

EARLY CHRISTIANITY IN THE CONTEXT OF ANTIQUITY

Edited by Anders-Christian Jacobsen, Christine Shepardson, Jörg Ulrich

Anna Usacheva

Knowledge, Language and Intellection from Origen to Gregory Nazianzen

A Selective Survey

18



PETER LANG
EDITION

Epistemological theories of the patristic authors seldom attract attention of the researchers. This unfortunate status quo contrasts with a crucial place of the theory of knowledge in the thought of such prominent authors as Origen and the Cappadocian fathers. This book surveys the patristic epistemological discourse in its various settings. In the context of the Church history it revolves around the Eunomian controversy, Eunomius' language theory and Gregory Nazianzen's cognitive theory, where the ideas of Apostle Paul were creatively combined with the Peripatetic teaching. In the framework of Biblical exegesis, it touches upon the issues of the textual criticism of the Homeric and Jewish scholarship, which had significantly shaped Origen's paradigm of the Biblical studies.

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To my mother

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All in all, it has been a pure pleasure to work on this project and I sincerely hope that at least some glimpse of my fascination with the process of scholarly research may also please the readers of this book.

1 The investigation was realized with the assistance of the financial support of the European Unions Horizon 2020 research and innovation programme under the grant agreement No 660894.

Introduction

*Actual knowledge is identical with its object.*²

After a brief excursus into Aristotle's concept of 'actual knowledge' Hubert Dreyfus and Charles Taylor in the first chapter of the book *Retrieving Realism* describe, as they call them, the modern contact theories of epistemology characterized by an attempt to re-embed thought and knowledge in the bodily and socio-cultural contexts in which it takes place.³ Taylor remarks that these theories launched primarily by Heidegger, Merleau-Ponty, and Wittgenstein do not depend on ancient philosophy, and indeed, as we know, these modern thinkers very often decisively rebelled against some of the ancient concepts. Yet one cannot help noticing a certain parallelism between, on the one hand, Aristotelian holistic and multivocal ontology and epistemology broadly applied and developed in the Hellenistic period,⁴ and, on the other hand, some of the modern epistemological and hermeneutical discourses bridging textual, historical, philosophical, linguistic, socio-cultural, ethical and anthropological contexts and frameworks.⁵

Speaking of the epistemological discourse of the Hellenistic epoch and the period of Late Antiquity⁶ the following cluster of problems should be mentioned. An enigmatic provenance of the *Corpus Aristotelicum* entails questions concerning the reception and hence interpretation of Aristotelian legacy.⁷ Since recent scholarship suggests new readings of Aristotelian treatises and rethinking the impact of Aristotelian concepts on the Hellenic

2 Cf.: τὸ δαυτὸ ἐστὶν ἢ κατ' ἐνέργειαν ἐπιστήμη τῷ πράγματι (Arist., *De anima* 430a20; transl. J.A. Smith, 1931, available on-line).

3 Dreyfus, H. / Taylor, Ch., *Retrieving Realism*. Cambridge 2015, 25.

4 In his recent monograph Edward Feser draws a vivid picture of an Aristotelian revival in modern scholarship and particularly in the spheres of epistemology, ontology and scientific and philosophic methodology. Feser, E., *Aristotle on Method and Metaphysics*. New York 2013.

5 In her seminal monograph Elizabeth Clark outlines the key trends of 20th century literary theory and in the last chapter of her survey offers an interesting review of Patristics within the framework of literary theory. Clark, E.A., *History, Theory, Text: Historians and the Linguistic Turn*. Cambridge 2004.

6 For the sake of precision and accuracy I use the term Hellenic for designation of the Greek language, pagan culture, nationality, paideia, and the assimilated folks, the term Hellenistic for designation of the period from Alexander the Great and until Augustus.

7 A survey of the scholarly discussions concerning the provenance of the *Corpus Aristotelicum* sketched by Jonathan Barnes pinpoints the systematic problems of

and Christian philosophy and theology,⁸ it also appears to be an ideal time to rethink and question patristic texts in terms of Hellenic epistemological and methodological discourse developed in a productive dialogue between the representatives of the philosophical schools, non-affiliated thinkers, and Christians (some of whom held a philosophical affiliation).⁹

Taking into account the problematic setting of the Hellenistic epistemology, I suggest considering patristic texts within the multidimensional and complex Hellenistic framework including socio-cultural, institutional, historical, and, especially important in this case, intellectual contexts characterized by an undivided and productive collaboration of humanitarian and scientific disciplines.¹⁰

Aristotelian studies, still actively discussed in scholarship. Barnes, J. (ed.), *The Cambridge Companion to Aristotle*. Cambridge 1995, 6–22.

- 8 Based on his new reading of *De anima* and *Metaphysics*, Kurt Pritzl challenged the traditional approach to Aristotelian epistemology and bridged Aristotelian philosophy with Christian theology. Pritzl, K., *Aristotle's Door*, in: Pritzl, K. (ed.), *Truth: Studies of a Robust Presence*. Washington 2010, 15–40. A fresh look at Aristotelian ontology comprising epistemology and cognitive theory is offered by Aryeh Kosman. Kosman, A., *The Activity of Being: An Essay on Aristotle's Ontology*. Cambridge / London 2013. Based on his interpretation of the *Metaphysics Theta*, Jonathan Beere gives an insightful approach to the Aristotelian theory of intellection. Beere, J., *Doing and Being: An Interpretation of Aristotle's Metaphysics Theta*. Oxford 2009. David Bradshaw offered a broad survey of Aristotelian reception and a deep study of the key terms of Aristotle's epistemology. Bradshaw, D., *Aristotle East and West: Metaphysics and the Division of Christendom*. Cambridge 2004.
- 9 A classical survey of Aristotelian reception is found in: Sorabji, R. (ed.), *Aristotle Transformed: The Ancient Commentators and Their Influence*. Ithaca / New York 1990. A keen overview of Aristotelian impact on the Hellenic scientific and philosophical epistemology and methodology is offered in: Gentzler, J. (ed.), *Method in Ancient Philosophy*. Oxford 1998. Jonathan Barnes, in his massive volume of *Logical Matters*, gives a deep investigation of the Aristotelian methodology and its later development mastered by the representatives of various philosophical schools (cf. Barnes, J., *Logical Matters: Essays in Ancient Philosophy II*. Oxford 2012).
- 10 Among the epistemological issues at stake in various disciplines were: in linguistics – a correlation between facts and words; in psychology – between the faculties of sense-perception and intellection, in theology – between the human body and soul, and along with it, the problems of incarnation, resurrection of flesh, and vision of the ascetic practice, exegesis and textual criticism of the Bible. Iain McGilchrist suggested an interesting overview of the history of European epistemology and scientific methodology from a perspective of contemporary neuroscience. He pinpointed the significance of an undivided and holistic methodology that is more discernible in ancient than in modern science (cf. McGilchrist, I., *The Master and His Emissary: The Divided Brain and the Making of the Western World*. New Haven 2009).

Following from this methodological setting¹¹, an initial ambition of my research is to map and outline various contexts relevant to the texts of Origen, Basil of Caesarea, Eunomius and Gregory Nazianzen that I study. Sketching a multicolour background of the texts allows me to question them in various ways and to engage with various problematic settings that were at stake when these texts were composed.

A chief purpose of my research project is to study how Christian and Hellenic authors of the third–fourth centuries regarded knowledge, language and intellection. Within these chronological frontiers the intellectual milieus engaged in the discussions of epistemological issues primarily included members of the philosophical schools, specialists in medicine and grammar, Christian educated elite, and members of the monastic communities. The daily routine of these groups of intellectuals was shaped by the life of the scholarly and philosophical communities, libraries, and scriptoria and for some of them, by the life of the church institutions.

Whatever religious beliefs and philosophical teaching these communities supported, they were similarly engrossed in studying, copying, interpreting and producing texts,¹² and, hence, in pondering various strands of the epistemological and exegetical issues. One of these strands belongs to the field of language theories. Linguistic discussions sharpened by the socio-cultural challenges and shifts accompanying the processes of Hellenization, revolved around the legacy of the classical Greek and its literature (e.g., the phenomenon of the Second Sophistic¹³). From early on, linguistic problems featured

11 Notoriously, importance of the socio-cultural and embodied context for understanding of the text was underlined by Gadamer who introduced a notion of hermeneutical horizon; by Wittgenstein, who in his later Philosophical investigations argued that the language unfolds before the agent who is actively engaged with the context; by Julia Kristeva, who established a notion of intertextuality shaping hermeneutical horizons of the textual and suggesting a comprehensive approach to the interpretation. Cf. Gadamer, H.-G., *Truth and Method*, transl. J. Weinsheimer. New York 2004. Wittgenstein, L., *Philosophical Investigations*, transl. G.E.M. Anscombe. Basil 1953. Kristeva, J., Σημειωτική: *Recherches pour une Sémanalyse*. Paris 1969.

12 Gregory Snyder aptly defined the philological obsession of the Late Empire as the reading-writing culture of the Hellenic epoch (cf. Snyder, G.H., *Teachers and Texts in the Ancient World: Philosophers, Jews, and Christians. Religion in the First Christian Centuries*. London 2000).

13 Graham Anderson and Simon Swain in their monographs highlighted a socio-cultural and political aspect of the Second Sophistic. Anderson, G., *The Second Sophistic: A Cultural Phenomenon in the Roman Empire*. London, New York 1993. Swain, S., *Hellenism and Empire: Language, Classicism and Power in the Greek World A.D. 50–250*. Oxford 1996 (cf. footnote 87).

prominently in the agenda of Hellenic grammarians and textual critiques and later on made their way into the Jewish and Christian exegetic milieus.¹⁴

Another strand of epistemological discussions featured also within philosophical and theological context. In such a way, studies of the physiological prerequisites of human intellective capacity featured in the Hellenic philosophical and medical discourse and proved particularly useful to some of the patristic authors in their partaking of the Trinitarian and Christological controversies.¹⁵ At the top of all the philosophical and scientific puzzles adopted by the Christian authors from their environment, the legalization of Christianity in the Roman Empire was followed by the entrance of big politics in the Christian church agenda.¹⁶

It is no surprise that appreciation of the multidimensional intellectual horizon of Late Antiquity enhances our understanding of the language, explicit and implicit ideas and nuances of patristic texts. Yet, although sketching a historical context of the text is a traditional tool of the historical-philological method, I am unsatisfied with the traditional lineaments of this research methodology. What I find problematic and insufficient about this method is that it frequently predisposes patristic scholars to question theological texts chiefly within the Christian theological framework and to make little of other relevant contexts. As a result of a long-term privilege of the

14 Maren Niehoff traced a trajectory of Aristotelian methodology of the textual studies in Alexandrian and Jewish contexts. Niehoff, M., *Jewish Exegesis and Homeric Scholarship in Alexandria*. Cambridge 2011. On Origen's reception of Alexandrian and Jewish philological methodology cf. chapter 2.

15 In his treatise *De anima*, whose major part (DA 38.12–92.14) is devoted to different cognitive capacities (perception, the individual senses, the common sense, imagination, intellection and an excursus on desire and action; DA 73.14–80.15), Alexander of Aphrodisias polemicizes with Galen of Pergamum and rejects seeing the compound of soul and body in the terms of reductive materialism. Instead, he argues that although the capacities of the soul emerge from blend (sc. κρᾶσις) or mixture (sc. μίξις) of material factors, these capacities do not belong to any of the material constituents (cf. Alexander of Aphrodisias, *On the Soul*. Part 1, transl., introd., comm. V. Caston. London / New York 2012, 10–12). The notions of κρᾶσις and μίξις were used by Gregory Nazianzen in his description of the hylomorphic compound of the soul and body in human being (cf. Greg. *Apologetica* [Or 2] PG 35, 464.11). Later on these notions featured in the formulation of the doctrine of the unmingled union (ἀσύγχυτος ἔνωσις) of the divine and human natures in Christ found in the treatise *On the Nature of man* by Nemesius of Emesa, one of the key figures of the anti-monophysite polemics (cf. Nemesius, *De natura hominis* 3.171).

16 A relevant example from the life of Gregory Nazianzen cf. later, chapter 3, section 2.2.

historical-philological approach, investigation of the epistemological theories of the Christian authors is seldom a topic of the patristic studies.

For instance, the heritage of such a prominent Christian author as Gregory Nazianzen, as far as I am concerned, has never been questioned within the problematic field of Hellenic epistemological discourse. This fact appears particularly surprising in light of Gregory's brilliant classical education and professional status of teacher of rhetoric, which he never completely abandoned.¹⁷ Not only did Gregory feel at home with contemporary philosophical discourse but pedagogical and methodological issues were also some of his preeminent concerns.¹⁸ Bowing to Gregory's heritage Byzantine authors named him the Theologian par excellence and included his orations in the curriculum of rhetorical school.¹⁹ Distinguished Christian theologians such as John Damascene, Maximus the Confessor, Gregory Palamas and others borrowed widely from Gregory's orations and teachings. Nevertheless, in spite of all this evidence, the general scholarly consensus apropos Gregory's heritage proclaims him mostly a philosophical rhetorician²⁰ and such a conclusion naturally precludes further investigations into Gregory's pedagogical methodology and philosophical epistemology. I problematize this status quo and look at Gregory's theological orations within the framework of the epistemological discourse of Late Antiquity shaped by various intellectual, institutional and socio-cultural contexts. Viewed in the light of epistemological discussions the theological orations show a new anthropological and cognitive strand of Gregory's teaching and also reveal a remarkable Peripatetic aspect of his doctrine.

As Gregory borrowed many of his insights from Origen and Basil of Caesarea, I also devote significant attention to the epistemological and linguistic theories of these authors, and especially to Origen. Despite the richness of Origenian studies, the epistemological teaching of Adamantius has not been sufficiently investigated. In the introduction to his recent monograph Robert

17 For details about Gregory's education cf. McGuckin, J.A., *Saint Gregory of Nazianzus. An Intellectual Biography*. New York 2001, 35–85.

18 Frederick Norris pictures a fruitful alliance between the classical *paideia* and Gregorian theology in his fundamental for the Nazianzen studies monograph: Norris, F., *Faith Gives Fullness to Reasoning: the Five Theological Orations of Gregory Nazianzen*. Leiden 1991, 17–39.

19 About the Byzantine reception of Gregory's heritage see: Nimmo Smith, J., *A Christian's Guide to Greek Culture: the Pseudo-Nonnos Commentaries on Sermons 4, 5, 39 and 43 by Gregory of Nazianzus*. Liverpool 2001, xxx–xxxvi. Bady, G., *Le «Démosthène chrétien»: Grégoire le Théologien dans les Rhetores graeci*, in: Somers, V. / Yannopoulos, P. (eds.), *Philokappadox. In memoriam Justin Mossay*. Leuven / Paris 2016, 285–307.

20 Norris, 1991, 38.

Somos expresses his complaint.²¹ His book opens the door to a further investigation of this topic and indeed there is a way to go. Concentrating on the study of Origen's method of argumentation Somos drew revealing parallels with Aristotelian logic and Platonic teaching. Focused on the doctrine of Origen, he did not take into account such important institutional contexts as Hellenic grammar studies and Alexandrian and Jewish textual criticism, which had a decisive influence on Origen's scholarly method and without which a picture of Origen's epistemological teaching cannot be sufficient. Before Somos, scholars did pay attention to Origen's relation to the methodological heritage of Hellenic grammarians and textual critiques,²² but these studies never exceeded the format of an article and I believe this field still holds a potential for new discoveries.

Investigation of the epistemological and methodological concepts of Origen and Gregory embedded in their peculiar socio-cultural, intellectual and institutional contexts not only reveals some new aspects of their teaching and connections with various Hellenic intellectual milieus, but also allows one to approach the ancient text with clear recognition of the inevitable limitations of our reading. That is to say, it is difficult to be optimistic when looking at the text as a reflection of the complex life of the society, and as a result of a long and enigmatic track of transmission and reception. Nevertheless, I believe that this approach holds an extensive academic potential for interdisciplinary studies. In my investigation I follow methodological guidance of contemporary scholarship, which bridges cognitive and literary theories and contends that the epistemological framework²³ and environmental context²⁴ of a literary composition is just as important for the formation of meaning²⁵ as words and sentences, which constitute the textual tissue.

21 Somos, R., *Logic and Argumentation in Origen*. Münster 2015.

22 For details cf. later chapter 2, section 2.

23 Cf. a framework of the project “*Modes of Knowing and the Ordering of Knowledge in Early Christianity c. 100–700*” headed by Lewis Ayres and the relevant publications of the major investigators of the project.

24 A project entitled “*New Contexts for Old Texts: Unorthodox Texts and Monastic Manuscript Culture in Fourth- and Fifth-Century Egypt*” guided by Hugo Lundhaug focuses on issues of textual transmission and environmental context of the codices (cf. Lied, L.I. / Lundhaug, H. [eds.], *Snapshots of Evolving Traditions: Jewish and Christian Manuscript Culture, Textual Fluidity, and New Philology*. Berlin / Boston 2017). A project “*Early Monasticism and Classical Paideia*”, run by Samuel Rubenson concentrates on studying the transmission of the *Apophthegmata Patrum*, within various relevant institutional, linguistic and historical contexts.

25 Evans, V. / Green, M., *Cognitive Linguistics: An Introduction*. Mahwah / New Jersey 2006.

Owing to the amplitude of this research methodology I was obliged to limit my investigation of *Knowledge, Language and Intellection from Origen to Gregory Nazianzen* to a selective survey of the relevant issues. Among these issues are particularly influential events of the Christian intellectual history of the third–fourth centuries.

The first major focal point of my study focuses on the biblical studies of Origen, which comprised the Hexapla project, the formation of the biblical canon, and an attempt to create a Christian research institution akin to the Alexandrian Mouseion and to formulate a coherent system of Christian theological knowledge.

The second focal point of my research revolves around the linguistic-ontological-cosmological debates that arose from the teaching of Aëtius and Eunomius, and the comprehensive anti-Eunomian polemic of the Cappadocian fathers, which resulted in the formation of the chief Christian doctrines and hence structured the Christian system of education, monastic communities, Church rituals, etc. Thus, in this monograph I explore the heritage of Origen, Eunomius, Basil of Caesarea and Gregory Nazianzen, and trace the interconnections between their concepts and the relevant teachings of Hellenic and Jewish philosophers, grammarians, scientists and exegetes.

My study comprises two major parts. The first part provides an introduction to those aspects of Hellenic social life and culture (libraries, schools, scriptoria) which are relevant to the formation of the Christian paideia and biblical exegesis. It also surveys the notions of Peripatetic and Stoic logic, linguistics and grammar and shows how these terms and conceptions were adopted by Origen, Eunomius, Basil and Gregory in their theological argumentation. On the whole, the purpose of the first part is to sketch a comprehensive background for the discussions about knowledge, language and intellection, which featured in the doctrines of the mentioned authors and occasioned the composition by Gregory Nazianzen of his theological orations.

The second part of the monograph illuminates the crucial clusters of epistemological, linguistic and ontological puzzles which resound throughout the theological orations of Gregory Nazianzen (written in reaction to Eunomian teaching); it also shows in what way the epistemological and cognitive theories that had emerged in Hellenic philosophy penetrated Gregory's theological discourse and shaped his anthropological, Christological and Trinitarian teaching.

In the conclusions to each of these two parts I highlight various aspects of the knowledge, language and intellection peculiar to the theological discussions of the third–fourth centuries that were shaped by different relevant institutional, socio-cultural and intellectual contexts. On the whole, I hope that the selective survey given in this book will provoke further questioning and investigation of the epistemological theories of the patristic authors within their relevant multidimensional contexts.

Part One: Language and Theological Knowledge in the Teachings of Origen, Basil and Eunomius

Introduction to Part One

The first part is an introduction to the epistemological and pedagogical debates which formed the framework for the third–fourth century theological discussions and particularly Eunomian teaching. By briefly surveying Hellenic philosophical discussions concerning the scientific method,²⁶ cognition (sense-perception, imagination, reasoning and intellection²⁷) and language²⁸ I outline the chief issues and methodological patterns which surfaced within theological debates and drove the formation of Christian doctrine. This part is divided into five chapters.

The first chapter is an overview of the epistemological and pedagogical issues debated during the Hellenistic epoch and Late Antiquity. While epistemology, or the study of knowledge (viz. understanding, or justified belief), investigates the process and methodology of thinking, it also involves such disciplines as linguistics, logic, and psychology since they specifically explore the faculties of sense-perception, imagination, conceptualization and naming, discursive and intuitive thinking. The Christian and pagan authors of Late Antiquity were deeply concerned with these issues. Naturally enough, epistemological discourse resonated in the Hellenic and Christian *paideia*, scholarly environments and theological discussions.

In the second chapter, I examine the epistemological and didactic principles of Origen's biblical studies. I survey the methodology of such Hellenic institutions and environments as the Alexandrian Mouseion, Homeric scholarship, Jewish exegesis, and Hellenic grammatical scholarship. These environments had a pronounced effect on Origen's influential exegetic and theological methodology.

In the third chapter I consider Eunomian teaching within the framework of the historical circumstances, socio-cultural and philosophical debates of Late Antiquity. Coming closer to the analysis of Eunomian doctrine in the

26 By the scientific and philosophical method in this book I mean the way of solving a conundrum of correlation between the empirical and theoretical. Hence, methodology, i.e. deliberate system of the scientific and philosophical argumentation, depends on the solution of this conundrum.

27 For a detailed account of various cognitive capacities cf. part two, chapter 3.

28 The linguistic discussions chiefly revolved around the problem of correlation between things and their names (sc. words). For details cf. chapter 4.

fourth chapter, I discuss the core linguistic and ontological strands of his teaching. This section also includes an excursus on relevant terminology,²⁹ and an outline of the logical, linguistic and theological concepts of Origen and Basil of Caesarea, which echoed in the Post-Nicene theological discourse and especially in Gregory Nazianzen's teaching.³⁰

Chapter 1. Epistemological and Pedagogical Debates of Late Antiquity: Language, Logic and Theology

1. Epistemology from the Hellenistic epoch to Late Antiquity: Aristotelian methodological turn

Although questions about the sources and justification of knowledge had already emerged in the discussions of the Pre-Socratic philosophers,³¹ I start this survey with Aristotle because his comprehensive approach to epistemology constituted a point of no return in the philosophical and scientific theory of knowledge. Aristotelian epistemology embraced logical, linguistic, physical, physiological, anthropological, ethical, ontological and cognitive aspects of the theory of knowledge and hence outlined a framework for the complex and interdisciplinary studies of those perennially big questions that are equally relevant to various scientific and humanitarian disciplines.

It would be unfair to talk about the Aristotelian scientific method without acknowledging that his ideas were, although in many aspects genuinely innovative, nonetheless an evolution of Platonic philosophy. Plato distinguished between opinion (sc. δόξα) and knowledge (sc. ἐπιστήμη): in his view, justified knowledge (i.e. knowledge which is acquired by causal reasoning) is

29 I focus on the following terms: thing signified (sc. σημαίνόμενον), name (sc. ὄνομα), common quality (sc. κοινῶς ποιόν), individual quality (sc. ἰδίως ποιόν), relation (sc. σχέσις), concept (sc. ἐπίνοια), essence (sc. οὐσία) and hypostasis (sc. ὑπόστασις).

30 Gregory acknowledged Basil's mentoring role in his intellectual upbringing. E.g., in his pahegyric to Basil Gregory praised Basil's excellent command of rhetoric, grammar and philosophy (sc. "the practical and the theoretical [philosophy] and also that which concerns logical proofs and antitheses and tricks", cf. *Or* 43.23; here and afterwards transl. C.G. Browne / J.E. Swallow, 1894, unless otherwise mentioned). As for the influence of Origen, I tend to accept that Gregory and Basil compiled the *Philocalia*, mentioned in Gregory's letter to Theodoretus of Tyana (*Ep* 115) as "a small volume of choice thoughts from Origen, containing extracts of passages which may be of service to scholars," a volume which he compiled together with Basil.

31 Cf. Graham, D.W., *Heraclitus: Flux, Order and Knowledge*, in: Curd, P. / Graham, D.W. (eds.), *The Oxford Handbook of Pre-Socratic Philosophy*. Oxford 2008, 169–189.

superior to right opinion (cf. *Meno* 98a). Aristotle significantly elaborated upon this principal distinction for he distinguished different kinds of knowledge (cf. *EN* 1141a–1143b) and outlined a method for the process of causal reasoning.³² Hence, Aristotelian epistemology provided a basis for the comprehensive scientific and philosophical studies whose pillars were classification and method. In the *Nicomachean Ethics* Aristotle claimed:

...a man knows a thing scientifically [sc. non-accidentally] when he possesses a conviction arrived at in a certain way, and when the first principles on which that conviction rests are known to him with certainty³³ (*EN* 1139b20).

In other words, according to Aristotle, to know a thing scientifically and non-accidentally (sc. μὴ τὸν κατὰ συμβεβηκός) means to know it methodologically, therefore recognition of the method must be a prerequisite of any scientific exploration (*APo* 71a4ff).

The method of scientific research, according to Aristotle, rests on first premises, or first causes (sc. αἰτίαι), which are immediate, primitive, true, uncontroversial, basic truths (*APo* 71b20).³⁴ In the *Prior Analytics*, he asserts that the starting points (sc. ἀρχαὶ) of scientific explanation are grasped by the sense-perception³⁵ (sc. αἴσθησις). In the *Nicomachean Ethics* Aristotle contends:

All teaching (πᾶσα διδασκαλία) starts from facts previously known (ἐκ προγιγνωσκομένων) ... since it proceeds either by way of induction (δι' ἐπαγωγῆς), or else by way of deduction (ἢ δὲ συλλογισμῶ). Now induction supplies a first principle or universal (ἢ μὲν δὴ ἐπαγωγή ἀρχὴ ἐστὶ καὶ τοῦ καθόλου), deduction works from universals (ὁ δὲ συλλογισμὸς ἐκ τῶν καθόλου) (*EN* 1139b25–30).

This methodological approach to epistemological issues led to the demarcation of the demonstrative or theoretical (sc. ἀποδεικτική), and inductive or empirical (sc. ἐπαγωγική), kinds of knowledge (and hence, of the theoretical and empirical disciplines). In this fashion, all the sciences, including philosophy, were defined by Aristotle as probative disciplines, whose task

32 For a general account of Aristotelian epistemology cf. Taylor, C.C.W., *Aristotles Epistemology*, in: Everson, S. (ed.), *Companions to Ancient Thought 1: Epistemology*. Cambridge 1990, 116–142.

33 Here and later I quote the translation of *Nicomachean Ethics* by H. Rackham (1934), available on-line.

34 For the details and scholarly discussion of the two kinds of the starting points cf. Reeve, C.D.C., *Dialectic and Philosophy in Aristotle*, in: Gentzler, J. (ed.), *Method in Ancient Philosophy*. Oxford 1998, 227–252.

35 Cf.: “The majority of principles for each science are peculiar to it consequently; it is for our experiences concerning each subject to provide the principles” (*APr* 46a17–20; transl. R. Smith, 1989, 49).

consisted in the collecting, arranging and analyzing of empirical data, noting regularities and deducing reasonable and logical explanations of phenomena.

Metaphysics occupied a special place in the Aristotelian system because its stated purpose was to “investigate universally about the things which exist insofar as they exist” (*Met* 1003a21–6).³⁶ In other words, as opposed to other disciplines focused on the studies of various attributes and relations of things and phenomena, the domain of metaphysics is the substance of things or existence *per se*.

Aristotle introduced logic as a basic scientific method. He proved the effectiveness of his methodology in various scientific and humanitarian disciplines. Eventually, the identification of a common methodological framework of various disciplines had a remarkable effect on the general development of science, humanities and educational institutions.³⁷ The Peripatetics and Platonists unanimously considered logic as an effective instrument for scientific and philosophical investigations.³⁸

In the Middle Academy Aristotelian logic was integrated in the school program. Porphyrus’s *Isagoge* put a watershed between the reception paradigms of the Middle-Platonic and Neoplatonic schools. While Middle-Platonic exegesis tended to attribute Aristotle’s insights to Plato, Porphyry put forward the integrity of Aristotelian logic. Thus, from the third century and onwards the studies at the Neoplatonic school began with the *Isagoge*, followed by the exegesis of Aristotle and then of Plato.³⁹

Along with Aristotelian “categorical” syllogisms the logical training included the study of the ‘hypothetical’ syllogisms (introduced by the Stoics) and the “relative” syllogisms (discovered by Galen⁴⁰). In general, the place of

36 Here and later I quote the translation of *Metaphysics* by W.D. Ross (1924), available on-line.

37 About the use of logic in antiquity cf. Barnes, J., *Argument in Ancient Philosophy*, in: Sedley, D. (ed.), *The Cambridge Companion to Greek and Roman Philosophy*. Cambridge 2003, 20–41.

38 Alexander of Aphrodisias starts his *Commentary on the Prior Analytics* by saying that “logic and the syllogistic discipline (λογική τε καὶ συλλογιστική πραγματεία) comprises the demonstrative and dialectic and experimental and sophistic methods (ἀποδεικτική καὶ ἡ διαλεκτική τε καὶ πειραστική ἔτι τε καὶ ἡ σοφιστική μέθοδος) and that it is not a part but an instrument of philosophy (μὴ μέρος αὐτὴν ἀλλ ὄργανον φιλοσοφίας)” (*ComAPr* 1.5–2.1; transl. mine). Plotin held the same view (cf. *Enn* 1.3.5.9).

39 Praechter, 1990, 41.

40 E.g., Hippolytus of Rome at the beginning of the third century asked rhetorically: Who did not know that Aristotle had “turned philosophy into an expertise and was given to logic (εἰς τέχνην φιλοσοφίαν ἤγαγεν καὶ λογικώτερος ἐγένετο)” (*Ref* 1.20.1); and later declared that it was the Stoics, not Aristotle, who

logic in the Hellenic intellectual mindset was a debatable issue: some scholars regarded it as an instrumental, others as an independent discipline.⁴¹

On the whole, the influence of the Aristotelian mode of argumentation went beyond the employment of logic and could likewise be seen in the literary domain. For example, the simplicity and accuracy of Aristotelian style in the *Organon* were recognised by the Peripatetics and Stoics as the characteristics of a proper scientific style.⁴² Accordingly, of obscurity (sc. ἀσάφεια) which occasionally occurred in Aristotelian works, Theophrastus stated that Aristotle applied it to attract the readers' attention (Demetrius, *De Elocutione* 1.158). By contrast, the Neo-Platonists regarded Aristotelian obscurity as a sign of esoteric writing.⁴³

A more detailed description of Aristotelian epistemology and methodology is provided in the second chapter, in which I identify how Peripatetic ideas resonated in the theological thought of Gregory Nazianzen. Presently, it is important to highlight the particularly significant consequences for Hellenic thought and the Hellenic educational system of the recognition of a common epistemological framework.

1.1 *The epistemological conundrums of the Hellenic grammatical and medical studies*

Although the principle of the logical (sc. cause-and-effect) correspondence between various theoretical and empirical phenomena was generally accepted by the Hellenic scientists (c.f., e.g., Galen, *De methodo medendi* 10.32.2), the nature of the correlation between empirical evidence and theoretical reasoning never ceased to puzzle the minds of scholars and philosophers in Classical and Late Antiquity. For this reason there emerged in the Hellenistic age, in different fields of philosophical and scientific studies,⁴⁴ a methodological debate revolving, in one way or another, around the understanding of the ἐμπειρία – θεωρία correlation.

made philosophy more syllogistic (ἐπὶ τὸ συλλογιστικώτερον τὴν φιλοσοφίαν ἠϋξήσαν)” (*Ref* 1.21.1; transl. mine).

41 Cf. Hadot, P., *La logique, Partie ou Instrument de la Philosophie?* in: Hadot, I. (éd., trad., com.), *Simplicius, Commentaire sur les Catégories*, fasc. 1. Leiden 1990, 184–188.

42 In such a way, the Stoics elaborated a teaching about the virtues and vices of discourse, where clear expression was conceived as “containing just what is necessary for the clarification of the sense (τοῦ πράγματος)” (Diog., 8.59).

43 E.g., Themistius, *Oratio* 36 (Ἐπεὶ τοῦ λέγειν ἢ πῶς τῷ φιλοσόφῳ λεκτέον) 319c.

44 Cf. Barnes, 2003, 20–41.

One example from the field of medicine is the debate in the third century BC between the so-called Dogmatists and Empiricists, which involved questioning the possibility of drawing reliable theoretical inferences from empirical data.⁴⁵ Galen (who had a compromised position in the debate though he officially sided with the Dogmatists⁴⁶) tells us in his treatise *On sects for beginners* that this debate turned out to be crucial for the development of medicine.⁴⁷ He also noted that the issue at stake in the debate was of an epistemological nature: the Dogmatists believed that theoretical generalizations and detection of the initial causes of a disease could help a doctor properly identify an efficient treatment. Empiricists contested the value of rational generalizations and preferred to rely on a practical approach and on tested treatments.

A comparable epistemological debate emerged in the field of grammar.⁴⁸ Many Hellenic grammarians⁴⁹ supported the principle of analogy in grammar and consequently became known as Analogists (or Rationalists). The Analogists claimed that the principle of grammatical regularity provides an effective and reliable tool for establishing grammatical and syntactic rules and correcting mistakes. Their opponents (the so-called Anomalists) deprecated the value of grammatical analogy as a fundamental linguistic principle. The Anomalists asserted that the observation of the everyday use of language is a better tool for grammatical analysis than seeking to impose grammatical regularity (cf. Sextus, *M* 1.191). Some scholars, however, argued for a position of compromise.⁵⁰ Thus, Apollonius Dyscolus postulated that a correct form should be observed in everyday usage and justified by rational demonstration (sc. ἀπόδειξις) of a relevant grammatical regularity (*Pron* 72.20, *Adv* 126.3, *Constr* 162.4).

45 For the details cf. Hankinson, R.J., *Philosophy and Science*, in: Sedley, D. (ed.), *The Cambridge Companion to Greek and Roman Philosophy*. Cambridge 2003, 271–299.

46 Galen suggested constantly checking the logical conclusions (sc. λόγος) against experience (sc. πείρα), instead of adherence to either of them. The same methodological approach can be detected in Basil of Caesarea's *Homilies on Hexaemeron* 6.11.

47 For details cf. Bates, D., *Knowledge and the Scholarly Medical Traditions*. Cambridge 1995, 37.

48 For details cf. Frede, M., *An Empiricist View of Knowledge: Memorism*, in: Everson, S. (ed.), *The Cambridge Companions to Ancient Thought: Epistemology*. Cambridge 1990, 225–250.

49 The Alexandrian grammarians (Callimachus, Aristarchus of Samothrace, Dionysius Thrax, Apollonius Dyscolus et al.) and their Pergamon colleagues (Crates of Mallus and his pupils).

50 E.g., Galen and Apollonius Dyscolus (Greek grammarian of the second century AD).

These debates, which *prima facie* appear to be of a singularly technical nature, in fact touched upon capital epistemological notions such as law (sc. νόμος), analogy (sc. ἀκολουθία), paradigm (sc. κανών), and most significantly – the conundrum of the correlation between facts or phenomena and concepts or ideas. In classical and late antiquity this conundrum surfaced in a philosophical discussion about the nature of human language and the process of naming. Thus Plato, in his *Cratylus*, thoroughly scrutinized the heuristic potential of discursive thought, which is bound with words (or names, sc. ὀνόματα) and to a certain degree depends upon the norms of language. The participants of the dialogue survey the issue (which is also known as the question of the correctness of names) from various perspectives and suggest that either things receive their names conventionally (sc. θέσει) or that names are inherently, naturally (sc. φύσει) bound with things.

In Hellenic discourse⁵¹ the investigation of the correlation between things and their names (sc. πράγματα and ὀνόματα) turned out to be particularly important. In this discussion, the positions of the major philosophical schools were generally allocated as follows: the Peripatetics believed that names were bestowed by arrangement (cf. Origen, *Cels* 1.24), Platonists inclined towards the natural provenance of language⁵² (cf. Plato, *Cra* 383a–b). The Stoics supported a compromise solution. They conceived of names as assigned (sc. θέσει) to things in accordance with their nature and thus correct (sc. φύσει).

Although the Stoics believed in the original correctness of names, they nonetheless contended that over time the correct names of pristine language were misused by corrupted humanity in such a way that the current linguistic reality (of their time) represented rather messy material, whose original appearance should be reconstructed by means of etymology⁵³ (cf. Philo, *Opif* 150). Stoic linguistics believed that the natural agreement between signifiers and things they signified had been confused by incorrect derivation and had eventually led to ambiguity and homonymy. Hence, the Stoics considered it

51 This issue never ceased to surface in different contexts within various methodological debates: Sluiter, I., *Textual Therapy. On the Relationship between Medicine and Grammar in Galen*, in: Horstmanshoff, H.F.J. (ed.), *Hippocrates and Medical Education*. Leiden 2010, 25–52.

52 Plato in the *Cratylus* argued for the substantial character of names, saying that they bring out the power (sc. δύναμις) of the thing named (*Cra* 384d–e). He also affirmed that the sounds or “elements (sc. στοιχεῖα) of which names are composed” imitate both the function (sc. δύναμις) and the essence (sc. οὐσία) of a thing named, hence bestowing on a name prominent heuristic power (*Cra* 432b1–7). In later times this issue became a commonplace of philosophical discourse.

53 Cf. Blank, D.L., *Ancient Philosophy and Grammar: the Syntax of Apollonius Dyscolus*. Chico 1982, 21.

a task of the philosopher-grammarians to analyse the process of the development of language and to reconstruct the etymologies of words (cf. Ammonius, *ComInterpr* 42.30 = *SVF* 2.164).⁵⁴

One of the products of Stoic linguistic studies⁵⁵ was a theory of the sequential provenance of parts of speech. The Stoics taught that it is peculiar to nouns (personal names and appellatives) to signify substance and to be succeeded by verbs, which signify a certain state of substance (cf. Diog., 7.57 = *SVF* 2.147, 148). Stoic etymological theory echoed in their allegorical interpretation of the classical texts⁵⁶ (e.g., the works of the classical poets). Although the Stoics were primarily associated with creating allegories⁵⁷ this method of textual analysis was widespread among all scholars irrespective of their philosophical affiliation.

In such a way, Aristotle states in his *Poetics* that a metaphorical reading of an epic text should be adopted when the poet employs a metaphorical or analogical resemblance between different things (*Poet* 1457b16–19). He states that metaphor is a transfer of a name that belongs to something else (*Poet* 1457b6). Hence Aristotelian metaphorical interpretation implies detection of “the habitual use of the phrase” (τὸ ἔθος τῆς λέξεως), that requires a comprehensive comparison of various employments of the word or phrase (*Poet* 1461a31–3).

Platonists also made use of allegory. As opposed to the Peripatetic, the Platonic version of allegory was an obscure spiritual reading,⁵⁸ or in a definition of Porphyry, allegorical interpretation should be considered as the “conjectures of ingenious men” (Porph., *Nymph* 18).

54 Cf. von Arnim, H.F.A. (ed.), *Stoicorum Veterum Fragmenta*, in 4 vols. Leipzig 1903–1931 (available on-line).

55 I distinguish between linguistics and logic using modern notions in order to clarify my research objectives, although in Stoic doctrine there was no strict distinction between grammatical and logical matters (Stoic logic consisted of rhetoric and dialectic, which included grammar, sc. the conception of τὸ σημαῖνον, and logic, sc. the conception of τὸ σημαϊνόμενον (cf. Diog., 8.41 = *SVF* 2.45).

56 Cf. the examples of the Stoic etymologies in the fragments 156–163 of the second volume of von Arnim’s *SVF* (*Chrysippi Fragmenta logica et physica*). E.g., fragment 156, Schol. *Il.* Δ 295: “ἀλάστωρ – a sinner or according to Chrysippus – a killer, got his name because his deed deserves outcasting (ἀλᾶσθαι) that is to say he should be banished” (transl. mine).

57 The Stoics were known for their attempts to support their teaching by the authority of Homer (cf. Eustathios, *Commentarii ad Homeri Iliadem* 11.32–40).

58 Cf.: “Since this narration is full of obscurities, it can be neither a fiction casually devised for the purpose of [the readers’] delight nor an exposition of a topical history, but something allegorical (must be indicated in it by the poet, who mystically places an olive near the cave” (Porph., *Nymph* 2.14–17; transl. T. Taylor, 1917, 173).

By contrast, the Stoic version of allegorical interpretation⁵⁹ was characterized by its appeal to the etymology of a word. Crates of Mallus, a founder of the Pergamon school of grammar and an adherent of Stoic philosophy, was known as an expert in allegory.

The hitherto described epistemological problems later on surfaced in the Christian theological and exegetic context; various kinds of allegorical and metaphorical interpretations also made their way into Jewish and Christian biblical studies.

1.2 *Philological paradigm of Hellenic paideia*

As I have already noted, from the Hellenistic epoch and onwards interest increased in the linguistic and psychological aspects of epistemological problems⁶⁰ (sc. the processes of naming, sensual perception and conceptualization). Consequently, one way or another, linguistic questions surfaced within the different parts of philosophy, and the development of grammar⁶¹ as a systematic discipline produced a significant impact on science and philosophy.

The grammarians of the Alexandrian and Pergamum schools took advantage of Stoic and Aristotelian linguistic studies. They chiefly (though not exclusively) occupied themselves with grammatical technicalities and shifted grammatical studies away from basic questions towards specific philological issues and textual criticism. Their study of the grammatical regularities and solecisms of the Greek language resulted in the systematization of the basic rules of grammar and syntax, and in the significant development of textual criticism. Notably, the formalisation of language per se is a telling milestone in the intellectual maturation of Hellenic society. It underscores a characteristic

59 The allegorical method of exegesis was chiefly associated with the Stoic doctrine. Thus, Cicero said that Chrysippus in his writings gave a definitive statement of the principal Stoic doctrines, and that he “wanted to harmonize the myths in Orpheus, Musaeus, Hesiod, and Homer with his own views... about the immortal gods, so that the earliest poets, who had not the slightest idea about these views, would appear to have been Stoics” (*De natura deorum* 1.41; transl. H. Rackham, 1933, available on-line).

60 Cf. Charles, D., *Aristotle on Names and Their Signification*, in: Everson, S. (ed.), *The Cambridge Companions to Ancient Thought 3: Language*. Cambridge 1994, 37–74.

61 We should not take grammar as a mere complex of morphological, syntactical and phonetical rules since in the period under consideration it was regarded more widely: according to the *Suda Lexicon* (available on-line) the parts of grammar are: reading, interpretation, correction and evaluation (sc. ἀναγνώστικόν, ἐξηγητικόν, διορθωτικόν, κριτικόν). The representatives of the Old Stoa investigated grammar (above all, semantics and logic) from the philosophical perspective.

interest in cultural introspection, when representatives of a certain culture seek not merely to transmit but also to analyse their own cultural heritage, or, to put it differently, to observe it as if from the outside. This introspective tendency surfaced in particularly marked fashion in Plato's critique of the classical poets and in Aristotle's justification of Homer and the other Greek poets in his *Aporemata Homerica* and *Poetica*. Aristotelian philological studies provided a seminal foundation for Homeric scholarship, especially for the Alexandrian school. Consequently, the achievements of the Hellenic philologists resonated in the contemporary educational system, which was built around the interpretation of authoritative texts.

Guglielmo Cavallo vividly showed in his study of the evidence from the library of Herculaneum that the philological-philosophical investigation of manuscripts with the authoritative texts constituted the backbone of the Greek *paideia*.⁶² Within these circumstances, discussions about how to preserve and copy, how to read and understand,⁶³ and, consequently, how to study and interpret authoritative texts (sc. how to see the text in the light of certain philosophical traditions, historical context and merely literary theories) naturally penetrated into the educational and philosophical agenda. This scholarly and critical treatment of Greek literature framed a natural process of digesting Greek cultural heritage.

The systematisation of Hellenic grammar had represented an influential example of methodological investigation. At the root of this system lay the belief in the rational arrangement (sc. τάξις – ordering) of linguistic phenomena such as words (orthography and morphology) and sentences (syntaxis and grammar). The second century Greek grammarian Apollonius Dyscolus started his treatise on syntaxis (*De constructione* 2.3) by affirming that, just as sequentially arranged letters form words (sc. λέξεως), so the reasonable

62 Cavallo's study of the library at Herculaneum shows that among the functions of the ancient library there were the collection, copying and commenting of the manuscripts, and also training the scribes. Ergo, he concludes that the ancient library comprised the functions of a library, scriptorium and scholarly institution (cf. Cavallo, G., *Scuola, Scriptorium, Biblioteca a Cesarea*, in: Cavallo, G. [ed.]. *Le biblioteche nel mondo antico e medievale*. Bari 1989, 65–78).

63 An interesting observation apropos the ancient reading practice is preserved in Galen's treatise *About Sophistry or Deception in Speaking* where he asserts that according to the Stoics, the reader of the manuscript should first of all rightly put spaces in between the uninterrupted sequence of written letters, then he should make a grammatical analysis of the words (define parts of the speech, cases, tenses, etc.) that would enable him to make correct syntactic connections between the words (cf. Galenus, *De sophismatis seu captionibus penes dictionem* 4; transl. Edlow, 1977, 56f).

sequence (sc. ἀκολουθία) of words creates phrases (sc. λόγοι) and principles of regularity or correct phrasing (sc. καταλληλότης).⁶⁴

Although philosophers and grammarians were officially opposed to each other, they were similarly engaged in the philological studies and used the same methods of textual analysis.⁶⁵ Accordingly, among the key competences of the professional scholar were prominent exegetic skills. The representatives of different philosophical schools produced numerous commentaries on the works of Plato and Aristotle.⁶⁶ In this context, so-called secondary literature (περί-literature, incl. paraphrases, questions-and-answers, introductions, etc.), whose purpose was to arrange the relevant fragments on the specific topics preserved in the authoritative texts,⁶⁷ became very popular.⁶⁸ On the whole, the focus on the authoritative text, understood as a linguistic, conceptual, and material (sc. manuscript) unit, characterized, to use an apt definition of Gregory Snyder, “the writing-reading culture” of the Hellenistic epoch and of the period of Late Antiquity.⁶⁹

In such a way, the debates between the philosophical schools often concerned disagreements about interpretation or criticism of authoritative texts. This philological preoccupation of philosophers was furthermore fed by a popular

64 Apollonius also professed that the rules of syntaxis (sc. σύνταξις) can be ascertained by examining the tradition (sc. παράδοσις) and history (sc. ἱστορία) of the normal usage (sc. συνήθεια) of words and their combinations along with solecisms and in detecting (sc. συναγωγή) analogy (sc. ἀναλογία), and reasoning (sc. διαίρεσις) out of it the occurrence of irregularities (cf. *Constr* 2.3–3.2).

65 E.g., Porphyry reported that Amelius took notes in the seminars of Plotinus, which he published in one hundred books under the title *Scholia* (cf. Porph., *VitPlot* 3.22).

66 E.g., among the commentators of the *Organon* were: Alexander of Aphrodisias, Porphyry, Themistius, Dexippus, Ammonius, Philoponus, pseudo-Philoponus, Boethius, Simplicius, Olympiodorus, David, Stephanus and Anonymous commentaries; for details cf. de Haas, F.A.J., *Late Ancient Philosophy*, in: Sedley, D. (ed.), *The Cambridge Companion to Greek and Roman Philosophy*. Cambridge 2000, 246–249.

67 Themistius in his *Paraphrase on Aristotles De anima* concludes a series of quotations of Theophrastus by stating that “someone could best understand the insight of Aristotle and Theophrastus on these [matters], indeed perhaps also that of Plato himself, from the passages that we have gathered” (*Paraphr* 108.35; transl. R.B. Todd, 2014, 134).

68 For details cf. Sluiter, I., *The Dialectics of Genre: Some Aspects of Secondary Literature and Genre in Antiquity*, in: Depew, M. / Obbink, D. (eds.), *Matrices of Genre. Authors, Canons, and Society*. Cambridge 2000, 183–203.

69 Cf. Snyder, H.G., *Teachers and Texts in the Ancient World: Philosophers, Jews, and Christians*. New York, London 2000.

tendency towards harmonization of Aristotelian and Platonic teachings.⁷⁰ This trend emerged in the Middle Academy (e.g., Atticus, Alcinous⁷¹) and progressed in the New Academy (e.g., Simplicius, *ComCat* 2.5–25).

One of the efficient ways of harmonizing disagreements between authoritative philosophers was to suggest a bridging interpretation of their texts. This technique can be traced back to Aristotle, who explicitly proclaimed in the *Metaphysics*:

If one were to infer that Anaxagoras recognized two elements, the inference would accord closely with a view which, although he did not articulate it himself, he must have accepted as developed by others (*Met* 989b4f).

Ergo, Aristotle permitted philosophers and exegetes to make conjectures in the writings and doctrines of authoritative authors. This however did not mean that he approved of irrelevant exegetic liberty; on the contrary, Aristotle endorsed properly contextualized and justified interpretations. His close followers developed this principle. Thus, Aristarchus coined a *κατὰ τὸ σιωπώμενον* technique based on a presumption that an author had left something unsaid. This technique entitled Aristarchus to resolve contradictions in the Homeric text by suggesting conjectures based upon his knowledge of Homer's style and lexicon (cf. *Schol. Il.* 21.17a).

In such a way, a creative and liberal interpretation and transformation of the authoritative text characterised the reception paradigm of the philosophical schools of late antiquity. Well-documented evidence of this reception paradigm is provided by an uninterrupted tradition of Neoplatonic commentaries on Aristotle that cover a period from the 2nd until the 7th century AD. In his seminal review of the *Commentaria in Aristotelem Graeca* Karl Praechter highlights some essential characteristics of the *Commentaria*.⁷² He underscores that the written commentaries “published” by the students of the school stemmed from of the oral lectures they attended. Thus, the *Commentaria* is a witness to the oral discussions and routine exegetic practice of the Neoplatonic School. Naturally, lectures were sometimes repeated (at least partially), and normally transcribed by a few students. Consequently,

70 E.g., Alcinous in his *Handbook* and the Neo-Platonic commentators on the *Categories* discussed how the works of Plato and Aristotle should be classified and arranged in the school program, how to study them, etc. For details cf. Hadot, I., *Studies in Platonism, Neoplatonism, and the Platonic Tradition*. Vol. 18: *Athenian Neoplatonism and the Harmonization of Aristotle and Plato*. Leiden 2015, 43–50.

71 Alcinous in his *Handbook to Platonism* (*Did* 158.17–159.30) claimed that Plato knew the syllogisms of the Peripatetics and the Stoics.

72 Praechter, K., *Review of the Commentaria in Aristotelem Graeca*, in: Sorabji, R. (ed.), *Aristotle Transformed: the Ancient Commentators and Their Influence*. Ithaca / New York 1990, 31–55, (41).

lectures were captured in varied transcription and this variety was *the norm* of the school routine. This *status quo* is attested to in the *Commentaria*, where contradictions and duplicates frequently occur.

This evidence manifests the reception paradigm of the philosophical schools characterised by creative transmission of the authoritative text and a rather liberal approach to authorship. In accord with this conclusion, Elias, one of the 6th century Neoplatonic commentators on Aristotle, asserts that:

One shouldn't alter oneself in accordance with whatever one is expounding, like actors on stage that play different roles and imitate different characters. Don't become an Aristotelian when expounding Aristotle; don't say that there was no such a good philosopher. Don't become a Platonist when expounding Plato's work; don't claim that there was no philosopher to equal Plato⁷³ (*Com-Cat* 122.27–29).

In the fourth century, Themistius, another commentator on Aristotle, who himself was a Peripatetic philosopher (active career from the late 340s to 384) and a Constantinople politician, vividly exemplified the above-described reception paradigm. Despite his eloquent admiration of Plato, which had been noticed by his contemporaries (*inter alios*, Gregory Nazianzen, cf. Greg., *Ep* 24), Themistius remained faithful to Peripatetic teaching.⁷⁴ Its worth noting here that Gregory Nazianzen was personally acquainted with Themistius, held him in high regard, and even in one of his letters called him “a king of arguments” (cf. Greg., *Ep* 140).

Now, to draw brief conclusions from this survey of the epistemological and methodological discussions that dominated intellectual life in Hellenic society, I would like to emphasize that logic and philological training were considered a compulsory part of Hellenic education⁷⁵ and that grammatical studies owed a debt to logic.⁷⁶ Logical expertise was both admired and attacked by different thinkers but once firmly established in the curricula of the philosophical schools it could no longer be dethroned. The intrusion of logical matters into the philosophical agenda gradually influenced the very process

73 Translation mine.

74 Blumenthal, H.J., *Themistius: the last Peripatetic commentator on Aristotle?* in: Sorabji R. (ed.), *Aristotle Transformed: the Ancient Commentators and Their Influence*. Ithaca / New York 1990, 113f.

75 For the constituent elements of the Hellenic Paideia and the famous trivium and quadrivium, which formed the cycle of the seven liberal arts, cf. Hadot, I., *Arts Libéraux et Philosophie dans la Pensée Antique. Contribution à l'Histoire de l'Éducation et de la Culture dans l'Antiquité*. Paris 2005.

76 Cf. Ebbesen, S., *Theories of Language in the Hellenistic Age and in the Twelfth and Thirteenth Centuries*, in: Frede, D. / Inwood, B. (eds.), *Language and Learning: Philosophy of Language in the Hellenic Age*. Cambridge 2005, 299–320.

of philosophizing. Thus, a passion for justifying philosophical theories by appealing to empirical data became widespread not only in the scientific but also in the philosophical debates of the Hellenic age.

Besides, it is important to stress the philological (grammar, exegesis and textual criticism) and institutional achievements (libraries, where the manuscripts of the authoritative texts were collected, preserved, copied, studied and commented⁷⁷) of the Hellenic grammarians and textual critics.⁷⁸ The Alexandrian grammarians along with their Pergamum colleagues⁷⁹ established the rules of Greek grammar and a canon of literary and textual criticism which has not been significantly altered since. It was due to the study of language that questions of grammar and syntax, both *per se* and in regard to exegetical practice, became a matter of philosophical contemplation (chiefly within the logic agenda; e.g., the logical structure of propositions and homonymy).

2. Logic and a verified belief in Christian education

In the period of Late Antiquity, Christian intellectuals were actively engaged in the methodological and pedagogical discussions spread throughout Hellenic society. At the beginning of Christianity we cannot ascertain any such specific educational interest. Being chiefly spread among the lower orders of society, Christianity could achieve almost nothing using academic claims. But as the situation changed and the higher and more educated classes took an interest in the new religious doctrine it began to move more closely towards the classical image of the philosophical school.

Since the emergence of Christianity, the adherents of the new religion had been repeatedly ridiculed for their blind and artless faith, whose simplicity could only be attractive to the illiterate and low classes.⁸⁰ Some Christian authors felt quite comfortable about this social standing, others, on the contrary, were deeply vexed and spared no effort in discrediting this “reputation”.⁸¹ Justin the Martyr in his *Dialogus cum Tryphone* performed

77 Cf. Williams, G.A., *Christianity and the Transformation of the Book: Origen, Eusebius, and the Library of Caesarea*. London 2008, 49–53.

78 For details cf. MacLeod, R. (ed.), *The Library of Alexandria*. New York 2005.

79 Aulus Gellius reported that “two distinguished Greek *grammatici*, Aristarchus and Crates, made a habit of defending with the utmost vigour, the former analogy, and the latter anomaly” (*NoctAtt* 2.25.4; transl. J.C. Rolfe, 1927, available on-line).

80 E.g., Galen, *DiffPuls* 8.579: “It would have been much better to have added something – if not a solid proof then at least an adequate argument, so that you would not start by reading out unproved laws as if you had entered a school of Christ or of Moses” (transl. mine). Cf. also a critique of Christian argumentation by Celsus.

81 A vivid example is represented by father and son Apollinaris, who according to church historians together rewrote parts of the Bible in conformity with the

brilliant skills of argument à la mode of the Platonic dialogues.⁸² Clemens stressed that logical training is necessary for the intelligent Christian (*Strom* 1.28.176.3–177.3, 6.10.4–81.1). Gregory Thaumaturgus and Eusebius reported that Origen included logic in his school’s curriculum⁸³ (Greg., *Orig* 7, cf. Eus., *HE* 6.18.3); Eusebius of Caesarea in his *Demonstratio Evangelica* and *Praeparatio Evangelica* affiliated Christian doctrine to Hellenic philosophy.⁸⁴ Jerome demonstrated excellent knowledge of certain logical literature, mentioning *Categoriae*, *De Interpretatione*, *Analytics* of Aristotle and Cicero’s *Topics*, and professes that he himself in his course of logic had also studied Alexander’s commentaries and Porphyry’s *Isagoge* (*Ep* 50.1). Augustine contended that he read Aristotle in his early years (*Conf* 4.16.28). The Cappadocian fathers systematized the achievements of their predecessors by formulating the methodological principles of paradoxical theology, which achieved the long-desired accordance of logic and faith.⁸⁵

This evidence seems to confirm that a propensity for a critical and discursive way of reasoning was animated and supported not only by Hellenic philosophers but also by prominent Christian theologians, who after the legalization of Christianity found themselves responsible for guiding public opinion. While the pagans became interested in the harmonization of philosophical doctrines through the backdating of Aristotelian innovations, the affirmation of the superiority of Plato over Aristotle and the worshipping of divine Pythagoras, the Christians sought to match Hellenic philosophy with their doctrine by noting the similarities between the Bible and concepts of the Hellenic sages.

conventions of classical genres in order to teach the forms of classical literature by means of the Bible (Socr., *HE* 2.46; 3.16; Sozom., *HE* 5.18; 6.25).

82 For details cf. a dissertation *The influence of the Platonic dialogues on the literary form of the Dialogus cum Tryphone by Justin the Philosopher* by Elizaveta Zueva, defended in 2011 in Moscow State University (in Russian, available on-line).

83 Even if Aristotle was widely proclaimed to be a founder of logic and thus of the scientific method, the revision of his concepts offered by Chrysippus appeared to be quite as widely employed and positively esteemed. For details cf. Barnes, J., *Galen, Christians, Logic*, in: Bonelli, M. (ed.), *Logical Matters: Essays in Ancient Philosophy II*. Oxford 2012, 13; for Basils and Origen’s reverence for Peripatetic and Stoic logic cf. Sesboué, B. (intr., trad. et notes), *Basile de Césarée, Contre Eunome: suivi de Eunome Apologie*, t. 2. Paris 1983, 195.

84 Cf.: “They say that we provide nothing by way of proof but require that those who come to us rely on trust alone. Against this slander the present treatise may be a not irrational reply” (Eus., *DE* 1.1.12f).

85 E.g., Gregory Nazianzen in his oration 23 (*De pace*) claimed that Christians should reason dogmatically (δογματικῶς) yet not illogically (ἀλλ’ οὐκ ἀντιλογικῶς)” (*Or* 23, PG 35.1164.46).

Christians and pagans were educated at the same schools and naturally enough shared many epistemological principles as well as methodological problems and concerns. For instance, Christians willingly embraced the principle of utility (sc. ὠφέλεια) in education, that is, the idea that studies of the literary classics were aimed at educating (sc. παιδεύειν) rather than entertaining (sc. τέρπειν).⁸⁶ In this fashion, Julian the Emperor proposed educational innovations which were aimed at strengthening the utility of education. In his *Letter to a Priest* we find a summary of Julian's idea of a proper education of a pagan priest.⁸⁷

And that you understand what I mean by this, let no one who has been consecrated a priest read either Archilochus and Hipponax or anyone else who writes such poems as theirs. ... and of philosophers only those who chose the gods as guides of their mental discipline, like Pythagoras and Plato and Aristotle and the school of Chrysippus and Zeno (*Fragm. Ep* 89b.300c–d).

