was translated into Slavonic and the rest was ignored. This is a general fact of Slavonic patristic translations: predominantly moral and social texts were translated and almost nothing of a

²⁰ PG 50, 699-706.

²¹ PG 54, 604-607.

²² PG, 49, 283-292.

²³ PG, 49, 291-300.

²⁴ PG, 48, 871-882.

²⁵ PG, 56, 570-574.

²⁶ PG, 50, 705-712.

speculative or metaphysical nature²⁷. Likewise, in the Symeon's *Zlatostrui*, many of the excerpts from John Chrysostom are of a moral nature. This is obviously the reason for John's popularity among the Slavs, since he was the social and moral preacher 'par excellence'. The Slavs were not as interested in scriptural exegesis as they were in forming a society in accordance with Christian moral teaching, and they were even less interested in the dogmatic debates of the early church, having received Christianity in a 'ready-made form'²⁸. What they needed were practical, pastoral sermons and what they wanted was a 'simple and clear teaching that every Bulgarian could understand'²⁹.

Another theory concerning the popularity of John Chrysostom among the Slavs was proposed by Georgii Kurbatov in 1958 in a most interesting article, 'The Nature of Class in the Teaching of John Chrysostom'³⁰. In it Prof. Kurbatov goes against the commonly held notions about John Chrysostom, from Chrysostomus Baur³¹ to Hans von Campenhausen³², that always portray him as a great defender of the poor, more the saint than the very capable political strategist as Kurbatov sees him. Kurbatov maintains that Chrysostom enjoyed wide popularity among the Slavs because he was a congenial author to the powers that be and therefore, church and state promoted his works above all others. For example, in the homilies *Ad populum Antiochenum*, which were delivered during the uprising in 387, John Chrysostom tells the Antiochians that it is useful to fear the authorities³³ and he exhorts them to thank the authorities for the subsequent repressions³⁴.

Thus, since there is so much to do, not only with regard to John Chrysostom, but in the area of 'patristica slavica' in general, it is a fascinating field, one of the last archeographical frontiers of patristic scholarship where it is still possible to make discoveries. Furthermore, the study of patristic texts in Slavonic is uniquely interesting in that one can see how the Fathers of the Church shaped and influenced an entire culture (which did not happen in Western Europe where the classical tradition was much stronger). Tat'jana Čertorickaja writes: 'Patristic literature was read by princes, boyars, and monks. It not

²⁷ Cf. Francis J. Thomson, 'The Nature of the Reception of Christian Byzantine Culture in Russia in the Tenth to Thirteenth Centuries and its Implications for Russian Culture', *Slavica Gandensia*, vol. 5 (1978) pgs. 65-139.

²⁸ Granstrom (1974), p. 191.

²⁹ Arkhangel'skii, op. cit. p. 62.

³⁰ Г.Л. Курбатов, 'Классовая сущность учения Иоанна Златоуста', *Ежегодник музея истории религии и атеизма*, том 2 (1958), стр. 80-106. English translation by A. Valevičius (as yet unpublished).

³¹ P.Chr. Baur, *Der heilige Johannes Chrysostomos und seine Zeit* (2 vols., München, 1929-1930).

³² Hans von Campenhausen, *Les Pères grecs* (Éditions de l'Orante, 1963), p. 188. This book, however, does not figure in Kurbatov's article.

³³ PG, 49, 81.

³⁴ PG, 49, 38.

only influenced the norms and morals, but it also formed the aesthetic taste of society³⁵. Thus, the well known preference for social ideas in Russian philosophy³⁶.

The thesis of the author of this present article is that it is not just the 'Fathers of the Church' who influenced the norms and morals of the Slavs, but especially one of the Fathers, John Chrysostom who, with his 'social radicalism' can be seen as precursor to the Marxist Russian Revolution. The soil was prepared over nine centuries and through hundreds of homilies by the ringing voice of John Chrysostom calling for social justice and questioning the validity of the immense possessions of the rich and even the validity of private property itself. Among the first Marxists in Russia were many representatives of the clergy who quickly saw the similarity of communist ideas to the teaching of 'our Holy Father John Chrysostom', only with a difference; Marx was providing a concrete political plan.

Establishing an index of the works of John Chrysostom in Slavonic, to be followed by critical comparisons between the original Greek text and the Slavonic translation, with any possible modifications that may exist in way of adapting the text to the Slavic mentality, will then permit the systematic verification and establishment of the thesis here stated which, hopefully, will revive some of the enthusiasm which the great Antiochian preacher used to enjoy.

³⁵ Čertorickaja, op. cit., p. 15.

³⁶ Cf. Frederick Copleston, *Philosophy in Russia* (Notre Dame, Indiana, 1986).

Musical Aesthetics and Biblical Interpretation in John Chrysostom

Amanda Berry WYLIE, Elizabeth, New Jersey

In his first homily on the fourth gospel, John Chrysostom compares the evangelist to a popular musician. The evangelist appears on the world-stage beautifully costumed, not in gold, but having put on Christ. His voice resounds with the grace of God, and the sound is 'sweeter and more desirable than all musical harmony'.¹ He has no need for instruments such as the cithara or lyre, for his voice alone is lovelier and more profitable. He has formed in himself a virtuous soul which becomes like a jeweled golden lyre that is plucked by the Spirit.² The words that come from the mouth of this singer, i.e. the text of the gospel, are not his own. Thus John's use of this musical metaphor announces the divinely inspired nature of the biblical text.³

In John's introduction of the fourth evangelist as a minstrel of the divine song, the utterance of the inspired text marks the beginning of its interpretation.⁴ This notion that in the recitation of a text the process of interpretation has begun is at least as old as Plato's *Ion*. In the *Ion*, the rhapsodist who recites epic poetry is once removed from the divinely inspired poet. Like the evangelist in our homily, the poet in the *Ion* is infused with words through divine dispensation. The poet then, by giving expression to the divine poetry, gives a rendition (as ἔρμηνῆς) of the utterances of the god, who uses the ordinary voice of the poet. The rhapsodist in turn interprets the utterances of the poet by performing another rendition.⁵ The stylistic expression of poetry is akin to interpretation, at least linguistically, where we find in ἔρμηνεύειν, this sense of 'to render' as well as 'to interpret'.⁶ In the context of poetry it includes the

¹ In *Joh. Hom.* 1.1, PG 59:25. On the evidence that the Prologue to the gospel was a hymn sung in early Christian circles, see Raymond Brown, *The Gospel According to John* (Garden City, NY, 1966), pp. 3-4 (text) and pp. 20-23.

² In *Joh. Hom.* 1.1, PG 59:26.

³ In so doing he supplies a standard apologetic comparison to other literature, arguing for the higher truth of the biblical text.

⁴ That John himself would then become the interpreter as rhapsodist of the text might be a logical implication, though he does not state the claim.

⁵ Plato *Ion* 534b-e. Some have seen this as an indication that the rhapsodist was lecturing on the text; our reading shows that this is an unnecessary explanation. The rhapsodist interpreted not by means of some additional commentary but by repetition.

⁶ For this usage, see Ps.-Plutarch *De Musica* 1138a and 1144d.

translation of ideas into verse and the reinterpretation of the meaning through the style of recitation.

John begins the musical analogy by announcing the evangelist's rendition and continues by addressing how one ought to listen to the biblical text: like a music student learning to play a tune. With this musical metaphor (which echoes the work of Clement if it does not borrow directly from it)⁷ John says that the text cannot be appreciated fully by an immature listener who wishes to find only pleasing entertainment; the harmony of this music can only be heard rightly by those who are attentive.⁸ Only the quiet soul can learn to play the mystical melody.⁹ To achieve this quiet, the people must swab out the ears of their souls which are clogged with lust, anger, and other passions.¹⁰ Such guidance as John will provide in his preaching on the gospel will be fruitless if heard by careless souls, but the musical illustration provides more than inducement to pay attention to the sermons that follow. It supplies the hermeneutical key — that personal harmony leads to higher understanding.¹¹

The aptness of the musical metaphor for the biblical text lies in the parallels between music and language.¹² This study will suggest that for John similar parallels exist between musical performance and textual interpretation, specifically, that the musical vocalization of text can be seen as a form of interpretation. On an elementary level, setting biblical passages to music aids in learning the text. On a more profound level, the parallel between music and language can elucidate what interpretation entails.

In the Greek philosophical and pedagogical contexts, both music and grammar were part of the curriculum which had as its goal the formation of civic virtue. John turns the skills acquired through rhetorical training to the biblical text with similar aims for Christian moral formation.¹³ Likewise, his comments on

⁷ Clement *Protrepticus* 1. The similarities could also indicate a common exegetical source on the fourth gospel.

⁸ In *Joh. Hom.* 1.1, PG 59:26.

⁹ In *Joh. Hom.* 1.2, PG 59:27: 'it is the hearing of the soul which I require'.

¹⁰ In *Joh. Hom.* 1.2, PG 59:27. Ears tuned to fleshly pleasures cannot hear the beautiful strains or benefit from them.

¹¹ See p. 276 in Everett Ferguson, 'Toward a Patristic Theology of Music', *SP* 24 (1993), pp. 266-83. Ferguson discusses harmony with God in terms of spirituality. The hermeneutical dimension is an elaboration of the spiritual relationship.

¹² Edward A. Lippman, *Musical Thought in Ancient Greece* (New York, 1964), pp. 92-100. For a convincing discussion of the practical and theoretical similarities between music and poetry, see James Anderson Winn, *Unsuspected Eloquence: A History of the Relations between Poetry and Music* (New Haven and London, 1981).

