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The Father in the Son, the Son in the Father in the Gospel of John: Sources and Reception of Dynamic Unity in Middle and Neoplatonism, 'Pagan' and Christian

Abstract: This article will investigate the context – in terms of both *sources* (by means of influence, transformation, or contrast) and ancient *reception* – of the concept of the 'dynamic unity' of the Father in the Son and the Son in the Father (expressed in John 10:38, 14:10, and 17:21) in both 'pagan' and Christian Middle-Platonic and Neoplatonic thinkers. The Christians include Clement of Alexandria, Origen, and Gregory of Nyssa, as well as Evagrius Ponticus and John Scottus Eriugena. The article will outline, in so-called 'Middle Platonism,' the hierarchical theology of a first and second God (and sometimes a third), and in Neoplatonism Plotinus' three hypostases arranged in hierarchical order, which will be contrasted with Origen's and the Cappadocians' three divine hypostases that are *equal* – like those of Augustine. Thus, for Origen not only is *the Son in the Father*, as in a 'pagan' Middle and Neoplatonic scheme, but also *the Father is in the Son*, in a perfect reciprocity of dynamic unity. Origen subscribes to this reciprocity because, as I argue, he is no real 'subordinationist', but the precursor of the Nicene and Constantinopolitan line (the Cappadocians, especially Nyssen, developed and emphasized the notion of equality, bringing the three Hypostases of the Trinity to the level of Plotinus' One, but the premises were all in Origen's theology and his concept of the coeternity of the three Hypostases and their common divinity: Nyssen, like Athanasius, even uses Origen's arguments in his own anti-Arian polemic, as we shall see). Origen interpreted Philo's theology, also close to so-called Middle Platonism, in a non-subordinationistic sense, attributing to the Hypostasis of Logos/Sophia the various *dynameis*, such as Logos and Sophia, that Philo used most probably in a non-hypostatic sense.

I shall also demonstrate how Gregory of Nyssa, significantly following Origen, in his work *Against Eunomius* used John 14:10a to refute the philosophical

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argument of Eunomius, who had a profoundly subordinationistic view of Christ with respect to the Father. Gregory's solution is that neither the Father nor the Son are in an *absolute* sense, but both are in a *reciprocal* relation or σχέσις, what I shall present as Gregory's own version of the 'dynamic unity' (in turn grounded in Origen). I shall also concentrate on the use that Gregory makes of *John* 17:21-23 to argue that the unity of the Father and the Son, and of all believers – and eventually all humans – in them, is substantiated by the Holy Spirit, who is seen as a bond of unity.

I shall study how the notion of the Father in the Son and the Son in the Father relates to the parallel statements in John 14:10, that Christ is in the disciples (and all believers) and these are in Christ – what I will call an 'expansive' notion of dynamic unity – and John 17:21, that just as the Father is in the Son and the Son in the Father, so the disciples and all believers too should become 'one' in the Father and the Son. Here, as I shall argue, Middle and Neoplatonic *henology* (or doctrine of the One) comes to the fore as a possible background and interpretive lens at the same time. I shall show how Origen joined it to the unifying force of charity-love (agape), in turn a central theme in John, and how Evagrius, performing his exegesis of these verses, interpreted *henosis* or unification. A coda will explore the corollary of the Divinity 'all in all', which is not only a central tenet of Origen's theology, but also of that of Proclus. It will be pointed out how this concept relates to the issue of the dynamic unity within the divine.

1 Introduction

The question I address in this article is whether, and how, Platonism can be treated as both one of the *sources* (in terms of inspiration, transformation, or differentiation) and as an aspect of the ancient *reception* of the concept of the 'dynamic unity' of the Father in the Son and the Son in the Father (pertaining to John 10:38; 14:10; 17:21).[1] A preliminary issue, already treated remarkably well by Daniel Boyarin, concerns the Johannine Logos viewed as the same as the Memra in the Jewish

tradition and God's Logos in Philo, and how the notion of dynamic unity can be employed in this context.[2] Origen, as will be pointed out below, applied the concept of dynamic unity both to the Johannine Logos and its relation to God, and to Philo's Logos/Wisdom and its relation to God, and he did so in accordance with his own conceptualization of the relationship between God and God's Logos. This interpretation, however, although applicable to John, is more difficult to apply – at least unproblematically – to Philo.

1.1 Dynamic Unity in Theology — Middle and Neoplatonism and Origen's and the Cappadocians' Christian Platonism. The Role of 'Anti-Subordinationism' in Establishing the Dynamic Unity between Father and Son

I consider the way in which the terms of the dynamic unity are represented to be a major issue, and very relevant to my investigation here — in order for John to conceive of a reciprocal relationship of divine unity, that the Son may be *in* the Father but also the Father *in* the Son, a kind of egalitarian relationship is required, at least from the theological viewpoint (namely, without counting the incarnate nature of the Son, which pertains to οἰκονομία, or divine action in creation, more than to θεολογία or God the Trinity per se, without relation to creation). The difference here dichotomizes – albeit not particularly sharply – 'pagan' and Christian Middle-Platonic and Neoplatonic thinkers. The dichotomy concerns those Platonists (mostly 'pagan,' but certainly also Christians, including 'gnostic' and 'Arians,' but also Justin – so the binary is, properly speaking, not simply a 'pagan'/Christian one![3]) who entertained a *hierarchic* view of the theological entities or protological principles, so as to posit a first God and a second God,[4] and sometimes a third God, such as in the case of the Neophythagorean - Middle

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2 D. Boyarin, "The Gospel of the Memra: Jewish Binitarianism and the Prologue to John," *Harvard Theological Review* 94:3 (2001): 243–84; on John's Logos theology see also T. E. Pollard, *Johannine Christology and the Early Church* (Cambridge–New York: Cambridge University Press [CUP], 2005).
3 It is not a 'religious' one. See C. Barton – D. Boyarin, *Imagine No Religion. How Modern Abstractions Hide Ancient Realities* (New York: Fordham University Press, 2016), who not only emphasize that *religio* and θρησκεία cannot be translated as 'religion' in modern terms (on which see also J. Scheid, "Religion, Roman, terms relating to," in the online *Oxford Classical Dictionary*, accessed March 2016, DOI:10.1093/acrefore/9780199381135.013.5549 and E. Kearns, 'Religion, Greek', online *Oxford Classical Dictionary*, DOI:10.1093/acrefore/9780199381135.013.5537), but also argue that 'religion' did not exist in antiquity as a standalone entity, as private religion.
4 See, for example, J. Dillon, *The Middle Platonists* (London: Duckworth, 1977), 37; 374; J. Turner, *Sethian Gnosticism and the Platonic Tradition* (Laval: Presses Université Laval, 2001), 362–70.

Platonist Numenius (although scholarship is divided on whether to consider Numenius as postulating two or three gods),[5] and those Platonists, such as Origen and, more completely, the Cappadocians, who entertained an *egalitarian* concept of the Trinity.

In Fragments 11 & 21 Des Places, Numenius spoke of a first God and a second God, of which the first is clearly superior to the second. In Fragment 12 Des Places, Numenius distinguished the King from the Creator, identifying the former with the first God, who creates nothing, and the latter with the second:

> "The First God is the King. He does not occupy himself with any works. But God the Creator is the leader. He makes his rounds through the heavens" and animates the world; the first "must not even create, and should be considered Father of the Creator."[6]

The third is the cosmos. Numenius is important here both in terms of his influence on Origen and also regarding the development that Origen's theology will be shown to display with respect to the Middle-Platonic (and Pythagorean) background that Numenius exemplifies. Origen turned towards a more (if perhaps not entirely) 'egalitarian' view among the divine hypostases, and thereby grounded his view that "the Father is in the Son and the Son in the Father."

Origen's theology is less hierarchical than that of Numenius. Origen might even have polemicized with Numenius' protology in this respect. Origen, who is cited without any distinctive specification other than a disciple of Ammonius Saccas, and who may or may not have been the Christian Origen (a disciple of Ammonius Saccas himself),[7] is reported to have expounded Ammonius' ideas in

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5 See, for example, E.R. Dodds, 'Numenius and Ammonius', in *Les sources de Plotin* (Vandoeuvres-Genève: Hardt, 1960), 3–61; J. Waszink, 'Porphyrios und Numenios', in *Porphyry* (Genève: Hardt, 1966), 33–78; B. Centrone, Introduzione *ai Pitagorici* (Roma-Bari: Laterza, 1996), 182–6; H. Hägg, *Clement of Alexandria and the Beginning of Christian Apophaticism* (Oxford: OUP, 2006), 106–14, who sees in Numenius a twofold theology.

6 Numenius F12.1-3; see also Proclus' report, *C.Tim.* 1.303.27–29.

7 This point is not determinant in the present investigation, although it is tangentially relevant and interesting with regard to the history of ancient Platonism. Amongst others, scholars such as Richard Hanson, René Cadiou, Franz Kettler, Elizabeth DePalma Digeser, Pier Franco Beatrice, Heidi Marx-Wolf, Thomas Böhm, Christoph Markschies, Panayiotis Tzamalikos, and also I, have argued that the two Origens may have been one. See R. Cadiou, *La jeunesse d'Origène* (Paris, 1935), 231–240; Richard P.C. Hanson, *Origen's Doctrine of Tradition* (London, 1954), 1–30; H. Crouzel, "Origène et Plotin élèves d'Ammonios Saccas," *BLE* 57 (1956), 193–214; F. Kettler, "Origenes, Ammonios Sakkas und Porphyrius," in *Kerygma und Logos* (Göttingen: V&R, 1979), 322–8; P. F. Beatrice, "Porphyry's Judgment on Origen," in *Origeniana V*, ed. Robert Daly (Leuven: Peeters, 1992), 351–367:351; P. F. Beatrice, "Origen in Nemesius' Treatise On the Nature of Man," in *Origeniana Nona*, 505–532: "Origen the Pagan, or the Neoplatonist, has never existed, and the Origen we meet three times in Nemesius's treatise is always the only Christian and Platonist Origen, known to Christian and pagan writers without any distinction" (p. 531); T. Böhm, "Origenes—

On Spirits and *The King Is the Only Creator*. In the latter, Origen may well have rejected an aspect of the theology of Numenius, one of his favorite readings according to Porphyry. While for Numenius the first God is the King and the second God is the Creator, for Origen the King is the only Creator. Origen the Christian is said by Porphyry to have read Numenius' writings assiduously.[8] He also praises Numenius, in his debate against Celsus, for having allegorized passages of the Bible, including what became the New Testament.[9] Origen, therefore, grouped Numenius' gods into one God, creator and governor of the universe, and (if he is the same as the Christian Origen) divided this God into three hypostases—one of Origen's main theological conceptualizations—and placed these on an equal footing, as coeternal – as recognized also by Athanasius, in *Decr.* 27, who cited