For the Christians this utility consisted principally in establishing a sufficient background for approaching Holy Scripture. Interestingly enough, sufficient background meant studying Hellenic literature. Basil of Caesarea coined a paradigmatic consideration of the matter:⁸⁸

But so long as our immaturity forbids our understanding their deep thought [sc. of the divine words], we exercise our spiritual perceptions upon profane writings, which are not altogether different, and in which we perceive the truth as it were in shadows and in mirrors⁸⁹ (*Homilia de legendis gentilium libris* 2.27–30).

The more power the Christians acquired the more persistently they strove for public recognition and rehabilitation of their doctrine, the shortest way to which lay in entering the institutionalized academic milieu of the philosophical schools. In the poem *To his own verses* (Εἰς τὰ ἑμμετροῦ), which forms a part of the *Autobiographical poems* (*Carmina de se ipso*),

86 Galen, *De semine* 1.4 = 4.524.

87 Cf. also: “But for us will be appropriate to read such narratives as have been composed about deeds that have actually been done; but we must avoid all fictions in the form of narrative such as were circulated among men in past, for instance tales whose theme is love, and generally speaking everything of that sort” (Jul., *Fragm. Ep* 89b.301b; transl. W.C. Wright, 1913, available on-line).

88 Julian apparently was vexed by this practicality of the Christian approach. Cf.: “But you yourselves know, it seems to me, the very different effect on the intelligence of your writings as compared with ours; and that from studying yours no man could attain to excellence or even to ordinary goodness, whereas from studying ours every man would become better than before, even though he were altogether without natural fitness” (*Gall* 205.7–17; transl. W.C. Wright, 1913, available on-line).

89 Transl. B. Jackson, 1895, available on-line.

Gregory Nazianzen expressed his intention to create a Christian alternative to the Hellenic literary tradition.

I wished to present my work to the young people (and especially those who enjoy literature – ὅσοι μάλιστα χαίρουσι λόγοις), as a kind of pleasant medicine, as inducement which might lead them to more useful things ... I cannot admit the pagans to have greater literary talent than us. I'm speaking of those ornate words of theirs (τοῖς κεχρωσμένοις λόγοις), for in our eyes beauty lies in contemplation (τὸ κάλλος ἡμῖν ἐν θεωρίᾳ)⁹⁰ (*Carm* 2.1332f).

Nevertheless, the efforts of Christian intellectuals to take part in the official pedagogical and philosophical agenda were not appreciated by the majority of Hellenic intellectuals. The reasons for this disapproval were sound. For instance, Origen ascribed the insights of Plato to the doctrine of the Hebrews (Or., *Cels* 4.39), while Eusebius proclaimed certain Greek philosophers to have been latent preachers of Christianity (Eus., *PE*). Some Hellenic authors (e.g., Celsus, Porphyry, Julian the Emperor) were furious about the intellectual claims of the representatives of the new-born religion and expressed their indignation in treatises against Christians.

Besides, the Greek and some of the Jewish intellectuals repeatedly mocked translation of the Jewish Bible.⁹¹ During the entire period of the so-called Second Sophistic⁹² attempts to purify the Hellenic language and cleanse it of

90 Translation mine.

91 Isidore of Pelusium in one of his letters blames the sons of Hellenes for their contempt for biblical language on the grounds of barbarism (*Ep* 1555.3–7); Theodoret of Cyrus said that some authors blamed the Apostles for their lack of education, which revealed itself in their poor style (*Greac. affect. cur.* prol. 1.4–6); and Jerome, who said that even Cicero had to use in his works some odd terms, because he translated from Greek and could only make some Latin imitations of the Greek terms: “The word ἀποκάλυψις, which means revelation, is a uniquely Scriptural coinage that none of the wordly sages among the Greeks employed” (*ComGal* 1.1f, transl. A. Cain, 2010, 79).

92 The term second sophistic was introduced by Erwin Rohde (Rohde, E., *Der Griechische Roman und Seine Vorläufer*. Leipzig 1876; Rohde, E., *Die Asianische Rhetorik und die Zweite Sophistik*, in: *RhM* 41 [1886], 170–190). Afterwards the term was employed by Georg Kaibel (Kaibel, G., *Dionisios von Halikarnass und die Sophistik*, in: *Hermes* 20/4 [1885], 497–513), Wilhelm Schmid (Schmid, W., *Der Atticismus in seinen Hauptvertretern von Dionysius von Halikarnass bis auf den zweiten Philostratus*, Bde. 4. Stuttgart 1887–1896), Ulrich von Wilamowitz-Moellendorff (Wilamowitz-Moellendorff, U. von., *Asianismus und Atticismus*, in: *Hermes* 35 [1900], 1–52) et al. Glen Bowersock challenged the notion that the second sophistic represented a social phenomenon (Bowersock, G., *Greek Sophists in the Roman Empire*. Oxford 1969). His Oxford colleagues approved and developed this approach (Gleason, M., *Making Men: Sophists and Self-Presentation in Ancient Rome*. Princeton 1995; Goldhill, S., *Being Greek under Rome: The*

barbarism, and to reconstruct Attic forms in writing practice, became an *idée fixe* of many rhetoricians and thinkers.⁹³ In this context, Christian authors were forced to defend not only their faith but also the relatively poor language of the Holy Scripture. This linguistic task called for professionals in the sphere of *belles lettres*. Origen was one of them, and Basil and Gregory Nazianzen esteemed him so highly that they compiled the *Philocalia* of selected passages from Origen's works, which represented a manual of Christian exegesis and textual criticism. This fact marked an important milestone in the methodological (sc. exegetic methodology featured in the recognition of the biblical canon), institutional (sc. a Christian school in Caesarea organized not as a typical catechetical school but *per sample* of the Alexandrian Museion – Eus., *HE* 6.8) evolution of the Christian environment.

Chapter 2. Epistemological and methodological principles of Origen's biblical studies

1. Institutional framework of Alexandrian scholarship and Origen's biblical studies

In the third century, when Origen made a considerable contribution to the investigation of the biblical manuscripts and establishment of a biblical canon, the methodology of textual criticism had, thanks to the achievements of Homeric scholarship, already been widely known and recognized. Five centuries before Origen, it took a lot of financial and human resources to found the Alexandrian Library, to collect manuscripts with Homeric poems,

Second Sophistic, Cultural Conflict & the Development of the Roman Empire. Cambridge 2001; Connolly, J., *Reclaiming the Theatrical in the Second Sophistic*. Helios 2001). Some scholars distinguish between the first (second–third centuries AD) and the second (fourth century AD) periods of the second sophistic. As part of the discussion of the term a keen debate has taken place concerning the place of Christian authors in regard to the phenomenon (Swain, S., *Hellenism and Empire: Language, Classicism and Power in the Greek World A.D. 50–250*. Oxford 1996; Anderson, G., *The Second Sophistic: A Cultural Phenomenon in the Roman Empire*. London / New York 1993; Kennedy, G., *The Art of Rhetoric in the Roman World 300 BC – 300 AD*. Princeton 1963; Kustas, G.L., *Studies in Byzantine Rhetoric*. Thessalonike, 1973; Guignet, M., *Saint Grégoire de Nazianze et la Rhétorique*. Paris 1911; Ruether, R., *Gregory of Nazianzus: Rhetor and Philosopher*. Oxford 1969). A combination of the socio-cultural and linguistic approach to the Second Sophistic is suggested by: Whitmarsh, T., *The Second Sophistic*. Oxford 2005.

93 Apropos of employment of the classical genres and topoi by Christian authors cf. Dorival, G., *Les formes et modèles littéraires*, in: Pouderon, B. / Norelli, E. (eds.), *Histoire de la littérature grecque chrétienne* 1. Introduction. Paris 2008, 139–188.

to create the methodology of textual criticism, to produce critical editions of the Iliad and the Odyssey and to stabilize the rules of Greek grammar. The efforts, however, paid off. After the acme of the Alexandrian Mouseion not only did the so-called wild manuscripts, containing weird paraphrases of Homeric poems, disappear, but in addition the groundwork was established for the Homeric vulgate (with all its pedagogical, literature and cultural values and implications). These pivotal achievements occasioned the formation of such cultural and intellectual pillars of Hellenism as the paideia and Hellenic language.

As a matter of course, Origen in his biblical studies pursued scholarly principles which can be traced back to the complex history of Alexandrian philological scholarship. That is to say, the principles of Origen's biblical studies resulted from the philological debates of the Hellenic and Hellenic-Jewish scribes and scholars affiliated with the Alexandrian tradition.⁹⁴ Therefore, I now proceed to a brief survey of this tradition.

It is common knowledge that in response to Plato's critique of the poets Aristotle came up with a justification of Homer and other Greek poets in his *Poetica* and *Aporemata Homerica*. These compositions became methodological pillars for Homeric scholarship (scholars of the Alexandrian school leaned towards the Peripatetic school of philosophy).⁹⁵ However, there was a difference in Aristotle's and Alexandrians' approach to the philological studies. While Aristotle pursued justification of the poets, Alexandrian scholars, though never in full conformity with each other, balanced the vindication of Homer with criticism of the so-called wild manuscripts containing the weird paraphrases of Homeric poems. Their studies resulted in critical editions and running commentaries of Homeric poems.⁹⁶ Therefore it would be fair to say that Homeric scholars formalized the methodology of textual criticism, whose binding purpose was to reconstruct the original text of literary composition.

This research purpose *sensu stricto* could hardly match the scope of Jewish Alexandrian exegetes of Bible, who were born and educated in Hellenic culture and had little or no knowledge of the Hebrew language. Therefore,

94 A connection between Alexandrian scholarship and Origen's biblical studies has been explored by recent research (cf. Perrone, L. [ed.], *Origeniana Octava: Origen and the Alexandrian Tradition*. Leuven 2003).

95 The famous Peripatetics Demetrius of Phalerum and Theophrastus stood at the foundation of the Library in Alexandria (cf. MacLeod, 2005, 79–83).

96 From what remained in the genuine or paraphrased version from Aristarchus (217–145 BC) editions and running commentaries of the Homeric poems we know that he athetized and obelized many verses but not as harshly as Zenodotus (cf. Niehoff, M., *Jewish Exegesis and Homeric Scholarship in Alexandria*. Cambridge 2011, 9–16).

the research interest of Jewish exegetes dwelled in the studies of Septuagint. Yet, as Maren Niehoff showed in her monograph *Jewish exegesis and Homeric scholarship in Alexandria*, certain groups of Jewish Alexandrian exegetes applied the methodology of textual criticism of Homeric scholars.⁹⁷ The quarrelsome debates concerning applicability of textual criticism to biblical studies divided Alexandrian Jewish exegetes into two main groups. The first associated with the ideas of the author of *Letter of Aristeas* (*Aristeae epistula ad Philocratem*, second century BC),⁹⁸ Aristobulus the Peripatetic⁹⁹ (181–124 BC), and Philo (10–50 AD), who tried to justify the contradictions of the *Septuagint*. The second comprised of Demetrius (160–131 BC), his anonymous colleagues and the argumentative opponents of Philo (whose works are mainly known from Eusebius’ paraphrase in the *Praeparatio evangelica* 9.29.16). These ridiculed the barbarisms of the biblical language, and didn’t hesitate to emend and reject them in a typical Aristarchian fashion.¹⁰⁰

Despite methodological disagreements, both parties of Alexandrian exegetes in one way or another made use of the philological methods of their Hellenic colleagues. In a similar vein with Homeric scholarship, the biblical studies of Jewish exegetes resulted in various editions and translations of the biblical texts. Yet, it is important to underscore that since the more traditionally oriented scholars could not allow emendation of the sacred texts, their primary pursuit was to justify and explain biblical contradictions.

Origen confirmed that at his time there were: “large differences between the manuscripts (τῶν ἀντιγράφων διαφορά),” which according to his testimony were created:

either by the negligence of some copyists (ἀπὸ ῥαθυμίας τινῶν γραφέων), or by the perverse boldness of others; they either neglect to check over what they have transcribed, or, in the process of checking, they make additions or deletions as they please (ἀπὸ τῶν τὰ ἑαυτοῖς δοκοῦντα ἐν τῇ διορθώσει <ἢ> πρῶστιθέντων ἢ ἀφαιρούντων)¹⁰¹ (*ComMatth* 15.14).

97 Cf. Niehoff, 2011, 19–58.

98 The author of the letter argued for “the sanctity and natural meaning of the law [sc. the Jewish Scriptures]” (*ArEp* 117), that has been ascertained in the Septuagint and hence no alteration (μηδεμία διασκευή) was allowed in this translation (*ArEp* 310).

99 Taking Aristotelian methodology as his point of departure Aristobulus elaborated a philosophical and philological exegesis of the Hebrew Bible (cf. Collins, N.L., *The Library in Alexandria and the Bible in Greek*, Suppl. to *Vetus Testamentum* 82. Leiden 2000, 186–190).

100 Cf. Niehoff, 2011, 38–58.

101 Transl. B. Metzger, cf. Metzger, B.M., *Explicit References in the Works of Origen to Variant Readings in New Testament Manuscripts*, in: Birdsall, J.N. / Thomson,

Notoriously, these large differences between the biblical manuscripts created a serious research problem of choosing between various readings. Yet, even this problem was not half as vexing as the puzzling oddities which sprung from the discrepancy between the Hebrew and Greek languages. Origen described this stylistic discrepancy in the *Letter to Africanus*, where he pointed to “the so-called etymological fancies (οίονεὶ ἐτυμολογίαι αἴτινες), which in the Hebrew are perfectly suitable, but not in the Greek” (*Epistula ad Africanum* 11.76.55).¹⁰² Origen affirmed that part of the biblical solecisms found in Septuagint sprang out of loose or even fallacious translations.¹⁰³

Presented with these research problems, Origen, an heir of both Hellenic and Jewish Alexandrian traditions, firstly tried to solve them by the means of philological (sc. grammatical) analysis. From the *Commentary on John* we learn that some of the Jewish and Early Christian scholars were likewise committed to meticulous grammatical studies and engaged in the textual criticism of biblical manuscripts.¹⁰⁴ They investigated style and grammar of the Greek translations of the Bible in order to detect pseudepigrapha and textual forgery in the biblical texts.¹⁰⁵

Similar to many of his predecessors and contemporaries, Origen was deeply engaged in the textual criticism and grammatical studies of the biblical texts. Yet, his methodology of the textual criticism and grammatical analysis had a different scope than the methodology of his Hellenic and Jewish predecessors. As a matter of course, Origen was obliged to distinguish his position from both traditions, and this obligation significantly complicated his research task. For instance, Origen reported that he studied the Jewish Scripture (i.e. using secondary sources and consulting Jewish scholars)¹⁰⁶ in order to argue with

R.W. [eds.], *Biblical and Patristic Studies: In Memory of Robert Pierce Casey*. New York 1963, 78–95, [78–79].

102 Here and later transl. F. Crombie, 1885, available on-line.

103 Cf.: “For in many other passages we can find traces of this kind of contrivance (οἰκονομικῶς τινα) on the part of the translators, which I noticed when I was collating the various editions (συνεξετάζοντες πάσας τὰς ἐκδόσεις ἀλλήλαις)” (*EpAf* 77.25).

104 Cf.: “We are not unaware that ‘these things were done in Bethania’ occurs in nearly all the manuscripts. It seems likely too that, in addition, this was the earlier reading. And, to be sure, we have read Bethania in Heracleon” (*ComJn* 6.40.204; transl R.E. Heine, 1989, 224).

105 In the *Letter to Africanus* Origen cites the argumentation of his addressee, who doubts the authenticity of the story of Susanna and suggests that it is a “modern composition and a forgery (σύγγραμμα νεωτερικὸν καὶ πεπλασμένον)” because it contains some fine phrases, “which not even Philistion the play-writer would have used” (*EpAf* 49.15).

106 Cf.: “And I make it my endeavour not to be ignorant of their various readings, lest in my controversies with the Jews I should quote to them what is not found

his Jewish opponents. In spite of this evidence, I think that his pursuits spread much further than those required to meet daily polemical needs.

In order to resolve the disagreements among the Christian churches about various versions of the Bible, Origen attempted to formalise the canon of the Christian Bible which may appear to be quite a traditional pursuit.¹⁰⁷ Yet, the way he proceeded towards this goal was truly challenging. Exceeding the philological technology of his Hellenic and Jewish predecessors Origen in his Hexapla project applied textual criticism to parallel bilingual texts;¹⁰⁸ he insisted upon collecting various editions with various readings of the biblical texts and banned the practice of emendation of biblical texts as heretical.¹⁰⁹

Being so far engrossed in discovery of various readings in various manuscripts,¹¹⁰ Origen faced a challenging and unprecedented philological and linguistic investigation of bilingual and fairly complicated biblical texts. Besides, one should not forget that biblical texts possessed special authoritative status for different religious and cultural communities.¹¹¹ Hence, it is

in their copies, and that I may make some use of what is found there, even although it should not be in our Scriptures” (*EpAf* 60.15).

107 In disagreement with J.A. McGuckin’s thesis, presented at *Origeniana Octava* (McGuckin, J.A., *Origen as Literary Critic in the Alexandrian Tradition*, in: Perrone, L. [ed.], *Origeniana Octava: Origen and the Alexandrian Tradition*. Leuven 2003, 121–135), that Origen trod in the steps of Alexandrian textual critiques by aiming at making *textus criticus* of Bible, I wish to rather recall and renovate B. Metzger’s conclusion that Origen never attempted to prepare a formal edition of the New Testament (cf. Metzger, 1963, 78). Yet, contrarily to Metzger’s criticism of Origen’s “remarkable indifference to what are now regarded as important aspects of textual criticism” (Metzger, 1963, 95), I wish to underpin that Origen was well versed in classical textual criticism as well as in the methods of Jewish Biblical studies.

108 Eusebius tells us about Hexapla in *HE* 5.28.16, 18.

109 Cf.: “...an apostolic saying not understood by the followers of Marcion, who therefore atheize the Gospels (ἀθετοῦντων τὰ εὐαγγέλια)” (*ComJn* 5.7.1f; transl. R. Heine, 2014, 165, modified).

110 A compelling testimony of Origen’s devotion to manuscript studies is given Eusebius, who in his *Historia Ecclesiastica* tells us that Origen found unknown manuscripts of Psalms in a jar in Jericho, which he embedded in his Hexapla (*HE* 6.16.3).

111 Cf.: “The following examples in the Gospels, however, may persuade us that matters related to names are incorrect in the Greek manuscripts in many places” (*ComJn* 6.208) (transl. R. Heine, 2014, 225); and also: “It is possible to see the same inaccuracy in many passages of the Law and prophets, as we have investigated them thoroughly after we learned from the Hebrews and compared our manuscripts with theirs, which are confirmed by the translations of Aquila and Theodotion and Symmachus which have not yet been corrupted” (*ComJn* 6.212; transl. R. Heine, 2014, 226).

fair to say that from a technical and methodological viewpoint, the Hexapla marked a unique scholarly achievement because Origen, to the best of his knowledge, tried to compare and detect the differences between the Hebrew and Greek languages preserved in the multiple manuscripts. He expounds the underlying purpose of his studies in his *Letter to Africanus*:

What needs there to speak of Exodus, where there is such diversity (ἐπὶ πολὺ παρήλλακται) in what is said about the tabernacle and its court, and the ark, and the garments of the high priest and the priests, that sometimes the meaning even does not seem to be akin (ὡς μηδὲ τὴν διάνοιαν παραπλησίαν εἶναι δοκεῖν)? (*EpAf* 11.57.1).

Taking into account these facts, it appears that the purpose of Origen's biblical studies was not to make the *textus criticus* of Bible,¹¹² but rather to sketch the multi-dimensional and pervasive divine message spread through various readings in the Greek and Hebrew manuscripts. In other words, Origen sought to assemble a comprehensive and inclusive picture of the biblical readings, while his direct opponents as well as Homeric scholars and Jewish exegetes aimed at the creation of an exclusive picture of Scripture.

Unlike his opponents, Origen explicitly stated that he did not dare to fully reject the passages that he found in disagreement between the Hebrew and Greek manuscripts. Yet, seeking to mark the manuscript disagreements he applied the typical Aristarchian signs (asterisk and obelisk) to mark the textual differences:

For the lack of consistency in the manuscripts of the Old Testament, we have with God's help found a cure, while we use the remaining manuscripts as a yardstick; what was dubious in the Septuagint on account of manuscripts lacking consistency, we judge this from the rest of the manuscripts, and retain whatever is in harmony. Moreover, such places that are not in the Hebrew (we did not dare to erase them completely) we mark some with an obelisk. Other places we mark with an asterisk to make clear that what we added is not found in the Septuagint, but is found in the Hebrew and some manuscripts [of the Septuagint]. Whoever wants to can accept these variants, but to whom such a thing is objectionable, he can accept or refuse as he wishes (*ComMth* 15.14).

112 In disagreement with J.A. McGuckin's thesis, presented at Origeniana Octava (McGuckin, 2003, 121–135), that Origen trod in the steps of Alexandrian textual critiques by aiming at making *textus criticus* of Bible, I wish to rather recall and renovate Metzgers conclusion that Origen never attempted to prepare a formal edition of the New Testament. Yet, contrarily to Metzger's criticism of Origen's "remarkable indifference to what are now regarded as important aspects of textual criticism" (Metzger, 1963, 95), I wish to underpin that Origen was well versed in classical textual criticism as well as in methods of Jewish biblical studies.

This passage shows that Origen insisted upon the studies of various readings not for the sake of reconstruction of the original text (as was the purpose of Homeric scholars and those Jewish scholars who followed their path) nor for the sake of preservation of the sacred text (as was the common pursuit of conservative Jewish exegetes) but for the sake of a deep and multifarious understanding of the biblical text and various individual levels of content.

It naturally follows from this that such a comprehensive scholarly approach to biblical studies implies that an exegete can observe and compare various parallel readings of biblical passages. The Hexapla represented an unfolded version of such a helpful edition.¹¹³ This technical and methodological innovation could certainly not pass unnoticed by Hellenic scribes and scholars. There is no wonder that at least among Christian exegetes Origen acquired an outstanding reputation of an exegete *par excellence*. A composition of the *Philocalia*, a handbook of Christian biblical studies compiled from Origen's works and secured by the authority of Basil of Caesarea and Gregory Nazianzen, I think, could be considered as trustworthy evidence of the positive reception of Origen's exegetic methodology by later biblical scribes and scholars.

Origen's comprehensive approach to biblical studies may appear somewhat in tension with his attempts to create a canon of the Christian Bible. Indeed, in various works Origen expresses his concern with such issues as: how many codices or rolls should a proper edition of the Bible comprise, what is the proper sequence of the biblical books, what should distinguish a proper Christian edition of the Bible from heretic editions. Eusebius gives a condensed version of Origen's vision of the biblical canon in his *Historia Ecclesiastica*. Apropos of the Old Testament he refers to Origen's commentary on the first Psalm, where he asserts that "the canonical books, as the Hebrews have handed them down, are twenty-two; corresponding with the number of their letters" (*HE* 6.25). In the introduction to the fifth volume of *Commentaries on John* Origen contends that despite the variety of readings, the prophets and apostles conceived of the Holy Scripture as one book (νενόηκε γραφήν ὡς βιβλον μίαν; *ComJn* 6.6.7). To justify this idea Origen refers to Apostle John's words from the book of Revelation 10:10 where he claims that "he ate one roll of the book" (μίαν κεφαλίδα; *ComJn* 5.6.25).

In such a way Origen argues for the inherent consistency of the biblical corpus which can and should be clearly displayed in the edition of Bible. At the same time, in a somewhat contradictory way, Origen asserts that a Christian exegete should not reject what seems to him an odd reading or an inconsistent passage of the Bible. He alleged that it is a habit of heretics to

113 A description of Origen's Hexapla is preserved in Jerome's *Commentary on Epistle to Titus* 3.9 (PL 26, 734d–735a), and Eusebius' *HE* 6.16.

reject spurious readings, and that Christians should not fall for such an impious treatment of the holy texts (*ComJn* 5.7.1–2).

In order to see what Origen possibly meant by suggesting these contradictory criteria, I now turn back to classical scholarship, where comparable ideas were first aired. In his seminal *Aporemata Homericæ*, Aristotle introduced the practice of multiple solutions of textual contradictions. The general structure of the Aristotelian study of Homeric questions consisted of the following elements: the contradictory fragment, the διὰ τί inquiry about this fragment, and a few possible solutions of the issue. In chapter 25 of the *Poetics* Aristotle justifies the multiplicity of possible answers by pointing to the multivocality of being:

With regard to problems, and the various solutions of them, how many kinds there are, and the nature of each kind, all will be clear if we look at them like this. Since the poet represents life, as a painter does or any other maker of likenesses, he must always represent one of three things — either things as they were or are (οἷα ἦν ἢ ἔστιν); or things as they are said and seem to be (οἷα φασι καὶ δοκεῖ); or things as they should be (οἷα εἶναι δεῖ)¹¹⁴ (*Poet* 1460b5–11).

In a quite similar way Origen in his *De Principiis* contends:

Scripture interweaves the imaginative with the historical, sometimes introducing what is utterly impossible (πῆ μὲν μηδὲ δυνατόν γενέσθαι), sometimes what is possible but has never occurred (πῆ δὲ δυνατόν μὲν γενέσθαι, οὐ μὴν γεγεννημένον)¹¹⁵ (*Princ* 4.2.9 = *Phil* 1.16).

Aristotle applied different logical, grammatical, historical and stylistic arguments in order to solve textual puzzles. If all these arguments fail to provide consistency in a given questionable fragment, Aristotle assumed that for some reason the author had applied dramatic effect in the text. Homeric scholars, Jewish exegetes and Origen also explained particularly troublesome fragments by assuming deliberate authorial usage of dramatic effect.¹¹⁶ Porphyry informs us that Aristarchus elaborated the methodology of justification of textual contradictions by suggesting a comparison of parallel fragments.¹¹⁷

114 Transl. W.H. Fyfe, 1932, available on-line.

115 Here and later translation of the *Philocalia* fragments by G. Lewis, 1911, available on-line.

116 On the whole, Origen stood in line with Philo and Aristotle who supposed that the authoritative text (sc. of the Bible or of Homer) is free from any inconsistency and that each and every questionable fragment can be justified by a meticulous scholar (cf. Or., *Phil.* 9.30).

117 Although Aristarchus' authorship of the famous dictum “αὐτὸς μὲν ἑαυτὸν πολλαὶ Ὀμηροῦ ἐξηγεῖται” preserved by Porphyry is questionable (*Porph.*, *HQ* 1.1.12f.), the method of comparison of parallel readings most assuredly goes back to Aristarchus (in support of this idea cf.: Eustathios, *ComIll* 2.101.14f.).

Thus, for Aristarchus a seemingly nonsensical phrase (sc. τὸ ἀδύνατον) can be clarified, justified and understood through comparison with another context or reading. Aristarchus used this technique in his running commentaries and also as the main instrument for the emendation of Homeric text, namely when he transferred some passages into different contexts, under the pretext that “this line is not properly placed here” (Schol. *Il.* 1.177a).

Origen also compared parallel fragments, although he did not attempt in so doing to reconstruct as accurately as possible the original reading and produce a scholarly critical edition. Instead, his aim was the comprehensive compiling of various versions of the biblical texts, which would present the exegete with as full a variety of readings as possible. In such a way Origen contended that:

... the only way to begin to understand the Scriptures is (οὐκ ἄλλοθεν τὰς ἀφορμὰς τοῦ νοεῖσθαι λαμβανούσας) by means of other passages containing the explanation dispersed throughout them (ἡ παρ’ ἀλλήλων ἔχουσῶν ἐν αὐταῖς διεσπαρμένον τὸ ἐξηγητικόν)¹¹⁸ (*Sel. in Ps.* 12.1080.37 = *Phil* 2.3).

Seen in the light of this logic, figurative or allegorical interpretation manifests itself as, so to speak, a multicontextual reading of the text. Niehoff argued that Aristobulus¹¹⁹ regarded figurative interpretation in a similar way. She also noted that this version of allegorical interpretation should be traced back to Aristotle and in no way be associated with the Stoics.

Yet Origen went even further and sought for parallel readings not only throughout Scripture but also in comparing biblical fragments with certain relevant passages of the most authoritative classical compositions. Thus, Origen significantly broadened the background of Scripture and allowed the reader of the holy texts to grasp the contextual framework of biblical concepts and notions (cf. *Or., Cels* 6.10). Although he applied classical contexts only for the sake of interpretation and never equated their authority with the authority of biblical texts, nonetheless the amplitude of Origen’s horizon was a remarkable phenomenon which distinguished the Christian approach to textual criticism from the classical and Jewish approaches.¹²⁰

118 Transl. G. Lewis, 1911, available on-line.

119 Cf. Niehoff, 2011, 62f.

120 By presenting this way of understanding figurative interpretation I do not mean to deny that sometimes Origen went further than the literal meaning of various contexts could suggest. Nevertheless, I believe that even when Origen was busy suggesting some allegorical interpretation of the text, the way he did so can be legitimately traced back to the philological techniques of Aristotelian Homeric scholarship. To give one short example, in the Fragment from *Commentary on John* Origen assumes that the Jews called Christ a Samaritan because they agreed to do so in secret (κατὰ τὸ σιωπώμενον, *ComJn* fr. 77.14). This passage

Now by the way of outlining the bedrock principles of Origen's biblical studies I would pinpoint certain passages from the *Philocalia*.

1. Origen argued for collecting various editions preserving various readings of the biblical texts. Remarkably, the purpose of this activity was to go through *all* the existing readings, no matter how wild these manuscripts may seem at first blush. In such a way, Origen claimed:

Nay, I suppose that every letter, no matter how strange, which is written in the oracles of God, does its work (ἀλλὰ γὰρ οἶμαι ὅτι καὶ πᾶν θαυμάσιον γράμμα τὸ γεγραμμένον ἐν τοῖς λογίοις τοῦ θεοῦ ἐργάζεται) (*ComJer* fr. 2.1 = *Phil* 10.1).

2. Origen forbade emendation of the solecistic phrases of Scripture. The entire eighth chapter of the *Philocalia*, excerpted from the *Commentary on Hosea*, is devoted to this topic and correspondingly entitled:

That we need not attempt to correct the solecistic phrases of Scripture. (Περὶ τοῦ μὴ δεῖν τὰ σολοικοειδῆ ῥητὰ τῆς γραφῆς ἐπιχειρεῖν διορθοῦσθαι) (*Phil* 8.1n).

3. Origen also forbade the rejection of spurious fragments, arguing that to reject fragments of Scripture was a heretic custom. Here are Origen's thoughts on this issue in his *Commentary on Hezekiah*:

There are some who err in respect of the Gospel pasture and the apostolic water, so that they tread down certain portions of the Gospel field and feed on others as on good pasture, either rejecting the whole apostolic pasture, or approving some parts and rejecting others, let us feed on the whole of the Gospels and not tread down any part of them (ἀμαρτανόντων δέ τινων καὶ περὶ τὴν εὐαγγελικὴν νομὴν καὶ τὸ ἀποστολικὸν ὕδωρ, ὥστε τῶν εὐαγγελικῶν τινὰ μὲν πατεῖν τινὰ δὲ ὡς καλὴν νέμεσθαι νομὴν, καὶ τῶν ἀποστολικῶν ἢ πάντα ἀποκρίνειν, ἢ τινὰ μὲν ἐγκρίνειν τινὰ δὲ ἀποκρίνειν) (*ComEzech* fr. 13.665.5 = *Phil* 11.2).

4. Origen acknowledged that not all readings are of equal authenticity and that certain ones might indeed be fallacious. Yet, interestingly enough, this did not prevent him from stating together with Apostle Paul that this variety of readings is but natural and even reasonable because, as the Apostle asserted:

There must be also sects among you, that they which are approved may be made manifest among you (Δεῖ γὰρ καὶ αἰρέσεις ἐν ὑμῖν εἶναι, ἵνα οἱ δόκιμοι φανεροὶ γένωνται ἐν ὑμῖν [1 Cor 11:19])” (*Cels* 3.13.2 = *Phil* 16.2).

suggests that Origen was familiar with Aristarchus' κατὰ τὸ σιωπώμενον technique (Schol. *II*. 21.17a).

5. In sum, these complementary principles elucidate Origen's vision of biblical studies, whose purpose, as I emphasised earlier, consists in acquiring a comprehensive vision of biblical readings in both Hebrew and Greek traditions, which would allow an exegete to penetrate a multi-dimensional and universal divine message. Origen conceded that acquiring such a comprehensive vision required an ascetic way of life, which may or may not bring the scholar to a desirable result (for it is only a saint, after all, who is able to penetrate the divine message). In such a way, Origen asserted:

The saint is a sort of spiritual herbalist, who culls from the sacred Scriptures every jot and every common letter, discovers the value of what is written and its use, and finds that there is nothing superfluous in the Scriptures (οὕτως οἰονεὶ βοτανικός τις πνευματικός ἐστὶν ὁ ἅγιος, ἀναλεγόμενος ἀπὸ τῶν ἱερῶν γραμμάτων ἕκαστον ἰῶτα καὶ ἕκαστον τὸ τυχὸν στοιχείον, καὶ εὐρίσκων τὴν δύναμιν τοῦ γράμματος, καὶ εἰς ὅτι ἐστὶ χρήσιμον, καὶ ὅτι οὐδὲν παρέλκει τῶν γεγραμμένων) (*ComJer* fr. 2.2 = *Phil* 10.2).

These principles of biblical studies were set out in the *Hexapla*, which represented a ground-breaking methodological and technical innovation in Hellenic philology. It is important to see the heavy methodological baggage which emerged together with the composition of *Hexapla*. What distinguishes Origen's approach from the textual criticism of Hellenic and Jewish scholars is a pioneering and outstandingly high estimation of various *receptions* of the text. Whilst admitting that the Greek versions of Aquila, Symmachus had some forgeries deliberately inserted by the Jews,¹²¹ he neither emended nor rejected these versions from his collection. These versions were important for him because they threw light on the Jewish tradition of the reception of the Bible.

In view of this evidence I cannot help seeing Origen's approach to the text as surprisingly comparable to the contemporary research contending that the environmental (sociocultural and institutional) context of the literary composition is just as important for the formation of meaning¹²² as words

121 For instance, Origen argued that Jews, in order to reject the story of Susanna and many other narratives and passages accepted in Christian tradition, "introduced some phrases manifestly incorrect (λέξεις τινὰς τὰς μὴ προπούσας παρεμβεβληκότων τῇ γραφῇ)" (*EpAf* 11.65.25).

122 Contemporary cognitive linguistics studies reveal interesting observations concerning the process of meaning formation. E.g., Evans and Green in their introduction to cognitive linguistics focus on the relation of language and thought and conclude that semantic structure is conceptual and as such it is embodied (cf. Evans, V. / Green, M., *Cognitive Linguistics: An Introduction*. Mahwah / New Jersey 2006, 44–50).

and sentences, which constitute the textual tissue.¹²³ I think that for Origen biblical text was not simply a collection of words arranged in sentences, divided in books with certain subheadings and paragraphes, scribed in codices, and organized in the canon so that a correct sequence of the books is preserved. This is, of course, a rather rough depiction of the canon but even so, Origen knew that a commonly accepted version of the Bible would contribute to peace in the Church. Yet, he also knew that from the scholarly viewpoint this task was fairly complicated. Not only was it so because of the variety of the biblical manuscripts but also because these manuscripts were produced in certain environments and therefore their interpretation entailed studies of the transmission history of these endoseis. This tension between a routine Church need of the biblical canon and scholarly awareness of its “price,” eventually led Origen to a somewhat compromised solution. He balanced his efforts to establish the biblical canon with a thorough historical and philological study of the biblical texts that resulted in his extensive commentaries. Thus, it appears that Origen considered the canonised text of the Bible as a starting point and a rudder in his further and deeper studies and commentaries.

In the Hellenic context and especially in the period of Late Antiquity, such a comprehensive scholarly approach to the text, and a pronounced interest in the transmission history of the text was not extraordinary. For instance, it is attested in the contemporary biblical scholarship that the New Testament manuscript culture was characterized by the so-called textual fluidity.¹²⁴ It is in the same manner that, with a reference to Bernard Cerquiglini’s *Éloge de la variante*, Hugo Lundhaug, who studies the monastic manuscript culture in late antique Egypt,¹²⁵ assumes that manuscript variants should not be

123 Lundhaug persuasively argues for applying cognitive poetics in the studies of the early Christian literature (cf. Lundhaug, H., *Cognitive Poetics and Ancient Texts*, in: Ostreng, W. [ed.], *Complexity. Interdisciplinary Communications 2006/2007*. Oslo 2008, 18–20). He asserts that ancient texts should not be analysed apart from the discourse context. In tune with the blending theory of Fauconnier and Turner, he concludes that words, sentences and texts certainly guide the production of meaning, but they do not determine it (cf. Fauconnier, G. / Turner, M., *The Way We Think: Conceptual Blending and the Minds Hidden Complexities*. New York 2002, 40).

124 Cf. the details about the history of the concept in: Lundhaug, H. / Lied, L.I., *Studying Snapshots: On Manuscript Culture, Textual Fluidity, and New Philology*, in: Lied, L.I. / Lundhaug, H. (eds.), *Snapshots of Evolving Traditions: Jewish and Christian Manuscript Culture, Textual Fluidity, and New Philology*. Berlin 2017, 1.

125 An ERC financed research project “*New Contexts for Old Texts: Unorthodox Texts and Monastic Manuscript Culture in Fourth- and Fifth-Century Egypt (NEWCONT)*” guided by Professor Hugo Lundhaug (University of Oslo).

considered as deviation from the norm but as a natural product of the scribal culture, where textual variant represented the norm.¹²⁶

Another comparable context can be seen in the reception paradigm of the philosophical schools of Late Antiquity. As I have mentioned earlier, a routine business of the philosophical schools was to practice philosophy by reinterpreting the authoritative texts. Importantly, the purpose of these school oral exegetic-philosophical exercises was not to agree upon some commonly accepted reading but to contribute to a personal progress of the students. An impressive variety of interpretation and a keen interest in re-thinking the authoritative texts is preserved in the *Commentaria in Aristotelem Graeca* composed in the Peripatetic and Platonic schools in a period from the second and until seventh century AD. The written commentaries composed by the students of the schools captured the oral lectures in varied transcription and this variety was *the norm* of the *Commentaria*.

Now, if we combine these bits of evidence I think we can see how Origen's principles of the biblical studies fit the context of Late Antiquity. Namely, in the circumstances of textual fluidity every honest scholar would see that making an accurate *textus criticus* of Bible is an even more daring enterprise than the Hexapla project. This *status quo* of the manuscript culture shaped the reading-writing paradigm of the philosophical schools, where a stronger didactic potential of questions over answers has been realised and a balance between the canonised authoritative texts and the research questions attached to them has been found. In these circumstances Origen could hardly consider variant readings as necessary negative phenomenon. Hence, he was deeply engrossed in studies of the transmission of the biblical texts. Although we have nothing but a few short fragments of the Hexapla,¹²⁷ I think it is safe to assume that the Origenian methodology of biblical studies influenced at least some groups of the biblical scribes and scholars of the period that followed. Moreover, I venture to suggest that were this so, then the traces of it can be seen not only in the editions and commentaries of the biblical texts but also in the scribal τέχνη in general. In such a way, it is logical to assume that some of the authoritative texts composed or copied in the monastic communities, who supported Origenian philological principles, could preserve variant readings of the text or references to the contextual parallels.¹²⁸

126 Cf. Lundhaug, 2017, 2; Cerquiglini, B., *In Praise of the Variant: A Critical History of Philology*, transl. B. Wing. Baltimore 1999, 77f.

127 Grafton, A. / Williams, M., *Christianity and the Transformation of the Book: Origen, Eusebius, and the Library of Caesarea*. London 2008, 28.

128 I am sincerely grateful to Professor Lundhaug's illuminating suggestion given *impromptu* in the discussion of Origen's principles of biblical studies and their possible impact on posterior exegetic and scribal tradition. He recalled the papyrus

In conclusion I would like to cite Gregory Nazianzen, who similarly to Origen believed that texts should not be investigated irrespective of their transmission. In his *Oration* 31 he asserts:

...words do not belong more to the speaker of them than to him who called them forth (οὐ γὰρ τοῦ λέγοντος μᾶλλον οἱ λόγοι ἢ τοῦ λέγειν συναναγκάζοντος)¹²⁹ (*Or* 31.24).

2. Origen's exegetic methodology and Hellenic grammarians

Origen's experimental method of biblical studies was also primed to be influential from the linguistic point of view. As I have noted above Origen disapproved of rejecting those passages which he could not understand because of their strong dependency on the Hebrew original. In other words, Origen could not allow a one-standard model of language to control his biblical studies. In this he differed from the Hellenic grammarians who mainly considered the language of the poets as a paradigmatic example.¹³⁰ In such a way Origen's approach featured great flexibility, which he nevertheless combined with a peculiar way of systematizing and ordering theological concepts. In this section I observe the lineaments of his method of systematisation which partially depended on the principles of ordering knowledge, discovered and established by the Hellenic grammarians (sc. the concepts of canon, grammatical analogy and order).

The growth of Homeric scholarship boosted grammatical studies and eventually resulted in the systematization of the rules of the Greek and Latin languages. A process of formalisation of the rules of Greek and Latin languages exemplified a significant epistemological paradigm. It is a commonly accepted prerequisite of systematization that there should be a somewhat reasonable arrangement of the elements constituting a system. One method of systematization comes with following certain operative regularities (sc. analogy); another with compiling a canon or paradigm, which practically amounts to a certain empirically attested data-storage framed by a less rigid, not apparent and maybe even dubious regularity. Analogy regulates connections between the components,¹³¹ while canon can be understood as a

roll (P.Köln Kopt. 1), which contains the two different versions of Pachomius *Letter 10*, preserved in the Coptic language and currently held in the Cologne University Library.

129 Transl. Ch.G. Browne / J.E. Swallow, 1894, available on-line.

130 Apollonius Dyscollus asserted that the language of poets, while significantly differing from ordinary speech yet represents a pre-eminent example of Hellenic language and therefore should be explored and explained (cf. *Constr* 2.77).

131 The methodological principle of analogy, which formed a ground of the Alexandrian grammatical and exegetical science, is captured in Varro's account:

less restricted sequence, list, or table.¹³² In such a way, canon (sc. κανών) comprises different examples that occurred in habitual usage, and does not necessarily conform to analogical regularity.

A discussion of these two principles between the grammatical Analogists and Anomalists, roughly speaking, revolved around the limits of rational theorizing on the basis of empirical data. Although neither rationalists nor empiricists denied the regularity of linguistic phenomena, they disagreed about the implications of this regularity: the rationalists believed that rules must determine the reality of language, while their opponents held the opposite position. In this way, Zenodotus, the first librarian of the Alexandrian Museion, in his first critical edition of Homeric poems based on a comparison of various manuscripts, expunged or obelized doubtful verses, transposed or altered lines, and introduced numerous conjectures. His successors appreciated his critical methodology but often disagreed with his conjectures, so that a lot of verses expunged by Zenodotus were later accepted by Aristarchus. Subsequently, a tendency towards the reasonable harmonization of ratio and empeiria gave rise to a balanced scholarly approach held by grammarians and physicians.¹³³

A case example is preserved in the works of the second century grammarian Apollonius, whose treatises on syntaxis and orthography became the standard manuals for many years after their publication. His work came after the achievements of the Stoic linguistics and of the Alexandrian and Pergamum schools of grammar.¹³⁴ In Apollonius' study of Greek language we find a balanced treatment of grammatical analogy and of the empirical facts of language. Thus, Apollonius designated two criteria of his study of Greek syntaxis: analogy (sc. ἀναλογία, ἀκολουθία) or correct construction (sc. καταλληλότης) and tradition (sc. παράδοσις, ἱστορία) or habitual usage. In his treatise *De constructione* he professed as follows:

... parts of speech will be established neither because of regularity of form (οὔτε παρὰ τὸ ἀκόλουθον τῶν φωνῶν), nor because of irregularity (οὔτε μὴν παρὰ

“Aristarchus, when he writes about the consistency of speech, bids us follow a certain likeness (similitudinem) of words in their declension, as far as usage permits (consuetudo)” (*De Lingua Latina* 9.1.1; transl. R.G. Kent, 1938, 441).

132 Cf. Lampe, G.W.H. (ed.), *A Patristic Greek Lexicon*. Oxford 1987; Liddell, H. / Scott, R. / Jones, H.S. (eds.), *A Greek-English Lexicon*. Oxford 1983; (available on-line).

133 For instance, Sextus tells us that Galen argued for a balanced use of rational speculations and empirical data (cf. Sextus, *M* 1.176, 1.60, 72).

134 Crates of Mallus was a founder of the Pergamum school, an adherent of the Stoic philosophy and a famous expert in allegorical interpretation. According to ancient evidence he sought to secure the support of Homer for Stoic doctrines (Eustathios, *ComIl* 11.32–40).

τὸ ἀνακόλουθον τὰ τοῦ λόγου) but, as has been explained, on the basis of constant unique distinctive properties [of use or sense] (ἐκ τῆς παρεπομένης ιδιότητος)¹³⁵ (*Constr* 1.77).

This research principle enabled Apollonius to expound and thereby “legalize” some irregularities of Greek grammar, as, for instance, in the construction of a neuter plural with a singular verb. It follows from this approach to the language, that one of the tasks of the grammarian consists in recognition and explanation of syntactical and orthographical irregularities (sc. ἀκατάλληλα) or solecisms (*Constr* 267.2), which can be explained and thus justified. Accordingly, Apollonius talked about “reason of irregularity” (sc. λόγος or αἰτία τοῦ ἀκατάλληλου¹³⁶). Apollonius emphasized that it is important to study constructions which appear irregular, and to seek to explain their irregularity.

The rationalistic approach to language, which is characterised by an explanation of both regularities and irregularities in language, was built on the assumption that at the background of all the puzzling and regular linguistic data lies the reasonable organization of the universe, which surfaces on different levels of being. For instance, Apollonius at the beginning of his *De Constructione* postulated that there is a certain order (sc. τάξις), which is determined by nature (*Constr* 16.6–11) and can be detected in various phenomena. In a similar vein, he draws a parallel between the rational orderly organization of the universe (sc. λογικὴ ἀκολουθία), and its physical regularity (sc. φυσικὴ παρακολουθησις; *Constr* 1.52.5).

In Stoic philosophy, this concept of the universal logicity and orderly structure of nature was mirrored in a theory of sequential provenance of the parts of speech.¹³⁷ Apollonius professed that when language was first invented (*Constr* 4.10) the parts of speech took a certain order. He remarked that analogical orderly organization characterises the sequence of letters in the alphabet, the order of cases (nom., gen., dat., acc.), of tenses (present, past, future, etc.), and of genders (masc., fem., neut.). Eventually, this chain of thoughts leads to the assumption that all these orderly structures manifest logical patterns of the human intellect (*Constr* 1.12–29). Hereby, Apollonius asserted that grammatical analogy, which can be observed in word-forms, reveals not only regularity of the signifiers (sc. φωναί, words), but also the logicity of their significata (sc. νοητά, meanings; *Constr* 2.3–3.2, cf. *ComJn*

135 Translation W. Householder, 1981, 50.

136 Apollonius, *Pron* 38.22; transl. W. Householder, 1981, 91.

137 The orderly organization of parts of speech goes back to the Stoic theory of pristine language, which was characterized by an accurate resemblance between intelligible and corporeal phenomena and was violated in the run of time (cf. Apollonius, *Pron* 38.22f.).

2.161). Consequently, Apollonius contended that words can be analysed from the viewpoint of either their form or their meaning.¹³⁸ A belief in correspondence between the signifiers and significata was a feature of Stoic linguistic theory, which was adapted by grammarians.¹³⁹

Like the grammarians, Origen based his exegetical studies on a compromise between reasoning out both analogy and irregularities of the biblical language (for he clearly approached these notions as relative terms, which lose their meaning if not paired together¹⁴⁰). Origen's biblical studies comprised various techniques. By the means of grammatical analysis he studied the habitual usage of scriptural lexique (sc. συνήθεια, ἥθος; cf. *ComJn* 13.285, 290, 32.52; *Sel. in Ps.* 15.9) and argued for the logicity and consistency of the biblical text (sc. ἀναλογία, ἀκολουθία; cf. *Philocalia* 2.4.6; *ComJn* 2.102f.).

Like Hellenic grammarians, Origen supported the idea of sequential provenance of the parts of speech, of orderly structure of the universe and of the analogical connection between the physical (corporeal) and intelligible (incorporeal) phenomena (sc. καταλληλότης¹⁴¹).

With regard to the sequential provenance of the parts of speech in the *Commentaries on Genesis*, Origen refers to Aquila Romanus (the third cent. AD Latin grammarian) who taught that subject has a certain priority to its derivation (sc. predicate) which characterises the subject.¹⁴²

Pondering the reasonable structure of the universe, Origen asserted that this primordial structure enables the structuring of theological knowledge.¹⁴³ For instance, in the *Commentary on John* he affirmed that the whole Bible is one body, whose parts form a harmonious unity in the Word

138 Apollonius, *Adv* 119.1.

139 It has become an accepted commonplace that it was the Stoics who introduced grammar as a “philosophy of language” and thereby procured a place for this discipline within philosophical studies (cf. Blank, 1994, 165).

140 Cf. Simplicius' observation apropos the father-son relationships from his *Commentary on Categories* (cf. *ComCat* 8.166.15–27).

141 Cf. Origen's observation from his *Homily on the Prayer*: “Needful, therefore, is the bread which corresponds most closely to our rational nature and is akin to our very essence (ἄρτος ὁ τῆ φύσει τῆ λογικῆ καταλληλότατος καὶ τῆ οὐσία αὐτῆ συγγενῆς), which invests the soul at once with well-being and with strength, and, since the Word of God is immortal, imparts to its eater its own immortality” (*Orat* 27.9.20–4; transl. W.A. Curtis, 2001, available on-line).

142 Cf. Or., *ComGen* 12.88.20f.

143 In a recently issued monograph Róbert Somos scrutinizes the epistemology and strategy of argumentation of Origen. Somos touches upon different aspects of the logical discipline, focusing chiefly on rational syllogistic and linguistic exegetic issues, and takes as his point of departure a comprehensive definition of logic as a rational discipline, which, due to the likeness of the created mind to divine intellect and the providential activity of God, guarantees the possibility

of God (*ComJn* 10.107). Origen contends that the whole world consists of the “elements of faith” (sc. στοιχεῖα τῆς πίστεως), through which, as long as they are arranged in a proper order, heavenly matters can be read (*ComJn* 1.21). Origen draws a parallel between the sequence of the alphabet (sc. linguistic level), and the sequence of the corporeal universe (sc. physical level), and also maintains the sequence of theological knowledge coined in the biblical canon¹⁴⁴ (sc. exegetical and theological level, *ComJn* 1.106).

The concept of universal law, which surfaces in different spheres of reality, links together and governs the whole universe, and this appeared in a fully-fledged form in Stoic philosophy.¹⁴⁵ Arius Didimus reported that according to the Stoics “the linkage and logical consequence of all things past, present and future, is an irrevocable and inescapable fate and knowledge and truth and law of all that is”.¹⁴⁶ Cicero affirmed that “natural law is divine” and that “a reason which pervades all nature is possessed of divine power”.¹⁴⁷

In a similar vein with the complex and comprehensive theory of the Stoics, the Hellenic grammarians retained flexibility in their explanation of disanalogous linguistic examples. A comparable approach characterized Origen’s vision for the diversity and richness of the biblical language. Not only did he proclaim the multivocality of the biblical lexis but he also attested to various interpretative levels embedded in the biblical text. Consequently, in his view biblical text represents a multi-level and multi-dimensional system comprised of different meaningful “codes”, which can work differently not only due to their multiplicity but also depending on the circumstances,

of attaining true knowledge about the universe and divinity (Somos, R., *Logic and Argumentation in Origen*. Münster 2015).

144 In his monograph on logic and argumentation in Origen, Somos highlights the analogy which Origen makes between the logical elements of the universe and the principles of theology. Somos particularly focuses on the parallels between the scientific methodology of Aristotle and Origen’s exegetical principles declared in the *Commentary on John* (cf. Somos, 2015, 106).

145 Although the reasonable and orderly organization of the universe was proclaimed in Plato’s *Timaeus*, lately Antiochus of Ascalon (died 68 BC) and Posidonius (135–151 BC) harmonised the teachings of Platonism and Stoicism. George Karamanolis stated that Platonists believed “that in the Aristotelian or the Stoic writings they read nothing but Plato in a more dogmatic form”, since Zeno and Aristotle were both disciples of Plato, one directly, the other indirectly (cf. Karamanolis, G.E., *Platonists on Aristotle from Antiochus to Porphyry*. Oxford 2006, 21). Another evidence of an intense dialogue between the philosophical schools is Simplicius’ commentary on the *Handbook* by the Stoic Epictetus (cf. Hadot, I. / Hadot, P., *Apprendre à Philosopher dans l’Antiquité. L’Enseignement du “Manuel d’Épictète” et son Commentaire Néoplatonicien*. Paris 2004, 35).

146 The witness of Arius is preserved in Eusebius’ *PE* 15.14.2.

147 Cf. Cicero, *De natura deorum* 1.36. (transl. H. Rackham, 1933).

environments, and eventually, on the embodied minds of exegetes, where these “codes” are “activated”.¹⁴⁸

Interestingly enough, Origen arrived at this flexible approach to biblical studies when the governmental edicts and the spires of soldiers impelled a demand for an official church decision about the canon of the Christian Bible. As Lee McDonald persuasively showed in his research of the history of the Christian scriptural canon, the church community played an essential role in the identification of authoritative biblical texts. Practically, it was attested by liturgical and, so to speak, functional institutional employment of certain scriptures in the Christian worship, mission and literature.¹⁴⁹

In conformity with McDonald’s argument, I wish to suggest that Origen’s biblical studies assume that the burden of responsibility for correct interpretation of the Bible lies on the shoulders of the exegete (rather than church community), who must format the whole way of studying the biblical puzzles. Clearly, this emphasized responsibility of an individual did not infringe upon the authority of church, but simply underscored that biblical meanings represent a difficulty, a challenge, which awakens the mind of exegete and calls it to *metanoia*.

Origen’s commitment to serious philological studies of the Bible can also be seen in his attempt to create a Christian school akin to the Alexandrian Museion. A general outline of Origen’s plan was presented by John McGuckin at *Origeniana Octava*, especially devoted to Origen and the Alexandrian Tradition.¹⁵⁰ McGuckin argued that the educational standards of the Alexandrian Museion, which represented a fine example of an educational and research institution,¹⁵¹ impressed Origen to the extent that he ventured to organize a similar Christian institution. According to Eusebius’ account (*HE* 6.3.8–13) the church hierarchy at Alexandria disapproved of this “daring deed” of Origen, because his project of the school differed to a remarkable extent from the familiar image of a catechetical school and from the expectations of the

148 Origen gives an interesting account concerning the interconnection between corporeal and intellectual aspects of the human being in the 20th homily on Jeremiah (*HomJer* 20.9.83f.), where he expounds the biblical saying that God examines hearts and kidneys (sc. νεφροί) of men (cf. Ps 15:7; 25:2; 72:21) in order to evaluate their righteousness.

149 Cf. McDonald, L.M., *Identifying Scripture and Canon in the Early Church: The Criteria Question*. Peabody 2002, 417–420.

150 Cf. McGuckin, J. A., *Origen as Literary Critic in the Alexandrian Tradition*, in: Perrone, L. (ed.), *Origeniana Octava: Origen and the Alexandrian Tradition*. Leuven 2003, 121–135.

151 Cf. Guichard, L.A. / Alonso, J.L.G. / Paz de Hoz, M. (eds.), *The Alexandrian Tradition: Interactions Between Science, Religion, and Literature*. Bern / New York 2014.

Alexandrian bishop, Demetrius (*HE* 6.8.4). Hence Origen decided to go to Caesarea, where he eventually received financial and administrative support for his school (*HE* 6.26).

As a matter of course, in formulation of curriculum for his school Origen took advantage of the curricula of contemporary philosophical schools. Pondering differences between the curricula of philosophical schools and Origen's educational program preserved in the Prologue of his *Commentary on Song of Songs* (§3) Róbert Somos concluded that Origen's program cannot be fully identified with any of the philosophical curricula. Although the arrangement of disciplines in different philosophical curricula did not significantly change from one school to another,¹⁵² Origen, in his turn, took over the systematic and gradual approach to education and traced it back to Solomon. Thus, the classification of philosophical disciplines from the Prologue of the *Commentary on the Song of Songs* (§3) goes as follows:

- 1) ethics (i.e. moral knowledge, which in Solomon's writings is preserved in the *Book of Proverbs*);
- 2) physics (i.e. knowledge about nature preserved in the *Book of Ecclesiastes*);
- 3) epoptics (i.e. inspective knowledge preserved in the *Song of Songs*).

Concerning logic, Origen specifically notes that it is an instrumental discipline, which is yet indispensable for biblical studies. From the description of logic which Origen gives in the prologue to the *Commentary on the Song of Songs* (§3), it becomes clear that he regarded it first and foremost as a philological discipline:

For this Logic is, as we say, rational, in that it deals with the meanings and proper significances and their opposites, the classes and kinds of words and expressions, and gives information as to the form of each and every saying; and this branch of learning certainly requires not so much to be separated from the others as to be mingled and interwoven with them¹⁵³ (*Cant* prol. 3).

This text shows that Origen recognised logic as an important component of his educational program and a useful analytical instrument.¹⁵⁴ Pondering Peripatetic traces in Origen's methodology, John McGuckin convincingly showed in his article that Origen's exegesis was probably inspired by Aristotelian

152 Thus, the Middle Platonic division, which was adopted by the Stoics, comprised logic, physics and ethics; while the Peripatetics distinguished between theoretical, practical and poetic sciences (cf. Somos, 2015, 20f.).

153 Transl. R.P. Lawson, 1957, 40.

154 Peculiarly he remarked that Solomon notably appreciated the significance of logical training and for this reason he entitled his book *Proverbs* because "the word pro-verb denotes that one thing is openly said, and another is inwardly meant" (*Cant* prol. 3).

teleological theory, because whatever nuances of meaning Origen discovered in Scripture, their purpose was to throw light on the final cause, or divine design, of the fragment under consideration. Unsurprisingly, when guided by Aristotelian methodology, Origen's writing style is sober and pithy, and his argument expressed in a dialogical manner.¹⁵⁵

Robert Somos also recognizes elements of Aristotelian scientific method in Origen's system. Namely, he asserts that the Aristotelian classification of knowledge into the "prior by nature" and the "prior in relation to us"¹⁵⁶ is echoed in Origen's sorting of the scriptural names of Christ preserved in the Prologue to *the Commentary on John*. Thus, Origen distinguishes the names of Christ that represent his human nature, which is closer to us, and the names that characterize Christ's divine nature.¹⁵⁷ Somos argues that, similarly to Aristotle's scientific project of philosophy, Origen sought to establish a scientific project of Christian doctrine.¹⁵⁸ Nevertheless, Somos concludes his observation of various philosophical influences on Origen's teaching by saying that Origen used mixed material from Platonic, Stoic and Aristotelian sources contained in the works of Platonic authors. I agree with this thesis to the extent that Origen was well versed in the teachings of various philosophical schools and that his own doctrine preserves the traces of Platonic, Peripatetic, and Stoic concepts, as well as the achievements of Hellenic grammarians and textual critiques and Jewish exegetes.

In sum, Origen's approach to ordering theological knowledge, which he built upon his biblical studies, has the following features. Similar to the grammarians, Origen retained a compromise between the regularities and irregularities of the biblical language. This experience of work with complex and fluid linguistic structures patterned Origen's view of structuring theological knowledge, which comprises various non transparent levels of meanings.

155 McGuckin, 2003, 121–135.

156 In the *Analytica Posteriora* Aristotle asserts that one kind of knowledge is prior by nature (sc. τῆ φύσει), which means that it is further away from sense-perception and closer to reason; another kind of knowledge is closer to sense-perception and prior in relation to us (sc. πρὸς ἡμᾶς) (*APo* 71b34).