¹³ For a discussion of how the methods of the rhetorical schools informed Antiochene exegesis, see Frances Young, 'The Rhetorical Schools and Their Influence on Patristic Exegesis', in *The Making of Orthodoxy: Essays in honour of Henry Chadwick*, ed. Rowan Williams (Cambridge, 1989), pp. 182-99. Young also shows (p. 184) the relation between the analysis of language in that context and its use in moral formation.

the pedagogical aspects of music reflect the Platonic/Pythagorean tradition¹⁴. In the context of classical education, music is a form of mimesis in which the student first learns to perform by copying the technique of the instructor and subsequently gains instruction through imitating the moral character of the composition and its subject¹⁵. Engaged in the performance and charmed by melody and rhythm, the player is shaped by the song¹⁶. A survey of selected passages from John's writings will show that he stands within this tradition in his expectation that music is imitative, participatory, and formative.

Because music is imitative, the initial choice of music is important, for the wrong choice in music can have potent ill effects. John uses the conventional distinction between two kinds of music: 1) the profane music of theatres and banquet halls, which was usually instrumental, and 2) sacred music, psalms, and hymns including but not limited to their use in a liturgical setting. A suspicion of instrumental music was not new with Christian writers. For the philosophers, the music of the aulos in particular was seen as dangerously immoral, because it lacked words and preyed upon the passions¹⁷. Likewise, John declares that the music of the aulos is 'satanic pomp', which is inarticulate, without meaning, and thus shameful¹⁸. Those songs played with aulos and lyre after a sumptuous meal 'are none other than songs to demons'¹⁹. The songs heard on the streets and in public places raise strong objections for their sexual content. Such amorous songs sung by beggars on the street 'engender sins in our character'²⁰.

The powerful psychological influence of music has mechanically more to do with the rhythm and melody than the song lyrics, even though all three — words, melody, and rhythm — were denoted in the term μουσική. The same potency that makes immoral music dangerous can make 'good' music beneficial as well. One related application is that those who are reluctant to read the Bible can be led to it through music. God used rhythm and melody to make the psalms enticing²¹. John takes it for granted that musical pleasure is natural to

¹⁴ For this, see especially Lippman, *op. cit.*; Warren D. Anderson, *Ethos and Education in Greek Music* (Cambridge, 1966). For a broader treatment of Christian attitudes toward music, see Johannes Quasten, *Music and Worship in Pagan and Christian Antiquity*, trans. Boniface Ramsey (Washington, D.C., 1983; orig. 1973). A helpful collection of texts is found in James McKinnon, *Music in Early Christian Literature* (Cambridge, 1987). The musical context is described in Günther Wille, *Musica Romana: Die Bedeutung der Musik im Leben der Römer* (Amsterdam, 1967); also James Mountford, 'Music and the Romans', *Bulletin of the John Rylands Library* 47 (1964-65), pp. 198-211.

¹⁵ Plato *Legg.* 668 and 802c-d.

¹⁶ Plato *Rep.* 10.601.

¹⁷ Lippman, 50-51; Plato *Rep.* 3.399.

¹⁸ In *Coloss. Hom.* Hom. 12.5, PG 62:389.

¹⁹ In *Coloss. Hom.* 1.5, PG 62:305. This is in contrast to the thankful psalms sung at the tables of the poor. See also Quasten, pp. 128-32.

²⁰ In *1 Thess. Hom.* 11.3, PG 62:465. Also the reference to 'lascivious and voluptuous' songs, *ad Pop. Hom.* 15.2, PG 49:155.

²¹ *Expos. in Psal.* 41.1, PG 55:156.

the soul, which melody frees from the chains of the body. The effect is demonstrated in the way infants are entranced by lullabies²². It is here that aesthetic considerations enter in: the beauty of music accounts for its allure²³. His respect for the enchanting sway of music makes John cautious. Songs that appeal merely to human senses may be quite seductive for their sensuality, but they lack a higher spiritual beauty. While ethical considerations are primary — whether the words are edifying or obscene — the ethical value of the music will make it more aesthetically pleasing to those with cultivated sensibilities²⁴.

For good or ill, music exerts a transformative power over those who hear it. In an attack on the 'satanic' music of the theatre, John compares what a person becomes by hearing the depraved songs in the theatre with what one becomes by hearing the psalms²⁵. Any words set to music can alter the soul, making the soul more angry and passionate or sober and meek, depending on the choice of songs. John says that the words of scripture 'resounding in the ears' can 'soften the callous soul'²⁶, but elsewhere he warns, '...when any obscene and sweet melody is uttered, it softens the mind, and corrupts the very soul itself'²⁷. John is both cautious and pragmatic.

Another benefit of music for the preacher's purposes is that it makes the text more memorable. Indeed John complains that members of his congregation can remember and sing by heart the songs from the theatre, though they are ignorant of the biblical text. Still, the attentiveness of the singer to the biblical text being sung determines its ultimate effectiveness. John speaks of singing from the heart or with the heart and mind to indicate that full participation in musical performance entails internalization of the meaning of the text²⁸. He says that the people ought to sing the psalter responses in the liturgy more earnestly so that the letters being written on the wax tablets of their souls by the Spirit will not be obliterated by devilish impressions elsewhere²⁹.

John enthusiastically recommends active participation in the singing of spiritual songs, especially the biblical text, for such performance leads to even

²² *Expos. in Psal.* 41.1, PG 55:156.

²³ While this allure of music is what makes the secular music so dangerous in John's mind, he does not disapprove of God's use of this form of pleasure to attract souls and transform them. Compare in *Coloss. Hom.* 12.6, PG 62:389, where John condescends to allow beautiful music at wedding celebrations, as long as it is spiritual (certainly not aulos music).

²⁴ Compare Plato *Legg.* 2.658d-659a and 7.802. The beauty in harmony lies in its symmetry and good measure. The quality of beauty in other arts is similarly defined: Plato *Politicus* 284; and *Rep.* 3.401. See also Lippman, p. 107.

²⁵ In *Matt. Hom.* 2.6, PG 57:30-31. Compare Plato *Legg.* 7.802d. Quasten, pp. 135-37.

²⁶ In *Matt. Hom.* 2.6, PG 57:31.

²⁷ In *1 Thess. Hom.* 11.3, PG 62:465.

²⁸ E.g. in *1 Cor. Hom.* 35.3, PG 61:300 (commenting on 1 Cor. 14:15); in *Eph. Hom.* 19.2, PG 62:129; in *Coloss. Hom.* 9.2, PG 62:363-64.

²⁹ In *Matt. Hom.* 11.6, PG 57:200-201; in *Joh. Hom.* 3.1, PG 59:37.

greater involvement in the lessons. In the performance of songs, obvious aesthetic qualities such as clarity of voice or sense of rhythm become subordinate to the moral exertions of the singer. In his comments on the Psalms John returns to a familiar metaphor, this time to illustrate the extent of the participation: the self is tuned like a cithara when the body and soul are brought into harmony, which is accomplished by the mortification of the members of the body³⁰. Speaking figuratively, he means that renunciation creates personal symmetry and spiritual beauty.

The figurative language then blurs into a literal application in the discussion of work songs that follows. The actual performance of the biblical text musically becomes a holistic exercise, involving the whole self and leading to the incorporation of the text³¹. John wants laborers to rehearse the psalms while they weave or plow or drive cattle to market, not only to ease the tedium of repetitive labor, but also so that the rhythmic repetition that matches their physical motions will assist them in learning the text from memory. For those whose occupations include rhythmic songs to help keep time, the whole body is disciplined while busy in this work, leaving the mind open to training. The habitual rehearsal of holy songs at work (whether sung aloud or recalled inwardly in silence), after meals, in the market place, or with friends, is a kind of spiritual training³². It seems that singing then surpasses its mnemonic function in relation to the text. The personal harmony of body and soul gained through self-discipline finds active expression in the singer's resonance with the sacred text as it is sung.

Thus, for John the best musicians are those who also live harmoniously. The women and men of the Egyptian desert who sing the psalms devotionally each day are angel choirs in human forms³³. Brighter than the choir of stars in the sky, they sing hymns at night and pray during the day as they work with their hands, having risen above bodily pleasures by their imitation of incorporeal

³⁰ See Ferguson, pp. 276-77. Striking parallels are found in comments by Didymus, whose work on the Psalms might well have been conveyed to John through Evagrius. The texts by Didymus are analyzed to other ends by Everett Ferguson, 'The Active and Contemplative Lives: The Patristic Interpretation of Some Musical Terms', *SP* 16 (1985), pp. 15-23.

³¹ *Expos. in Psal.* 41.1, PG 55:157. See also *Ad Illuminandos Cat.* 2.4, PG 49:237. For other discussions of work songs, see: J.C.B. Petropoulos, 'The Church Father as Social Informant: St. John Chrysostom on folk-songs', *SP* 22 (1989), pp. 159-64; Anton Naegele, 'Über Arbeitslieder bei Johannes Chrysostomos', *Berichte über die Verhandlungen der Königlich Sächsischen Gesellschaft der Wissenschaften zu Leipzig. Philologisch-Historische Classe* 57 (Leipzig, 1905), pp. 101-42.

³² *Expos. in Psal.* 41.2, PG 55:158. For singing in the market, see also: *in Coloss. Hom.* 9.2, PG 62:363.

³³ *In Matt. Hom.* 8.4, PG 57:87. Note that these models of personal harmony also display social harmony as they live peaceably with one another. In a very different portrayal, Quasten (pp. 94-99) presents examples of monastic opponents of singing. His texts indicate that music stirred controversy in various monastic settings.

powers³⁴. Yet, the orderliness of their souls exhibits itself in their bodies. Their hands are always clean, they sleep lightly, without snoring (or exposing their bodies), and they rise again quickly to sing. In the desert 'everything is full of prayer, of hymns, and of a spiritual fragrance; there is nothing carnal'³⁵. While others are laughing and indulging in sport and gluttony, the monks sing psalms and hymns at regular hours. The equilibrium demonstrated in their control of their bodies is matched by their harmonious singing of psalms:

And neither cithara nor pipe nor other musical instrument makes such sweet melodies, as the ones you hear from the singing of these holy ones in their deep solitude in the desert³⁶.