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Theologe und (Neu-)Platoniker?" *Adamantius* 8 (2002), 7–23 based on doctrinal identities; D. Boyarin, "By Way of Apology: Dawson, Edwards, Origen," *The Studia Philonica Annual* (*StPhiloA*) 16 (2004): 188–217; C. Markschies, *Origenes und sein Erbe* (Berlin: de Gruyter, 2007), 3, thinks that the identification "*ist nicht ganz auszuschließen* [can not quite be ruled out];" Ramelli, 'Origen, Patristic Philosophy'; 'Origen the Christian Middle/Neoplatonist', *JECH* 1 (Ramelli, 2011) 98–130; A. Johnson, *Religion and Identity in Porphyry of Tyre* (Cambridge: CUP, 2013), 90, 153, passim; E. DePalma Digeser, "Origen on the Limes," in *The Rhetoric of Power in Late Antiquity*, eds. Elizabeth DePalma Digeser, Robert M. Frakes and Justin Stephens (London: I. B. Tauris, 2010), 197–218; E. DePalma Digeser, "The Usefulness of Borderlands Concepts in Ancient History: The Case of Origen as Monster," in *Globalizing Borderland Studies in Europe and North America*, eds. Michael North and John Lee (Lincoln: University of Nebraska, 2016), 15–32; H. Marx-Wolf, *Spiritual Taxonomies and Ritual Authority: Platonists, Priests, and Gnostics in the Third Century CE* (Philadelphia: University of Pennsylvania, 2016), 43–4; I. Ramelli, "Origen, Patristic Philosophy, and Christian Platonism: Re-Thinking the Christianisation of Hellenism," *Vigiliae Christianae* 63 (Ramelli, 2009): 217–63; "Origen the Christian Middle/Neoplatonist," *Journal of Early Christian History* 1 (Ramelli, 2011): 98–130; "Origen and the Platonic Tradition," in *Plato and Christ: Platonism in Early Christian Theology*, ed. J. Warren Smith, *Religions*, 8:2 (2017), 21 (DOI:10.3390/rel8020021); *Origen of Alexandria* (in preparation). H. Tarrant is open to the identity of the two Origens: "it is not certain that they are distinct" ("Plotinus, Origenes and Ammonius on the King," in *Religio-Philosophical Discourses within the Greco-Roman, Jewish and Early Christian World*, eds. Anders Klostergaard Petersen and George van Kooten [Leiden: Brill, 2017], 323–37:324); P. F. Beatrice, "Porphyry at Origen's School at Caesarea," in *Origeniana Duodecima: Origen's Legacy in the Holy Land*, eds. Lorenzo Perrone, Brouria Bitton-Ashkelony, Oded Irshai, Aryeh Kofsky and H. Newman, *Bibliotheca Ephemeridum Theologicarum Lovaniensium (BETL)* 302 (Leuven: Peeters, 2019), 267–84; S. Clark, "Plotinus, Eriugena and the Uncreated Image," Oxford workshop: *Eriugena and His Sources in Patristic and Ancient Philosophy*, dir. I. L.E. Ramelli (forthcoming in *Studia Patristica*): "The Christian theologian Origen may or may not be identical with Plotinus' friend and fellow-pupil, but both Origens (*if they are distinct*) were students of Ammonius Saccas."

8 *C.Chr.* F39.
9 I. Ramelli, "The Philosophical Stance of Allegory in Stoicism and its Reception in Platonism, 'Pagan' and Christian: Origen in Dialogue with the Stoics and Plato," *International Journal of the Classical Tradition* 18:3 (Ramelli, 2011): 335–371.

Origen as an authority in this respect – and co-divine, since only God is eternal in the absolute sense[10] (and therefore consubstantial).[11]

The same hierarchical ordering of the three protological principles appears again in 'pagan' Neoplatonism, in Plotinus, who was accused of plagiarizing Numenius, so that Amelius had to defend him in a treatise dedicated to Porphyry.[12] Numenius' characterization of the "second God" [δεύτερος θεός] as "Creator/ Demiurge" [δημιουργός] parallels that of Plotinus' second hypostasis as δημιουργός.[13] Origen also called the Son δημιουργός or "Creator/Demiurge," and seldom adopted the Platonist terminology of δεύτερος θεός or "second God", although, unlike Plotinus, he paved the way for the Cappadocians' characteriza-tion of the Trinity as equal.[14] Also, Numenius' first God is αὐτοαγαθόν, "Good Itself," like Plotinus' first hypostasis, the One (ὑπόστασιν τὴν πρώτην . . . αὐτοα-γαθόν, "the first Hypostasis… is Good Itself")), and like Origen's God the Father[15] – but the Son for Origen is also essential Good, being divine, not accidental good as with rational creatures, who are good insofar as they are created (they do not exist *ab aeterno*) and by free will can always fall into evil. Plotinus' three hypostases, rather, are arranged in a clearly hierarchical order: the One is superior to the Nous, and the Nous to the Soul, from which all individual souls and the entire world derive.[16]

Even though the three Persons of the Trinity were not deemed equal by early Christian Platonists (including the aforementioned 'Gnostics,' Justin, and 'Ar-ians'), Origen, followed by the Cappadocians and Augustine, at least paved the

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10 For full documentation on this point, see I. L.E. Ramelli and D. Konstan, *Terms for Eternity Αἰώνιος and ἀΐδιος in Classical and Christian Authors* (Piscataway: Gorgias, 2007; new edition 2013), and the reviews by C. O'Brien, *The Classical Review* 60 (O'Brien, 2010), 390–91 and D. Ghira, *Maia* 61 (2009),732–4; Ramelli, 'Αἰώνιος and αἰών in Origen and Gregory of Nyssa', *SP* 47 (2010), 57–62; ead., "Time and Eternity," in *The Routledge Companion to Early Christian Philosophy* (London:-Routledge, forthcoming).

11 Arguments in Ilaria L.E. Ramelli, "Origen's Anti-Subordinationism and Its Heritage in the Nicene and Cappadocian Line," *Vigiliae Christianae* 65 (Ramelli, 2011), 21–49; M. Edwards, Alfons Fürst, and Panayiotis Tzamalikos, cited below in n. 19; my *Origen of Alexandria* (in preparation), ch. 5.

12 Porphyry, *V.Plot*. 17.

13 For Numenius' characterization of the second God, see F20-21 DP; for Plotinus' second hy-postasis, see *Enn*. 2.3.18.

14 For Origen, here, see *Cels*. 6.47.

15 For Numenius, see F20 DP; cf. 16, for Plotinus, see *Enn*. 6.6.10, for Origen, see *Princ*. 1.2.13.

16 See L. Gerson, *Plotinus* (London: Routledge, 1994); P. Remes, *Neoplatonism* (Stocksfield: Acumen Publishing Ltd, 2008), 35–76; also M. Fattal, *Platon et Plotin: Relation, Logos, Intuition* (Paris: L'Harmattan, 2013); M. Fattal, *Du Logos de Plotin au Logos de saint Jean* (Paris: Cerf, 2014 [second edn. 2016]); M. Fattal, *Existence et Identité: Logos et Technê chez Plotin* (Paris: L'Har-mattan, 2015).

way for regarding the three divine hypostases as *equal*. Thus, for Origen, not only is the Son *in* the Father, as in a 'pagan' Middle and Neoplatonic scheme, but also the Father is *in* the Son, in a perfect reciprocity of dynamic unity. Origen subscribes to this reciprocity because, as I have argued elsewhere,[17] he is no real 'subordinationist' – as he is often depicted – but the precursor of the Nicene and Constantinopolitan line, the line of the ὁμοουσιότης ("identity of essence / substance / *ousia*") between the Son and the Father, the coeternity of the Son with the Father (which amounts to their ὁμοουσιότης since it entails the divinity of both), and the later Cappadocian–Constantinopolitan formula, *mia ousia treis hypostaseis* ("one common essence, three hypostases or individual substances") .

Origen elaborated the Trinitarian notion of Hypostasis as individual substance of each Person within the common *ousia*, or essence, of the Trinity. He thus conceived of the Trinity, which he called Τριάς,[18] as three distinct *hypostaseis* but one *ousia*. I have thoroughly argued for the novelty of his Trinitarian use of ὑπόστασις ("individual substance") and its impact on Porphyry and later Neoplatonism, in "Origen, Greek Philosophy, and the Birth of the Trinitarian Meaning of Hypostasis" (in *HTR*), and his possible use of ὁμοούσιος or "identical in essence" (this is ultimately uncertain, being unattested by uncontroversial sources, although the concept is very likely there) and the coeternity of the three Hypostases, which implies their common divine nature, as well as Origen's impact upon later Christian theology, in "Origen's Anti-Subordinationism" (in *VigChr*). In their

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17 "Origen's Anti-Subordinationism"; "Origen, Greek Philosophy, and the Birth of the Trinitarian Meaning of Hypostasis," *Harvard Theological Review* 105:3 (Ramelli, 2012): 302–350; referred to, for example, by G. Karamanolis, *The Philosophy of Early Christianity* (Durham: Acumen, 2013), 307; by P. W. Martens, "Embodiment, Heresy, and the Hellenization of Christianity: The Descent of the Soul in Plato and Origen," *Harvard Theological Review* 108 (2015): 594–620: 611; by M. Havrda, *The So-Called Eighth Stromateus by Clement of Alexandria: Early Christian reception of Greek scientific methodology* (Leiden: Brill, 2016), 35. Further arguments in Ilaria Ramelli, *Origen of Alexandria* (in preparation).

18 Origen used Τριάς for the Trinity in Greek works of indisputable attribution, such as *Comm. in Io.* 6.33.166: "the adorable Trinity" [τῆς προσκυνητῆς Τριάδος]; the later *C.Matt.* 15.31: "the sovereign Trinity, principle of all" [τῆς ἀρχικῆς τριάδος], exactly corresponding to the earlier *archiken Trinitatem* in *Princ.* 1.4.3, and elsewhere: *Comm. in Io.* 10.39.270: the eternal Trinity [αἰωνίῳ τῇ Τριάδι]; *FrIo.* 20.30: God the Trinity [(θεὸν … τὴν Τριάδα]; 36.42: τῆς ἁγίας Τριάδος; *Sel.Gen.* PG 12. 125: τῆς ἁγίας Τριάδος; *Sel.Num.* PG 12.581: τῆς ἁγίας Τριάδος; *Sel.Ps.* PG 12.1229.28: ἡ ἁγία Τριὰς ἥτις ἄρχεται τῶν κτισμάτων; ibid. 1265.24; 1280.23; 1369.4; 1465.40; 1481.38; 1656.11; 1673.10; 1677. 10; *Fr.Ps.* 37:22-23: τὴν ἁγίαν Τριάδα; 64:5,6: τῆς Τριάδος; 70:14: ἡ γνῶσις τῆς Τριάδος; 72.23: τὴν ἁγίαν γινώσκων Τριάδα; 118:65-66: γνῶσις δέ ἐστιν ἡ θεωρία τῆς Τριάδος (corresponding to *Princ.*2. 11.7: spiritual food is *theoria et intellectus Dei*); 138:7: τὴν ἁγίαν τριάδα; 144:3: τῆς ἁγίας Τριάδος ἡ γνῶσίς ἐστιν ἀπέραντος; 144:13: ἐν τῇ ἁγίᾳ Τριάδι; *Fr.Ies.N.* p.302.29: οἱ πρότεροι ἥψαντο μὲν τῆς Τριάδος, οὐ μὴν καθαρῶς; *Exp.Prov.* PG 17.196.22: ἐξ οὐκ ὄντων εἰς τὸ εἶναι παραγαγοῦσα Τριὰς ἁγία; *ibid.* 17.221.20: τῆς ἁγίας Τριάδος, etc.

recent monographs on Origen, Alfons Fürst and Panayiotis Tzamalikos, alongside other scholars such as Henryk Pietras, David Bentley Hart, Mark Edwards, share my perspective when it comes to denying Origen's 'subordinationism.'[19]

Indeed, Origen, far from being a precursor of 'Arianism,' as he was depicted during the Origenist controversy, a misrepresentation that has persisted and still occurs today, was probably the main source of inspiration for the Nicene-Cappadocian line. This line, which was represented above all by Gregory of Nyssa, is that God is "one and the same nature or essence [μία οὐσία] in three individual substances [τρεῖς ὑποστάσεις]," and that the Son is ὁμοούσιος, or consubstantial, with the Father. Indeed, the three members of the Trinity share in the same divine "nature" [οὐσία]. This Trinitarian formulation was followed by Basil in his last phase; Didymus; Gregory of Nazianzus, from 362 CE onwards; Evagrius; and numerous later authors. Now, Origen had already maintained both things: that the Father, the Son, and the Spirit have the same divine, absolutely eternal nature, but are three different ὑποστάσεις or "individual substances," and Gregory of Nyssa closely followed his line of thinking.

