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Clement on *Apokatastasis* Related to the “Feminine” Side of God¹

Ilaria L. E. RAMELLI

Clement of Alexandria; apokatastasis; the breast of God; love and feminine aspect of God; Origen; Gregory of Nyssa; Evagrius

Clement of Alexandria connects the doctrine of ἀποκατάστασις (the restoration of rational creatures to God) to what he depicts as the feminine side of God. The latter is a theological imagery that Clement uses in several of his works, but especially in *Paedagogus* (= *Paed.*) and *Quis dives salvetur*. From here, indeed, arises the connection between the feminine aspect of God and *apokatastasis*.

Clement’s representation of women, mothers, and babies in his *Paedagogus*, especially in Book I, is to be considered within his historico-theological context: significant parallels are to be found in Bardaisan

¹ Many thanks to Miklós Gyurkovics for the kind invitation to contribute to the Journal, to Durham University for the relevant work connected to my honorary Professorship in Theology there, and to many colleagues and academic audiences at lectures, main lectures, and seminars connected with this article, including at Harvard University, Divinity School; the University of Chicago, Divinity School; Princeton; Duke; Notre Dame; Boston University; Columbia; CUA; Emory; Durham, Theology, Classics, and IAS; Oxford University, Theology and Philosophy; Cambridge University, Divinity; Erfurt University for a public lecture, Zurich University, Theology; LMU München; Humboldt University in Berlin; the Hebrew University in Jerusalem; CEU; the Humboldt Foundation for a Forschungspreis; the Enoch Seminar/Nangeroni Meetings, the Templeton Foundation, the Raskob Foundation, AAR–SBL and the Society of Christian Philosophers for a keynote lecture on apokatastasis; SNTS; NAPS; SPES; the Onassis Foundation for a Professorship in Greek Thought; ERC; the Czech Academy of Science for a main lecture; the Colloquia Clementina; the Origeniana for a main lecture; the Adamantiana at Cambridge University for a seminar around my work on Apokatastasis and the Trinity; the Gregory of Nyssa Colloquia for a main lecture; the Angelicum; the Augustinianum; the Gregorian University, Philosophy and Theology; the Holy Cross University, Theology; KUL for the Professorship of Patristics and Church History, the Pontifical Academy of Sciences, and, at various times, the Libraries especially of Stanford, Princeton, the Catholic University, and the Universities of Durham and Bonn.

of Edessa, the *Odes of Solomon*, the *Acts of Thomas*, and other texts. As it has been pointed out, Clement's treatment of women, maternity, and babies in his *Paedagogus* affects his theology prominently, being actually used in the service of his theological argument; even his long biological expositions in Book I of his *Paedagogus* arguably support his theology.² God is no less Mother than Father,³ although the Divinity, properly speaking, is beyond genders, being entirely spiritual (angels also are non-gendered); as a consequence, both men and women are in the image of God in the same way, as Gen 1:27 also makes clear. Origen would elaborate on this point. Clement deployed much Platonic and Stoic lore about genders, their common virtue, and philosophical education. Gregory of Nyssa shared with Clement the conviction of the exclusively biological and temporary differentiation between man and woman.

Clement attributes to God and Christ a great deal of feminine and maternal attributes. He claims that “the Lord gave birth” to the Christians “with carnal birth-pangs [ἐκύησεν ὁ Κύριος ὠδῖνι σαρκικῆ], and swaddled them up with his precious blood” shed on the Cross; “the Logos is all for the newborn, father and mother, pedagogue and nurse” (*Paed.* I,6,42,2). Christ provides “milk from his loving breasts” (φιλοστόργοις πηγάζουσα μαστοῖς, *Paed.* I,6,35,2-3) and his blood is like a mother's blood transformed into milk—according to the biology of Clement's time—for the nourishment of her baby (*Paed.* I,6,40,1). The Logos is the breast of God the Father, supplying God's children with milk; the babies, namely the Christians, suckle and are nourished by the milk of the Father; they rush to the Father's care-soothing breast,

2 Examined in Ilaria L. E. Ramelli, *Babies and Women in Clement's Paedagogus: Biology, Anthropology, Theology, and their Interrelations*, in Veronika Černušková – Miklós Gyurkovics (eds.), *Colloquium Clementinum III: Clement's Paedagogus*, Brill, Leiden 2024, forthcoming.

3 Pope John Paul I in a famous audio-recorded message from St. Peter (Angelus, 10th September 1978) likewise claimed: God “is Father; even more, Mother [è Papà; più ancora, è Madre]”.

which Clement identifies with the Logos.⁴ Clement offers a Trinitarian exegesis of this imagery in this context: the flesh symbolizes the Holy Spirit, the blood the Logos; the union of both is “the Lord, the food of the babies” and

the nourishment is *the milk of the Father* [ἡ τροφή τὸ γάλα τοῦ Πατρὸς], by which alone we infants are fed [ὡ μόνῳ τιτθευόμεθα οἱ νήπιοι]. The Logos itself, indeed, the beloved One, our nourisher, shed Its blood for us, thereby saving humanity [σώζων τὴν ἀνθρωπότητα]; and thanks to It we, believing in God, flee to *the care-soothing breast of the Father, the Logos* [ἐπὶ τὸν λαθικηδέα μαζὸν τοῦ Πατρὸς, τὸν λόγον, καταφεύγομεν]. And the Logos alone, as is fitting, provides us, babies, with the milk of love [ἡμῖν τοῖς νηπίοις τὸ γάλα τῆς ἀγάπης χορηγεῖ], and truly blessed are only those who suck this breast [τοῦτον θηλάζουσιν τὸν μαστόν]. (*Paed.* I,6,43,4).

The Logos supplies the faithful with the milk of love, and only those who suckle this breast are really blessed (*Paed.* I,6,43,2-4). Clement attributes again (as in I,6,43,4) maternal breasts to the Father in *Paed.* I,46,1: the Father’s “nipples of love” provide milk to babies who seek the Logos. Such a maternal imagery related to God and Christ is emphasized in Book I of *Paedagogus*, and is supported by plenty of biological information, which works as a support for an important theological argument that Clement is setting out.⁵

Clement explicitly says that God is Mother as well as Father not only in Book I of his *Paedagogus*, but also in *Quis dives salvetur* 37,1-2, in very clear terms, and, crucially, he connects God’s female side with God’s love (charity-love, ἀγάπη), as Gregory of Nyssa will also do, probably in the footsteps of Clement, as we shall see later. This constitutes the link between God’s female side and *apokatastasis*, which is the supreme

4 See Nonna Verna Harrison, “The Care-Banishing Breast of the Father: Feminine Images of the Divine in Clement of Alexandria’s *Paedagogus* I”, in *Studia Patristica* 31 (1997), 401-405.

5 As argued in I. L. Ramelli, “Babies”. Veronika Černušková, “Proliferation of Divine Reciprocity. Clement of Alexandria’s Trinitology as a Reaction to Valentinian Pleromatology”, in *ETJ* (2023), 165-180, suggests with reason that Clement’s statements about the femininity and maternity of the Father and the Son represent an “orthodox” alternative to the “Valentinian” notion of feminine beings in the divine Pleroma.

expression of God's love, and is related according to Clement with the feminine aspect of God. In this passage from *Quis dives salvetur*, Clement remarks that the ineffable part of God is Father, but the part that has sympathy for God's creatures is Mother. It is precisely by loving that the Father "became female" (ἐθελύνηθη), and the evidence of this feminine aspect of God is the Child whom God brought forth:

Contemplate the mysteries of charity-love, and then you will have the revelation of *the maternal womb of the Father*, which the only-begotten God alone demonstrated. Now, God *is* charity-love and it is on account of love that he was captured by us. What is ineffable in God has become Father, *what has sympathy for us, Mother*. Having begun to love us, the Father *became Female*, and the great proof of such a feminization is the One whom *God brought forth from Godself*. And the fruit to which it was given birth out of love is love.