For laborers and monks alike, participation of the whole self in musical recitation of the biblical text is disciplinary and thus formative, which in turn prepares them for a clearer understanding of the text. This gradual training with music finds a place in the education of Christian children as well³⁷. Aware of their pedagogical value, John wants parents to teach their children to sing the psalms, for they are full of philosophy. Teaching children to exercise restraint and temperance and to refrain from excess and lust for power, the psalms will gradually lead them forward to higher lessons³⁸. Musical instruction is for John an example of considerateness, for it appeals to a child's sensibilities³⁹.

The same concept of accommodation is a central notion in John's approach to scripture. Music accommodates lessons to a child's level just as the language of scripture accommodates truth to a level of human understanding through its embodiment in the text. John says that God 'modulates' (ῥυθμίζει) the language of the psalms to meet human limitations, or in other words, God arranges the divine music for human ears⁴⁰. To move beyond the body of text to a more

³⁴ *In Matt. Hom.* 8.5, PG 57:88. Thus the ideal of sacred singing is to move like angels beyond bodily perception. John gives the example to show how completely the presence of the infant Jesus during his flight to Egypt transformed the Egyptians who formerly sat around the 'fleshpots' (cf. *Exod.* 16:3).

³⁵ *In I Tim. Hom.* 14.5, PG 62:377.

³⁶ *In I Tim. Hom.* 14.4, PG 62:576. Note the similarities in this description and that of the fourth evangelist above.

³⁷ John recognizes music as part of the curriculum in his *On Vainglory*, SC 188, 124-26. Like his precedents, John hints that the very foundations of education are musical in nature when he says that formation of young Christians is about 'the origin and education and rhythm of the world'. The sacred songs of the Bible are chosen replacements for traditional poetic materials. Just as the stories of the Old Testament are suggested as appealing stories for young children, the psalms are recommended as approved music. John complains that their children sing the songs of Satan, like 'cooks and caterers and chorus dancers' (*in Coloss. Hom.* 9.2, PG 62:362). See also *in Matt. Hom.* 2.5, PG 57:30. On this question in other Christian writers, see Quasten, pp. 137-39.

³⁸ *In Coloss. Hom.* 9.2, PG 62:363. Cf. Plato *Legg.* 2.659e-660a.

³⁹ *In Coloss. Hom.* 9.2, PG 62:362.

⁴⁰ *Psal.* 112.2, PG 55:303. For this reference (p. 5) and a helpful discussion of the term, I am indebted to Robert Hill, 'On Looking Again at *sunkatabasis*', *Prudentia* 13 (1981), pp. 3-11. The suggestion that the body becomes the lyre is to be seen as progress from the accommodation

spiritual comprehension through application is the goal of interpretation. John's exegetical strategy remains Antiochene in his insistence on the meaning and usefulness embodied in the narrative⁴¹. As an alternative to allegorical fancy, he would have it that purer understanding comes when submission of the body to the soul prepares one to hear the text and to imitate the models of virtuous conduct contained therein. Higher understanding and application of the text proceeds from the absorption or internalization of the text.

Again the parallel between music and language is drawn. This leads us to three concluding points. First, as more than just an analogy to illustrate his view of scripture, singing becomes an effective method for discerning the meaning of the text. As a result of its imitative, participatory, and formative functions, singing is also interpretive. When executed artfully, with a modulated self-control that keeps body and soul in harmonious balance, the singer finds meaning in the song that goes beyond human utterance. Secondly, John's program of musical exegesis is holistic: the singer conforms the whole self to the source of divine music, and thus mimesis is more than an intellectual exercise⁴². The abstractness of music facilitates the expression of the ineffable truth contained in the text and allows the singers to internalize the meaning, if they move beyond the fleshly sense of hearing. Finally, this view of the utility of music, rooted in the context of classical education, provides a theoretical framework for John's interpretive exercises, but their practical execution potentially extends to a wider, less-literate audience. A more personalized rendition of the text was permitted, although the bishop's preaching defined the parameters of meaning, and fanciful allegorizing was clearly discouraged. We may nonetheless find in John's use of music a democratization of interpretation — one in which even weavers, drovers, and farmers work with the text.

made to the Israelites in the use of musical instruments. See Reiner Kaczynski, *Das Wort Gottes in Liturgie und Alltag der Gemeinden des Johannes Chrysostomus* (Freiburger theologische Studien 94; Freiburg, 1974), pp. 263-64. Quasten, pp. 92-93, presents a less sympathetic condescension.

⁴¹ Young, pp. 183-84, describes this method as rooted in the rhetorical schools.

⁴² The notion of personal harmony as an imitation of cosmic harmony is well-represented in patristic as well as classical sources. See, e.g. Augustine *De Musica* 6. Discussion of the text is found in Robert J. O'Connell, *Art and the Christian Intelligence in St. Augustine* (Cambridge, Mass., 1978). See also the more recent response by Carol Harrison, *Beauty and Revelation in the Thought of Saint Augustine* (Oxford, 1992). Harrison's treatment of the role of scripture and the importance of the rhetorical context are of particular interest for the parallels in our study of John Chrysostom. See also Lippman, p. 92; Ferguson, 'Theology', p. 271.

Le omelie di Giovanni Crisostomo "De prophetiarum obscuritate"

Sergio ZINCONE, Rome

La tradizione precedente

Nella letteratura cristiana antica dei primi secoli è ben presente il motivo dell'oscurità del linguaggio biblico con particolare attenzione alle profezie veterotestamentarie. In questa sede accennerò ad alcune significative testimonianze patristiche che hanno affrontato tale problematica in modo da inquadrare in modo più compiuto dal punto di vista storico-letterario l'articolazione del discorso crisostomiano¹.

Nel *Dialogo con Trifone*, a proposito della finalità dell'oscurità biblica, con specifico riferimento a quanto hanno detto e compiuto i profeti, Giustino rileva che essi si sono serviti di parabole e figure² perché non tutti potessero comprendere facilmente sicché la verità fosse trovata ed appresa con fatica, mediante un'adeguata preparazione³. Egli osserva inoltre che se i giudei avessero compreso le Scritture relative a Cristo e agli eventi futuri, le avrebbero fatte sparire⁴; è questo un argomento che si ritrova in altri autori cristiani, e viene ripreso da Crisostomo, per spiegare l'oscurità delle profezie.

Per Ireneo i giudei non avrebbero esitato a bruciare le Scritture se avessero conosciuto la loro utilizzazione futura da parte dei cristiani⁵. Il vescovo di Lione sottolinea che nelle Scritture è nascosto Cristo, indicato 'per typos et parabolis' che non potevano essere compresi prima della venuta del Signore⁶; è questo dunque l'evento che svela il senso profondo delle Scritture e toglie alle profezie oscurità ed incertezze.

Gli Alessandrini estendono il concetto di oscurità biblica al complesso delle Scritture⁷. Clemente enumera varie cause del fatto che il significato delle

¹ Per maggiori dettagli si veda il mio studio 'La funzione dell'oscurità delle profezie secondo Giovanni Crisostomo', *Annali di storia dell'esegesi* 12/2 (1995), pp. 361-366.

² Cfr. G. Otranto, *La terminologia esegetica in Giustino*, in AA.VV., *La terminologia esegetica nell'antichità* (Bari, 1987), p. 70.

³ *Dial.* 90,2; ed. Archambault, t. II, p. 82. Si veda anche S. Giustino, *Dialogo con Trifone* (Lecture cristiane del primo millennio, 5, a cura di G. Visonà; Milano 1988), p. 282.

⁴ *Dial.* 120,5; ed. cit., p. 218.

⁵ *Adv. haer.* III,21,1; SC 211, p. 400.

⁶ *Adv. haer.* IV,26,1; SC 100/2, pp. 712-714. Questo tema sarà ripreso da Crisostomo.

⁷ Cfr. M. Harl, 'Origène et les interprétations patristiques grecques de l'"obscurité" biblique', *Vigiliae Christianae* 36 (1982), p. 346.

Scritture risulta nascosto; ciò innanzitutto, come si è visto in Giustino, ha lo scopo di stimolare la ricerca e la scoperta degli insegnamenti che recano la salvezza. Inoltre non a tutti era conveniente comprendere il senso delle Scritture perché non ricevevano danno dal recepire in modo distorto le parole salvifiche dello Spirito santo. L'Alessandrino rileva poi che il genere parabolico della Scrittura si trovava largamente nei profeti perché lo Spirito santo mostrasse che i filosofi greci e i sapienti barbari avevano ignorato la futura venuta del Signore e l'insegnamento che avrebbe trasmesso; era quindi opportuno il carattere coperto delle profezie relative al Signore, perché non fossero travisate e mal comprese. Infine Clemente accenna al motivo per così dire prudenziale dell'occultamento del significato delle predizioni concernenti Cristo, ricordando che tutti i profeti che avevano predetto la venuta del Signore e i santi misteri che lo riguardavano furono perseguitati e uccisi⁸.

Per Origene una causa dell'oscurità biblica va ricercata in un certo tipo di stile della Scrittura che talvolta salta rapidamente da un discorso su un argomento ad un altro su un tema diverso, il che rende oscuro soprattutto il testo dei profeti⁹. Secondo l'Alessandrino lo Spirito santo non ha voluto che quanto si trova negli scritti profetici fosse esposto apertamente, ma ha fatto in modo che l'oscurità dell'espressione lo custodisse riposto nel mistero, tutelandolo dagli ignoranti¹⁰. Si noti poi che Origene specifica che i profeti hanno esposto, senza nascondere il significato, tutto ciò che poteva essere utilmente compreso in ordine alla riforma dei costumi, mentre hanno indicato oscuramente quanto richiedeva una comprensione superiore¹¹; un'analoga argomentazione sarà sviluppata da Crisostomo.