As I have comprehensively argued,[20] Origen's thought represented a novel and fundamental theorization with respect to the individuality of the Trinity's ὑποστάσεις, conceived as three different individual substances within the common divine nature of one God. Origen, on the basis of early Imperial philosophical and medical debates, maintains that the Father is endowed with his own hypostasis or individual substance and the Son with his own, which is different from the Father's. This is a conceptual and linguistic novelty that Origen introduced into the Christian theological field, and can explain his appropriation of the Johannine notion of dynamic unity in full reciprocity.

That Father and Son are two distinct individual substances is argued by Origen, for instance, in *Cels*. 8.12, in which Origen opposes those who deny that they are "two different hypostases" [δύο εἶναι ὑποστάσεις]. This attestation is all the more important in that it is preserved in the original Greek, and does not come from a work of uncertain attribution or a fragment. Origen did not find in Clement of

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19 Mark Edwards, "Did Origen Apply the Word ὁμοούσιος to the Son?", *Journal of Theological Studies (JThS)* 49 (1998): 658-70; A. Fürst, *Origenes: Grieche und Christ in römischer Zeit* (Stuttgart: Hiersemann, 2017), 139, 152; P. Tzamalikos, *Anaxagoras, Origen, and Neoplatonism: The Legacy of Anaxagoras to Classical and Late Antiquity* (Berlin/Boston: DeGruyter, 2016), Appendix II and *passim*. My review in *Gnomon* 92.2 (2020): 109–113. As an insightful reviewer has noted, the dynamicity of the relationship between the Father and the Logos in Origen is often misunderstood: see, for example, J. O'Leary, "Le destin du Logos johannique dans la pensée d'Origène," *Revue des Sciences Religieuses (RSR)* 83/2 (1995) 283–292, esp. 286.
20 In "Origen… and the Birth of the Trinitarian Meaning of Hypostasis" (Ramelli, 2012); further in *Origen of Alexandria*, ch. 5 (in preparation).

Alexandria an anticipation of his own use of ὑπόστασις as individual substance applied to the Trinity, but was more closely influenced by philosophical and medical authors of the early Imperial age, and by Scripture, especially Hebrews 1:3,[21] and I think also by the notion of dynamic unity in John that we are analyzing.

Subsequently, it was mainly under the influence of the Cappadocians that the Trinitarian terminology was clarified and standardized, with the aforementioned formula μία οὐσία, τρεῖς ὑποστάσεις ("one common essence, three individual substances"), which continued to be used and ascribed to them later by the Origenian Eriugena (*Periph.* 2.34). But the Cappadocians, and especially Gregory of Nyssa, in fact depended on Origen. The role of Origen in the building of the Trinitarian notion of hypostasis was so remarkable that he might have even influenced the characterization of the Neoplatonic three principles–against Plotinus' own use–as three Hypostases: αἱ τρεῖς ἀρχικαὶ ὑποστάσεις, the three hypostases that are the first principles (ἀρχαί) of all, exactly as the three divine Hypostases theorized by Origen, which were conceived as the first principles (ἀρχαί) of all. Should this be the case, Origen's theory may have influenced not only subsequent Trinitarian theology, but perhaps even 'pagan' Neoplatonism.[22] There are other potential examples of this influence that I deem noteworthy in this connection, but these merit and require separate treatment elsewhere.

Gregory of Nyssa's anti-subordinationistic arguments in *In Illud: Tunc et Ipse Filius* aimed at interpreting 1 Corinthians 15:28 (Origen's favorite passage in support of his theory of apokatastasis) in an anti-subordinationistic manner, arguing that the Son is not subordinate to the Father in his divinity, only in his body, which is the whole of humanity. This anti-subordinationistic demonstration entirely derives from Origen. Origen's influence, theoretical and exegetical, is evident in every passage, from the main argumentative pillars down to the most subtle details of exegesis.[23] Gregory's close dependence on Origen in his polemic against subordinationism, within his stance against 'Arianism,' confirms that Origen was not the forerunner of 'Arianism' (certainly he was not perceived as such by theologians like Gregory, or Athanasius), as he was depicted in the Origenistic controversy, and at times is still thus regarded, but the main inspirer of the Cappadocians, especially Nyssen, in what became Trinitarian 'orthodoxy.'[24] Origen inspired Athanasius, the

21 As is extensively argued in "Hypostasis" (Ramelli, 2012).

22 See I. Ramelli, "Hypostasis" (Ramelli, 2012); further arguments in *Origen of Alexandria* (in preparation).

23 I comprehensively demonstrated this in "Origen's Anti-Subordinationism" (Ramelli, 2011); "Gregory of Nyssa's Trinitarian Theology in *In Illud: Tunc et ipse Filius*: His Polemic against 'Arian' Subordinationism and Apokatastasis," in *Gregory of Nyssa: The Minor Treatises on Trinitarian Theology and Apollinarism,* eds. Volker Drecoll and Margitta Berghaus (Leiden: Brill, 2011), 445–78.

24 See Ilaria Ramelli, "Origen's Anti-Subordinationism" (Ramelli, 2011).

champion of anti-Arianism, who cited Origen as an authority on the Son as coeternal with the Father, against the 'Arians' (being well aware that such coeternality entailed the sharing of the same divine nature),[25] and the Cappadocians, as well as Eusebius, who in fact was no 'Arian' and subscribed to the Nicene creed. Origen's Trinitarian heritage is found, not so much in Arianism, as it is in Nyssen, Athanasius, Eusebius, and the Nicene-Constantinopolitan line, as I pointed out based on painstaking analysis of his own works—with attention to their reliability in relation to Origen's Greek original texts, translations, and fragments—and of Pamphilus, Eusebius, Athanasius, and other significant testimonies, 'pagan' and Christian. Even the origin of the ὁμοούσιος formula ("of identical essence/substance") can probably be traced back to Origen, as is also suggested by Eusebius and his first report of what happened at Nicaea.[26] Origen seems to have been the first positive anti-subordinationist in Christian thought, and was understood as such especially by Gregory of Nyssa and the other Cappadocians, and partially by Athanasius. As noted by Xavier Morales, Athanasius' Trinitarian theology focused on the 'correlative argument' (there is no Father without Son) before the Cappadocians (who, as we shall see below, theorized the σχέσις or "relation" within the Trinity),[27] and shows rightly that Basil depends on Origen's theology, especially concerning the 'correlative argument.' Origen displays this kind of theology too in his Logos theology, which in turn inspired Athanasius.[28] Thus, he is a source of inspiration of both Athanasius and the Cappadocians in this regard.

Nyssen, in particular, took up Origen's argument against subordinationism and its connection to the doctrine of apokatastasis very closely in his exegesis of 1 Corinthians 15:28 in the aforementioned *In Illud: Tunc et Ipse Filius* – to the extent of verbal borrowings, the same Scriptural quotations, and remarkably similar anti-subordinationistic interpretation, as I have previously pointed out. The link between anti-subordinationism and apokatastasis, so clear in Gregory, was

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25 Detailed analysis in Ramelli, "Origen's Anti-Subordinationism" (Ramelli, 2011).

26 Ramelli, "Origen's Anti-Subordinationism" (Ramelli, 2011); "Origen… and the Birth of the Trinitarian Meaning of Hypostasis" (Ramelli, 2012); *Origen of Alexandria* (in preparation). On ὁμοούσιος, M. Edwards also agrees, proposing an analogical use of ὁμοούσιος: "Did Origen Apply the Word ὁμοούσιος to the Son?" (1998). In line with my own views in "Origen's Anti-Subordinationism" (Ramelli, 2011), Edwards also thinks that there is someone else before Constantine's ὁμοούσιος: "Alexander of Alexandria and the Homoousion," *Vigiliae Christianae VigChr* 66:5 (2012): 482–502. He hypothesizes it to be Alexander of Alexandria – who of course, in turn, would have been influenced by Origen, like Eusebius, Athanasius, and the Cappadocians.

27 See G. Maspero, *Essere e relazione. L'ontologia trinitaria di Gregorio di Nissa*. Rome: Città Nuova, 2013.

28 X. Morales, "Basile de Césarée est-il l'introducteur du concept de relation en théologie trinitaire?," *REAug* 67.1 (2017), 141–80.

established already by Origen, in *Princ*. 3.5.6-7 and elsewhere: it was developed by Gregory, drawing precisely on Origen.

Against the backdrop of his anti-subordinationistic theology, Origen consistently interpreted Philo's theology (close to Middle Platonism), with its aforementioned 'Binitarian' notion of God and God's Logos and Wisdom,[29] in a non-subordinationistic sense, attributing to the Hypostasis of Logos/Wisdom the various *dynameis*, such as Logos and Wisdom/Sophia, which Philo probably used in a non-hypostatic sense.[30]

Given the fundamental divine equality and coeternity of the three Hypostases of the Trinity, in *Cels*. 8:17 Origen quotes John 14:10, "My Father is in me," with reference to the Son. Not only is the Son *in* the Father, but the Father also is *in* the Son, because for Origen there is no substantial subordination of the Son (in his *divine* nature, of course, not in his *human* nature) to the Father. This is why, for him, the Son is *in* the Father but the Father conversely is *in* the Son. This works at the level of theology, as distinct from that of economy.

Importantly, both Clement and Origen appropriated a famous passage of Plato's *Second Letter*, attributed to Plato by Numenius (F24, associating Plato being a Pythagorean to this letter), Clement, Origen, and Plotinus, although the *Second Letter* may have been Neopythagorean.[31] The passage (312E) concerns three Kings, whom Clement (in *Strom*. 5.103.1) and Origen applied to the Trinity; it speaks

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29 See above, the first paragraph of the section *Dynamic Unity in Theology*, and Boyarin, "The Gospel of the Memra" (Boyarin, 2001). On this doctrine of "two powers in haven" see A. Segal, *The Other Judaisms of Late Antiquity*, 2nd edn. (Waco, Texas: Baylor University Press, 2017), ch.1. The Philonic Logos theology was mostly rejected by Rabbinic Judaism. In *Cels*. 2.32, Origen speaks of the rabbis whom he met in Palestine in his day, who rejected Logos theology as the heresy of "the two powers in heaven," probably also due to the Christian overtones that this theory assumed. Yet, it must be observed that there is some Logos Theology in Rabbinics, as studied especially by H. Bietenhard, "Logos-Theologie im Rabbinat. Ein Beitrag zur Lehre vom Worte Gottes im rabbinischen Schrifttum," *Aufstieg und Niedergand der Römischen Welt* (*ANRW*), ed. Wolfgang Haase, II. 19.2 (1979), 580–618.

30 See Ilaria L.E. Ramelli, "Divine Power in Origen of Alexandria: Sources and Aftermath," in *Divine Powers in Late Antiquity*, eds. Anna Marmodoro and Irini Fotini Viltanioti (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2017), 177–98; also "Cristo-Logos in Origene: ascendenze filoniane, passaggi in Bardesane e Clemente, e negazione del subordinazionismo," in *Dal Logos dei Greci e dei Romani al Logos di Dio. Ricordando Marta Sordi*, eds. Alfredo Valvo and Roberto Radice (Milan: Vita e Pensiero, 2011), 295–317, referred to in Giulio Maspero, *Essere e relazione. L'ontologia trinitaria di Gregorio di Nissa* (Rome, 2013), 79; in Han J.W. Drijvers, *Bardaisan of Edessa*, intro. by Jan Willem Drijvers (Piscataway, New Jersey: Gorgias, 2014), xv; in M. Gyurkovics, "The Problem of 'Place' in the Prologue to John," in *Clement's Biblical Exegesis*, eds. Veronica Černuskova, Judith Kovacs and Jana Platova (Leiden: Brill, 2016), 277–291: 281.