157 Somos does not assert that Origen borrowed this principle directly from Aristotle, nor does he suggest any version of Origen's source (but notes only that it was not of Middle-Platonic origin).

158 Although Origen expressed, as did Aristotle, an intention to build a coherent system of theological knowledge (in the words of Origen, a kind of organic and connected whole [seriem quondam et corpus; *Princ* praef. 10]), his system ended up by being a probative one, since his exegetical exercises often represent a meticulous collection of alternative, relatively valid interpretations. The reason why Origen deliberately avoided formalizing and finalizing his theological edifice might be found in his exegetic principle of the polysemy of Scriptural language.

The multiplicity of biblical meanings, which is accompanied by a variety of biblical readings and an obscure history of biblical texts, renders it impossible to decisively authorise one reading and one meaning of Scripture. Owing to the previous outlined status quo of the biblical studies, the idea of canon in Origen's system appears to be fairly challenging. Yet, I suppose that this is the focal point of Origen's biblical studies: he deliberately engaged in all the possible complexities because he identified both exegetic and ascetic practices. He maintained that the grammatical analysis of the biblical lexicon and grammar of various connotations and parallel readings is important for biblical studies. According to Origen, a mere grammatical study of the Bible does not bring a scholar to the top of spiritual ascendance because a clear vision of the nuances of complex biblical knowledge is an ability that emerges from a constant mental and bodily search for decoding the genuinely appealing biblical enigmas. This plastic and challenging approach to the biblical canon which characterises Origen's methodology of biblical studies distinguishes his approach from his Alexandrian (both Hellenic and Jewish) colleagues.

Chapter 3. Eunomian teaching in the context of philosophical and pedagogical debates

1. Philosophical background of Eunomian teaching

Turning to a pre-history of Eunomian teaching that played a significant role in the Christian epistemological discourse, I start with a brief survey of the previous theological discussions revolving around the Arian doctrine.

The ontological questions raised by Arius were of long philosophical standing. For instance, the question about the generation of the Son and creation of the world invoked a debate about the created/uncreated cosmos. The generation of cosmos was discussed in the *Timaeus*, where the following dilemma was detected: either to see cosmos as “what always is and never becomes” (τί τὸ ὄν αἰεὶ, γένεσιν δὲ οὐκ ἔχον; *Tim* 27d6), or to regard it as “what becomes and never is” (τί τὸ γιγνόμενον μὲν αἰεὶ, ὄν δὲ οὐδέποτε; *Tim* 28a1). It is stated in the *Timaeus* that the universe has come to be (sc. γέγονεν; *Tim* 28b7), and that its cause is a Craftsman, who fashioned the universe after a model (*Tim* 28a6).

The interpretation of the Middle Platonists¹⁵⁹ underscored a particular angle of the issue: the divine will maintains the eternity of the created universe, hence, the eternity of the universe is superficial, while God is inherently unbegotten and eternal. A reflection of this Middle Platonic concept can be seen in Origen's vision of God the Father as unbegotten (sc. ἀγέννητος), and

159 Cf. Alcinous, *Did* 14, Philo, *Opif* 7–9.

of God the Son as begotten (sc. γεννητός).¹⁶⁰ Although Origen repeatedly affirmed that the Son was begotten, he insisted that he was eternally begotten.¹⁶¹ This concept undeniably divorced his Christology from the teaching of Arius, who speaking about Christ declared that “there was when He was not” (sc. ἦν ὅτε οὐκ ἦν; Theod., *HE* 1.3).

Within the discussion about the relationship between the Father and the Son Origen introduced the term ὑπόστασις into Christian theology. Although he used it with different meanings,¹⁶² and not as a theological *terminus technicus*, later on this term and Origen’s Christology in toto turned out to be helpful to the Cappadocian fathers in their polemics against Eunomius, Aëtius and their followers.¹⁶³

160 E.g., Origen constantly stressed that the Son was begotten by the Father and that he was assigned to create the world (*Cels* 6.17.31–44). Some Christian authors (Marcellus of Ancyra, Eustathius of Antioch in *De engastrimytho contra Origenem*, Epiphanius of Salamis in *Panarion*) have regarded Origen as proto-Arian (for details of ancient and modern discussions of Origen’s role in the Arian controversy cf. Hanson, R.P.C., *The influence of Origen on the Arian controversy*, in: Lothar, L. [ed.], *Origeniana quarta*. Innsbruck / Vienna 1987, 410–423). G. Stead in his contribution to *Origeniana Septima* showed that Arius was not influenced by Origen’s thought, while the Alexandrian bishops, who argued with Arius, were (cf. Stead, G.C., *Philosophy in Origen and Arius*, in: Bienert, W.A. / Kühneweg, U. [eds.], *Origeniana Septima*. Leuven 1999, 101–108).

161 Cf. “the Father has not begotten the Son and then served him from his generation but always begets him (οὐχὶ ἐγέννησεν ὁ πατήρ τὸν υἱὸν καὶ ἀπέλυσεν αὐτὸν ὁ πατήρ ἀπὸ τῆς γενέσεως αὐτοῦ, ἀλλ’ αἰεὶ γεννᾷ αὐτόν)” (Or., *HomJer* 9.4.71–74).

162 Origen applied the term ὑπόστασις for the demarcation of the persons of the Father and the Son: “they are two realities regarding coming into existence (ὄντα δύο τῇ ὑποστάσει πράγματα), but one in regard to unity of thought, and harmony, and identity of will (ἐν δὲ τῇ ὁμονοίᾳ καὶ τῇ συμφωνίᾳ καὶ τῇ ταυτότητι τοῦ βουλήματος)” (Or., *Cels* 8.12.13; transl. mine). I would like to stress the relative function of *Dativus Singularis* τῇ ὑποστάσει, and feel uneasy with the translation “they are two, considered as persons or subsistences” by Fr. Crombie (1885). While in a fragment from the *Commentary on John* he used ὑπόστασις as a synonym for essence (οὐσία, ὑποκειμένον): “both being one, not only in essence but also in substance (ἐν οὐ μόνον οὐσία ἀλλὰ καὶ ὑποκειμένω τυγχάνοντας ἀμφοτέρους), they are said to be Father and Son (λέγεσθαι πατέρα καὶ υἱόν) in relation to certain differing aspects (κατὰ τινὰς ἐπινοίας διαφορῶν), not in relation to [their] reality (οὐ κατὰ ὑπόστασιν)” (*ComJn* 10.37.246). Cf. another fragment from the *Commentary*: “we believe in three hypostases of the Father and the Son and the Holy Ghost” (τρεῖς ὑποστάσεις πειθόμενοι τυγχάνειν, τὸν πατέρα καὶ τὸν υἱὸν καὶ τὸ ἅγιον πνεῦμα)” (*ComJn* 2.10.75.1–2; transl. mine).

163 For details concerning the provenance of the term ὑπόστασις cf. chapter 4, section 4.2.

In the Eunomian teaching Christological questions were discussed in epistemological and methodological contexts rather than in an ontological context. In such a way, the discussion came to be concerned firstly with “*how* we know the divine being,” and secondly, with “*what* we know about it”.

With a particular emphasis on the methodology of theological argumentation, Eunomius argued against the substantial equality of the Father and the Son:

There are two roads (δυσεῖν ὁδῶν) marked out for the discovery of what we seek: one is that by which we examine the actual essences (τὰς οὐσίας αὐτὰς ἐπισκοπούμενοι) and with clear and unadulterated reasoning (τῷ περὶ αὐτῶν λόγῳ) about them make a judgement (κρίσιν) on each; the other is an inquiry by means of the actions (τῆς διὰ τῶν ἐνεργειῶν ἐξετάσεως), whereby we distinguish the essence on the basis of its products and completed works (ἐκ τῶν δημιουργημάτων καὶ τῶν ἀποτελεσμάτων) – and neither of the ways mentioned is able to bring out any apparent similarity of the essence [in Father and Son] (τὴν τῆς οὐσίας ὁμοιότητα)¹⁶⁴ (A 20.5–10).

The first of these roads constituted an examination of the divine names. In the seventh paragraph of his *Apology*, Eunomius introduced the term “unbegotten” (sc. ἀγγένητος), and afterwards affirmed that the Father is an unbegotten essence (οὐσία ἀγέννητος; A 8.17), and consequently:

He could never undergo a generation which involved the sharing of his own distinctive nature (τῆς ἰδίας μεταδοῦναι) with the offspring of this generation (τῷ γεννωμένῳ φύσεως), and could never admit of any comparison or association (σύγκρισιν καὶ κοινωνίαν) with a thing begotten (τὸ γεννητόν) [viz. the Son]¹⁶⁵ (A 9.1–3).

Eunomius built his reasoning by means of syllogism. Like his master Aëtius, he was a renowned logician, and on that account they were both repeatedly castigated for their technical arguments by the adherents of Nicene Christology.¹⁶⁶ Nevertheless, Eunomius claimed that his teaching, unlike the conception of his opponents, was based not on “human invention” (sc. κατ’ ἐπίνοιαν ἀνθρωπίνην – A 8.1), but on “reality” (sc. κατ’ ἀλήθειαν – *ibid.*). Eunomius so persistently emphasised the advantages of his logical methodology

164 Here and later transl. R.P. Vaggione, 1987, 59.

165 Transl. R.P. Vaggione, 1987, 43.

166 Epiphanius accused Aëtius’ *Syntagmation* of being a nest of logical vipers; he claimed that his work was a dialectical error (*Pan* 3.351), and nothing but a dialectical ostentation and a syllogistic waste of labour (*Pan* 3.361); Sozomenus stated that Eunomius was a technician of arguments, given to captiousness, rejoicing in syllogisms (*HE* 6.26); Socrates stated that Aëtius loved the matters set out technically by Aristotle (*HE* 2.35); Faustinus claimed that Aristotle was the bishop of the Arians (*Trin* 12 = PL, 13.60b).

that it would be fair to regard this methodological discourse as a backbone of his argumentation.

Strictly speaking, what Eunomius seemingly meant to achieve in his discourse was to dissociate his teaching from a theological argument processed by means of “human invention,” which, as he professed in his *Apologia Apologiae*,¹⁶⁷ not only perverts Scripture, but even defames God (NPNF 280a39–41 = J 2.312.30–313.3). Instead of the “κατ’ ἐπίνοιαν ἀνθρωπίνην” mode of theological argumentation Eunomius suggested an accurate mode of reasoning and precise expression. Referring to Moses’ account about creation, Eunomius affirmed that God himself used words in creating (NPNF 270b48–56 = J 284.30–285.3e), and that God gave human beings the use of things and their names, and that the names are older than those who use them (NPNF 277all–17 = J 303.1–6f). In this fashion, according to Eunomius, the greatness of the Creator is shown not only in the creation but also in the appropriate bestowal of names of the created things (NPNF 290b48–52 = J 344.8–13g), for he declared that the Creator made names conformable to natures (NPNF 291a36–40 = J 345.12–16).

Regarding this evidence we have every reason to believe that it was not the term “unbegotten” *per se* which Basil and Eunomius quarrelled about, but the way (sc. method) in which this particular term (and other words) was generated in the human language. Consequently, the teaching of Aëtius and Eunomius occasioned an urgent need for a coherent and clear methodology of theological argumentation, or to put it plainly, for a step-by-step explanation of how to think the unthinkable God (sc. epistemology), how to speak and write the unspeakable and indescribable God (sc. linguistics and grammar), how to engage with the simultaneously immanent and transcendent being of the divinity (sc. ontology) and how to treat the symbolical and obscure language of the Bible, preserved in various editions and translations (sc. exegesis). These problems naturally touched upon certain philosophical, scientific and institutional matters such as: epistemological principles of the Christian teaching, methodology of biblical studies, program and content of Christian education, genres and linguistic criteria of Christian literature, and form of Christian rituals (baptismal formula and prayers¹⁶⁸).

167 A paraphrase of the *Apologia Apologiae* is preserved in Gregory of Nyssa’s *Contra Eunomium*. In his edition of Eunomius’ works Richard Vaggione gave parallel references to the critical edition of Gregory’s text by Jeager (1952) and to the English translation from NPNF. I reproduce Vaggione’s handy system of double references.

168 The Eunomians were reputed to change the baptismal formula in conformity to their doctrine. Athanasius of Alexandria reported that they baptized in the name

Small wonder that Gregory Nazianzen considered debate with Aëtius and Eunomius as predominantly methodological. For instance, in the third theological oration Gregory gives a detailed account of his vision of the heuristic potential of human language, particularly touching upon the scriptural names of Christ:

Our position, of course, is that horses, man, oxen, and each item that comes under the same species have a single concept. Whatever shares in the concept (ὁ μὲν ἂν μετέχη τοῦ λόγου) is rightly called by that name (τοῦτο καὶ κυρίως λέγεσθαι), and whatever does not share in it is not properly called by the name. Thus in the same way there is a single being (καὶ θεοῦ μίαν οὐσίαν εἶναι), nature (φύσιν), and name of God (κλήσιν), even though the titles are distinguished along with the distinct ideas about him (κἄν ἐπινοίαις τισὶ διαιρουμέναις συνδιαιρῆται καὶ τὰ ὀνόματα). Whatever is properly (κυρίως) called “God” is God and whatever he is in his nature (κατὰ φύσιν) is a true name for him (ἀληθῶς ὀνομάζεσθαι) —granted that real truth is contained in facts (ἐν πράγμασιν), not in names (μὴ ἐν ὀνόμασιν). These people, though, act as if they were afraid of leaving any opposition to the truth untried. They acknowledge the Son as “God,” when forced by reason and proof-texts (τῷ λόγῳ καὶ ταῖς μαρτυρίαις) to do so, but only in an equivocal sense (ὁμώνυμον), thus implying that he shares the name and the name alone (μόνης κοινωνοῦντα τῆς κλήσεως)¹⁶⁹ (Or 29.13.17–23).

In this text we can easily identify a linguistic discussion of the correctness of names,¹⁷⁰ or in terms of modern linguistics, between a signifier and a thing signified. This issue was crucial for Eunomian language theory, which formed a base of his theological conception. Eunomius’ doctrine revolved around the term “unbegotten,” which he defined as an essential characteristic of God the Father (A 15) and deduced his Christology from this thesis.¹⁷¹

Eunomius’ interest in technical questions appears natural in the philosophical context of Late Antiquity.¹⁷² Thus, the issue of the correctness of names

of Creator and Creature, Maker and Made or of the Unbegotten and Begotten (cf. Athan., Ar 2.42; Athan., Decr 31.3; cf. also Vaggione, 2000, 258f.).

169 Transl. L. Wickham / F. Williams, 1991, 250.

170 A conundrum concerning the correlation between a name (sc. ὄνομα) and a thing named (sc. πρῶγμα) usually surfaced in the Hellenic philosophical agenda in the context of the exegesis of Plato’s *Cratylus*. For the details of the debate between the so-called naturalists and conventionalists cf. Frede, D. / Inwood, B. (eds.), *Language and Learning: Philosophy of Language in the Hellenistic Age*. Cambridge 2005.

171 Details about the language theory of Eunomius and its correlation with his Christology are provided later in this chapter.

172 Cf. Vaggione, R.P., *Eunomius of Cyzicus and the Nicene Revolution*. Oxford 2000, 239–243.

surfaced in a religious-philosophical discussion of the Neo-Platonic thinkers¹⁷³ and shortly afterwards involved Christian interlocutors (Origen, Eusebius of Caesarea, Gregory of Nazianzen). Some of the chief participants of this discussion were personally acquainted (Eunomius, Julian the Emperor, Basil and Gregory) and for certain particular reasons were far from being indifferent to each other. Ergo, their polemic writings clearly manifest the socio-cultural and personal nuances of their relationships.

2. Historical and social context of Eunomian teaching

2.1 *Gregory vs. Julian: a pedagogical debate*

The legalization of Christianity in 311 had a considerable impact on the cultural and social life of the Roman Empire. A penchant for the social and academic recognition of Christian doctrine was encouraged by the most enlightened and refined Christian authors such as Origen and his distinguished students. In the fourth century this tendency expanded and grew in strength, so that Hellenic intellectuals could no longer merely ignore the claims of their Christian colleagues. In such a way Christian and Hellenic thinkers came to discuss topical socio-cultural issues on an equal footing. One of these issues was the question of the correctness of names. In the context of the fourth century it was transformed and began to revolve around divine names. In other words, the issue introduced the dilemma: whether divine names signify the essence of gods and hence are granted with certain magical powers,¹⁷⁴ or whether they are merely conventional utterances deprived of any supernatural power.

In addition to its own particular context the discussion about divine names also surfaced in a religious-philosophical debate concerning the statues of gods. Like divine names, whose origin, heuristic and cognitive potential and ability to elevate a person spiritually were thoroughly discussed by philosophers, the question of the purpose and role of statues of gods surfaced in the

173 Cf.: “The present dialogue makes us understand the correctness of names, and one must, if one is going to be a dialectician, begin from this theoretical examination. [...] Plato now wishes to present the first principles of real entities [τὰς ἀρχὰς τῶν ὄντων] and of the art of dialectic, inasmuch as he is presenting the names together with the things of which they are names” (Proclus, *ComCra* 6–8; transl. B. Duvick, 2007, 11).

174 Cf.: “if all these were the fraudulent devices of enchanters (γοιήτων), how is it possible that things which are in the most eminent degree united (συννηωμένα) with the Gods, which also conjoin (συνάπτοντα) us with them, and have powers all but equal to those of superior beings (τὰς ἴσας δυνάμεις ἔχοντα τοῖς κρείττοσι), should be fantastic devices (πλάσματα), though without them no sacred operation (ἱερατικὸν ἔργον) can be effected?” (Iambl., *De mysteriis* 7.5.25–30; transl. T. Taylor, 1821, available on-line).

social and philosophical context of the fourth century. Iamblichus, in his treatise *On the Statues of the Gods*, Porphyry in his work *On the Statues* (the title preserved in Stobaeus' *Anthology*, the excerpts – in Eusebius' *PE*), Eusebius in his *Praeparatio Evangelica* (where he argued with Porphyry) and Julian the Emperor in his *Hymn to the Mother of God* and *Epistle 89* discussed whether statues of gods are really helpful in spiritual ascendance. Within this context these authors quite naturally also pursued the question about the correctness of names debated in the *Cratylus*.¹⁷⁵

Interestingly enough all of these authors agreed that divine names signify divine essence. The only point they disagreed upon consisted in applying this principle to material objects like statues. Consequently, they held different opinions concerning the effect that statues can produce on ordinary people, and on initiated philosophers. Thus, Iamblichus, Porphyry and Julian stated that both divine names and statues of gods are powerful, while Eusebius believed that while divine names really have a certain supernatural power, this is not true for statues of gods. In this fashion, certain Hellenic philosophers¹⁷⁶ and Christian thinkers (e.g., Origen and Eusebius) tolerated the idea that divine names (when they are correctly spelled in certain ancient languages¹⁷⁷) possess supernatural power.¹⁷⁸

Another significant context, which results from the discussion of the correctness of names, can be seen in the works of Julian the Emperor. Julian believed that the Hellenic language is inherently connected with the pagan

175 Cf. Elm, S., *Transformation of the Classical Heritage: Sons of Hellenism, Fathers of the Church: Emperor Julian, Gregory of Nazianzus, and the Vision of Rome*. Berkeley 2012, 245–270.

176 E.g., Iamblichus' deliberation concerning divine names reads: “some of them are known to us, the explications of which we receive from the Gods (τὰς ἀναλύσεις παρὰ θεῶν)” and, hence “in those names which we can scientifically analyse, we possess a knowledge of the whole divine essence, power, and order (τῆς θείας οὐσίας καὶ δυνάμεως καὶ τάξεως ἔχομεν), comprehended in the name (ἐν τῷ ὀνόματι τὴν εἶδησιν)” (*Myst* 7.4).

177 Cf.: “These names, accordingly, when pronounced with that attendant train of circumstances which is appropriate to their nature, are possessed of great power; and other names, again, current in the Egyptian tongue, are efficacious against certain demons who can only do certain things; and other names in the Persian language have corresponding power over other spirits; and so on in every individual nation, for different purposes” (Or., *Cels* 24).

178 It has been convincingly demonstrated by Barnes that the language theory of Eusebius (*PE* 11.6.1.1–2.5), which he articulated within a discussion about statues of gods, provided a foundation for the language theory of Eunomius (cf. Barnes, M.R., *The Background and Use of Eunomius' Causal Language*, in: Barnes, M.R. / Williams, D.H. [eds.], *Arianism after Arius: Essays on the Development of the Fourth-Century Trinitarian Conflicts*. Edinburgh 1993, 217–236).

religion.¹⁷⁹ Consequently, he claimed that since the gods themselves “revealed all their learning to Homer, Hesiod, Demosthenes, Herodotus, Thucydides, Isocrates and Lysias” (*Ep* 61c.30f.), therefore Christians, who dishonour the gods, have no right to “expound the works of these authors in the Hellenic schools” (*Ep* 61c.423a–b).

In June 362, Julian promulgated a rescript forbidding Christian teachers from working in Hellenic schools¹⁸⁰ (preserved in *Ep* 61c). He required all public teachers who were paid by the state to be approved by the Emperor, in order to prevent Christians from teaching in Hellenic schools.

Yet, though I think this absurd, I do not say that they ought to change their opinions and then instruct the young. But I give them this choice: either not to teach what they do not think admirable, or, if they wish to teach, let them first really persuade their pupils that neither Homer nor Hesiod nor any of these writers whom they expound and have declared to be guilty of impiety, folly and error in regard to the gods, is such as they declare. For since they make a livelihood and receive pay from the works of those writers, they thereby confess that they are most shamefully greedy of gain, and that, for the sake of a few drachmae, they would put up with anything (Jul., *Ep* 61c.423a–b).

Eusebius and Eunapius describe the grievous effect of the rescript, which caused the dismissal of many Christian teachers.¹⁸¹ The purpose of Julian’s law was not only to limit Christians’ access to classical education but to ghettoize them and to detach them from Hellenic culture. Gregory Nazianzen understandably burst with indignation and in his invectives against the Emperor (orations 4, 5) affirmed:

... for though there are many and weighty reasons why that person deserves to be detested, yet in no case will he be shown to have acted more illegally than in this: and let everyone share in my indignation who takes a pleasure in words (*Or* 4.2–5);

‘Ours’, says he, ‘are the words and the speaking of Greek, whose right it is to worship the gods’; yours are the want of words, and clownishness, and nothing beyond the faith in your own doctrine¹⁸² (*Or* 4.102).

179 Cf.: “If speaking Greek (τὸ Ἑλληνίζειν) belongs to the religion (τῆς θρησκείας), pray show where it is the rule, and amongst what sort of priests, like particular sorts of sacrifices, and in honour of what kind of diction?” (Greg., *Or* 4.103; here and later translation of the invectives against Julian [orations 4, 5] by C.W. King, 1888, available on-line).

180 For the details about Emperor Julian’s *Rescript on Christian Teachers* cf. Sozom., *HE* 5.18; Socr., *HE* 3.16.1.

181 Cf. Eus., *HE* 6.3; Eunap., *VS* 10.1.3f.

182 Here and afterwards translation of the invectives by C.W. King, 1888, available on-line.

Throughout Gregory's invectives, his harsh resentment toward Julian is beyond doubt. He and Basil personally met the future Emperor in Athens during the time of their studies.¹⁸³ Gregory's reaction is therefore not only of a professional but also of a personal nature.¹⁸⁴

These examples show how the philosophical issue of the correctness of names, which surfaced in various religious and socio-cultural contexts, came to seriously disturb social life in the Roman Empire of the fourth century. Moreover, Eunomius and Aëtius introduced this issue in the theological context.

2.2 *The Cappadocian fathers vs. Eunomians: how the debate started*

In the year 361 the *Apology* of Eunomius was published. Two years later Basil finished composing his lengthy treatise *Adversus Eunomium*, which caused Eunomius to write his second *Apology*.

Thinking through the arguments by which Eunomius supplied his defence against Basil's attack it appears plausible that he not only knew about the Emperor Julian's especial reverence for the Hellenic language but even sought to benefit from it.¹⁸⁵ In this fashion Eunomius asserted that while his own doctrine relies on the teaching of the saints (*J* 347.18–21 = *NPNF* 292a11–15), Basil contradicts the teaching of apostles (*J* 315.31–316.3 = *NPNF* 281a41–5), agrees with Aristotle (*J* 346.4–11 = *NPNF* 291b22–31) and follows the teaching of Epicurus¹⁸⁶ (*J* *ibid.* = *NPNF* 291b10–15). Eunomius framed these accusations in such a way that they painted Basil as an adherent of Hellenic philosophy (*J* 312.30–313.3 = *NPNF* 280a39–41). Of

183 After the composition of the invectives, Gregory approved them with Basil and thereon concluded his psogos as follows: "These words Basil and Gregory send you, those opponents and counterworkers of your scheme, as you were wont to call them and persuade others to do the same – doing us honour by what you did threaten us with, and moving us all the more to piety – persons who being well known for their life, discourse, and mutual affection, and whom you were acquainted with ever since our common residence in Greece" (*Or* 5.39).

184 Furthermore, Gregory's brother Caesarius, who was a court physician, was obliged for fear of persecution to leave Constantinople in 362 and return to Nazianz, where he provided his brother with information about the injustice and crimes of the Emperor (cf. Bernardi, J., [intr., texte critique, trad. et notes], Grégoire de Nazianze, *Discours 4–5. Contre Julien*. SC 309. Paris 1983, 49).

185 At that time he resided in Constantinople along with his master Aëtius (Philost., *HE* 6.7, 7.6), who had previously had a close relationship with the future Emperor since in 348 Gallus appointed him a Christian tutor to young Julian. Though Aëtius failed to keep Julian faithful to Christianity, he managed to maintain good relations with him later on (Greg. Nys., *CE* 1.45–51).

186 In like manner, in the *Apology* Eunomius professed that his opponents were "led astray by the sophisms of the Greeks" (*A* 22, 27)

course, it is an exaggeration to equate mere support of certain philosophical ideas with betrayal of religious doctrines, but this exaggeration was in line with the Emperor's policy. I take these circumstances to highlight that the socio-political climate of the fourth century played no less important a role in the theological debates than the religious discussions themselves.

As for the philosophical background of Eunomius' own texts, it should be noted that in comparison with Basil's and Gregory's compositions the apologies of Eunomius appear more plain and unsophisticated. Eunomius did not dwell on the heritage of the classical philosophers as much as his opponents did. Plain and logical as it was, the teaching of Eunomius and Aëtius proved very successful (Soz., *HE* 6.26, 7.6). In the eyes of Gregory and Basil, the methodological message of Eunomian doctrine along with the positive public recognition of the teaching made it a more perilous evil than the social victimization of Christianity launched by Julian. At the beginning of the first theological oration, which Gregory directed against the Eunomians, he exclaimed:

I say this is so, the evil is intolerable and not to be borne, and our great mystery is in danger of being made a thing of little moment (*Or* 27.1).

As a matter of fact, the Eunomians were reported to have changed the baptismal formula and ritual and to have ordained priests from those whom they had previously re-baptised.¹⁸⁷ Ergo, their activity aimed at establishing a new church hierarchy, and this understandably seemed highly dangerous, especially given the success that they had managed to achieve (Soz., *HE* 7.8).

As the years passed, the success of the Eunomians grew. In the year 379, Basil died and Gregory was invited by the pro-Nicene hierarchs to Constantinople in order to "assist the congregation and help defend the world" (Greg., *De Vita Sua* 5.596). At that time, the Eunomians had already enjoyed huge governmental support for forty years and all the churches of the metropolis were under their control.¹⁸⁸ In 379, the political climate changed. The favour of Theodosius, the new Emperor, turned towards the supporters of the Nicene faith. Under the circumstances the politicians seeking to please their new Emperor encouraged the previously persecuted Nicene hierarchs to strengthen their voice. For this reason the pro-Nicene bishops required Gregory to come to the capital city and to stand with all his prominent rhetorical, polemical and philosophical skills in defence of the Nicene doctrine.

In such a way, Gregory's mission was planned and financially supported by the Nicene hierarchs and politicians. In plain words, Gregory agreed to

187 Sozomenus stated that "Eunomius was the first who ventured to maintain that divine baptism ought to be performed by one immersion" (*HE* 6.26).

188 Cf. Greg., *De Vita Sua* 655–657 (PG 37, 1075). For the details concerning Gregory's arrival to Constantinople cf. McGuckin, 2001, 238–240.

undertake a challenging mission for his task was to inform the still powerful pro-Eunomian intellectual and political elite that they had been hitherto mistaken in welcoming Eunomian teaching (some of them had even been rebaptized by the Eunomian hierarchs). Instead, he could offer them another doctrine, that of the hitherto despised and persecuted Nicene bishops, whom Eunomius and Aëtius continuously castigated for their unawareness and ignorance.

Shortly after Gregory's arrival he met his hostile and malevolent opponents (*Ep* 77.3). They ridiculed his speeches, mocked his Cappadocian dialect, abused him, and even made an attempt on his life.¹⁸⁹ Gregory in turn persistently continued performing his duty and preaching not merely against the Eunomians but more broadly and ambitiously, by professing the universal philosophical and scientific claims of the Nicene doctrine.

As I have noted above, one of the keys of the success of the Eunomian party consisted in the tolerable simplicity of the theological argumentation chosen by Eunomius and Aëtius. Their teaching was constructed of syllogisms which appeared earnestly persuasive to everyone. Thus, the Eunomians popularized theological knowledge for the considerable benefit of their party. Gregory of Nyssa vividly depicted the situation, commenting that in the full bloom of Eunomian teaching all the streets and markets were full of people discussing the most intricate theological matters:

When you ask about obols, in reply you hear philosophizing about the begotten and unbegotten; you request the price of bread, hear in return that the Father is greater and that the Son is under His control (ὁ Υἱὸς ὑποχέριος); you announce that the bath is ready, receive a firm reply that the Son is out of the non-existent (ἐξ οὐκ ὄντων)¹⁹⁰ (*De Deitate Filii et Spiritus Sancti*, 46.557.23–27).

Apparently, these circumstances made Gregory's mission even more difficult for he could not disprove the persuasive Eunomian teaching simply by declaring the incomprehensibility of God. He was obliged to suggest a fully-fledged theological system based on an equally persuasive argumentation. In other words, his task was not only in disproving Eunomian teaching but in creating a methodology of theological and exegetical argumentation.

An obvious way of performing this task was to dwell on the achievements of predecessors. Among them were Basil and Origen with their logical and grammatical argumentative strategies, and the classical and Hellenic philosophers and scholars with their epistemological theories. However, there was a difficulty attached to this strategy because the Eunomians already made use

189 Cf. McGuckin, 2001, 256–258.

190 Translation mine.

of the syllogistic technique and were publicly accused of this by their Nicene opponents (sc. they nicknamed Eunomians “the church of Aristotle”).

Yet, Gregory pursued this path. He decided to discredit the logical skills of his opponents and to suggest an alternative theological methodology, which he grounded on a sophisticated mix of Peripatetic epistemology, ontology and anthropology, Stoic logic and linguistics, conceptions of Origen and Basil, and decorated with fitting Platonic *topoi* and biblical allusions. In the second part of this book I show how Gregory made use of these various components in his theological orations. Now it is time to analyse briefly the fundamental rhetorical polemical techniques applied by the Eunomians and Cappadocians in order not to be deceived by the finesse of their expressions.

2.3 *Polemical rhetoric of the Cappadocians and Eunomians: an unjustified reasoning*

While Gregory Nazianzen worked on his theological cycle, Gregory of Nyssa was composing his treatise *Adversus Eunomium* (in 12 books). For both Gregories and for Basil this debate was not only of a philosophical and theological but also of a personal character. It stands to reason that personal antagonism was reflected in the polemical compositions of the disputants, who did not hesitate to use rhetorical tricks in their argumentation, to slightly falsify the words of their opponents, and to manipulate public opinion.

The Eunomians and Cappadocian fathers applied such classical rhetorical tricks as misrepresentation of the opponent’s ideas; charging the opponent with the misinterpretation of an authoritative text (either deliberate or caused by the opponent’s ignorance); personal abuse (incl. pointing to some defect of appearance, commonness, lack of education or low social standing).¹⁹¹

Misrepresentation. As I have already noted, the rational positivism of the Eunomians was widely ridiculed by their opponents. Thus, according to Socrates, Eunomius professed that:¹⁹²

God knows no more of his own substance (τῆς ἑαυτοῦ οὐσίας) than we do; nor is this more known to him, and less to us: but whatever we know about the Divine substance, that precisely is known to God; and on the other hand, whatever he knows, the same also you will find without any difference in us (HE 6.7.35–38).

191 Cf. Gibson, C.A. (transl., introd., notes), *Libanius’ Progymnasmata: Model Exercises in Greek Prose Composition and Rhetoric*. Atlanta 2008, 196f.

192 Cf. Socr., HE 4.7.7, Thdt., Haer. 4.3. For a detailed analysis of this evidence cf. Vaggione, 2000, 253–256.

Nevertheless, in the preserved works of Eunomius and Aëtius, direct claims of full comprehension of the divine essence are absent.¹⁹³ In Eunomius' own words, the substance of Christ is identical with what is signified by his name, that is to say:

...his essence was begotten (γενγεννησθαι) – not having been in existence prior to its own coming to be (οὐκ οὐσαν πρὸ τῆς ἰδίας συστάσεως) – and that it exists, having been begotten before all things (εἶναι δὲ γεννηθεῖσαν πρὸ πάντων γνώμη) by the will of its God and Father (A 12.12f.).

From this statement I assume that in Eunomius' concept the term “unbegotten” constituted a substantial characteristic of God the Father rather than his essence *per se*.¹⁹⁴

Nonetheless, it stands to reason that with such a vague statement Eunomius came very close to the dictum attributed to him by his opponents (namely, that Eunomius has fully comprehended the divine substance). Gregory Nazianzen repeatedly accused Eunomius of undue boldness and even made of this accusation a leitmotiv of his second theological oration (oratio 28). In this speech Gregory applied different sorts of arguments in order to arrive by various ways at the same conclusion about the incomprehensibility of the divine essence (*Or* 28 §§ 4, 6, 11, 17).

Now, to illustrate how Eunomius misrepresented the ideas of his opponents, I want to mention that Eunomius accused Basil of adopting the language theories of Aristotle (*J* 1.346.4–11 = *NPNF* 291b22–31), Epicurus (*J* 1.345.25–29 = *NPNF* 291b10–15) and Valentinus (*J* 1.356.20–24 = *NPNF* 295a22–25). It would seem that these accusations cannot all be true simply because Aristotle and Epicurus held different views about the origin and nature of language.¹⁹⁵ Yet Eunomius could easily gain from equating his opponents' ideas with philosophical concepts unpopular in Christian circles. Gregory Nazianzen responded to Eunomius' accusation of Basil by saying

193 Vaggione argued that since neither Aëtius nor Eunomius claimed to possess full knowledge even of earthly phenomena, they could never go as far as to profess to fully comprehend the divine essence (cf. Vaggione, 2000, 257).

194 My impression is that Eunomius' understanding of unbegotten was similar to the Cappadocians' idea of the hypostatic characteristic of the each of the divine persons, which I observe in detail later on (with respect to the exegesis of the famous phrase from the Heb 1:3: “χαρακτήρ τῆς ὑποστάσεως αὐτοῦ”). Thus, the principal difference between Cappadocian and Eunomian theology lay in the demarcation of essence and hypostasis: what Eunomius claimed as an essential characteristic of God, Cappadocians recognized as a hypostatic characteristic.

195 Cf. Verlinsky, A., *Epicurus and his predecessors on the origin of language*, in: Frede, D. / Inwood, B. (eds.), *Language and Learning: Philosophy of Language in the Hellenistic Age*. Cambridge 2005, 56–101.

that the Eunomians stand for “a view which is more absurd and anile than even the atoms of Epicurus” (*Or* 28.8).

A typical rhetorical argument *ad hominem* appears in the works of Gregory Nazianzen and Gregory of Nyssa. Without any apparent hesitation they mocked the “servile” philosophy of the Eunomian teachers¹⁹⁶ and pointed to the technical character of their intellectual craft (sc. τεχνύδιον¹⁹⁷). McGuckin persuasively demonstrates that these accusations represent examples of social critique because Eunomius and Aëtius were of low social origin and made their living by teaching, while all three Cappadocian fathers belonged to the landed gentry, received better education than Eunomius and Aëtius and used this fact in their polemics.¹⁹⁸

Concerning the accusation of misinterpreting authoritative text, plenty of evidence exists from both parties. Thus, the Cappadocians demonstrated their superiority in pointing to the philosophical incompetence of Eunomius. Gregory of Nyssa accused Eunomius of misinterpreting Plato’s *Cratylus* (*CE* 2.1.404). Gregory Nazianzen censured Eunomius for misunderstanding the Aristotelian *Organon*.¹⁹⁹ Basil charged him with applying Aristotelian wisdom (*AE* 1.9.10):

The claims about possession (ἔξις) and deprivation (στέρησις) come from Aristotle, as those who have read him can attest, in his book entitled *Categories*, where he says that privations are secondary to possessions (*AE* 1.9).

By pointing to Aristotle’s concepts of possession and deprivation Basil implied that Eunomius perverted Aristotelian teaching because it followed from Eunomius’ theory that deprivation (sc. unbegotten) is prior to possession (sc. begotten).

R. Mortley has argued that Eunomius offered an explanation of his vision of the possession-deprivation correlation in *A* 8.10–11 which matches with the interpretation of this concept preserved in Peripatetic and Neo-Platonic commentaries on the *Metaphysics*.²⁰⁰

196 In such a way Gregory of Nyssa mocks Eunomius in his *Contra Eunomium* (*CE* 1.4), and also Aëtius (*CE* 1.6). Gregory Nazianzen calls Eunomius the head of “a revolutionary factory for profanities” (*Or* 27.9).

197 Cf. Greg. Naz., *Or* 27.2.13.

198 Gregory of Nyssa stated that whereas in Eunomius’ wording, Basil is a plodding farmer, Eunomius is a singing master (*CE* 1.4). For details cf. McGuckin, 2001, 282–284.

199 Cf. Basil, *AE* 1.5.43–45, Greg. Naz., *Or* 29.12, 15.

200 Cf. Alexander of Aphrodisias in his *Commentary on Metaphysics* used the classical example of blindness as privation of the inherent property of sight (cf. *ComMet* 327.20–27).

Gregory Nazianzen in his third theological oration (*Or 29*) also claimed that the Eunomians violated the rules of logic.²⁰¹ Daniélou offered a comparative investigation of the Peripatetic, Neo-Platonic and Eunomian teachings. He has attested a strong influence of Neo-Platonic thought on Eunomius and Aëtius and concluded that no original Aristotelian ideas had been involved in the discourse of Eunomians.²⁰²

Gregory of Nyssa discussed Eunomius' teaching about the Creator, who fittingly bestowed names on things made (*AA 1.324.1–5*), against the background of Plato's *Cratylus*.²⁰³ Gregory's conclusion was that Eunomius had either read Plato's dialogue himself, or had learnt its content from someone who had read it (*CE 2.1.404*). Daniélou argued that the Eunomian theory of language should be traced back to Neo-Platonic circles, with which he could possibly have been in touch *via* his master Aëtius.²⁰⁴ Meanwhile, Barnes convincingly shows that it is more likely that the Eunomian theory of language emerged from Eusebius' *Præparatio Evangelica*.²⁰⁵

Chapter 4. Logical, linguistic and grammatical theories in the doctrines of Origen, Basil and Eunomius

1. The post-Nicene debate: a terminological introduction

In this chapter I discuss especially significant notions involved in the debate surrounding the Eunomian cause, and trace their background in the relevant philosophical context. Namely, the terms under consideration are as follows: thing signified (sc. τὸ σημαίνόμενον, λεκτόν), essence (sc. οὐσία), substance (sc. ὑποκειμένον), hypostasis (sc. ὑπόστασις), common quality (sc. κοινῶς ποιόν), individual quality (sc. ἰδίως ποιόν), characteristic (sc. χαρακτηριστήρ), relation (sc. σχέσις), concept (sc. ἐπίνοια), name (sc. ὄνομα) and real entity or meaning (sc. πραγμά). All these notions represent *termini*

201 For the details concerning Gregory's critique of the argumentation of Eunomians cf. later, part two, chapter 1.

202 Cf. Daniélou, J., *Eunome l'arien et l'exégèse néo-platonicienne du Cratyle*, in: REG 69 (1956), 412–432. I agree with Daniélou apropos of Eunomius' rather surface knowledge of Aristotle's logic but I am not positive about Daniélou's affiliation of the doctrine of Eunomius to Neo-Platonic language theory (for the details concerning Eunomius' language theory cf. later, chapter 4, section 2).

203 Cf.: “And the work of the lawgiver, as it seems, is to make a name, with the dialectician as his supervisor, if names are to be well given... and Cratylus is right in saying that names belong to things by nature” (Plat., *Cra* 390d).

204 Daniélou, 1956, 428.

205 Cf. Barnes, M.R., *The Background and Use of Eunomius' Causal Language*, in: Barnes, M.R. / Williams, D.H. (eds.), *Arianism after Arius: Essays on the Development of the Fourth-Century Trinitarian Conflicts*. Edinburgh 1993, 217–236.

technici of Hellenic logic and grammar²⁰⁶, therefore it seems reasonable to start by surveying their specific technical definitions. I then show how Origen and Basil supported their theological argumentation by the adoption of this terminology.

It is no wonder that Origen, Basil and Gregory, who due to their excellent education were deeply grounded in classical culture, applied logical and grammatical terminology in expounding exegetical and theological matters.²⁰⁷ The Eunomians likewise processed their theological arguing in a logical manner and brought up issues that strictly speaking were as much concerned with logic and grammar as with theology.

To illustrate the case, I offer a patent example from Eunomius' first apology. Though Eunomius says there that his purpose is to "examine the actual essences" of the Father and the Son (A 20.5), his argument in practice concerned plain logical and linguistic matters, for he was examining the correlation between the essence (οὐσία) and "the meaning of the word which designates it (τι παρ' αὐτήν τὸ σημαϊνόμενον)" (A 12.8) (that is to say, the meaning of the words: unbegotten, begotten, the Father and the Son). In such a way, a correct understanding of the technical term τὸ σημαϊνόμενον, which roughly means "what is signified," became rather important in the context of the polemics around Eunomian doctrine.

Now, turning to the history of the term τὸ σημαϊνόμενον the following factor should be noted. If we understand τὸ σημαϊνόμενον simply as "meaning" or "thing signified," for it indeed frequently surfaced with this connotation in the texts of philosophers and theologians, we are not given a clear vision of the ontological status of the notion. To put it plainly, the very notion "thing signified" demands the question: what is *this thing that is signified*? Is it the thing as a whole or is it the essence or the power of the thing?²⁰⁸ The answer to this question clarifies *what exactly is signified* by the thing signified.

In such a way Eunomius questioned the arguments of the Nicene advocates. For instance, when Athanasius of Alexandria (*De syn* 46.3) argued against the Arians, he stated that the term ἀγέννητος has two different but equally valid meanings (sc. σημαϊνόμενα), first, signifying him who has no cause (τὸ μὴ ἔχον τὸν αἴτιον) and second signifying him who is neither creation (sc. ποίημα), nor generation (κτίσμα). This thesis naturally provoked

206 The notion of λεκτόν is a specific term of Stoic logic (cf. Столяров, А.А., *Стоя и стоицизм*. Москва 1995, 70–78). The notions essence, substance, hypostasis, common and individual quality or characteristic and relation are attached to the Stoic and Aristotelian categorial systems.

207 Cf. Norris, 1991, 3–5.

208 These answers were proposed by Eunomius in A 18, 19.

a set of logical and theological questions concerning the definition of τὸ σημαίνόμενον, which Eunomius didn't hesitate to ask.

For instance, in the twelfth chapter of *Liber Apologeticus*, he criticized people who “stumble at the use of equivocal terms (ταῖς ὁμωνυμίαις προσπταίοντας)” and “understand the essence to be one thing (ἕτερον μὲν τὴν οὐσίαν νοοῦντες) and the meaning of the word which designates it, to be something else (ἕτερον δέ τι παρ' αὐτὴν τὸ σημαίνόμενον)”. This is an example of a typical Peripatetic critic of Stoic language theory. Ammonius Hermiae in his commentary on Aristotle's *De Interpretatione* affirmed that nouns and verbs directly correspond to the meaning of real objects and that one should not invent anything in between thoughts and real objects, as the Stoics do by inventing the notion of λεκτόν²⁰⁹ (*Int* 17.25).

The concern of the Eunomians about applying language theory to theological matters was not altogether artificial. After the Council of Nicaea the question about the correctness of divine names (viz. the correlation between the signifiers “unbegotten,” “the Father,” “the Son” and the reality signified by them: whether it was the divine essence (sc. οὐσία, ὑπόστασις, ὑποκείμενον – A 12), or authority (sc. ἐξουσία – A 21), or energy²¹⁰ (sc. ἐνέργεια – A 24) still remained unclear. Besides, there was no agreement on the appropriate way of discussing these matters. Although the disputants processed their arguments by means of logic (Eunomius, Aëtius, and the Cappadocians), they at the same time accused each other of overuse of logical expertise.²¹¹ Pressured by the circumstances of the debate, the Cappadocian fathers were obliged to solve the question raised by the Eunomians and also to try to forestall the appearance of new methodological questions. To succeed in this task both Basil and Gregory Nazianzen decided to apply the analytical instruments of contemporary science, namely logical and grammatical analysis, which they learned at the school desk and which had already proved to be useful in Origen's exegetical technology.

Now, to continue our discussion about the term τὸ σημαίνόμενον we need to make a brief excursion into Stoic linguistics, where this notion appeared as a synonym of λεκτόν – one of the key concepts of Stoic philosophy. It

209 The term τὸ λεκτόν and its synonym τὸ σημαίνόμενον are *termini technici* of Stoic teaching (for the details concerning the provenience of these terms cf. below, chapter 4, section 1.1).

210 Cf.: “Hence, if they think it not ridiculous to ascribe the same qualities equally to both of them—essence say, or action, authority or name (thereby doing away with the differences between the names and their objects – ἀνελόντες τὰς τῶν ονομάτων καὶ πραγμάτων διαφορὰς) —let them explicitly speak of two Unbegottens” (A 21.1–4; transl. R. Vaggione, 1987, 61).

211 Cf. Eun., A 22; Bas., AE 1.9.8–11; Greg., Or 27.2.

is important to look more deeply into philosophical terminology because many of the chief terms and concepts applied by the Cappadocians (often via Origen) go back to Stoic and Peripatetic linguistics and logic.²¹² In order to outline the background of the post-Nicene debates and to recognise the shifts and innovations that Christian authors applied to the adopted philosophical terminology it is useful to start by surveying the relevant notions in their particular context.

1.1 Stoic linguistics at the service of Christian thought

In Stoic logic the notion of λεκτόν (or τὸ σημαίνομενον) played a significant role for it linked together the whole body of Stoic doctrine.²¹³ One of the remarkable advantages of this notion is that it suggested a compromise between the spheres of physical reality and language (sc. πράγμα and ὄνομα). Various philosophers at different times have provided various interpretations of the λεκτόν notion, which I am not going to discuss here.²¹⁴ Instead I survey the major aspects of the notion in order to facilitate our understanding of Origen's, Basil's and Gregory's vision of the correlation between sense-perception, language, and thought, which they tended to express in Stoic terms.

The difficulties which confront a researcher of the notion of λεκτόν lie in its multidimensional nature. Literally, λεκτόν means "something that can be said" or "sayable," or, in terms of modern linguistics "something signified".²¹⁵ That is to say, it is understood as "meaning" which is "generated by rational thinking"²¹⁶ or, put differently, it is an impression which is thought through and verbalised.

212 Scholars have acknowledged that Origen and Basil rather leaned towards Chrysippus' logic rather than to Aristotelian logic (cf. Sesbouïé, B. [introd., trad. et notes], *Basile De Césarée, Contre Eunome*, SC 305. Paris 1983, 195–197; de Ghellinck, J., *Patristique et Moyen Âge: Études d'Histoire Littéraire et Doctrinale III*. Brussels 1961, 282–296).

213 Cf. Столяров, А.А., *Стоя и стоицизм*. Москва 1995, 70–78; Kidd, I.G. (ed.), Posidonius Rhodius, *The Commentary, Testimonia and Fragments*. Cambridge 1989, 9f.

214 The discussion had begun already in the works of Aristotelian commentators. Thus, Ammonius argued that λεκτόν is an intermediate between thought and thing (μέσον τοῦ τε νοήματος καὶ τοῦ πράγματος, *ComInterp* 17.27); Simplicius contended that it is a thought (*ComCat* 11.4); John Philoponus identified λεκτόν with a sound (*ComCat* 243).

215 In Stoic linguistics "thing signified" (sc. τὸ σημαίνομενον), is opposed to "signifier" (sc. τὸ σημαῖνον) (cf. Sextus, *M* 8.11f.). Stoics also used a term "thing thought" (sc. νοούμενον πράγμα), as a synonym of τὸ σημαίνομενον (cf. Sextus, *M* 8.80).

216 Cf. τὸ κατὰ τὴν λογικὴν φαντασίαν ὑφιστάμενον (*Diog.*, 7.63).

Understood as an abstract and immaterial meaning λεκτόν corresponds to inner speech (sc. ὁ ἐνδιάθετος λόγος), and is opposed to utterance (sc. ὁ προφορικός λόγος, Sextus, *M* 8.275–276). Inner speech comprises various connotations of the notion and nuances of meaning which cannot be simultaneously articulated in speech. In such a way, λεκτόν can be also considered as a sign that implies various meanings in addition to its chief denotation. Different meanings of λεκτόν get to be actualised in different contexts:

As soon as we understand the sequence, we immediately derive from it the idea of sign' (διόπερ ἀκολουθίας ἔννοιαν ἔχων εὐθὺς καὶ σημείου νόησιν λαμβάνει διὰ τὴν ἀκολουθίαν)²¹⁷ (Sextus, *M* 8.275 = *SVF* 2.135).



Plutarch (*SVF* 2.171) reported that, according to the Stoics, when we utter “don’t steal” we forbid one thing and order another thing and both these meanings are implied in the same utterance. In such a way, λεκτόν understood as incorporeal inner speech represents a comprehensive notion which, according to the Stoics, can be grasped by the sense-perception (sc. κατάληψις, *SVF* 2.70).

Although λεκτόν has a close connection with the sense-perception (and consequently, with the sphere of τυγχάνον – material) it nevertheless has an immaterial status (albeit, its immateriality is different from that of Platonic ideas completely belonging to the transcendental sphere). For this reason the Stoics insisted upon distinguishing λεκτόν from idea or thought (sc. ἔννοια, ἰδέα).²¹⁸

217 Translation mine.

218 Cf. Frede, M., *The Stoic Notion of a Lekton*, in: Everson, S. (ed.), *Companions to Ancient Thought 3: Language*. Cambridge 1994, 109–129.

Thus, λεκτά are neither thoughts nor impressions upon the organs of sense, although they depend on both. They do not depend on the rules of propositional logic, yet they belong to the sphere of human cognition. From the ontological point of view λεκτά are characterized by an independent ontological status, which is fixed in their special mode of existence conveyed by the verb “to subsist” (sc. ὑφιστάναι) as opposed to “to be” (sc. εἶναι). In other words, as immaterial items λεκτά cannot share the same mode of being as material objects.²¹⁹ The λεκτά do not exist but subsist (Sextus, *M* 1.15, 8.70). This is how Sextus described the matter:

... some placed the true and false in the region of the sign signified, others in that of utterance, others in that of the motion of thought. And the Stoics stood for the first opinion, saying that three things were inseparably connected with one another: a thing signified, a signifier and an object (σημαινόμενον, σημαῖνον, τυγχάνον). Of these the signifier is the utterance (for example, the utterance ‘Dion’); the sign signified is the actual state of affairs revealed by it, and which we apprehend as it subsists in our thought, and which foreigners do not understand even though they hear the utterance; and the object is the externally existing thing (for example, Dion himself). And of these, two are bodies, namely the utterance and the object, while one is incorporeal, namely the state of affairs signified and sayable, which is true or false. This is not the case universally, but some sayables are deficient and some self-sufficient. And belonging to the self-sufficient kind is the so-called proposition, which they delineate by saying ‘a proposition is what is true or false’²²⁰ (*M* 8.11–12 = *SVF* 2.166).

Along these lines we see that the Stoics distinguished between the “thing signified” and its signifier (cf. Diog., 7.62f.). When λεκτόν is uttered it enters the sphere of grammar. In this fashion, the Stoics thought that λεκτόν can be temporally actualized (sc. ὑπάρχει) in a proposition²²¹ (sc. ἀξιωμα). Now, talking about the uttered λεκτόν it is important to specify that it can be uttered in various ways.

A distinction which the Stoics drew between the thing signified and its signifier had an interesting analogy. The Stoics distinguished between the true (sc. τὸ ἀληθές) and truth (sc. ἡ ἀλήθεια). Although taken independently, as a pure meaning, λεκτόν is beyond true or false (*M* 8.74) because it is literally

219 In Stoic philosophy, everything, including even gods, is material.

220 Transl. R. Bett, 2005, 92.

221 The Stoics identified three kinds of actualized or uttered λεκτόν: first, the intelligible and incorporeal complete λεκτόν (sc. αὐτοτελές λεκτόν) expressed in a complete sentence; second, λεκτόν was considered a corporeal quality (sc. ποιότης, πτώσις) if it was expressed by a substantive; third, the incomplete λεκτόν (sc. ἐλλιπές λεκτόν) expressed neither by substantive, nor in a complete sentence. Cf. Frede, M., *The Origins of Traditional Grammar*, in: Frede, M. (ed.), *Essays in Ancient Philosophy*. Minnesota 1987, 352–354.

beyond “being” (sc. εἶναι), when λεκτόν is actualised in a proposition it become either true or false.²²² Here is how Sextus explained the matter:

We suggest it thus: truths are said to differ from the truth in three ways – in substance, in constitution, in power. In substance, because truths are incorporeal (they are statements and sayables) whereas the truth is corporeal (it is knowledge assertoric of all truths, and knowledge is the ruling part in a certain condition – just as a hand in a certain condition is a fist) ... In constitution, since truths are simple (e.g. I am conversing), whereas the truth is constituted by a recognition of many truths. In power, because the truth is linked to knowledge, whereas truths are present only in virtuous men but truths are present in bad men as well (a bad man may say something true)²²³ (PH 8.81–83).

It is likely that these peculiar Stoic concepts of truth and truths and unuttered and uttered λεκτόν resonated in the argument of Origen and Basil. I will elaborate this hypothesis later in this chapter; for now I shall highlight only two examples in order to illustrate the matter. In a comparable vein with the Stoic understanding of inner speech Origen in his *Commentary on John* characterised the wisdom of God, which he identified with the second hypostasis of the Holy Trinity. He asserted that:

...the wisdom of God (θεοῦ σοφία) is an incorporeal substance (ἀσώματον ὑπόστασιν) consisting of different ideas (ποικίλων θεωρημάτων περιεχόντων), and that ‘It is because of this creation [of wisdom] that the whole creation has also been able to subsist (πᾶσα κτίσις ὑφ’εστάναι), since it has a share in the divine wisdom according to which it has been created (Ps 103:24) (ComJn 1.34.243).

Remarkably enough in this fragment Origen uses the verb ὑφίστημι, which, as we remember, the Stoics applied to distinguish the quasi-being of the incorporeal λεκτόν from the real being of the corporeal τύγχανον. Origen uses this verb in order to explain how the whole creation subsists in the divine wisdom and exists in material reality.

Basil also appears to dwell on the Stoic conception of truth and the truths, when in the *Epistle 38* he contends:

222 Susanne Bobzien expounded the matter as follows: “While true, the propositions have the ontological mode of subsistence, or are actualized (ὑπάρχει), whereas when false, they do not. Truth and actualization of a proposition alike are time-dependent: a proposition can subsist and be true at one time, then cease to do so, and then subsist and be true again later— still being the same proposition” (cf. Bobzien, S., *Determinism and Freedom in Stoic Philosophy*. Oxford 1998, 64).

223 Transl. J. Annas / J. Barnes, 2000, 87.

Yet receive what I say as at best a token and reflection of the truth (ὑπόδειγμα καὶ σκιὰν ἀληθείας); not as the actual truth itself (αὐτὴν τὴν τῶν πραγμάτων ἀλήθειαν)²²⁴ (*Ep* 38.5.1).

On the whole, by differentiating between the thing signified and the signifier the Stoics detected the relative truthfulness of human speech and eventually made considerable progress in exploring this phenomenon²²⁵. The achievements of the Stoic linguists along with the Hellenic philologists helped Origen, Basil and Gregory to explain the multiplicity and multivocity of the divine names. Thus, Gregory Nazianzen asserted that the multiple divine names manifest the single and integral divinity through the different characteristics of its nature. Here is how Gregory summarized the issue in his third theological oration:

there is one essence of God (μίαν οὐσίαν), and one nature (φύσιν), and one name (κλήσιν)... although in accordance with a distinction in our thoughts (ἐπινοίαις τισὶ διαιρουμέναις) we use distinct names (ὀνόματα) and that whatever is properly (κυρίως) called by this name really is God; and whatever he is in his nature (ὁ δ' ἂν ἢ κατὰ φύσιν) is a true name for him — granted that real truth is contained in facts (ἐν πράγμασιν), not in names (μὴ ἐν ὀνόμασιν)²²⁶ (*Or* 29.13.15–20).

This fragment demonstrates the close connection and mutual interdependence of epistemology and ontology. In other words, there is an inherent tie between the conception of being and the method of understanding the being. Consequently, my next excursus concerns the philosophical notions peculiar to categorial theory and touches upon cognitive theory.

1.2 The categorial theory and correlation between logic and linguistics

In the Stoic system the notion of λεκτὸν is intrinsically connected with the categorial theory, which has much in common with the Peripatetic categorial theory, though the Stoics themselves spared no effort to underscore the differences between theirs and Aristotelian logic.²²⁷ Since the chief notions of the categorial theory (essence, substance, hypostasis, common and individual quality or characteristic and relation) played a significant role in the teach-

224 Translation mine.

225 For the details concerning Hellenistic temporalized conception of truth cf. Bobzien, 1998, 19–21.

226 Transl. Ch.G. Browne / J.E. Swallow.

227 Cf. *Gottschalk, H.B., The Earliest Aristotelian Commentators*, in: Sorabji, R. (ed.), *Aristotle Transformed: the Ancient Commentators and Their Influence*. Ithaca / New York 1990, 79f.

ings of Origen, Eunomius, Basil and Gregory, it is important to include this theory in our survey.

It is very characteristic that as opposed to the Peripatetic categories, which represent the genera of being, the Stoic categories represent the genera of what is explicable. This particular feature of the Stoic categorial theory, in my opinion, matches the underlying assumption of Christian dogma concentrated on the explicable side of divinity (sc. the hypostatic characteristics of the divinity).²²⁸

The first category of the Stoic system is substrate (sc. ὑποκείμενον – SVF 2.314, 2.369). It is understood as an unqualified essence, or primordial substance (sc. ἄπειρος οὐσία/ἄλη – SVF 1.86, 1.88); it corresponds to the Aristotelian pure potentiality (δυνάμει σῶμα). In grammar ὑποκείμενον correlates with the subject of proposition.

The second category is “common quality” (sc. κοινή ποιότης – SVF 3.398). It denotes the independent (or self-dependent – κατ’ ἑαυτὸν πως ἔχον) general characteristic.

The third category is “individual quality” (sc. ἰδία ποιότης – SVF 2.400) *scilicet* the “independent individual characteristic” (sc. κατ’ οἰκειῶν χαρακτηριστῆρα).

The fourth category is relation (sc. σχέσις – SVF 2.369). It constitutes a dependent, “relative characteristic” (πρός τι πως ἔχον).

The interrelationship of these categories can be easily demonstrated in the following example: It (1st) is a homo sapiens (2nd), named Paul (3rd), father to John (4th).