Origene ha lasciato cadere la tesi secondo cui l'oscurità della Scrittura aveva la finalità di salvaguardare i profeti dalle persecuzioni dei giudei. Egli piuttosto mette in evidenza la valenza positiva di tale oscurità che, per così dire, rivela nascondendo¹², sollecita un'adeguata preparazione per la comprensione dei misteri adombrati nei testi sacri, spinge ad una ricerca attenta della verità, induce ad intravedere in Cristo la luce che dissolve ogni oscurità.

Eusebio, in un'opera apologetica quale la *Dimostrazione evangelica*, rileva che alcune cose sono state dette per mezzo di enigmi, altre in modo più chiaro e osserva che i giudei avrebbero distrutto la Scrittura se avesse indicato manifestamente il loro ripudio¹³.

Basilio, a proposito di *II Cor.* 3,14 sgg., spiega che chi toglie come una cortina l'oscurità della lettera, imita Mosè che si toglieva il velo quando parlava con Dio; questo velo viene quindi inteso nel senso dell'oscurità degli insegnamenti

⁸ *Strom.* VI,126-127; GCS, Cl. Alex. II, pp. 495-496.

⁹ *Philoc.* 7,1; SC 302, p. 326.

¹⁰ *In Num. hom.* 18,4; GCS, Or. VII, p. 175.

¹¹ *C. Cels.* 7,10; SC 150, pp. 36-38.

¹² Cfr. M. Harl, *art. cit.*, p. 356.

¹³ *Dem. ev.* VI, *Prol.*; GCS 23, p. 251.

della legge, mentre al gesto di volgersi verso il Signore corrisponde la contemplazione spirituale¹⁴. Crisostomo svilupperà l'interpretazione del velo nel senso dell'oscurità, in rapporto alla legge e al suo compimento in Cristo.

Per Gregorio di Nissa l'intento di Dio è nascosto, come da una cortina, dal corpo della Scrittura. Perciò, osserva riferendosi a *II Cor.* 3,13 sgg., Paolo dice che coloro che considerano il corpo della Scrittura hanno un velo sul cuore e non possono guardare la gloria della legge spirituale, in quanto sono ostacolati dal velo che era stato posto davanti al viso del legislatore¹⁵.

Il *De prophetiarum obscuritate*: elementi di cronologia

Nelle due omelie dedicate alla problematica dell'oscurità dell'AT e specificamente delle profezie Crisostomo riprende il t. ἀσάφεια che non sembra essere stato usato prima di Origene nel senso del carattere oscuro della Scrittura. A tale riguardo si noti che questo termine, riferito all'oscurità della Scrittura, appare nel titolo del cap. I della *Philocalia*, che conserva i capp. 1-2 e la maggior parte del cap. 3 del 1.IV del *De principiis* origeniano; ora il medesimo termine è presente nel titolo della seconda omelia crisostomiana *De prophetiarum obscuritate* a proposito dell'AT, mentre nel titolo della prima si trova l'aggettivo ἀσαφείζ, in rapporto alle profezie riguardanti Cristo, i pagani e il ripudio dei giudei.

Queste omelie furono pronunciate verosimilmente ad Antiochia, in quanto Crisostomo, nel contesto della preghiera dei fedeli per il vescovo, parla di questo come di una persona diversa da se stesso¹⁶; il nostro autore dunque non era stato ancora elevato all'episcopato di Costantinopoli. La prima omelia dovette precedere di poco la seconda; in questa infatti¹⁷ si fa riferimento al debito, contratto recentemente dall'oratore con il suo uditorio e non ancora soddisfatto a causa dell'ampiezza dell'argomento. Si tratta del motivo per cui l'AT è più oscuro del Nuovo; Crisostomo si rifà a quanto aveva esposto in precedenza nella prima omelia, riprendendo la testimonianza paolina di *II Cor.* 3,12 sgg. e confermando l'interpretazione del velo di Mosè, di cui parla l'Apostolo, nel senso dell'oscurità della legge.

Possiamo inoltre stabilire che la seconda omelia fu pronunciata di domenica, come si evince dalla prima omelia *De diabolo tentatore*¹⁸, in cui l'Antiocheno menziona la domenica precedente, quando aveva esortato a combattere la maldicenza, richiamando argomentazioni ed esempi scritturistici di cui si era

¹⁴ *De Spir.* 21,52; SC 17, pp. 434-436. Cfr. E. Cavalcanti, *L'esperienza di Dio nei Padri greci. Il trattato "Sullo Spirito Santo" di Basilio di Cesarea* (Roma, 1984), p. 183.

¹⁵ *C. Eun.* III, t. V, 9; ed. Jäger (Leiden, 1960), p. 163.

¹⁶ *De proph. obscur.* II,5; PG 56, 182.

¹⁷ *Ibid.* II,1; 176.

¹⁸ *De diab. tent.* I,1; PG 49, 245.

servito nella parte finale della seconda omelia *De prophetiarum obscuritate*¹⁹, e ricorda altresì gli applausi che accolsero la fine del suo discorso. Può essere interessante notare che in molti codici alle omelie *De prophetiarum obscuritate* segue immediatamente proprio la prima omelia *De diabolo tentatore*.

Non emergono elementi decisivi che possano indicare una precisa data di composizione delle omelie *De prophetiarum obscuritate*²⁰; troppo generico è ad es. l'annuncio da parte di Crisostomo, nella prima omelia, di rinviare ad un altro giorno il discorso su Melchisedek che era stato introdotto a proposito di *Hebr. 7,1-3*²¹ con sviluppi in senso antiariano. Già Montfaucon, nel suo *Monitum*, aveva rilevato la difficoltà di stabilire l'anno di composizione sulla base di questo accenno a Melchisedek. Sembra dunque più prudente concludere, senza ulteriori specificazioni, che queste omelie risalgono con ogni probabilità al periodo antiocheno dell'attività crisostomiana.

La trasmissione del testo

Savile fa riferimento ad un cod. Regio che va identificato con il Parisinus gr. 759 del s. XI. Nella sua edizione, ripresa da Migne in PG 56,163-192, Montfaucon cita esplicitamente due mss. che indica con la segnatura Regio 2343 e Colbertino 1030; essi corrispondono rispettivamente al già citato Parisinus gr. 759 e al Parisinus gr. 768 del s. XIII. Questi codici contengono entrambe le omelie. Il ms. che è alla base dell'edizione di Montfaucon, come del resto di quella di Savile, è sostanzialmente il Parisinus gr. 759 che effettivamente si può considerare uno dei codici migliori. A volte le note in apparato di Montfaucon sono alquanto approssimative; ad es. egli osserva che le parole *τουτέστι Νοέμβριος* mancano nei mss., mentre sono aggiunte sopra il rigo proprio nel Parisinus gr. 759.

Per l'edizione critica che sto attualmente preparando ho potuto reperire e collazionare integralmente 26 mss., la cui datazione va dal X s. (Vat. gr. 450) fino al XVI s.; 18 di essi si possono collocare tra l'XI e il XII s., gli altri in un arco di tempo fra il XIII e il XVI s. 18 contengono entrambe le omelie: Vat. gr. 450 (s. X), Vat. gr. 555 (s. XI), Angel. gr. 110 (s. XI), Laur. Plut. 8,10 (s. XI), Laur. S. Marco 679 (s. XI), Genuens. Urbani 13 (s. XI), Paris. gr. 754 (s. XI), Paris. gr. 759 (s. XI), Mosq. Bibl. sinod. 109 (Vlad. 171: s. XI-XII), Petropol. GPL Sobr. gr. 234 (222; s. XI), Ath. Iviron gr. 4375.255 (s. XIV),

¹⁹ *De proph. obscur.* II,8-9; 188-190.

²⁰ Lenain de Tillemont (*Mémoires pour servir à l'histoire ecclésiastique des six premiers siècles*, t. XI (Venise, 1732), pp. 84-86) fa risalire queste omelie al 388; C. Baur (*Der heilige Johannes Chrysostomus und seine Zeit*, vol. I (München, 1929), p. 238) si limita a farle rientrare nel periodo antiocheno di Crisostomo, mentre M. Harl, *art. cit.*, p. 336, indica nel 386 l'anno della loro composizione.

²¹ *De proph. obscur.* I,3; 167.

Cantabrig. cod. Nn. I. 22 (2551: s. XI-XII), Ath. Stavron. gr. 897.32 (s. XII), Paris. gr. 768 (s. XIII), Oxon. Auct. T.3.4 (s. XVI), Matrit. ms. 4747 (s. XVI), Oxon. Holkham 42 (s. XVI, con molte omissioni), Paris. Suppl. gr. 400 (s. XVI). 3 conservano soltanto la prima omelia; Cantabrig. cod. B.8.11 (195: s. XI), Oxon. Roe 24 (s. XI), Taurin. B.II.21 (Pasinus gr. 99: s. XI); 5 contengono solo la seconda omelia, integralmente (Berolin. cod. Phill. 1439, s. XI-XII) o parzialmente (Taurin. B.I.10, Pasinus gr. 12, s. XI; Vat. gr. 1225, s. XI; Hierosol. S. Sabae 32, s. XI-XII, cui sono stati restituiti da Aubineau 14 fogli del ms. Photios 47 contenente frammenti della seconda omelia²²; Vat. gr. 585, s. XV).