31 On the Second *Letter* and its reception in 'pagan' and Christian Platonism, see *Proclus: Théologie platonicienne*, II, eds H.D. Saffrey–L.G. Westerink (Paris, 1974), XX–LIX.

of the First, the King of the universe, around whom are all beings, and who is the end of all and the cause of all beauty; the second beings are around the Second, and the third around the Third: "Related to the King of All [πάντων βασιλέα] are all things, and for his sake they are, and of all good/noble things [ἀπάντων τῶν καλῶν] He is the cause. And related to the Second are the second things, and to the Third the third'."[32] This specific passage in Plato's *Second Letter* concerns the "nature of the First" [τοῦ πρώτου φύσις]. Origen quotes it in *Cels.* 6.18, finding parallels in Scripture. For Origen, the three Kings of *Second Letter* 312E were the three Hypostases of the Trinity, but they were *not three gods*: they formed one and the same God the Creator. They shared in the same divine nature but were three different *hypostaseis*. Origen's *The King Is the Only Creator* (if it is by our Origen, as is indeed possible[33]) alludes to it. In Treatise 10(5.1)8, Περὶ τῶν τριῶν ἀρχικῶν ὑποστάσεων, *On the Three Hypostases that Are the First Principles*, entitled by Porphyry very likely after Origen (albeit without acknowledging his debt, of course),[34] Plotinus presents himself as exegete, ἐξηγητής, of Plato, and especially of the *Second Letter*'s three kings (312E): Plotinus, or his editor Porphyry, may well have meant that *Plotinus* was the true interpreter of Plato, not Origen. Plotinus insists that his own ideas are "not new" [μὴ καινούς], as opposed to those of the 'Gnostics'[35] – but also to those of Origen, who, in Plotinus' and Porphyry's (and Proclus') view, innovated with respect to Plato.

It would be very interesting to know whether the fourth evangelist was acquainted with the *Second Letter*, which Clement and Origen attributed to Plato (when dating it, it is difficult to assess whether it is by Plato). Justin also maintained that Plato foresaw the Trinity, probably, like Clement, on the basis of the *Second Letter*: "Plato assigns the second place [δευτέραν χώραν] to God's Logos, the third to the Spirit."[36] Justin, however, seems to have entertained a subordinationistic view of the Trinity, so in this regard – and therefore with respect to his approach to the concept of dynamic unity – he seems closer to Numenius and other Middle Platonists than to Origen and the Cappadocians.

In relation to the context of divine dynamic unity, it is interesting to note the use of κατὰ περιγραφήν in Origen in relation to the hypostasis of the Son within the Trinity, and more specifically in his relation to the Father (as in *Comm. in Io.* 2.2.16). Here Origen is polemic against some precursors of 'Arianism,' some

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32 Plato, Second *Letter*, 312E.

33 I do not enter this discussion here, but for the possible identification of the two Origens, both disciples of Ammonius Saccas, see above, n. 8.

34 See Ramelli, 'Origen… and the Birth of the Trinitarian Meaning of Hypostasis' (Ramelli, 2012).

35 So M. Fattal, *Existence et Identité* (2015), 19.

36 *1Apol.* 60.7.

'subordinationists.' Origen's adversaries, to avoid proclaiming "two gods," "deny the divinity of the Son and posit his individuality [ἰδιότητα] and his individual/circumscribed essence [τὴν οὐσίαν κατὰ περιγραφήν] as different [ἑτέραν] from that of the Father."[37] This use of κατὰ περιγραφήν seems to come from Clement's work against 'Gnostic' ideas: "the Logos in its own identity [ἐν ταὐτότητι] was Son according to its individual delimitation, not according to essence [κατὰ περιγραφὴν καὶ οὐ κατ᾽ οὐσίαν]."[38] It is important that Origen denied the existence of "two gods," the Father and the Son, both here and in *Heracl.* 4.4. For Father and Son are two individual Hypostases taken κατὰ περιγραφήν within the context of the common divine essence, which Origen emphasizes against those who denied the Son's divinity. The Father's and the Son's mutual relation or σχέσις was highlighted especially by Origen's follower, Gregory of Nyssa (see below).[39]

Approximately at the same time, Tertullian distinguished the *personae* (a term roughly corresponding to Greek 'hypostasis') of Father and Son, but not their common *substantia* (corresponding to Greek οὐσία), which is undivided; Father and Son are two "by way of distinction, not of division" (*Prax.* 12.6): "the Logos is also God, but as God's Son, not as Father" (*Prax.* 12.2). He used *prima*, *secunda*, and *tertia persona* (*Prax.* 18.2, 12.3, and so on), identifying the second Person with Logos and Sophia (*Prax.* 6.1). Melito, in *H.Pasch.* 6, first spoke of two οὐσίαι, divine and human, in Christ, a thesis that was to have a long history but pertains primarily to Christology, not to Trinitarian theology.

From the viewpoint of *theology*, the Son is equal to the Father for Origen, as discussed earlier. It is this that grounds his notion of divine dynamic unity: the Father is *in* the Son, just as the Son is *in* the Father. From this perspective, as argued earlier, Origen transformed the Platonist hierarchical view of the first principles into a relation of equality. From the viewpoint of *economy*, rather, Origen, deploying the Neoplatonic hierarchical (that is, subordinationistic) view of protology, underlined the mediating function of the Son between God and creation. This is why Origen characterizes Christ-Logos, who is God's Logos and God, as endowed with a rational soul, like all rational creatures or *logika*.[40] And he ascribes to this soul (Middle- and Neoplatonically) a mediatory function: a mediation between God and the human body of Jesus, and between God and the created world. The soul of Christ, due to its extremely strong and immutable love for God, is said

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37 *Comm. in Io.* 2.2.16.

38 See *Exc. Theod.* 19.

39 See G. Maspero, *Essere e relazione* (2013).

40 Especially in *Princ.* 4.4.4, but also in many other passages; see my 'Atticus and Origen on the Soul of God the Creator: From the "Pagan" to the Christian Side of Middle Platonism', *Jahrbuch für Religionsphilosophie* 10 (2011), 13–35; *Origen of Alexandria* (in preparation), chh 5–6.

by Origen to have been the only rational creature who escaped the fall and became united to God "in an inseparable and indissoluble union," thus acquiring divine characteristics.[41] What first depended on this rational soul's free will – to love God and adhere to the supreme Good – has, owing to the intensity and the steadfastness of this love, become nature for it. As a consequence, the union of this soul with God (the supreme Good, αὐτοαγαθόν employing a description borrowed from Numenius) is a natural union, and this soul has become entirely good, that is, divine, and therefore incapable of sinning.[42] This soul is divine on account of its union with God and in particular with the divine Logos, the Son, who is God's Logos and Wisdom. Due to this union, God the Logos is in Jesus' soul, and Jesus' soul is in the Logos. This is another instance of dynamic unity in Origen's theology, applied in this case to Christology. Although it clearly depends on its application to theology by Origen.

Origen describes Christ's soul as "a medium between God and the flesh," so that "the Logos could become the human being Jesus."[43] This soul was sent by God to receive a human body from Mary;[44] thus, the incarnated Christ turns out to be "a composite being,"[45] divine and human. Now this is possible precisely thanks to the mediation of his soul,[46] which provides a link between Christ's divinity and his human body. Christ's soul functions as a mediator between God and the human being Jesus. Additionally, since Christ the Logos is the Creator, his soul also plays a mediatory role between God the Creator and creation itself, all the more so in that creation is a work of Christ-Logos. Indeed, Christ is said by Origen to be "the mediator between the non-generated nature [*sc.* that of God] and the nature of all generated beings [*sc.* all creatures]."[47] His soul is a mediator also in that it transmits the loving heat of God, or the ointment of holiness, to the other rational souls that receive them from him.[48] The only *logikon* that never fell from perfect communion with God to any extent, but only grew in this communion, is that of Jesus Christ. Origen contrasts the presence of sin in each and every rational creature with Jesus' freedom from sin.[49] This is why his assumption of humanity,

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41 *Princ*. 2.6.3–5.

42 *Princ*. 2.6.5.

43 *Cels*. 2.42.

44 *Comm. Io*. 20.162.

45 Σύνθετόν τι χρῆμα (*Cels*. 1.66).

46 *Princ*. 2.6.3.

47 Διαμεταξὺ τῆς τοῦ ἀγενήτου καὶ τῆς τῶν γενητῶν πάντων φύσεως (*Cels*. 3.34).

48 *Princ*. 2.6.6.

49 *Solus ergo est Dominus et Salvator noster Iesus qui peccatum non fecit* (*Comm. Cant*. 3.14.30). For the relation of Jesus' impeccability to the doctrine of 'original sin' – a problematic notion in Origen – see Ramelli, "Was Patristic Sin Different from Ancient Error? The Role of Ethical Intellectualism

with its mortal body, was voluntary and not the necessary consequence of sin.[50] For this reason, Christ could defeat death and free those who were under the power of death, both physical and spiritual.[51] This soul of Christ is a rational soul, a λογικόν, whose participation in the Logos is perfect (whereas the participation of human souls, and even angelic souls, therein is not). Indeed, since this soul is united with the Logos in such a perfect way, in a supreme participation with God the Son, they have become "one and the same thing," ἕν.[52] This soul, therefore, is a λογικὴ ψυχή ("rational soul") so perfect as to be one with the divine Logos. All rational creatures, however, are ultimately called to this, to the eventual deification (θέωσις).

In the time of Origen and Tertullian, Praxeas and his followers used the Johannine passages at stake, concerning dynamic unity, in support of Monarchianism – the doctrine, fought by Origen, that in the Trinity there is only one ἀρχή, the Father, and not three, coinciding with the three Hypostases:

> "I and the Father are one," and "Whoever has seen me has seen the Father," and "I am in the Father and the Father is in me." To these three citations they [*sc.* Praxeas and his followers] wish the whole appurtenance of both Testaments to yield, though the smaller number ought to be understood in accordance with the greater.[53]

Tertullian opposed to this a different interpretation of the Johannine statement of Jesus, "I am in the Father and the Father is in me," claiming that it was a means to distinguish these two Hypostases of the Trinity.[54] This quite closely resembles one aspect of Origen's interpretation – the positing of three Hypostases as individual substances within the common divine nature, whose interrelation will be brought to the fore by Gregory of Nyssa. They upheld the commonality of nature, and the consequent coeternity, of the three Hypostases in one God.

In the fourth century, a Priscillianist composed a treatise *De Trinitate*, formerly ascribed to Priscillian himself, also drawing on the *Gospel of Truth*, which is

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and the Invention of 'Original Sin,'" lecture delivered at the international conference *The Invention of Sin*, Paris, Institute of Advanced Studies of the University of Paris, April 13–14, 2017 (forthcoming).

50 *In morte fuerit, sed voluntarie et non, ut nos, necessitate peccati* (*Comm. Cant.* 3.14.32).
51 *Quia liber inter mortuos fuit, idcirco devicto eo qui habebat mortis imperium, abstraxit captivitatem qua tenebatur in morte* (*Comm. Cant.* 3.14.32).
52 *Cels.* 6.47.
53 *Ap.* Tertullian *Adv. Prax.* 20.
54 *Adv. Prax.* 13. I discuss this in greater depth in Ilaria Ramelli, "Origen, Greek Philosophy, and the Birth of the Meaning of Hypostasis" (2012), see also S. Waers, "Monarchianism and the Two Powers: Jewish and Christian Monotheism at the Beginning of the Third Century," *Vigiliae Christianae (VigChr)* 70:4 (Waers, 2016): 401-429: 413-414.

generally regarded as Valentinian.[55] He explicitly constructed his own Trinitarian theology on the basis of the Johannine notion of dynamic unity, that is, of the reciprocal presence of the Father *in* the Son and the Son *in* the Father. Moreover, he extends this relation to the Holy Spirit, since he has strong pneumatological interests that were also grounded in the Johannine Gospel (as I have argued elsewhere).[56] Thus, in *Trin.* 357-360, he interestingly affirms the presence not only of the Father in the Son, but also of the Son in the Spirit: *Pater ergo in Filio, et in Spiritu Sancto Filius, unum nomen omnipotentis est Dei* ["The Father is in the Son, and the Son is in the Holy Spirit: the name of the omnipotent God is one"]. This theologian's argument aims at stressing the internal unity of the Trinity and can be regarded as an extension of the concept of Johannine dynamic unity.