According to Stoic logic, this proposition is true if there is something whose generic quality makes it a homo sapiens, whose individual quality makes it Paul²²⁹, who is indeed a father to John, i.e. the proposition is true, where the subject of the proposition does really exist and the circumstances of its existence satisfy the qualities and relations mentioned in the proposition. By contrast, if there is no Paul or he is not father to John, in other words, if the proposition does not correlate with reality, – it is a false proposition, yet it subsists in the mind. In summary, λεκτόν, when uttered, corresponds to a proposition (either complete or incomplete). To be true a λεκτόν-proposition

228 Cf. Gregory in his second theological oration stated that: “Since the divine essence is ineffable, we too will honour it by silence (ἐπεὶ δὲ ἄρρητα ἦν, καὶ ἡμῖν σωπῆ τιμάσθω)” (Or 28.20).

229 Diogenes Laertius informs us that the Stoics believed that proper names (sc. ὀνόματα) signify an individual quality, while common names (sc. προσηγορίαί) signify a common quality (Diog., 7.58). The Alexandrian grammarians shared this view (Apollonius, *Constr* 103.13, 142.1f., 155.3–5).

(sc. προφορικός λόγος) must be complete, satisfy the grammatical rules and correspond to reality, i.e. to the sphere of “being” (sc. τὸ εἶναι).

TABLE I:

Category and its definition	Substrate – unqualified essence, primordial substance	Generic quality – independent general characteristic	Individual quality – independent individual characteristic	Relation – dependent, relative characteristic
Greek term	ὑποκείμενον	κοινῶς ποιόν	ιδίως ποιόν	σχέσις
Alternative Greek terms	ἄποιος οὐσία\ ἕλη i.e. δυνάμει σῶμα (i.e. potentia)	κατ’ ἐαυτὸν πως ἔχον	κατ’ οἰκεῖον χαρακτηῖρα	πρὸς τι πως ἔχον
Example	It	is a homo sapiens	named Paul	father to John
Relevant grammatical terms		Common noun ὄνομα (Diog., 3.22)	Personal noun προσηγορία (Diog., 3.22)	
	Subject	Predicates		

The Stoic complex understanding of λόγος, which comprised the conceptions of inner and outer speech (sc. λόγος προφορικός and λόγος ἐνδιάθετος) accompanied by the categorial theory, provided a compromise solution of the issue of the correctness of names (sc. the dilemma of either the conventional κατὰ θέσιν or the natural κατὰ φύσιν provenance of words). Namely, the λεκτόν understood as an intermediary between the world of phenomena and the world of thoughts, (and what is especially worth mentioning, a linguistic intermediary), indicated a *via media*. To put it differently and maybe more accurately, for the Stoics the announced dilemma simply was not valid because their vision of the cognitive process comprised natural (sense-perception) and conventional (analysis and classification of the perceived data) components. The Stoics never ceased to underline the rational

character of human speech (language) *vs.* the babbling of children²³⁰ or cries of animals,²³¹ nor did they cease to explore the connection of language with perception (sc. κατάληψις, SVF 2.70). This vision of the nature of language provided them with a solid alibi against the extremes of the conventional and natural theories of language origin. To that end, instead of solving the long-standing dilemma the Stoics approached it from a new angle and in so doing promoted a compromise solution. Without the λεκτόν notion this solution would not have been possible.

The interdependence of Stoic linguistics, epistemology and ontology was based on the logical grammatical methodology constituted by the universal law of cause-and-effect and was recognized as equally valid for grammar, logic, physics and ethics.²³² Ergo, in the Stoic doctrine, ontology agreed with linguistic and logic, and the last one was acknowledged as a full-fledged part of philosophy.

One can easily guess the benefits that bridging linguistic and philosophical matters brought to Christian doctrine with its pronounced focus on the sacred text and all the associated linguistic matters (sc. the concept of the divine Logos and veneration of the Pentecost event). In the following sections I show how some of the Stoic concepts were applied by Origen, Basil and Gregory Nazianzen.

2. Hellenic philosophers, Eunomius and Origen on the correctness of names

Now that we are aware of the original philosophical definitions of those specific logical terms which sprang up in the debate around the Eunomian case, let us see how Christian authors took advantage of them.

As I noticed earlier, Aëtius and Eunomius built their doctrine on the simple assertion that God the Father is an unbegotten essence, while God the Son is a begotten essence. This means that in their view the terms “unbegotten” and “begotten” signified the essential qualities of the Father and the Son; and

230 Varron argued that children being ignorant of grammar are incompetent in sensible speech (*De lingua latina* 6.56).

231 Sextus noticed that animals are also capable of articulation and feeling but this is not enough for the creation of discursive and complex (sc. μεταβατική και συσθετική) impressions (cf. *M* 8.275f.). An interesting comparable remark is preserved in Origen's fragments of the *Commentary on Luke*: “You will find that in *Proverbs* is promised the divine perception (sc. αἴσθησιν θείων) in contradiction to that one which is not divine. In fact, perception cannot be divine, as also irrational animals – seeing, hearing, tasting and touching – take part in it...” (Or., *ComLc* fr. 186.40–46). (Translation mine).

232 Barnes, J., *Logic and the imperial Stoa*, Leiden 1997, 9f.

since these qualities were different they assumed that they signified different essences. In terms of Hellenic linguistics this amounts to understanding the “thing signified” (sc. τὸ σημαίνόμενον) as “thing signifying the essence of the thing”. Notoriously, this linguistic theory forming a foundation of theological doctrine was interwoven with the discussion of the correctness of the divine names which, as I noted earlier, had emerged in the Hellenic philosophical agenda.

Although the issue of the correctness of names debated by the Hellenic philosophers and theologians has attracted considerable interest in contemporary scholarship, a certain nebulousness still surrounds the history of this debate. In particular, the specification of relevant terminology and charting the crossroads and specific nuances of the Christian theories involved in the dispute still lacks precision and accuracy.

A seminal article of J. Daniélou²³³ devoted to the language theory of Eunomius and to the debate about the correctness of names has been a lodestar in the investigation of the problem. Although the issue of the correctness of names goes back to Plato’s *Cratylus*, Daniélou convincingly demonstrates that there is no reason to become entangled in discussions of the fourth century BC when exploring debates of the third–fourth century AD. In late antiquity the view of the matter had considerably altered from that of the fourth century BC.

Moreover, a long tradition of debating the issue and re-interpreting the relevant authoritative texts, which runs through the whole of classical and late antiquity, rendered it almost impossible to establish a standard classification of the disputant parties. To give a thematic example of the state of affairs: the attribution, preserved in works of Origen and Eunomius, of certain theories of the origin of language to Aristotle, Epicurus and the Stoics, is clearly misleading.²³⁴ Whatever were the sources of the accounts of Origen and Eunomius about the language theories of the ancient philosophers, it is evident that they were not particularly interested in details and nuances of the debate.

With reference to H. Steinthal,²³⁵ Daniélou affirmed that in the third–fourth centuries AD we cannot find any theory of the origin of language whose

233 Daniélou, 1956, 412–432.

234 Daniélou stated that the incorrect account of the Stoic, Epicurean and Aristotelian theories of language offered by Eunomius in the second apology suggests that he had “aucune connaissance de leurs doctrines sur le langage” (cf. Daniélou, 1956, 414–416). Allen pointed out in his article that Origen gave a wry account of the Stoic theory of language (cf. Allen, J., *The Stoics on the origin of Language and the Foundations of Etymology*, in: Frede, D. / Inwood, B. [eds.], *Language and Learning*. Cambridge 2005, 36–56).

235 Cf. Steinthal, H., *Geschichte der Sprachwissenschaft bei den Griechen und Römern mit besonderer Rücksicht auf die Logik*. Berlin 1890, 332f.

derivation from Aristotelian, Epicurean or Stoic doctrine could be sufficiently proved.

Analysing the matter within the context of late antiquity, Steinthal established a classification of the three disputant parties: the first believing in the conventional or arbitrary origin of language (sc. θέσει), attributed to the Sceptics and sophists; the second supporting the mystical or supernatural origin of language (sc. φύσει), attributed to Heraclitus; and the third party holding a somewhat compromised opinion and associated with grammarians. Steinthal formed his classification on the basis of the testimony of Ammonius Hermiae, a Neo-Platonic author of the fifth century. In the second chapter of his *Commentary on Aristotle's De Interpretatione* (§§ 34–45) Ammonius traces the history of the famous debate. He thoroughly examines views of various philosophical schools as well as various philosophers individually. He highlights not only philosophical and religious-philosophical aspects of the issue²³⁶ but more extensively dwells on the grammatical and linguistic nuances of the question.²³⁷

In fact, Ammonius' presentation of the debate is so detailed that I think Steinthal's interpretation of his text does injustice to it. To say the least, I believe that it would be correct to develop his classification by mentioning the Aristotelian vision of the matter. In his work, Ammonius devotes a particular attention to the description of Aristotelian language theory. At the end of his overview of this issue he expounds five senses of "name" in Aristotle (§§ 45–46). The Aristotelian diversified position may give us the sense of the complexity of the debate, which in my view should not be reduced to a debate between two parties. I think it would be more accurate to say that strict conventionalism and naturalism marked the extremes of the dispute, while the really interesting discussion concerned the nuances of various compromise solutions.²³⁸ Later, I will come back to surveying the details of the debate and now continue with the research history of this question.

236 For instance, paragraph 39 of Ammonius' commentary, where he deliberates on the conundrum of the correctness of names, is entitled: "By imposition [sc. θέσει] is not contradicted by the efficacy of prayer".

237 In such a way, the titles of the sections of Ammonius' commentary, where he observes the naming problem, are self-explanatory: "Beasts sounds, none of which is a name"; "Indefinite name"; "Porphyry on the Stoic classification of predicates"; "Cases do not make an assertion when combined with just the copula" (*ComInt* 41–45).

238 Thus, Ammonius, for instance, tried to combine Aristotelian conventionalism with Platonic naturalism when he stated that Aristotle associated names with symbols because, as with a symbol, a name bears an artificial likeness to the nature of the thing named: "For signifying (sc. σημαίνων) and signified (sc. σημαίνόμενον) are said relative to one another, so that the things which signify by convention are reasonably <said to be> symbols of the things signified. ... It is

Taking Steinthal's classification as a point of departure Daniélou concentrated on the study of the two parties defined by Steinthal. Thus, Daniélou characterized the approach of grammarians as a congruence of the positions of Plato, Aristotle and the Stoa, which formed the "scientific" or "syncretic" (sc. θέσει + φύσει) theory of the origin of language. Daniélou claimed that the Cappadocians supported this "scientific" approach. However, he did not elaborate his hypothesis nor indicate any possible direct sources of the Cappadocians' language theory.

As for the so-called mystical or supernatural theory of the origin of language²³⁹ Daniélou attributed it to Clemens of Alexandria (*Strom* 1.143.6), Origen and Eunomius.²⁴⁰ He maintained that they believed in the divine and revelatory character of the Hebrew language, and traced the roots of Origen's and Eunomius' concept to the doctrines of the Chaldean Oracles. According to Daniélou, Eunomius' language theory emerged from the concepts of Origen and the Neo-Platonic theurgists, with whom he was related through his master Aëtius. The comparison of the Neo-Platonic and Eunomian concepts suggested by Daniélou does not seem sufficient to affiliate Eunomius' language theory to the *voces magicae* concept, which sprang from the Chaldean Oracles and was subsequently elaborated by the Neo-Platonic theurgists.

A clear presentation of the *voces magicae* concept is found in Iamblichus' *De Mysteriis* (7.4f). Iamblichus tells us that the basis of the theurgic practice comprises a belief in the automatic power attached to the sounds upon which divine names are built. Dillon emphasized that according to Iamblichus only gods know the meanings of divine names for these meanings are unfathomable to humans and men should not even venture to provide these names with any rational interpretation.²⁴¹

In contrast to the logic of Iamblichus' argument, Eunomius interpreted the term "unbegotten," which in his view amounted to a true name of God, in an entirely rational way. Besides, Eunomius was never known to have attached any supernatural power either to the word ἀγέννητος or to any of its sounds. In fact Eunomius' argument was a logical deduction from two

no wonder that we want to call the name both a symbol and an artificial likeness (sc. ὁμοίωμα τεχνητὸν). For what is imposed unreflectively (sc. ἀσκόπως) is merely a symbol, while what is imposed according to reason resembles symbols in being able to be composed of now some and now other syllables, but in being appropriate to the nature of what is named it is a likeness, not a symbol" (*ComInt* 40.14–16; transl. D. Blank, 1996, 48f.).

239 John Dillon also talked about a theory of mystical or supernatural origin of names (cf. Dillon, J.M., *The Magical Power of Names in Origen and Later Platonism*, in: Hamson, R. / Crousel, H. [eds.], *Origeniana tertia*. Roma 1985, 203–216).

240 Cf. Daniélou, 1956, 422.

241 Cf. Dillon, 1996, 203–216.

premises: the simplicity and ontological priority of the divine essence. Thus, in the 7th paragraph of the *Liber Apologeticus* Eunomius in a typical logical way argues for the ontological priority of the divine essence:

In fact, just as the maker must be in existence before the thing he brings into being, and the thing made must be later than its maker, by the same token a thing cannot exist before or after itself, nor anything else at all before God... So, then, if it has now been demonstrated that God neither existed before himself nor anything else exist before him, but that he is before all things, then what follows from this is the Unbegotten, or rather, that he is unbegotten essence (οὐσία ἀγέννητος)²⁴² (A 7).

Interestingly enough, immediately after this logical arguing Eunomius expounded his methodological principle by way of rejecting discursive thought:

Expressions based on invention (κατ' ἐπίνοια) have their existence in name (ὀνόμασι) and utterance (προφορᾷ) only, and by their nature are dissolved along with the sounds (φωναῖς) [which made them up]; but God, whether these sounds are silent, sounding, or have even come into existence, and before anything was created, both was and is unbegotten²⁴³ (A 8.4–7).

This example seems to confirm the idea that Eunomius did not consider the word “unbegotten” (with its syllables and sounds) as abnormally powerful, but instead professed the uniqueness of its meaning. He claimed:

Indeed, if something else did exist before the Unbegotten, it is that which would properly have to be called ‘unbegotten’ and not the second²⁴⁴ (A 10.13f.).

Thus it seems safe to conclude that it was the thing signified of ἀγέννητος and never the signifier itself that occupied the mind of Eunomius. More to the point, from Eunomius’ second apology (J 2.1.524–525) we learn that different divine names preserved in the Bible in fact mean the same, namely, that God is unbegotten. Eunomius even asserts that those who take the scriptural names of Christ to mean that he is an unbegotten essence, accord with his (sc. Eunomius’) teaching (τῷ ἡμετέρῳ συναγορεύσει λόγῳ).²⁴⁵ This affirmation renders it impossible to identify Eunomius’ teaching with the *vores magicæ* concept.

242 Transl. Vaggione, 1987, 41.

243 Transl. Vaggione, 1987, 43.

244 Transl. Vaggione, 1987, 47.

245 Cf. in the second apology Eunomius affirmed that if there is a single divine life, every name applied to it must effectively signify the same divine essence (cf. J 1.367.9–14 = *NPNF* 297b29–37, 298b38–40); and later on that this single divine life must have a single inner meaning, even if the names expressing it are different; real meanings are determined on the basis of the underlying objects, so that (if their names are different) either the reference is to a different object or there is no difference in meaning (cf. J 1.368.6–18 = *NPNF* 299a10–25).

Like Daniélou, Dillon also saw reason in deriving Origen's language theory from the *voce magicae* concept. According to the Neo-Platonists, the names of demons possess a certain power over their bearers because they have some substantial connection with them²⁴⁶. This approach implies that mastery over nature is acquired by the magical action of the theurgist. The nature and even daemons are obliged to obey theurgist because he knows certain magical formulae, hence, his appeal to the daemons is not strictly speaking a dialogue but an imperative monologue.

Origen indeed believed that automatic power is inherent in divine names. Vivid evidence for Origen's thoughts on this matter is preserved in the *Homilies on Joshua*:²⁴⁷

That there are certain invisible forms within us, and indeed a multitude of them, is revealed to us by the psalm which says: Praise the Lord, my soul and let all the things within me praise his holy name [Ps 102:1]. So there are a multitude of powers within us which have been assigned to our souls and bodies, which, if they are whole, when the Holy Scripture is read, are benefitted and become stronger, even if 'our mind is unfruitful,' as it is written about 'him who speaks with tongues' [1 Cor 14:14], 'My spirit prays, but my mind is unfruitful'²⁴⁸ (*HomJosh* 20.1).

Supportive of the supernatural power attached to divine names Origen considered their translation fatal for this power because, as he put it it must not be the "signification" of the name which gives it [the name] power but instead it must be "the qualities and characteristics of the sounds" (*Cels* 1.25).

In spite of these beliefs, which, as Dillon demonstrated,²⁴⁹ come really close to the views held by the Neo-Platonists, Origen emphatically rejected the

246 This substantial connection could not be perceived by any logical technique – it is ontological, inherent and irrational. Referring to Proclus' *Commentary on Cratylus*, Dillon shows that names were understood as σύμβολα and συνθήματα, "which the gods have sown in the world, at all levels of existence. They are, in a way, meta-symbols, or the subjective correlatives of the symbols the gods have laid down. If one gets them right, one has the key to the understanding and manipulation of the world, and if one has the gods names right, one has achieved access to the gods" (cf. Dillon, 1996, 204).

247 Dillon gives this fragment in parallel with a fragment from the fourth *Ennead* in support of his hypothesis. The citation from Plotinus goes as follows: "the concord of like things and the mutual repulsion of unlike ones ... it is by drawing on this unifying force in Nature that the magician achieves his effects. Nature itself, indeed, is the primal magician" (*Enn* 4.40.6f.).

248 Transl. J. Dillon, 1996, 214.

249 Dillon connects Origen's remarks about translation with similar prohibitions, such as those found in Iamblichus (*De mysteriis* 7.5) and the Chaldean Oracles (cf. Dillon, 1996, 203).

equation of pagan rituals with Christian prayer. He underscored the different mechanisms of pagan and Christian worship (cf. *Cels* 8.17–20). Whatever parallels might be seen between Origen’s conjectures on the divine origin of the Hebrew proto-language (sc. before the babble of languages, cf. Gen 11) and the concept of *voces magicae*, the practical application of divine names in prayer described by Origen is rather different from the Neo-Platonic reciting of spells.

In such a way Origen emphasised that Christian prayer stands as far away from the magical spell as inane sounds do from meaningful words. Origen also asserted that the magical spell reveals its weakness in translation, which renders it powerless, while the Christian prayer remains powerful as long as one who says the prayer does it consciously:²⁵⁰

... for the Lord of all languages (ὁ πάσης διαλέκτου κύριος) of the earth hears those who pray to Him in each different tongue, hearing, if I may so say, but one speech corresponding the meaning (ὡς μιᾶς φωνῆς τῆς κατὰ τὰ σημαινόμενα ἀκούων), expressing itself in different dialects (*Cels* 8.37.15).

In the *Homily on prayer* Origen asserted that Christian prayer can be efficacious even when silent, because God listens rather to the heart of a praying man than to his voice (*Orat* 24).

Besides, from Origen’s philological studies we learn that he had a sober scholarly approach to common biblical nouns and to divine names alike. In the *Commentary on John* Origen encouraged exegetes to investigate the contextual connotation (τοῦ σημαινόμενου τὴν δύναμιν, *ComJn* 1.21.125) of a divine name (ἐκ τῆς φωνῆς), since this name is meant not only figuratively but literally (οὐ τροπικῶς ἀλλὰ κυρίως, *ComJn* 1.21.125). The usage of τὸ σημαινόμενον in these two fragments is in tune with the Stoic understanding of the “thing signified,” which belongs to intellectual reality and implies different connotations.

Origen’s leaning towards the Stoic linguistic was persuasively underscored by Shawn Keough, who showed that Origen applied the Stoic classification of words to common noun (sc. ὄνομα) and proper noun (sc. προσηγορία) and affirmed that “Origen’s understanding of divine names may perhaps be more usefully discussed against the background of Graeco-Roman linguistics, rather than magical papyri or Peircian semiotics”.²⁵¹

From the evidence presented above we must admit that the principles of Origen’s biblical studies appear to be somewhat at odds with his belief in the

250 In this regard, it is important to note that Basil, whose inclination towards Stoic perception theory is clear, literally proclaimed the same idea in the *Homily 18* (PG 31, 504).

251 Cf. Keough, S.W.J., *Divine Names in the Contra Celsum*, in: Heidl, G. / Somos, R. (eds.), *Origeniana nona. Origen and the Religious Practice of his Time*. Leuven 2009, 205–215.

supernatural power attached to the sounds of the *nomina barbara*. There can be no doubt, however, particularly after Dillon’s convincing argument, that Origen was aware of the principle of working magic, scilicet of sympathy (sc. συμπάθεια). Indeed, Origen’s description of the technique of imitation (sc. μίμησις, *Cels* 6.63), by means of which he effectively bridged exegesis, theology and ascetics, makes one think of Plotinus’ vision of the *imitatio dei*²⁵² practice and bears a striking resemblance to the practices described by later Neo-Platonic authors (though this is obviously a theme for another story²⁵³). In sum, it is true that Origen, as did his philosophical colleagues, believed in *imitatio dei* as the foremost way to God.²⁵⁴

Nevertheless, when going into the details of the *imitatio dei* practice, Origen tried to distance himself from his Hellenic colleagues, who elaborated a comparable doctrine. He used a tolerably rare adjective σύμμορφος (sc. similar, *LSJ*), which, according to the TLG statistics, once appeared in the classical period, later came into use in the Epistles of Apostle Paul and eventually found its highest use in the texts of Clemens and Origen. It seems quite plausible that Origen deliberately chose to avoid the famous ὁμοίωσις (sc. resemblance; cf. ὁμοίωσις θεῶ – to become like God, in Plat. *Thaet.*; cf. *LSJ*), the term deeply rooted in the Platonic philosophical tradition, and to use Pauline vocabulary instead.

252 Cf.: “In the strength of such considerations we lead up our own soul to the Divine, so that it poses itself as an image of that Being (ἀνάγεσθαι καὶ τὴν ψυχὴν ἡμῶν εἰς αὐτὸ εἰκόνα θεμενὴν ἑαυτὴν εἶναι ἐκείνου), its life becoming an imprint and a likeness of the Highest (ἰνδαλμα καὶ ὁμοίωμα εἶναι ἐκείνου), its every act of thought making it over into the Divine and the Intellectual (ὅταν νοῆ, θεοειδῆ καὶ νοοειδῆ γίγνεσθαι)” (Plotin, *Enn* 5.3.8; transl. B.S. Page, 1969, available on-line).

253 Proclus in his *Commentary on Timaeus* defined the following stages of the theurgic ascendance: 1. knowledge (sc. γνῶσις); 2. affinity (sc. οἰκειώσις, acquired via “τὸ θεῖον ὁμοίωσις” or “τὰς ιδιότητας τῶν θεῶν ὁμοίωσις”); 3. contact (sc. συναφή, understood as touching the divine essence “καθ’ ἣν ἐφαπτόμεθα τῆς θείας οὐσίας”); 4. adhesion (sc. ἐμπέλασις understood as provider of greater communion and a more manifest participation in the light of God (τὴν κοινωνίαν ἡμῖν παρεχομένη καὶ τρανεστέραν τὴν μετουσίαν τοῦ τῶν θεῶν φωτός); 5. union (sc. ἔνωσις, understood as provider of unification of our energy with divine energy (μίαν ἐνεργεῖαν ἡμῶν τε ποιούσα καὶ τῶν θεῶν)” (*ComTim* 1.211.20–25). For a detailed analysis of this fragment in the context of the Neo-Platonic and Christian concept of prayer cf. Petroff, V., *Anagogic Rays of the Good: the Sun in the Platonism of Late Antiquity and the Corpus Areopagiticum*, in: *The History of Philosophy Yearbook 2009*, Moscow 2010, 112–139.

254 Cf.: “Thus the Spirit of Christ dwells in those who bear, so to say, a resemblance (συμμόρφους ἐφιζάνει) in form and feature to Himself” (*Cels* 8.18).

In his debate with Celsus Origen stressed that, in contrast with the pagans who venerate divinities by altars and statues, Christians practise virtue in order to establish statues of God within themselves.²⁵⁵ This testimony, which sounds rather predictable in the text of a Christian author, peculiarly enough found support in the writings of Julian the Emperor. He explicitly stated that Christians, whom he thoroughly despised, showed remarkable success in their operative charity initiatives and other social work (education, mission, confession, etc.). For this reason he insisted upon cultivating similar social work within the pagan denomination.²⁵⁶

Thinking through the controversial evidence presented so far, I incline to regard Origen's belief in the supernatural power of the *nomina barbara* in the light of his biblical studies. If we just take into account how persistently Origen urged his fellow exegetes to collect and explore all the readings they could find in various manuscripts with both Hebrew and Greek biblical texts, then we perhaps see the underlying logic of his thought. In his *Letter to Africanus* Origen expounds this idea by saying that "Providence has ministered to the edification of all the Churches of Christ in the sacred Scriptures," therefore, he continued, "In all these cases consider whether it would not be well to remember the words, 'You shall not remove the ancient landmarks which your fathers have set'" (*EpAf* 11.57–60).

In such a way Origen emphasised that everything that is found in various biblical manuscripts (either Hebrew or Greek) must be taken into account by a zealous student of scripture. I believe that with this argument in hand, the confusion about Origen's "too pious" regard of the Hebrew names of God

255 Cf.: "And everyone who imitates Him according to his ability, does by this very endeavour raise a statue according to the image of the Creator, for in the contemplation of God with a pure heart they become imitators of Him" (*Cels* 8.18).

256 The testimony of Julian goes as follows: "For when it came about that the poor were neglected and overlooked by the priests, then I think the impious Galileans observed this fact and devoted themselves to philanthropy. And they have gained ascendancy in the worst of their deeds through the credit they win for such practices" (Jul., *Ep* 89b.463–476). Gregory Nazianzen also mentioned this episode in his invective against the Emperor: "He [Julian] also, having the same design, was intending to establish schools in every town, with pulpits and higher and lower rows of benches, for lectures and expositions of the heathen doctrines, both of such as give rules of morality and those that treat of abstruse subjects ... He was purposing also to build inns and hospices for pilgrims, monasteries for men, convents for virgins, places for meditation, and to establish a system of charity for the relief of prisoners, and also that which is conducted by means of letters of recommendation by which we forward such as require it from one nation to another – things which he had especially admired in our institutions" (Greg., *Or* 4.111).

disappears. It is clear that he approached biblical texts as a highly complicated research enigma, which would take more than a lifetime to explore. He therefore maintained that even if he had not yet grasped some of the questions concerning the history of the biblical corpus, he could not simply abandon these questions. The correlation of the Hebrew and Greek versions of the Bible was one of the most perplexing research problems, which Origen explored more deeply than anyone else in his time.

In sum, I think it is quite natural that Origen left a question mark over the enigma of the divine names, which he was not able to solve due to his poor knowledge of the Hebrew language. It is only fair that, unable to penetrate the underlying meaning of the Hebrew words, whose existence he nevertheless could guess from his own experience of Greek philological studies, he preferred to leave these sacred words without translation. I wish to conclude this chain of thoughts by noting in passing that, as most readers will know, in Greek the word *δύναμις* can signify both “power” and “meaning,” and therefore the mysterious supernatural power of the sounds of *nomina barbara*, that Origen mentions in the *Homilies on Joshua* (20.1), can refer also to their enigmatic meaning.²⁵⁷

To sum up the arguments presented in this section I wish to highlight that neither Eunomius’ nor Origen’s theories of language can be traced back to the *Chaldean Oracles* or *Greek Magical Papyri*. There is no good reason to somehow associate or affiliate Eunomius’ theory with the teaching of Origen. As for Origen, however pious was his attitude to the antediluvian Hebrew language, he did not know its contemporary version and therefore his daily concern was about philological studies of the biblical manuscripts. The explorative approach to the Bible and logical and grammatical techniques of Origen’s biblical studies eventually provided the pattern for the routine methods of theological discourse pursued by the Cappadocian fathers.

257 Having said that, I would like to distance my thought from the hypothesis of Naomi Janowitz, who in her investigation of Origen’s language theory concluded that in his view names are non-referential and iconic (cf. Janowitz, N., *Theories of Divine Names in Origen and Pseudo-Dionysius*, in: HR 30/4 [1991], 359–372). It is a plain fact that Origen usually applied the non-literal meaning of words in his interpretations but this does not mean that he supported the idea that divine names are strictly non-referential. I would suggest rather that Origen knew that these names have their reach meaning but this meaning was inaccessible for him because he didn’t know the language and, hence could not help treating these names as non-referential.

3. The language theories of Origen and Basil, and Stoic linguistics

Having repeatedly emphasised that Origen and the Cappadocian fathers were deeply absorbed in logical and grammatical studies, I now elaborate this thesis. As I mentioned earlier J. Daniélou affiliated the language theory of the Cappadocian fathers with the teaching of the Hellenic grammarians (though he did not delve more deeply into this topic). He defined the Cappadocians' approach to language as "scientific" or "syncretic".

It is true that Cappadocians were inclined towards a scientific solution of the issue and that their approach was syncretic, that is to say they stood for a compromise between the conventional (sc. θέσει, or νόμῳ) and natural (sc. φύσει) origin of the human language. Yet, I believe that a little bit of precision might be welcome in defining the language theory of Cappadocians. Thus, I venture to suggest another vague and broad, yet comparatively more precise term for labelling the Cappadocians' theory of language. Namely, I would like to call it "cognitive" Meaning, in that it emerged out of a combination of the contemporary scientific and philosophical theories about sense-perception, imagination, logic, intellection, memory, and language. Although "cognitive language theory" sounds fairly modern, it appears to be quite a convenient umbrella term for the combination of the above-mentioned components. What I especially wish to underscore by this label is that the Cappadocian fathers took notice not only of specific linguistic but also of the psychological, socio-cultural and psychological aspect of language theory.²⁵⁸ Since there has been a long discussion about the influence of Stoic philosophy on the language theory of Basil and Origen, I start by surveying its focal points.

It was Henri Crouzel who first mentioned Origen's familiarity with Stoic concepts.²⁵⁹ Louis Roberts took a particular interest in studying Origen's relation with Stoic logic.²⁶⁰ He demonstrated that Origen's method of treating arguments, particularly in polemics, was highly dependent on Stoic logic, where the truthfulness of propositions was of decisive importance. Roberts maintained that Origen carefully followed the principles of Stoic

258 Cf. Basil by means of rhetorical questions described how the human mind performs the naming process: "Does his intelligence receive an impression from objects, and, after having conceived them, make them known by particular signs appropriate to each of them, he proclaims? Has he consequently recourse to the organs of voice to convey his thoughts? Is he obliged to strike the air by the articulate movements of the voice, to unveil the thought hidden in his heart?" (*Hom.* 3.2).

259 Cf. Crouzel, H., *Origène et la Philosophie*. Paris 1962.

260 Cf. Roberts, L., *Origen and Stoic Logic*, in: *Trans. and Proceed. of the Am. Philol. Assoc.* 101 (1970), 433–444.

logical studies.²⁶¹ John Rist was sceptical of Origen's high concern for Stoic logic, although he accepted and added evidence in support of Origen's perfect awareness of Stoic philosophy.²⁶² Ronald Heine studied how Origen used Stoic logic in the *Commentary on John*.²⁶³ He pinpointed that the exegetical techniques Origen applied in the *Commentary on John* reveal his familiarity with Stoic logic. He also provided historical and philological evidence for Origen's high regard for Stoic logic. Heine asserted that according to Gregory Thaumaturgus, the Stoic dialectic formed a fundamental initial part of the curriculum of Origen's school at Caesarea.

It is evident from these studies that Origen was well versed in Stoic logic. A general course of Stoic and Peripatetic logic famously formed an integral part of Hellenic education, so it is no wonder that Origen applied this knowledge for the benefit of his studies. Yet let us take a closer look at his works in order to see which of his adopted logical techniques subsequently turned out to play a significant role in the theological argumentation of Basil and Gregory Nazianzen. Predictably, the first notion I wish to scrutinize is the previously discussed λεκτὸν.

Although Origen only once referred to λεκτὰ in the *Commentaries on Psalms* (Fr. 80 1.20), he rather frequently (more than 100 times) used the term σημαίνόμενον with a likely Stoic meaning. For instance in the *Commentary on John* he advised a reader of Scripture to distinguish clearly between the "language (sc. φωνή), meanings (sc. σημαίνόμενα), and things (sc. πράγματα), on which the meaning is based" (*ComJn* 2.5.47, cf. *Phil* 4.1).

Marguerite Harl in her critical edition of the *Philocalia* noted that Origen in his language theory applied a Stoic differentiation between concepts, words and facts. With reference to the two fragments of the *Philocalia* and one from the *Commentary on John*, she affirmed that "les mots des incantations dans leur forme matérielle, les φωναί, renvoient naturellement au réel (sc. πράγματα)".

Although it might seem rather persuasive at first glance that Origen indeed embraced the Stoic λεκτὸν notion, we can't accept the fact without inquiring about the spirit of Origen's attitude to Stoic language theory: whether he really and totally embraced it, or applied it with some reservations, or, more probably, used only words and implied a different meaning. To answer this

261 To prove his argument Roberts refers to *Cels* 1.71 (cf. Roberts, 1970, 443).

262 Cf. Rist, J.M., *The Importance of Stoic Logic in the Contra Celsum*, in: Blumenthal H. / Markus R.A. (eds.), *Neoplatonism and Early Christian Thought*, London 1981, 64–78.

263 Cf. Heine, R.E., *Stoic Logic as Handmaid to Exegesis and Theology*, in: *Origen's Commentary on the Gospel of John: JTS* 44 (1993), 90–117.

question we must define more precisely the meaning of the terms involved, i.e. φωνή and πρᾶγμα, and to check their use in Origen's opera.

Marguerite Harl understood πρᾶγμα as a real object – equivalent to the Stoic τύχχανον.²⁶⁴ Louis Roberts challenged this understanding. He noted that in Stoic language theory πρᾶγμα has a regular meaning of significate, so that this term was essentially used as a synonym for λεκτόν. Indeed, Sextus used²⁶⁵ τὸ πρᾶγμα σημαίνόμενον and τὸ πρᾶγμα νοούμενον as identical *termini technici*, which signify an intelligible equivalent to a real object, or to put it differently, a mental grasp of reality.

The term φωνή, we recall, is responsible for making Origen, in the eyes of some scholars, an adherent of the so-called mystical language theory, since he proclaimed that syllables (sc. φωναί) acquire a certain supernatural power.²⁶⁶ In the first book of the *Contra Celsum* Origen expounds both terms (sc. φωνή and πρᾶγμα) and also gives an account of the Stoic language theory. Thus, Origen affirmed that:

... according to the Stoics the names were bestowed by nature since the first sounds imitated the things signified which conform to the given names;

... ὡς νομίζουσιν οἱ ἀπὸ τῆς Στοᾶς, φύσει, μιμουμένων τῶν πρώτων φωνῶν τὰ πρᾶγματα, καθ' ὧν τὰ ὀνόματα (*Cels* 1.24).

It follows from this passage that both the sounds and the names depend upon the things signified.

This translation of mine differs from the classical French and English translations in two respects. First, I accept Roberts' offer to understand τὰ πρᾶγματα in this fragment²⁶⁷ as “the things signified” instead of the slightly less precise “the things described” suggested by Chadwick, or “le modèle des choses mêmes” offered by Borret.

Second, I suggest that the participle clause “which conform to the given names” (καθ' ὧν τὰ ὀνόματα) does not refer to the “first sounds” (τῶν πρώτων φωνῶν), as Chadwick and Borret argue,²⁶⁸ but to “the things

264 Harl made a table with the terms, which in the texts of Philo, Clemens, Origen and Sextus corresponded to Stoic distinction between the language, meanings and things. In this table Harl did not show that Sextus and Origen used πρᾶγμα to denote the thing named (sc. significatum) (cf. Harl, M. [ed.], *Origène, Philocalie, 1–20 sur les Écritures*, SC 302. Paris 1983, 278).

265 Cf., e.g., Sextus, *M* 8.12.

266 We have the evidence that Origen maintained that Scriptural names are stronger than any charm (cf. *Phil* 12.1.15).

267 Though I do not share Roberts' idea that Origen regularly used πρᾶγμα in this meaning (cf. Roberts, 1970, 436–443).

268 In Chadwick's translation we read: “the first articulate sounds being imitations of the things described and becoming their names”; in Borret's translation: “les

signified” (τὰ πράγματα). There are two arguments on which I rest my point. First, there is a literal parallel to this phrase in the *Commentary on John*, where the affiliation of the names to the things signified (τὰ πράγματα, καθ’ ὧν τὰ ὀνόματα) is beyond doubt. The passage goes as follows:

For if we consider the meanings (Ἐκλαβόντες γὰρ τὰ πράγματα) which conform to the given names (καθ’ ὧν τὰ ὀνόματα κεῖται) (*ComJn* 1.9.52.5).

In this passage the phrase τὰ πράγματα, καθ’ ὧν τὰ ὀνόματα appears as coherent as a coined formula.

Second, if we affiliate the names (sc. τὰ ὀνόματα) to the first sounds (sc. τῶν πρώτων φωνῶν) it would follow from this that Origen believed that the principles of Stoic etymology are based on the following provenance of language (as follows from the logic of Chadwick’s translation):

- 1) “the things signified” *from which* 2) “the first sounds” *from which* 3) “the names”;
- 1) τὰ πράγματα *from which* 2) αἱ πρώται φωναί *from which* 3) τὰ ὀνόματα.

This vision of the provenance of human language and accordingly of etymological theory was supported by J. Dillon who affirmed that Origen accepted the Platonic-Stoic etymological theory, which “provided an excellent theoretical basis for a theory of magical power of names²⁶⁹”. The Stoics accepted the basic principle of etymology set out in the *Cratylus*, namely that etymology is built on the indicating of a distinctive characteristic (i.e. functional characteristic) of a thing. For instance, it is stated in the *Cratylus* that Apollo’s name is “admirably appropriate to the power (sc. δύναμις) of the god” because it “aptly indicates [his] four functions (sc. δυνάμεις): music, prophecy, archery, medicine” (*Cra* 404e–405a). The Stoics would likely approve such an interpretation: similar examples of Stoic etymologies pursued the same principle (*SVF* 2.156–163).

Nevertheless, I think there is a big difference between thinking that Stoic etymologies derived from the meanings of names (sc. from the functional characteristics of things, which are coined in their names) and thinking that the Stoics derived their etymologies from the first sounds, which in some mysterious way imitated phenomena. I think that the problem with the direct connection of first sounds to words lies in the assumption that these first

premières voix s’étant formées sur le modèle des choses mêmes et les représentant par leur son, d’où ensuite les noms entiers ont été tirés” (cf. Origen, *Contra Celsum*, transl. H. Chadwick, Cambridge 1953, 23; Borret, M., *Origène Contra Celse*, t. 1, SC 132 Paris 1967, 135).

269 Cf. Dillon, 1996, 206.

sounds are independent philological facts like *nomina barbara*. That is to say, nobody knows where these sounds came from but there is no choice but to accept them without explanation, like magical spells. In fact, the Stoics preferred to work with semantics rather than with phonetics.²⁷⁰ They believed that the process of intellection comprises the following stages: 1) sense-perception; 2) imagination; 3) memory; 4) intelligible conception (sc. ἔννοια).²⁷¹ Aëtius, the demographer of the second century, provided the following account of the naming process:

When man is born, the Stoics say, he has the commanding part of his soul like a sheet of paper ready for writing upon. On this he inscribes each one of his conceptions (ἔννοια). The first method of inscription is through the senses. For by perceiving something, e.g., white, they have a memory of it when it has departed. And when many memories of a similar kind have occurred, then we say we have experience (ἐμπειρία). Some conceptions arise naturally in the aforesaid ways and undesignedly, others through our own instruction and attention²⁷² (Aët., 4.11.1–4 = SVF 2.83).

This seems to confirm that the Stoics took no great interest in phonetics. In fact, they defined sound as “a kick of the air” that affects human sensors.²⁷³ This rational explanation leaves no place for some mysterious and unfathomable first sounds.

Now, with regard to the evidence presented above, it appears difficult to accept that Origen could consider Stoic etymological theory as a basis for magical practice and much less that he could himself be engaged in such business. In the homily *On prayer* Origen clearly formulated the definition of name (sc. ὄνομα), which perfectly matches the Stoic language theory and correlates with the categorial system:

A name (ὄνομα) is a summary designation descriptive of the peculiar character (προσηγορία τῆς ἰδίας ποιότητος) of the thing named. ... It is the peculiar in these characteristics, the unique combination (τὸ τοίνυν τούτων τῶν

270 Cf. Dawson, D., *Allegorical Readers and Cultural Revision in Ancient Alexandria*. Berkeley 1991, 27f.

271 Cf. Diogenes’ account of the Stoic approach to perception: “The Stoics like to start with the theory of appearance and perception (φαντασίας καὶ αἰσθήσεως), since the criterion by which the truth of things is recognized is in the genus appearance, and since the theory of assent, and that of apprehension and thinking, which precede the rest, cannot be put together without appearance. For appearance leads the way, and then the articulating thinking (διάνοια) which is present brings out in words what the effect is on it of the appearance” (Diog., 7.49).

272 Transl. D. Dawson, 1991, 28.

273 Cf. SVF 139–141 = *Scholias Arati* 5.1; Diog., 7.55; Aul. Gell., *NoctAtt* 5.15.

ποιότητων ἴδιον) – for there is not another being identical with Paul – that is indicated by means of the appellation Paul (*Orat* 24).

A very similar vision of the provenance of words and conceptions is found in Basil's *Adversus Eunomium*, where he maintained that:

the names (αἱ προσηγορίαι) don't signify the substances (οὐχὶ τῶν οὐσιῶν εἰσι σημαντικαὶ) but the qualities (τῶν ἰδιοτήτων), which characterise each individually (αἰ τὸν καθ' ἕνα χαρακτηρίζουσιν) ... when we hear Paul, we think of the combination of characteristics (ἰδιωμάτων συνδρομὴν) that is attached to this particular name (φωνή)²⁷⁴ (*AE* 2.4 = *PG* 29.577.30).

In view of the above presented evidence it seems safe to assume that Origen and Basil took advantage of contemporary linguistic theories, particularly those which emerged from Stoic theories.

Eunomius contested the language theory of Basil. In his second apology he affirmed that “Basil has divided our God” (σύνθετον ἡμῖν τὸν θεὸν ἀπεργάζεται), when he characterized him through a “combination of characteristics” (συνδρομὴ ἰδιωμάτων) (*J* 2.307.23). As one may reasonably assume the debate between Basil and Eunomius was as much theological as methodological. However severe was Basil's criticism of Eunomian syllogisms, he himself never pretended to hide his own logical preferences and explicitly urged it in his *Ep* 38:

to apply (μετατιθεῖς) to the divine dogmas (ἐπὶ τῶν θείων δογμάτων) the same standard of difference which you recognize in the case both of essence (τῆς οὐσίας) and of hypostasis (τῆς ὑποστάσεως) in human affairs, and you will not go wrong (*Ep* 38.3.30).

The arguments we have observed hitherto demonstrate that Origen and Basil took advantage of their competence in logic in pursuing their theological and exegetical studies. It is likely that Origen was interested in logic due to his exegetical practice, whereas Basil was thus predisposed by reason of his polemics with reputed logicians (Eunomius and Aëtius) and his personal interest in physical studies.²⁷⁵ In the following section I show how the logical and linguistic trend of Origen's and Basil's studies shaped their theological theories.

274 Transl. M. Delcogliano / A. Radde-Gallwitz, 2011, 135.

275 Cf.: “May He who has given us intelligence to recognize (καταμανθάνειν) in the smallest objects of creation the great wisdom of the Contriver make us find in great bodies a still higher idea of their Creator. However, compared with their Author, the sun and moon are but a fly and an ant” (Bas., *Hexaem.* 6.11.57–60; transl. B. Jackson, 1895, available on-line). Remarkably, the verb καταμανθάνω that Basil uses in this passage was commonly used in the context of scientific studies (sc. to observe well, examine closely, cf. *LSJ*).

4. Methodology of the theological discourse of Origen and Basil

4.1 Conceptual theology and the notion of *epinoia*

Eunomius unmistakably detected the logical trend in Basil's argumentation and censured him for conceptual (sc. κατ' ἐπίνοιαν) theological arguing (A 8.1). Basil, in his turn, insisted upon the κατ' ἐπίνοιαν theology and, as I show hereafter, Origen's influence played a considerable role in Basil's methodological choice.

Meanwhile, the role of the ἐπίνοια concept in Origen's own doctrine has been variously regarded by scholars. To give a shortcut of the research history, Henri Crouzel considered it one of the key notions in Origen's doctrine, while Marguerite Harl proclaimed "the famous ἐπίνοιαί" to be "superficial, naturally verbal, and much less important than the doctrine of the two natures of Christ²⁷⁶". In recent studies,²⁷⁷ however, different aspects of the ἐπίνοια concept have attracted the interest of scholars. In my opinion this concept is one of the backbones of Origen's doctrine. Before I elaborate this thesis and show the connection between Origen's and Basil's visions of ἐπίνοια, it is necessary to sketch the philosophical background of this concept.

In Stoic philosophy ἐπίνοια has a meaning synonymous with ἔννοια, which is one of the key *termini technici* of Stoic logic.²⁷⁸ Augustine tells us that this term (ἔννοια) supports the whole plan and connection of Stoic learning and teaching. He expounds the notion as follows:

276 Cf. Crouzel, H., *Le Contenu Spirituel des Dénominations du Christ selon le Livre I du Commentaire sur Jean d'Origène*, in: Crouzel, H. / Quacquarelli, A. (eds.), *Origeniana secunda*. Roma 1980, 131–150; Harl, M., *Le Déchiffrement du Sens. Études sur l'Herméneutique Chrétienne d'Origène à Grégoire de Nysse*. Paris 1993.

277 Cf. Torjesen, K.J., *Hermeneutical Procedure and Theological Method in Origen's Exegesis*. Berlin 1986; Wolinski, J., *Le recours aux epinoiai du Christ dans le Commentaire sur Jean d'Origène*, in: Dorival, G. / Le Boulluec, A., et al. (eds.), *Origeniana sexta*. Leuven 1995, 465–492.

278 Cf.: "Of true appearances, some are apprehensive and some are not. Non-apprehensive ones are those that strike people when they are suffering an effect. ... An apprehensive one is the one that is from a real thing and is stamped and impressed in accordance with just that real thing, and is of such a kind as could not come about from a thing that was not real. For since they trust this appearance (φαντασίαν) to be capable of perfectly grasping the underlying things (ἀντιληπτικὴν εἶναι τῶν ὑποκειμένων), and to be skillfully stamped with all the peculiarities (ιδιώματα) attaching to them, they say that it has each of these as an attribute (συμβεβηκός)" (Sextus, *M* 8.247–249; transl. R. Bett, 2005, 50).

from the senses the mind conceives the notions (ἐννοιαί) of those things which they [sc. the Stoics] explicate by definition²⁷⁹ (*Civ* 8.7).

In a similar vein, Basil in his treatise *Adversus Eunomium* characterized ἐπίνοια as “conception,” which springs out of analysis of sensual information. Namely, in his own wording:

After an initial concept has arisen for us from sense perception, the more subtle and precise reflection on what we have conceived is called conceptualization²⁸⁰ (μετὰ τὸ πρῶτον ἡμῖν ἀπὸ τῆς αἰσθήσεως ἐγγινόμενον νόημα τὴν λεπτοτέραν καὶ ἀκριβεστέραν τοῦ νοηθέντος ἐπενθύμησιν ἐπίνοιαν ὀνομάζεσθαι) (*AE* 1.6 = *PG* 29, 524.19–22).

This fragment shows that formation of the conception depends, on the one hand, on sensual information, and on the other hand, on human intellective capacity, which comprises imagination, memory and conceptualization.²⁸¹ While perception is processed by the sense organs, conceptualisation is patterned by logical and linguistic structures. This interdependence of logic and grammar is reflected in Origen’s definition of a name (sc. ὄνομα). In his homily *On prayer* he affirmed that:

A name (ὄνομα) is a summary designation descriptive of the peculiar character (προσηγορία τῆς ἰδίας ποιότητος) of the thing named. ... It is the peculiar in these characteristics, the unique combination (τὸ τοίνυν τοῦτων τῶν ποιότητων ἴδιον) – for there is not another being identical with Paul – that is indicated by means of the appellation Paul (*Orat* 24).

This way of mapping the process of conceptualisation²⁸² resonated in Origen’s Christology. In his *Commentary on Jeremiah* he expounds the nature of Christ as follows. He contends that although the nature of Christ “constitutes a single subject (τὸ μὲν ὑποκείμενον ἓν ἔστιν), yet conceptually (ταῖς δὲ ἐπίνοιαῖς) it is designated by many names (τὰ πολλὰ ὀνόματα), which signify different aspects [of the nature] (ἐπὶ διαφορῶν)²⁸³” (*HomJer* 8.2.10–11).

279 Translation mine.

280 Transl. M. Delcogliano / A. Radde-Gallwitz, 2011, 98.

281 By conceptualization I mean orderly, analytical and complex thinking, which operates many concepts at the same time. Cf.: “Generally speaking, all things recognized through sense-perception and which seem simple in substrate but which admit of a complex account upon further consideration are said to be considered through conceptualization” (Bas., *AE* 1.6 = *PG* 29.524.35–37; transl. M. Delcogliano / A. Radde-Gallwitz, 2011, 98).

282 Cf. Bas., *AE* 29.577.30.

283 Translation mine.

Of course Origen was not the first who built his Christology by means of interpreting the scriptural names of Christ but he was the one who patented this method as equally valid for exegetical, theological and even ascetical practice. Thereby Origen created a methodological track for the following generations of exegetes and theologians.

By methodological track I mean that generally speaking Origen's exegetic and theological practice, as far as he informed us about it, included three components, which I label exegetical, theological and ascetical. This is of course, a very simplistic classification and by making it I only mean to highlight the distinction between the exegetical "excavation" of the material and the theological "processing" of this data. In other words, I wish to emphasise that Origen worked *from* the textual data and not *from* the theological doctrines (after all, not many of them were hitherto fully elaborated). His theological concepts emerged out of his biblical studies, while his biblical studies included grammatical, logical, poetical, historic, philosophical and even scientific scrutiny of the text preserved in various readings and in two languages. By stating this I do not wish to divorce theological and exegetical analysis. On the contrary, I think it is important to see that, just as the philological studies of the Homeric scholars were framed first and foremost by textual material, likewise Origen's biblical studies were framed by relevant textual and historical data, out of which he deduced his arguments and concepts. In order to arrange these concepts in a coherent system he used contemporary philosophical patterns (e.g., categorial and language theories). Needless to say, all this intellectual work relied upon sincere personal devotion to the Christian faith, therefore, the third component, which I labelled ascetic practice, in fact, precedes, accompanies and fulfils both the exegetical and the theological work.

Although the hitherto described components of Origen's exegetic and theological work are very broadly defined, I nonetheless have tried to illustrate them in order not so much to divide them as to locate their focal points.

Exegetical inquiry

In the *Commentary on Romans* Origen urged exegetes to pursue the accurate philological study of the biblical texts and strive to grasp all possible connotations of various readings. Thus, he proclaimed:

A reader must therefore in every place carefully consider first the literal meaning of the word 'law,' (τί σημαίνεται ἐκ τῆς νόμος φωνῆς) then its particular meaning (τί χωρὶ τὸ τοιοῦτον ἐννοεῖν)²⁸⁴ (*ComRom* 36a.2–4).

284 Translation mine.

Origen himself showed an example of this philological study and in the *Commentary on John* he concluded his analysis of various readings of the word “god” by deducing four different meanings of this word (“four orders in relation to the noun “god,” [τέσσαρα τάγματα κατὰ τὸ ‘θεός’ ὄνομα]: “the god,” and “god,” then “gods” in two senses [ὁ θεός καὶ θεός, εἶτα θεοὶ διχῶς]”; *ComJn* 2.32).

Theological analysis

In the *Commentary on John* (2.28.126) Origen formulated his Christological concepts on the basis of the scriptural names of Christ and with the help of categorial theory.

There has been a keen discussion among scholars as to whether or not Origen tolerated the idea of the substantial unity of the Father and the Son.²⁸⁵ Origen indeed argued for a distinction between the Father and the Son²⁸⁶ (e.g., in *ComJn* 1.112). Yet, at the same time he insisted on the eternal co-existence of the two divine persons. This inconsistency of Origen’s thought can be easily explained by the complexity of the Father-Son relationship, which was later expounded by the Cappadocian fathers in the language of paradoxes and metaphors. I believe that Cappadocians took advantage of Origen’s concept of the three divine hypostases²⁸⁷ in formulating their Trinitarian doctrine and also adopted Origen’s way of describing the Father-Son relationship by means of the term “relation” (sc. σχέσις).

Origen expounded the principle of the Father-Son relationship in his *Fragments of the Commentary on John*, where he gave his interpretation of a famous phrase from the *Proverbs* (8:22: “The Lord possessed me [the Wisdom of God] at the beginning of His way, before His works of old”), which the Arians usually refer to in order to prove subordination of the Son to the Father.²⁸⁸ Origen explained this phrase by involving a category of relation (sc. σχέσις). He argued that, although initially Wisdom had no other relation but to God, later, due to the divine intention to create, Wisdom assumed a creative relation (sc. σχέσιν δημιουργικῆν). Consequently, he continues:

285 For an account of the debate cf. Stead, G.C., *Homousios*, in: RAC 16 (1994), 364–433 (90).

286 Cf. Jacobsen, A.-C., *Christ – the Teacher of Salvation. A Study of Origen’s Christology and Soteriology*. Münster 2015, 125–130.

287 In the *Commentary on John*, Origen plainly affirmed that “we believe in three hypostases of the Father and the Son and the Holy Ghost (τρεις ὑποστάσεις πειθόμενοι τυγχάνειν, τὸν πατέρα καὶ τὸν υἱὸν καὶ τὸ ἅγιον πνεῦμα)” (*ComJn* 2.10.75.1–2; transl. mine).

288 Cf.: “God made all things in Wisdom” (Ps 103:24).

the same existence (ἡ αὐτὴ ὑπαρξίς) bears the name of Wisdom by essence (κατ' οὐσίαν), for it dwells with God (ῥκειώται τῷ θεῷ), and the name of Creative logos (ὁ δημιουργικός λόγος) for the sake of creation (πρὸς τὰ δημιουργήματα)²⁸⁹ (*Fragm. ComJn* fr. 1.60–69).

In this interpretation Origen declares that the Wisdom of God shares the same existence with the Father and that the creation of the universe has not substantially changed this existence for it is only the relation of the second hypostasis that has been altered for the sake of creation. Hence, it becomes clear that the distinction which Origen detected between the Father and the Son is of a relative nature.²⁹⁰

Origen maintained that various names of the Son signify various aspects of his relation to the creation. In the *Commentary on John*, after listing the scriptural names of Christ Origen states that there is “a system of ideas (συστήματος θεωρημάτων) in him insofar as he is wisdom”, and among these ideas there are some things that “the Saviour has not for himself (οὐχ αὐτῷ), but for others (ἐτέροις)”, and besides, that he has “some things for himself and for others” (*ComJn* 2.28.125–126). Ergo the interpretation of the scriptural names of Christ, according to Origen, at once provides knowledge about his divine and human natures.

Ascetic component

A process of personal perfection played a crucial role in Origen's exegetical and theological studies.²⁹¹ Remarkably, he claimed that the investigation of the scriptural names of Christ not only deepens theological understanding but also favours personal salvation. He professed that the investigation of the biblical enigmas accelerates the personal advancement of the exegete:

And if we should thus collect the remaining aspects of Christ (τὰς λοιπὰς ἐπινοίας τοῦ Χριστοῦ), we will discover without difficulty from what has been said how he who does not believe in Christ will die in his sins. For because he

289 Translation mine.

290 It is remarkable that in Stoic philosophy this kind of distinction exists in thought only (κατ' ἐπίνοιαν) and has no real (sc. material) existence (sc. ὑπαρξίς) (Sextus, *M* 8.453f.).

291 Cf.: “human wisdom is an exercise for the soul, but that divine wisdom is the end, being also termed the strong meat of the soul by him who has said that strong meat belongs to them that are perfect (τελείων δέ ἐστιν ἡ στερεὰ τροφή), to those who by reason of use have their senses exercised to discern both good and evil” (*Cels.* 6.13). Cf. Usacheva, A., *The Exegetical Requirements in Origen's Late Works: Mystical and Intellectual Aspects of Perfection According to Origen and his Followers*, in: Jacobsen, A-Ch. (ed.), *Origeniana Undecima*. Leuven 2016, 871–885.

is in opposition to the things that Christ is in his aspect (ἐν τοῖς ἐναντίοις τῇ ἐπινοίᾳ, ὧν ἐστὶν ὁ Χριστός), he dies in the sins themselves²⁹² (*ComJn* 19.158).

In order to better understand this passage it is important to recall that traditionally the image of God in man was associated with Christ, who, as stated in the *Epistle to Hebrews* 1:3, is “the Impress of the hypostasis of his Father (χαρακτήρ τῆς ὑποστάσεως αὐτοῦ)”.

In this fragment the word χαρακτήρ is applied as a synonym for other meaningful biblical terms: effulgence (sc. ἀπαύγασμα), impress (sc. χαρακτήρ), image (sc. εἰκόν) and stamp (sc. σφραγίς). This thesis from the *Epistle to Hebrews* and the idea of “Christ – the image of God” associated with the idea of “man – the image of God” were broadly used in patristic literature.²⁹³

Yet the prerequisites for this association had already been elaborated in pre-Christian times. Philo, for instance, used different meanings of the word χαρακτήρ in his philosophy, one of which goes back to Stoic perception theory. Namely, Philo asserted that the idea of λόγος – the image of God – unfolds itself in the following analogy:²⁹⁴ “man was created after the image of God, thus the soul of man has received its divine impress (ὁ ἐπιγιγνόμενος χαρακτήρ), namely, in its implanted ability to know God” (*Gen* 1:26f.). Origen appeared to share this concept of Philo. In a similar vein Origen states in his *Contra Celsum* that:

when a man becomes perfect ... and learning the precept – ‘Be followers of God’, receives into his virtuous soul the traits of God’s image (μανθάνων τὸ ‘Μιμηταὶ τοῦ θεοῦ γίνεσθε’ ἀναλαμβάνει εἰς τὴν ἑαυτοῦ ἐνάρετον ψυχήν τοὺς χαρακτήρας τοῦ θεοῦ) (*Cels* 6.63).

As a matter of course, the idea that the names of God signifying the characteristics of divinity can be grasped by the human mind, promotes the study of these names for the sake of spiritual ascendance. This is how Origen expounds this idea in the *Homily on prayer*:

Since therefore, though we all have some notion of God, conceiving of him in various ways, but not all of what he is (ὅ ἐστι), for few and, be it said, fewer than few are they who comprehend his complete holiness – we are with good

292 Transl. R.E. Heine, 1993, 203.

293 For instance, Gregory Nazianzen applied it in his third theological oration (*Or* 29.17); Origen in *Contra Celsum* stated: “So entirely are they (The Father and the Son) one, that he who has seen the Son, who is the brightness of Gods glory, and the express image of His person (χαρακτήρα τῆς ὑποστάσεως τοῦ θεοῦ), has seen in Him who is the image of God (ἐν αὐτῷ ὄντι εἰκόνι τοῦ θεοῦ), God Himself (τὸν θεόν)” (*Cels* 8.12).

294 Cf. an article on the term τέλειος from *ThWNT*.

reason taught to attain a holy conception of him (ἐννοῖαν περὶ θεοῦ) in order that we may see his holiness as creator, provider, judge, elector, abandoner, acceptor, rejecter, rewarder and punisher of each according to his desert (*Orat* 24).