La costituzione del testo delle omelie si presenta notevolmente complessa non solo per il numero dei testimoni della tradizione manoscritta, ma soprattutto perché mentre alcuni raggruppamenti di codici sono abbastanza chiaramente individuabili, di altri mss. appare più incerta e problematica la collocazione. Inoltre, a prescindere dal fatto che, come si è visto, non tutti i mss. hanno entrambe le omelie, a volte alcuni apparentamenti di codici che si riscontrano in un'omelia, non trovano conferma nell'altra; la situazione non appare quindi del tutto omogenea nelle due omelie, per cui il discorso deve essere necessariamente differenziato.

Tra le numerose questioni che emergono dal punto di vista filologico, vorrei soffermarmi, a titolo di esempio, su di una che mi sembra particolarmente significativa. Nel suo *Monitum* Montfaucon, ricordando la prima omelia *De diabolo tentatore*, in cui Crisostomo si rifà alla parte finale della seconda omelia *De prophetiarum obscuritate*, dove aveva condannato la maldicenza e, per contrasto, aveva riportato alcuni esempi di personaggi che avevano accusato i propri peccati senza occuparsi di quelli degli altri, rileva che l'Antiocheno enumera nello stesso ordine i passi scritturistici adottati nell'omelia precedente, tra cui *Lc. 5,8*. Ora però già Tillemont aveva lamentato che questo passo non appare nel *De prophetiarum obscuritate*, ipotizzando che Crisostomo, nel *De diabolo tentatore*, avesse ritenuto di aver invece citato il suddetto brano evangelico nel *De prophetiarum obscuritate* insieme ad altri passi che sono comuni ai due scritti²³. A questo punto Montfaucon osserva che il passo in questione è restituito dal cod. Colbertino, vale a dire il Parisinus gr. 768, e lo riporta nella forma seguente: *τὸν Πέτρον λέγοντα: "Ἐξέλθε ἀπ' ἐμοῦ, ὅτι ἀνὴρ ἁμαρτωλός εἰμι, facendolo precedere dal verbo "Ἀκουσον, con cui egli integra il brano perché possa reggersi sintatticamente. In realtà questo verbo è attestato da tre mss. nella forma τὸν Πέτρον ἄκουσον e da un altro che scrive: ἄκουσον καὶ τὸν Πέτρον forse per influsso del periodo seguente: "Ἀκουσον πῶς*

²² M. Aubineau, 'Restitution de quatorze folios du codex Hierosolymitain, Photios 47, au codex Saint-Sabas 32. Prédications de Chrysostome à Constantinople et notamment à Sainte-Irène', *The Journal of Theological Studies* 43 (1992), pp. 528-544.

²³ Cfr. Lenain de Tillemont, *op. cit.*, p. 576 n. 31.

καὶ Ματθαῖος... Altri mss. omettono Ἄκουσον oppure tutto il passo, mentre un altro sposta la frase poco più avanti riportandola in questo modo: Ὅρα μοι δὲ καὶ τὸν Πέτρον λέγοντα... Molto incerta appare dunque la collocazione di questo passo nel *De prophetiarum obscuritate*, mentre nel *De diabolo tentatore* l'espressione τὸν Πέτρον λέγοντα ... εἰμι, e le altre relative a vari personaggi biblici che accusarono i loro peccati, si inseriscono naturalmente nel discorso essendo rette tutte da παρήγαγον con cui Crisostomo introduce questi esempi²⁴. C'è poi da osservare che la costruzione di ἀκούω con l'accusativo del participio presente, secondo la lezione di alcuni mss. e di Montfaucon, è estranea all'*usus scribendi* di Crisostomo che sistematicamente in questi casi adopera il genitivo, come si può rilevare abbondantemente anche nel *De prophetiarum obscuritate*, ad es. poco più avanti sempre nel medesimo contesto di cui ci stiamo occupando: Ἄκουε καὶ τούτων ... φθεγγομένων²⁵. Poiché comunque il passo τὸν Πέτρον λέγοντα ..., dal punto di vista sintattico, deve essere retto da un verbo, è significativo che uno dei mss. che omette Ἄκουσον avverta la necessità di aggiungere in margine σκόπει, mentre, come abbiamo visto, un altro ms. fa reggere il passo da Ὅρα lo colloca in modo diverso. Si tenga presente poi che nella maggior parte dei mss. che riportano il brano in questione al *De prophetiarum obscuritate* segue la suddetta omelia *De diabolo tentatore*, mentre ciò non si verifica in quasi tutti i mss. che omettono tale brano. Da quanto è stato esaminato finora si ricava l'impressione che l'inserimento di questo passo sia avvenuto, un po' maldestramente, per armonizzare, mediante la citazione di Lc. 5, 8, il *De prophetiarum obscuritate* con il *De diabolo tentatore* in cui effettivamente Crisostomo, riepilogando gli esempi addotti nella seconda omelia *De prophetiarum obscuritate*, e nello stesso ordine, cita il predetto brano evangelico tra i riferimenti a Paolo e a Matteo. I contesti però appaiono alquanto differenti. Infatti nel *De diabolo tentatore* l'Antiocheno parla in generale di coloro, come Paolo, Pietro, Matteo e altri, che accusarono se stessi senza pensare di chiamare in causa le colpe altrui²⁶. Nel *De prophetiarum obscuritate* Crisostomo non si limita a questo tipo di argomentazione, ma più specificamente mette in evidenza che sia Paolo sia Matteo, rispettivamente l'uno nell'epistolario²⁷, l'altro nel vangelo²⁸, poiché non potevano accusare se stessi di nulla che avessero commesso dopo il battesimo, ricordavano ciò che avevano fatto di male in precedenza, insegnando che non ci si deve occupare delle colpe altrui, ma delle proprie²⁹. Ora a me sembra che in questa ottica non si inserisca in modo congruo la citazione di Lc. 5,8 perché qui non è Pietro a fare un discorso retrospettivo sul suo

²⁴ *De diab. tent.*, cit., *ibid.*

²⁵ *De proph. obscur.* II,9; 189.

²⁶ *De diab. tent.*, cit., *ibid.*

²⁷ *I Tim.* 1,12-13.15; *I Cor.* 15,9.

²⁸ *Mt.* 9,9; 10,3.

²⁹ *De proph. obscur.* II,8-9; 188-189.

passato e a ricordare i peccati commessi prima del battesimo, ma è piuttosto Luca a rammentare l'umiltà dell'Apostolo che si riconosce peccatore davanti al prodigio della pesca miracolosa operata da Cristo. In conclusione pare più probabile che Crisostomo nel *De diabolo tentatore*, sintetizzando un po' sommariamente ciò che aveva discusso in modo più articolato nel *De prophetiarum obscuritate*, abbia inserito la citazione di Lc. 5,8 che si adattava bene a quel contesto, allargando ulteriormente la gamma degli esempi biblici già utilizzati nell'opera precedente.

Per questi motivi ritengo che sia preferibile espungere dalla seconda omelia *De prophetiarum obscuritate* il passo in questione.

La struttura delle omelie. I temi principali

Queste omelie affrontano il tema, ampiamente presente, come si è visto, nella letteratura cristiana antica, dell'oscurità delle profezie dell'AT relative a Cristo e alla nuova economia di salvezza. Di esse soprattutto la prima si sofferma su tale problematica, mentre la seconda, dopo aver ripreso e sviluppato ulteriormente le argomentazioni esposte nella prima, a partire dal par. 3 passa a trattare altre questioni prevalentemente di carattere morale.

All'inizio della prima omelia, con un linguaggio metaforico che ritroviamo anche nell'esordio della seconda, sia pure con immagini ed espressioni diverse, Crisostomo annuncia programmaticamente di voler imbandire ai suoi ascoltatori la mensa dei profeti e di accingersi ad affrontare il mare della sapienza di Isaia. In realtà solo più avanti compaiono tre citazioni tratte dal libro di Isaia (53,8; 1,2; 1,15; 1,3; 65,1; 1,6. Altre citazioni si trovano nella seconda omelia), in contesti differenti, mentre, fra i profeti, è piuttosto la figura di Geremia che emerge e, insieme alla testimonianza di Paolo, occupa un posto centrale nell'argomentazione crisostomiana sull'oscurità delle profezie. Invece quindi di soffermarsi su Isaia, il nostro autore, in un quadro più ampio, mette in luce la profondità del messaggio profetico e in generale delle Scritture, la cui interpretazione ha bisogno di esperienza e di esercizio, così come deve avvenire sia nella navigazione, per non lasciarsi travolgere dallo sgomento di fronte al mare aperto e ai flutti tempestosi, sia nel caso dello scatenarsi delle passioni, perché l'animo non venga dominato da esse, ma riesca al contrario ad imporre loro il freno della ragione come un esperto nocchiero al timone della sua imbarcazione (I,1).

Questa introduzione, in cui prevalgono le immagini desunte dal mondo marino e dai suoi fenomeni, è funzionale alla dimostrazione della tesi secondo cui il discorso elaborato dalla Scrittura risulta di difficile comprensione non per sua natura, ma per la debolezza e l'inesperienza di coloro che l'affrontano senza la dovuta preparazione. A tal fine Crisostomo adduce l'esempio di Melchisedek su cui, come si evince da *Hebr.* 5,11, ampio è il discorso e difficile

da spiegare; ma ciò dipende non dalla natura di questo discorso, ma dalla lentezza nell'apprendere di quelli che l'ascoltano. Per rendere con maggior efficacia tale concetto, l'Antiocheno si serve della similitudine dei malati per i quali occorre preparare cibi differenziati allo scopo di superare la loro ritrosia a nutrirsi mediante la varietà delle vivande; analogamente, nel caso del nutrimento spirituale, è necessario elaborare un discorso ampio e variato, con molti accorgimenti che lo rendano accessibile e quindi utile a coloro che sono deboli.