Θεῶ τὰ τῆς ἀγάπης μυστήρια καὶ τότε ἐποπτεύσεις τὸν κόλπον τοῦ πατρὸς, ὃν ὁ μονογενὴς θεὸς μόνος ἐξηγήσατο. "Ἔστι δὲ καὶ αὐτὸς ὁ θεὸς ἀγάπη καὶ δι' ἀγάπην ἡμῖν ἐθελύνηθη. Καὶ τὸ μὲν ἄρρητον αὐτοῦ πατὴρ, τὸ δὲ εἰς ἡμᾶς συμπαθεὶς γέγονε μήτηρ. Ἀγαπήσας ὁ πατὴρ ἐθελύνηθη, καὶ τούτου μέγα σημεῖον ὃν αὐτὸς ἐγέννησεν ἐξ αὐτοῦ. Καὶ ὁ τεχθεὶς ἐξ ἀγάπης καρπὸς ἀγάπης.⁶

God is ἀγάπη or charity-love, and Christ, to whom God gave birth as a Mother out of love, is also love. Charity-love is typical of Christ and of a mother.⁷ It is through ἀγάπη that God became female and could then give birth from her womb in a maternal way, as Scripture states in Psalm 109:3 in the Septuagint, which functioned as a Scriptural basis for God's maternal parturition of the Son: "From the womb, before Morning-star, I [God] brought you forth" (ἐκ γαστρὸς πρὸ ἑωσφόρου ἐγέννησά σε, Ps 109:3 LXX). If God gave birth to the Son from the womb, God is obviously Mother. The connection between God's *Maternity* and God's *love*, established by Clement, appears again manifestly in

6 *Quis div.* 37,1-2, in Otto Stählin – Ludwig Früchtel (eds.), *Clément d'Alexandrie, Quel riche sera sauvé?*, Introduction, notes et index par Carlo Nardi – Partick Descourtieux, Cerf, Paris 2011, 194.

7 As I show in "Love", in Angelo Di Berardino (ed.), *Encyclopedia of Ancient Christianity*, InterVarsity, Downers Grove, IL 2014, and in "Life in Christ", in Mark Edwards – Giulio Maspero (eds.), *The New Brill History of Doctrines*, 1, Brill, Leiden, forthcoming.

Gregory of Nyssa, who was impacted by Clement in a variety of ways⁸ and, I suspect, in this respect as well. The link is evident in Gregory's Homily 7 on the Song of Songs: "If we call God «Mother» or «Love», we shall not err: for God is Love, as John stated".

Being aware that the Divinity properly transcends genders, Clement describes the ineffable side of God as Father but the side of God which has sympathy for humans as Female and Mother. God is both Father and Mother, just as both justice and goodness belong to one and the same God (*Paed.* I,8,73,3); the latter point targeted both Marcionite and "Gnostic" theories of the separation of divine justice and goodness.⁹ Now, the female aspect of God is related to the doctrine of restoration or *apokatastasis*. Clement, indeed, can be regarded as a precursor of Origen's, Gregory of Nyssa's, and Evagrius' doctrine of *apokatastasis*, although he was not an explicit or systematic theorizer of the doctrine of universal restoration.¹⁰

Clement deployed the lexicon of *apokatastasis* profusely (ἀποκατάστασις, ἀποκαθίστημι), and his use of the vocabulary expressing time and eternity is revealing.¹¹ He often describes salvation as absolutely eternal, frequently also depicting it as the health of the soul, in Philonic and Pauline terms, which will be taken over by Origen.¹² Instead, he never describes damnation as absolutely eternal. Clement explicitly refers αἰδιος, "absolutely eternal", to the eventual *apokatastasis*: in *Stromateis* (= *Strom.*) VII,10,56,2-7, he identifies

8 A Colloquium in Rome, Santa Croce University, has cast light on this relation (*From Alexandria to Nyssa. Clement and Gregory in Conversation*, 28-30 October 2021, forthcoming).

9 Ilaria L. E. Ramelli, *The Christian Doctrine of Apokatastasis: A Critical Assessment from the New Testament to Eriugena*, *Vigiliae Christianae Supplements* 120, Brill, Leiden 2013, 119-136.

10 Argument in Ilaria L. E. Ramelli, *Stromateis VII and Clement's Hints of the Theory of Apokatastasis*, in Matyas Havrda – Vit Hušek – Jana Plátová (eds.), *The Seventh Book of the Stromateis: Colloquium Clementinum I, Olomouc 2010*, *Vigiliae Christianae Supplements*, Brill, Leiden 2012, 239-257.

11 Detailed treatment in Ilaria L. E. Ramelli – David Konstan, *Terms for Eternity: Αἰώνιος and αἰδιος in Classical and Christian Authors*, Gorgias Press, Piscataway 2007; new, electronic edition, De Gruyter, Berlin 2022, 102-116.

12 *Strom.* VIII,7,48; *Paed.* I,8,65,2; I,11,96,3.

the final *apokatastasis* or restoration with perfection of knowledge (γνώσις) and charity–love (ἀγάπη). This is attained after a period of “salvific [σωτήριο] education”: then, “restoration [ἀποκατάστασις] awaits them in absolutely eternal contemplation [τῇ θεωρίᾳ τῆ ἀιδίῳ]”. Clement here, like Origen and Gregory later, characterizes the eventual restoration as absolutely eternal (ἀίδιος), not simply as αἰώνιος, which can mean a variety of things, including “pertaining to the other aeon”, “long-lasting”, or even “mundane”, and the like.¹³

The perfection of the soul that has attained perfect knowledge (γνώσις) and abides in what is divine and saint is described by Clement as “*apokatastasis* to the highest place of rest” (εἰς τὸν κορυφαῖον ἀποκαταστήσῃ τῆς ἀναπαύσεως τόπον).¹⁴ Those who know God “become eternal thanks to their knowledge”, which Clement identifies as the perfection of *apokatastasis* (ἐν τῇ ἄκρᾳ ἀποκαταστάσει, *Eclogae Propheticae* 57,2). Note that Evagrius, who was also acquainted with Clement and derived from him some important doctrines, repeatedly described God the Trinity as “essential knowledge”;¹⁵ this is why the knowledge of God is perfection and makes people eternal, as God is. Evagrius’ idea of knowledge (γνώσις) is the direct descendant of Clement’s notion of γνώσις, which in its highest degree is inseparable from that of deification (θέωσις). As is clear from *Kephalaia Gnostica* I,89, the opposite of knowledge for Evagrius is not only ignorance but also evil(ness).

In a very powerful description, Clement remarks that life in the world to come is the “aim” or “end” (τέλος) of the present life: “Paul teaches that the end is the hoped–for *apokatastasis*” (τέλος διδάσκει τὴν

13 See Ilaria L. E. Ramelli, *Time and Eternity*, in Mark Edwards (ed.), *The Routledge Handbook to Early Christian Philosophy*, Routledge, Oxford 2021, 41–54.

14 *Strom.* VII,10,57,1–4.