This passage shows how Origen associated the scriptural names of God with his characteristics available for human comprehension and with the human concepts about God. This chain of associations tied up by the ἐπίνοια concept clearly illustrates how important this notion was for Origen's theology. Now, let us explore how this concept was reflected in the doctrine of Basil of Caesarea.

Like Origen, Basil used grammatical and logical *termini technici* in his Christology. In the *Adversus Eunomium*, pondering the idea of divine simplicity, he remarked that “the indicative tropes of his characteristics (οἱ δεικτικοὶ τῆς ιδιότητος αὐτοῦ τρόποι)” do not infringe the idea of simplicity (*AE* 2.29.640.25). The term δεικτικὸς τρόπος is *terminus technicus* in logic and grammar, particularly typical for Peripatetic and Stoic philosophy.²⁹⁵ Basil applied this term in order to underscore that the individual characteristics of Christ manifest his divine incomprehensible nature. Like Origen, Basil noted that Christ himself had indicated to men his characteristics (sc. the scriptural names), which Christians can grasp through contemplation,²⁹⁶ and emphasised that it is by virtue of the study of the names of Christ that a man can approach divinity:

If there were nothing to characterize the substance (τὸ τὴν οὐσίαν χαρακτηρίζον) there would be no way for us to penetrate it. Since divinity is one (μιᾶς οὐσης θεότητος), it would be impossible to specify the concept of the Father or the Son, unless our thought does not articulate any additional characteristic (τῶν ιδιωμάτων)²⁹⁷ (*AE* 2.29.640.15).

In the context of investigating the scriptural names of Christ Basil approved of philological techniques. In a similar vein as Origen, Basil used the categorical theory for classifying the names of Christ. Remarkably his ambiguous logical-theological reasoning sometimes appears so technical that, unaware of the implied subject of Basil's discourse, a reader can easily take his theological reasoning for a logical one and vice versa. For instance, in the *Adversus Eunomium* we read:

295 Cf. Alexander Aphr., *ComApr* 323.4.

296 Cf.: “When our Lord Jesus Christ spoke about himself to make known both the Divinity's love of humanity and the grace that comes to humanity from the economy, he did so by means of certain distinguishing marks considered in connection with him (ιδιώμασί τισι τοῖς περὶ αὐτὸν θεωρουμένοις ἀπεσήμαινε ταύτην): he called himself door, way, bread, vine, shepherd, and light...” (*AE* 1.29.524; transl. M. Delcogliano / A. Radde-Gallwitz, 2011, 99).

297 Transl. M. Delcogliano / A. Radde-Gallwitz, 2011, 180.

Who does not know that some names are expressed absolutely in respect of themselves (καθ' ἑαυτὰ προφερόμενα), signifying the things which are their referents (τῶν ὑποκειμένων αὐτοῖς πραγμάτων ἐστὶ σημαντικὰ), but other names are said relative to others (τὰ δὲ πρὸς ἕτερα λεγόμενα), expressing only the relation to other names relative to which they are said (τὴν σχέσιν μόνην ἐμφαίνει τὴν πρὸς ἃ λέγεται)?²⁹⁸ (AE 2.29.588.35–40).

A strong logical trend of reasoning is a feature of Basil's teaching. On the evidence we have thus far examined, it seems plausible that Basil took advantage of Origen's methodological principles. In the following section I show how the method of theological argumentation described above shaped Basil's polemics with Eunomius and echoed in his Trinitarian concept.²⁹⁹

4.2 *The categorial theory in the Trinitarian doctrine*

One of the key questions which Eunomius and Aëtius asked about the term ὁμοούσιος revolved around the contradiction between the simplicity of the divine essence and the distinction between the divine persons.³⁰⁰ According to Eunomian logic, God the Father was unbegotten essence (sc. οὐσία ἀγέννητος – A 7.10), that is to say he was not begotten essence³⁰¹, and hence

298 Transl. M. Delcogliano / A. Radde-Gallwitz, 2011, 142.

299 The issue of provenance of the hypostasis doctrine has been recently debated. Thus, Volker Drecoll has argued that Basil's occasional usage of the term hypostasis in the *Epistle* 9 and in the *Adversus Eunomium* does not reflect his deep engagement with the elaboration of the hypostasis doctrine. According to Drecoll, Basil came to specifically deliberate on this issue in around 370 when circumstances forced him to engage with the Homousian party (cf. Drecoll, V.H., *Die Entwicklung der Trinitätslehre des Basilius von Cäsarea. Sein Weg vom Homöusianer zum Neunizäner*. FKDG 66. Göttingen 1996, 101, 337f.). Christoph Marksches and Reinhard Hübner challenged Drecoll's view and argued that Basil's deliberation on the hypostasis concept can be detected in his works written before 370 (cf. Marksches, C., *Gibt es eine einheitliche "kappadozische Trinitätstheologie"? Vorläufige Erwägungen zu Einheit und Differenzen neunizänischer Theologie*, in: Härle W. / Preul R. [eds.], *Trinität*, MThJ 10. Marburg 1998, 51–94, [56–58]; Hübner, R.M., *Zur Genese der Trinitarischen Formel bei Basilius von Caesarea*, in: Weitlauf, M. / Neuner, P. [eds.], *Für euch Bischof – mit euch Christ*. FS F. Kardinal Wetter. St. Ottilien 1998, 123–156, [152–154]). I am inclined to side with Marksches and Hübner and to suggest that Basil's reflection on the hypostatic relationship, and employment of the terms hypostasis and epinoia, echoes the conceptions of Origen.

300 Cf.: "It is in accordance, therefore, both with innate knowledge and the teaching of the fathers that we have made our confession that God is one..." (A 7.1–2; transl. R.P. Vaggione, 1987, 41).

301 Cf.: "He was not first begotten and then deprived of that quality so as to become unbegotten!" (A 8.10f.; transl. R.P. Vaggione, 1987, 43).

the begotten Son has a different essence than the Father³⁰². A solution to this tricky issue proposed by Basil and elaborated by Gregory Nazianzen (as we will observe in the following chapters) articulated the relative nature of the differentiation between the divine persons (sc. the Son and the Father are relative names, which don't signify different substances but only certain relations within the same substance). This solution, as Basil and Gregory emphasised, did not damage the idea of simplicity of the divine essence, nor prevent the divine persons from sharing the same divine essence.³⁰³

Basil's vision of the Father-Son relationship might be traced back to Origen, who introduced the term hypostasis into Christian theology (cf. *PGL*) and to the Stoics, who instituted the notion in a philosophical context (cf. *ThWNT*). Remarkably, the term hypostasis emerged in Stoic philosophy from the medical and scientific lexicon. Posidonius, who had a philosophical and scientific education and achieved impressive results in astronomy, devoted special attention to this term. He defined hypostasis as an actualized being, which comes into existence to manifest an eternal essence and its peculiar attributes in the real phenomena (here the physical background of the notion is pronounced). An account of Posidonius' concept is preserved in Arius Didymus' *Epitome*:³⁰⁴

302 Cf.: “We assert, therefore, that this essence was begotten – not having been in existence prior to its own coming to be – and that it exists, having been begotten before all things by the will of its God and Father” (*A* 12.10–12; transl. R.P. Vaggione, 1987, 49).

303 Cf. Basil in *Adversus Eunomium* stated: “So when anyone hears something begotten, he is not brought in his mind to a certain substance (οὐκ ἐπί τινα οὐσίαν), but rather he understands that it is connected with another (ἐτέρῳ ἐστὶ συναπτόμενον). ... So, how is it not the peak of insanity to decree that that which does not introduce a notion of any subsistence, but only signifies the relation to another (τὴν πρὸς ἕτερον σχέσιν), is the substance (οὐσίαν)?” (*AE* 2.9 = 29.588.40–45; transl. M. Delcogliano / A. Radde-Gallwitz, 2011, 142). Similarly Gregory Nazianzen in the third theological oration contended: “Father is not a name either of an essence or of an action (οὔτε οὐσίας ὄνομα ὁ πατήρ, οὔτε ἐνεργείας). But it is the name of the Relation in which the Father stands to the Son, and the Son to the Father (σχέσεως δὲ καὶ τοῦ πῶς ἔχει πρὸς τὸν υἱὸν ὁ πατήρ, ἢ ὁ υἱὸς πρὸς τὸν πατέρα)” (*Or* 29.16; transl. Ch.G. Browne / J.E. Swallow).

304 Cf. Origen's description of the Stoic first category preserved in the *De oratione*: “On their [i.e. the Stoics] view essence (ἡ οὐσία) is inherently unqualified and inarticulate (ἄποιός τε καὶ ἀσχημάτιστος) as such. It is even indeterminate in magnitude (οὐδὲ μέγεθος ἀποτεταγμένον ἔχουσα), but it is involved in all quality (πάσῃ δὲ ἔγκειται ποιότητι) as a kind of ready ground for it (ἔτοιμόν τι χωρίον)” (*Orat* 27.8).

Posidonius said that the substance of the whole, i.e. matter (τὴν τῶν ὅλων οὐσίαν καὶ ὕλην) was without quality and without shape, in so far as in no way has it a form detached of its own (οὐδὲν ἀποτεταγμένον ἴδιον ἔχει σχῆμα), nor quality by itself either (οὐδὲ ποιότητα καθ' αὐτήν), but always is in some form and quality. For he said that substance differs from matter (διαφέρειν δὲ τὴν οὐσίαν τῆς ὕλης), being the same in reality, in thought only (οὐσαν κατὰ τὴν ὑπόστασιν ἐπινοία μόνον) (Arius Did., *Epit.* fr. 20 = Posidonius, fr. 92³⁰⁵).

This distinction between οὐσία and ὑπόστασις created a problem, which concerned the status of ὑπόστασις. If hypostasis is to be understood as the essence, which is actualised in its attributes (which are different from the essence), the question arises about the status or basis of the hypostatic being. In other words, if hypostasis is neither essence nor attributes but something in between (sc. the essence actualised in the attributes), what can be said about its being? Does the hypostasis properly exist or subsist or is it a mere illusion? The Stoics solved this problem by identifying the attributes with the functional characteristics of the essence. A detailed and clear explanation of the matter is preserved in Origen's *Homily on prayer*:

By qualities (ποιότητας) they mean distinctively like the actualities and the activities (τὰς ἐνεργείας καὶ τὰς ποιήσεις) in which movements and relations of the essence have come to be (τὰς κινήσεις καὶ σχέσεις συμβέβηκεν), and they say that the essence as such has no part in these inherently (οὐδέ τούτων μετέχειν φασὶ τὴν οὐσίαν) though it is always incidentally inseparable from some of them (αὐτῶν ἀχώριστον εἶναι) and equally receptive of all the agent's actualizations (ἐπιδεκτὴν πασῶν τῶν τοῦ ποιούντος ἐνεργειῶν) however it may act and transform (ὡς ἂν ἐκεῖνο ποιῆ καὶ μεταβάλλῃ). And they say that it is throughout transformable and throughout divisible (δι' ὅλων τε μεταβλητὴν καὶ δι' ὅλων διαρετὴν), and that any essence can coalesce with any other (πᾶσαν οὐσίαν πάσῃ συγχεῖσθαι δύνασθαι), all being a unity notwithstanding (ἡνωμένην μέντοι) (*Orat* 27.8).

Such a peculiar and complex Stoic vision of the essence which exists behind real objects and actualizes itself in them, quite understandably seemed weird to the Peripatetics, who normally detected existence exclusively in real things (cf. Alex. Aphr., *ComTop* 4.5). One must admit that the Peripatetic criticism of the Stoic concept appears quite rational. A tolerably satisfactory explanation of the Stoic vision of the relationship between ὑπόστασις and οὐσία might be found, however, in the sphere of logic and grammar. A grammatical equivalent to οὐσία is ὑποκείμενον – a subject of proposition (or a thing signified), while ὑπόστασις is regarded as actualisation of the subject in a predicate (or a signifier).

305 Greek text and translation of Posidonius' fragments by I.G. Kidd, 1989, 368.

TABLE II:

<i>ontology</i>	<i>grammar</i>	<i>logic</i>
οὐσία (essence)	= ὑποκείμενον (subject of proposition)	= thing signified (=λεκτόν)
ὑπόστασις (actualisation of the essence)	= predicate of the subject	= signifier

A very helpful account of this tricky matter is preserved in Dexippus' fourth-century *Commentary on Categories*. I have summarized his testimony in the following table.

TABLE III:

<u>1st meaning of the subject</u> (πρῶτον ὑποκείμενον): qualityless matter (ἡ ἄποιος ὕλη) = a subject of <i>proposition</i> = potential body (δυνάμει σῶμα) <i>e.g., it (τί)</i>
<u>2nd meaning of the subject</u> : qualified subject (ὑποκείμενον τὸ ποιόν) = actualization (ὑπόστασις) of the subject in the attributes which are predicated of the subject (relative terms πρὸς τι λέγεσθαι) <i>e.g., the bronze</i>
these attributes are either general or particular (κοινῶς ἢ ἰδίως) <i>e.g., the bronze of statue (general), or the bronze of the statue of Socrates (particular)</i>

In Dexippus' own words the fragment runs as follows:

... (τὸ ὑποκείμενον) 'subject' has two senses, both with the Stoics and with the older philosophers (the Peripatetic and the Old Academy), one being the so-called primary subject (πρῶτον ὑποκείμενον), i.e. qualityless matter (ἡ ἄποιος ὕλη), which Aristotle calls 'potential body' (δυνάμει σῶμα), and the second type of subject is the qualified subject (ὑποκείμενον τὸ ποιόν).³⁰⁶

Apropos of the second type of subject Dexippus says that this qualified subject represents the actualization (ὑπόστασις) of the subject in the attributes (ἐπίνοιαι) which are predicated of the subject, and which are themselves relative terms (πρὸς τι λέγεσθαι). Then he continues by saying that:

... these attributes are either general or particular (κοινῶς ἢ ἰδίως); for both the bronze and Socrates are subjects (ὑποκείμενον) to those things that come to be in them (ἐγγινομένοις) or are predicated of them (κατηγορουμένοις). For 'subject' is regarded as being a relative term (κατὰ πρὸς τι λέγεσθαι) (for it is the subject of something – τινὶ γὰρ ὑποκείμενον), either without

306 Transl. J. Dillon, 1990, 50f.

qualification, of those things that come to be in it and are predicated of it, or in a particular sense. Unqualifiedly, the subject for all accidents (ὑποκείμενον πᾶσι τοῖς γινομένοις) and predicates (κατηγορούμενοις) is prime matter (ἡ πρώτη ὕλη), while for particular accidents and predicates the subject is (τισὶ δὲ ὑποκείμενον γιγνομένοις ἐπ’ αὐτοῦ καὶ κατηγορούμενοις), e.g. the bronze or Socrates (*ComCat* 23.25–24.4).

This fragment demonstrates that from the linguistic perspective, the difference between οὐσία and ὑπόστασις looks less problematic than from a pure ontological viewpoint. This vision of essence, which finds its actualization in the attributes of real things, happened to fit a complex Christian vision of the divine essence.

This is how Basil adopted this concept to his anti-Eunomian Christology. In the *Epistle* 38, he stated:

That which is spoken of in the specific sense (τὸ ἰδίως λεγόμενον) is signified by the word ‘hypostasis’ (τῷ τῆς ὑποστάσεως δηλοῦσθαι ῥήματι). For, because of the indefiniteness of the term, he who says ‘man’ has introduced through our hearing some vague idea, so that, although the nature is manifested by the name (τὴν μὲν φύσιν ἐκ τοῦ ὀνόματος δηλωθῆναι), that which subsists in the nature (τὸ δὲ ὑφεστός) and is specifically designated by the name is not indicated (δηλούμενον ἰδίως ὑπὸ τοῦ ὀνόματος πρᾶγμα μὴ σημανθῆναι)... It is not the indefinite notion of essence (οὐχ ἡ ἀόριστος τῆς οὐσίας ἔννοια) which creates no definite image because of the generality of its significance (ἐκ τῆς κοινότητος τοῦ σημαίνομένου στάσιν), but the hypostasis, which is evident through the specific qualities³⁰⁷ (*Ep* 38.3.1).

Once again we see that for Basil a purely logical or, should I say, grammatical reasoning is appropriate to theological matters. I assume that it was not at all the idea of prime matter that seemed worth adopting for Christian doctrine but the mechanism of correlation between categories and its equal eligibility in ontology, logic and grammar.

In table number four I demonstrate how the logical and grammatical notions adopted by the Christian authors correlated with each other and with the theological notions:

TABLE IV:

<i>ontology</i>	<i>grammar</i>	<i>theology</i>	<i>logic</i>	<i>linguistics</i>
$\frac{\text{πρῶτη ὕλη}}{\text{ὕλη}}$	$\frac{\text{ὑποκείμενον}}{\text{ὑπόστασις}}$	$\frac{\text{οὐσία}}{\text{ὑπόστασις}}$	$\frac{\text{κοινὸν}}{\text{ἴδιον}}$	$\frac{\text{σημαινόμενον}}{\text{σημεῖον}}$

307 Transl. B. Jackson, 1895, available on-line.

This table shows that the relation between the two notions of one discipline is analogous to the relation between the two notions of another discipline, etc. Thus, prime matter has the same relation to matter in ontology as the subject (sc. ὑποκειμένον) has to the predicate (sc. ὑπόστασις) in grammar, as essence has to hypostasis in theology, as common quality has to individual quality in logic, as the thing signified (sc. σημαίνόμενον or λεκτόν) to the signifier (sc. σημείον) in linguistics. The very idea of compounding the logical and theological notions which I use in this formula belongs to Basil, who in his *Epistle* 214 plainly affirmed:

οὐσία has the same relation to ὑπόστασις (τοῦτον ἔχει ἢ οὐσία πρὸς τὴν ὑπόστασιν) as the common has to the particular (ὄν ἔχει λόγον τὸ κοινὸν πρὸς τὸ ἴδιον)³⁰⁸ (*Ep* 214.4.1–15).

It seems plausible that the Cappadocians applied Stoic cognitive theory to their theological argument so that it resulted in stating that the incomprehensibility of the essence of the Trinity is its substantial characteristic; whereas all the other characteristics like begotten and unbegotten and so forth are relative names. That is to say that everything that is predicated of the essence reveals not the essential but the functional characteristic of the subject, or to put it plainly, the functional characteristic does not denote what the Trinity is in its essence but merely explicates how it functions for the sake of humanity.

Conclusion

I think that a principal methodological challenge introduced into theology by the Cappadocians was that they tried to explore and explain topical theological matters in the terms of contemporary science and philosophy instead of merely teaching ex cathedra some unexplainable divine doctrines. They took advantage of the logical, linguistic, cognitive and philosophical discourses and applied the relevant notions and terms to the interpretation of the biblical narrative and formulation of the theological doctrines. I believe that this daring explorative approach to the Bible and theology balanced by a modest recognition of the limitation of the human ratio in discovery of the divine enigmas was inspired by Origen and his method of biblical studies.

Another important common feature of the theological method of the Cappadocians and Origen is that they emphasised the significance of the individual effort reflected in the life of the Christian community. Admittedly, although they encouraged Christians to investigate Scripture and the physical world in order to discover the beauty of creation, they set rather high

308 Transl. B. Jackson, 1895, available on-line.

intellectual and ascetical requirements for the researcher. Thus, one may say that it was an elitist theology that they promoted. Be this so, their theology was also paradoxical therefore exceptions and contradictions were inherent in this system.

Such an explorative, dialogical and collective approach to theological contemplation was not, however, an invention of either Origen or the Cappadocians. As it is broadly known, one of the most popular contemporary approaches to the provenance of John's Gospel is the Johannine community hypothesis. Roughly the hypothesis states that the fourth gospel was composed during a period of time in the second half of the first century by several authors belonging to the Johannine community, and hence, that the remarkable theology of the fourth gospel to a considerable extent reflects the intellectual atmosphere of this community.³⁰⁹ This is of course only a hypothesis but it accurately highlights the social climate of the Early Christian community where the teaching was not only preached but also explicated and intensively developed.

As I have shown earlier in this chapter, it was also peculiar to the philosophical schools of Late Antiquity to practise philosophy by way of re-interpreting authoritative texts. Importantly, the purpose of these oral exegetic-philosophical exercises was not to arrive at a fixed and commonly accepted reading but to contribute to the personal progress of the students. An impressive variety of interpretation and a keen and persistent interest in continuous exploration of the same authoritative texts is preserved in the *Commentaria in Aristotelem Graeca* composed in the Peripatetic and Neo-Platonic schools in a period from the second and until the seventh century AD.

Origen's explorative interest in biblical studies also required a scholarly community for the realisation of his Hexapla project. A post at the school in Caesarea and the generous support of someone by the name of Ambrosius provided Origen with the necessary means for his studies. Cappadocians did not literally establish a school but all their work can be characterised as a long collective theological research project. They discussed theological issues with each other and with their colleagues, Hellenic philosophers, and opponents, and they vastly benefitted from this discussion. They explored the same questions from various perspectives and expressed their multivocal and sometimes paradoxical ideas in different literary styles and genres.

This explorative courage and amplitude of intellectual horizon are the distinctive hallmarks of the theological style of Origen and the Cappadocians

309 Cf. Cirafesi, W.V., *The Johannine Community Hypothesis (1968–Present): Past and Present Approaches and a New Way Forward*, in: *Cur. Biblic. Res.* 12/2 (2014), 173–193.

and make it sometimes really difficult to claim decisively that they inherited this or that idea from a particular author. Although in this chapter I have traced back to Origen the concepts of hypostasis, epinoia and the idea of the relative relationship between the Father and the Son, lately developed by the Cappadocian fathers, I wish to underline that at the same time similar ideas were discussed in the philosophical and scientific milieus. Thus, I would like to conclude this chapter by sketching the institutional and methodological points of transmission of the theological ideas relevant for the third–fourth centuries.

Taking into account Origen’s engagement with classical culture (philosophical schools, textual criticism, grammatical studies) it is no wonder that he creatively used and transformed classical heritage. To give a concrete example, I believe that within the context of Late Antiquity Origen happened to play a remarkably important role for the following reasons.

First, he adapted Jewish and Hellenic philological and scribal technology to the needs of Christian church, such as formation, preservation, copying and studying of the canon of Scripture. Consequently, Origen’s heritage became particularly popular within monastic circles, where the lion’s share of biblical scribal work was done.³¹⁰

Second, Origen set an example of how basic grammatical and logical knowledge can be successfully applied to the needs of Christian dogma. As soon as the basics of grammar and logics were well known to broad audience, the use of these school arguments could easily prove successful in Christian preaching and theological polemics. Indeed, as I have demonstrated in this chapter, Basil of Caesarea broadly applied simple logical and grammatical analogies to explain difficult theological doctrines.

Third, Origen’s deep knowledge of the contemporary philosophy and institutional educational achievements primed his controversial and loud fame: he simply turned out to be an unparalleled figure of his time and therefore in later times his achievements echoed in various ways. The Cappadocian fathers found a lot of insights in Origen’s teaching and methodological approach to theological argumentation.

A particularly significant strand clearly discernible in Origen’s thought and in the discourse of the Cappadocian fathers is their anthropological turn. That is to say, they regarded theology not so much as divine and sacred knowledge given by God as a daring attempt of humans to challenge and stretch

310 Cf. Rubenson, S., *The Influence of Origen on Fourth-Century Monasticism: Some Further Remarks*, in: Dorival, G. / Le Boulluec, A. et al. (eds.), *Origeniana sexta*. Leuven 1995, 591–598; Lundhaug, H., *Origenism in Fifth-Century Upper Egypt: Shenoute of Atripe and the Nag Hammadi Codices*, in: *StPatr* 64 (2013), 217–228.

themselves towards the inexplicable and unknowable. Hence, it is through the prism of anthropology, of the embodied human being, that Origen and the Cappadocian fathers looked at theological doctrines. In the second part of this book I will examine the cognitive theory of Gregory Nazianzen and try to read his theology in the light of his epistemological and anthropological concepts.

Part Two: Epistemology and Human Intellection in the Theological Orations of Gregory Nazianzen

Introduction to Part two

As I have already mentioned in the introduction to this monograph, the scope of my analysis lies in investigating Gregory's method and the methodology of theological discourse and epistemology which supports it. That is to say, I explore firstly the argumentative strategies, genres, and *topoi* Gregory applied in his theological circle; secondly the philosophical background of his reasoning and thirdly, how contemporary historical and philosophical circumstances and discussions shaped Gregory's epistemological theory and theology.

With regard to these research questions the material in the second part is structured in the following way. The first chapter is devoted to the justification of the methodological scope of my inquiry. I delineate the historical reasons and textual evidence which proves that the methodology of theological argumentation was considered important by Gregory. Then I describe the research methodology which I myself have used to examine Gregory's orations in order to track his epistemological theory and to unearth its philosophical background. Afterwards I present a philological analysis of the genres, stylistic features, and coherent structure of the five-speech circle, which also correlates with my interpretative approach to the theological circle. In the second chapter, I focus on philosophical and methodological matters. Here I begin by investigating the concept of essential predication in the context of Eunomian teaching. The general scope of this part consists in highlighting the basic concepts of Peripatetic epistemology which, in my view, established the parameters for Gregory's epistemological and methodological reflections. In the third chapter I consider how the physiological and anthropological aspects of Peripatetic epistemology and cognitive theory found an echo in Gregory's natural, exegetic and dogmatic theology.

Chapter 1. The methodological framework of the theological orations

Introduction

In the previous chapters I have observed the historical circumstances of the Eunomian debate and outlined the main trends in the relevant philosophical discussions of that time, which touched upon epistemological, logical

and grammatical issues. I have also briefly sketched the vulnerable situation of Constantinople in the year 379, when Gregory Nazianzen arrived at the capital city at the request of the Pro-Nicene party, which was in a considerable minority and urgently needed support from a skillful rhetorician and theologian who was capable of persuasive and witty argument in favour of the Nicene cause even in the face of death threats from his opponents. Now it is time to proceed to the analysis of the theological orations, which Gregory composed and delivered before his fastidious metropolitan audience at a home-church which he named Anastasia, comfortably situated in one of the most prestigious areas of Constantinople³¹¹. Having summarized the material to be considered in this first chapter I now provide some further explanations as to the methodological scope of my research.

First, I begin my methodological questioning of the theological orations guided by a strong impression that the clue to their interpretation lies in the process of theological argumentation which they contain, rather than in the multitude of arguments that have evolved out of them. Second, this peculiar process-oriented reading of the orations which I offer is not only rooted in my own experience of thinking through them but is also firmly supported by historical, philosophical and textual evidence from the contemporary epoch.

In other words, the intellectual and social climate of the fourth century strongly suggests that the Christian church experienced an urgent need to officially leave the intellectual ghetto of its restricted Judeo-Christian background and to address the fundamental methodological and epistemological issues with which Hellenic philosophy had been grappling and had thus far made considerable progress in science. The scope of this cultural quest was much larger than the accidental aims of a purely theological discourse and we have ample evidence that Gregory appreciated its amplitude. I suggest that it was precisely this ambitious pedagogical pursuit that played a decisive role in his consent to the request of the Pro-Nicene bishops.³¹² As he confessed in his autobiographic poem, he had a hard time thinking about their offer, which he accepted somewhat reluctantly and only because it seemed to him that no one else was sufficiently accomplished for this mission.³¹³ In this chapter I run through Gregory's explicit remarks about the methodology of theological

311 Cf. McGuckin, 2001, 241–242.

312 In his autobiographic poem Gregory asserts that he came to Constantinople not on his own initiative but was “summoned by powerful men to defend the word” (*De Vita Sua* 607f. = PG 37, 1071).

313 A captivating account of Gregory's Constantinople campaign can be found in a substantial intellectual biography of Nazianzen written by John McGuckin (McGuckin, 2001, 233–240).

discourse and the stylistic characteristics of the theological orations signifying their didactic drift.

1. Method in the theological orations: historical evidence and modern scholarship

Now turning back to the question I raised for this prolegomenon: What evidence is there to justify my claim that methodological and epistemological issues model the texture and structure of the theological orations? Various as it is, this evidence can be arranged into three groups: polemical, philosophical and philological. By polemical evidence I mean that from the texts of the Eunomians and their contemporaries (e.g., the church historians) we know that the leaders of the Eunomian teaching insisted upon the methodological advantages of their mode of theorizing about God and that they apparently succeeded in acquiring a reputation as strong logicians. This fact obviously suggests that the Nicene cause lacked a certain persuasiveness, which in addition to the historical and political circumstances fed the increasing success of the Eunomian teaching.

I hope that the historical and philosophical overview of the Eunomian debate sketched in the first part of the book may provide a sufficient illustration of the issues which were brought up by Eunomius, Aëtius, and their followers, and occasioned severe dogmatic and methodological debate. It should also be clear from the first part of the book that as the Christian church grew in power and began to enjoy a benevolent attitude from the government, demand for a formulation of a clear pedagogical paradigm emerged in the Christian agenda. Should the domain of Christian teaching be limited by the framework of religious ritual or should it maintain the whole cultural and intellectual life of the society?

Although these broad pedagogical issues may seem to be less pressing than the polemics with heresies, Gregory repeatedly insisted that for him they were of big importance.³¹⁴ Having spent 10 years in the schools of Caesarea, Alexandria and Athens, where he had received an exceptionally good education, one not every aristocrat could boast of,³¹⁵ he reasonably enough felt responsible for answering the pedagogical challenges of his epoch. For these reasons he engaged in a fundamental epistemological and methodological discourse

314 In the poem *To his own verses* (Εἰς τὰ ἑμμέτρα), which forms a part of the *Autobiographical poems*, Gregory explicates his didactic motivation towards literary activity (cf. *Carmina de se ipso* 2.1332f.).

315 Byzantine authors noticed and praised Gregory's encyclopedic knowledge of classical culture and usually set his orations as examples not only of rhetorical finesse but of theological contemplation deeply rooted in classical philosophy and literature. (Cf. Bady, 2016, 285–307).

about the proper preparation, organisation and conduct of theological contemplation.³¹⁶ This combination of the methodological (how to approach and think through the incomprehensible divine knowledge, how to explicate it), epistemological (how to justify Christian faith and the correct interpretation of the Bible), and pedagogical (how to teach Christian doctrine and transmit the Bible) issues outlined a framework of Gregory's theological orations.³¹⁷

Some scholars have previously also admitted a methodological aspect in Gregory's discussion with Eunomians. Thus, Gallay and Bernardi have noted that the methodological concern of Nazianzen is particularly clear in orations 27 and 28.³¹⁸ Norris has noted that in Gregory's mind the debate with the Eunomians emerged from a "basic disagreement about methodology, about *paideia*," albeit he affirmed that Gregory's orations were not concerned with the question of a theological method.³¹⁹ Yet, it was not a purpose of Norris' commentary on the theological orations to assemble an integral epistemological theory of Gregory and to discern his methodological and pedagogical concepts (albeit he encouraged this research inquiry³²⁰).

I believe that it is important to approach Gregory's text bearing in mind that his own educational patterns were formed in the Hellenic philosophical and rhetorical schools at a time when he was not yet even baptised. Therefore I suggest that before reading the theological orations we should recall the reading-writing paradigm³²¹ of the philosophical schools of Late Antiquity. As I have shown in the first part of the book, the reading-writing paradigm of the philosophical schools was characterised by the creative transmission of the authoritative text and a rather liberal approach to authorship.

In the fourth century, Themistius, a commentator on Aristotle, who himself was a Peripatetic philosopher (active career from the late 340s to 384) and a Constantinople politician, vividly exemplified this reception paradigm.

316 In such a way he declares in his first theological oration that he is going to explicate, who, when, before whom and to what an extent can and ought to philosophize about God (*Or* 27.3).

317 Henceforth I denote this cluster of issues of Gregory's agenda as methodological framework of the theological orations.

318 Cf. Gallay, P., *Grégoire de Nazianze: Discours 27–31: Discours Théologique*, SC 250. Paris 1978, 8–10, 84; Bernardi, J., *La Prédication des Pères Cappadociens: Le Prédicateur et son Auditoire*. Montpellier 1968, 184f.

319 Cf. Norris, 1991, 36.

320 Cf. Norris, 1991, 17.

321 By the reading-writing paradigm I mean the way of engaging with the authoritative text (reading, copying, interpreting, explicating) that was practised in the philosophical schools of Late Antiquity. I also call this paradigm the reception paradigm – for the sake of brevity.

Despite his eloquent admiration of Plato, which had been noticed by his contemporaries,³²² Themistius remained faithful to Peripatetic teaching.³²³

Accordingly, Gregory Nazianzen who received an excellent education having spent 10 years in the schools of Caesarea, Alexandria and Athens,³²⁴ naturally adopted the reception paradigm of the philosophical schools. Although Gregory's debt to the classical tradition has been recognized by scholars,³²⁵ yet it has not sufficiently affected the interpretation of Gregory's philosophical impact, especially as regards his epistemological and anthropological concepts. Thus, Norris resumed his observation of the methodological allegiance to Hellenic philosophical concepts by saying:

...in many ways Nazianzen's dependence upon Aristotle's views of dialectic and rhetoric and a partial acceptance of an Epicurean theory of language allowed him to limit the Platonic dominance in Christian theology that Eunomianism embodied and rescue many important insights from Origen.³²⁶

Having shown particular attention to Gregory's rhetorical breeding, Norris did not examine Gregory's anthropology and ontology and drew the conclusion that there are no grounds to see Gregory as something "more than philosophical rhetorician" and his teaching otherwise than philosophical rhetoric (*ibid.*). Norris persuasively demonstrated that concept of philosophical rhetoric in Gregory's works stemmed from Plato's *Phaedrus* (259e–274b).³²⁷

Despite this, I see no good reason for the appraisal of Gregory's legacy as within the classical debate between rhetoric and philosophy announced in the dialogues of Plato³²⁸. I think that neither literary genre chosen by the author nor his literary style but rather the reception history of his texts should be

322 Gregory was personally acquainted with Themistius, held him in high regard, and in one of his letters to Themistius Gregory called himself his admirer (τοὺς σοὺς ἐπαινέτας) and also noted Themistius' reverence to Plato (cf. Greg., *Ep* 24).

323 Cf. Blumenthal, H.J., *Themistius: the Last Peripatetic Commentator on Aristotle?* in: Sorabji, R. (ed.), *Aristotle Transformed: the Ancient Commentators and Their Influence*. Ithaca / New York 1990, 113f.

324 Cf. Norris, 1991, 3.

325 Cf. Demoen, K., *Pagan and Biblical Exempla in Gregory Nazianzen: A Study in Rhetoric and Hermeneutics*. Turnhout 1996, 29.

326 Cf. Norris, 1991, 38.

327 Cf. Norris, 1991, 18f.

328 E.g., a famous 2nd cent. AD teacher of rhetoric, Hermogenes of Tarsus, in his treatise *On types of style* distinguished between meaningful political speech and stylish panegyric speech. Notably, he classified Plato's prose as panegyric standard and thereby was the first to use Platonic *loci communi* for stylistic purposes (Hermogenes, *Περὶ ἰδεῶν λόγου* 2.10.230–245).

decisive in the scholarly appraisal of the legacy of the ancient author. It seems to me that sometimes readers, perhaps too readily, take ancient authors at their word when they depict an austere conceptual battle between Christian and pagan philosophy, which might have taken place on a polemical level but not so much on a substantial one. That is to say, Christian and pagan authors frequently appear to have more in common than they are ready to acknowledge. To give a single example, Christopher Beeley in his influential monograph on Nazianzen's theology notes that:

...for all his knowledge of Greek philosophy, Gregory is concerned above all with setting the pagan and Christian philosophies in contrast with one another.³²⁹

If this were true, we could expect to find no impact of philosophical and scientific conceptions on Gregory's thought. As far as I'm concerned, Gregory never engaged in combat against pagan philosophy. He did say that it should not be overestimated because its intellectual potential is limited and that it yields to Christian teaching, but he nonetheless exhorted Christian students to seek a good education.³³⁰ It was his openly stated belief that the human mind constitutes the image of God through which it is possible for men to acquire both perfection and likeness to God (*Or* 28.17). I wish to underscore this point not as a mere truism but as an operative motif, which propelled Gregory's educational and epistemological initiative.

There are, it is true, passages in Gregory's opera in which he ironically ridicules certain concepts of Greek philosophers, but similar kinds of squabbles are easily found between representatives of different philosophical schools. Hence, I do not think we have grounds enough to somehow categorically distinguish Christian thinkers from their pagan colleagues. They shared the same agenda, the same education and (I believe it fair to say when it comes to science), in many cases the same intellectual pursuits.³³¹ Therefore I find

329 Cf. Beeley, C.A., *Gregory of Nazianzus on the Trinity and the Knowledge of God: In Your Light We Shall See Light*. Oxford Studies in Historical Theology. Oxford / New York 2008, 91.

330 Thus Gregory described his education as follows: "so from secular education we have received principles of enquiry and speculation, while we have rejected their idolatry, terror and pit of destruction... We must not then devalue education, because some are pleased to do so, but rather suppose such to be boorish and uneducated, desiring all to be as they themselves are, in order to hide themselves in the crowd and escape the detection of their want of culture" (*Or* 43.11).

331 For instance, Gregory Nazianzen tells us that his brother Caesarius was a court physician. He particularly emphasized that it was due to Caesarius' profound knowledge of philosophy that he received this post and specific honours from the Senate of Constantinople (cf. *Or* 7.8). Gregory of Nyssa tells us that Aëtius worked as an assistant of a physician and quite succeeded in this job

it disadvantageous to apply to Gregory the label “philosophical rhetorician” suggested by Norris. I think that this approach has precluded Gregory’s epistemology and anthropology from intensive special studies. So far these areas have not been especially deeply investigated.

To illustrate my idea, I refer once again to a reflection of Christopher Beeley, who suggested that Gregory’s drift away from the philosophical path was due to his preference for the practical discipline of “conducting one’s life in light of one’s highest values”.³³² I do not see how this argument could stand if Gregory’s own life and the typical customs of the Hellenic philosophical schools were taken into account. As far as we know, Gregory’s explicit ideal of practical discipline consisted in theological contemplation, which basically meant biblical studies and prayer. In his eventful and burdensome life he was once blessed with a three-year stay (375–378 AD) at St Thekla’s convent in Seleukia, which he recalled afterwards as the most pleasant time of his life, and which was completely devoted to his beloved studies.³³³

A compelling example of a life devoted to active and practical studies of various aspects of being can be also found in the Peripatetic tradition.³³⁴ Thus, Aristotle explicitly asserts in the *Nicomachean Ethics* that intellectual perfection (sc. σοφία) can only be achieved when theory meets practice.³³⁵ In the *Metaphysics* Aristotle tells us that “philosophy ... differs from sophistic in its decision about how to live”³³⁶ (*Met* 1004b23–25).

In view of this evidence, I believe it is not correct to lay down a watershed between Christian and Hellenic thinkers with regard to their inclination

(cf. CE 1.36–45). In his eulogy of Basil Gregory Nazianzen told us that Basil was well versed in medicine and was able to take care of the bodies of his flock as well as of their souls (*Or* 43.23). For the details cf. Marasco, G., *The Curriculum of Studies in the Roman Empire and the Cultural Role of Physicians*, in: Horstmannshoff, M. (ed.), *Hippocrates and Medical Education*. Leiden 2010, 209–212.

332 Cf. Beeley, 2008, 73.

333 Cf. Greg., *De Vita Sua* 547–549 = PG 37.1067. Cf. also: McGuckin, 2001, 229–231.

334 Notoriously, the Platonists valued theoretical life more than practical (cf. Alcinous, *Did* 152.30–154), therefore the Peripatetics’ active interest in the studies of embodied living beings suited some of the Christian authors similarly interested in the investigation of enigmas of the divine creation (cf. Bas., *Hexaem* 8).

335 Aristotle provides us with a pretty mechanistic account of how it is impossible to succeed in any kind of studies while enjoying a moral holiday. He affirms that “that what is wished for in the true and unqualified sense is the good, but that what appears good to each person is wished for by him” (*NE* 1113a23f.). It follows from this that when apparent good does not match the true good, than a person is deceived due to his own lack of moral virtue (*NE* 1114b21–25). Here and afterwards transl. H. Rackham, 1934, available on-line.

336 Here and afterwards transl. W.D. Ross, 1924, available on-line.

to either a practical or philosophical way of life. A reasonable balance between practice and theory was a commonplace of Hellenic philosophy. Yet, naturally enough, there were men of praxis as well as men of letters in both groups and as for the men of letters, although some of them valued beautiful and metaphorical language and maybe even the fiction genres (cf. Platonic dialogues), this, of course, does not diminish the depth of their philosophical deliberation.

Thus, I do not think that Gregory's way of life somehow precludes his writings from being a deep and solid piece of eloquent philosophical contemplation. Besides, it comes as no surprise that Gregory regarded the philosophical insights of his predecessors as his own intellectual heritage, which he could utilize at his sole discretion. As a result, his texts are marked by a creative interplay of classical and biblical tags: he shifts and transforms terms and meanings, introduces neologisms and demonstrates his mastery over classical and Christian literature.

2. A reception paradigm of the theological orations

One of the direct consequences of the liberal approach to the authoritative text is that Gregory does not confess his leaning to any philosophical teaching, even if analysis of his concept proves his considerable and substantial dependence on a particular philosophical doctrine. In such a way, on the surface of his theological orations Gregory appears to support Platonic *loci communi* and uses many of the well-known Platonic metaphors and stylistic patterns.³³⁷ These characteristics have prompted the scholars to assume a dominant Platonic trend of Gregory's thought.³³⁸ Although the concept of a

337 In the first theological oration Gregory creates an atmosphere of a lively dialogue with his opponents, whose incompetence he mocks with easy recognizable Platonic irony. Almost every paragraph of the 27 speech has parallels or allusions to the *Corpus Platonicum*. For example, Gregory calls his opponents sophists and acrobats who specialize in uncommon and paradoxical speeches (Greg., *Or* 27.1, cf. Plat., *Sym* 190a). He compares his opponents with "those who in the theatres perform wrestling matches in public, but not that kind of wrestling in which the victory is won according to the rules of the sport, but a kind to deceive the eyes of those who are ignorant in such matters, and to catch applause" (Greg., *Or* 27.2, cf. Plat., *Soph* 231d, 234a).

338 To give a single example, Claudio Moreschini in his comprehensive volume on patristic philosophy devoted a section to the Platonic theology of Gregory Nazianzen, where he did not mention any traces of Peripatetic concepts in Gregory's texts. Cf. Moreschini, C., *Storia della Filosofia Patristica*. Brescia 2004, ch. 7; cf. also: Moreschini, C., *Il Platonismo Cristiano di Gregorio Nazianzeno*, in: *Ann. Sc. Norm. Super.* 3/4 (1974), 1347–1392. Moreschini, C., *Filosofia e Letteratura in Gregorio di Nazianzo*. Milano 1997, 22–69.

Platonic influence on Gregory is by all means compelling, I suggest that it is not univocal and that Gregory employed various philosophical and literary patterns for different purposes; and that unless we at least try to differentiate between these purposes, we might misinterpret Gregory's texts.

Another group of scholars have recognised a dependence on Aristotelian rhetoric and mode of argumentation in Nazianzen's teaching.³³⁹ For instance, Norris devoted a considerable part of his study to the examination of Gregory's connection with Aristotelian rhetoric and logic and assumed:

The Theologian's dependence upon Aristotle's understanding of the relationship between logical syllogisms and rhetorical enthymemes seldom if ever appears as clearly in earlier Christian literature.³⁴⁰

Yet, Norris did not go further than an examination of Gregory's leaning towards Aristotelian rhetoric thus having completely missed his ontological, epistemological and anthropological dependence upon the Peripatetic doctrine.

I think that in the theological orations we can see a balanced and methodological dealing with various philosophical texts. That is to say, that Gregory apparently distinguished between different ways of employment of the classical heritage. Plato was a universally acknowledged master of excellent philosophical prose; hence Gregory made use of many Platonic *loci communi*, metaphors and stylistic patterns. Aristotle in his comprehensive and multivocal epistemology renounced the Platonic binary of the material and ideal and offered instead a hylomorphic undivided union of matter and form in all the living (sc. natural or ensouled) beings.³⁴¹

For Gregory this hylomorphic narrative turned out to be particularly important because Gregory affirmed that the degradation of the body caused by the fall of man had been redeemed by Christ, who himself from the moment of incarnation and forever onwards preserves his human body.³⁴² Thus, there is grave tension between the Platonic approach to the human body and hence to the bodily aspect of the cognitive process (i.e. the sense-perception, imagination and conceptualisation) and Gregory's Christology, namely a concept of the perfect humanity of Christ. Christopher Beeley admits the fact that Gregory's view of the human body is complicated and should not be conceived

339 Cf. Peters, F.E., *Aristotle and the Arabs: The Aristotelian Tradition in Islam*. New York 1968, 18–22; Norris, 1991, 17–37.

340 Cf. Norris, 1991, 37.

341 About Aristotelian theory of hylomorphism cf. later, chapter 3, section 1.

342 Cf.: "For there is One God, and One Mediator between God and Man, the Man Christ Jesus. For He still pleads even now as Man for my salvation; for He continues to wear the Body which He assumed (μετὰ τοῦ σώματός ἐστιν)" (Or 30.14).

singularly in Platonic terms.³⁴³ Nevertheless, he does not detect the Aristotelian teaching at the background of Gregory's approach.

Similarly to Origen, in the materiality of the universe Gregory sees a beautiful work of the divine Wisdom (sc. of the second hypostasis of the Trinity), that he identifies with the "knowledge of the divine and human matters" (ἐπιστήμη θείων τε καὶ ἀνθρωπίνων πραγμάτων, *Or* 30.20.13).³⁴⁴ Moreover, Gregory underscores a substantial and not only metaphorical or theoretical connection to the Son of God and his creation. He argues that "he [the Son=the Wisdom of God] exists inherently in the living beings (διὰ τὸ ἐνυπάρχειν τοῖς οὖσι, *Or* 30.20.10)". In a similar way, Origen in the *Commentary on John* also contends that the Son is identified with the Wisdom of God because of his bond with reason (εὐλόγως τυγχάνων, *ComJn* 1.34.243). What is even more interesting, Origen emphasises that this identification of the Son with the Wisdom of God ought to be understood as something more substantial and solid than a simple analogy because, as he says:

For he [the Son] does not have his wisdom merely in the mental images of the hypostasis of God and Father of the universe in a way analogous to the images in human thoughts³⁴⁵ (*ComJn* 1.34.243).

This argumentation implies that because of this substantial connection between the second hypostasis and the whole creation the process of theological study should not be a merely theoretical discipline. In terms of Hellenic philosophy, the divine knowledge (sc. ἐπιστήμη θείων καὶ ἀνθρωπίνων πραγμάτων) that Gregory is talking about is different from the Platonic ideas because these ideas are completely deprived of the material world. Instead, in his approach to knowledge Gregory comes closer to the Aristotelian multivocal and practical vision of knowledge as an alliance between the cognising subject and the object of cognition (cf. *DA* 430b20). Thus, Gregory argues that it is through *knowing Christ* that the whole creation is saved.

This emphasis on *knowing Christ* Gregory took up from the Epistles of Paul. Gregory very often cites Paul and especially the passages from the

343 Cf. Beeley, 2008, 80.

344 Fragments from the *Commentary on John* (in catenis) preserve an elaborate deliberation about the Son as the Wisdom of God and the beginning and the principle of the creation (*Fragmenta in evangelium Joannis* (in catenis) fr. 1.50–70). Moreover, in tune with Origen's interpretation of the scriptural names of Christ given in the first book of the *Commentary on John* Gregory provides a comparable explication of the scriptural names of Christ at the end of the fourth theological oration. Although the list of the divine names of Origen's account is remarkably longer and more elaborate, all the 22 names that Gregory expounds coincide with Origen's interpretation.

345 Transl. R.E. Heine, 1989, 83.

Epistle to Romans, 8:11 and 1 Corinthians, 12:15.³⁴⁶ In his interpretation of one of Paul's key epistemological passages from the 1 Cor 13:12, – “then shall I know, even as also I am known” (ἐπιγνώσομαι καθὼς καὶ ἐπεγνώσθην), Gregory underlines the importance of personal engagement with God, of active and bodily recognition of ourselves in God. He underscores that this knowledge is not of a purely theoretical discovery kind because broadly speaking there is not much left to discover about God but rather about an empirical recognition of the human being in God.³⁴⁷ That is to say that since human beings cannot fully comprehend God; whenever they try they stumble across their own cognitive limitation. Nevertheless, Gregory argues that this limitation is not bad and should not discourage anyone. In claiming this he again joins Paul in marvelling at the “the depth of the riches both of the wisdom and knowledge of God” (Rom 11:33) and in switching his focus to the study of the wonders of the material universe and particularly of the human mind (*Or* 28.21).

The epistemological strand of Gregory's theology comprises ideas from the Pauline Corpus, the concepts of Origen and Aristotelian epistemology. Neither the Aristotelian leaning of Gregory's epistemology, nor indeed Gregory's epistemological teaching itself has ever attracted special scholarly interest. I believe that the scholars have mostly overlooked Gregory's epistemology and cognitive theory because they are shrouded in his fine rhetoric and sophisticated stylistic play in various philosophical and biblical allusions. Hence, Gregory's teaching is mainly considered as an example of beautiful rhetoric rather than of deep philosophical deliberation. I want to challenge this approach and to show that Gregory inherited the reception paradigm of the philosophical schools and practised a creative and liberal interpretation of the authoritative text. That is to say, Gregory employed various philosophical and literary patterns for different purposes. He married Peripatetic anthropology and epistemology to Christian teaching and wrapped the result in multivocal philosophical and biblical allusions. An example of this creative reception of the authoritative text can be seen in a beautiful passage from the second theological oration, which is as rich as it is puzzling and therefore

346 Cf. index of Norris' edition (1991).

347 Cf.: “So that if anyone has known God, or has had the testimony of Scripture to his knowledge of God, we are to understand such an one to have possessed a degree of knowledge which gave him the appearance of being more fully enlightened than another who did not enjoy the same degree of illumination; and this relative superiority is spoken of as if it were absolute knowledge, not because it is really such, but by comparison with the power of that other” (*Or* 28.17; transl. C.G. Browne / J.E. Swallow, improved).

suitable for a methodological demonstration. For the sake of the argument I cite the passage at length:

Therefore this *darkness of the body* (ὁ σωματικὸς γνόφος, cf. Ex 10:22³⁴⁸) has been placed between us and God, like *the cloud of old* between the Egyptians and the Hebrews; (cf. Ex 14:20) and this is perhaps what is meant by “He made darkness His secret place,” (cf. Ps 18:12 [LXX 17:12]) namely our dullness, through which few can see even a little. But as to this point, let those *discuss it* (φιλοσοφεῖτωσαν³⁴⁹) whose business it is; and let them ascend as far as possible in *the examination* (διασκέψεως³⁵⁰). To us who are, as Jeremiah says, “*prisoners of the earth*,” (τοῖς δεσμίοις τῆς γῆς, cf. Lam 3:34³⁵¹) and covered with the denseness of *carnal nature* (σαρκίον περιβεβλημένοις³⁵²) ...as it is impossible for the eye to draw near to visible objects apart from the intervening air and light (τοῖς ὄρατοῖς πλησιάσαι τὴν ὄψιν δίχα τοῦ ἐν μέσῳ φωτὸς καὶ ἀέρος³⁵³) (Or 28.12).

What we see here is a sophisticated play on tags from, on the one hand, Plato and Aristotle, and on the other, the Bible. It is noteworthy that Gregory clearly seeks to outline a common grounding for the biblical and philosophical reflections and for the sake of reconciliation he uses direct citations from the Bible and, I believe, quite discernible Platonic and Aristotelian flags. Regarding this sophisticated play with classical allusions it is important to classify the tags with respect to their plausible role in the context.

Apropos of this passage I suggest that Platonic allusions are of a decorative character, while the Aristotelian tags reveal Gregory’s philosophical position. In such a way, pondering the famous topic of the “bonds of flesh” (sc. σάρξ), Gregory supplements his complaint about the “denseness of carnal nature” (sc. σαρκίον περιβεβλημένοις) by:

348 Cf. in Ex 10:22 γνόφος means “darkness,” in Arist., *De mundo* 319b12 – “storm-clouds”.

349 Gregory always uses derivatives of the verb φιλοσοφῶ when he refers to the Hellenic philosophers. Cf. Or 27.10.15, 27.3.1, 27.6.12; Or 28.17.3; Or 29.2.19, and elsewhere in *Corpus Gregorii*.

350 Note that διασκέψεως – *term. tech.* for the scientific examination (cf. *LSJ*) along with a verb φιλοσοφῶ allows one to consider the lexicon of the passage as multivocal and simultaneously implying biblical, Platonic and Aristotelian allusions.

351 Cf. a passage from the *Timaeus* (73a–b), where Plato discusses the carnal natures (σαρκῶν φύσεως, 73a) and affirms that “the bonds of life (τοῦ βίου δεσμοί) by which the Soul is bound to the body were fastened, and implanted the roots of the mortal kind” (73b).

352 Cf. Plat., *Tim* 73a.

353 Cf. Arist., *DA* 418b2.

- 1) allusion to the Bible (Ex 10:22), when he speaks of “the darkness of the body” (ὁ σωματικὸς γνόφος),
- 2) direct reference to Jeremiah (Lam 3:34), when he mentions “prisoners of the earth” (τοῖς δεσμίοις τῆς γῆς) covered with the denseness of carnal nature (σαρκίον περιβεβλημένοις).

It worth noting that Gregory also provides what we may call a naturalistic grounding for his thought:

...it is simply impossible (ἀμήχανον) for those who are in the body (τοῖς ἐν σώμασι) to be conversant with objects of pure thought (τῶν νοουμένων) apart altogether from bodily objects (*Or* 28.12).

I deem it obvious that what Gregory is referring to here are not Platonic “light-bearing eyes” (φωσφόρα ὄμματα, Plat., *Tim* 45bc) attacking sensible objects whenever “surrounded by midday light” with the result that “like becomes conjoint with like” (ὅμοιον πρὸς ὅμοιον συμπαγῆς γενόμενον, *ibid.*). Neither could it be a later interpretation of Platonic theory found in Plotinus who agreed with Plato’s account of the process of sight and dismissed Aristotelian theory: “the vision sees not through some medium but by and through itself alone (οὐ δι’ ἑτέρου, ἀλλὰ δι’ αὐτῆς, Plotinus *Enn* 5.3.8)”.

According to Aristotle a medium between the object of perception and the organ of sense is indispensable in the process of perception (Arist., *DA* 416b33), which he regarded as a kind of mechanistic process, where the joint activity of the sensible object and the cognizing subject is realized with the help of a medium.³⁵⁴ One must note that it is quite problematic to admit to objectivity in the Platonic scheme because the perceptual process fully hangs on the cognizing subject, while in the Aristotelian scheme the contact and cooperation of the subject and object of perception gives more floor for reliability. I believe that this is exactly what Gregory underscores by asserting that “as it is impossible for the eye to draw near to visible objects apart from the intervening air and light” (*Or* 28.12).

354 The Interpretation of Aristotle’s vision of the interaction between form and matter in sense-perception is highly debatable in the contemporary scholarship. Mainly, it concerns the question about materiality of the soul (cf., e.g., Nussbaum, M.C. / Rorty, A.O. [eds.], *Essays on Aristotle’s De Anima*, with an Additional Essay by M.F. Burnyeat. Oxford / New York 1995, 12f.). Although it would be preposterous to suppose that Gregory found any interest in debating the nuanced philosophical issues, I yet suppose that his vision of sense-perception leaned towards Aristotelian teaching because he also emphasised that contact and mutual exchange between the cognizing subject and the object of cognition is indispensable in the process of sense-perception, which he also understood as a kind of alteration. A comparable reading of Aristotle is attested in the works of Themisius (Blumenthal, 1990, 118).

In contrast to Plato, Aristotle rejected the very possibility of the bifurcated human being, whose soul can go on existing without its body. In the third book of *De anima* he claims that although “in each case the sense-organ (τὸ νοῦν) is capable of receiving the sensible object (τὸ νοούμενον) without its matter” yet “when the sensible objects are gone the sensings and imaginings continue to exist in the sense-organs”³⁵⁵ (DA 430a), therefore it is impossible to fully discharge the mind from the sensible images.

I believe that Gregory generally supported the Aristotelian vision of the cognitive process and therefore I take his complaints about the burden of flesh simply as a confirmation of the fact that the human being was created as a compound of soul and body and that the annoying side effects of the carnal bonds he mentions should be interpreted in ethical and cognitive terms. Gregory affirmed that the degradation of the body caused by the fall of man had been redeemed by Christ, who himself from the moment of incarnation and forever onwards preserves his human body³⁵⁶ (why should he do this if it is such a wretched burden?). Thus, there is grave tension between the Platonic approach to the human body and hence to the bodily aspect of the cognitive process (i.e. the sense-perception, memory and imagination) and Gregory’s Christology, (a concept of the perfect humanity of Christ).³⁵⁷

Gregory appealed to the practicalities of the cognitive process not only for polemical reasons but also in order to establish a reliable methodology of theological argumentation given the indispensable bodily conditions of the process. In light of this consideration it becomes clear that whenever he picked at the bonds of flesh, it was the basic cognitive limitedness of carnal nature which is meant to be overcome through the imitation of God understood as a complex mental-bodily praxis. I suggest that Gregory here chose to side with Aristotle³⁵⁸

355 Here and afterwards transl. J.A. Smith, 1931, available on-line, unless otherwise mentioned.

356 Cf.: “For there is One God, and One Mediator between God and Man, the Man Christ Jesus. For He still pleads even now as Man for my salvation; for He continues to wear the Body which He assumed (μετὰ τοῦ σώματος ἔστιν)” (Greg., *Or* 30.14).

357 Although Beeley admitted the fact that Gregory’s view of the human body is complicated and should not be conceived solely in Platonic terms, he did not detect Aristotelian teaching in the background of Gregory’s anthropology (Beeley, 2008, 80).

358 Cf.: “let those discuss it (φιλοσοφείτωσαν) whose business it is; and let them ascend as far as possible in the examination (διασκέψεως)” (*Or* 28.12). The vocabulary of this passage suggests its Hellenic philosophical background. For instance, Gregory uses the verb φιλοσοφῶ that he normally applies when talking about Hellenic philosophy; he also used the term διάσκεψις – *term. tech.* for the scientific examination (cf. *LSJ*).

because unlike Plato, who associated intellectual perfection (sc. σοφία) with theoretical knowledge (*Meno* 96d–100a), Aristotle valued practical wisdom (sc. φρόνησις) more highly than theoretical (*NE* 1141b3–9) and emphasised the importance of ethical virtue for achieving perfection:³⁵⁹

Our function is achieved both through practical wisdom and through ethical virtue. For virtue makes the goal right, whereas practical wisdom makes what serves the goal right³⁶⁰ (*NE* 1144a7–9).

This line of argumentation was helpful for the discussion with Eunomius and even more so for a polemic with Apollinaris, in which Gregory was simultaneously engaged. A Peripatetic approach to the cognitive process can be traced in Gregory’s criticism of Apollinaris’ interpretation of the famous saying from 1 Cor 2:16, “we have the νοῦς of Christ”. In his second letter to Cledonius, Gregory remarks:

they who have purified their mind by the imitation of the mind which the Saviour took of us (οἱ τῶν ἑαυτῶν νοῦν καθήραντες μιμήσει τοῦ νοῦς ἐκείνου, ὃν ὑπερῶν ἡμῶν ὁ Σωτὴρ ἀνεδέξατο), and, as far as may be, have attained conformity with it, are said to have the mind of Christ (πρὸς αὐτὸν ὀυθμίζοντες, ὡς ἐφικτόν, οὗτοι νοῦν Χριστοῦ ἔχειν λέγονται); just as they might be testified to have the flesh of Christ who have trained their flesh, and in this respect have become of the same body and partakers of Christ (ὡς καὶ σάρκα Χριστοῦ μαρτυρηθεῖεν ἂν ἔχειν ἐκείνοι οἱ τὴν σάρκα παιδαγωγῆσαντες καὶ σύσσωμοι καὶ συμμέτοχοι Χριστοῦ κατὰ τοῦτο γενόμενοι), as so he says “As we have borne the image of earth, we shall also bear the image of heaven” (Ὡς ἐφορέσαμεν τὴν εἰκόνα τοῦ χοῖκου, οὕτω, φησί, φορέσομεν τὴν εἰκόνα τοῦ ἐπουρανίου) (*Ep* 102.10f. = PG 37.332).