La figura di Melchisedek offre lo spunto a Crisostomo per inoltrarsi in una delle numerose digressioni di cui sono costellate queste omelie; egli infatti, rifacendosi a *Hebr.* 7,1-3 e applicando a Cristo, sulle orme della stessa lettera agli Ebrei, le prerogative di Melchisedek di essere senza padre, senza madre, senza genealogia, mette in rilievo, polemizzando contro gli ariani, l'imperscrutabilità di entrambe le generazioni del Figlio di Dio, quella divina e quella umana. E' in questo contesto che si inserisce la prima citazione di Isaia (53,8): 'Chi racconterà la sua generazione?', cui il nostro autore fa riferimento per confermare il carattere arcano di entrambe le generazioni di Cristo (I,2). Crisostomo afferma con forza che queste realtà si possono accogliere soltanto con la fede e, servendosi di verbi quali *πολυπραγμονεῖν, περιεργάζεσθαι*, attacca il razionalismo teologico degli eretici, in cui si possono ravvisare in particolare gli eunomiani³⁰, che cercavano di indagare con vana curiosità sulla generazione celeste del Figlio di Dio.

Rinviando genericamente ad altra occasione il discorso su Melchisedek, il nostro autore affronta il tema centrale dell'omelia rilevando la maggiore difficoltà dell'AT rispetto al NT, benché questo parli di realtà superiori quali il regno dei cieli, la resurrezione dei corpi, i beni ineffabili che trascendono la comprensione umana, e si pone specificamente il problema del motivo per cui le profezie sono oscure.

Esaminiamo innanzitutto in via preliminare che cosa intenda Crisostomo per profezia in queste omelie. Egli osserva che la qualità della profezia consiste non nell'annunciare gli avvenimenti presenti, ma nel predire quelli futuri che non possono essere ancora conosciuti (II,1). Per questo non considera profezia la previsione, da parte di Geremia, della conquista di Gerusalemme, perché la grave situazione in cui versava la città assediata dai babilonesi era a tutti manifesta e quindi era evidente la sorte che sarebbe toccata ad essa (I, 3). Tra gli esempi di profezie Crisostomo cita le parole di Gesù ai giudei, riportate in *Io.* 2,19: 'Distruggete questo tempio e lo farò risorgere in tre giorni', perché non si era ancora verificato l'evento della croce e della resurrezione (II,1). Secondo questa impostazione dunque la profezia si configura come un annuncio di fatti

³⁰ Cfr. l'introduzione di J. Daniélou all'edizione delle omelie I-V di Crisostomo contro gli anomei: SC 28 bis, p. 26. Sulla problematica relativa alla controversia ariana cfr. M. Simonetti, *La crisi ariana nel IV secolo* (Roma, 1975); E. Cavalcanti, *Studi eunomiani* (Roma, 1976).

non altrimenti noti se non attraverso esposizioni più o meno oscure ed enigmatiche in relazione al tipo di evento che si vuole indicare³¹.

Perché allora le profezie sono oscure? Inserendosi, come abbiamo visto, nel solco della tradizione precedente, Crisostomo osserva che tale oscurità assolve la funzione di tutelare i profeti che sarebbero stati uccisi dai giudei se questi avessero compreso con chiarezza il significato di quelle profezie che preannunciavano tutti i mali che sarebbero loro capitati, come la conquista di Gerusalemme, la distruzione del tempio, la dispersione del popolo giudaico. Che questo sarebbe stato il comportamento dei giudei nei confronti dei profeti è dimostrato, secondo il nostro autore, da vari passi sia dell'AT sia del NT che attestano la convergenza delle testimonianze bibliche su tale punto³². Molto forte è in questa parte dell'omelia (I, 3) la polemica anti giudaica che raggiunge uno dei livelli più alti quando Crisostomo rileva che finché i giudei non uccisero il Signore, avevano speranza di salvezza, ma dopo averlo ucciso ed aver respinto colui che era venuto a rimettere i peccati, persero ogni speranza³³.

Per dimostrare ancora più chiaramente che i giudei avrebbero eliminato i profeti e non avrebbero nemmeno risparmiato le Scritture se si fossero resi conto delle sciagure che li avrebbero colpiti, l'Antiocheno si sofferma a lungo sulla storia di Geremia e sulla sua predizione della conquista di Gerusalemme³⁴, mettendo in rilievo la persecuzione che subì il profeta a causa di questo annuncio e la distruzione, da parte del re di Giuda Ioakim, del rotolo scritto da Baruc su ordine di Geremia, perché in esso si parlava dei mali che sarebbero toccati ai giudei. La vicenda di Geremia dimostra dunque per il nostro autore che era rischioso per i profeti esporre chiaramente ai giudei le loro sciagure future, perché se l'annuncio della temporanea cattività di Gerusalemme aveva provocato una reazione così violenta sia contro Geremia, sia nei confronti di quanto egli aveva fatto scrivere al suo discepolo Baruc, a maggior ragione non si sarebbe sopportato di venire a conoscenza di una cattività perpetua, della dispersione del popolo giudaico, del suo disonore in contrapposizione all'onore e alla gloria che avrebbero ricevuto i pagani. Anche dagli avvenimenti relativi a Geremia Crisostomo non manca di trarre lo spunto per una digressione, concentrando la sua attenzione in particolare su *Ier.* 43,3 (LXX) ove il Signore, prescrivendo al profeta di scrivere le sue parole, dice: 'Forse ascolteranno i mali che penso di fare loro e abbandoneranno il loro modo di agire malvagio'. Questo versetto offre l'occasione all'Antiocheno sia

³¹ Su questo punto cfr. il mio studio *La funzione dell'oscurità ... cit.*, p. 368 e la n. 50, anche per quanto concerne altri autori antiocheni.

³² Cfr. *III Reg.* 19,10; *Mt.* 23,37; *Is.* 1,15; *Lc.* 11,47 (anche *Mt.* 23,29).

³³ PG 56,168.

³⁴ *Ier.* 43,1 sgg. (LXX).

di polemizzare contro coloro che accusavano di ignoranza l'Unigenito³⁵, sia di precisare che la prescienza divina non determina il comportamento umano, non elimina la responsabilità delle scelte individuali, come nel caso di Giuda che non è diventato traditore perché Gesù l'ha predetto, mentre al contrario è stato predetto il suo tradimento proprio perché si sarebbe poi verificato.

Nella parte finale della prima omelia Crisostomo sviluppa la propria argomentazione sulla base di due testi paolini. Egli cita innanzitutto *Rom.* 10,20 e pone l'accento sul fatto che l'Apostolo, rifacendosi a *Is.* 65,1, ammira il coraggio del profeta e ne mette in luce l'ardimento in quanto non esita ad alludere all'onore e alla gloria che avrebbero avuto i pagani ed al disonore invece che sarebbe toccato ai giudei (I,6). Ma è soprattutto su *II Cor.* 3,12 sgg. che il nostro autore si sofferma per approfondire il discorso sull'oscurità di quelle profezie dell'AT concernenti la chiamata della Chiesa, l'abbandono della sinagoga, l'abrogazione della legge; in particolare su quest'ultimo aspetto egli insiste fortemente, anche in chiave antieretica³⁶, rilevando altresì il valore e la funzione della legge nella prospettiva della venuta di Cristo in cui essa avrebbe avuto il suo compimento. Da questo punto di vista la legge era provvisoria, ed è proprio tale concetto che per Crisostomo è adombrato nel suddetto brano paolino, dove si parla del velo che rimane sulla lettura dell'AT, non rimosso, perché in Cristo viene eliminato. Secondo il nostro autore il velo, che richiama quello che Mosè aveva sul volto da cui rifluiva una gloria ineffabile³⁷, indica che la legge, identificata in questo contesto con l'AT, era oscura non per quella parte di essa che concorreva a formare la condotta morale dell'uomo (già Origene, come abbiamo visto, si era espresso in modo analogo), ma erano state occultate quelle parti, mediante le quali si poteva apprendere che la legge è abrogata per mezzo di Cristo. Ancora contro gli eretici³⁸ che avevano accolto il predetto passo paolino perché vi ravvisavano un'accusa contro la legge, l'Antiocheno replica rivendicando al contrario la grandezza della legge, la sua gloria che consiste nel poter insegnare che è abrogata in Cristo, nel guidare a lui.

Se Crisostomo accenna polemicamente al fatto che i giudei non possono contemplare la gloria della legge, come, all'epoca di Mosè, non erano in grado di vedere la gloria del suo volto, coperto dal velo, attacca con maggior insistenza gli eretici, rilevando che la legge non solo non è cattiva né in contrasto con Cristo, ma anzi costituisce il punto di partenza per la fede in lui.

³⁵ Si può qui intravedere un'allusione agli ariani e alla loro dottrina dell'inferiorità del Figlio nei confronti del Padre: cfr. in proposito É. Bouland, *L'hérésie d'Arius et la 'foi' de Nicée*, I (Paris, 1972), p. 90; M. Simonetti, *op. cit.*, pp. 74,384.

³⁶ Contro marcioniti e manichei: cfr. il mio studio *La funzione dell'oscurità...cit.*, p. 370 n. 56.

³⁷ *Exod.* 34,29 sgg.

³⁸ *De proph. obscur.* I,7; 174-175. Cfr. la n. 36.

Con il ringraziamento a Dio per la sua bontà e provvidenza, l'esortazione a vivere in modo degno di tale generosità e la consueta dossologia finale Crisostomo conclude la prima omelia in cui sviluppa il tema dell'oscurità delle profezie partendo dalla motivazione tradizionale secondo la quale essa doveva salvaguardare l'incolumità dei profeti e l'integrità delle stesse Scritture e approfondendo successivamente il discorso con il mettere in evidenza che tale oscurità riguardava in particolare la provvisorietà e precarietà della legge, la cui gloria era costituita dal fatto di essere propedeutica a Cristo e di essere in lui abrogata. Da un punto di vista esegetico in questa prima omelia emergono la figura di Melchisedek, la cui chiave di lettura è funzionale alla polemica antiariana, la storia di Geremia che ha lo scopo di illustrare compiutamente la motivazione tradizionale dell'oscurità delle profezie, il brano di *II Cor.* 3,12 sgg., interpretato nella prospettiva della funzione svolta dalla legge in rapporto con la venuta di Cristo.