15 See Ilaria L. E. Ramelli, *Evagrius’ Kephalaia Gnostika: Propositions on Knowledge*, WGRW 38, Brill–SBL, Leiden – Atlanta 2015, XLVII–XLIX, LXVI–LXIX; 79–80, 95, 118–119, 136–137; 142, 146–148; 167–168; 239–243; 296–299; 310; 325–326; 332; 335–336; 357–362; Fabien Muller, “What Is Evagrian γνώσις?” *The Heythrop Journal* 64/5 (2023), 1–16: <https://onlinelibrary.wiley.com/doi/10.1111/heyj.14239>.

τῆς ἐλπίδος ἀποκατάστασιν).¹⁶ Gregory of Nyssa echoed this definition, as we shall see, I suspect intentionally. Clement had also in mind 1Cor 15:24-28, which is Origen's favourite Biblical authority in support of his doctrine of *apokatastasis*, and in which Paul describes the τέλος, explicitly mentioned, as the submission of all enemies to Christ, the elimination of evil and death, and the final presence of God "all in all" (ὁ θεὸς τὰ πάντα ἐν πᾶσι).¹⁷ In this passage, as in Rom 6:22, Paul can indeed be taken to teach that the *telos* is the hoped-for *apokatastasis*.

God's Wisdom is, in Clement's view, the cause of both the creation and of "the *apokatastasis* of the elect" (*Strom.* II,8,37,5), who are those who have reached knowledge and have subjugated all passions: they "will be restored to the most loving adoration".¹⁸ Note that the *apokatastasis* of rational creatures is *voluntary*, as Origen and Gregory of Nyssa would also insist,¹⁹ and as Clement already maintained against the perceived determinism of "Gnostic" trends (supposed to pre-determine the salvation of the "spiritual" or "pneumatics" and part of the "psychics" alone, but the condemnation of the "hylics", all conceived as fixed natures).

Thus, the restoration is *voluntary*, but Clement stresses God's mercy even towards sins or voluntary faults, because God wants the sinner's repentance and conversion, not his death.²⁰ Repentance and conversion take place thanks to God, but without detriment to human freewill, because "God wants us to save ourselves by ourselves".²¹ This coexistence of providence and human freewill would be a tenet of Origen's theology.

16 *Strom.* II,22,134,4, with a reference to Rom 6:22.

17 See I. L. E. Ramelli, "Paul on Apokatastasis", 212-232.

18 *Strom.* IV,6,40,2. The lexicon is that of ἀποκατάστασις and ἀποκαθίστημι, as in *Strom.* III,9,63,4.

19 Christian Hengstermann, *Origenes und der Ursprung der Freiheitsmetaphysik*, Aschendorff, Münster 2015; Alfons Fürst, *Origen of Alexandria: Christian Philosophy of Freedom*, in Wiebke Denecke – Ilaria L. E. Ramelli (eds.), *A Companion to World Literature*, I, Wiley-Blackwell, Oxford 2020, 255-266; Ilaria L. E. Ramelli, "The Legacy of Origen in Gregory of Nyssa's Theology of Freedom", in *Modern Theology* 38/2 (2022), 363-388.

20 *Strom.* II,15,66.

21 *Strom.* VI,12,96,1-3.

Each one's salvation or punishment must rest on one's voluntary choices.²² A punishment for mistakes due to deception, obnubilation, and ignorance is still right, according to Clement, but God's justice is "salvific". This is why Clement highlights the therapeutic and pedagogical value of suffering inflicted by God:²³

everything, both in general and in the single cases, is ordered by the Lord of the universe *for the purpose of universal salvation* ... God is good and from eternity and eternally *saves* through his Son ... the task of salvific Justice is to lead each being to what is better.²⁴

God's punishments are instructions (παιδεύσεις), decided out of goodness (ἀγαθότητι), even at the final judgment, in order to "compel those who have hardened too much to repent [ἐκβιάζονται μετανοεῖν] and convert" to God. The terminology of compelling emerges again: the Logos "almost compels people to salvation for a superabundance of goodness" (*Strom.* VII,14,86,6). The idea of compelling seems to contradict the voluntary nature of one's conversion and restoration, and this is why Clement uses the modifier "almost", but it is clear that in Clement's view this kind of compulsion is salvific and worthwhile.

According to Clement, it is either through good deeds or through punishment that God's providence works, but the goal of both is the same, namely salvation, which takes place through conversion to virtue (*Strom.* I,17,173). Clement, unlike later Patristic theologians, was convinced that salvific repentance and conversion is always possible, "both here on earth and on the other side", because God's goodness operates everywhere:²⁵

The Saviour is active, because *his work is to save*. ... All those who have believed will be saved, even if they come from paganism, because they have professed their faith *down there* (in hell): *God's punishments save and educate!* ... Even those who were out of the Law but had lived in a righteous way, thanks to the

22 E.g. in *Strom.* I,6,35,1; II,3,11,2; V,27,4; IV,26,170,4; V,17,1-2; 13,83,1; VI,12,96,2; VII,2,6,3, etc.

23 E.g., in *Strom.* II,15,69-71, etc.

24 *Strom.* VII,2,12; I,17,86,1-2.

25 *Strom.* IV,6,37,7.

particular quality of their soul, quickly converted and believed, even if they happened to be imprisoned *in hell* ... Therefore, it is demonstrated for sure that God is good, and the Lord can save with impartial justice those who convert, *here or on the other side*; for God's active power arrives not only here on earth, but everywhere, and it operates *everywhere*.²⁶

God's salvific power is active everywhere, even in the otherworld, even in hell. The "otherworldly fire" (πῦρ αἰώνιον) has a purifying and educative function; therefore, it is wise and endowed with discernment, φρόνιμον.²⁷ Thus, Clement hopes that "the heretics" can be converted by God, even after death, thanks to God's parental care (*Strom.* VII,16,102,1-3). Should they undergo "the final and general judgment", even then "God does not *punish* [τιμωρεῖται]—since punishment is the retribution of evil with further evil—but *corrects* [κολλάζει] *for the sake of those who are corrected*, both in general and singularly".²⁸ Punishment looks backwards, to the evil done, while correction looks forward, to the sinner's improvement.

The punishment of Sodom is "the image of the well calculated salvation for the human beings [τῆς εὐλογίστου τοῖς ἀνθρώποις σωτηρίας]". It does not represent damnation, but salvation, which is "well calculated" because purifying punishment must be applied in proportion to human sins for the sake of their salvation. Threats and punishments are also wanted by God to inspire a salutary fear, which keeps humans from sinning. The Logos waits for unbelievers to believe, even after death, because it is the Lord of all and the Saviour of all.²⁹ As Clement states in Book I of his *Protrepticus*, Christ, who "has saved us while we were already close to our ruin",³⁰ will produce the harmony and concord of all creatures.³¹ This is primarily a unity

26 *Strom.* VI,6,45-47.

27 *Strom.* VII,6,34,4.

28 *Strom.* VII,16,102,4-5.

29 *Strom.* VI,6,46-50; VII,2,7,6.

30 *Protrepticus* 1,7,4.

31 *Protrepticus* 1,5,2-4.

of will, and not of substance, either among rational creatures or God: Origen would stress this point.