2 Gregory of Nyssa's Interpretation of the Dynamic Unity in John 14:10a against Eunomius' 'Neoarian' Subordinationism

I have already stressed how Gregory relied very closely on Origen's anti-subordinationistic arguments in his own argument for anti-subordinationism in connection with the theory of apokatastasis in *In illud: Tunc et Ipse Filius,* a commentary on 1 Corinthians 15:28. With respect to John 14:10a and its expression of dynamic unity in the divine, "Do you not believe that I am in the Father and the Father is in me?," Gregory of Nyssa in his work *Against Eunomius* (*Contra Eunomium*)[57] used this verse to refute the argument of the 'neo-Arian' Eunomius, who had a subordinationistic view of the Son with respect to the Father. Gregory's *Contra Eunomium* was written between 379 and 383 CE and there are frequent occurrences of the use of σχέσις (a key-term strategically used by Gregory for the Father-Son relationship in his own version of the dynamic unity), to a far greater extent than all antecedent Greek works.[58]

While σχέσις, denoting the Trinitarian dynamic unity, is significantly absent from Eunomius' *Apology* (which is understandable in the case of a

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55 See M. Edwards, "Pseudo-Priscillian and the *Gospel of Truth*," *Vigiliae Christianae (VigChr)* 70:4 (2016): 355–372.

56 Ilaria Ramelli, "The Spirit as Paraclete in 3rd to 5th-Century Debates and the Use of John 14-17 in the Pneumatology of That Time," in *Receptions of the Fourth Gospel in Antiquity*, eds. Jörg Frey, Tobias Nicklas (Tübingen: Mohr Siebeck, forthcoming).

57 Specifically, *Contra Eunomium*, III 8.40.11-41 (GNO II 253.25-254.11).

58 See Giulio Maspero, "Ontologia e dogma: il ruolo della schesis nella dottrina trinitaria greca," *Annales Theologici* 27 (2013), 293–342.

subordinationist, who denied the egalitarian relation between these two Hypostases), this was present in Basil of Caesarea's response and especially in Gregory of Nyssa's *Contra Eunomium*. Eunomius, indeed, claimed that being in something or someone (ἔν τινι εἶναι) is a sign of not being in the proper sense, in order to conclude that, since the Son is in the Father, the Son cannot be in the proper sense in the same way as the Father is, that is to say, "absolutely" [ἄσχετον]. Gregory of Nyssa responds that John 14:10, the core text for the dynamic unity of Father and Son, states that not only is it the case that *the Son is in the Father*, but also *the Father is in the Son*. Therefore, Eunomius should conclude that neither can the Father be in the proper sense. Gregory's solution is that neither the Father nor the Son are in an *absolute* sense; rather, both are in a *reciprocal relation* or σχέσις – Gregory's version of the dynamic unity, I would say a 'strong' version of it, grounded in Origen's distinction of three hypostases and one and the same *ousia*. In this light, according to Gregory, to say that the Father is in the Son and that the Son is in the bosom of the Father is the same thing, since both are in "relation" [σχέσις] to each other.

Gregory emphasized even more than Origen the equal (anti-subordinationistic) relation between the Father and the Son. For Gregory, all the three Hypostases of the Trinity – and not only the Father – correspond to the first principle, Plotinus' One.[59] Hence also his doctrine of 'social analogy,' detailing that the same egalitarian relationship that obtains within the Trinity also obtains within all of humanity. Gregory even applied this doctrine, which stressed the equal dignity of all humans, to the rejection of slavery and social injustice.[60]

The same conclusions concerning the equality of the Trinity as the bedrock of the concept of dynamic unity were drawn by Augustine, who was influenced by Origen probably more than is commonly thought, especially during his anti-Manichaean phase, as well as later on.[61] Augustine stressed "the unity and

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59 See, especially, *Ad Graecos* 5.

60 See my *Social Justice and the Legitimacy of Slavery: The Role of Philosophical Asceticism from Ancient Judaism to Late Antiquity* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2016), 172–210; see also "Institutionalisation of Religious Individualisation: The Case of Asceticism in Antiquity and Late Antiquity and the Rejection of Slavery and Social Injustice," in *Religious Individualization: Types and Cases. Historical and Crosscultural Explorations,* vol. 1: *Facets of Institutionalization*, eds. Martin Fuchs, Bernd Otto, Rahul Parson, and Jörg Rüpke (Berlin: de Gruyter, 2019), 695–718.

61 See I. Ramelli, "Origen in Augustine: A Paradoxical Reception," *Numen* 60 (Ramelli, 2013): 280–307, confirmed by K. Pollmann, "The Broken Perfume-Flask: Origen's Legacy in Two Case-Studies," lecture held at Origeniana XI, Aarhus 26-August 31, 2013; I. Perczel, "St. Maximus on the Lord's Prayer," in *The Architecture of the Cosmos: St. Maximus the Confessor: New Perspectives*, eds. Antoine Lévy, Pauli Annala, Olli Hallamaa and Tuomo Lankila (Helsinki: Agricola, 2015), 221–278:229; D. Heide, "Ἀποκατάστασις: The Resolution of Good and Evil in Origen and Eriugena," *Dionysius* 3 (2015): 195–213:206; Charlene P.E. Burns, *Christian Understandings of Evil: The*

equality of the Trinity" [*unitas et aequalitas Trinitatis*].[62] Likewise, the activity of the Trinity is "inseparable and equal" [*inseparabilis et par operatio*].[63] The consequentiality between the ontological and the dynamic equality was a point made by Gregory of Nyssa on the basis of Origen's premises.[64]

3 Dynamic Unity in both Reciprocal Indwelling and Reciprocal Knowledge: The Role of the Spirit in Its Construction and 'Expansion' into the Unity of Believers

Let us now turn our investigation to what I call an 'expansive' notion of dynamic unity. In John 17:21, the dynamic unity of the Father and the Son expands from the intra- to the extra-Trinitarian sphere (from theology to economy):

> 1:7:20 Now I am not praying only for these here, but also for those who will believe in me thanks to their word: 21 that all may be one thing [πάντες ἓν ὧσιν]; *just as you, Father, are in me and I am in you, so may they too be one thing in us* [ἐν ἡμῖν ἓν ὧσιν], that the world [ὁ κόσμος] may believe that you sent me.
>
> 22 And I have given them the glory [τὴν δόξαν] that you have given me, that they may be one thing [ὧσιν ἕν] just as we are one thing [ἡμεῖς ἕν].
>
> 23 I in them and you in me, that they may be perfected into unity [τετελειωμένοι εἰς ἕν], that the world [ὁ κόσμος] may realise [γινώσκῃ] that you sent me and I loved [ἠγάπησα] them in the same way as you loved [ἠγάπησας] me.

Historical Trajectory *(Minneapolis: Fortress, 2016), 77; W. Howard-Brook,* Empire Baptized: How the Church Embraced What Jesus Rejected 2nd-5th Centuries *(Orbis Books, 2016); Michael K.W. Suh, "Τὸ πνεῦμα in 1 Corinthians 5:5: A Reconsideration of Patristic Exegesis,"* Vigiliae Christianae (VigChr) *72 (2018) 121–141: 131; Alexandar Djakovac, "Apokatastasis and Predestination: Ontological Assumptions of Origen's and Augustine's Soteriologies," in* Ad orientem: Essays from Serbian Theology Today*, ed. Bogoljub Sijakovic (Belgrade: Faculty of Theology - Los Angeles: Sebastian Press, 2019), 103–115; M. Cameron, "Origen and Augustine," in* The Oxford Handbook of Origen, *eds. Ronald Heine and Karen Jo Torjesen (Oxford: Oxford University Press, forthcoming). A systematic work on Origen's impact on Augustine is a substantial desideratum and is in the works.*

62 *Trin.* 1.6.13; 1.7.14.
63 *Trin.* 2.1.3.
64 See Ilaria Ramelli "Divine Power" (2017) and "La triade Ousia - Energeia - Dynamis in Gregorio di Nissa," in *La Triade nel Neoplatonismo*, ed. Giulio D'Onofrio (Turnhout: Brepols, Ramelli, 2021).

24 Father, I wish what you have granted me [ὃ δέδωκάς μοι θέλω]: that, where I am, those too may be together with me [μετʼἐμοῦ], that they may contemplate the glory that is mine, that which you have given me [τὴν δόξαν66 τὴν ἐμήν, ἣν δέδωκάς μοι], because you loved [ἠγάπησας] me before the creation / the casting down of the world [πρὸ καταβολῆς κόσμου; *ante constitutionem mundi* VL, Vg].[66]

25 O Father just, the world has not known you [οὐκ ἔγνω], but I have known you [ἔγνων], and these here have realised [ἔγνωσαν] that you sent me.

26 And I manifested [ἐγνώρισα] them your Name, and I shall manifest [γνωρίσω] it, that the love with which you have loved me [ἡ ἀγάπη ἣν ἠγάπησάς με] may be in them and I too may be in them.

Here, the perspective is at the same time enlarged and unified: expanded to all those who will believe in Jesus Christ in the future, and unified in that all these people will have to become one thing, ἕν. This principle of unification, a leitmotiv in the whole farewell speech of Jesus,[67] returns again, at the very end of this speech, to conclude it together with the theme of love. The evangelist clearly wanted to highlight the two principal notions of the entire discourse by bringing them up together again at its end. Another key concept that is recapitulated here at the end is that of glory, which has a unifying function in the dynamic unity according especially to the Platonic interpreters of this pericope. The idea that the Father has given Jesus his glory (*claritatem* in all Latin versions apart from the Latin column of Codex Bezae, which uses *gloriam*), in verse 22, parallels the notion that the Father has given Jesus his own Name; this reinforces the preference given to the reading ᾧ δέδωκάς μοι in verses 11–12 in reference to the Name. Moreover, Jesus' declaration in verse 26 that he has made the Name manifest further suggests that the Father has given it to Jesus. To readers such as Origen and the Cappadocians, this clearly pointed to the shared divinity of the Father and the Son, which, as I have argued, is the basis for their appropriation of the concept of divine dynamic unity.

The world, ὁ κόσμος, which was described as sharply opposed to the Father and to the followers of Jesus in the preceding sections of the Johannine Gospel, is here an object of inclusion and communion, through faith. Towards it, the dynamic unity of God can be indeed expanded. The perspective is that of the conversion of

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66 The pre-existence of the Son to this world is made clear in v. 24, in which Jesus says that the Father loved him before the καταβολή ["casting down; foundation"] of this world (not κτίσις ["creation"], ποίησις ["making"], or even πλάσμα ["moulding"], just as the Latin, in both the Vetus Latina and the Vulgate, does not render *ante creationem mundi* ["before the creation of the world"], or even *ante plasmationem* ["before the moulding of the world"], but *ante constitutionem* ["before the constitution/construction of the world"]).

67 A full volume will be devoted to this in the Novum Testamentum Patristicum series.

the world, achieved thanks to the demonstration of the unity of Jesus' disciples, present and future, in Christ and God.