Come si è osservato in precedenza, la seconda omelia fu pronunciata di domenica. Nell'esordio Crisostomo, con una sorta di *captatio benevolentiae*, si rallegra per la quantità e qualità del pubblico che ascolta la sua predicazione paragonando la propria gioia a quella del mandriano e dell'agricoltore che esultano nel vedere l'armento pieno di vigore e le messi rigogliose. Servendosi delle immagini della semina e della pesca il nostro autore mette in luce come la fecondità del suo insegnamento non dipenda dalle proprie capacità, ma dalla buona predisposizione, dalla docilità, dalla sapienza del suo uditorio; così anche se si spargono pochi semi, si ricava ugualmente un raccolto abbondante se la terra è fertile e grassa, e nonostante l'imperizia dei pescatori, se il mare è ricco di pesci, si potranno catturare molte prede. Pur consapevole quindi della sua inadeguatezza e insufficienza, l'Antiocheno, nella certezza che la sua parola fruttificherà nell'animo dei fedeli in virtù della loro prontezza nell'accoglierla, si accinge a riprendere e completare l'esposizione del tema affrontato nell'omelia precedente.

Innanzitutto egli riassume quanto aveva osservato sulla maggior oscurità dell'AT rispetto al NT e ritorna sulla testimonianza di Paolo che in *II Cor.* 3,14 parla del velo che rimane sulla lettura dell'AT e che viene eliminato in Cristo. Ribadendo l'interpretazione del velo nel senso dell'oscurità, Crisostomo rileva che la legge aveva un velo perché non potevano essere ancora compresi gli insegnamenti perfetti relativi a Cristo, adombrati e racchiusi, come in un tesoro, nell'AT. In questo modo la legge, di cui viene messa ancora in evidenza la valenza positiva, si mostrava condiscendente e conservava in sé tutta la ricchezza di cui era portatrice, affinché il velo fosse rimosso con la venuta di Cristo e le profezie su di lui raggiungessero il loro compimento (II,1).

A questo punto Crisostomo, proseguendo nella linea di attenuazione della polemica anti giudaica, come abbiamo constatato nella parte finale della prima omelia ove l'accento è spostato piuttosto sugli eretici, nota che i giudei non

erano passibili di accusa se non comprendevano quelle profezie su Cristo che si sarebbero svelate solo dopo la sua venuta, e a tal riguardo cita significativamente la prima parte di *Io. 15,22*, ove Cristo dice: 'Se non fossi venuto e non avessi parlato loro, non avrebbero peccato'. I giudei non avevano perciò colpa in quanto tali profezie erano oscure; ma, pur nella loro oscurità, le profezie avevano una precisa finalità che consisteva nel fare in modo che, al momento della venuta di Cristo, i giudei avessero al loro interno i maestri che li spronassero e facessero comprendere ad essi che l'evento relativo a Cristo rientrava nel piano provvidenziale divino ed era stato preannunciato molto tempo prima, il che contribuì ad attirare alla fede in lui (II,2). Si noti che in questo contesto Crisostomo non mette in luce esplicitamente, come nell'omelia precedente, la provvisorietà e l'abrogazione della legge in Cristo, ma piuttosto la sua forza propulsiva che avrebbe spinto gli uomini a volgersi verso di lui.

Il riferimento ai profeti come maestri che il popolo giudaico aveva al suo interno per prepararsi ad accogliere Cristo, riappare nella sezione dell'omelia che illustra un altro motivo che rende l'AT più difficile del Nuovo (II,2-3), vale a dire il fatto che il primo è stato tradotto dall'ebraico in greco; ora questo passaggio da un sistema linguistico ad un altro è alla base dell'impossibilità di rendere in tutta la sua chiarezza una lingua, con le sue proprietà costitutive, nel momento in cui viene tradotta in un'altra. Ad ogni modo, nonostante questa difficoltà, la traduzione dell'AT in greco si è rivelata utile e provvidenziale perché, superando l'ostacolo rappresentato per molti popoli dall'oscurità della lingua ebraica, ha fatto conoscere, prima della venuta di Cristo, numerose profezie che lo riguardavano, affinché tutte le genti, e anche i giudei che, sparsi per il mondo, avevano abbandonato la lingua ebraica, potessero trarre vantaggio da questa traduzione ed avere la strada aperta alla conoscenza di Cristo. Di conseguenza il pagano è arrivato alla fede contemplando i segni dei giudei e d'altra parte gli apostoli non avrebbero potuto cercare di attrarre a sé i giudei se non avessero presentato loro i profeti come maestri che provenivano dal loro interno; così il contenuto del messaggio cristiano, anticipato dalle predizioni dei profeti, conosciute più chiaramente attraverso la traduzione dell'AT, si inseriva nel solco della tradizione precedente e poteva essere più facilmente accolto. In questo contesto il concetto di oscurità si sposta dal contenuto delle profezie alla loro concreta espressione linguistica (l'ebraico); la traduzione in greco finisce con l'essere anch'essa uno strumento propedeutico all'accoglimento di Cristo da parte di pagani e giudei, accomunati in un unico disegno di salvezza.

Il fatto che sia stato necessario tradurre dall'ebraico in greco l'AT perché risultasse più comprensibile induce Crisostomo a mettere da parte la questione dell'oscurità delle profezie per affrontare invece la problematica relativa all'originaria unità linguistica, perduta successivamente dall'uomo che non se ne è mostrato degno; lo svolgimento di questo tema, sia pure interrotto da numerose digressioni, occupa la maggior parte della seconda omelia, da II,3 a II,8,

per poi lasciare ampio spazio all'esortazione ad evitare la maldicenza con cui si conclude l'omelia. Per il nostro autore la perdita dell'unità linguistica, che ha deteriorato il sistema dei rapporti sociali e ha innalzato fra gli uomini il muro della divisione, è un'ulteriore prova dell'ingratitude degli esseri umani nei confronti di Dio; essi a causa della loro negligenza sono stati disonorati rispetto agli animali irrazionali che hanno conservato, ciascuno nel proprio ambito, la voce che era stata assegnata ad essi fin dal principio.

Crisostomo pone diversi problemi chiedendosi fino a quando ci fu una sola lingua e quando si mutò in molte, se quella originaria sparì o rimase quando le altre furono introdotte, per quale motivo avvenne la confusione delle lingue e se l'AT fu composto nella lingua originaria oppure in quelle introdotte successivamente. In realtà il nostro autore, e ne è ben consapevole, non dà una risposta esauriente a nessuno di questi interrogativi nella presente omelia; egli comunque non trascura di accennare ad essi affinché l'uditorio, nell'attesa, lo abbia continuamente nel suo animo. Questa situazione, che gli dà la certezza di poter fruire dell'amore e quindi anche della preghiera del popolo che assiste numeroso alla sua predicazione, offre lo spunto a Crisostomo di sviluppare una digressione sulla preghiera, soprattutto quella ecclesiale, di cui mette in evidenza la grande capacità di intercedere presso il Signore, servendosi specificamente degli esempi degli apostoli Pietro e Paolo che trassero molti benefici dalla concorde preghiera della comunità cristiana³⁹. Se si tiene presente che la seconda omelia fu pronunciata di domenica, si comprende meglio perché Crisostomo dia forte rilievo all'efficacia della preghiera della moltitudine riunita in chiesa per supplicare Dio con la forza derivante dal vincolo dell'amore vicendevole, nel contesto di un'esortazione a partecipare con sollecitudine alle sinassi eucaristiche, durante le quali l'intero corpo della Chiesa unanimemente eleva le preghiere alla presenza dei sacerdoti che le offrono al Signore (II,4). Per attestare la grande forza della preghiera comunitaria, tanto più se inserita nell'ambito della celebrazione eucaristica, il nostro autore incentra la sua attenzione sulla preghiera dei fedeli guidata dal diacono che esorta a rivolgere suppliche a Dio per il vescovo, per il mondo, per la Chiesa estesa fino ai confini della terra; questo invito può essere accolto efficacemente proprio dalla comunità ecclesiale riunita in preghiera, consapevole della forza che promana da tale assemblea e fiduciosa quindi di essere esaudita (II,5).

Dopo questa digressione sulla preghiera, Crisostomo ritorna al tema dell'originaria unità linguistica e fa riferimento a *Gen. 11,1* sottolineando che in questo passo, con linguaggio metaforico, si allude al genere umano nel suo complesso, designato con il t. 'terra' in quanto da essa è derivato. Invece di sviluppare e approfondire la problematica inerente a *Gen. 11,1* sgg., cui

³⁹ *De proph. obscur.* II,4,5; 181-182. Cfr. il mio studio 'Valore e funzione della preghiera comunitaria secondo Giovanni Crisostomo', *Studi sul cristianesimo antico e moderno in onore di M.G. Mara* (Augustinianum XXXV; 1995), pp. 705 sgg.

accenna alquanto cursoriamente rilevando l'arrogante presunzione di coloro che progettano di costruire la torre di Babele, l'Antiocheno prende lo spunto dalla menzione del t. 'terra' per ribadire la duplicità della costituzione dell'uomo, composto da due sostanze, l'una sensibile e l'altra intelligibile, l'anima e il corpo che hanno affinità rispettivamente con il cielo e con la terra; l'essere umano è quindi presentato come il legame dell'intera creazione perché è partecipe delle potenze celesti mediante la sostanza spirituale, mentre per mezzo di quella sensibile si ricollega alle realtà terrene⁴⁰.