Gregory of Nyssa was surely aware of Clement's hints of the theory of apokatastasis (besides being thoroughly familiar with Origen's theory), as seems to me to emerge from his clear allusion to Clement in his own description of apokatastasis as the highest hope.³² What is more, Gregory connected apokatastasis with God's Maternity and God's love, as I have pointed out that Clement already did. Gregory absorbed, both from his elder sister Macrina and from direct reading, a form of Christianity that was clearly Origenian and included apokatastasis. In his dialogue *De anima et resurrectione*, Macrina, one of the two protagonists along with Gregory himself, argues for apokatastasis. Note that this doctrine is again linked to a woman, who in her biography written by Gregory of Nyssa is also depicted as a (spiritual) mother of both of her younger brothers Gregory of Nyssa and Peter of Sebaste and of girls taken in and raised in her monastery, and was called so by them. But apokatastasis can be found in virtually all of Gregory's works, including in his short commentary on 1Cor 15:28, where Gregory explicitly states even the salvation of the Devil, as he also does in his *Oratio catechetica*.³³

Now, Gregory describes the eventual restoration as τὸ πέρας τῶν ἐλπιζομένων, "the culmination of (our) hopes" (*Tunc et Ipse* GNO III/II,13,15), very much as Clement had done, as pointed out. I suspect that Gregory is indeed echoing Clement. Furthermore, precisely like

32 For *apokatastasis* in Gregory: see Ilaria L. E. Ramelli, *The Christian Doctrine of Apokatastasis*, 372-440; eadem, "Christian Soteriology and Christian Platonism. Origen, Gregory of Nyssa, and the Biblical and Philosophical Basis of the Doctrine of Apokatastasis," in *Vigiliae Christianae* 61/3 (2007), 313-356; eadem, *Apokatastasis and Epektasis in Hom. in Cant.: The Relation between Two Core Doctrines in Gregory and Roots in Origen*, in Giulio Maspero – Miguel Brugarolas – Ilaria Vigorelli (eds.), *Gregory of Nyssa: In Canticum Cantorum. Commentary and Supporting Studies. Proceedings of the 13th International Colloquium on Gregory of Nyssa (Rome, 17-20 September 2014)*, *Vigiliae Christianae Supplements* 150, Brill, Leiden 2018, 312-339; eadem, *Gregory of Nyssa on the Soul (and the Restoration): From Plato to Origen*, in Anna Marmodoro and Neil McLynn (eds.), *Exploring Gregory of Nyssa: Historical and Philosophical Perspectives*, Oxford University Press, Oxford 2018, 110-141.

33 As argued in I. L. E. Ramelli, *Apokatastasis*, 372-440.

Clement, Gregory states that the *apokatastasis* we hope for is the *telos*, which, like Origen and Plotinus, he connects with the origin (ἀρχή):

“Scripture teaches us that the Good [ἀγαθόν] to which we adhere out of our solicitude is nothing other than what is reserved for human nature from the origin (τὸ ἐξ ἀρχῆς ἐναποτεθὲν τῇ φύσει).”³⁴

Paul’s eschatological prophecy in 1Cor 15:28 was Origen’s favourite Biblical buttress in support of *apokatastasis*. Like Origen, Gregory interprets the final submission of all to Christ announced in this Biblical verse as the salvation of all, in *De anima et resurrectione* (= *An.*), in *In Illud: tunc et ipse Filius*, and elsewhere.³⁵ Christ’s submission to God is understood by Gregory, just as by Origen,³⁶ as the submission, and consequent salvation, of all humans and rational creatures. Once all rational creatures reject evil, they will be saved.³⁷ The rejection and eviction of evil is enabled by Christ, in whom humanity is made connatural with the Good (God), which will reach even “the extreme limit of evil”, so “nothing will remain opposed to the Good”. All will be one body and united to God; “no being will remain outside the number of the saved” (*In illud* GNO III/II,21,2-3); “no creature of God will fall out of the Kingdom of God” (*ibid.* 14,2-3). Gregory insists that “Every being that had its origin from God will return such as it was from the beginning, when it had *not yet received evil*” (*ibid.* 14,5-7). If God must eventually be “all in all” (1Cor 15:28), then evil will no longer exist in any being, because God, the Good, could never be found in evil. In this argument, Gregory is drawing on Origen’s argument to the same effect (*De principiis* III,6,2-3).

34 Gregory of Nyssa, *Cant.* GNO VI 198, 8-10.

35 I demonstrated this in “Gregory of Nyssa’s Trinitarian Theology in *In Illud: Tunc et ipse Filius*: His Polemic against “Arian” Subordinationism and Apokatastasis”, in Volker Henning Drecoll – Margitta Berghaus (eds.), *Gregory of Nyssa: The Minor Treatises on Trinitarian Theology and Apollinarism. Proceedings of the 11th International Colloquium on Gregory of Nyssa (Tübingen, 17-20 September 2008)*, *Vigiliae Christianae Supplements*, 106, Brill, Leiden 2011, 445-478.

36 Argument for the derivation from Origen in Ilaria L. E. Ramelli, “Origen’s Anti-Subordinationism and Its Heritage in the Nicene and Cappadocian Line”, in *Vigiliae Christianae* 65 (2011), 21-49.

37 See I. L. E. Ramelli, “Christian Soteriology.”

Macrina, in the role of Socrates in the Christian remake of Plato's *Phaedo*, *De anima et resurrectione*, argues for the resurrection and the restoration of all through the vanishing of sin and evil. She foresees

the *universal* harmony of all rational nature that one day will obtain in the Good . . . When finally, after long cycles of aeons, evil(ness) has disappeared, only the Good will remain, and even those creatures (demons) will concordantly and unanimously admit the sovereignty of Christ.³⁸

Fallen angels themselves will submit to Christ and be saved. Gregory, like Clement and Origen, regards otherworldly sufferings not as retributive but as healing, such as to purify rational creatures from passions and sins. God attracts the soul to himself, not to punish it, but to have it back in a divine work of *οικείωσις* (a Christianisation and theologisation of the Stoic doctrine of *οικείωσις*),³⁹ as Clement already stressed; suffering is but a side effect of God's re-appropriation of rational creatures (*An.* 97b-100c GNO III/III,71-73). The amount of sin in each one determines the duration of the purifying suffering, the flame of the "otherworldly fire" (*αἰώνιον*, *An.* 100cd-101a GNO III/III,73,5-75,2). God's aim with all this is the total annihilation of evil (*An.* 100-105a GNO III/III,73-78; with reference to Matt 18:23-25; Luke 7:41). The very notion of amount, quantity, and measure rules out a doctrine of an eternal duration of otherworldly suffering. Its purging nature, also stressed by Clement oftentimes, also excludes its eternity.

Out of pastoral concerns, which also worried Origen in relation to the theory of *apokatastasis*, Gregory warns through Macrina's words that the purifying process will be very hard—thus, it is much better not to sin than sinning and being purged very harshly.⁴⁰ But he never states that purifying suffering will be eternal. Purification will rather achieve its aim: restoration (*An.* 81a-84d GNO III/III 59,6-62,5; cf. *An.*

38 Gregory of Nyssa, *An.* 72b GNO III/III,51,12-14.

39 Argument in Ilaria L. E. Ramelli, "The Stoic Doctrine of Oikeiosis and its Transformation in Christian Platonism", in *Apeiron* 47 (2014), 116-140.

40 *An.* 157b-d, *Beat.* 5, etc.

85b-88c GNO III/III,62,16-65,8). Phil 2:10 foresees the final “universal harmony with the Good” (*An.* 136a *ibid.* 103,1-8), and the Feast of Tabernacles symbolizes the eventual universal salvation: all rational creatures will be in harmony and unity, after the vanishing of evil (*An.* 132c-136a GNO III/III,100,6-103,1).