This argument eliminates any objections against the bodily conditions of cognition (sc. the sense-perception and imagination), on the one hand, and at the same time affiliates the vision of cognitive and argumentative processes to anthropology, i.e. to the scientific study of the physiological conditions of the cognitive process.

In my view an emphasis on the physiological strand of the cognitive process forms the basis of Gregory’s polemic with Eunomius. By the way of pinpointing the bodily conditions of cognition Gregory demonstrated simultaneously the limits of the human intellection and the paradoxical and miraculous divine design that calls human beings to seek understanding of the matters that surpass their mental capacities. Thus, the recognition of the hylomorphic nature of the human being that formed a watershed between Platonic and

359 Cf. Kraut, R., *Aristotle on Method and Moral Education*, in: Gentzler, J. (ed.), *Method in Ancient Philosophy*. Oxford / New York 2001, 283.

360 Here and afterwards transl. H. Rackham, 1934, available on-line.

Aristotelian doctrines at once married Gregory's anthropology to Peripatetic teaching and divorced it from the teaching of Platonists. Gregory's stylistic leaning towards the Platonic dialogues and his creative and liberal engagement with the authoritative texts serve rather to demonstrate his familiarity with the routine practices of the philosophical schools.

3. Style and argumentative strategies of the theological orations

3.1 *The objectives of the theological circle: Gregory's explicit testimony*

The objectives of Gregory's methodological framework are explicitly stated in the incipit of each of the five theological orations and accurately scrutinized in the following text. Thus the first speech (*Oration 27*) is concerned with the general external (time, place, audience) and internal (ethics, education, motivation) requirements for the theologian.³⁶¹ Gregory affirms that philosophising about God is not for everyone, nor is it for every occasion, or every audience; neither are all its aspects open to inquiry.

Pondering rather uninspiring pedagogical instructions Gregory creates a vivid dramatic performance à la mode of the school Platonic dialogues. His strategy is to set down methodological instructions by pointing at the negative example of his opponents. Gregory uses the well-known Platonic caricature of the ignorant and greedy sophists. In his oration he creates an atmosphere of lively dialogue with his opponents, whose incompetence he mocks with easily recognizable Platonic irony. For example, he calls his opponents sophists and acrobats (σοφισταὶ καὶ κυβιστὰι³⁶²) who specialize in uncommon and paradoxical speeches (λόγων ἄτοποι καὶ παρὰδοξοι, *Or 27.1*).

Alluding to the platonic image of the two successful sophists Euthydemus and Dionysodorus (Plat., *Euth.*) — ex-champions of wrestling, who had come to exercise their fighting skills in eristic activity,³⁶³ Gregory compares

361 Cf.: "...to philosophize about God belong not to everyone <...> and I will add, not before every audience, nor at all times, nor on all points; but on certain occasions, and before certain persons, and within certain limits (οὐδὲ πάντοτε, οὐδὲ πᾶσιν, οὐδὲ πάντα, ἀλλ ἔστιν ὅτε, καὶ οἷς, καὶ ἐφ ὅσον)" (Greg., *Or 27.3*).

362 The word κυβιστής is rather rare, but we find it in Plato's *Symposium*: "it went like our acrobats, whirling over and over with legs stuck out straight – i.e. androgyne (ὥσπερ οἱ κυβιστῶντες καὶ εἰς ὄρθον τὰ σκέλη περιφερόμενοι κυβιστῶσι κύκλω)" (*Symp 190a*).

363 Besides, in the *Sophista* Plato mentioned "an athlete in contests of words, who had taken for his own the art of disputation" (τῆς γὰρ ἀγωνιστικῆς περὶ λόγους ἦν τις ἀθλητῆς, τὴν ἐριστικὴν τέχνην ἀφωρισμένος, *Soph 231d*). To give an ironic characteristic of the sophist Plato put a rhetoric question:

his opponents with “the promoters of wrestling-bouts (οἱ τὰ παλαίσματα δημοσιεύοντες) in the theatres” (*Or* 27.2). Further on he develops this idea:

and not even the sort of bouts which are conducted in accordance with the rules of the sport... but the sort which are stage-managed to give the uncritical spectators (τῶν ἀμαθῶν τὰ τοιαῦτα) visual sensations and compel their applause³⁶⁴ (συναρπάξει τὸν ἐπαινέτην) (*Or* 27.2).

Another famous Platonic characteristic of the sophists is their boasting. Gregory hints at this *topos* by stating that his opponents:

profess to know all and teach all (οἱ πάντα εἰδέναι τε καὶ διδάσκειν ὑπισχνείσθε) – an attitude which is too naive and pretentious: I would not offend you by saying stupid and arrogant³⁶⁵ (λίαν νεανικῶς καὶ γενναίως, ἵνα μὴ λυπῶ λέγων ἀμαθῶς καὶ θρασέως) (*Or* 27.2).

Moreover, when Gregory speaks of the capacity of reason, he applies a vivid Platonic metaphor of horses. He says:

We must not be like fiery, unruly horses, (καθάπερ ἵπποι θερμοὶ καὶ δυσκάθεκτοι), throwing reason our rider (τὸν ἐπιβάτην λογισμὸν ἀπορρίψαντες), and spitting out the bit of discretion which so usefully restrains us, (τὴν καλῶς ἄγχουσαν εὐλάβειαν ἀποπτύσαντες), and running wide of the turning post (πύρρον τῆς νύσσης θέωμεν) (*Or* 27.5.1–10).

Although the Platonic background of the first theological oration is certainly compelling, I would warn against drawing a conclusion that the whole oration, and even the whole circle, are conceived in terms of Platonic philosophy. I suggest that Gregory uses the style of the Socratic dialogues in order to make a scenic and impressive introduction to theological practise. It seems clear to me that in the first oration Gregory employs the genre of *dialexis* which was widely used in the philosophical schools for the introduction to a philosophical discourse.³⁶⁶

“And when a man says that he knows all things and can teach them to another for a small price in a little time, must we not consider that a joke?” (Τί δέ; τὴν τοῦ λέγοντος ὅτι πάντα οἶδε καὶ ταῦτα ἔτερον ἂν διδάξειεν ὀλίγου καὶ ἐν ὀλίγῳ χρόνῳ, μῶν οὐ παιδιὰν νομιστέον, *Soph* 234a; transl. B. Jowett, available on-line).

364 Transl. F. Williams / L. Wickham, 1991, 217.

365 Transl. F. Williams / L. Wickham, 1991, 218.

366 Frederic Norris suggested that the first theological oration (πρὸς Εὐνομιανοῦς προδιάληξις) is written in the invective genre (cf. Norris, 1991, 32). Indeed, in this speech Gregory mocked his opponents, but he did not abuse them. There can be no doubting Gregory’s capacity to abuse his opponents since he proved it in his orations against Julian the Emperor (*Or* 4–5). I see no good reason why Gregory would have chosen the genre of invective for his theological speeches,

As Papadogiannakis showed in his recent monograph³⁶⁷ devoted to the analysis of Theodoret of Cyrus' *dialexeis*, this genre is characterised by an informal, conversational style, usage of popular literary and philosophical commonplaces, quotations from poets and philosophers, and involving a dialogical element bound up with Socratic form. As a result, the genre of *dialexis* was rather widely employed in the Christian literature: Theodoret of Cyrus, a young contemporary of Gregory, composed 12 *dialexeis* on different topics within his polemic with the pagans and heretics.

Therefore, it is no wonder that Gregory chose the *dialexis* genre for the introduction to the theological cycle. By means of this beautiful rhetorical performance, he could at once entertain his sophisticated audience and meet their approval.

At the end of the oration Gregory criticises all the leading philosophical schools and hence distances his teaching from them and highlights his creative and innovative approach to the Hellenic heritage. A distinctive idea that features Gregory's specificity and forms the climax of the first oration is a demand to "philosophize within our proper bounds (εἶσω τῶν ἡμετέρων ὄρων φιλοσοφῶμεν)" (Or 27.5). From the following orations of the circle it becomes clear that by bounds Gregory means to hear the physical conditions of the human intellection. In such a way, Gregory introduces an ethical and ascetical topic that further on unfolds into an exhortation to observe a proper way of life. Thus, rather expectedly and in conformity with common demands of the philosophical schools, Gregory proclaims ethical excellence and purification as obligatory requirements and urges himself and his audience "to look to ourselves (πρὸς ἡμᾶς αὐτοὺς ἴδωμεν), and to smooth the theologian in us, like a statue, into beauty (ξέσωμεν εἰς κάλλος, ὥσπερ ἀνδριάντα, τὸν θεολόγον)," (Or 27.7). To strengthen the dramatic effect from his performance Gregory follows his own advice and makes a public confession before his audience, imputing to himself and other Nicene supporters a lack of ethical soberness and an incautious methodological approach to the practice of theology, which had occasioned the controversy (cf. Or 27.7).

The ethical discourse that Gregory introduces in the first oration is not just a trivial preaching of morals. Bearing in mind the explicit methodological goal of the oration we can see that ethical and anthropological issues should rather be considered in connection with the initially stated epistemological problems. That is to say, Gregory affirms that how people behave has a huge

when he explicitly proclaimed that the goal of these compositions was pedagogical rather than vindictive (cf. Or 30.16).

367 Cf. Papadogiannakis, Y., *Christianity and Hellenism in the Fifth-Century Greek East: Theodoret's Apologetics Against the Greeks in Context*. Washington 2013.

influence on how they think. Hence, epistemological questions for Gregory vastly overlap with anthropological questions and the roots of this connection go deep in the divine design about creation.

In the second theological oration Gregory gives the answer to the methodological questions that he set up at the beginning of the previous speech. Thus, he contends that theological investigation requires a tolerable purity of the theologian (“as far as may be pure” – “ὡς οἶόν τε καθαρὸν”), a conscious choice of interlocutors (“ought to consort with serious men” – “τοῖς ἐπιμελεστέροις”), a sober selection of a proper time for theological discourse (“when we have a calm within from the whirl of outward things” – “ὅταν γαλήνην ἔχωμεν ἔνδον ἀπὸ τῆς ἔξω περιφορᾶς”), and a prudent measuring of one’s own noetic capability (“to advance in so far as we are [presently] advanced” – “ὅσον ἐχωρήσαμεν, ἢ χωρούμεθα,” *Or* 28.1).

This practical vision of the proper conditions of investigation point to the tradition of linking ethical and cognitive issues launched by the Aristotelian elaboration of Platonic topics. Aristotle cogently reasoned in his *Nicomachean Ethics* that without good morals a student is unable to get the starting points right and therefore would either never engage in research or would not be able to acquire true knowledge.³⁶⁸ A compelling consideration, but apropos of scientific inquiry, is preserved in the famous last chapter of the second book of the *Analytica Posteriora*, where Aristotle makes the telling statement that νοῦς³⁶⁹ is a capacity to see starting-points, which is indispensable for successful scientific research:

νοῦς is not the means by which universals are formed in the soul, but *an ability to see*, in a given scientific context, which universals are suitable to function as explanatory starting-points for the explanandum in question (*APo* 2.19).

368 In the *Nicomachean Ethics* Aristotle distinguished between two kinds of starting-points: those that are already known to the beginners of ethical studies, and that they use as the basis for their deliberation, and those that are unknown to the beginners and must be worked out (*NE* 1095a32–b4). Cf. Kraut, 1998, 271–291.

369 Aristotle uses the term νοῦς with different connotations, which have puzzled Aristotelian commentators and scholars since the emergence of the *Corpus Aristotelicum*. In this book I translate the term νοῦς as mind, sense-perception and intellection. This translation tolerably satisfies my purposes because I am mostly interested in the contexts where Aristotle talks about νοῦς as a climax of the human cognitive capacity. In my understanding of νοῦς in Aristotle I generally follow the interpretation of Kurt Pritzl, who argued that “perception is the cognition of things in their particularity; intellection is the cognition of things in their universality” (Cf. Pritzl, K., *Aristotle’s Door*, in: Pritzl, K. [ed.], *Truth, Studies in Philosophy and the History of Philosophy*. Washington 2010, 20).

Along these lines it becomes clear that good morals secure a sharp sense-perception (sc. νοῦς), which provides a proper mental state for engaging in philosophical contemplation.³⁷⁰

I suggest that Gregory's exhortation to sustain good morals links into not merely the Platonic tradition but also the Aristotelian development of Platonic ethics into a cognitive theory. Thus, Gregory affirmed in the first theological oration that if the student did not acquire a proper noetic state before engaging in theological research, he would surely go astray and this might even cause damage not only to him but also to his environment.

As a consequence, Gregory's methodological theological instructions were diversified and person-centred. In the second oration Gregory presents what may be roughly called a classification of the theologians. He defined the following six orders of theological practitioner:

- {1} if any be an Aaron, let him go up with me and enter within the cloud, and hold converse with God (θεῶν συγγένωμαι), for so God commands;
- {2} if any be a Nadab or an Abihu, or an elder, let him too ascend, but stand further off, according to the value of his purification (σθηκέτω πόρρωθεν, κατὰ τὴν ἀξίαν τῆς καθάρσεως);
- {3} if any be of the crowd and unfit as they are for so sublime contemplation of this height of contemplation (τις τῶν πολλῶν καὶ ἀναξίων ὕψους τοιούτου καὶ θεωρίας);
- {4} if any be altogether unpurified let him not come nearer for it is not safe (ἀναγνος πάντη, μηδὲ προσίτω);
- {5} if any be temporally purified let him abide below and hear the voice and the trumpet (πρόσκαιρα γοῦν ἡγνισμένος, κάτω μενέτω);
- {6} if any be an evil and savage beast, and altogether incapable of taking in the subject matter of contemplation and theology (τις θηρίον ἐστὶ πονηρὸν καὶ ἀνήμερον καὶ ἀνεπίδεκτον πάντη λόγων θεωρίας καὶ θεολογίας) let him not lurk in the woods, baneful and harmful (*Or* 28.2).

Taking into account the historical circumstances of Gregory's preaching I suggest that these classifications can be interpreted as follows. Within the first order Gregory clearly denotes himself and most likely the Nicene hierarchs who shared his theological views. The second group is more confusing but with respect to the mentioned social position, I suggest that it denotes the Christian pro-Nicene aristocratic circles that invited Gregory to Constantinople. The third rank is pretty clearly marked by educational and social deficiency as

370 Thus, good choice depends most of all on an eye for the relevant particulars. Practical intelligence is this eye: "we must have perception of particulars, and this immediate perception is νοῦς (τούτων οὖν ἔχειν δεῖ αἴσθησιν, αὕτη δ' ἐστὶ νοῦς)" (*NE* 1144a29f.).

οί πολλοί – i.e. the majority of Christians with a tolerable yet not sufficient education and degree of purification; hence their part is to receive an adopted portion of theological knowledge. The fourth and fifth groups are defined respectfully by the baptismal rite; i.e. correspondingly – the unbaptized and the catechumen, each equally disqualified from theological contemplation. The last group clearly denotes the heretics, whom Gregory warns against approaching theological discipline.

In view of the presented evidence, I think it safe to assume the methodological and pedagogical strand of the theological circle. It follows from this that the mode of argumentation that Gregory applies in the orations 28–31 should also reflect the routine dialectics of the philosophical schools. In the following section I check this hypothesis.

3.2 *Dialectical argumentation in the theological orations*

Having presented his prolegomenous instructions in the first speech, Gregory moves on to the investigation of the subject matter – the divine terrain (“νεώσαμεν ἑαυτοῖς θεῖα νεώματα,” *Or* 28.1). In such a way, in *Oration* 28 (*De theologia*), which is traditionally considered as a second speech of the circle, he surveys the commonly known religious beliefs and most popular philosophical opinions concerning cosmogony, cosmology and the nature of divinity. Thereby, Gregory proceeds in his investigation in a dialectical manner. That is to say his discourse follows the classical three-stage dialectical method formulated by Aristotle.³⁷¹ Gregory starts by presenting an undisputable fact apparent for him through sense-perception. In such a way he claims that:

Now our very eyes and the law of nature teach us that God exists and that He is the efficient and maintaining cause of all things³⁷² (*Or* 28.7)

371 Cf.: “As in our other discussions, we must first set out the way things appear to people, and then, having gone through the puzzles, proceed to prove the received opinions about these ways of being affected – at best, all of them, or, failing that, most, and the most authoritative. For if the problems are resolved, and received opinions remain, we shall have offered sufficient proof” (*NE* 1145b4f.).

372 Remarkably in this phrase Gregory not only approached the existence of God as if it were a phenomenon of the material world but also assimilated God to the efficient and maintaining cause of the universe. Thus, he placed the existence of God within the cause-and-effect relationship and hence legitimized the logical study of the divine matters.

Having presented the phenomenon of God's existence³⁷³ Gregory discusses the most reputable opinions (sc. *endoxa*³⁷⁴) about the existence of God, questions them, and examines them and eventually arrives at a conclusion about a logical advantage of the Christian cause.

Although he repeatedly affirms that the essence of God is beyond human comprehension, practically at the beginning of the oration he inquires how the divine being could be demonstrated i.e. reasoned by logical argumentation.³⁷⁵ This question is followed by a logical examination of the fundamental epistemological questions and popular opinions concerning the cognitive capacities of the human mind with respect to human physiology, the logical and linguistic settings of the process of cognition with respect to scientific study, theological reasoning and exegetical practice, and the chief ontological conceptions relevant to the correlation between the theological and scientific spheres of study.

373 Although my description of Gregory's statement of the existence of God as a phenomenon may arguably be questioned (because the existence of God is rather an interpretation of reality than a plain fact), I would argue the truth of my assertion by pointing to the opinion of Gwilym Owen. In his famous article *Tithenai ta phainomena* he argued that Aristotle does not always start his investigation by appealing to the plain facts (sc. *phainomena sensu stricto*) but sometimes replaces them with *endoxa* (cf. Owen, G.E.L., *Tithenai ta phainomena*, in: Owen, G.E.L. [ed.], *Logic, Science, and Dialectic: Collected Papers in Greek Philosophy*. London 1961, 239–251). In such a way, I suggest characterizing Gregory's statement as an *endoxic phenomenon*.

374 In a famous fragment from the *Topics* Aristotle maintained: "Those things are *endoxa* which seem so to everyone, or to the majority, or to the wise – and either to all of them, or to the majority, or to the most notable and reputable among them" (*Top* 100b21–23; transl. R. Smith, 1997, 1, improved). A neat account of this controversial Aristotelian *terminus technicus* has been offered by Reñón Vega (cf. Vega Reñón, L., *Aristotle's Endoxa and Plausible Argumentation*, in: *Argumentation* 12/1 [1998], 95–113). Vega affirmed that in the context of argumentative strategy *endoxa* can be understood as characteristic premises of dialectical syllogism.

375 Namely, Gregory asked: "What is the proof?" (τίς ἡ ἀπόδειξις, *Or* 28.6). In the terms of Aristotelian logic ἀπόδειξις means "deductive proof by syllogism," (*APo* 71b17, cf. *LSJ*).

The dialectical procedure of running through *endoxa*,³⁷⁶ which Gregory applies in this oration,³⁷⁷ was commonly accepted as a proper introduction to scientific or philosophical inquiry.³⁷⁸ Occupied in this way with surveying the basic epistemological issues, Gregory at the same time continues his polemical argumentation contra the Eunomian syllogistic play and thereby maintains the dialogical mode of his deliberation.³⁷⁹

While the first theological oration serves as a prelude to the theological cycle, the second is an introduction (sc. εἰσαγωγῆ) to the epistemological principles of Christian doctrine. The characteristics of the *Oration 28* satisfy the traditional requirements of the school's philosophical manual (sc. ἐγχειρίδιον, ἐπιτομή, εἰσαγωγῆ).³⁸⁰

Among the typical characteristics of the manual peculiar to the *Oration 28* are: consecutive employment of the classical philosophical *topoi*, employment of a plain syllogistic argument, philosophical terminology and commonplaces,³⁸¹ indicating a mixed Platonic, Stoic and Peripatetic background. Notably, almost half of the *Oration 28* (§§ 21–31) constitutes a

376 There is a keen scholarly discussion about the distinction between the methods of dialectic and demonstrative science. Terence Irwin in his classic *Aristotle's first principles* pointed out that although Aristotle claimed in the *Topics* that dialectic leads towards the First Principles (*Top* 101b3f.), in other works he advocated the demonstrative science, which is more objective than dialectic can ever be because it refers to phenomena, while the domain of dialectic is *endoxa*. In the *Metaphysics*, difficulties with the universal research method become even more complex. Irwin solved them by distinguishing between ordinary dialectic based on common beliefs, and strong dialectic based on logically tested premises (cf. Irwin, T., *Aristotle's First Principles*. Oxford 1988, 188).

377 Namely, Gregory runs through the proofs of the incorporeality of God, and the philosophical notions such as the fifth element, the beginning of motion, etc., which were the typical topics of philosophical discussions.

378 The research inquiry is a characteristic feature of the manual genre. Thus, the author usually questions some basic philosophical issues and explores them together with his readers. Gilles Dorival illustrated this strategy by referring to the works of Sallustius (*De diis et mundo*) and Iamblichus (*De mysteriis*), composed in the isagogic manner (cf. Dorival, 1975, 37).

379 Gregory made use of the word τεχνύδιον – a remarkable diminutive of τέχνη, which according to the *TLG* statistics is attested only in Plato's *Republic*, when Plato juxtaposed true philosophers and the “the practitioners of the minor arts” (*Resp* 475e1).

380 Marguerite Harl and Gilles Dorival argued that Origen set his *De principiis* into a tradition of the school philosophical manual (cf. Harl, 1975, 12–32; Dorival, 1975, 33–45).

381 E.g., Gregory used the sun metaphor for divine knowledge (*Or* 28.3), the idea of bonds of flesh (*Or* 28.4), and the Stoic concept of the natural law (sc. ὁ φυσικὸς νόμος, *Or* 28.6), etc.

survey of physical matters: a colourful description of the different spheres of the created world. This part might seem improper in a theological treatise but it is typical for a philosophical manual. Moreover, the way Gregory runs through physical matters is in itself rather peculiar for it represents a set of questions, the research issues presented in the form of inquiries. In such a way, Gregory rather frequently engages in pondering some fundamental theological, or even cosmological and anthropological, concepts which could not possibly have been provoked by the Eunomian teaching. Sometimes Gregory even attributed to his opponents concepts they never held. Thus in the *Oration 28* he attributes to his opponents the odious conception of divine corporeality (“a view which is more absurd and anile than even the atoms of Epicurus,” *Or 28.8*) and thereby equates the Eunomians with the advocates of materialism, just as he had equated them with the sophists in the previous speech. This of course can be regarded purely as a rhetorical trick but the contexts of the oration suggest that there is more to it. Seeking to establish a general epistemology of theological inquiry, Gregory had to run through the principal philosophical questions and apropos of this pursuit, the polemics with the Eunomians were as much a pressing necessity as the circumstantial dramatic output of his thought.

At the beginning of the third theological speech (*Oration 29*) Gregory again summarizes his examination of the philosophical *endoxa* by pronouncing that monarchy is a more reasonable and reliable religious concept than polyarchy or anarchy. Following this affirmation he engages in a philosophical reconciliation of the idea of divine monarchy with the Trinitarian concept. Thus Gregory moves from the general epistemological and cosmological observations presented in oration 28, to his particular theological specialty and, in *Oration 29*, he commits himself to “bring forth to the light” his own conceptions about the godhead (*Or 29.1*). At the same time, he clearly enunciates a polemical scope of the oration:

let us first of all state our own position, and then try to controvert that of our opponents so that our arguments may be taken in at a glance like those of the elementary treatises (λόγον εισαγωγικόν) which they have devised to deceive simple or foolish persons (τῶν ἀπλουστέρων ἢ εὐθηεστέρων)³⁸² (*Or 29.1*).

Gregory devotes the lion’s share of the oration to a logical argumentation concerning the divine nature of the Father and the Son, which he investigates from a pronounced logical and grammatical viewpoint, which suggests a

382 By mentioning the simple and foolish persons who approve of the teaching of his opponents, Gregory hinted at his first theological oration, where he depicted the Eunomians as sophists whose audience was broadly known from Platonic dialogues as simple-minded and unsophisticated.

strong dependence on Aristotelian and Stoic logic and on the philological achievements of Origen and his Hellenic colleagues. In contrast with the first two orations, which are remarkably sophisticated and rhetorically decorated, the third speech appears more robust and straightforward. At the same time, it is in this speech that the main theological concepts are accurately reasoned through so that we can witness here how Gregory makes use of the methodological principles that he had thus far developed.

The investigation of the Father-Son relationship, and the wrestling with the arguments of the Eunomians, continues in the following speech (*Or* 30), performed, as Gregory specifically designated, in the genre of refutation.³⁸³ It is noteworthy that he openly lays out his methodological pursuits in the incipit of each oration so that his audience would benefit not only from the content but also from a clear instruction about how to apply it. This pedagogical concern is also apparent from Gregory's declared intention:

to state the explanations summarily, dividing them into numbers (κεφαλαιώσομεν εἰς ἀριθμοὺς διελόντες) for the sake of carrying them more easily in mind (ταύτας διὰ τὸ εὐμνημόνευτον) (*Or* 30.1).

Interestingly, Gregory mentions that he arranged his arguments in numerical sequence because of an anonymous request of some second person, to whom Gregory refers by using the second singular of the personal pronoun.³⁸⁴ Although this statement may be taken for a simple rhetorical address to the audience it is remarkable that here Gregory uses the singular pronoun instead of his usual plural address to his listeners throughout the circle.³⁸⁵

In addition, there are some other passages in the orations which seem to be either completely out of place or not quite fitting the logic of the argument. This particularly concerns remarks in the introductions and conclusions of each of the orations, which give the strong impression of later editorial insertions for the sake of bridging the speeches in order to create a coherent composition within the circle. The most problematic is the place of the *Oration* 28:

383 Namely, in the first paragraph of the oration Gregory denoted his speech as refutation by using the term λύσις, known as an Aristotelian *terminus technicus* (cf. *LSJ*).

384 Cf.: “since you demand of us (σὺ δὲ καὶ τούτων ἐπιζητεῖς)” (Greg., *Or* 30.1).

385 Besides, it is most unlikely that such a remark could be put in the incipit of oral presentation. We have evidence from Jerome (*Ep* 50.1; *Ep* 52.8), who stayed with Gregory for some time when he was in Constantinople, that he helped Gregory to revise his orations for publication after they had been presented in public. Whether this evidence is fully reliable remains to be inspected but it seems that the editorial scenario can easily explain the remark in question.

either after the *Oration 27* (direct sequence³⁸⁶), or after the *Oration 30* (indirect sequence³⁸⁷). Although orations 27 and 28 are obviously bridged with one another, this cannot be said about the orations 28 and 29. Contrastingly, the beginning of the 29 speech echoes the chief message of the *Oration 27*. Thus, the *Oration 27* stated that the unworthy speaker should not engage in theological discourse. Correspondingly, in the first paragraph of the *Oration 29* we read:

This then, is what can be said to check our opponents' propensity to engage in debate at the drop of a hat, with the consequent danger of over-hasty judgement in all matters but above all in discussions which have to do with God (*Or 29.1*).

I think that it is too difficult to arrive at a decisive solution of the sequence problem. Yet, I am personally inclined to suggest that the sequence of the orations within the circle was subject to editorial revision.

The question of the sequence of the orations and of the coherent internal structure of the circle is particularly to the point apropos of the fifth speech (oratio 31), which does not always belong to the circle in the manuscript tradition.³⁸⁸ The purpose of the oration is postulated in the incipit as the objection³⁸⁹ to the disclaimers of the Holy Spirit. Gregory plainly affirms that his argument will follow a line of philosophical reasoning: "let me reason with you (φιλοσοφήσω σοι)" (*Or 31.5*); "let the syllogisms be woven (οί συλλογισμοί πλεκέσθωσαν)" (*Or 31.7*). Interestingly, Gregory makes this claim despite his repeated remarks about the incomprehensibility of the divinity in *Or 28.4*, *Or 29.21*, *Or 30.17* and *Or 31.33*. This evidence suggests that Gregory does not mean to banish thinking about God but, as he tells us, to observe a proper decorum in speech and silence (*Or 27.5*).

386 Some scholars have argued for the direct sequence of the cycle orations based primarily on the apparent link between the *Oration 27* and the beginning of the *Oration 28*, where the answer to the methodological questions of the previous speech is provided (cf. Gally, 1978, 8–10. Bernardi, 1968, 184f. Sinko, 1917, 11f., 20f.).

387 Norris did not determine any special place for the *Oration 28*, but remarked that the direct order is not indisputable (cf. Norris 1991, 64). Sieben stated that the manuscript data allow the *Oration 28* to be placed elsewhere: after the *Oration 30* or at the end of the cycle (Sieben, J.H. von, *Gregorius Nazianzenus. Oraciones Theologicae*. Freiburg 1996, 50).

388 I believe that owing to a number of distinct references to previous speeches, *Oration 31* legitimately belongs to the circle. E.g., in the fifth paragraph Gregory remarked that "we have already discussed the Trinity (πρότερον διειλήφαμεν)" (*Or 31.5*). Besides, in the *Oration 28.2–3* he used a vivid metaphor of the miraculous Sinai revelation, which he also recalled in the *Oration 31.3*.

389 For the objection in *Or 31.3*, Gregory used the Aristotelian *terminus technicus* ἔνστασις (cf. *LSJ*).

As far as Gregory's argumentative strategy is concerned, in the theological circle he chiefly uses the Aristotelian (sc. not Platonic!) version of dialectic reasoning as defined in the *Topics*:

method by which we will be able to reason deductively about any matter proposed to us on the basis of *endoxa*, and to give an account of ourselves [when we are under examination by an interlocutor] without lapsing into contradiction³⁹⁰ (*Top* 100a18–20).

The mode of argumentation which Gregory performs conforms to the characteristics of Peripatetic dialectic: he argues with his opponents in the first person, and in most cases his argument is rather straightforward, and designed in the form of logical testing of certain opinions against obvious phenomena and logical principles. Besides, in most cases, Gregory builds his discourse around philosophical *endoxa* (in the *Oration* 28 and occasionally in the other speeches of the circle he also contrasts his opponent's ideas with plain phenomena), which he either examines or applies as indisputable and compatible with scriptural evidence. It is remarkable that although Gregory sometimes refers to the authority of the Bible as if it were unchallengeable, at other times he scrutinizes the scriptural evidence with grammatical accuracy and precision and even repeatedly urges that contextual grammatical analysis should be applied every time when biblical evidence is taken as a point of departure.³⁹¹

Norris also admitted that Gregory made use of Aristotelian rhetoric and logic.³⁹² Yet, I believe that he goes further than this. In the following chapters I show that he was concerned not merely with logic but more deeply with the ontological and cognitive prerequisites of knowledge and, hence, he approached the problem of theological methodology from a different, more fundamental level than his opponents.

3.3 *Exegetic theology and Aristotelian categorial theory*

The impact of the Peripatetic categorial system is clearly discernible not only in Gregory's mode of argumentation but also in the way he classifies different functions of the divine nature in accordance with their various relations (i.e. apropos of divine activity, and apropos of the life of the cosmos and of human beings). Here is how Gregory exemplified this distinction. He took

390 Transl. R. Smith, 1997, 1, improved.

391 Cf.: "the task of examining (ἐξετάζειν) carefully and distinguishing (διαιρεῖσθαι) in how many senses the word Spirit or the word Holy is used and understood (νοεῖται καὶ λέγεται) in Holy Scripture, with the evidence suitable to such an enquiry; and of showing how besides these the combination of the two words – I mean, Holy Spirit – is used in a peculiar sense" (Greg., *Or* 31.2).

392 Cf. Norris, 1998, 99.

the path of his predecessors (particularly Origen and Basil) and adopted the categorial distinction between common and proper qualities for his theological interpretation of the “common names of the divinity” (sc. κοινὰ θεότητος τὰ ὀνόματα, *Or* 30.19) and the proper names of the divine hypostases³⁹³. In particular, in the third oration he denoted the “proper” (sc. ἄφαιτος) name of God (i.e. “he who is” [ὁ ὢν] as a special “name of his essence” [τῆς οὐσίας ὄνομα]; the individual names of the divine persons he distinguished with regard to their “peculiar properties” [κατὰ τὰς ιδιότητας] and also identified the so-called relative names, which manifest the relations of the divinity to the creation [τῶν πρὸς τι λεγομένων ἐστί]), (*Or* 29.18).

The Eunomians themselves introduced thinking about the divine names in terms of categories. They claimed that the name of “the Father” denotes either essence or action (*Or* 30.16). Gregory turned this argument around by refusing to identify the name of the Father with either essence or action (οὔτε οὐσίας ὄνομα ὁ πατήρ, οὔτε ἐνεργείας), and suggesting instead that “it is the name of the relation in which the Father stands to the Son, and the Son to the Father (σχέσεως δὲ καὶ τοῦ πῶς ἔχει πρὸς τὸν υἱὸν ὁ πατήρ, ἢ ὁ υἱὸς πρὸς τὸν πατέρα)” (*Or* 30.16). To clarify his statement Gregory provides the term “relation” with a typical explanation by which the Peripatetics normally exemplify the category of relation (either on their own or in the Stoic system, for both teachings were agreed on this issue³⁹⁴).

A telling example of the candid employment of categorial theory is preserved in Gregory’s fifth oration, where he reasons the divine dignity of the

393 Cf.: “proper name (ἴδιον) of the unoriginated (τοῦ ἀνάρχου) is Father, and that of the unoriginately begotten (τοῦ ἀνάρχως γεννηθέντος) is Son, and that of the unbegottenly proceeding or going forth (τοῦ ἀγεννήτως προελθόντος, ἢ προϊόντος) is the Holy Spirit” (Greg., *Or* 30.19).

394 Cf.: “...the mere idea of the Father – he says – still brings in the idea of the Son (ὁ πατήρ-συννεισάξει τὸν υἱόν)” and this fact of the relative connection between the ideas produces no changes in either of them, or as Gregory puts it “will not make it of a different nature, according to common ideas and the force of these names (οὐκ ἀλλοτριώσει, κατὰ τὰς κοινὰς ἐννοίας καὶ τὴν τῶν κλήσεων τούτων δύναμιν)” (Greg., *Or* 30.16). Simplicius in his *Commentary on Categories* explained the meaning of the category of relation in the Stoic doctrine: “they say that [thing] ‘in relation’ (πρὸς τι) – is something that is somehow disposed (διακειμένα πῶς) according to its peculiar characteristics (κατ’ οἰκεῖον χαρακτήρα) and inclines towards another (ἀπονενύει πρὸς ἕτερον), while [thing] ‘in the state of relation to’ (πρὸς τι δὲ πῶς ἔχοντα) – is something that has a natural capacity to join or not to join something (πέφυκεν συμβαίνειν τινὶ καὶ μὴ συμβαίνειν), herewith not undergoing a process of change or alteration (ἄνευ τῆς περὶ αὐτὰ μεταβολῆς καὶ ἀλλοιώσεως), [it is] something that is considered in relation to the external (μετὰ τοῦ πρὸς τὸ ἐκτὸς ἀποβλέπειν)” (Simpl., *ComCat* 8.166.15–27).

Holy Spirit by means of logical argumentation. Interestingly he introduced his reasoning with a pledge not to enter into discussion “with those who do not even believe in his existence, nor with the Greek babblers”; instead he affirms that he will argue “with others”. Norris suggests that by “others” Gregory means his Eunomian opponents.³⁹⁵ Indeed, in light of the concepts he goes on to confront, one can hardly suppose otherwise but it is notable that although Gregory rejected the use of Greek philosophical conceptions for serious theological argumentation, nevertheless in this and following passages he formulated his own reasoning in full conformity with Aristotelian logic and even with a reference to it. For example, he begins his argument by proclaiming:

The Holy Spirit must be conceived of either as in the category of the self-existent (τῶν καθ’ ἑαυτὸ ὑφ’ ἑσθιτότων), or as in that of the things which are contemplated in another (τῶν ἐν ἑτέρῳ θεωρουμένων); of which classes those who are skilled in such matters call the one substance (οὐσίαν) and the other accidental³⁹⁶ (Or 31.6).

Proceeding by way of logical argumentation about the characteristics of the Holy Spirit, Gregory plainly admits his method by saying:

let the syllogisms be woven (οἱ συλλογισμοὶ πλεκέσθωσαν). Either he is altogether unbegotten, or else he is begotten. If he is unbegotten, there are two unoriginates. If he is begotten, you must make a further subdivision (Or 31.7).

Another important instance of usage of the categorial theory for theological augmentation is evident in Gregory’s treatment of the scriptural names of Christ. Gregory classified these names as common names of the divine nature, which “are still common (κοινὰ) to Him who is above us (τοῦ τε ὑπέρ ἡμᾶς), and to Him who came for our sake (τοῦ δι’ ἡμᾶς). But others are peculiarly our own (ἃ δὲ ἰδίως ἡμέτερα), and belong to that nature which He assumed (τῆς ἐντεῦθεν προσλήψεως)” (Or 30.21).

It is noteworthy that Gregory explained the divine names by virtue of the functions or relations of the divinity which these names denote. Of course, Gregory’s interpretation of the divine names, especially of the names of Christ, is not totally original: most evident parallels point to Origen’s commentaries,³⁹⁷ which to a remarkable extent hinged upon Alexandrian

395 Cf. Norris, 1998, 190.

396 For the “accidental” Gregory used a characteristic Aristotelian *terminus technicus* συμβεβηκός, denoting the non-essential attribute; cf. Arist., *Met* 1029a10–14.

397 Origen explained the background of the distinction ranging from ὑπέρ ἡμᾶς to δι’ ἡμᾶς or ἡμῖν by saying, with reference to a passage from 1Cor 1:30, that: “Since Christ became wisdom (and justice, and sanctification, and redemption) for us (ἡμῖν) from God, hence “the distinction has to be made between for us

exegetic methodology based mainly on Aristotelian literature theory.³⁹⁸ Ergo, it is simply natural to see similar accounts of the διὰ τί interpretations of the divine names in the works of Origen, Basil and Gregory. For instance, in the fourth theological oration:

ἄνθρωπος μὲν, οὐχ ἵνα χωρηθῆ μόνον διὰ σώματος σώμασιν, ἄλλως οὐκ ἂν χωρηθῆις διὰ τὸ τῆς φύσεως ἄληπτον· ἀλλ' ἵνα καὶ ἀγιάσῃ δι' ἑαυτοῦ τὸν ἄνθρωπον ... καὶ πρὸς ἑαυτὸν ἐνώσας τὸ κατακριθὲν ὅλον λύσῃ τοῦ κατακριματος, πάντα ὑπὲρ πάντων γενόμενος, ὅσα ἡμεῖς, πλὴν τῆς ἁμαρτίας, σῶμα, ψυχὴ, νοῦς, δι' ὧσων ὁ θάνατος· τὸ κοινὸν ἐκ τούτων, ἄνθρωπος, θεὸς ὁρώμενος, διὰ τὸ νοούμενον.

So he is called man, not only because through his body he may be apprehended by the corporeal, whereas otherwise this would be impossible through his incomprehensible nature; but also in order to sanctify man through himself, so that after he unites the condemned [nature] to himself all that was condemned would be released from condemnation; our like in everything except sin: in body, soul, and mind – in all that death pervades. [Being as] man a share to these; [as] God he is perceived by mind alone (*Or* 30.21).³⁹⁹

It is important to note that the underlying assumption of this functional interpretation of the names of God is the idea that these names truly correspond to the metaphysical reality of the divine plan about humanity. In such a way, while the names of God represent the characteristics of the divinity, perceived by the human soul and preserved in the human concept, the very process of understanding and thinking through these names favours a personal salvation of the theologian.

This metaphysical account of exegetic practice first occurred in Origen's teaching and I believe that the analogous conception of Gregory represents a trace of Origen's influence.⁴⁰⁰ What is special about Gregory's account of the divine names is that they not only manifest divine activities but that through these names the divine activities can be actualised in human beings by means of producing a certain psychological effect on human souls. Here is how Gregory expresses this thought:

and the unqualified state (διασταλέντων τοῦ ἡμῖν καὶ τοῦ ἀπλῶς)" (*Or., ComJn* 1.34.251).

398 As I have already discussed in part one, chapter 2, section 1.

399 Transl. L. Wickham / F. Williams, 1991, 277, improved.

400 In the *Homily On prayer* we read: "Since therefore, though we all have some notion of God, conceiving of Him in various ways, but not all of what He is (ὁ ἐστὶ), for few and, be it said, fewer than few are they who comprehend His complete holiness – we are with good reason taught to attain to a holy conception of Him (ἐννοῖαν περὶ θεοῦ) in order that we may see His holiness as creator, provider, judge, elector, abandoner, acceptor, rejector, rewarder and punisher of each according to his desert" (*Orat* 24.2).

Of the other titles (Τῶν δ' ἄλλων προσηγοριῶν), some are evidently names of his authority (αἱ δὲ τῆς οἰκονομίας), others of his government of the world (τῆς ἐξουσίας), and of this viewed under a twofold aspect, the one before the other in the incarnation (τῆς μὲν ὑπὲρ τὸ σῶμα, τῆς δὲ ἐν σώματι). ... For since we are governed by these three things, the fear of punishment, the hope of salvation and of glory besides, and the practice of the virtues by which these are attained, the name of the God of vengeance governs fear, and that of the God of salvation our hope, and that of the God of virtues our practice; that whoever attains to any of these (ὁ τούτων τι κατορθῶν μᾶλλον) may, as carrying God in himself (ἴν' ὡς τὸν θεὸν ἐν ἑαυτῷ φέρων), press on yet more unto perfection (ἐπείγεται πρὸς τὸ τέλειον), and to that affinity which arises out of virtues (καὶ τὴν ἐξ ἀρετῶν οἰκείωσιν) (*Or* 30.19).

In addition to the conspicuous functional (i.e. “for the sake of”) exegesis of the divine names, this passage and the way Gregory classifies the divine names in general manifest another telling methodological pattern. Gregory’s exegesis of the divine names provides an overview of the activities or functional characteristics of the divine nature and thereby deduces “a fragmentary perception of it from its images” (μερικὴν τινα φαντασίαν ἐκ τῶν εἰκασμάτων, *Or* 28.13). Though Gregory fully admits to the uncertainty of this image,⁴⁰¹ yet, in his opinion, this is as far as the human mind can reach, therefore it is better for those human beings engaged in research of divine matters to prudently confine themselves within their intellectual limits (*Or* 29.2) than to desire comprehension of the incomprehensible.

Although one may reasonably doubt the accuracy and objectivity of the descriptive reasoning that Gregory presents here, no-one can totally deny its epistemic value. In this way, Aristotle criticised Plato’s overestimation of the method of division (sc. διαίρεσις). Aristotle claimed that as opposed to syllogism and scientific definition on the basis of demonstration, the inductive or descriptive definition on the basis of division does not yield knowledge.⁴⁰² Yet, Aristotle also admitted that “neither presumably does someone who gives

401 Cf.: “What then is this *deus ex machina* (τίς οὖν ἡ μηχανή), which is of these, and yet is not these (ἐκ τούτων τε καὶ μὴ ταῦτα), or how can that unity which is in its nature uncomposite and incomparable, still be all of these, and each one of them perfectly (ἢ πῶς ταῦτα πάντα, καὶ τελείως ἕκαστον, τὸ ἐν τῇ φύσει ἀσύνητον καὶ ἀνεἰκάστων)?” (*Or* 28.13).

402 Jonathan Barnes interpreted Aristotle’s critique of Plato’s method of division in the following way: “every step in the divider’s proof is an assumption and not an inference. Even when he could deduce the divider does not. Even if divider’s conclusion is true, he has no warrant for supposing that it gives a definition” (cf. Barnes, J. [ed., transl., com.], Aristotle, *Posterior Analytics*. Oxford 1975, 211).

an induction (sc. ὁ ἐπάγων) demonstrate anything (sc. ἀποδείκνυσιν) – but he nevertheless shows something (sc. δηλοῖ τι)⁴⁰³ (APo 91b32–36).

Aristotle also specified that in order to solve the inevitable difficulties of descriptive definitions, it is necessary to “assume everything in what the thing is (ἐν τῷ τί ἐστι πάντα), make a division consecutive by postulating what is primitive (τὸ ἐφεξῆς τῆ διαίρέσει ποιεῖν, αἰτούμενον τὸ πρῶτον), and leave nothing out”⁴⁰⁴ (APo 91b28–31). In such a way Aristotle underscored two significant requirements for descriptive definitions: they should be as comprehensive as possible, and they should contain a classification of the qualitative items included in them.

In conformity with this vision of the descriptive definition, Gregory, when considering why it is impossible to describe the essence of God (whilst the activity of the divinity is available for inductive description), asserted that “comprehension (ἡ κατάληψις) is one form of circumscription (ἐν περιγραφῆς εἶδος)” (Or 28.10). I am inclined to take this and other methodological remarks that rather frequently occur in the theological orations as the hallmarks of Gregory’s deep concern about the method of theological discourse.

Thus, for instance, Gregory professed that although human imagination lacks an appropriate perceptive experience which could satisfy the requirements of a decent description of the divinity, yet God himself landmarked a way towards him. Gregory associated this way towards divinity with the divine paideia and argued that it is analogous to the method of theological contemplation. More concretely Gregory claimed that, before the incarnation of the second hypostasis, the strategy of the divine paideia was similar to the method of medicine, where progress is reached by subtractions (ἐκ τῶν ὑφαίρεσεων ἢ μετάρθεσις – e.g., elimination of symptoms); whereas the purpose of the New Testament paideia is perfection achieved by additions⁴⁰⁵ (διὰ τῶν προσθηκῶν ἢ τελείωσις, Or 31.26).

Gregory contends that the method of additions can be seen in the variety of manifestations of the divine paideia. Among these manifestations of the divine paideia Gregory lists the beautiful arrangement of nature, the providential events of Holy history and the gift of the Holy Scripture. Besides, Gregory asserts that God deliberately established, firstly, the human mind as the image of God and as an operative tool of approaching divine knowledge,

403 Transl. J. Barnes, 1993, 53.

404 Transl. J. Barnes, 1993, 53.

405 By way of explanation, the key term used for the method of addition is προσθήκη – a word which in late antiquity had a specific grammatical and logical connotation. According to the *Ars grammatica* of the fourth century grammarian Dositheus Magister, προσθήκη denotes an additional qualification enabling one to distinguish between different meanings of homonyms (AG 25.8).

and secondly, a certain order or method in attaining knowledge about him, an order that Gregory himself observed in treating his disciples and that he expected them and their followers to follow.⁴⁰⁶ Analogous to this principle of the divine paideia, Gregory suggests that a certain order should be observed also in theology:

You see lights breaking upon us, gradually (κατὰ μέρος); and the order of theology (τάξις θεολογίας), which is better for us to keep (ἡμᾶς τηρεῖν ἄμεινον), neither proclaiming things too suddenly (ἄθρόως ἐκφραίνοντας), nor yet keeping them hidden to the end (εἰς τέλος κρύπτοντας). For the former course would be unscientific (ἄτεχνον), the latter atheistical (ἄθειον); and the former would be calculated to startle outsiders, the latter to alienate our own people (Or 31.27).

Chapter 2. The essential predication of the divine nature in the context of Eunomianism

Introduction

As I have already noted, the issue at stake in the Eunomian doctrine concerned the correct definition of God. In terms of Aristotelian philosophy the issue at stake in Eunomius' teaching is an essential predication of the divine substance.⁴⁰⁷ Eunomius claimed that God the Father *is* an unbegotten essence, while God the Son *is* a begotten essence.⁴⁰⁸ Since Eunomius and his master Aëtius constructed their theological system by means of syllogistic logic, in order to refute them there was no other way but to work through their arguments following their path. Hence essential predication was certainly at the top of Gregory's polemical agenda. Yet he approached the matter more thoroughly than a purely polemical logic might demand.

Aristotle not only provided a logical and grammatical description of essential predication but primarily investigated an ontological aspect of the

406 In Gregory's wording: Christ "gradually came to dwell in the disciples, measuring Himself out to them according to their capacity to receive Him (τοῖς μαθηταῖς κατὰ μέρος ἐπιδημεῖ, τῇ τῶν δεχομένων δυνάμει παραμετρούμενον)" (Or 31.26).

407 A basic account of the concept of essential predication is given in *Met* 1017a7–30 and *APo* 83a1–4 and highlights a distinction between what is said about the substance *in the virtue of itself* (sc. κατ' αὐτό) and *coincidentally* (sc. κατὰ συμβεβηκός). I personally am inclined to support the interpretation of Sebastian F. Weiner, who pinpoints an ontological strand of the concept of essential predication (Weiner, S.F., *Aristotle's Metaphysics V.7 Revisited*, in: *Apeiron* 48/4 [2015], 407–426).

408 Cf. Eunom., A 8–10.

concept.⁴⁰⁹ And quite reasonably so, because essential predication concerns a basic epistemological question: how can I know that the propositions that I make are true and not false?⁴¹⁰ While in the *Posterior Analytics* 1.22 Aristotle investigated the methodological aspects of essential predication and denoted the correlation between predication and demonstration,⁴¹¹ in *De Anima*, he considered the cognitive faculties that enable human beings to think and say truly or falsely about subjects.⁴¹² All in all, it is accurate to say that Aristotle provided a methodological and comprehensive description of essential predication.

I intend to show in this section that Gregory, being far better versed in Aristotelian theory than his opponents, took advantage of his deep philosophical knowledge not only to refute the Eunomians but also to build his own theological system on a firm epistemological foundation. His polemical strategy was simple: he claimed that his opponents used the tool of syllogism but did not have a grip on the mechanism which galvanizes this instrument of thought. Does this mean that Gregory was genuinely interested in following Aristotelian guidelines? I do not see why he necessarily should have been,

409 Insofar as logic is concerned, Aristotle tells us that “to be” is said in many ways, e.g., to be of a certain substance, or a quality, or a relation, et al. categories (*Met* 1027b31). From a grammatical perspective, Aristotle distinguished four types of correlation between the subject (sc. ὑποκείμενον) and the predicate (i.e. what is said of the subject – λεγόμενον) (*Cat* 1a20–b16). Importantly, in the Aristotelian account, the subject and predicate of the predication match reality (sc. τὰ ὄντα). With respect to this idea Charles Kahn has argued that in Aristotelian propositions the verb “to be” normally denotes the being (sc. existence) of the substance and the being of its predicate (cf. Kahn, C.H., *Questions and Categories. Aristotle’s Doctrine of Categories in the Light of Modern Research*, in: Hiz, H. [ed.], *Questions*. Dordrecht 1978, 227–278, [260]).

410 One of the clearest passages, in which Aristotle approached the question of predication from an epistemological perspective is found in the *Metaphysics*: “‘to be’ and ‘is’ signify that a thing is true, and ‘not to be’ that it is not true but a falsehood, equally in the case of affirmation and of denial” (*Met* 1017a31–34; transl. L.J. Ackrill, 1989, 276). Unsurprisingly, the epistemological strand of essential predication is the subject of intensive scholarly debate (cf. Kahn, C., *Retrospect on the Verb ‘To Be’ and the Concept of Being*, in: Knuuttila, S. / Hintikka, J. [eds.], *The Logic of Being*. Dordrecht, 1986, 1–28).

411 Later in *APo* 99a20–25 Aristotle makes an important distinction between predications and definitions (sc. the identity statements). While a predicate asserts something of the subject, a definition simply identifies it or as Sarabji puts it, “refers to the same thing twice” (cf. Sarabji, R., *Myths about Non-Propositional Thought*, in: Schofield, M. / Nussbaum, M.C. [eds.], *Language and Logos*. Cambridge 1982, 141).

412 In such a way, Aristotle claims that sense-perception is for the most part true and a mistake might come when the intellect goes astray (*DA* 430a27f.).

but I think it quite natural that, in order to formulate a strong alternative to the Eunomian cause, he worked through the syllogistic arguments of his opponents and supplemented his philosophical edifice with the strong points of the Peripatetic doctrine.⁴¹³

Moreover, since one of the crucial points of Aristotelian philosophy constituted the study of “being qua being” (i.e. the issue at stake in the *Metaphysics* 6.1) and of its different shapes, manifestations and relations, and the most explicit and undeniable biblical self-identifier of God was $\acute{\omicron} \acute{\omega}\nu$ – the two teachings had a positive chance for a productive dialogue. Besides, Aristotle did not simply theorize about being but studied it systematically and with a particular focus on the methodology of the scientific inquiry. In a word, there are considerable grounds to believe that Aristotelian doctrine might have appeared rather beneficial for Gregory regarding the hitherto described challenges he faced.

Authoritative Aristotelian methodology could help him to disprove the Eunomians not only due to its peculiar persuasiveness and clarity but also because by using it he could defeat his rivals with their own weapon and thus highlight their lack of syllogistic competence – a popular rhetorical technique. Besides, Aristotelian epistemology was commonly recognized as a reliable and tolerably independent instrument for both philosophical and scientific inquiries (logic and grammar as instrumental disciplines); therefore a scholar who chose to pursue it was not necessarily associated with the Peripatetic school. Last but not least, the chief position secured for metaphysics in Aristotelian philosophy matched the universalistic claims of Christian theology as a science of sciences, which were established by Origen and adopted by the Cappadocians.⁴¹⁴ Regarding these advantages of Aristotelian doctrine, the ample textual and semantic parallels between the theological orations and the works of the Stagirite, and the abundant examples of syllogistic reasoning applied by Gregory, which are observed below, I suggest it reasonable to read the theological orations in the light of Aristotelian epistemology.

In doing so I do not attempt to affiliate definitively Gregory’s teaching to the Aristotelian or any other school of philosophy, nor do I entertain the possibility of discovering the genuine sources of his thought. This attempt is as unachievable as it is unreasonable due to the generally utilitarian approach taken by Christian authors to the classical heritage and their tendency to merge and modify philosophical concepts. The similarities between the thoughts of Gregory and Aristotle which I trace in this chapter should not be

413 Whether Gregory took directly from Aristotle or from some of his commentators or later handbooks should be analysed on a case-by-case basis.

414 Cf. Origen is talking about theology as “the science of sciences” in *ComJn* 13.303.

taken as an attempt to argue that Gregory directly borrowed from the Corpus Aristotelicum. I cannot say with sufficient accuracy what texts, commentaries, or paraphrases Gregory used in his work but I believe it is possible to distinguish the basic methodological, ideological and stylistic components of his compositions – and this is what I am going to do.

1. Aristotelian epistemology and the essential predication theory

1.1 *An ontological account of essential predication*

Now going back to the crux of the theological orations, as I have already mentioned it was the question about the essence of God. What is God? How to define God? Indeed, naturally enough, all theological reasoning should start from this inquiry. Yet, this question cannot be answered or even approached without first demarcating the epistemological principles of the research.

The Aristotelian study of the matter suggested a multivocal approach to the “what is it” question. Still, a point of departure was straightforwardly defined: Aristotle regarded the “what is it” question as an inquiry about substance of the thing. In other words, the inquiry about the nature of the thing (*Met* 1051b30–33).

The “what is it” inquiry equally applies to logic and grammar, where substance is denoted as the first category and the subject of the proposition.⁴¹⁵ Aristotle affirms that the “what is it” indicates the substance, rather than the other categories of being.⁴¹⁶ In book Γ of the *Metaphysics* Aristotle symmetrically married the “what” of the thing to its substance (sc. τί ἐστὶ) or to its being (sc. τὸ ὄν) and further argued that it (sc. the substance) should be distinguished from the qualities of the thing (sc. τὸ ποιόν):

The term ‘being’ (τὸ ὄν) has several senses (λέγεται πολλαχῶς), which we have classified in our discussion of the number of senses in which terms are used. It denotes first the ‘what is’ of a thing (τί ἐστὶ), i.e. the individuality (τι);

415 Cf. a comparable vision of the subject of proposition in Apollonius’ *De Constructione*: “When inquiring [about] the identity (ὑπαρξίς) of some subject we say ‘Who is moving?’ ‘Who is walking?’ ‘Who is speaking?’... To this we find nominal answers, common nouns or proper nouns — and proper nouns also convey the generic essence. And since all the attributes or qualities are not made clear by the suggested nominal answers (for by itself the word who inquires only about the essence (οὐσία), to which quality and quantity apply), the additional device was invented of interrogation about these matters, so that when we ask about quality we say ποῖος (what sort?), and about quantity πόσος (how much?)” (*Constr* 1.31f.; transl. F.W. Householder, 1981, 29).

416 In *Met* 1043b32–34 and 1044a2–9, where Aristotle says that substance is one and a unit, but not a unit like a number, since, unlike a number it is “a complete reality and a definite nature” (cf. Pritzl, 2010, 198).

and then the quality or quantity (ποιὸν ἢ ποσὸν) or any other such category (ἢ τῶν ἄλλων ἕκαστον τῶν κατηγορουμένων) (*Met* 1028a12f.).

At first glance, the way Aristotle treats the “what is it” question might seem somewhat tautological.⁴¹⁷ Indeed, it is planted in the question “what *is* it” that “it” somehow exists, therefore to say that at least one of the plausible answers to the “what is it” (sc. τί ἐστὶ) inquiry refers to the *being* of the thing (sc. τὸ ὄν) – is a little disappointing. In other words, the answer would be: it is something that *is*, something that has a certain being – period. Tautological as it might seem, I take it that for Aristotle, this pause after the identification of *the substance of the thing* with *the nature of the thing* or *the basis for unity of the thing’s characteristics* made all the meaning.⁴¹⁸ And here is the reason for this.

Aristotle was the natural philosopher par excellence, whose main research interest was in living organisms that belong to the real world. Thus, Aristotle made a categorial distinction between the substance or “being” of the thing (i.e. τὸ τί ἐστίν, or τὸ ὄν) and the “being” of its characteristics, for, he states, that just as a living organism, however complicated it might be, still *is one*, the substance of this organism must also be one, rather than a cluster of characteristics (*Met* 1040b7). Hence, the substance of the thing is a basis for its unity, that is to say, for the unity of the characteristics or qualities of the thing. This is how Aristotle himself puts it:

Now of all these senses which ‘being’ has, the primary sense is clearly the ‘what is it,’ (τὸ τί ἐστίν) which denotes the first substance (πρῶτον ὄν) because when we describe the quality of a particular thing we say that it is ‘good or bad,’ and not ‘five feet high’ or ‘man’; but when we describe what it is, we say not that it is ‘white’ or ‘hot’ or ‘five feet high,’ but that it is ‘a man’ or ‘a god’ (*Met* 1028a13–15).

417 Owen has argued that for Aristotle “‘to be’ is always ‘to be something or other’” (cf. Owen, G.E.L., *Aristotle on the Snares of Ontology*, in: Bambrough, R. [ed.], *New Essays in Plato and Aristotle*. London 1965, 69–95, 76). I take this statement to denote Aristotle’s vision of discursive thinking. Yet, I believe that there could be no doubt that Aristotle recognized the distinction between being and being something, and that he saw the latter as the dominion of discursive thought while he approached the former as a subject of noetic contact that in Pritzl’s definition is “pre-discursive and pre-propositional, is outside of and prior to this logical space proper to propositional truth” (cf. Pritzl, 2010, 38).

418 Aristotle even demolished his opponents for loose dialectical reasoning that was due to their perfunctory approach to the understanding of being qua being. Cf.: “In general our opponents do away with substance and essence, since they must say that everything is a coincident and that there is no such thing as being essentially man or being essentially animal” (*Met* 1007a20–b1).