Now, Origen and the Origenian tradition – Christian Neoplatonism – drew extensively from this section, as the biblical basis for the expected unification [ἕνωσις] of all rational creatures among themselves and with God in the *telos*. This will be the culmination of apokatastasis or universal restoration, in which all rational beings will return to God.[68] For example, Origen, in *C.Cant.* 1.4.9, quotes verse 21 to illustrate how rational creatures will be united to Christ-God in the end by the most powerful bonds of *agape* ("charity-love"):

> I think that, if they [*sc.* rational creatures] ever reach that stage, they no longer walk or run, but they will be bound by the bonds of love [*caritatis*] and will adhere to the Logos…and in them the Scriptural passage will be fulfilled that "As you Father in me and I in you are one [*unum*], so may these also be one [*unum*] in us."[69]

Gregory of Nyssa in *H.Cant.* (GNO VI 467.2-17) uses John 17:21-23 as a departure point to argue that the unity of the Father and the Son, and of all believers – and eventually all humans and rational creatures – in them, is substantiated by the Holy Spirit, who is identified with the Glory of which Jesus speaks in verse 22 and is therefore seen as a bond of unity:

> It is better to quote literally the exact divine words of the Gospel: "That all may be one; as you, Father, are in me and I in you, so may they too be one in us" [v. 21]. What keeps together [τὸ συνδεκτικόν] this unity [ἑνότης] is the Glory… Now, the Holy Spirit is called Glory… For the Lord says, "I have given them the glory that you have given me" [v. 22]. Indeed, he gave this Glory to the disciples when he told them, "Receive the Holy Spirit." [John 20:22] Having assumed the human nature, Christ received this glory, which he already had from eternity, from before the world existed [v. 5]. And because this human nature was glorified by the Spirit, the glory of the Spirit is communicated to all those who participate in this same nature, beginning with the disciples. This is why he states: "And I have given them the Glory that you have given me, that they may be one thing just as we are one. I in them and you in me, that they may be perfected into unity [vv. 22-23]."

Evagrius was a disciple of both Gregory Nazianzen and Gregory of Nyssa (indeed strongly influenced by the latter, as recent research progressively demonstrates);[70]

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68 On this, see I. Ramelli, *The Christian Doctrine of Apokatastasis: A Critical Assessment from the New Testament to Eriugena* (Leiden: Brill, 2013); on ἕνωσις as ideal in Platonism and culmination of apokatastasis, see Eadem, "Harmony between *arkhē* and *telos* in Patristic Platonism and the Imagery of Astronomical Harmony Applied to the Apokatastasis Theory," *International Journal of the Platonic Tradition* 7 (Ramelli, 2013): 1–49; in Origen, Gregory of Nyssa, and Evagrius, see I. L.E. Ramelli, "Mystical Eschatology in Gregory and Evagrius," in *Mystical Eschatology in Gregory of Nyssa*, ed. Giulio Maspero Miguel Brugarolas, and Ilaria Vigorelli, Studia Patristica CI (Leuven: Peeters, forthcoming), Ch. 14, 175–204.

69 *C.Cant.* 1.4.9.

who also built on John 17:21-23 for his eschatological notion of ἕνωσις or unification, which thereby falls within what I call the 'expansive' form of dynamic unity:

> And there will be a time when the body, the soul, and the intellect will cease to be separate from one another, with their names and their plurality, since the body and the soul will be elevated to the rank of intellects; this conclusion can be drawn from the following words: "That they may be one in us, just as you and I are one."[71] And thus there will be a time when the Father, the Son, and the Spirit, and their rational creation, which constitutes their body, will cease to be separate, with their names and their plurality. And this conclusion can be drawn from the words, "God will be all in all"[72]

Evagrius is building here upon the same relation that Origen and Gregory of Nyssa established between the dynamic unity expressed in John and the eschatological unity in which creation too will be subsumed according to Paul, 1 Corinthians 15:28 (one of the main biblical pillars for the doctrine of apokatastasis). The same inclusion of creation in the ideal ἕνωσις or unification is also expressed by Evagrius on the basis of the same Johannine cluster of notions related to dynamic unity, also in *Ep. de fide* 7.25 (a work that is strongly informed by Cappadocian Trinitarian theology):

> For that famous prayer of our Lord must necessarily be fulfilled, because it was Jesus who prayed as follows: "Grant them that they may be one in us, just as I and you are one, o Father." For, as the Godhead is One, it will unify all when it comes into each, and number will be annulled by the presence of unity.[73]

The divine dynamic unity will thus expand to the whole rational creation at the eventual restoration or apokatastasis.

It may be objected that in Evagrius the very basis of the theory of divine dynamic unity, namely the equality among the hypostases of the Trinity – emphasized by Origen and even more fully by Gregory of Nyssa – was lacking. Indeed, Evagrius is often described as a 'subordinationist,' and especially as one who had a dualistic notion of Christ, going so far as to exclude Christ from the Trinity. This widespread view, however, as I have argued elsewhere, should be revised.[74] Evagrius deemed the divine nature of Christ divine and part and parcel of the Trinity. There are numerous statements in Evagrius' *Kephalaia Gnostika* and

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70 See I. Ramelli, *Evagrius' Kephalaia Gnostika* (Leiden-Atlanta: Brill, Society of Biblical Literature [SBL], 2015), introduction and commentary, and "Gregory Nyssen's and Evagrius' Biographical and Theological Relations: Origen's Heritage and Neoplatonism," in *Evagrius between Origen, the Cappadocians, and Neoplatonism*, ed. Ilaria Ramelli, in collaboration with Kevin Corrigan, Giulio Maspero, and Monica Tobon (Leuven: Peeters, 2017), *Studia Patristica* 84, 165–231.
71 John 17:22.
72 1Cor 15:28. Evagrius, *Ep. ad Mel.* 22.
73 Evagrius, *Ep. de fide* 7.25.

Letter on Faith that in fact contradict subordinationism and indicate that the Son is fully divine, like the Father and the Spirit. I offer here only some examples. The first sentence of KG 6.14 – a *kephalaion* which is often adduced as a proof of Evagrius' subordinationism – should be probably read as a claim by an objector, or better the whole *kephalaion* should be interpreted as an internal dialectics of thesis, antithesis, and discussion: Evagrius repeatedly uses such dialectic strategy, within his 'zetetic', heuristic methodology, which he inherited from Origen.[75] This is the only way to understand KG 6.14 in a non-contradictory manner, since it first states, "Christ is not ὁμοούσιος [consubstantial] with the Trinity," and then, "Christ is ὁμοούσιος [consubstantial] with the Father."[76] The subject is always Christ, in two sentences that form a *contradictio in adiecto*. Within a discussion, Evagrius is challenging the former sentence and establishing the latter. If, in KG 4.9 and 4.18, Evagrius distinguishes Christ – the composite of God's Logos and a *logikon* – from the Logos, in KG 6.14 he considers both together as a unity: "in union, Christ is ὁμοούσιος [consubstantial] with the Father" and "is the Lord" God.[77] In KG 3.1, Christ is considered in his divine nature as Son, and thereby as God: "The Father – only he – knows Christ, and the Son – only he – the Father." Christ and the Son occupy the same position in the equation:

Father : Christ = Son : Father.

This implies the identity between Son and Christ in his divine nature.

I find this reciprocal relation of knowledge between the Father and the Son another expression of the divine dynamic unity, alongside that of the reciprocal indwelling of the Father in the Son. Evagrius was following Origen in highlighting this form of divine dynamic unity. Origen, commenting on this idea in *C.Cant.* 2.5.17-19, relied on John, Matthew and Luke for this notion, quoting all of them as follows: John 10:15: "just as the Father knows me, so do I know/recognise the Father" [*sicut cognoscit me Pater et ego agnosco Patrem*]; Luke 10:22: "No one knows what is the Son but the Father, and no one knows what is the Father but the Son," with the relevant 'expansion:' "and the one to whom the Son wishes to reveal the Father" [*nemo scit quid sit Filius nisi Pater, et nemo scit quid sit Pater nisi Filius et cui voluerit Filius revelare*]; Matt 11:27: "No one knows the Son but the Father, and

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74 *Evagrius' Kephalaia Gnostika* (2015); "Gregory Nyssen's and Evagrius' Relations" (2017); Thanks and response to Jonathan Douglas Hicks, http://rblnewsletter.blogspot.nl/2017/10/20171023-ramelli-evagriuss-kephalaia.html; and eventually in a future monograph, *Evagrius' Philosophical Theology*.

75 A specific work on this aspect of Origen's methodology is in preparation.

76 Evagrius, KG 6.14.

77 Evagrius, KG 6.14.

no one knows the Father but the Son," with the relevant 'expansion:' "and the one to whom the Son wishes to reveal the Father" [*Nemo novit Filium nisi Pater, neque Patrem quis novit nisi Filius, et cui voluerit Filius revelare*].[78]

Evagrius, exactly like Origen, sometimes calls Christ the *logikon* alone, sometimes the union of this *logikon* with God's Logos/Son (I use *logikon* in the sense of rational creature, as Origen also indicated rational creatures as λογικά/λογικοί: Christ is one of them because he took up a rational creature in his human part, but he is at the same time the divine Logos and is God in his divine component). In *Skemmata* 1, Evagrius treats Christ as a compound of creatural and divine nature, claiming that Christ *qua* Christ possesses the essential knowledge, that is, God, who constitutes his own divine nature. Consistently, Palladius, in his biography of Evagrius, depicts him as supporting, against 'heretics' such as 'Arians' and Eunomians, the full divinity of Christ-Logos, God's Son, who also assumed a human body, soul, and *nous* or intellect. Thus, Christ for Evagrius is both God and a *logikon*. *Qua* God, he is consubstantial with the Trinity, while of course he is not *qua* rational creature or *logikon*. The same was expressed, for instance, by Augustine, who stated that, "the Son is equal in nature to God the Father, but inferior in what he took up: in the form of a slave, which he assumed, he is inferior to the Father; but in the form of God – in which he was even before he received the form of a slave – he is equal to the Father."[79]

Evagrius is often accused of entertaining a dichotomic Christology, although the same also applies to Gregory of Nyssa. This continuity is not surprising to me, since I suspect that Gregory exerted more influence on Evagrius than is commonly assumed. However, neither Nyssen nor Evagrius really had a divisive or double Christology. In fact, in KG 6.14, the adverb "inseparably," in reference to Christ, who possesses "inseparably" the "essential knowledge," that is, God, is the same as the adverbs that at Chalcedon will describe the inseparability of Christ's two natures: ἀχωρίστως, ἀδιαιρέτως. Also, "inseparable" is used here by Evagrius exactly to describe the union of Christ's divine and human natures: "Christ is the only one who always and inseparably possesses the essential knowledge in himself."[80] For Evagrius, Christ is both God and a *logikon*, "always and inseparably." This is an anticipation of Chalcedon, which Origen and even Tertullian foreshadowed,[81] more than the expression of a dichotomic or a subordinationistic Christology.

78　Origen, *C.Cant.* 2.5.17-19 (preserved in Latin translation).
79　*Trin.* 1.7.14: "*Est ergo Dei filius Deo patri natura aequalis, habitu minor. In forma enim serui, quam accepit, minor est patre; in forma autem Dei in qua erat antequam hanc accepisset, aequalis est patri.*" Translation mine, as always, unless differently stated.
80　"Always" may even be taken to anticipate Chalcedon's ἀτρέπτως, "without change over time."

Jerome also followed Origen in his *Commentary on Ephesians*, which very closely reflected that of Origen:

> At the end of the aeon all beings must be restored into their original condition, and all of us will be made into one and the same body, and reformed into the perfect human being. In this way, the Saviour's prayer will be fulfilled in us: "Father, grant that, just as you and I are one and the same thing, so *these, too, may be one and the same thing in us.*" [82]

This passage, which is preserved by Rufinus, *Apol. c. Hier.* 1, reveals that Jerome too, like Origen, saw the eventual unification as a characteristic of the final apokatastasis or universal restoration, this also belongs to the tradition of an 'expansive' notion of dynamic unity grounded in the gospel of John.

The extension of dynamic unity beyond the intra-Trinitarian relation – what I have called an 'expanded' notion of dynamic unity – is employed on the basis of the Johannine passages on dynamic unity by 'the Persian sage' Aphrahat also, who wrote in Syriac his *Demonstrations* or *Expositions*, composed between 336 and 345 CE for his fellow ascetics. John 14:20, "You are *in* me, and I am *in* you," is the object of his reflections. Aphrahat was far removed (although not entirely[83]) from Greek philosophy, as well as from the theological controversies of his own day. In *Dem.* 6, col. 281, he explains John 14:20 by saying that "Christ dwells in the many even if he is one … although he is divided into the many, he sits at the right of his Father. *He is also in us, and we are in him*, as he said: '*You are in me and I am in you.*' And elsewhere he declared: '*I and my Father are One.*'" The latter is a reference to John 10:30, which also supports the 'expanded' notion of dynamic unity in the notion of reciprocal indwelling.