Like Clement, who connected Moses to the doctrine of the Logos and *apokatastasis* through the episode of manna, assimilated to the Logos’ milk, and water, which gushed out from Christ the Rock in the desert, Gregory also links Moses with the Logos and *apokatastasis*. He interprets Moses’ outstretched hands in battle as a type of the salvific effect of Christ’s cross (*De Vita Moysis* GNO VII/1,57,8-58,3); the plague of darkness in Egypt, from which Moses led away the Hebrews, indicates that Christ’s cross can dissipate even the “outer darkness” of hell. Given that “after three days of suffering in darkness even the Egyptians participated in light”, Exod 10:21 indicates

the restoration (ἀποκατάστασις) that we expect will come to pass in the end, in the Kingdom of Heavens: the restoration of those who had been condemned to Gehenna . . . the “outer darkness”. Now, both this (Egyptian darkness) and the “outer darkness” are dispelled when Moses outstretched his arms for the salvation of those who lay in darkness.

God’s will entails apokatastasis, as Clement insisted: God’s work is to save. And, as Gregory stresses, God’s will shall eventually be fulfilled. The last of his *Homilies on the Song of Songs* describes the restoration of all, after the purification of all from evilness: “no evilness will any longer remain in anyone. Then God will really be «*all in all*»”.⁴¹ The accomplishment (τέλος) of all is

that love may always increase and develop, until the One who “wants all to be saved and reach the knowledge of truth” has achieved his will . . . until the good will of the Bridegroom is accomplished. And this good will is that *all human beings be saved* and reach the knowledge of truth.⁴²

41 Gregory of Nyssa, *In Canticum Cantiorum* 15 GNO VI,469,5-6.

42 Gregory of Nyssa, *In Canticum Cantiorum* 4 GNO VI,131,12-13, with reference to 1Tim 2:4-6.

What is paramount for the present investigation, *apokatastasis* according to Gregory reveals the feminine side of God, as it emerges already in Clement. It is the side of God that “has sympathy toward us” humans in Clement’s words, although God is *per se* beyond genders.⁴³ Clement, as seen, notes that “The ineffable part of God is Father; the part that has sympathy towards us is Mother. By loving, the Father became female, and the great proof thereof is the Child She brought forth”.⁴⁴ Clement, as I suggested, probably had in mind Ps 109:3 LXX. Now, Gregory similarly links God’s saving will to God’s female, motherly aspect: human heart, *καρδία*,

becomes capable of the divine indwelling in it (*τῆς θείας αὐτοῦ ἐνοικήσεως*), when it returns up (*ἐπανέλθῃ*) to that condition (*κατάστασιν*) in which it was from the beginning (*τὸ κατ’ ἀρχάς*), when it was moulded by Her who conceived it (*ὑπὸ τῆς συλλαβούσης*). For if one conceives the first Cause of our constitution (*τὴν πρώτην τῆς συστάσεως ἡμῶν αἰτίαν*) as a Mother (*Μητέρα*), one will not err (*οὐχ ἀμαρτήσεται*).⁴⁵

Nyssen overtly calls God “Mother” in at least another significant passage of his last work: also in Homily 7 on Canticles, he declares that God is neither male nor female: how could one think of anything of this kind concerning the divine nature, while not even for us humans this characteristic endures forever (but we shall transcend gender in the other world)... If we call God “Mother” or “Love”, we shall not err: for God is Love (*ἀγάπη*), as John stated. (1]John 4:8; 4:16)⁴⁶

Clement, as pointed out above, in Book I of his *Paedagogus* represented Christ’s blood, shed for the salvation of humanity, as a mother’s blood shed in childbirth (*Paed.* I,42,2; 35,23) or as a mother’s blood transformed into milk for the nourishment of her baby (*Paed.*

43 See Ilaria L. E. Ramelli, “Christian Platonists in Support of Gender Equality: Bardaisan, Clement, Origen, Gregory of Nyssa, and Eriugena”, in Jessica Elbert Decker – Danielle Layne – Monica Vilhauer (eds.), *Otherwise than the Binary: New Feminist Readings of Ancient Philosophy and Culture*, SUNY, New York 2022, 313-350.

44 *Quis dives salvetur* 37,2.

45 Gregory of Nyssa, *Cant.* 6 GNO VI,183,10-15.

46 Gregory of Nyssa, *Cant.* 7 GNO VI.

I,40,1). The Logos is closely linked with milk in Clement's discourse, being the breast of God, which supply God's children with milk: "The food is the milk of the Father, from whom alone we babies suckle ... we rush to the care-soothing breast of the Father, the Logos. He alone, as is fitting, provides us babies with the milk of love. Only those who suckle this breast are really blessed" (*Paed.* I,43,2-4). The attribution of maternal breasts to the Father is hammered home in *Paed.* I,46,1, cited above: "The Father's nipples of love supply milk to babies who seek the Logos".

This striking image, repeatedly employed by Clement, surfaces again in Gregory: "The divine breasts", τῶν θείων μαστῶν, produce "milk" for us; "from God's breasts milk is supplied, and milk is the nourishment of infants", but the most simple teaching from God is loftier than the highest human teachings; thus, "God's breasts", again, οἱ θεῖοι μαστοί, produce milk that is better than human adult food. Gregory adds that this thought (νόημα) is very important ("not at all secondary or negligible").⁴⁷ I suspect that Clement, with his imaginative bio-theology, impacted Gregory profoundly.

The insistence on the θεῖοι μαστοί, "divine breasts", which are obviously female since they produce milk, and which Clement sometimes identifies with the Logos, might also have the following Biblical foundation. Jesus in Rev 1:13-16 is dressed as a high priest and is explicitly said to have μαστοί, "female breasts". Note that this term is exclusively applied to women in the Bible (e.g. Isa 32:12), Philo, and Josephus. The angels in Rev 15:6 are said to have στῆθη ("chest"), not μαστοί. Christ's μαστοί can point to inclusiveness, in reference to the creation of the human being, the ἄνθρωπος, obviously not one gender alone, "in God's image and likeness" (Gen 1:26-27). To save the entire humanity, Jesus, ἄνθρωπος corresponding to the first ἄνθρωπος (Rom 5:6-11), assumed the whole of humanity, not only one gender (or one

47 Gregory of Nyssa, *Cant.* 1 GNO VI,35,4-10.

race). In the transcendent Christ gender is no longer relevant, like all other differentiations such as ethnic or social ones (Gal 3:28), and only the human nature remains, together with the divine one (Phil 2:6-8). It is likely that the Biblical image of Christ's *μαστοί* influenced Clement in Book I of his *Paedagogus*, and, after him, Gregory. Clement, as I have pointed out above, was also acutely aware of God's *maternal* generation of the Child "from the womb" in Ps 109:3 LXX.

This article has argued that Clement of Alexandria connects the doctrine of *ἀποκατάστασις* (the restoration of rational creatures to God) to what he depicts as the feminine side of God. After examining how Clement describes God, properly speaking, as transcending genders, but with a great deal of imagery that represents God as both Father and Mother (with a theological use of female attributes and arguably some Biblical foundations thereof), I have considered the connection that Clement establishes between the "female side" of God, divine love (charity-love: *ἀγάπη*), and apokatastasis. I have examined the concept of restoration in Clement, and have pointed out that the connection between God as Mother, divine love, and apokatastasis established by him and taken over by Origen was absorbed and developed by Gregory of Nyssa in a conscious and deliberate way.

Clement, although he was not an outspoken or systematic supporter of universal restoration, situates himself in a prominent position in the history of apokatastasis, as his own oeuvre makes clear, and as the major exponents of this theory contribute to show with their deliberate development of Clement's hints.