Ma il t. 'terra' viene applicato anche all'uomo in quanto peccatore, come Crisostomo desume, oltre che da *Gen.* 11,1, in cui per lui il termine suddetto viene a denominare i costruttori della torre che con folle temerarietà si erano accinti alla loro vana impresa, anche da altri passi quali *Gen.* 3,19, dove Adamo dopo il peccato è qualificato come terra, *Mal.* 3,24 e *Is.* 11,4, ove la terra che viene colpita è intesa nel senso dei peccatori (II, 5-6).

Inoltre il richiamo alla terra, presente in *Gen.* 11,1, induce secondo il nostro autore a meditare sulla fragilità e precarietà della natura umana, il che costituisce un insegnamento di umiltà, capace di placare le passioni e riportare la tranquillità nell'animo. Di qui la citazione di *Sir.* 29,20 (LXX), *Gen.* 18,27 e ancora *Sir.* 10,9 che invitano a frenare l'orgoglio dell'uomo che, abbagliato dall'inganno dei beni esteriori quali la bellezza fisica, lo sfarzo delle ricchezze, il fasto del potere, si cura soltanto della vita presente e non pensa affatto a quella futura. Con immagini assai efficaci Crisostomo delinea la superbia del potente che con il suo atteggiamento altezioso e arrogante non si rende conto del carattere effimero e caduco della sua esistenza, e mette in luce la vanità che è alla base dello splendore che circonda il re, la cui natura non ha nulla di più della massa dei suoi sudditi. La riflessione sulla pochezza e caducità della natura umana, considerata nella sua finitezza e contrassegnata dalla mortalità, contribuisce dunque a reprimere l'alterigia, a distruggere l'arroganza e a placare altre passioni che possono essere suscitate dalle ricchezze o dalla bellezza femminile.

A questo proposito Crisostomo offre un altro vivace ritratto, descrivendo il fascino e lo splendore della grazia e della leggiadria muliebri, ma anche il loro carattere transeunte, esortando a non fermarsi alle apparenze, a riflettere più a fondo, a non farsi travolgere dal desiderio verso ciò che in ultima analisi è di poco conto ed effimero, tanto più se si pensa a come tale bellezza possa sfiorire con il passare del tempo o l'insorgere di malattie. Il nostro autore tiene comunque a sottolineare che queste sue considerazioni intendono non svilire o deprezzare la natura (con riferimento in questo caso specificamente a quella femminile), ma a combattere la dissolutezza, e sottolinea che la bellezza fisica

⁴⁰ Su questo punto cfr. i miei 'Studi sulla visione dell'uomo in ambito antiocheno (Diodoro, Crisostomo, Teodoro, Teodoreto)', *Quaderni di Studi e Materiali di Storia delle Religioni* n.s.l. (L'Aquila-Roma, 1988), pp. 22 sgg.

da un lato indica la sapienza del Creatore che ha saputo realizzarla anche con il fango (evidente è il richiamo a *Gen.* 2,7), dall'altro proprio a causa della sua fragilità costituisce un incentivo a frenare le passioni (II,7).

Ritornando a *Gen.* 11,1 e puntualizzando che in questo passo il t. χεῖλος indica il linguaggio, il nostro autore, con un'ulteriore digressione, coglie l'occasione per polemizzare con i manichei⁴¹ che consideravano cattivo il corpo prendendo a pretesto alcuni luoghi della Scrittura in cui i cattivi impulsi dell'animo sono designati mediante le membra corporee. Come dunque in *Gen.* 11,1 il termine suddetto va inteso metaforicamente nel senso del linguaggio, così in altri passi, quali *Ps.* 140 (139), 4; 57 (56), 5; 12 (11), 3; 5, 10, altrettanto metaforicamente con i termini 'lingua' e 'gola' sono indicate le cattive parole che causano un danno maggiore di quello provocato dalla spada (II,7). Di qui l'invito, che prolettivamente prepara l'esortazione finale ad evitare la maldicenza, a non esternare per mezzo delle parole i malvagi pensieri che, come belve feroci, si annidano nell'animo e, se non sono prontamente soffocati, si realizzano nelle azioni cattive (II,8).

Dopo aver soltanto posto il problema del motivo per cui furono introdotte molte lingue, il nostro autore abbandona definitivamente questo tipo di problematica e con l'espressione programmatica τὸν ἠθικώτερον γυμνάσωμεν λόγον affronta, nell'ultima parte dell'omelia, il tema morale della disciplina della lingua che deve essere tenuta a freno perché non manifesti indiscriminatamente tutto ciò che proviene dall'animo e non sia indotta a parlare male del prossimo. Della maldicenza Crisostomo mette in luce soprattutto il fatto che, mentre altri peccati hanno delle motivazioni, sia pure irragionevoli, essa al contrario è, per così dire, puramente gratuita perché si fonda su nient'altro se non sull'invidia ed il malanimo. L'unica maldicenza che viene elogiata nella Scrittura, come si evince da *Is.* 43,26 e *Prov.* 18,17 (LXX), è quella rivolta contro i propri peccati; se dunque si accusano gli altri, si viene puniti, mentre se ci si autoaccusa, si viene premiati. A sostegno della propria argomentazione l'Antiocheno fa riferimento a quei giusti che erano soliti non parlare male degli altri, ma di se stessi e cita alcuni personaggi esemplari in tal senso, traendo spunto dall'AT e dal NT; come abbiamo già osservato, questi esempi saranno ripresi nella prima omelia *De diabolico tentatore*⁴². Chi perciò accusa i suoi peccati si procura la giustificazione e il perdono del Signore; di qui l'insistente esortazione di Crisostomo a non essere indagatori delle colpe del prossimo, ma delle proprie, e non solo a non parlare male degli altri, ma a non ascoltare nemmeno le maldicenze altrui (II,9). Con una fine notazione psicologica Crisostomo rileva che, mentre altri peccati, per la loro realizzazione, hanno bisogno di tempo e di preparativi, durante i quali a volte viene meno il cattivo impulso iniziale e non si attua il proposito peccaminoso, la maldicenza

⁴¹ Cfr. *Comm. in Gal.* V,3; PG 61, 668-669.

⁴² *De diab. tent.* I,1; PG 49, 245.

invece non richiede preparativi, ma agisce assai rapidamente, perché è sufficiente soltanto la decisione di parlare; ne consegue che occorre vigilare con maggior attenzione per fuggire un morbo così pericoloso. Avviandosi verso la conclusione il nostro autore, servendosi di un'altra immagine assai realistica, paragona i maldicenti alle mosche perché come queste si pongono sulle ferite e procurano malattie ai corpi su cui si posano, così quelli con il loro riprovevole comportamento finiscono con l'aggravare le ferite dei peccatori divulgando le loro colpe invece di curarle mediante la correzione fraterna, secondo l'indicazione di *Mt.* 18,15, e contribuire al recupero dei peccatori (II,10). Anche questa omelia si conclude con la consueta dossologia.

La seconda omelia si presenta assai varia e composita, meno omogenea della prima, in quanto prende in considerazione diverse tematiche non sempre ben articolate fra di loro. Essa infatti, dopo aver ripreso la questione relativa all'oscurità delle profezie, di cui è messa in rilievo la funzione propedeutica nella prospettiva dell'accoglimento di Cristo, esamina un secondo motivo che rende l'AT se non oscuro, senz'altro però più difficile del NT, vale a dire il problema della traduzione dall'ebraico in greco. Ma ben presto Crisostomo sposta la sua attenzione sull'originaria unità linguistica, perduta dall'uomo all'epoca della costruzione della torre di Babele, richiamandosi a *Gen.* 11,1 sgg. che in realtà utilizza soprattutto per sviluppare un discorso di carattere morale, prendendo lo spunto dal t. 'terra' in cui intravede l'indicazione della realtà sia del peccato sia della precarietà e fragilità della natura umana. Come abbiamo rilevato, frequenti sono le digressioni come quella sulla preghiera che se indubbiamente è di per sé assai significativa e risponde alle esigenze pastorali del nostro autore, ha però un legame molto tenue con il complesso dell'argomentazione crisostomiana. Da un punto di vista strutturale si può notare che l'esortazione finale contro la maldicenza appare in un certo senso come la logica conclusione dell'impostazione parenetica con cui Crisostomo affronta il suddetto testo genesiaco che viene continuamente ripreso e accantonato senza essere oggetto di esegesi globale.

Montfaucon, nel già citato *Monitum*, dà risalto in modo particolare all'aspetto morale sviluppato in queste omelie osservando: 'Has duas conciones inter nobilissimas commemoramus: hic multa ad morum institutionem praeclara'⁴³. Certamente tale giudizio si può condividere soprattutto per quanto riguarda la seconda omelia. Dal punto di vista più strettamente esegetico mi sembra assai suggestiva l'interpretazione di *II Cor.* 3,12 sgg. che offre a Crisostomo l'occasione di superare in qualche modo la polemica anti giudaica, in chiave antieretica, di sottolineare la funzione positiva dell'oscurità delle profezie cristologiche, propedeutiche all'accettazione dell'annuncio del Figlio di Dio, mettendo in evidenza quindi non solo l'abrogazione, ma anche la gloria

⁴³ PG 56, 163-164.

della legge che ha guidato a Cristo. In ultima analisi all'Antiocheno sta maggiormente a cuore mettere in luce la valenza cristologica dell'oscurità delle profezie e il suo carattere pedagogico, teso ad aprire la via alla conoscenza di Cristo a beneficio di pagani e giudei. Tale respiro universalistico appare uno dei tratti caratteristici più incisivi e stimolanti di queste omelie crisostomiane.