4 Dynamic Unity, Henology, and the "All in All" Motif in 'Pagan' and Christian Neoplatonism

In Origen, Nyssen, and Evagrius, the resurrection-restoration is a return to unity. Christ's great prayer for unity, in John 17:21-23, was one of the most important pillars of Origen's conception of apokatastasis as unity, which is configured as an expansion of the divine dynamic unity through the mystery of "deification"

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81 Like Origen, his semi-contemporary Tertullian, *Prax.* 27.11, posited for Christ "a double state, not confused, but joined in one Person, God and the human Jesus," *duplice statum, non confusum, sed coniunctum in una persona, deum et hominem Iesum.*

82 Jerome, *Comm. in Eph. ap.* Rufinus, *Apol. c. Hier.* 1.

83 See Ramelli, "Revisiting Aphrahat's Sources: Beyond Scripture?," *Parole de l'Orient* 41 (2015): 367–97.

(θέωσις). Although the section of Origen's Commentary on John devoted to the great prayer for unity in John 17 is lost, a fragment on John 17:11 survives from the Catenae (fr. 140), in which Origen explains that "Unity has many meanings" [τὸ ἓν πολλαχῶς λέγεται]: he was taking up a famous Aristotelian expression,[84] applying it to the Platonic issue of unity. For instance, it can be a unity according to harmony and agreement, or according to similarity of nature. The unity of all human beings in Adam and in Christ is of the latter kind.

In *Comm. in Io.* 1.20.119, Origen develops this concept by observing that, whereas God the Father is One and absolutely simply One, Christ the Logos is "One through All."[85] Christ is said to be "the first and the last" in Revelation because he is the first, the last, and all that is in between, as Christ-Logos is "all things" (*Comm. in Io.* 1.31.219), "all and in all" (*Comm. in Io.* 1.31.225). The unity of the Logos is emphasized in *Comm. in Io.* 20.6.43-44 against those who "want to kill the Logos and to break it to pieces […] to destroy the unity of the greatness of the Logos." The dialectic between unity and multiplicity was indeed an important theme in Origen's thought – hence also the pivotal nature of his notion of dynamic unity.[86] Multiplicity is subsumed and transcended in the Logos' unity, and, through Christ-Logos, in the eschatological unity of all rational creatures in God. This "deification" or θέωσις has been often misrepresented as pantheism, as though a substantial confusion should occur between God and creatures. But this is excluded by divine transcendence itself; the "deification" of the *logika* will be their leading a divine life, and their unity in God is for Origen a unity of will. For all rational creatures' will shall be oriented only to the Good, that is, God, no longer to evil, neither will it be dispersed among minor or apparent goods, but God will be all goods, in one, for all.

This eschatological unity will be unity in *agapē* – a pivotal concept emphasized in John 14-17 along with that of unity, and even considered to be a factor of unity. This is why there will be no more fall from unity in the final apokatastasis: because "love never falls," *caritas numquam cadit* (*Comm. in Rom.* 5.10.158-240). So, thanks to *agapē* there will be no new fall. This *agapē* will keep all rational

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84 Τὸ ὂν λέγεται πολλαχῶς, but also, even more closely, *Met.* 1004a22 and other passages: πολλαχῶς τὸ ἓν λέγεται. This sentence is repeated *ibid.* 1005a7 and *Phys.* 227b3; cf. *Met.* 1077b17; *Met.* 1018a35: τὸ ἓν καὶ τὸ ὂν πολλαχῶς λέγεται; *Phys.* 185b6: τὸ ἓν πολλαχῶς λέγεται ὥσπερ καὶ τὸ ὄν; *Soph. el.* 182b27: διὰ τὸ πολλαχῶς φάναι τὸ ἓν λέγεσθαι καὶ τὸ ὄν.

85 *Comm. in Io.* 1.20.119. For more on this, see Ramelli, "Divine Powers in Origen of Alexandria: Sources and Aftermath," in *Divine Powers in Late Antiquity*, eds. Anna Marmodoro and Irini Fotini Viltanioti (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2017): 177–98.

86 *Comm. in Io.* 1.20.119. See Ramelli, "Harmony between *arkhē* and *telos* in Patristic Platonism and the Imagery of Astronomical Harmony Applied to the Apokatastasis Theory," *International Journal of the Platonic Tradition* 7 (Ramelli, 2013): 1–49.

creatures in unity within themselves and with God, because *agapē* is a centripetal force: *Tanta caritatis vis est ut ad se omnia trahat* (*Comm. in Rom.* 5.10.226). This expands the *theological* notion of dynamic unity into an *economical* notion. According to Origen, the first fall, of Satan and Adam, took place before the manifestation of Christ's love, but in the apokatastasis love will be perfect (since the end will be not only similar to, but better than, the beginning – a theory that Gregory of Nyssa was to develop further in his vision of *epektasis*)[87]. The unity of apokatastasis will never be disrupted by one rational creature's free will, which could endure forever in the rejection of God. Origen takes up Paul's revelation that nothing will be able to separate us from God's love, not even death; therefore, *a fortiori*, not even our free will (*Comm. in Rom.* 5.10.212-222).

Origen quotes John 17:21 in *C.Cant.* 1.4.9 to signify the final *henosis* as a unity of volition. Once souls reach Christ, their volitional movements in any other direction will cease and they will become one spirit with Christ; so, Jesus' prayer for the unity of all believers in John 17:21 (the 'expanded' notion of divine dynamic unity) will be fulfilled. The fact that each rational creature's free will shall spontaneously adhere to the Good will also constitute the main feature of the final unity – which will be a participation in the dynamic unity of God. The current multiplicity of the rational creatures' wills and conditions will be subsumed and transcended in the eventual unity.

The unity-multiplicity dialectic is clear in the following statement, from *Princ.* 1.6.2: "Just as there will be one single end for the many, so from one single beginning there have developed many differences and varieties, which in turn will be recalled back to one and a single end, similar to the beginning, by the goodness of God, the subjection of Chris and the unity of the Holy Spirit" [*sicut multorum unus finis, ita ab uno initio multae differentiae ac varietates, quae rursum per bonitatem Dei, per subiectionem Christi atque unitatem Spiritus sancti in unum finem, qui sit initio similis, revocantur*].[88] That for Origen the final unity is a unity of will is also demonstrated by his statement that the cause of the multiplicity and diversity of the present state of things is precisely rational creatures' free will, which is now oriented in different directions, and has been so since the fall, before which there was "unity" [*unitas*] and "concord" [*concordia*]: the initial unity was a concord in

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87 See Ramelli, "Apokatastasis and Epektasis in *In Cant*.: The Relation between Two Core Doctrines in Gregory and Roots in Origen," in *Gregory of Nyssa: In Canticum Canticorum. Commentary and Supporting Studies. Proceedings of the 13th International Colloquium on Gregory of Nyssa (Rome, 17-20 September 2014)*, eds. Giulio Maspero, Miguel Brugarolas, and Ilaria Vigorelli (Leiden: Brill, 2018), Supplements to Vigiliae Christianae 150, 312–39; referred to by C. Moreschini, *Origene e Gregorio di Nissa sul Cantico dei Cantici*, in collaboration with Vito Limone (Milan: Bompiani, 2016), 1544.

88 *Princ*. 1.6.2.

which all *logika* wanted the same thing, but it was lost with the fall, when intellectual creatures, the *noes*, began to wish for something other than the Good, and their wills dispersed in a multiplicity of volitions.[89] Likewise, the final unity shall be a unity of will. In *Princ.* 1.6.2, the universality of the submission to Christ, based on *Phil.* 2:10, is stressed, as well as the dialectic between the multiplicity of all creatures (*omnes, omnis universitas*) and the unity of the *telos* (*unum finem*); the same is intimated in *Princ.* 1.6.4: "that dispersion and division of the initial unity is restored to the similarity of the one and the same end," *dispersio illa unius principii atque divisio ad unum et eundem finem et similitudinem reparatur*. It is precisely the unity of the end that induces Origen to assume that not even demons will be left outside: not even this class of rational creatures "will be left out of that final unity and concord," *ab illa etiam finali unitate ac convenientia discrepabit*.[90]

The theme of human beings "scattered" in death/perdition and brought to unity by, and in, Christ-Logos, who is the Unifier par excellence and joins divine dynamic unity into its 'expanded' version including humans and rational creatures, was emphasized by Origen also in connection with the motif of Jesus' gathering into unity the scattered children of God, which repeatedly appears in his Commentary on John, where the theme of unity through Christ, especially based on John 17:21, is essential. In *Comm. in Io.* 28.21.185, Origen joins these two motifs: the eschatological reconstitution of Christ's body is connected to the interpretation of 1 Corinthians 15:28 and the equation between universal submission to Christ and God in the end and universal salvation.

Gregory Nyssen took up this entire set of ideas in the aforementioned *In Illud: Tunc et Ipse Filius,* which, as pointed out, insists on the equality of the Persons of the Trinity, the main basis for supporting the divine dynamic unity. In *In Illud* 23, Gregory argues along the same lines, moreover introducing, like Origen, the key concept of love in apokatastasis: if the Father loves the Son, according to John

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89 *Princ*. 2.1.1.

90 *Princ*. 1.6.3. See Ramelli, "Christian Soteriology and Christian Platonism. Origen, Gregory of Nyssa, and the Biblical and Philosophical Basis of the Doctrine of Apokatastasis," *Vigiliae Christianae (VigChr)* 61 (2007): 313–356, Russian translation by Стефан Милановић, *Theological Views* 46.3 (2013): 977-1028; received by Mark S.M. Scott, "Guarding the Mysteries of Salvation: The Pastoral Pedagogy of Origen's Universalism," *Journal of Early Christian Studies (JECS)* 18.3 (2010): 347–368 354; Mark S.M. Scott, *Journey Back to God: Origen on the Problem of Evil* (Oxford-New York: Oxford University Press, 2012), 219; n.10, 18, 32, 38, 49, 116; Katharina Heyden, "Apocatastasis," in *EBR. Encyclopedia of the Bible and Its Reception* (Berlin: De Gruyter, 2009-), II, cols. 373-375; Hans Boersma, "Overcoming Time and Space: Gregory of Nyssa's Anagogical Theology," *Journal of Early Christian Studies (JECS)* 20.4 (2012): 575–612: 606, 607; Amy Hughes, "The Legacy of the Feminine in the Christology of Origen of Alexandria, Methodius of Olympus, and Gregory of Nyssa," *Vigiliae Christianae (VigChr)* 70 (2016): 51–76: 55. Further arguments concerning the salvation of the demons and the devil in Origen are in the works.

17:23, and all humans are in the Son, again as multiplicity subsumed in unity, then the Father loves all humans as the Son's body, and the Son's submission to the Father means that all humanity will "attain the knowledge of God and be saved" (allusion to 1Tim. 2:4-6). This is, again, an *expansion of the dynamic unity* between Father and Son to creatures. Nyssen depends on the notion of Christ-Logos being the unity of all human beings when, in *In Illud* 21, he states that a consequence of the elimination of death will be that all will be in life, because all will be in Christ, who is "Life itself" (John 11:25), and Christ's body will be constituted by all humankind. Similarly, in *Comm. in Rom.* 5.7, Origen argued that in the end all will be in life because eternal life, Christ, excludes eternal death altogether, since they are incompatible with one another; thus, one must be eliminated, and 1Cor 15:25-8 reveals that this will be death.[91]

According to Gregory, Christ is the Mediator in that he unifies all to himself and to the Father, in a function of unification of multiplicity that is reminiscent of Origen's theorization.[92] Christ unifies all human beings in himself and unites them to the Father through himself, that is, through his subsuming them in unity in his body. Consistently with the notion of Christ-Logos as unity of multiplicity, in *In Illud* 22-23 Gregory focuses on Christ's prayer for unity in John 17:20-23, in which the notion of dynamic unity is hammered home and extended to humanity. He observes that Christ "unifies all" in himself and to the Father; all become "one and the same thing" with Christ and God who are one; Christ, being in the Father, by joining us to himself in unity accomplishes the union of all humans with God.