Abstract

L'articolo intende dimostrare che Clemente connette la dottrina dell'*ἀποκατάστασις* a ciò che egli descrive come "l'aspetto femminile" di Dio. Dopo avere esaminato in breve (con rinvio a studi approfonditi)

il modo in cui egli rappresenta Dio, che propriamente è al di sopra dei generi, con descrizioni della Divinità sia come Padre che come Madre (con un impiego teologico delle caratteristiche femminili, in base a fondazioni scritturistiche), l'articolo prende in esame la stretta relazione stabilita da Clemente tra l'aspetto femminile di Dio, l'amore divino (*ἀγάπη*, attribuito a Dio da Giovanni), e l'apocatastasi. L'articolo esamina la teoria della restaurazione in Clemente e dimostra che il nesso tra Dio come Madre, l'amore-carità di Dio, e l'apocatastasi, istituito da Clemente e ripreso da Origene, fu assorbito e sviluppato dal Nisseno consapevolmente. Clemente, pur non sostenendo sistematicamente la restaurazione universale, si situa in una posizione preminente nella storia della dottrina dell'apocatastasi, come dimostra la sua opera e come contribuiscono a suggerire i maggiori esponenti di questa teoria (da Origene al Nisseno ad Evagrio) grazie allo sviluppo che offersero degli spunti clementini.



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L'interazione tra Cristologia e dottrina trinitaria prima e dopo Nicea

Giulio MASPERO

1. Introduzione: la significatività di un rapporto; 2. Origene e la relazione; 3. La tensione in Eusebio; 4. La novità ontologica nei Cappadoci; 5. Conclusioni: l'utilità di un confronto

1. Introduzione: la significatività di un rapporto

Le presentazioni didattiche del I Concilio di Nicea possono, a volte, correre il rischio di separare questo concilio dai successivi, come se la questione trinitaria, oggetto principale delle discussioni nel 325 e poi a Costantinopoli nel 381, potesse venire separata dalle questioni cristologiche dibattute ad Efeso, Calcedonia e nel II Concilio di Costantinopoli, e dalle questioni antropologiche, cui la dottrina cristologica inevitabilmente rinvia, trattate nel III Concilio di Costantinopoli e nel II di Nicea. Per questo l'approccio metodologico del presente contributo è fondato sulla ricerca di quella che Gregorio di Nissa chiamerebbe *l'akoulouthia* nella riflessione cristologica che ha preceduto e che ha seguito le discussioni del 325.

Ovviamente tale approccio deve essere molto attento ad evitare ogni anacronismo, proiettando in modo indebito categorie successive, ad esempio la distinzione cappadoce tra economia ed immanenza, sul periodo anteriore a Nicea, come se già prodromi della disputa ariana fossero presenti nel III secolo.¹ Ma è anche vero che la questione

1 Questa sembra il rischio in Giuseppe Bartolozzi, "Origene e il dibattito sulla divinità del Logos nella prima metà del secolo III", in *Augustinianum* 50 (2010), 61-82, cui ha risposto in modo netto Manlio Simonetti, "Qualche novità sulla dottrina origeniana del Logos", in *Augustinianum* 51 (2011), 331-348.

affrontata attraverso lo strumento concettuale del rapporto tra economia ed immanenza era già presente e centrale nella discussione teologica, come dimostra la cristologia di Origene cui si farà riferimento.

Infatti, un approccio al I Concilio di Nicea che pretenda di separare la questione trinitaria da quella cristologica rischia di mancare il bersaglio per l'assunzione di un'epistemologia che per principio impedisce l'osservazione dell'oggetto studiato. Ancor più rischiosa sarebbe una lettura delle discussioni nel 325 che opponesse teologia e metafisica, come se solo la dottrina cristologica appartenesse veramente al primo ambito, mentre la trinitaria non fosse altro che una corruzione filosofica della purezza biblica centrata sulla salvezza cristiana.

Le questioni poste da Nicea, invece, sono teologiche e filosofiche insieme, perché non si può separare la teologia dalla Scrittura e proprio la Scrittura pone una domanda metafisica. Cosa è Colui che parla a Mosè dal roveto ardente? E ancor più, cosa è Gesù? Uomo o Dio? Uomo e Dio? La domanda sul Cristo esige, così, l'inseparabilità tra la riflessione sull'Essere trino del Dio di Gesù e quella sul Cristo, vero Dio e vero uomo. Ciò implica che non si possa evitare di discutere la relazione tra Dio e il mondo, né si può pensare che la dottrina della creazione sia separabile da quella della salvezza.

Nel fervere degli studi sul I Concilio di Nicea in occasione del suo anniversario sembra, per questo, utile studiare il rapporto tra la cristologia che lo ha preceduto e quella che l'ha seguito, analizzando in particolare la relazione tra Origene e i Cappadoci. I rischi di anacronismo saranno gestiti attraverso un approccio metodologico comparativo, che non ha la pretesa di definire in modo chiuso il suo oggetto di ricerca, ma solo quello di tentare di approfondire l'ambito studiato attraverso la via delle relazioni. E tale possibilità sembra profilarsi proprio dalle domande teologiche fondamentali che il Concilio di Nicea ha fatto emergere, come quanto segue cercherà di dimostrare.

2. Origene e la relazione

La questione del rapporto tra le due dimensioni che poi saranno identificate dai Cappadoci con l'economia e l'immanenza rinvia, nella sua origine, a quella tra l'essere indicibile di Dio e il suo agire, dal quale deriverebbe la possibilità di parlarne. Si pensi al seguente testo fondativo di Giustino:

Ma non c'è nessun nome che possa essere imposto al Padre dell'universo, poiché non è generato. Infatti, qualunque sia il nome con cui lo chiamate, è necessario che un essere più antico gli abbia imposto quel nome. Le parole padre e Dio e creatore e signore e padrone non sono nomi, ma designazioni derivate dai suoi benefici e dalle sue opere.²

Il bagaglio filosofico e quello teologico di Giustino interagiscono evidentemente, come la stessa terminologia, in particolare la definizione "Padre dell'universo" (πάντων πατήρ), che dai tragici e Pitagora attraversa la parabola filosofico-religiosa greca, arrivando ai Padri della Chiesa attraverso la mediazione anche di Filone. Questa osservazione rivela come il significato trasmesso dalla *chrēsis* realizzata da Giustino richieda che tale uso sia interpretato alla luce della novità architettonica introdotta dal pensiero cristiano rispetto a quello pagano.

Infatti, se per Platone e Aristotele Dio e il mondo appartenevano ad un'unica dimensione ontologica, caratterizzata da eternità e finitudine, la rivelazione del Dio uno e trino in Cristo obbligò a distinguere la natura del Creatore, infinita ed eterna, dal creato, finito e temporale. Ciò implicò il riconoscimento dell'esistenza di due dimensioni ontologiche diverse, separate da uno iato metafisico infinito.

Questo è esattamente il fondamento ontologico della futura distinzione tra economia ed immanenza, perché quest'ultima verrà identificata con l'essere di Dio, che di per sé è inconoscibile come

2 Ὅνομα δὲ τῷ πάντων πατρὶ θετόν, ἀγεννήτῳ ὄντι, οὐκ ἔστιν· ὃ γὰρ ἂν καὶ ὀνομά τι προσαγορεύηται, πρεσβύτερον ἔχει τὸν θέμενον τὸ ὄνομα. τὸ δὲ πατήρ καὶ θεὸς καὶ κτίστης καὶ κύριος καὶ δεσπότης οὐκ ὀνόματα ἔστιν, ἀλλ' ἐκ τῶν εὐποϊῶν καὶ τῶν ἔργων προσήρσεις. (Giustino, *Apologia secunda*, 6,1,1-2,39).