It becomes clear from this passage that it is in the virtue of the substance that the thing can be denoted. In other words, the substance understood as the basis for unity of the characteristics of the thing possesses an explanatory power which is required in the definition.⁴¹⁹ Yet it is not totally clear how to denote the nature of a concrete living being.

To explain this, Aristotle invented an operative mechanism of the correlation between the actuality and potentiality of the thing, which in short may be presented in the following way. The identity (sc. the “what is”) and the substance (sc. οὐσία) of the thing refer to its actuality (sc. ἐντελέχεια)⁴²⁰ and also to its functional or final (the “what for,” or the διὰ τί) cause. A detailed account of this intricate interconnection between substance-actuality-cause of the thing can be found in *De anima*, where Aristotle exemplified the soul-body relationships to illustrate how the soul *qua form* of a natural body is its substance and its actuality:⁴²¹

The soul (τὴν ψυχὴν) must, then, be substance (οὐσίαν εἶναι) *qua form* of a natural body (ὡς εἶδος σώματος φυσικοῦ) which has life potentially (δυνάμει ζῶην ἔχοντος), and substance *qua form* is actuality (ἢ δ’ οὐσία ἐντελέχεια) (DA 412a19–22).

That is to say, just as soul is the basis for unity of the bodily characteristics, and thereby the source of life of the ὀργανικὸν σῶμα (DA 412b1), in a similar way the substance per se has actuality or entelechy as its form, or to put it differently *the substance* per se just is *the source of life* per se, i.e. *the source of “being”*.

Aristotle explained this matter perhaps a little more clearly in another part of *De anima*, where he applied an eloquent analogy of actual-potential being to actual-potential knowledge. In the second book of *De anima* we read:

But ‘actuality’ (ἐντελέχεια) is so spoken of in two ways, on the one hand as knowledge is (ὡς ἐπιστήμη), and on the other as attaining knowledge (ὡς τὸ θεωρεῖν) is” (DA 412a22f.).

419 In such a way Aristotle identified thinking of a proposition with thinking of a unity (DA 430a26–b20). Pondering this Aristotelian statement Pritzl argued that “Thinking expands or unfolds the meanings of things in themselves and in their interrelations” (cf. Pritzl, 2010, 39).

420 Jonathan Beere has argued that ἐντελέχεια or ἐνέργεια understood as the fulfillment of an ergon can be safely associated with the telos of the thing. In support of his argument Beere refers to DA 417a16f., 431a6f., and *Phys* 201b31–33. (cf. Beere, J., *Doing and Being: An Interpretation of Aristotle’s Metaphysics Theta*. Oxford 2009, 204, note 63).

421 Cf.: “Hence the soul is the first actuality (ἐντελέχεια ἢ πρώτη) of a natural body which has life potentially” (DA 412a27f.).

So, what Aristotle is saying here is that the process of thinking or of attaining knowledge should be distinguished from knowledge itself, which is the goal or the final cause of thinking and *eo ipso* the substance of the process. The one who aims at attaining knowledge obviously has it potentially but it is only when he has succeeded in his pursuit that his potential knowledge becomes actual, and this actualized knowledge, so to speak, possesses an explanatory power to the whole process of knowing.⁴²² Thus, actuality of the thing is married to its function, so that practically to identify the thing we should know its functional cause which provides an explanation of the thing, which is its proper scientific definition. In other words, according to Aristotelian epistemology, in order to know the “what is” of the thing the scholar has to know the “what for” of the thing, which is the basis for unity of the characteristics of the thing and also its actuality:

For, while unity and being are so spoken of in many ways, that which is most properly (ὁλως) so spoken of is actuality (*DA* 412b8).

1.2 *An epistemological account of essential predication*

It is noteworthy in this passage that Aristotle uses one of the forms of the word καθόλου – his *terminus technicus* for essential predication (cf. *APo* 73b26). Additionally, it should be noted here that in Aristotelian physical theory (i.e. studies of the natural organisms), the final cause (i.e. “what for?”) is closely interwoven with the efficient cause (i.e. “where from?”), forasmuch as the form is interwoven with body (cf. *Phys* 199a20–32). Therefore, when it comes to epistemology Aristotelian discourse about these two causes may be ambiguous. Namely, although it follows from the set of the hitherto presented arguments that knowledge of a thing depends on knowledge of its final (i.e. functional) cause, it is also true that simple knowledge of a thing stands on the recognition of its efficient cause.

It was Plato who, in his *Meno*, affiliated simple knowledge about a thing to the recognition of its efficient cause. He professed that “a true belief becomes knowledge when secured by reasoning out of the cause” (*Meno* 97e–98a). Aristotle elaborated this principle and made a distinction between simple and scientific knowledge. Apropos of simple (or accidental) knowledge Aristotle affirmed in the *Posterior Analytics* that a man knows a thing simply if he knows that it exists and also “knows its efficient cause (sc. the cause on which the fact depends (τὴν τ’ αἰτίαν δι’ ἣν τὸ πρᾶγμα ἐστίν))” (*APo* 71b9–16).

422 In the words of Kurt Pritzl: “The drive of the intellect, its *telos*, is the full articulation of specific intelligibilities, given to it as unarticulated wholes, in the foundational intellectual grasp of things achieved through the reception of form” (cf. Pritzl, 2010, 34).

With regard to scientific knowledge he contends in the *Nicomachean Ethics* that:

... a man knows a thing scientifically [sic not-accidentally] when he possesses a conviction arrived at in a certain way, and when the first principles on which that conviction rests are known to him with certainty (*EN* 1139b20f.).

Here Aristotle talks of the final cause of the thing, which is not always apparent and often needs to be reasoned out by means of scientific demonstration (sc. ἀπόδειξις, *APo* 71b17).

From this short account of the Aristotelian treatment of the identity question it is clear that ontological issues in his system are tightly interwoven with logical and grammatical issues (and also physical and anthropological issues, which I address later) and that in every case the explanation of this complexity can be found in the sphere of epistemology, which in practice represents a middle ground between different disciplines. This comprehensive and methodological Aristotelian vision of epistemological issues matched the horizon of Gregory's approach to theological knowledge. In the following sections I demonstrate how Gregory took advantage of the Aristotelian theory of knowledge in his polemics with the Eunomians.

2. Essential predication in Gregory's system

2.1 *Disproving the Eunomians: scientific accuracy in theological reasoning*

I have hitherto observed only a few aspects of Aristotelian epistemological concepts and I will return to them later on. For now I shall show how the described ideas resonated in Gregory's polemics with the Eunomians (i.e. concerning the problem of essential predication) as well as in his independent discourse concerning a proper concept of God.

In the fifth theological oration Gregory applied a genuine Aristotelian vocabulary to make an ironic remark pointing at his opponent's ignorance of logical commonplaces (i.e. the concept of essential predication):

Do you not know that every number indicates the quantity of what is included under it (τῆς ποσότητος τῶν ὑποκειμένων ἐστὶ δηλωτικός⁴²³), and not the nature of the things (οὐ τῆς φύσεως τῶν πραγμάτων)? (*Or* 31.18).

What Gregory apparently hints at here is a categorial distinction between essential or universal (sc. καθόλου) and accidental predication (sc. καθ' ἕκαστον, κατὰ μέρος), which formed one of the chief conceptions of the

423 In Aristotle's lexicon δηλωτικός means "indicative," cf. Arist. *Physiognomica* 808b30 (cf. *LSJ*).

Organon (APo 24a17), where Aristotle observed the issue from a logical and grammatical viewpoint, and also of the *Metaphysics*, where he addressed its ontological aspects (*Met* 1003a).

Now this negative assessment of the Eunomian position logically demands an alternative, which Gregory should propose instead of the “incorrect” argument. To do so he has to ponder a possibility of the substantial predication to the divine essence. I believe that working through this issue led Gregory to make his crucial move to Aristotelian being-oriented theory. It must have been rather convenient for him to proceed with this theory because the only explicit biblical self-identification of God is “he who is” (sc. ὁ ὢν) and taking this identifier as a point of departure Gregory developed his theological system. In the *Supremum vale* (*Or* 42) he argued against the Eunomian assertion that the unbegotten is an essential predicate to God. Contemplating the nature of essential predication he asserted:

That which *is* without beginning (ἀναρχον), and *is* the beginning (ἀρχή), and *is* with the beginning (τὸ μετὰ τῆς ἀρχῆς), *is* the one God (εἷς Θεός). For the nature of that which *is* without beginning does not consist in being without beginning or being unbegotten (οὔτε τοῦ ἀνάρχου τὸ ἀναρχον φύσις, ἢ τὸ ἀγέννητον), for the nature of anything lies, not in *what it is not* (οὐδεμία γὰρ φύσις ὁ τι μὴ τόδε ἐστίν) but in *what it is* (ἀλλ’ ὁ τι τόδε)⁴²⁴ (*Or* 42.15 = PG 36, 476.12).

The context of the passage suggests that Gregory’s idea here not only refers to the Aristotelian possession-deprivation concept⁴²⁵, but also to a more fundamental inspection of *the essence of the substance* per se, which *is*, as we noted earlier, *its actuality* or *entelechy* understood as *the on-going completeness of the functional cause* (sc. τέλος).

With respect to the lexically and conceptually flagged Peripatetic background of the passage, it is clear that neither ἀναρχον (sc. without beginning), nor ἀγέννητον could serve as essential predicate of the divine or, in

424 In a comparable way Aristotle in the *Metaphysics* after having demolished his opponents for doing away with the substance explicated his position: “For if something is essentially man, this will not be being not man or not being man; but these are the denials of being man. For there is, as we saw, one thing signified, and this is the substance of something” (*Met* 1007a20–b1).

425 Like Basil (cf. *AE* 1.9) Gregory directly referred to the Aristotelian concept of possession in his polemical argument in the third oration: “And again, since begotten and unbegotten are contradictories (ἐπειδὴ τὸ ἀγέννητον καὶ τὸ γεννητὸν ἀντίκειται ἀλλήλοις), like possession and deprivation (ὡς ἕξις καὶ στέρησις), it would follow that contradictory essences would co-exist (ἀνάγκη καὶ οὐσίας εἰσαχθῆναι ἀντικειμένας ἀλλήλαις), which is impossible (ὅπερ οὐ δέδοται)” (*Or* 29.12).

fact, of any other nature because owing to their putative nature these terms are relative, they have no independent meaning (each of them entails the existence of its opposite). Besides, they can hardly procure a basis for unity of the inherent characteristics, because there would be apparent logical problems to think that “without beginning” or “unbegotten” could in any case provide a reasonable answer to the “what for” inquiry. I take it that “to be without beginning” or “to be unbegotten” can hardly be a τέλος of anything, for what should then be the completeness or the actuality of this thing? Apparently, there is no applicable, operative or functional implication of these terms.

Pondering an appropriate predication of the divine nature, Gregory admits to the logical basics established in the *Prior Analytics* (24a16), where Aristotle introduces the proposition (sc. πρότασις), i.e. an assertion where one thing (sc. predicate) is said of another (sc. subject) in a form of either affirmation or negation.⁴²⁶ He asserts that:

Just as predicating ‘is body’ or ‘is begotten’ of something ... is not enough to set out and to describe the thing (οὐκ ἄρκεῖ ‘τὸ σῶμα’ εἰπεῖν, ἢ ‘τὸ γεγεννηθῆναι’) but you must also, and if you wish to display a thing signified (τὸ νοούμενον) with adequate clarity, give the predicates their subject (τὸ ὑποκείμενον τούτοις εἰπεῖν) (*Or* 28.9).

Moreover, taking advantage of the Aristotelian distinction between the kinds of definitions, Gregory goes on to say that:

... an inquirer into the nature of a real being (ὁ τὴν τοῦ ὄντος πολυπραγμονῶν φύσιν) cannot stop short at saying what it is not but must add to his denials a positive affirmation (πρὸς τῷ εἰπεῖν ἂ μὴ ἔστι καὶ ὃ ἔστιν εἰπεῖν) (*Or* 28.9).

This statement of Gregory satisfies the Aristotelian vision of the definition (ὄρισμός) of an immediate item, which “is an indemonstrable account of what something is (λόγος τοῦ τί ἔστιν ἀναπόδεικτος)⁴²⁷” (*APo* 94a1–15). Aristotle stipulates an *indemonstrable* account because, as he specifies in the seventh chapter of the book β of the *Posterior Analytics*, “everything which a thing is must be proved through a demonstration – except its essence”⁴²⁸ (*APo* 92b13f.).

Subsequently, by way of explanation Aristotle verified that there are three types of definitions, where the first one constitutes “an account of what the name means (λόγος τοῦ τί σημαίνει τὸ ὄνομα)⁴²⁹” (*APo* 93b30). From the

426 In the *Posterior Analytics* (72a5f.) he supplements this notion by stating that immediate propositions constitute a principle of demonstration (ἀρχὴ δ ἔστιν ἀποδείξεως πρότασις ἄμεσος).

427 Transl. J. Barnes, 1993, 59.

428 Transl. J. Barnes, 1993, 56.

429 Ibid.

following explanation it is clear that the name signifies the existence of the thing, which is not identical with the essence of the thing. It is in the power of the second type of definition to denote the essence of the thing because it “shows why something exists (διὰ τί ἔστιν)”, and thus represents “a quasi-demonstration of what something is (οἶον ἀπόδειξις τοῦ τί ἐστι)”. As for the third type of definition he describes it as “a conclusion of the demonstration of what something is (τῆς τοῦ τί ἐστιν ἀποδείξεως συμπέρασμα)⁴³⁰” (A^Po 94a1–15).

Thus, from the viewpoint of Aristotelian logic it is totally legitimate to deliberate on the definition of God taking as a point of departure the biblical name of God.⁴³¹ As follows from the Aristotelian account of the definitions, the result of this deliberation does not go further than denoting the existence of God; it does not aim at grasping the divine essence. To get a grip on the essence of the divinity it would be necessary to perceive the τέλος of God, but this task is nonsensical because God is self-sufficient, a complete perfection (sc. τελειότης or τελείωσις) in itself.⁴³² Yet, it is possible to talk about the functional goal of divine activity for the sake of his creation because it is conspicuous and available in human experience. Naturally, pursuing this approach, the focus of the theological discussion dwells on the activity of Christ. This is why Gregory asserts in the fourth theological oration that Christ “relates to God the Father (ἔχει πρὸς τὸν πατέρα) as word (λόγος) to mind (πρὸς νοῦν) or as definition (ὄρος) to the thing defined (πρὸς τὸ ὀριζόμενον)” (Or 30.20).

2.2 “Being” as a predicate of the divine nature

An alternative which Gregory suggests to the Eunomian predicates is “being” (sc. τὸ εἶναι) as an essential predicate to the divine nature. Although the identification of the divine nature which results from this predication might seem somewhat tautological, Gregory makes a rich set of inferences from

430 Transl. J. Barnes, 1993, 59.

431 Jonathan Barnes contended that though definition and demonstration come very close to each other, Aristotle insisted on their distinction (cf. Barnes, 1993, 225). It follows from this that denoted as quasi-demonstration definition is based on analysis of the name of the thing and this is precisely what Gregory tried to do.

432 Cf. Gregory’s speculation on the name of the Holy Spirit in the fifth theological oration, where he identified the terms ἡ ἀγιότης and ἡ τελείωσις: “And how can that be perfect (τελεία δὲ πῶς) which lacks something of perfection (ἢ λείπει τι πρὸς τελείωσιν)? And surely there is something lacking if it has not the Holy (μὴ ἐχούση τὸ ἅγιον), and how would it have this if it were without the Spirit?” (Or 31.4). In the *Oration 41 (In pentecosten)*, PG 36, 433.40) Gregory calls Christ a pure perfection (ἡ καθαρὰ τελειότης).

this tautology. Having denoted the divine nature by one of the cognates of “being,” Gregory, in one shot, satisfied the requirements of simplicity, self-identity and independence of the divine nature, and at the same time planted the concept of god as a creator (and a maintainer) of the universe in the biblical identifier of God. Apropos of simplicity Gregory, in the above-cited passage of the *Supremum vale*, makes an important assertion:⁴³³

... those whose simple substance (ἀπλῆ φύσις) is identical with their being (τὸ εἶναι ταυτὸν) essentially (κύριον) are *the one* (τὸ ἓν)⁴³⁴ (*Or* 42.15 = PG 36, 476.12).

It is important to note here that habitually essential predication in the text in Gregory’s discourse is marked by the cognates and synonyms of the Aristotelian *terminus technicus* κυρίως, i.e. in the proper sense (*EN* 1157a31), which flags the substance of the thing, i.e. the basis of its unity, its actuality:

It is not necessary to ask whether soul and body are one, just as it is not necessary to ask whether the wax and its shape are one, nor generally whether the matter of each thing and that of which it is the matter are one. For even if one and being are spoken of in several ways (πλεοναχῶς λέγεται), what is properly (κυρίως) so spoken of is the actuality (*DA* 412b6–9).

This Aristotelian linkage between the substance of the thing and the actuality of the thing understood as the basis for unity of the thing’s compounds is discernable in the background of Gregory’s contemplation on the famous biblical identifier of God preserved in the fourth theological oration. Gregory contends there:

‘He Who Is’ (ὁ μὲν ὢν), and ‘God’ (καὶ ὁ θεός), are the special names of his substance (μᾶλλον πῶς τῆς οὐσίας ὀνόματα); and of these especially ‘He Who Is’ (καὶ τούτων μᾶλλον ὁ ὢν) (*Or* 30.18).

In what follows he supported this assertion with a typical Aristotelian argument, i.e. saying that “being (τὸ ὄν) in a proper sense denotes God” (ὄλον ὄντως θεοῦ, cf. Aristotelian *terminus technicus* καθόλου for essential predication), because being, like God, is in all senses identical to itself: ontologically – as the self-identical substance, logically – as a primary substance, which “has nothing before or after it” (μῆτε τῶ πρὸ αὐτοῦ, μῆτε τῶ μετ’ αὐτόν), and grammatically – as an everlasting “is” (participium presentis activi), “without any ‘was’ or ‘will be’” (οὐ ἦν, ἢ ἔσται) (*Or* 30.18).

433 Cf. an Aristotelian contemplation on the essential predicate of the substance from the book Γ of the *Metaphysics*: “...things whose substance is one have also one essence and are themselves one” (*Met* 1038b).

434 Translation mine.

I take the last statement of this rich assertion, namely that God is an everlasting “is”, to be a marker of a rather powerful idea, which surfaced in the Aristotelian philosophical project and also significantly shaped Gregory’s theology. Namely, although “He who Is” says nothing about the divine essence, it still constitutes a significant epistemological notion, and by virtue of epistemology it also penetrates the domains of logic, linguistics, ontology, metaphysics, anthropology and natural sciences. Although the interdependence of the different scientific and philosophical disciplines was in different ways deliberated by different philosophical schools, yet the noteworthy feature of the Peripatetic school consisted in a particular focus on the studies of natural data.⁴³⁵ As I have noted, Aristotelian thought in general revolved around the studies of different aspects of the life of living beings, and this is why, on the one hand, his philosophy is in a certain sense a scientific philosophy yet, on the other hand, many of his concepts are ambiguous and relative (for this is an inevitable consequence of dealing with empirical data). When Gregory said that God is an everlasting “is,” he simultaneously linked his theology, on the one hand, to the incomprehensible sphere of eternity (for nothing everlasting is known in the universe⁴³⁶), and, at the same time, to human philosophy, which is identical, in the Aristotelian system, with a broadly understood natural philosophy, – because after all it is all about how living embodied human beings think about this or that matter.⁴³⁷ In the subsequent sections I show that this particular approach to philosophical and theological theorizing, as an instance of broadly understood studies of being, resonated in Gregory’s thought. Whether Gregory adopted this research approach directly from Peripatetic teaching, or whether it took a somewhat peculiar path before appearing in Gregory’s thought, remains to be seen.

435 Thus, for instance, Alexander of Aphrodisias in his treatise *On the Soul* firstly expounded the distinction between matter and form and then surveyed nature in general, starting with the four elements and rising through inanimate substances, plants, animals, and finally humans (*DA* 8.17–11.13; cf. Caston, V. [transl. introd., com.], *Alexander of Aphrodisias: On the Soul: Part I*. London 2012, 3f.).

436 Cf.: “...we cannot set forth that which is above time, if we avoid as we desire any expression which conveys the idea of time. For such expressions as when and before and after and from the beginning are not timeless, however much we may force them” (*Or* 29.3).

437 In such a way Aristotle claims in *Met* 1037a14 that the investigation of sensible substances belongs to physics or secondary philosophy. Yet, he contends that the physicist must know not only about the matter, but also about the substance according to the formula. Therefore, the subject of first philosophy is equally important for the physicist and hence physics may be seen as an extension of the *Metaphysics* rather than a more limited discipline.

Whether inspired by Aristotelian thought or not, Gregory did develop the logical implications contained in his using a cognate of “being” as predicate of the divine nature. Namely, he was committed to supporting natural theology and tended to analyse his systematic and biblical theological reasoning with respect to the psychological conditions of the cognitive process. I will elaborate on these matters later. For now, having bridged the homonymous Aristotelian conception of substance with Gregory’s thought on the essential predicate to the divine nature, the following should be clarified.

2.3 *The efficient and final causes and the hypostatic relationships*

Is the Aristotelian vision of the actuality-potentiality mechanism, which as we have observed is one of the key-principles of Peripatetic epistemology, reflected in Gregory’s theory? Aristotle stated that, although universally actuality is prior to potentiality, apropos of a particular living being actuality functions as its τέλος,⁴³⁸ i.e. final cause, which contains an explanation of this living being (i.e. as the efficient and final cause of the living being).⁴³⁹ Then, how (if at all) is this supposed to work with respect to Gregory’s quasi definition⁴⁴⁰ of divine nature? The answer to this question is ambiguous. From one angle, that is, talking of divine nature in a proper sense, the answer is obviously that it does not. There can be no place for potentiality and final cause because, as Gregory repeatedly affirms, God himself is a full perfection, source and τέλος of his own being (*Or* 31.23).

Yet, in another sense, i.e. when it comes to the internal relationships between the three hypostases of the Holy Trinity, Gregory says (*Or* 29.3) that although the Father, the Son and the Holy Spirit “are coeternal,” the Son and the Holy Spirit “are from the Father, though not after Him”; therefore, he continues, “in respect of a cause (τὸ αἰδιον δέ) they [sc. the two hypostases] are not altogether unoriginated (οὐ πάντως ἀναρχον) as long as it may be referred to the Father as a cause (ἕως ἂν εἰς ἀρχὴν ἀναφέροται τὸν πατέρα)”. In the fifth theological oration Gregory summarized the

438 Gregory applied this idea in his polemical argument stating as a matter of course that “cause (τὸ αἴτιον) is not always prior to its effects (πρῶτον ἔστιν αἴτιον)” (*Or* 29.3).

439 In *De anima* Aristotle explained how is it possible to think of the soul as the cause and source of the living body. He said that *cause* and *source* are meant in many ways [or are homonymous]. Similarly, the soul is a cause because it is the source of motion [=the efficient cause], that for the sake of which [=the final cause], and the substance of ensouled bodies (*DA* 415b8–14).

440 This is to say that it is intolerable to see in Gregory’s assertion concerning divine nature a fully-fledged definition because it does not designate the cause of God, nor is it deduced from the first principles.

Trinitarian concept by rephrasing Apostle Paul’s slogan from the Epistle to Romans 11:36: “For of Him, and through Him, and to Him, are all things (ἐξ αὐτοῦ καὶ δι’ αὐτοῦ καὶ εἰς αὐτὸν τὰ πάντα)”. Gregory also uses three prepositions used with the same pronoun, yet unlike Paul who speaks of the whole creation, Gregory applies this phrase to the inter-hypostatic relationship: “of whom (ἐξ οὗ), and by whom (δι’ οὗ), and in whom (ἐν ᾧ)”, where the causal relations of the Father and the Son resonate in the causal function of ἐξ and διὰ (Or 31.20).

2.3.1 *The causal relationships of the divine hypostases*

This causal relationship of the hypostases obviously calls for justification. Although it seems *prima facie* that the causal relationship of the hypostases provides some kind of causal explanation of the Trinitarian concept, it is important to qualify this explanation. Does this knowledge about the causal interrelation between the divine hypostases truly reveal something about the genuine essence of God, and if so, what does it reveal? Should it be taken as relative knowledge, i.e. one which reveals not how things are in themselves but how they are in relation to some other things, in our case, in relation to cognizing subjects, i.e. to human beings? Besides, it might be also supposed that this causal interrelationship between hypostases should be interpreted metaphorically.

Now, as I expect the reader has rightly imagined, Gregory argues for the relative interpretation of the Trinitarian concept and before I show how he argued for this choice let me describe how he dismissed two the other options. The first one is easy. Gregory repeatedly claims that divine essence is incomprehensible and unspeakable.⁴⁴¹ Paraphrasing Plato’s statement⁴⁴² he contends that “whereas it is difficult to conceive of God (θεὸν νοῆσαι μὲν χαλεπόν), yet to verbalize him is impossible (φράσαι δὲ ἀδύνατον)...” (Or 28.4). Moreover, Gregory asserts that even metaphorical descriptions can

441 Cf.: “The weakness of the argument (τὸ ἀσθενὲς τοῦ λόγου) makes the mystery look weak, and thus eloquence empties (τὸ τοῦ λόγου κομψὸν) the cross of its power, as Paul thought. For faith is what completes our argument (πίστις τοῦ καθ’ ἡμᾶς λόγου πλήρωσις)” (Or 29.21). Cf.: “The divine nature cannot be expressed by any name (τὸ θεῖον ἀκατονόμαστον). And this is proved not only by argument (οἱ λογισμοὶ), but also by the wisest and most ancient of the Hebrews, so far as they have given us reason for conjecture (sc. Tetragrammaton)” (Or 30.17).

442 Gregory explicitly refers to a passage from Plato’s *Timaeus*: “...as one of the Greek theologians taught – not unskilfully, it seems to me...” (Or 28.4), Cf.: “Now to discover (εὐρεῖν τε ἔργον) the Maker and Father of this Universe were a task indeed; and having discovered Him, to declare Him unto all men were a thing impossible (ἀδύνατον λέγειν)” (Tim 28c).

never express the divine nature for they only allude to different nuances of the divine being. At the end of the fourth theological oration (*Or* 30.31–33) he lists different symbols which in one way or another touch upon certain characteristics of divinity but he concludes his survey by proving this way of thinking unreliable.⁴⁴³

Thus, we are left with the last option, which suggests treating the causal relationships of the divine hypostases as relative knowledge, whose domain is the relative and not the absolute truth. In other words, relative knowledge reveals some partial truth about subject, and the cognizing object by getting a grip on the mechanism of cognition. Or to put it differently, it is by virtue of the participation of the cognizing subject and cognizing object in the process of cognition that relative knowledge is possible about those parts of their nature which are practically interacting in the process. Hence, according to this concept, there could be no overestimation of the epistemological and methodological issues, because as far as the logic of this argument goes, *method is what it is all about*. This is how Gregory puts this thought in the third theological oration, where he ponders the true (i.e. in a sense of the absolute truth) meaning of the hypostatic names and their correlations:

These names [sic of God] do not belong to us in the absolute sense (τὰ γὰρ ἡμέτερα οὐ κυρίως), because we are both (ἄμφω), and not one more than the other; and we are of both (ἔξ ἀμφοῖν ἡμεῖς), and not of one only; and so we are divided, and by degrees become men (κατ' ὀλίγον ἄνθρωποι), and perhaps not even men (ἴσως οὐδὲ ἄνθρωποι), and such as we did not desire (οἳοι μὴ τεθελήμεθα), leaving and being left (ἀφιέντες καὶ ἀφιέμενοι), so that only the relations remain, without the underlying facts (μόνας τὰς σχέσεις λείπεσθαι ὀρφανὰς τῶν πραγμάτων) (*Or* 29.5).

This passage, rich and enigmatic as it is, tells us many important things, therefore I will refer to it several times in the following text. For now a couple of things should be noted for the sake of the present argument.

First, the passage clearly argues for the relativity of the hypostatic names and hence of all theological conceptions built on them. Second, it affiliates this relativity to the cognizing subject, i.e. to the human being. It is because of the mental and physical conditions which every human being has, that full comprehension of whatever a particular object is impossible,⁴⁴⁴ yet the

443 Cf.: “Finally, it seems best to me to let the images and the shadows go, as being deceitful and falling very far short of the truth, and to attach myself to the more reverent conception (τῆς εὐσεβεστέρως ἐννοίας), relying on few words, using the guidance of the Holy Ghost...” (*Or* 31.33).

444 Several times throughout the theological circle Gregory goes through a set of anthropological questions about how the process of cognition works, and how it is possible to understand the things in the world. Although he suggests certain

human ability to interact with external objects and thereby experience how they function, i.e. how they manifest themselves in life, – this ability allows a human being to know how things are not with themselves but with human beings, i.e. in relation to, or in interaction with human beings. It follows from this idea that relative knowledge shows not only, so to speak, the functional side of things but also a certain side of human beings, namely, the side responsible for cognition. And this is why Gregory, it seems, unexpectedly and abruptly shifts his focus from the divine hypostases to the nature of human beings. Therefore we too have to bring anthropological and cognitive matters into our discourse, but before we do this, let us finalize the main line of the present argument.

The passage suggests that we should understand the hypostatic names of God and hence the interconnections they bring as bearing knowledge not about God himself but about his relation to his creation, and specifically, to human beings. Consequently, the object of theological studies is strictly speaking not the nature of God or any of his qualities (whether anything predicated of him may or may not exist in a proper sense), that has to do with God in the proper sense, but rather the interrelation between God and human beings, the divine activity apropos of the universe, the manifestations of divine nature in the life of the created cosmos. The result of theological studies focused in this way is relative knowledge about the relations between God and men, which are possible by virtue of certain characteristics peculiar to God and men.

Having deduced from Gregory's statement this understanding of the hypostatic interrelationships, we are now in a position to inquire how to address the concept of the Trinity itself. One thing that Gregory says categorically and explicitly about the Trinitarian concept is that it is a paradox, which I am inclined to take as a meaningful statement and not as an implicit hint as to the incomprehensibility of the divine essence. This is how Gregory puts this thought:

... one illumination may come upon us from the One God (μᾶλλον δὲ μίαν ἐκ τῆς μιᾶς θεότητος γενέσθαι τὴν ἔλλαμψιν), One in diversity (ένικῶς διαιουμένην), diverse in Unity (καὶ συναπτομένην διαορέτως), wherein is a paradox (ὁ καὶ παράδοξον) (*Or* 28.15)

answers, he nevertheless emphasizes that this is but a partial and relative knowledge. In such a way, Gregory regards epistemological issues from an anthropological and cognitive perspective and asserts that complete understanding of the phenomena cannot be achieved as long as there is a lack of knowledge about the human being and human mind (for the details on this issue cf. later, chapter 3, section 2).

But does this assertion represent a taboo against thinking about God; does incomprehensible also mean unthinkable? With respect to this question Gregory was perfectly explicit and stated that thinking about God is certainly necessary for the purification, perfection and salvation of the human being. Moreover, it is due to divine design that a human being should seek salvation by means of his intellect. In the second oration he claims that:

Reason that proceeds from God (ὁ ἐκ θεοῦ λόγος), that is implanted in all from the beginning (παῶσι σύμφυτος) and is the first law in us (πρῶτος ἐν ἡμῖν νόμος), and is bound up in all, leads us up to God (ἐπὶ θεὸν ἡμᾶς ἀνήγαγεν) through visible things (Or 28.15).

Ergo, it is pretty obvious that for Gregory God *is thinkable*. He even claims that “we ought to think of God even more often than we draw our breath; and if the expression is permissible, we ought to do nothing else” (Or 27.5). Then we may reasonably inquire, what is the secret meaning of this “thinking a paradox” business? Since Gregory never directly addresses this question, I venture to suggest the following interpretation of this matter. I take paradox to be a symbol of a never attainable intellectual pursuit towards a never attainable goal and therefore never ceases to engage someone into action which, far from being a total waste of time, is a useful mental exercise whose purpose is to refine and to perfect one’s cognizing. Therefore, it is accurate to regard thinking as a teleological process, whose τέλος is not the knowledge itself but thinking the knowledge.

This idea radiates throughout the whole body of the theological orations and more clearly and decisively in the following passages. At the end of the fourth oration, after a long set of exegetical observations concerning the biblical names of Christ, which Gregory makes using grammatical, logical and philological (sc. the cross-references and parallels in the scriptural texts) arguments, he concludes that:

We sketch him by his attributes (ἀλλ’ ἐκ τῶν περὶ αὐτὸν σκιαγραφοῦντες τὰ κατ’ αὐτὸν), and so deduce a certain faint and feeble and partial idea concerning him (ἀμυδρὰν τινα καὶ ἀσθενῆ καὶ ἄλλην ἀπ’ ἄλλου φαντασίαν συλλέγομεν), and our best theologian is he who has (καὶ οὗτος ἀριστος ἡμῖν θεολόγος), not indeed discovered the whole (οὐχ ὃς εὔρε τὸ πᾶν), for our present chain does not allow of our seeing the whole (οὐδὲ γὰρ δέχεται τὸ πᾶν ὁ δεσμός), but conceived of him to a greater extent than another (ἀλλ’ ὃς ἂν ἄλλου φαντασθῆι πλέον), and gathered in himself more of the likeness or adumbration of the truth (καὶ πλείον ἐν ἑαυτῷ συναγάγη τὸ τῆς ἀληθείας ἰνδαλμα, ἢ ἀποσκίασμα)⁴⁴⁵ (Or 30.17).

445 This is then the highest stage of advancing in theological knowledge, which, however, should not be conceived as final in the chronological and doctrinal

The clear emphasis on the personal progress of a theologian which is discernable in this passage may, naturally enough, call into question the whole enterprise of theological practice and threatens to drown it in relative uncertainty. If theology fully depends on the individual achievements of the practitioners of the discipline then, it seems, no room is left for valid concepts or any epistemological theorizing. In fact, Gregory does explicitly say that theological knowledge should not be understood as an absolute truth but as a relative superiority.⁴⁴⁶

Given that Gregory himself admitted to a relativism of theological knowledge, one may ask why did he then bother about the heretics? Where is the basis for unity in such a system? Or maybe it is not a system at all but a multitude of unverified religious axioms, and all the quasi logical arguments that we have observed hitherto are just rhetorical camouflage of the faith that never wanted a reasonable justification? I do not think so, and the reason why we are again faced with the similar puzzle we started with is that, in Gregory's thought, God really *is*, in an ordinary way, *incomprehensible* (that is to say, he cannot be understood in a way in which natural phenomena or abstract objects can be understood). This is why none of the logical or philosophical axioms or rules (like actuality-potentiality mechanism, or logical causality) can be expected to facilitate thinking about his unthinkable essence. But once the fact is accepted, once all necessary precautions are taken and the indispensable limits imposed by human nature (i.e. the cognitive limits) are clearly recognized, then, I suggest, a scholar might discover that it is his human nature that contains the solution to the greater part of these puzzles. What is more, once recognized, cognitive limits will no longer preclude us from using philosophical and scientific concepts and theories. On the contrary, according to this logic, the more verified and methodologically tested concepts are mostly welcome to enrich Christian theological discourse. This is why Gregory saw no harm in explaining the Trinitarian internal relations in the terms of logical causality and⁴⁴⁷ by means of the grammatical causalis. He plainly verbalized his principle of theological argumentation in the following statement:

sense but rather in a sequential sense, meaning that normally this stage cannot be achieved without implementing the previous two.

446 Cf.: “the relative superiority (τὸ ὑπερβάλλον τέλειον) is spoken of as if it were absolute knowledge (οὐ τῆ ἀληθεία), not because it is really such, but by comparison with the power of that other (τῆ δὲ τοῦ πλησιόν δυνάμει παραμετρούμενον)” (Or 28.17).

447 He even emphasized his purely instrumental approach to the matter by allowing himself to “play a little upon this word Father (προοπαίξω καὶ τὸν πατέρα)” (Or 29.7).

Therefore let us confine ourselves within our limits (διὰ τοῦτο ἐπὶ τῶν ἡμετέρων ὄρων ἰστάμενοι), and speak of the unbegotten and the begotten and that which proceeds from the Father (τὸ ἀγέννητον εἰσάγομεν, καὶ τὸ γεννητόν, καὶ τὸ ἐκ τοῦ πατρὸς ἐκπορευόμενον) (*Or* 29.2).

This statement prompts one to inquire about the limits of employment of philosophical concepts for theological reasoning. As follows from Nazianzen's hitherto described reasoning, none of the philosophical concepts can be used for theorizing about the divine essence. However, all tested philosophical and scientific concepts are applicable to the investigation of those issues which belong to the domain of *theologia naturalis*, which in Gregory's view denotes a broadly understood Christian philosophy with its various apologetic, polemical, ethical and other fields:

Attack the silence of Pythagoras, and the Orphic beans... the ideas of Plato... the atheism of Epicurus ... or Aristotle's petty providence... the superciliousness of the Stoa, or the greed and vulgarity of the Cynic ... Philosophize about the world or worlds; about matter; about soul; about natures endowed with reason, good or bad; about resurrection, about judgment, about reward, or the Sufferings of Christ (*Or* 27.9).

Norris takes this passage to be a call Gregory makes to his antagonists "to turn their immature dialectical skills against" the pagan philosophers.⁴⁴⁸ I do not think this is a key message in this passage. The Christian philosophical doctrine, though quite immature at that time, was clearly on its way to philosophical recognition.⁴⁴⁹ Therefore, it would seem to be logically contradictory to suppose that Gregory, first, was interested in dethroning Hellenic philosophy (whose doctrines he so often applied in his discourse), and, second, delegated such a task to his opponents, whom he indeed regarded as unskillful and insufficiently qualified philosophers. Rather, I am inclined to regard his antagonistic pose as a normal and typical sign of a perfectly educated intellectual, who knows his professional field well enough to reasonably choose what suits his goals. In addition I do not believe that Gregory could surrender philosophizing about theological matters to those whom he considered unskillful philosophers. The very topics he listed (resurrection,

448 Cf. Norris, 1991, 99.

449 At least, it was an explicit pursuit of many Christian intellectuals at that time, as I have shown earlier (cf. part one, chapter 1, section 2). As for Gregory, in this passage he, as a matter of course, showed his familiarity with the philosophical theories and the peculiar philosophical discussion between different schools apropos of these theories. Thus, I take it to be a sign of his intention to converse with his philosophical colleagues rather than to withdraw under a pretext of his beliefs, or to hand over this task to those whom he considered heretics (unless they choose to follow his methodological recommendations).

judgment, reward, and the sufferings of Christ) could hardly be regarded as minute issues for a “light” theological discourse. Besides, he did not suggest any alternative, i.e. any appropriate list of topics for “hard-core” theological reasoning. What he says at the end of the passage (and it is the end of the whole speech) is:

with God we shall have converse, in this life only a little (νῦν μὲν ὀλίγα); while a bit later (μικρὸν δὲ ὕστερον), maybe more perfectly (ἴσως τελεώτερον) (*Or* 27.9).

It is apparent from this statement that there is not going to be any new list of exquisite topics for better skilled theologians, it is only the degree of comprehension of the same matters that Gregory expects to be refined, i.e. it is all in all about the cognizing subject and not about an object of cognition. The object of cognition is altogether the same for Christians, heretics and pagan philosophers, therefore there is no need to feed animosity between thinkers, when there is agreement about the concepts.⁴⁵⁰

If we accept my interpretation of this final passage of the first theological speech, we can easily detect the relevance of the sequence of arguments in the following four orations. That is, Gregory puts together the typical philosophical and theological puzzles, observing a proper sequence that is *philosophia* – in *prolegomena*, *theologia* – a headmistress of the studies. Yet this sequence should not be understood as an alienating divide because one of the tasks of philosophy is to suggest epistemological principles and instruments for studies, therefore the relationships between the two disciplines are, figuratively speaking, not like that of colleagues but rather that of twin-sisters. This idea about a close interconnection and collaboration between philosophy (including natural philosophy) and theology maybe even more sharply surfaces in Gregory’s vision of natural theology, where a background assumption is that God is the efficient and maintaining cause of the universe.

450 In many cases Gregory attested an agreement even about some crucial matters. For instance, Gregory expressed his approval of the concept of external or separable mind, which is a characteristic Aristotelian notion (cf.: “Χωριστός δὲ λέγεται ὁ θύραθεν νοῦς,” Aristocles, *Fragm.*, fr. 4.138). He asserted that some “most theological men amongst Hellenes (Ἑλλήνων δὲ οἱ θεολογικώτεροι)” have rightly denoted the name of God when they called him “the external mind (τὸν θύραθεν νοῦν)” (*Or* 31.5). Alexander of Aphrodisias explicated the concept of the external mind by saying that the immortal intellect only comes to be in humans from outside and that it is not itself a part or disposition of the human soul (*DA* 90.23–91.4; cf. Caston, 2012, 108).

3. God as a primary nature and a cause of the universe

3.1 *The Peripatetic definition of primary nature*

Now I would like to observe how the Aristotelian concept of the actuality-potentiality mechanism echoed in Gregory's *theologia naturalis*. To demonstrate this connection I firstly present the Peripatetic vision of primary nature, – one of the key-terms of the *Physics* and *Metaphysics*, and one which Gregory employs in his discourse. Gregory's contemplation of primary nature demonstrates his familiarity with the Aristotelian concept and exemplifies how he makes use of the actuality-potentiality mechanism, and of efficient and final causes, for the sake of his argument. An apt explication of primary nature is found in Alexander of Aphrodisias' commentary on the book Δ of the *Metaphysics*. Alexander starts by citing the definition of primary nature from the *Metaphysics*, where Aristotle contends:

... *the nature that is primary* and that is said to be such in the proper sense is *the substance* of those things that have a beginning of movement in themselves qua themselves (Arist., *Met* 1015a13 in Alex., *ComMet* 360.1–5).

Then Alexander also adds a relevant passage from the *Physics* saying that:

... *nature* in the proper sense is *the enmattered (enulos) form*, from which the composite has the beginning of its movement ... and *nature* in this sense is *the beginning of the movement of natural things*, being present in them in some way ... either potentially or actually – potentially, as the soul is in the ejected semen; actually when there is finally a living thing. (Arist., *Phys* 193b3–8, in Alex., *ComMet* 360.5–10)

Alexander's reading of the passages goes as follows:

... *the beginning of movement for all natural things is the enmattered form*; this later, then, is rightly (called) nature in the primary sense, for nature was the beginning of movement.⁴⁵¹

From this rich set of observations⁴⁵² we may assume that *primary nature* in the proper sense is to be understood as *the enmattered form* and *the beginning of movement of all natural things*, which is present in them either potentially

451 Cf. Dooley, W.E., *Alexander of Aphrodisias, On Aristotle's Metaphysics* 5. Ithaca / New York 1994, 30f.

452 A meticulous scholar of Aristotle, Alexander also made an important remark: "It should be noted, however, that when Aristotle distinguishes each of the things that is expressed in various ways, he treats it not as equivocal, but as derived from one thing and related to one thing" (*ComMet* 360.12–15, transl. W.E. Dooley, 1994, 31).

or actually.⁴⁵³ I suggest that this conception is at the background of Gregory's reflection about God as a cause of the universe.

3.2 Gregory's understanding of primary nature

In the second theological oration Gregory, after pondering the faculty of imagination, which bestows natural limitations on the cognitive process, sets up a series of examples. He lists the famous biblical symbols⁴⁵⁴, which were often used as the names of God (i.e. spirit, fire, light, love, wisdom, righteousness, mind and reason), and perhaps a little unexpectedly inquires whether these are “the names of the first nature (αί προσηγορίαί τῆς πρώτης φύσεως)?” The text which follows, initially, drifts further away from biblical vocabulary towards the scientific and philosophical lexicon and at this point, the linkage between the biblical names and the Aristotelian concept of primary nature becomes clearer. Gregory associates the primary nature with the primary cause of the universe, i.e. with the Creator, whom he in an earlier passage explicitly addressed as “God, the efficient and maintaining cause of the universe” (“θεόν, καὶ τὴν πάντων ποιητικὴν τε καὶ συνεκτικὴν αἰτίαν,”⁴⁵⁵ Or 28.6).

This is how Gregory performs his sophisticated play on the Hellenic and biblical allusions. He explains biblical symbols in the terms of Hellenic philosophy⁴⁵⁶ and thus shows that for human reason, which is framed by its own natural processual conditions, there is no way but to arrive at certain definitions of natural facts⁴⁵⁷, which should not in the proper sense be predicated

453 William Dooley has noted Alexander's interpretation of substance as the form of natural things, so that he thus understood form as the intrinsic principle of movement, the fundamental sense of nature (cf. Dooley 1994, 137).

454 The relevant references to the biblical passages where these names are mentioned have been detected by the SC editors. E.g.: “Spirit” (John 4:24), “light” (1 John 1:5), “love” (1 John 4:16), “wisdom” (Job 12:13), “righteousness” (John 17:25), “mind” (Isa 40:13), “reason” (John 1:1).

455 Of note is that both terms in use here (i.e. ποιητικὴ et συνεκτικὴ αἰτία) belong to the Peripatetic lexicon; ἡ τῶν ὄλων σ. αἰτία is mentioned in *De Mundo* 397b9, which according to Norris, Gregory probably attributed to Aristotle (cf. Norris, 1991, 118).

456 Wyss and Moreschini mentioned an apparent allusion to the Stoic concept of the inner discourse (cf. Wyss, B., *Gregor II [Gregor von Nazianz]*, in: RAC 12 [1988], 831. Moreschini, 2004, 72, n. 76). I suggest that the descriptions of the πνεῦμα καὶ πῦρ καὶ φῶς allude to Aristotelian theories of natural motion and natural place (sc. air is characterized by motion and diffusion, fire – by upward motion, light – by its blending with light).

457 Cf.: “... for usage (τὸ ἔθος) when confirmed by time (χρόνω βεβαιωθὲν) was held to be law (νόμος)” (Or 28.14).

of the divine nature because the divine nature is principally different from the created nature. As is evident from the following text Gregory denotes the divine nature as primary nature in the sense of the cause of the universe:⁴⁵⁸

...rational nature (λογικὴ φύσις) longs for the first cause (τῆς πρώτης αἰτίας)
... faint with desire ... through ignorance of the first nature (τῆς πρώτης φύσεως) ... it tries a second course, either to look at visible things and out of some of them to make a god (*Or* 28.13–14).

In sum, what Gregory does in this passage is to tightly interweave Hellenic scientific and Christian biblical and theological contexts. I regard his treatment of this background material not just as a measure of polemical strategy but as a deliberate pursuit of a comprehensive research framework. This should not be taken as an example of a sketchy employment of philosophical terminology for the sake of a sophistic show. Gregory repeatedly noted that this was a strategy of his opponents, who armed themselves with syllogisms without doing a proper study of the underlying epistemology on which Peripatetic logic relied. It would be in grave tension with common reason to imagine that, having condemned the Eunomians for a lack of professional consistency and accuracy, Gregory himself yielded to the same flaw.

I also want to disprove a possible impression that there is nothing in common between the concept of God the Creator and the Peripatetic complex notion of primary nature, except for a surface and depthless similarity. Logically, if Gregory not only made use of the terminological camouflage but also got a grip on the underlying concept, then we should expect to find in his discourse the same inferences from the concept of primary nature which are conspicuous in Alexander's reasoning. And indeed we can find them. It is plainly stated in the cited passage from Alexander's commentary that far from being just, so to speak, a starting point or a beginning of motion of natural things, primary nature serves as a principle of the life of things. Therefore whenever a researcher investigates a thing, he practically studies the primary nature of this particular thing, hence, studies of primary nature per se galvanize the whole institution of human knowledge and procure the epistemological basis for it.

A perfect match to this idea is easily discernible in Gregory's thought. Gregory plainly states that God is an ontological and epistemological principle of creation in general and of every created thing in particular.⁴⁵⁹ Therefore,

458 Note that in the *Carmina moralia* Gregory directly calls Christ "the greatest mind and the first nature (Νοῦς ὦν μέγιστος, καὶ νοὸς πρώτη φύσις)" (*Moral* 720.11).

459 Cf.: "Likewise for us, He who made and moves and preserves all created things (τὸ ποιητικόν, καὶ τὸ κινεῖν καὶ τηροῦν τὰ πεποιημένα) is manifested (δηλον),

a purpose of Gregory's natural theology is not just to sketch the natural proofs of the divine existence⁴⁶⁰ but to fulfil the final goal embedded into living beings as their operative mechanism. To put it plainly, it is not God who needs to be detected in the life of living beings, it is living beings who, in order to perform their lives in a proper way, i.e. according to their functional designations, need to recognise in God the principle of their being.⁴⁶¹ In other words, according to Gregory knowledge about God (or about primary nature) provides the operative instructions for the life of living beings, which explain to them how to fulfil their τέλοι, i.e. how to function in harmony with the given natural conditions of their organisms. Thus, instead of creating a fixed conception of God, Gregory formulated an operative mechanism of the theological praxis which, according to his theory, has to be performed by every rational soul willing to succeed in its life. In the subsequent sections I describe the details of this theological practice, which Gregory thoroughly outlined in his theological orations. Now for the sake of the present ontological and metaphysical discourse I concentrate on the basic theoretical recommendations for theologians provided by Gregory.

The evidence presented above allows us to argue that Gregory deliberately employed the Peripatetic term of primary nature because he thereby underscored that God is the cause of the universe and hence that theological studies form a legitimate part of the general studies of living beings. Yet, the question remains, how is this research supposed to be done? How to methodologically distinguish different branches of philosophical, theological and scientific studies?

Apropos of the first question I want to refer to a beautiful passage from the oration 28, where Gregory gives a metaphorical description of spiritual contemplation while speaking of the Sinai theophany. This short fragment

even if He is not comprehended by the mind (μη̄ διανοία περιλαμβάνηται)” (Or 28.6).

460 Cf.: “And very wanting in sense is he who will not willingly go thus far (i.e. reaching an understanding of God is not only Creator but also maintainer of the universe, who is always present in his creation) in following natural proofs (ταῖς φυσικαῖς ἀποδείξεσιν)”. Gregory emphasizes however that neither natural proofs nor human argumentation could reveal any side of the divine essence” (Or 28.6).

461 Cf.: “Who was it who thus opened his minds mouth and drew in the Spirit, that by the Spirit which searches out and knows Gods depths he might comprehend God, might stand in no need of further progress as owning already the ultimate object of desire (τὸ ἔσχατον ὄρεκτόν) towards which speeds all the higher order and the intelligence (εἰς ὃ πᾶσα σπεύδει καὶ πολιτεία τοῦ ὑψηλοῦ καὶ διάνοια)?” (Or 28.6).

describes the whole of Gregory's system of theological knowledge by means of symbolic performance:

But when I directed my gaze I scarcely saw the averted figure of God (μόλις εἶδον θεοῦ τὰ ὀπίσθια — cf. Ex 33:23), and this whilst sheltering in the rock (καὶ τοῦτο τῇ πέτρᾳ σκεπασθείς), God the word incarnate for us (τῷ σαρκωθέντι δι' ἡμᾶς θεῷ Λόγω). Peering in I saw not the nature prime (οὐ τὴν πρώτην τε καὶ ἀκήρατον φύσιν), self-apprehended (by 'self' I mean the Trinity), the nature as it abides within the first veil (ὄση τοῦ πρώτου καταπετάσματος εἶσω μένει) and is hidden by the Cherubim, but as it reaches us at its furthest remove from God (ὄση τελευταία καὶ εἰς ἡμᾶς φθάνουσα), being, so far as I can understand, the grandeur... inherent in the created things he has brought forth and governs. All these indications of himself which he has left behind him (μετ' ἐκεῖνον ἐκεῖνου γνωρίσματα) are God's 'averted figure' (θεοῦ τὰ ὀπίσθια) (*Or* 28.3).

Evidently enough by “prime nature” in this passage Gregory denotes God's essence, while God's “averted figure” signifies his activity, which emerges from the essence and indicates it in the form of a trace or something “left behind him” (sc. γνωρίσμα). The creation of the world manifests the divinity, so that learning the world's principles (sc. φυσικοὶ νόμοι) contributes to approaching the divine knowledge.⁴⁶² Gregory negates the perception of the divine essence; but instead suggests the perception of the divine activities sketched out in the regular arrangement of the natural living beings (particularly in the human beings), and in the Holy Scripture (sc. particularly the exegesis of the divine names).

These different aspects of divine activity imply different modes of theological practice: natural theology and exegetic theology. At the bottom of these two branches of theological practise lies the practice of asceticism and prayer that makes theology not only a theoretical but also a practical and individually oriented or embodied discipline.

462 Applying the Stoic concept of the natural law (ὁ φυσικὸς νόμος), Gregory argues that the reasonable and logical structure of the universe calls forth its logical perception: “... that God, the creative and sustaining cause of all, exists, sight and instinctive law (ὁ φυσικὸς νόμος) inform us ... instinctive law, which infers their author through the things seen in their orderliness (διὰ τῶν ὁρωμένων καὶ τεταγμένων τὸν ἀρχηγὸν τούτων συλλογιζόμενος)” (*Or* 28.6). Basil also featured this concept in his *Homilies on the Hexameron*, where he synonymously used the terms φυσικὸς νόμος/λόγος. In the fifth homily we read: “... every created thing (ἕκαστον δὲ τῶν γενομένων) in the whole creation has some peculiar reason (ἰδίον τινα λόγον) ... As soon as the saying of those time and the first command became a sort of natural law (οἷον νόμος τις ἐγένετο φύσεως) that remained on Earth in the course of ages” (*Hexaem* 5.4.11–14).

Summary

Gregory distinguished between the essential and accidental definition of the thing and also differentiated simple belief from scientific definition. It is accurate to say that from the viewpoint of Aristotelian epistemology the formal construction of the Eunomian essential predication of God falls under simple belief rather than scientific definition. Eunomius denoted God the Father and God the Son with regard to their efficient cause, i.e. pointing at the absence of the source for the Father, and at Father as the source of the Son. Gregory agrees with Aristotle that simple belief, for which it is enough to register the existence of a thing and its efficient cause, differs from scientific definition which reveals the substance of a thing by detection of the final cause of the thing.⁴⁶³ And although according to Gregory there could be no scientific definition (sc. demonstration) of God because the essence of God is incomprehensible, yet a kind of such definition he deduces from the activity of God which is manifest in creation. Thus, to put it plainly, while in Aristotelian theory the substance is denoted by virtue of the chief function of the thing and the name is given by virtue of the substance: in Gregory's idea, the substance per se (i.e. the substance of God) is beyond names and functions but in relation to human beings the functions of God are discernible, hence the divine names are given by virtue of the relative functions of God (i.e. apropos of creation).

Similarly to Aristotelian epistemology, where the underlying issue at stake is the substance, in Gregory's system the essential predication of "being" to God, and the association of the divine nature with primary nature, which (in one of the senses of the term) is understood as the efficient, maintaining and final cause of the universe – provided a foundation for epistemological theory.

Chapter 3. The physiological and anthropological aspects of epistemological theory

Introduction

What is a proper definition of God or how can a Christian theologian define and denote God? These questions were raised to the top of the fourth century theological agenda by the Eunomians. Confronted with them, Gregory of Nazianzus preferred, instead of giving a direct answer, to investigate the

463 Having said that God is *ὁ ὄν* – a true being – Gregory similarly to Aristotle remarks that "it is one thing to be persuaded of the existence of a thing, and quite another to know what it is" (*πλεῖστον γὰρ διαφέρει τοῦ εἶναι τι πεπεῖσθαι τὸ τί ποτέ ἐστι τοῦτο εἰδέναι*) (*Or* 28.5). Cf.: "to define what a unit is is not the same as to affirm its existence" (Arist., *APo* 1.2).

epistemic side of the problem. He started by inquiring how human knowledge is possible; how it correlates with reality; and, with regard to this, how a man can know anything about God; and whether it is possible to utter this knowledge. Naturally this set of questions, since it inquired about the anthropological seeds of human knowledge, leaned towards philosophical and psychological domains. Hence Gregory in developing his theory broadly dwelled on the contemporary achievements of these disciplines. Taking for granted some of the anthropological and epistemological concepts Gregory embedded them into his theory in transformed and transfigured state. In such a way he simultaneously distanced himself from the Hellenic scholars and eased his own task by making a philosophical diaeresis instead of a scientific treatise.

A major common premise of Christian and Peripatetic epistemological theorizing, which inspired Gregory's philosophical speculations, consists in the recognition of the exquisite and substantial dignity of human intellective capacity, which distinguishes human beings from the other animals.⁴⁶⁴ Although different Hellenic philosophical schools admitted to the exceptional value of the human intellect, inclination towards balanced studies of material constituents and a theoretical framework of cognition was a genuinely Peripatetic one.⁴⁶⁵

The Peripatetics understood the process of perception as an interaction between the object of perception and the perceiving subject. According to their theory, both actors of the process actively engage in interaction so that a perceived image of a real object is a result of this mutual subject-object activity. For the Platonists and Stoics the process of perception was fully determined

464 The author of the treatise *On the creation of man* attributed to Gregory of Nyssa, argued that the human mind constitutes a coherent and indivisible unity with the body so that the mind has no perception without the material, nor can there be perception without intellectual capacity. Basil of Caesarea in his *Homilies on Hexaemeron* also devoted particular attention to the study of physiological aspects of intellection. Later Nemesius of Emesa in his *On the nature of man* – a treatise that investigates the physiology and cognitive capacities of the human being, ventured to reconcile Christian theology with medical and philosophical anthropology. Philoponus in his *Commentary on Aristotle's De anima* also devoted particular attention to intellection (esp., *ComDA* 3.4–8), and tried to harmonize Aristotelian theory with Christian theology.

465 Martha Nussbaum and Hilary Putnam have shown in their reply to Myles Burnyeat that unlike Platonic idealism and materialistic reductionism Aristotelian realism is characterized by the studies of “the natural and organic unity of the intentional with its constitutive matter” (Cf. Nussbaum, M. / Putnam, H., *Changing Aristotle's Mind*, in: Nussbaum, M.C. / Rorty, A.O. [eds.], *Essays on Aristotle's De Anima*. Oxford / New York 1995, 30–59).

by the perceiving subject, therefore the studies of natural compounds of the process were less relevant for their agenda.⁴⁶⁶

I am intending to show that apropos of the theory of perception Gregory sided with the Peripatetic teaching, which consequently shaped his epistemological concepts. Besides, as I have shown previously, Gregory generally consented to the Peripatetic association of the major ontological category, i.e. “being,” with the major epistemological category, i.e. substance (sc. “what is it”). It follows from this that he was predisposed to accept that the cognitive process is somehow interconnected with the physical reality of the natural life.⁴⁶⁷

Hitherto I have surveyed the logical and ontological aspects of Gregory’s epistemological theory. Now I concentrate on the physiological side of the theory and show, first, the interconnections between the ontological and physiological aspects of the cognitive process and, second, the practical mechanism of cognition, and the way it is performed by a human being composed of the soul and body.

1. The epistemological aspects of the Aristotelian theory of the soul

Jonathan Beere in his insightful investigation of the *Metaphysics Theta* has highlighted an important connection between the Aristotelian understanding of activity (sc. ἐνέργεια) and the notion of a capacity. He has argued:

There are not only capacities for change, but also capacities for living, thinking, and other energeiai that are not changes. For instance, any body of theoretical knowledge constitutes such a capacity: it is the capacity to engage in the sort of thinking that is understanding the relevant objects—in the case of geometry, geometrical figures. In no case is such thinking changing.⁴⁶⁸

It follows from this that for Aristotle knowledge is not fully dependent on but very tightly linked to the physiology of cognition and it is by means of the actuality-potentiality mechanism that Aristotle establishes this linkage.

466 A detailed and sharp account of the Aristotelian theory of perception and its difference from the other philosophical schools was provided by Beere (cf. Beere, J., *Doing and Being: An interpretation of Aristotle’s Metaphysics Theta*. Oxford 2009, 6, 44, 103–108).