As previously mentioned, Christ's prayer for unity in John 17:20-23 was one of Origen's favorite biblical quotations in support of the idea of perfect unity in apokatastasis, which, in his view, will be the accomplishment of the subsumption of all multiplicity in a superior unity. This is evident, for instance, in *Princ.* 1.6.2 (one "will be restored to that unity which the Lord promises," *restituetur in illam unitatem quam promittit Dominus*…) and *Princ.* 2.3.5: "The Saviour's words, 'As I and you are one, may these also be one in us,' seem to indicate the (eschatological) state in which all beings will no longer be in an aeon, but God will be all in all," *Quod dicit Salvator […] 'Sicut ego et tu unum sumus, ut et isti in nobis unum sint' ostendere videatur […] id cum iam non in saeculo sunt omnia, sed omnia et in omnibus Deus.* All beings will be God through deification. In *Princ.* 3.6.1, Origen expresses the same idea against the background of the eschatological passage from "image of God" to "likeness with God" and from likeness to "unity" in God. The unity of all will depend on the fact that all will eventually be in God and God, as

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91 Commentary in Ramelli, *Apokatastasis* (2013), 162 and passim.

92 *In Illud* 21.10-16; cf. Origen, *Princ.* 2.6.1; *Cels.* 3.34.

1Cor. 15:28 predicts, will be "all in all" (see *Princ.* 3.2.4; *Princ.* 3.6.6, in which unity is again emphasized).

Another important motif, related to the connection between intra-Trinitarian dynamic unity and its extension to creatures *ad extra*, is common to Neoplatonists such as Proclus, Origen, Gregory, Iamblichus, and Ps. Dionysius, and in Origen and Gregory is closely related to apokatastasis: the presence of the divinity "all in all" [πάντα ἐν πᾶσιν], but in a manner that suits each recipient and in a given order.[93] The first Middle-Neoplatonist in whom this principle appears and is deployed throughout is Origen, who grounded it in 1Cor 15:28, where the perfection of the *telos* is described as the state in which God is "all things in all," or "all in all," τὰ πάντα ἐν πᾶσιν. Origen elaborated a great deal on this notion, making it the cornerstone of apokatastasis and his metaphysics. Gregory of Nyssa followed Origen and claimed that God will indeed be "all in all" [πάντα ἐν πᾶσιν], according to the capacity of each recipient and in a precise order, depending on the degree of each one's adhesion to the Good: those who are farthest removed from the Good will be the last to be restored and to come to be in God.[94] Plotinus, who was a disciple of Ammonius Saccas like Origen himself, might even have criticized Origen's doctrine when he claimed that the divinity, or the highest principle, which he pushes beyond Nous and Being, far from being "in all," "*is itself in nothing*, but it is the other beings that participate in it, all those which can be present to it and insofar as they can be present to it."[95]

After Origen, this doctrine of the presence of God "all in all" returns in Neoplatonism on the 'pagan' side, although in a different form, as the presence of all in all (without focus on God or the highest Principle); only Proclus will develop the *same* formula as Origen, of God being "all in all." Indeed, Porphyry, who was well acquainted with Origen's work in turn, in *Sent.* 10 has a different formulation: "Everything is in everything, but in an appropriate way [οἰκείως], according to the essence of each thing: in the intellect in an intellectual way, in the (rational) soul in a rational way, in plants in a seminal way, in bodies in the form of images, and in what is beyond (intellect and being) in a super-intellectual and super-essential way." Iamblichus, however, says that Porphyry rejected this principle of "all in all" elsewhere.[96] Iamblichus himself used this same principle[97] and ascribed it to Numenius, well known to Origen.[98] Origen, however, formulated it in reference to

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93 See *Apokatastasis*; in Proclus: Ilaria Ramelli, 'Proclus of Constantinople and Apokatastasis', in Proclus and his Legacy, eds. David Butorac and Danielle Layne (Berlin: de Gruyter, 2017), 95–122.
94 *Apokatastasis* (2013), the section on Gregory.
95 Plotinus, *Enn.* VI.5.3.13-15.
96 Stob. *Ecl.* I.49.31, p. 866 Hense.
97 Proclus *C.Tim.* I.426.20.
98 Stob. *Ecl.* I.49.31, p. 866 Hense.

God or the supreme ἀρχή, as did Proclus later, who adopted both Origen's form and also that of Porphyry, Numenius, and Iamblichus. Proclus, indeed, who very probably knew and commented on Origen's works,[99] developed this principle a number of times, and on various occasions. Indeed, the very first proposition of his *Elements of Theology* states that God-the One is in all, in that all multiplicity participates in the One in some way. In *ET* 23 he stresses that the principle is "in all" [ἐν πᾶσίν ἐστι], though at the same time is not immanent, but transcendent. In *ET* 103 he claims that "all things are in all, but in each one in an appropriate manner" [πάντα ἐν πᾶσιν, οἰκείως δὲ ἐν ἑκάστῳ], with the same formulation as in Porphyry's *Sentences*.

Ps. Dionysius, in turn, took over the principle both in Origen's and in Proclus' form – he was very well acquainted with the writings of both. The latter case, without reference to God, is evident for instance in *DN* 4.7: "the community of all in all in a manner appropriate to each one" [αἱ πάντων ἐν πᾶσιν οἰκείως ἑκάστῳ κοινωνίαι]. Origen and Proclus' formula, referring to the first principle, is clear in *DN* 1.7.596c-597a:

> The Cause of All is "all in all [πάντα ἐν πᾶσι]" according to the saying, and certainly it must be praised in that it is the Giver of existence to all, the Originator of all beings, who brings all to perfection, holding them together and protecting them; their seat, which has them all return/revert to itself [πρὸς ἑαυτὴν ἐπιστρεπτική], and this in a unified, irresistible, absolute, and transcendent way.[100]

The formula here – recognized as such by Dionysius and therefore called "saying" – has both Proclus' metaphysical import and Origen's eschatological value, which Dionysius expresses in Procline terms, as ἐπιστροφή.

The formula appears again in *DN* 11.5, in which Dionysius is speaking of the contents of his lost treatise, *Theologikai Hypotyposeis* or *Outlines of Theology*;[101] here the formula is referred to Jesus *qua* God and his operations, and has both metaphysical and eschatological overtones:

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99 See I. Ramelli, 'Proclus and Christian Neoplatonism: A Case Study', in *The Ways of Byzantine Philosophy,* ed. Mikonja Knežević (Alhambra, CA: Sebastian Press, 2015), 37–70; reviewed by Rosemary Arthur, *The Journal of Theological Studies* 67 (2016) doi: 10.1093/jts/flw146; 'Origen to Evagrius', in *A Companion to the Reception of Plato in Antiquity*, eds. Harold Tarrant, François Renaud, Dirk Baltzly and Danielle Layne (Leiden: Brill, 2018), 271–291. Further arguments in *Origen of Alexandria* (in preparation), ch 1.

100 Ps. Dionysius, *DN* 1.7.596c-597a.

101 See *DN* 11.5, p. 221 Suchla. This treatise may have got lost, or may never have been composed (as most scholars think), or else may have been transmitted under another name, as both István Perczel and Panayiotis Tzamalikos surmise. It may even be a reference to Origen's theology. See Ramelli, *Apokatastasis* (2013), 694–721; further arguments in "Origen, Evagrios, and Dionysios," in *Oxford Handbook to Dionysius the Areopagite* (Oxford: OUP, forthcoming), ch 5.

> What could be said of Christ's love for humanity, a love that gives peace in profusion? Jesus who operates all in all [τὰ πάντα ἐν πᾶσι ἐνεργοῦντος] and realises an unspeakable peace established from eternity, and reconciles us to him in spirit, and, through himself and in himself, to the Father. Of these wonderful gifts I have abundantly and sufficiently spoken in the *Outlines of Theology*, where to our testimony is joined that of the holy inspiration of Scriptures / of the sages / of the sayings [λογίων].[102]

In *DN* 9.5 Dionysius follows Origen's formulation and relates the situation described by 1Cor 15:28, God's being "all in all," both to "the providence of God" and to "the salvation of all beings." He states that "in his providence, God is close to every being," continually assisting each of them until the end, "and (thus) becomes 'all in all.'"[103] This takes place "for the sake of the salvation/preservation of all," διὰ τὴν πάντων σωτηρίαν, the preservation of all beings in the present life or aeon and their eventual salvation, in a double-reference scheme, pointing to both the Christian and 'pagan' Platonic tradition together, which is typical of Dionysius.[104] Gregory of Nyssa already employed both Origen's eschatological formulation that God will be "all in all," and the non-eschatological formula in *De anima* 132: "The power of the Spirit, which operates all in all / all things in all beings" [τὴν τὰ πάντα ἐν πᾶσιν ἐνεργοῦσαν δύναμιν]. Obviously, it is not possible for him to have been influenced by Proclus, who came after him.[105]

5 Conclusion

I have endeavored, in this article, to examine how Platonism can be treated as both one of the *sources* (whose hierarchical protology had to be transformed into a more egalitarian relationship) and especially an aspect of the ancient *reception* (mainly in Christian Platonism) of the concept of the dynamic unity of the Father in the Son and the Son in the Father, attested in John 10:38, 14:10, and 17:21.

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102 Ps. Dionysius, *DN* 11.5.

103 Ps. Dionysius, *DN* 9.5.

104 See I. L.E Ramelli, "'Pagan' and Christian Platonism in Dionysius: The Double-Reference Scheme and Its Meaning," in *Byzantine Platonists 284-1453*, eds Frederick Lauritzen and Sarah Klitenic Wear (forthcoming).

105 Maximus, after Proclus and Dionysius, picked up only Origen's theological-eschatological formulation, within the framework of the apokatastasis doctrine: "God will truly come to be 'all in all,' embracing all and giving substance to all in himself, in that no being will have any more a movement independent of God, and no being will be deprived of God's presence. Thanks to this presence, we shall be, and shall be called, gods and children, body and limbs, because we shall be restored to the perfection of God's project" (*Amb.* 7.1092Cff.).

I have pointed out, amongst other things, the important distinction offered by notions of 'subordinationism' and 'anti-subordinationism' (which is not a 'pagan'/ Christian binary within Platonism, since there were Christian 'subordinationists') with respect to different approaches to the concept of dynamic unity, which I have explored both in the primary notion of *reciprocal indwelling* and in the parallel concept of *reciprocal knowledge* between the Father and the Son. I have also investigated how Gregory of Nyssa, following Origen, used John 14:10a to refute the subordinationistic argument of Eunomius. The solution elaborated by Gregory, which I have highlighted, is that neither the Father nor the Son are in an absolute sense, but both are in a reciprocal relation (σχέσις). This is what I have presented as Gregory's own version of the dynamic unity. The Holy Spirit appears to function as the bond of this unity.

I have then explored what I call the 'expansive' notion of dynamic unity, which stems from the relationship between the reciprocal indwelling of the Father in the Son and of the Son in the Father, and the parallel statements in John 14:10, that Christ is in the disciples (and all believers) and these are in Christ, and in John 17:21, that just as the Father is in the Son and the Son in the Father, so the disciples and all believers too should become "one" in the Father and the Son. Here, Middle and Neoplatonic henology, or doctrine of the One, comes to the fore both as a possible background and as an interpretive lens. This in turn relates to the notion of the Divinity "all in all," which is a central tenet of Origen's theology, in metaphysics and eschatology, but also of Proclus' metaphysics.

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