Giustino già chiaramente afferma, mentre la prima con il Suo agire, che in quanto divino è in grado di superare la distanza infinita tra la Sua Natura e la creazione.

La *theologia* e l'*oikonomia*, in latino *dispositio*, diventeranno nel sec. IV in nomi tecnici³ di questi ambiti ontologici distinti, ma la questione del rapporto tra l'essere trascendente ed eterno di Dio e il Suo agire nella storia e nel mondo è presente fin da principio, in quanto riguarda la stessa lettura del testo biblico. La domanda cristologica ineludibile, infatti, è dove vada collocato Gesù: è solo nella storia, come i sabelliani e gli adozionisti affermavano nel sec. III e poi, nel secolo successivo, diranno gli ariani in termini distinti, ma altrettanto radicali, oppure è anche nell'immanenza divina? Egli appartiene solo all'agire di Dio o anche al Suo essere? L'esegesi del testo sacro girava radicalmente attorno a tali domande, che Origene affronta con la sua grande finezza e profondità.

Luogo di confronto privilegiato in questo ambito era l'esegesi del prologo del quarto vangelo, con l'identificazione tra il Logos che si è fatto carne e l'Unigenito che è nel seno del Padre. L'Alessandrino affronta con coraggio e profondità estremi la discussione su i due "in" che appaiano in Gv 1,1, e Gv 1,4. Nel primo si dice che il Logos era, quindi sempre è, nell'*arché*, mentre nel secondo passo si dice che "in Lui era la vita", cioè che quella vita che è la luce degli uomini è venuta per noi nel tempo:

Ma bisogna fare attenzione a questi due *in* e analizzare la loro differenza. Il primo è il Logos *nel* principio, il secondo è la Vita *nel* Logos. Ma il Logos non è venuto all'essere nel principio; né accadeva che il Principio fosse privo di Logos. Per questo si è detto: "In Principio era il Logos" (Gv 1,1). La Vita, invece, non era nel Logos, ma la Vita è venuta, se la "Vita è la Luce degli uomini" (Gv 1,4). Infatti, quando non c'era uomo, nemmeno c'era la luce degli uomini, poiché la

3 Cf. Basil Studer, voce "Economia", in Angelo Di Berardino (Dir.), *Dizionario Patristico e di Antichità Cristiane*, Marietti, Casale Monferrato 1983, 1062-1063 e Giulio Maspero, "Storia e salvezza: il concetto di *oikonomia* fino agli esordi del III secolo, in Pagani e cristiani alla ricerca della salvezza (secoli I-III)", in *Studia Ephemeridis Augustinianum* 96 (2006), 239-260.

luce degli uomini è concepita in relazione agli uomini (κατὰ τὴν πρὸς ἀνθρώπους σχέσιν).⁴

Con vigore metafisico Origene distingue il primo “in” dal secondo, negando in modo assoluto che in Gv 1,1 si possa fare riferimento ad un passaggio dalla potenza all’atto, mentre la venuta nel tempo del Logos si fonda proprio sul passaggio dalla potenza all’atto degli uomini, per i quali Lui viene. Così le dimensioni dell’essere e dell’agire di Dio sono già chiaramente distinte. Tale distinzione, infatti, dipende proprio da quella tra il Creatore unitrino puramente spirituale e le creature, sempre segnate, secondo l’Alessandrino, da una dimensione corporale, per quanto sottile, come nel caso degli angeli.⁵

La questione teologica di quello che dopo Nicea sarà chiamato il rapporto tra *theologia* ed *oikonomia* è, dunque, radicato nell’esegesi. La distinzione tra l’*in sé* di Dio e il *per noi*, chiama in causa la relazione, *schesis*, perché i nomi con i quali chiamiamo il Signore fanno riferimento proprio al suo rapporto con noi. Da qui emerge la percezione della distinzione in Cristo tra l’umano e il divino:

Mentre le sue caratteristiche umane erano visibili a tutti, quelle propriamente divine - non intendo quelle che lo mettevano in relazione con gli altri esseri (περὶ τῶν σχέσιν πρὸς ἕτερα ἐχόντων), ma quelle che lo differenziavano (περὶ τῶν κατὰ διαφορὰν) - non erano intelleggibili a tutti.⁶

Vale la pena di evidenziare come il linguaggio di Origene è qui propriamente metafisico, perché la distinzione tra il divino e l’umano nel Cristo è espressa in base alla categorizzazione in *kata diaphoran* e alla

4 Τηρητέον δὲ τὰ δύο “ἐν” καὶ τὴν διαφορὰν αὐτῶν ἐξεταστέον- πρῶτον μὲν γὰρ ἐν τῷ “λόγος ἐν ἀρχῇ”, δεύτερον δὲ ἐν τῷ “ζωὴ ἐν λόγῳ”. Ἀλλὰ λόγος μὲν “ἐν ἀρχῇ” οὐκ ἐγένετο- οὐκ ἦν γὰρ, ὅτε ἡ ἀρχὴ ἄλλογος ἦν, διὸ λέγεται- “Ἐν ἀρχῇ ἦν ὁ λόγος-” ζωὴ δὲ ἐν τῷ λόγῳ οὐκ ἦν- ἀλλὰ ζωὴ ἐγένετο, εἴ γε “ζωὴ ἐστὶ τὸ τῶν ἀνθρώπων”. “Ὅτε γὰρ οὐδέπω ἄνθρωπος ἦν, οὐδὲ “φῶς τῶν ἀνθρώπων” ἦν, τοῦ φωτὸς ἀνθρώπων κατὰ τὴν πρὸς ἀνθρώπους σχέσιν νοουμένου. (Origene, *Commentarii in evangelium Joannis* II,130, 1-9: SCh 120,292-294).

5 Cf. Origene, *Commentarii in evangelium Joannis*, II,23, 146,6-7 (SCh 120,304).

6 τὰ μὲν ἀνθρώπινα αὐτοῦ πᾶσιν ἦν ὁρατά, δὲ θεϊότεραλέγω οὐ περὶ τῶν σχέσιν πρὸς ἕτερα ἐχόντων ἀλλὰ περὶ τῶν κατὰ διαφορὰν οὐ πᾶσι χωρητά. (Origene, *Contra Celsum* II,70,24-27: SCh 132,452-454).

schesis pros.⁷ La dimensione puramente spirituale della natura divina, infatti, marca una differenza radicale rispetto all'agire relazionale a favore degli uomini che costituisce la storia della salvezza. Così l'ambito della *schesis* assume, a poco a poco, una valenza sovrapponibile con ciò che più tardi sarà definito in termini di *oikonomia*:

Perciò, [alcuni] dicono che il *Logos* nel principio non è diverso da questa Sapienza per quanto riguarda la sostanza (*κατ' οὐσίαν*), ma per quanto riguarda la concezione (*ἐπινοία*) e la relazione (*σχέσει*), in modo tale che c'è solo un'esistenza (*ὑπαρξίς*), che le Scritture descrivono qui secondo la sostanza (*κατ' οὐσίαν*), la quale in quanto Sapienza è propria di Dio e si è chinata, per così dire, come *Logos* creatore sulle creature.⁸