467 This correspondence is quite clearly marked in Aristotle’s contemplation about the soul of the living beings preserved in *De anima*: “That it is a cause as substance (ὡς οὐσία) is clear, for substance is the cause of being for all things (αἴτιον τοῦ εἶναι πᾶσιν ἢ οὐσία), and for living things, being is life (τὸ δὲ ζῆν τοῖς ζῶσι τὸ εἶναι ἐστίν), and the soul is also the cause and source of life (αἰτία δὲ καὶ ἀρχὴ τούτου ἢ ψυχῆ)” (DA 415b8–14).

468 Cf. Beere, 2009, 13.

He contended that actuality refers to potentiality as form refers to matter, as soul (or substance) refers to body (cf. *DA* 415b8–14, *Phys* 255a36–10).

This crucial constraint provided a firm interconnection between the theoretical and empirical fields of studies. Yet the roots of this analogy deepen into the studies of nature, and particularly the investigation of the correlation between matter understood as a physical body of a thing, and form understood as the soul or substance of a thing, i.e. something that delineates the thing's identity,⁴⁶⁹ something that persists through change (*Met* 1024b30–1). Aristotle contended that as long as a thing is presented in reality as a coherent unity (sc. τὸ τί εἶναι), its identity should not be reduced to a cluster of its characteristics (*Interp* 20b16–19). He spotted the basis for unity of a thing in its immaterial substance, which differs from its body (material constituent) and at the same time is united with it, and cannot exist without it. The genuine Aristotelian concept of hylomorphism distinguished Peripatetic anthropological teaching from analogous philosophical theories.⁴⁷⁰ It also had a significant impact on the epistemological and cognitive theories.

The concept of hylomorphism (sc. a coherent unity of matter and form) entitled Aristotle to claim that although the human mind is not mixed with the body,⁴⁷¹ it nevertheless cannot exist without the body.⁴⁷² Moreover, Aristotle

469 Gareth B. Matthews suggested a fresh look at Aristotle's approach to the identity problem, which Matthews labelled as a doctrine of kooky objects. He has shown that although Aristotle sees identity as the oneness of an individual substance, he also investigates the instances of accidental unities. The whole conundrum makes a good case for the correlation between empirical and theoretical studies (cf. Matthews, G.B., *Accidental unities*, in: Schofield, M. / Nussbaum, M. [eds.], *Language and Logos. Studies in Ancient Greek Philosophy Presented to G.E.L. Owen*. London / New York, 1982, 223–241).

470 In other words, although the soul is the source of life of the human being, neither soul nor body can exist without each other, therefore the bodily conditions of the cognitive process are positively primordial and inevitable. There is no reason to try to escape them; rather the human being should study and exercise them because this is his functional goal or τέλος of his life.

471 That is to say that there is no particular organ in the human body which is responsible for intellection, although some faculties of the human body, like perception and imagination, provide a basis for intellection (cf. *DA* 411b14–19).

472 A sharp functionalist interpretation of Aristotle's hylomorphism and its correlation with the theory of mind, which I tend to support, has been given by Marc Cohen. He has argued that although a mental state may be realized by several different physical states or processes, it nonetheless cannot be reduced to physical states. Thus mental states are, rather, "functional states of the physical systems that realize them" (cf. Cohen, S.M., *Hylomorphism and Functionalism*, in: Nussbaum, M.C. / Rorty, A.O. [eds.], *Essays on Aristotle's De Anima*. Oxford / New York 1995, 62).

also claims that immaterial as it is the human mind *can* achieve true knowledge about real material things and how they are out there in the world. Even more so, Aristotle contends that true knowledge about reality is not just a goal of theoretical inquiry, but that it is, so to say, a functional goal of the human mind (*Met* 993b20–21).

In book three of *De anima* Aristotle professed that “the actuality of the sensible object is one and the same with that of the sense, though taken in the abstract, sensible object and the sense are not the same”⁴⁷³ (*DA* 426a21–25). In other words, the human organs of sense are arranged in such a way that they are able to be affected by sensible objects and thereby to receive information about the sensible objects.⁴⁷⁴ This is why Aristotle says that sense-perception “seems to be a kind of alteration” since “perception comes about with [an organ’s] being changed and affected” (*DA* 416b33f.).

In line with his general account of alteration, Aristotle treats perception as a case of interaction between two suitable agents: objects capable of acting and capacities capable of being affected. This mechanistic account of perception entitles Aristotle to claim that a somewhat reliable picture of reality can occur in a human’s mind, yet the question remains as to the extent to which knowledge depends on sense-perception and how to distinguish between sense-perception and intellection.⁴⁷⁵

At the beginning of *De anima*, where Aristotle surveyed the opinions of his predecessors (Platonists and Atomists) on the subject, he argued that the ancients assimilated intellection to perception because for them truth is what appears (*DA* 404a25–404b5). That is to say, the information received by the organs of sense really corresponds to what exists in reality and therefore the truth about the things is available to everyone who endorses it. This doctrine Aristotle attributed to Democritus, Pythagoreans, Anaxagoras and Empedocles.

Interestingly enough Aristotle then claimed that similarly to Empedocles “Plato in the *Timaeus* fashions the soul out of this elements; for like, he holds, is known by like (τῷ ὁμοίῳ τὸ ὅμοιον), and things are formed out of

473 Cf.: “the actual knowledge is identical with the thing known (Τὸ δ’ αὐτὸ ἐστὶν ἢ κατ’ ἐνέργειαν ἐπιστήμη τῷ πράγματι)” (*DA* 431a1).

474 Christopher Shields in his commentary to *DA* 417a2f., where Aristotle admitted his puzzling about the sense-perception, contends that “the sensory faculty is in potentiality, and that just as the combustible requires an actual spark to ignite into fire, so perception requires an actual external object as its object” (cf. Shields, C. [transl., intr., com.], Aristotle, *De anima*. Oxford 2016, 214).

475 Beere has argued that Aristotle treated perception as a non-rational power. He claimed that “rational powers have a two-component structure, involving both knowledge and a soul, whereas non-rational powers do not” (cf. Beere, 2009, 140f.).

the principles or elements (ἐκ τῶν στοιχείων), so that soul must be so too” (DA 404b15–20). Thus, Aristotle asserted that Plato deduced his theory of the soul from the same assumptions as the Atomists, and that he supported the idea that like is known by like.

This equation of the Platonic concept with the views of Empedocles may seem somewhat problematic because we know from the *Theaetetus* (160e5–186e12) that in contrast to the Atomists, Plato opposed truth to appearances. In his view, it is not the object of cognition that determines the result of sense-perception but rather the cognizing subject. In the *Timaeus* Plato gives details of the process of seeing. He asserted that “light-bearing eyes” (φωσφόρα ὄμματα, Plat., *Tim* 45bc) see sensible objects whenever “surrounded by midday light” with the result that “like becomes conjoint with like” (ὅμοιον πρὸς ὅμοιον συμπαγῆς γενόμενον, *ibid.*).

In view of this evidence, the question arises, why Aristotle associates the doctrines of Empedocles and Plato? Themistius in his *Paraphrase of De anima* helps us to understand Aristotle’s argument. He maintains that “both Timaeus in Plato, and Plato himself, explained our grasp of existing things through the soul’s affinity with the first principles” (*Paraph* 12.28, [DA 404b27–30]), and then, Themistius concludes that both Empedocles and Plato “posited knowing as belonging to the soul and thereby constituted it out of the first principles”⁴⁷⁶ (*ibid.*). Later, Plotinus attested Platonic emphasis on the determinative role of the cognizing subject in the process of perception. Thus, he asserted that contrary to Aristotle, Plato thought that “the vision sees not through some medium but by and through itself alone (οὐ δι’ ἐτέρου, ἀλλὰ δι’ αὐτῆς, Plotinus, *Enn* 5.3.8)”.

As opposed to the Platonic and Atomistic accounts of sense-perception Aristotle contended that a mediatory contact and interaction between the cognizing subject and the object of cognition is indispensable in the process of the sense-perception. The result of this interaction is that the object of perception alters the organs of sense. Thus, Aristotle defined sense-perception as a sort of alteration (ἀλλοίωσις τις εἶναι, DA 416b33–35). That is to say, when the eye sees a colour of a thing, what happens practically is that the organ of sight changes in such a way that it takes on this particular colour, though by doing so it does not undergo a quantitative change because by taking on a certain colour sense-perception simply realises its function (DA 417b3–4). Thus, the sense-organs when they receive sensible information become like the objects of sense, because “the perceptive faculty is in potentiality such as the object of perception already is in actuality” (DA 418a3–6).

Aristotle distinguished three stages of the perceptive process: first, when the objects of sense are received by the organs of sense; “next comes the

476 Transl. R. Todd, 2014, 27.

perception that they are attributes (ἡ αἴσθησις τῶν μὲν ἰδίων), and at this point error may come in ... thirdly, there is a perception of the common attributes (τῶν κοινῶν)” (DA 428b18). The task of the imagination is to transform sensible information into mental images, which are, as Aristotle asserted, “like present sensations, except that they are immaterial (τὰ γὰρ φαντάσματα ὡσπερ αἰσθήματά ἐστι, πλὴν ἄνευ ὕλης DA 432a10)”. Aristotle distinguished between sense-perception, imagination and thinking.⁴⁷⁷ He assumed that “as without sensation a man would not learn or understand anything, so at the very time when he is actually thinking he must have an image before him” (DA 432a7f.). Nevertheless, “the simplest notions differ in character from mental images,” although “they cannot dispense with images” (DA 432a12f.).

The concept of the sense-perception held an important role in Aristotelian cognitive theory because he modelled his concept of intellection on that of sense-perception⁴⁷⁸. That is to say that like sense-perception, the process of intellection is operated by the actuality-potentiality mechanism. In Aristotelian words the human mind is nothing in actuality before it thinks (DA 429a22–24). And what happens with the mind thinking a thing is that it *becomes like*⁴⁷⁹ the object of thought and the result of this interaction is that “the actual knowledge (ἡ κατ’ ἐνέργειαν ἐπιστήμη) is identical (τὸ δ’ αὐτό ἐστίν) with the thing known (τῷ πράγματι)” (DA 431a1). Thus, the active intellect reconstitutes in itself an animated picture of reality, even though it receives from sense-perception nothing but sensory information about the characteristics of things.⁴⁸⁰

A similar sort of interaction and change that accompanies the process of the sense-perception, according to Aristotle, galvanizes the process of intellection

477 He claimed that imagination is not identical with thinking, or, in his words, “is distinct from affirmation and negation, because it needs a combination of notions to constitute truth or falsehood” (DA 432a11f.).

478 Here is how Themistius expounded this idea: “imagination is [active] towards the form, the imprint of which sense-perception has received. Thus actual sense-perception becomes for imagination precisely what the object of perception is for sense-perception” (*Paraph* 92.4; transl. R. Todd, 2014, 115).

479 Here is how Aristotle expounded the concept of knowing like by like: “it [the sense-perception] is affected while being unlike what affects it, but when it has been affected, it has been made like it and is such as what affected it is” (DA 418a5f.).

480 Shields has suggested that if we accept Bywater’s (1888) conjecture to the passage, “mind is a form of forms” (432a2) and read it as “mind is a form of intelligible forms”, then “we would come closer to completing the parallel with perception which follows immediately (432a2f.), since perception is said to be a form of the objects of perception” (cf. Shields, 2016, 344).

in such a way that the thinking intellect gets in contact with the substance of the object (*Met* 1072b21). Kurt Pritzl expounded this Aristotelian concept through the analogy of touch: “The mind’s contact with its object is a passive touching, a holding; the object, given here as the *ousia*, is active in touching the mind”.⁴⁸¹

In this theory *ousia* is understood as an immaterial basis for unity of the characteristics of the thing. In Aristotle’s explanation the substance of a thing is not something material that belongs to the thing because all the parts of the human body collected and properly arranged together do not make of a human body a certain living person. Aristotle contended that there should be something more than just a cluster of material constituents. This something more is the immaterial substance, which determines not only the thing’s shape but also its life and functional purpose. The human mind thinks these substances because it thinks things as indivisible entities,⁴⁸² i.e. *as they are* in reality,⁴⁸³ and not a bunch of categorial properties. Remarkably by thinking many substances, the human mind does not undergo either division or quantitative change but maintains its “oneness”.⁴⁸⁴

Thus, according to Aristotle the subject and object of sense-perception and even the environment where the process takes place determine its result. Hence, human intellection is severely restricted by bodily states and both external and internal conditions. Nevertheless, Aristotle emphasized that the bodily prerequisites of intellection do not prevent a human being from acquiring the true understanding of reality. On the contrary, only by means of bodily interaction is a true engagement of subject and object possible. Martha Nussbaum has argued that by saying “goodbye” to Platonic forms Aristotle distanced his philosophical position from idealism. She affirmed that for Aristotle “appearances and truth are not opposed, as Plato believed they were. We can have truth only *inside* the circle of the appearances, because only there can we communicate, even refer, at all.” Nussbaum defined Aristotle’s position as internal realism “that articulates very carefully the limits within which any realism must live.”⁴⁸⁵

481 Cf. Pritzl, 2010, 27.

482 Cf.: “the mind thinks in an indivisible unit of time and by an indivisible mental act” (*DA* 430b15).

483 Cf. *DA* 418a3–6; 424a17–21.

484 Themistius explained the oneness of intellect by affirming that the active intellect whenever it thinks other things it thinks itself too: the intellect, when inactive, is said to have the $\xi\xi\iota\varsigma$ of thoughts, but when active towards one of its thoughts is at that time identical with what is being thought, and by thinking that thing thinks itself too (*Paraph* 95.21; transl. R. Todd, 2014, 119).

485 Cf. Nussbaum, M., *Saving Aristotle’s Appearances*, in: Schofield, M. / Nussbaum, M. (eds.), *Language and Logos*. Cambridge 1982, 290f.

Along the lines of this logic, Aristotle claimed that thinking starts from the experience of life, from the starting points perceived by induction,⁴⁸⁶ and it ends in life⁴⁸⁷ because actual knowledge is a process, a process of thinking, which can (and in Aristotelian thought, should) master the life of the human being. That is to say, the human being can either follow the guidance of his mind or the guidance of his corporeal desires. One way of acting would be in conformity with the animal side of his nature, another – with his exquisite human side.

Aristotelian anthropology revolved around the idea that it is by virtue of mind that the human being has his special dignity throughout the animal kingdom (*DA* 414b18). Ergo, the faculty of intellection constitutes an essential feature of the human being⁴⁸⁸. Similarly to animals, who cannot survive without the faculty of sensation, human beings cease to be who they are without intellection (*DA* 429a6f.). Since this faculty is less developed in a child than in an adult, and acknowledging the fact that due to mental deficiencies some human beings are not capable of intellection, Aristotle claimed that it is the functional goal, the τέλος, of a human being to engage in intellection.

With this, my epistemological survey has finally come full circle. I started by inquiring how, according to Aristotelian thought, knowledge is possible, and have now arrived at a recognition that knowledge is not only possible but is *sui generis* a duty of human beings. Peripatetic theory suggests that the faculty of intellection is for the human being a substantial capacity. That

486 Aristotle professed that all explanations rely on first principles, which in turn are grasped by perception via induction: “all teaching (πᾶσα διδασκαλία) starts from facts previously known (ἐκ προγιγνωσκομένων) ... since it proceeds either by way of induction (δι ἐπαγωγῆς), or else by way of deduction (ἢ δὲ συλλογισμῶ). Now induction supplies a first principle or universal (ἡ μὲν δὴ ἐπαγωγή ἀρχὴ ἐστὶ καὶ τοῦ καθόλου), deduction works from universals (ὁ δὲ συλλογισμὸς ἐκ τῶν καθόλου); therefore there are first principles from which deduction starts (ἀρχαὶ ἐξ ὧν ὁ συλλογισμὸς), which cannot be proved by deduction (ὧν οὐκ ἔστι συλλογισμὸς); therefore they are reached by induction (ἐπαγωγῆ ἀρχα)” (*NE* 1139b25–30).

487 As opposed to Plato, who made no difference between wisdom (sc. σοφία) and practical wisdom (sc. φρόνησις) and associated wisdom primarily with theoretical knowledge (*Meno* 96d–100a), Aristotle deemed practical wisdom higher than theoretical wisdom (*NE* 1141b3–9) and even claimed that practical wisdom stands opposite to theoretical wisdom (*NE* 1142a25).

488 In a puzzling passage from *De Anima* Aristotle even claims that intellection is “a kind of an essence” and that “it does not perish” (cf.: ὁ δὲ νοῦς ἔουκεν ἐγγίνεσθαι οὐσία τις οὐσα, καὶ οὐ φθείρεσθαι; *DA* 408b18–29). Christopher Shields has suggested interpreting this fragment indirectly, and by means of analogy with sensation, which depends on sense-organs, while intellection appears to be free of such dependence (cf. Shields, 2016, 145).

is to say that the faculty of intellection (sc. νοῦς) is the basis for the unity of the human being understood as the hylomorphic unit of matter and form, i.e. body and soul. Now, after this schematic survey of the psychological and cognitive aspects of Aristotelian epistemology, I return to Gregory's reflection about theological knowledge preserved in his orations.

2. Gregory on the theory of knowledge and the intellective faculties of the human being

A principal characteristic of Gregory's epistemology is that the process of knowing is determined neither by cognizing subject nor by object of cognition but that it is a mutual and dynamic interaction of both. Aristotle emphasized the importance of contact and exchange in sense-perception and intellection. Apostle Paul associated the process of knowing Christ with interaction between the believer and God. One of Paul's key expressions about the process of knowing – a passage from the 1 Cor 13:12, – “then shall I know, even as also I am known” (ἐπιγνώσομαι καθὼς καὶ ἐπεγνώσθην) – a phrase that Paul repeats in Gal 4:9⁴⁸⁹ and that echoes a saying from John 10:14 “I know my own and my own know me”.⁴⁹⁰ Gregory put this slogan at the centre of his epistemological theory (cf. *Or* 28.17) and opposed the interactive method of acquiring knowledge to the rationalistic approach of Eunomius. I suggest that although Gregory's primary source of inspiration was in Paul, he also took advantage of the Aristotelian theory of knowledge and particularly of the connection between epistemology and physics that characterizes Aristotelian thought.

Like the Peripatetics Gregory inquired about epistemological puzzles from the perspective of studying nature, and especially from the anthropological viewpoint. It is remarkable that a few times throughout the theological circle Gregory devotes a fair bit of his text to a brief survey of the chief research questions of contemporary anthropological studies.⁴⁹¹ In the second theological oration Gregory inquires:

... consider myself and the whole nature and constitution of man (τὴν ἀνθρωπίνην φύσιν καὶ σύμπηξιν), and how we are mingled, and what is our movement, and how the mortal was compounded with the immortal (τὸ ἀθάνατον τῷ θνητῷ συνεκράθη) ... and how it gives life and shares in feelings

489 Cf.: “But now after ye have known God, or rather are known of God, how turn you again to the weak and beggarly elements where unto ye desire again to be in bondage?” (Gal 4:9; transl. KJV).

490 Cf.: “I am the good shepherd; I know my own sheep, and they know me” (John 10:14; transl. KJV,corr.).

491 Namely, *Or* 28.21–22, *Or* 29.8, *Or* 31.15.

(ζῶν δίδωσι, καὶ πάθους μεταλαμβάνει) ... what was our first moulding and composition (ἢ πρώτη πλάσις ἡμῶν καὶ σύστασις⁴⁹²) in the workshop of nature, and what is our last formation and completion (ἢ τελευταία μόρφωσις καὶ τελείωσις)?.. How is it that species are permanent, and are different in their characteristics (έστηκότα τε τὰ εἶδη καὶ τοῖς χαρακτήροισι διεστηκότα, ὧν τοσοῦτων ὄντων αἱ ιδιότητες ἀνέφικτοι⁴⁹³) ... and in a word, all by which this little world called Man is swayed (ὅσοις ὁ μικρὸς οὗτος κόσμος διοικεῖται, ὁ ἄνθρωπος) (Or 28.22).

Two important things should be noted with regard to this fragment. First, the questions which Gregory raises here demonstrate his awareness of the particular biological issues which were discussed in the philosophical and scientific milieus of his time.⁴⁹⁴ Second, the fact that Gregory briefly repeats these questions in other places in the theological circle and also in his other works shows his continuous interest in biological matters.⁴⁹⁵ Looking more closely at these rhetorical questions, we can see a concise form of contemporary scientific theories about human intellection that Gregory is ready to accept.

In the third theological oration Gregory again touches upon biological and especially anthropological matters likewise by means of rhetorical interrogation. He inquires:

... you have no knowledge of your generation ... and you have to discover the laws of composition and formation (συμπήξεως, μορφώσεως) ... and the tie of the soul to body (ψυχῆς πρὸς σῶμα δεσμόν) and mind to soul (νοῦ πρὸς ψυχῆν) and reason to mind (λόγου πρὸς νοῦν), movement (κίνησιν), increase (αὐξησιν), assimilation of food (τροφῆς ἐξομοίωσιν), sense-perception (αἰσθησιν), memory (μνήμην), recollection (ἀνάμνησιν), and all the rest of the

492 Both πλάσις and σύστασις are *termini technici* of Aristotle's biological corpus, where the highest frequency of these terms throughout the *TLG* corpus is detected. E.g., in *De generatione animalium* he speaks of "the first conformation (πρώτη συστάσει) of the parts from the seminal secretion" (GA 744b29), and about the the first formation of the embryo (πλάσιν τοῦ ἐμβρύου)" (GA 776a33).

493 It is also in *De generatione animalium* where Aristotle speaks in great detail about different species of animals (including human beings), their characteristics, etc.

494 Similarly to the Peripatetics Gregory explicitly defined man as "a rational animal (ζῶον λογικόν) from a mixture of rational and irrational elements (ἐκ λογικοῦ τε καὶ ἀλόγου κράματος)" (Or 32.9 = PG 36, 184.50).

495 Cf. in the Or 28.23 he inquires about the distinctions among different animals (τὰς τῶν ἄλλων ζῶων διαφορὰς πρὸς τε ἡμᾶς καὶ πρὸς ἄλληλα) and the distinctions among plants (φυτῶν διαφορὰς). Galen in his treatise *De alimentorum facultatibus* devotes a section to "the distinctions between the domestic and wild animals" (*Aliment* 3.680.18) and to "the distinctions between the parts of the edible plants" (*Aliment* 645.1).

parts of which you are compounded (τὰλλα ἐξ ὧν συνέστηκες); and which of them belongs to the soul and body together, and which to each independently of the other, and which is received from each other⁴⁹⁶ (*Or* 29.8).

The distinction that Gregory makes in this fragment (and elsewhere in his works outside the theological circle⁴⁹⁷) between different mental faculties and their interrelation with the soul and body conforms to Aristotelian theory. In the *Carmina moralia* he explicitly formalizes the basic notions of cognitive theory in agreement with the Peripatetic teaching. He professes that:

The soul is the nature, which gives and maintains life (Ψυχή δὲ, φύσις ζωτική, φέρουσα τε); as for my soul [sic. the human soul], it is commingled with reason and mind (Λόγος δὲ καὶ νοῦς τῆ γ' ἐμῆ συνεκράθη); Mind is the internal and indescribable sight (Νοῦς δ' ἔστιν ὄψις ἔνδον, οὐ περιγράφος); The function of mind is intellection and [the capacity to be] enformed (Νοῦ δ' ἔργον, ἡ νόησις, ἐκτύπωμά τε); Reason is the search for intelligible forms (Λόγος δ' ἔρκευα τῶν νοῦς τυπωμάτων), which you pronounce by your speech organs (Ὀν ἐκλαλήσεις ὀργανοῖς φωνητικοῖς); The sense-perception is a kind of reception of the external (Αἴσθησις ἔστιν εἰσδοχὴ τις ἔκτοθεν)⁴⁹⁸ (*Moral* 947.10–948.1).

Clearly enough these definitions generally lean towards the Aristotelian vision of the soul, reason, intellection, and sense-perception that I have discussed earlier. Like Aristotle, Gregory distinguished between the faculties of sense-perception (sc. αἴσθησις), imagination (sc. φαντασία), reasoning (sc. λόγος) and intellection (sc. νοῦς). He also regarded sense-perception as a mechanistic process which he labelled, like the Peripatetics, “a kind of alteration” that implies a certain change of mind, which becomes enformed by the intelligible form that it thinks. In such a way he asserted that the human mind is “something dwelling in another (τὸν ἐν ἄλλῳ)”, something whose “movements are thoughts (κινήματα τὰ διανοήματα)” either “silent or spoken (ἡρεμοῦντα ἢ προβαλλόμενα)”; that reason is something that accompanies silent or spoken [thoughts], while wisdom is “a kind of habit of mind (τίνα παρὰ τὴν ἕξις)” ... and justice and love are praiseworthy dispositions (διαθέσεις), the

496 A comparable list of questions we can find at the beginning of book I of *De anima* where Aristotle inquires, whether the soul is a unity or a compound of the elements, what maintains the unity of soul and body, how is the soul a source of life, what are the attributes and functions of the soul, how is it connected with the body and how does this connection shape the functional characteristics of the soul?

497 Cf.: “Mind (νοῦς), then, and sense (αἴσθησις), thus distinguished from each other, had held their own definitions (τῶν ἰδίων ὄρων ἐντὸς), and bore in themselves the magnificence of the Creator-Word” (*Or* 38.11).

498 Translation mine.

one opposed to injustice, the other to hate ... “which make us what we are, and change us as colours do bodies (ὅλως ποιούσας ἡμᾶς καὶ ἀλλοιούσας, ὥσπερ αἱ χροαὶ τὰ σώματα)?”⁴⁹⁹ (*Or* 28.13).

Similar to the Peripatetic teaching, Gregory professed that each time the mind thinks, it entertains images before it, and although intellection is not identical with the imagination, without imagination intellection is not possible.⁵⁰⁰ It logically follows from this idea that imagination and intellection can hardly serve as acceptable tools for a researcher trying to understand divine nature. Common sense dictates that the unoriginated nature of God differs from the originated nature of the universe. Whilst the latter is available to human sense-perception and feeds the imagination, the first is beyond the reach of human senses (cf. “carnal minds bring in carnal images,” *Or* 29.13). Whatever methods and techniques of thinking the scholar might apply, his thinking apparatus is arranged in such way that it cannot function other than according to its arrangement.

Gregory insists, however, that unable to overcome its natural operative mechanism, the human mind can nevertheless transcend it to a certain extent, in that it can recognize its own limitation. And this, Gregory insists is what is special about the human mind. In Gregory’s own words: “you have known reason by knowing the things that are beyond reason (λόγον ἔγνωσ τὸ γνῶναι τὰ ὑπὲρ λόγον)” (*Or* 28.28). A characteristic capacity of self-introspection distinguishes intellection from other cognitive capacities. Thus, sense-perception cannot perceive sense-perception; the imagination cannot, strictly speaking, imagine the imagination (though the mind can think about imagination as well as about other capacities, abstract concepts and categories). Unlike these faculties, human intellect *can* think itself and even spot its own limitations.

499 Themistius in his paraphrase of Aristotle’s *De anima* stated: “since the soul is the cause and first principle of the living body” (*Paraph* 50.26, [DA 415b8–12]), “it is from the soul that comes two kinds of movement: and movement in respect of place, and movement in respect of alteration (for sense-perception is considered an alteration)” (*Paraph* 50.29 = 415b21–27). He also talked about the disposition (διάθεσις) for knowledge (*Paraph* 55.29, [DA 417b2–8]) and ἔξις as the movement from ignorance to knowledge (*Paraph* 55.15, [DA 417a21–b2]). Robert Todd has noted that Themistius understands ἔξις as the precondition for thinking exemplified by someone thoroughly acquainted with a body of knowledge and able to actualize it at will (cf. Todd, R. [transl., com.], *Themistius On Aristotle On the Soul*. London / New York 1996, 192).

500 Cf.: “...our mind fails to transcend corporeal images” (οὕτω κάμνει ἐκβῆναι τὰ σωματικά ὁ ἡμέτερος νοῦς), and to consort with the incorporeal, stripped of all clothing of corporeal ideas...” (*Or* 28.13, cf. DA 432a).

In such a way Gregory maintains that intellection is a unique human capacity that distinguishes the human being from other animals. Gregory's natural philosophical approach to cognitive issues is no wonder if we take into account his surroundings. Gregory's brother Caesarius was a renowned physician, Gregory's friend Basil devoted special attention to the studies of nature, and Gregory's correspondent Themistius wrote many commentaries on Aristotelian treatises (inter alia, on the *Parva naturalia*; *Suda* also mentions his epitome of the *Physics*, in eight books). Thus, it seems natural that Gregory was himself tolerably well versed in the contemporary cognitive and anthropological definitions debated by members of the philosophical schools. In the fifth theological oration after a brief exposition of key anthropological concepts, Gregory explicitly mentions Aristotelian biological treatises, i.e. *The History of animals* and *On generation* (τὰς τῶν ζώων γενέσεις; τῆς περὶ ζώων ἱστορίας, *Or* 31.10).

It is no surprise that Gregory read some biological texts, more interesting, however is that having taken advantage of philosophical cognitive theories Gregory modelled his account of the process of knowing Christ on the process of intellection.

In such a way, Gregory emphasised the analogy between the human mind and body and the mind and body of Christ. He asserted that in following the direction of νοῦς of Christ, human beings can actualise their potential. Thus, in the *Oration* 32, having briefly described the functions of the eye, foot, tongue, ear, nose and hand, Gregory assumes:

the mind directs them all (νοῦς δὲ τοῖς πᾶσιν ἡγεμῶν) since it is the source of sensory perception (παρ' οὗ τὸ αἰσθάνεσθαι) and the locus to which sense impressions are channeled (εἰς ὃν ἡ αἰσθησις): so it is with us as well, as with the common body of Christ (οὕτω καὶ παρ' ἡμῖν, τῷ κοινῷ Χριστοῦ σώματι) (*Or* 32.10).

For Gregory this bodily narrative turned out to be particularly important because he affirmed that the degradation of the body caused by the fall of man had been redeemed by Christ, who himself from the moment of incarnation and forever onwards preserves his human body:

For there is One God, and One Mediator between God and Man, the Man Christ Jesus. For He still pleads even now as Man for my salvation; for He continues to wear the Body which He assumed (μετὰ τοῦ σώματός ἐστιν) (*Or* 30.14).

Thus, it is fair to say that in Gregory's view, neither intellection nor salvation are possible without body. Moreover, the very process of approaching God, i.e. the imitatio Dei practice implies an embodied contact and interaction, whose expected result is a change of mind or in Gregory's words an ascension of the human mind to its divine archetype:

In my opinion it [sc. the essence and nature of God] will be discovered when that within us which is godlike and divine (τὸ θεοειδὲς τοῦτο καὶ θεῖον), I mean our mind and reason (τὸν ἡμέτερον νοῦν τε καὶ λόγον), shall have mingled with its like (τῷ οἰκεῖῳ προσμίξει), and the image shall have ascended to the archetype (ἢ εἰκὼν ἀνέλθῃ πρὸς τὸ ἀρχέτυπον), of which it has now the desire (οὗ νῦν ἔχει τὴν ἔφεσιν) (*Or* 28.17).

Although in this passage Gregory speaks about the future, he elsewhere asserts that the process of knowing Christ should be started in the present. Gregory assimilates the practice of thinking of God to taking on the likeness to divinity. More concretely, it means that since the process of knowing is mutual, when the human mind thinks of God through thinking his divine manifestations or images it reassembles them into a united picture, or in Gregory's words, into a sketch of truth:

But we sketch him by his attributes (ἀλλ' ἐκ τῶν περὶ αὐτὸν σκιαγραφοῦντες τὰ κατ' αὐτὸν), and so deduce a certain faint and feeble and partial idea concerning him (ἀμυδρὰν τινα καὶ ἀσθενῆ καὶ ἄλλην ἀπ' ἄλλου φαντασίαν συλλέγομεν), and our best theologian is he who has (καὶ οὗτος ἀριστος ἡμῖν θεολόγος), not indeed discovered the whole (οὐχ ὅς εὔρε το πᾶν), for our present chain does not allow of our seeing the whole (οὐδὲ γὰρ δέχεται τὸ πᾶν ὁ δεσμός), but conceived of him to a greater extent than another (ἀλλ' ὅς ἂν ἄλλου φαντασθῆ πλέον), and gathered in himself more of the likeness or adumbration of the truth (καὶ πλεῖον ἐν ἑαυτῷ συναγάγῃ τὸ τῆς ἀληθείας ἰνδαλμα, ἢ ἀποσκίασμα) (*Or* 30.17)

Importantly, Gregory identifies this sketch with the mind of Christ, which is the archetype of the human mind. Thus, we can assume that by the way of thinking of God the human mind also thinks its own archetype. In this context, Gregory argues, it is possible to grasp the meaning of Paul's famous phrase: "we shall know as far as we are known." As I understand it, we shall know as far as we are engaged in knowing, i.e. in the mutual and dynamic exchange with God, which cannot be fulfilled because it is a process. Elsewhere in the theological circle Gregory repeats this idea by saying that when the human mind thinks of God at the same time God gets to know the human being and the Holy Spirit actualises this mutual exchange:

Be reconciled to God (καταλλάγητε τῷ θεῷ, 2 Cor 5:20) and quench not the Spirit (1 Thess 5:19) or rather, may Christ be reconciled to you (μᾶλλον δέ, καταλλαγείῃ Χριστὸς ὑμῖν), and may the Spirit enlighten you" (*Or* 29.21).

Remarkably, Gregory says here that he understands the process of knowing as a kind of interactive exchange between the human being and Christ in which both parties are actively engaged, that is to say, both parties undergo a non-quantitative change because in this system that true knowledge is mutual,

i.e. it requires contact and collaboration (which is why the bodily aspect of engagement is crucially important).

The fragment tells us that the value of understanding the attributes of divinity cannot be classified among pure intellectual achievements like the discovery of a mathematical or astronomical law, but should rather be regarded as an instance of the personal improvement of the theologian. The knowledge that the theologian gains should prove beneficial for his own life.

This ethical and didactic commitment of epistemological theory was very important for Gregory. Thus, he made it a pronounced goal for his orations to provide some general recommendations for the appropriate conduct of theological contemplation. He framed his argumentation in such a way that it could serve as “a sort of foundation and memorandum (ὄσον ῥίζα τις εἶναι καὶ ὑπόμνημα) for the use of those who are better able to conduct the enquiry to a more complete working out (τοῖς ἐξεταστικωτέροις τῆς τελεωτέρας ἐξεργασίας)” (Or 30.16).

This passage, and the explicit promise of clear instructions for theological argumentation, is followed by exegetic guidance, which touches upon the dogmatic and ethical or soteriological domains. Gregory asserts:

What is lofty you are to apply to the Godhead (ἐνὶ δὲ κεφαλαίῳ, τὰ μὲν ὑψηλότερα πρόσαγε τῇ θεότητι), and to that nature in him which is superior to sufferings and incorporeal (καὶ τῇ κρείττονι φύσει παθῶν καὶ σώματος); but all that is lowly to the composite condition of him who for your sakes made himself of no reputation and was incarnate (τὰ δὲ ταπεινότερα τῷ συνθέτῳ, καὶ τῷ διὰ σὲ κενωθέντι καὶ σαρκωθέντι) ... The result will be that you will abandon these carnal and groveling doctrines, and learn to be more sublime (ἵνα σὺ τὸ τῶν δογμάτων σου σαρκικὸν καὶ χαμαιπετὲς καταλύσας μάθης ὑψηλότερος εἶναι), and to ascend with his godhead (καὶ συνανιέναι θεότητι), and you will not remain permanently among the sensible images (καὶ μὴ τοῖς ὀρωμένοις ἐναπομένοις), but will rise up with him to the meanings of the things (ἀλλὰ συνεπαίρη τοῖς νοουμένοις, καὶ γινώσκης), and come to know which passages refer to his nature, and which to his assumption of human (τίς μὲν φύσεως λόγος, τίς δὲ λόγος οἰκονομίας) (Or 29.18)

It is pretty clearly marked in this passage that Gregory thinks through the process of theological contemplation in parallel with the process of intellection so that the background assumption here would be that his addressee is familiar with the terminology and concepts he uses in his discourse. I think it is in any way impossible or difficult to suppose that the well-educated audience in front of which he delivered his speeches was unaware of the key epistemological doctrines of the time. This general familiarity with the topical philosophical discussions that we may safely assume in Gregory's audience, I think, had motivated him to freely use philosophical and scientific *termini*

technici as well as numerous allusions to various Hellenic and Christian contexts and to weave them into a beautiful tissue of theological concepts.

3. God as maintainer and rationale of the universe

Gregory maintained that accurate knowledge of nature is desirable for the Christian theologian. Exegetic and dogmatic theology and the carrying out on a practical level of church rituals should not, Gregory argued, be in any way opposed to natural theology, because these are different branches of the same knowledge. The subject of this knowledge, according to Gregory, is the divine activity featured in the heavenly bestowed natural law that galvanizes the whole universe and that enables human cognition of the universe and mastery over creation.

With regard to these epistemic prerequisites it would be accurate to assume that Gregory conceived of theology as the study of life in all its fullness and variety of manifestations. Consequently, he was committed to applying various scientific and philosophical research methods as well as contemplative and ascetic practices.

These epistemological principles, which Gregory supplied, resonated with the Christian vision of God as creator, maintainer and τέλος of the universe. In Gregory's own words: "God gave substance (τὸ πᾶν οὐσιούτο τῷ Θεῷ) and existence (ὑφίστατο) to the whole" (*Or* 32.10). Gregory argued that God has instilled in human beings a longing for God that surpasses the earthly longing of the flesh (*Or* 32.9). In his *De moderatione in disputando* Gregory articulated a conception of the orderly organization of the universe, which is mirrored in the systematic organization of the cognitive process:

There is an order in elements (Τάξις ἐν στοιχείοις), which constitute the bodies (ἐξ ὧν τὰ σώματα) ... It is through order that all things have been given their arrangement (Τάξει τὰ πάντα διεκοσμήθη), and Logos who has done the arranging... It is order that holds together the things of heaven and the things of earth; order among the things we perceive with our minds; order among those we perceive with our senses (τάξις ἐν νοητοῖς·τάξις ἐν αἰσθητοῖς)⁵⁰¹ (*Or* 32.7–8).

Having proclaimed the regular organisation of the universe, Gregory immediately explains that it is for the sake of the intellective capacity, which human beings possess and are designed to exercise, that God shaped the universe in such an intelligible way. Gregory argued that the intellective capacity is the most God-like and divine⁵⁰² (sc. τὸ θεοειδὲς καὶ θεῖον, *Or*

501 Transl. M. Vinson, 2003, 196.

502 E.g., in the *Or* 28.17 Gregory explicitly says that "the mind and reason" (τὸν ἡμέτερον νοῦν τε καὶ λόγον) constitutes the image of God in human beings.

28.17) and contended that engaging in intellection is no less than a τέλος or functional goal of human beings. He also noted that since human capacities correspond to a certain natural arrangement of the bodily properties, therefore, instructions for a proper exercise of intellection should resonate with knowledge about human nature. Pondering the proper investigation of the law of nature Gregory evinced in *De moderatione in disputando*:

How can this be achieved? By investigating the universe (Ἐὰν εἰδῶμεν κόσμον) and respecting the law of nature (ἐπαινωμένον φύσεως νόμον), by using reason as one's guide (ἐπώμεθα λόγῳ) and refusing to disrespect the standard of order (μὴ ἀτιμάζωμεν εὐταξίαν)⁵⁰³ (*Or* 32.7f.).

Interestingly enough a comparable way of reasoning and adherence to “the standard of order” characterized Origen's teaching, though for him the notion of order had a less pronounced holographic meaning. That is to say that while Gregory urged the discovery of analogical regularities in different spheres of the universe, Origen mainly concerned with those philological regularities, which could prove effective for his exegesis. Yet, I suppose that there is a discernible trace of Origen's thought in Gregory's concept of order, especially when he comes to talk about the applicability of rules of Greek syntaxis to the interpretation of divine names.⁵⁰⁴

Having observed the regularities in various spheres: from the physical and biological world and Greek syntaxis to the properties of the divine persons, Gregory acknowledged a correspondence between the research methods of the theological and secular disciplines. These disciplines, in Gregory's opinion, should form a compulsory part of the complex of theological studies:

But reason (ὁ λόγος) took us up in our desire for God, in our refusal to travel without guide or helmsman. Reason looked on the visible world, lighted on things primeval yet did not make us stop at these (for reason will grant no superiority to things as much objects of sense as we are (τοις ὁμοτίμοις κατὰ τὴν αἴσθησιν) but leads us on through them to what transcends them, the very means of their continued existence (δι' οὗ τούτοις τὸ εἶναι περίεστιν) (*Or* 28.16).

One thing that I should briefly note here is that the term reason (sc. λόγος) in Gregory's vocabulary is multivocal. In this passage not only does it refer to the second hypostasis of the Holy Trinity but also denotes human intellection. Elsewhere Gregory also used this term for the designation of scientific

503 Transl. M. Vinson, 197.

504 To give a short example, in the *Commentary on John* Origen affirmed that the whole Bible is one body, whose parts form a harmonious unity that is the word of God, which “consists of many ideas each of which is a part of the whole word” (*ComJn* 10.107).

discourse and the scientific laws in general. Notably, in the second theological speech, Gregory coined a definition of science which markedly matches the description of science from the nineteenth chapter of the second book of the *Posterior Analytics*.⁵⁰⁵

Having thereby encouraged the investigation of the divine design in nature, Gregory himself engages in this research and gives an overall survey of the Christian approach towards the main issues of different natural disciplines. The second part of the *Or* 28.22–32 is devoted to a vivid description of the different spheres of the universe: stars, the sky and birds, oceans and fish, the earth and animals, plants and insects and of course – humans.

In comparison with Basil's *Hexaemeron*, Gregory's excursus in the science of nature is more rhetorical speculation than serious research.⁵⁰⁶ Yet, I believe that even this superficial presentation clearly marks the didactic and methodological drift of Gregory's orations because an overview of natural phenomena normally formed a part of the philosophical manuals. Moreover, as Richard Sarabji has pointed out, the issue of whether God was causally responsible for the existence of the physical world was actively debated by philosophers, who tried to harmonise Platonic and Peripatetic teachings. Sarabji also noted that Hierocles (fifth century), who contended that Plato and Aristotle agreed on the subject of creation, traced the general thesis of harmony back to Plutarch and Ammonius Saccas, who in the third century taught Plotinus and probably Origen. In the fifth century, Syrianus and Proclus developed the idea of harmony between Plato and Aristotle; and later on, a pupil of Proclus, Ammonius Hermiae, again claimed no contradiction between Plato and Aristotle on the issue of creation. Sarabji argued that Ammonius went so far as to affirm that "Aristotle accepted Plato's Ideas at least in the form of principles (sc. λόγοι) in the divine Intellect, and these principles were in turn causally responsible for the beginningless existence of the physical world". Ammonius pushed forward a thesis that Aristotle's God was an efficient cause of the world's existence. In view of this evidence, I think, it comes as no surprise that in the fourth century Gregory pondered

505 Gregory asserts that the process of scientific investigation consists of certain stages: "an observation of some movement (ἀλλὰ κινήσεως τινος ἐπιτήρησις), which, when confirmed by longer practice (ἢ πλείονι γυμνασία βεβαιωθεῖσα), and drawing the observations of many individuals into one generalization (εἰς ἓν ἀγαγοῦσα τὰ τηρηθέντα πλείοσιν), and thence deducing a law (εἶτα λόγον ἐπινοήσασα), has acquired the name of Science (ἐπιστήμη προσηγορεύθη)": (*Or* 28.29). The same components in the same sequence are listed by Aristotle in his deliberation about science in *APo* 99b35–100a15.

506 Like Basil, Gregory admires the hardworking bees and spiders, the geometry of cobwebs and honeycombs, the grasshoppers' form, different kinds of birds, fish and animals. Cf. Greg., *Or* 28.24f. and Bas., *Hexaem.* 8.

the topic of God as Sustainer of the universe not only from a perspective of Christian teaching but also with regard to the current philosophical debates, and that these debates echoed in his conception.

4. Intellection as the image of God and τέλος of the human being

As I have argued above, Gregory supported a complex approach to theological studies, and regarded natural theology from a rather broad philosophical perspective. The starting points of his dogmatic and exegetic reasoning hinged upon the epistemological and physiological understanding of the cognitive process. To illustrate this statement I wish to return to a fascinating passage from the third oration that we read earlier and to underpin the anthropological message of this text (*Or* 29.5).

Gregory says in the passage that the names of the Father and the Son and the Holy Spirit “do not belong to us in the absolute sense (τὰ γὰρ ἡμέτερα οὐ κυριῶς)”, and then by way of explanation he provides a rather enigmatic description of human nature. He tells us that:

... we are both (ἄμφω), and not one more than the other (οὐ γὰρ τόδε μᾶλλον ἢ τόδε); and we are of both (ἐξ ἀμφοῖν ἡμεῖς), and not of one only (οὐχ ἑνός); and so we are arranged (ὥστε μερίζεσθαι) (*Or* 29.5).

It is quite obvious that in this passage Gregory is talking about human nature, which is a compound of the soul and body – no surprises on this score, but then he goes on to describe how this complex mechanism functions as a unit, and here the ambiguity surfaces:

... and by degrees become men (κατ’ ὀλίγον ἄνθρωποι), and perhaps not even men (ἴσως οὐδὲ ἄνθρωποι), and such as we did not desire (οἷοι μὴ τεθελήμεθα), pulling away and being dismissed (ἀφιέντες καὶ ἀφιέμενοι), so that only the relations remain (μόνας τὰς σχέσεις λείπεσθαι), without the underlying facts (ὄρφανὰς τῶν πραγμάτων) (*Or* 29.5).

What does he mean by this? How is it that human beings become men by degree? What do they pull away from? How is it contrary to their desire? To answer these questions we have to examine Aristotelian ethics because it is my firm conviction that Gregory made this statement with Peripatetic teaching in mind.

Aristotle contended that it is inherent in the nature of the virtuous man to live in accordance with his nature, i.e. to desire only what is genuinely good for his nature, what brings him happiness and a functional self-realization:

For the good man is of one mind with himself (ὁμογνωμονεῖ ἑαυτῷ), and desires the same things with his whole soul (τῶν αὐτῶν ὀρέγεται κατὰ πᾶσαν τὴν ψυχὴν). Also he wishes his own good, real as well as apparent (ἑαυτῷ

τὰγαθὰ καὶ τὰ φαινόμενα⁵⁰⁷), and seeks it by action (for it is a mark of a good man to exert himself actively for the good; and he does so for his own sake (for he does it on account of the intellectual part of himself (τοῦ διανοητικοῦ χάριτι), and this appears to be a man's real self (ἕκαστος εἶναι δοκεῖ). Also he desires his own life and security (ζῆν ... ἑαυτὸν καὶ σῶζεσθαι), and especially that of his rational part (NE 1166a15–20).

Natural goodness (sc. εὐφροσύνη) enables the human being to make the right choice.⁵⁰⁸ Possession of εὐφροσύνη is a token of a clear mental eye, which is able to discern bad from good and to judge well.⁵⁰⁹ Logically, all the right choices that the clear mental eye makes, sustain a chain leading to a major right choice, i.e. the choice of the right end (sc. τέλος). Thus, possessing εὐφροσύνη ensures the proper functioning of the whole human organism, whose purpose is happiness (sc. εὐδαιμονία) understood as the human good (NE 1114a31–b1).

Moreover, the capability to judge well relates as much to moral choice as to scholarly research.⁵¹⁰ Interestingly enough, the capacity of judging well is imparted not “by process of reasoning, but by virtue, whether natural or acquired by training in right opinion as to the first principle” (NE 1151a15–19). Aristotle professed that it is virtue that sustains the true beliefs about the good (NE 1114b21–25), while reason can sometimes misguide researchers and as a result they: “do many things contrary to their habits and their nature, because of reason, if they are persuaded that it is better to do otherwise” (*Pol*

507 Elsewhere Aristotle specifies that “unconditionally and in truth, what is wished for is the good, although to each person what is wished for is the apparent good” (NE 1113a23–5). Gregory also refers to apparent and real virtue in the *Or* 32.6.

508 Cf.: “Where knowledge (γνώσις) and philosophical wisdom (φιλοσοφίαν φρόνησις) are concerned, the ability to discern and hold in one view the consequences of either hypothesis is no insignificant tool, since then it only remains to make a correct choice of one of them. But a task of this sort requires εὐφροσύνη. And true εὐφροσύνη consists in just this – the ability to choose the true and avoid the false (καλῶς ἐλέσθαι τἄληθές καὶ φυγεῖν τὸ ψεῦδος). Naturally good men are the very ones who can do this well...” (*Top* 163b9–16).

509 Cf.: “...rather he must by nature have a sort of natural eye to make him judge (ὄψιν ἔχοντα, ἣ κρινεῖ καλῶς) well and choose what is really good. Whoever by nature has this eye in good condition has a good nature (ἔστιν εὐφροσύνη)” (NE 1114b5–12).

510 E.g., with regard to mathematical investigation: “For virtue preserves the fundamental principle, vice destroys it, and the first principle or starting-point in matters of conduct is the end proposed, which corresponds to the hypotheses of mathematics” (NE 1151a15–19). Gregory similarly claims that what “order does, disorder undoes” and that the synonyms of disorder are sins in the soul, diseases in the body, tidal waves in the sea, thunderbolts in cities and earthquakes in the land (*Or* 32.8).

1332b6–8). An underlying issue at stake here is that people who are used to following their passions cannot, even when presented with true concepts, appreciate them because they conflict with their personal experience. Their bad habits make them insensitive and blind towards the truth, although they may be well-educated and smart.⁵¹¹ Alternatively to the bad habits a human being who is committed to achieving his final goal can exercise the capacity of right judgement.

In the *De generatione animalium* Aristotle explains at length the final goal of the human being from a biological viewpoint. He contends that the male parent is actually what the offspring comes to be (i.e. is potentially); the form whose realization is the goal of the reproductive process is actually present in the male parent (*GA* 734b35–36). And since intellective capacity is substantial (i.e. it is the basis for unity of the human being and the quality which distinguishes them from the other animals) for human beings, the perfection of this capacity, aimed at the acquiring of wisdom and εὐφύϊα, constitutes a teleological horizon of *homo sapiens*.

Now, I suggest returning to the puzzling phrase from the third theological oration that I have cited above (*Or* 29.5), bearing in mind the Aristotelian vision of the goal and gradual development of the human being. Gregory asserted that human beings “by degrees become men (κατ’ ὀλίγον ἄνθρωποι)” that I take to be a general biological observation.⁵¹² He continued: “...and perhaps not even men (ἴσως οὐδὲ ἄνθρωποι), and such as we did not desire (οἴοι μὴ τεθελήμεθα)”. This remark, I believe, implies a similar meaning to the ethical conception of good-natured man who is able to pursue what is right for him. What is special about the good-natured man is that he possesses a clear mental eye that enables him to hit the mark of being human εὐδαίμονία. Although all people desire happiness, not all of them can find their way to it and thus they pull away and dismiss themselves from their life task.

The first theological oration contains many applications of this concept. This is how Gregory describes his opponents, as those who:

... neglect every path of righteousness, and look only to this one point, namely, which of the propositions submitted to them they shall bind or loose (δήσουσιν ἢ λύσουσι) ... since, I say this is so, the evil is intolerable and unendurable, and our great mystery is in danger of being made a petty device (τεχνύδιον). ... For

511 “Our function is achieved both through practical wisdom and through ethical virtue. For virtue makes the goal right, whereas practical wisdom makes what serves the goal right” (*NE* 1144a7–9).

512 It is clear that Gregory was familiar with the basic biological doctrines of his time. Thus, in the third oration he contends: “For those parts whose maturity comes later (ὧν ὕστερον ἡ τελείωσις), yet received their laws at the time of genesis (τούτων οἱ λόγοι μετὰ τῆς γεννήσεως)” (*Or* 29.8).

either we shall have spoken in the ears of them that will hear, and our word will bear some fruit, namely an advantage to you (although the sower sows the word upon every kind of mind (πᾶσαν διάνοιαν), yet only and the good and fertile bears fruit), or else you will depart despising this discourse of ours, and having drawn from it further material for contradiction (ὑλὴν ἀντιλογίας) (*Or* 27.2).

In this passage Gregory depicts his opponents as incapable of digesting true knowledge because of their devotion to the devious way and scope of reasoning, which renders all their efforts infertile and conclusions – erroneous. To put it briefly, although every human being is granted a mind, i.e. the image of God, not everyone knows how to make use of it, therefore everyone needs instruction and to provide this instruction is a task of philosophy and theology. In such a way, I believe that Gregory implies in this passage that human beings have to engage in a certain activity in order to realize their inherent potential and thus fulfil the goal of their lives.

With respect to the concluding phrase of the cited passage saying that “only the relations remain (μόνας τὰς σχέσεις λείπουσθαι), without the underlying facts (ὄρφανὰς τῶν πραγμάτων)”, I want to delve more deeply into the context of *De generatione animalium*. Aristotle maintained in this treatise that in the offspring the form of a mature animal with all its relevant fully developed capacities exists potentially as an expected goal (*GA* 734b35–36). Consequently, Aristotle argued, the vocabulary which scholars apply to describe the offspring consists of relative terms, that is to say, of terms which cannot be properly applied to the offspring due to his immaturity.⁵¹³ This Aristotelian observation sharply underpins the relative nature of human language. I suggest that when Gregory asserts about those humans who fail to fulfil their goal that in their case “only the relations remain without underlying facts,” he merely points to their failure to realise their potential. What was expected to be true about these people has not been realised, therefore in their case “only relations remain without underlying facts.”

Conclusion

While the first part of this monograph is generally devoted to setting the theological orations in various historical, philosophical and institutional contexts, in the second part I undertook analysis of Gregory’s texts. Thus, the

513 Of note is the fact that when Gregory talks about the good Christians who fulfil their life goal he uses the adjective perfect (sc. τέλειος). The first meaning of this term is mature, fully grown, complete (cf. *LSJ*). Paul has used this term in both senses and coined the phrase “perfect man” as a synonym for a Christian saint, i.e. a person who, under the instructions of Jesus, has acquired a clear mental eye capable of right judgement (cf. *Col* 1:28, *Rom* 12:2, *Eph* 4:13, and also *Heb* 5:14).

results of my investigation are of a methodological, historico-philosophical and philological nature.

Apropos of method, I suggest that it is necessary to study Gregory's heritage with regard to the institutional and socio-cultural trends of Late Antiquity as well as relevant historical events and scientific and philosophical discussions. In such a way, I found it beneficial to examine the impact of contemporary philosophical and scientific discussions on Gregory's thought as well as of the educational trends and the socio-cultural controversies pushed forward by the legalization of Christianity and the social policy of Julian the Emperor.

Thus, in the context of the fourth century a *stricto sensu* theological controversy brought up by Eunomius provoked an acute methodological debate that was deeply concerned with the *how-questions* maybe even more significantly than the *what-questions*. That is to say, the main issues at stake in Gregory's theological orations were: firstly, *how* is it possible to have knowledge, and secondly *how* is it possible to have knowledge about God? Gregory emphasized the anthropological and cognitive conditions of human intellection: he inquired *how* human beings receive information from the sense-organs and transform it into concepts, *how* language can convey human thoughts, and *how* people can understand each other. These epistemological questions were in the background of Gregory's theological discourse; hence his theology turned out to be closely interwoven with anthropology and cognitive theory.

Importantly, a comparable correspondence between ontology, logic, linguistic, cosmology, anthropology and biology bound up with epistemological and cognitive theories was a distinctive feature of Peripatetic thought. Although these epistemological issues were on the agenda of all philosophical schools unlike other traditions, the Aristotelian school featured a conception of hylomorphism and a characteristic vision of the processes of sense-perception and intellection as instances of interaction between subject and object. These important components prevented Peripatetic thought from falling into either idealism or materialism. Instead Aristotelians inclined to support a balanced realistic approach to the studies of physical, linguistic and logical limitations within which the human mind does its amazing work of acquiring true knowledge about the world.

I believe that Gregory was familiar with the principal logical and some biological works of Aristotle as well as with some works and teachings of the Peripatetic and Neo-Platonic commentators on Aristotle. In tune with the reception paradigm of the contemporary philosophical schools Gregory applied various philosophical materials for various purposes. Thus, he vastly borrowed from the Platonic topoi and style, he applied some conceptions of the Stoics (probably, via intermediaries of Basil and Origen) and he took advantage of Aristotelian logic, anthropology, ontology and epistemology in elaboration of his theological teaching. In his polemics with the Eunomians

Gregory made use of the Aristotelian theory of essential predication. He argued that his opponents failed to understand the true meaning of the logical concepts they applied. In such a way Gregory pinpointed an ontological strand of essential predication and suggested considering biblical motto “He who *is*” (ἐγὼ εἶμι ὁ ὢν; Ex 3:14) as the most fitting predicate to the divine nature.

Taking this definition as his point of departure and also following the logic of Aristotelian epistemology Gregory demonstrated how his identification of the divine nature with being *per se* really helps to understand various aspects of Christian doctrine (e.g., God as the cause, maintainer and goal of the universe). These concepts prompted Gregory’s vision of natural theology whose purpose was not in apology of Christianity but in studying the world of God and approaching the creator. Although Gregory applied logical categories, syllogisms and the key-concepts of contemporary science such as scientific definition, demonstration, accidental and essential quality, etc. – I think that his main focus dwelled not on the theoretical proof of theological dogmas but on the investigation of the human capacity of *engaging with God* by the means of *thinking God*.

At the heart of Gregory’s theory is the human being and more precisely, the human mind as a bearer of the image of God. Gregory is particularly interested in investigation of the epistemological and cognitive issues. In his definitions of the human being, human soul, reason, sense-perception, imagination, intellection, an influence of the Peripatetic approach is clearly discernable. Namely, Gregory asserted that when the mind thinks it dwells in the object of thought, hence when the mind thinks, about the characteristics of God it elevates the human being and directs his or her life by having a certain impact on his or her choices and decision making. Gregory stresses that approaching God and imitating God ought to be understood as a *prima facie* noetic activity. Yet, he contends that far from being a purely theoretical activity the process of thinking is an embodied practice. That is to say, it involves the whole compound of the human being: the faculties of sense-perception, imagination without which intellection is impossible, and also the practical or ethical aspect of actual *living theological knowledge*. This approach emphasizes the individual responsibility of a theologian, whose intellectual-practical life becomes a necessary prerequisite of engaging with the divine knowledge. Thus, Gregory affirms that thinking about God is not simply a desideratum but a duty of the human being.

Although Gregory regularly employs philosophical concepts (especially those of Peripatetic epistemology and cognitive theory), he finds his inspiration in Scripture and particularly in the teaching of Apostle Paul, whose attention to the theory of knowledge is pervasive. I am committed to looking at Gregory’s heritage as a good example of a dynamic and productive alliance of various intellectual and socio-cultural contexts, which, I think may be

interesting not only for Patristic studies but also in a broader context of the history of philosophy and educational institutions. In such a way, Gregory's attempt to outline the Christian contact theory of knowledge appears to be in beautiful concord with some contemporary epistemological conceptions. In conclusion and to illustrate my idea I would like to draw an explication of epistemological contact from a book *Retrieving Realism* by Charles Taylor and Hubert Dreyfus:

The contact here is not achieved on the level of Ideas, but is rather something primordial, something we never escape. It is the contact of living, active beings, whose life form involves acting in and on a world which also acts on them. These beings are at grips with a world and each other; this original contact provides the sense-making context for all their knowledge constructions, which, however much they are based on mediating depictions, rely for their meaning on this primordial and indissoluble involvement in the surrounding reality.⁵¹⁴

514 Dreyfus, H. / Taylor, Ch., 2015, 19.

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