Al di là dell'attribuzione o meno del frammento citato all'Alessandrino,⁹ il testo è particolarmente importante perché rilegge il linguaggio scritturistico della Sapienza e del *Logos* dal punto di vista dell'identità ontologica della seconda Persona divina che appartiene all'unica sostanza divina, ma si presenta nella storia con nomi diversi secondo l'*epinoia* e la *schesis*, qui significativamente accostate. Si tratta ancora di una proto-distinzione tra economia ed immanenza, che Origene cerca di sviluppare anche dalla prospettiva escatologica:

È conveniente, allora, raccogliere le denominazioni del Figlio, per esaminare quelle che sono sopravvenute successivamente e quelle che non esisterebbero in così gran numero se i santi fossero rimasti nella beatitudine originaria. Infatti, forse (*τάχα*) rimarrebbero solo la Sapienza, il *Logos* e la Vita, certamente anche la Verità. Ma non gli altri nomi che ha assunto per noi (*δι' ἡμῶν*). E beati coloro che, avendo necessità del Figlio, sono diventati tali da non averne più bisogno come

7 Sul rapporto di tali espressioni in Origene con le possibili fonti filosofiche, si veda Giulio Maspero, "The Category of *πρὸς τί* in Origen's Thought and its Philosophical background", in *Origeniana XIII*, in corso di stampa.

8 ἀρχὴν οὖν εἶναι τὸν λόγον φασὶν οὐχ ἕτερον ὄντα αὐτῆς κατ' οὐσίαν ἀλλ' ἐπινοία καὶ σχέσει, ἢ ἡ αὐτὴ ὑπαρξίς ἦν καλοῦσιν κατ' οὐσίαν αἰ γράφαι, ἣ μὲν ἠκείωται τῷ θεῷ σοφία, ἣ δὲ νένευκεν, ἢ οὕτως εἶπω, πρὸς τὰ δημιουργήματα ὁ δημιουργικὸς λόγος. (Origene, *Fragmenta in evangelium Joannis*, I, 63-67: GCS 10, 483, 12-16).

9 Al di là delle opinioni a favore, come quella di Preuschen, o contro, come per Heine, quello che qui conta è il valore della questione prima di Nicea. Si vedano Erwin Preuschen (Ed.), *Origenes Werke 4. Der Johanneskommentar*, Hinrichs, Leipzig 1903 e Ronald E. Heine, "Can the Catena Fragments of Origen's Commentary On John Be Trusted?", in *Vigiliae Christianae* 40 (1986), 118-130.

medico, che cura coloro che sono malati, né come pastore, né come redenzione, ma solo come Sapienza e Logos e Giustizia e tutto quant'altro riguardi coloro che per la propria perfezione possono accogliere il meglio di Lui.¹⁰

Questo testo, tratto dal commento al quarto Vangelo, mette in luce anche la chiara differenza dell'impostazione origeniana rispetto al IV secolo. Infatti, per la corrispondenza tra escatologia e protologia che caratterizza il pensiero dell'Alessandrino,¹¹ alcune *epinoiai* della seconda Persona divine sono indipendenti dalla Sua manifestazione storica, in modo tale che la perfezione dello gnostico cristiano richiederebbe il superamento del bisogno delle *epinoiai* che si potrebbero definire "economiche", come avviene con l'affermazione che il vero gnostico non ha bisogno dell'Eucaristia, ma solo della Scrittura,¹² nella quale le realtà storiche non puntano verso altre realtà storiche, ma verso realtà spirituali e intelleggibili.¹³

La tensione tra l'essere di Dio e il suo agire è qui evidente, cui corrisponde sia la distinzione delle Persone divine in termini di partecipazione, seppur all'interno dell'unica natura divina, e la differenza nella loro sfera di azione.¹⁴ Da questa tensione avrà origine la crisi ariana, che qui, però, non è ancora presente, nemmeno nel senso di prodromi. Quello che, invece, è già evidentemente presente è la questione teologica del rapporto tra dottrina trinitaria e cristologia. Secondo Origene, l'Incarnazione non è l'unica via di accesso possibile

10 Βασανιστίον οὖν συναγαγόντα τὰς ὀνομασίας τοῦ υἱοῦ, ποῖα αὐτῶν ἐπιγεγόνασιν οὐκ ἂν ἐν μακαριότητι ἀρξαμένων καὶ μεινάντων τῶν ἁγίων γενόμεναι τὰ τοσάδε. Τάχα γὰρ σοφία ἔμενε μόνον ἢ καὶ λόγος ἢ καὶ ζωὴ, πάντως δὲ καὶ ἀλήθεια· οὐ μὴν δὲ καὶ τὰ ἄλλα ὅσα δι' ἡμᾶς προσεῖληφε. Καὶ μακάριοι γὰρ ὅσοι δεόμενοι τοῦ υἱοῦ τοῦ θεοῦ τοιοῦτοι γεγόνασιν, ὡς μηκέτι αὐτοῦ χρῆξιν ἱατροῦ τοῦς κακῶς ἔχοντας θεραπεύοντος μηδὲ ποιμένος μηδὲ ἀπολυτρώσεως, ἀλλὰ σοφίας καὶ λόγου καὶ δικαιοσύνης, ἢ εἴ τι ἄλλο τοῖς διὰ τελειότητα χωρεῖν αὐτοῦ τὰ κάλλιστα δυναμένοις. (Origene, *Commentarii in evangelium Joannis*, I,123,1-124,5: SCH 120,124).

11 Cf. Ilaria Ramelli, *The Christian Doctrine of Apokatastasis: A Critical Assessment from the New Testament to Eriugena*, Brill, Leiden 2013.

12 Cf. Origene, *Commentarii in evangelium Joannis*, XXXII,24,310: SCH 385,320. Per il contesto, si veda Jean Daniélou, *Origène: Le génie du Christianisme*, La Table Ronde, Paris 1948,74-79.

13 Cf. Origene, *Commentarii in evangelium Joannis*, X,110,4-6: SCH 157,448.

14 Cf. Giulio Maspero, *Re-Thinking the Filioque with the Greek Fathers*, Eerdmans, Grand Rapids (MI) 2023, 38-42.

per la conoscenza della Trinità, ma già i profeti hanno parlato della venuta di Cristo e dell'immanenza trinitaria, definita in termini tecnici *theologia*, intesa come affermazione dalla divinità del Verbo a livello intradivino:

E probabilmente le testimonianze profetiche non annunciano solo la venuta di Cristo, insegnandoci ciò e null'altro, ma piuttosto è possibile imparare molta teologia (*θεολογία*), e la relazione (*σχέσιν*) del Padre al (*πρὸς*) Figlio e del Figlio al (*πρὸς*) Padre, dai Profeti e da quello che loro hanno annunciato a questo proposito, non meno che dagli apostoli che hanno narrato la grandezza del Figlio di Dio.¹⁵

Profeti ed apostoli parlano tutti della distinzione personale del Padre, del Figlio e dello Spirito Santo, cioè della loro relazione. Qui si ha un punto di passaggio delicato, perché la *schesis* rappresentava la dimensione dell'agire di Dio, ma deve essere predicata anche nel Suo essere. L'ambivalenza che ne consegue richiederà un chiarimento dopo Nicea e, in parte, sarà tra le cause che hanno portato al concilio del 325, come rivela la negazione da parte di Ario (e anche di Eusebio come si vedrà nella sezione seguente) della possibilità che il Logos appartenga ai relativi:

Così [il] Dio, che è causa di ogni cosa, è assolutamente unico nell'essere senza principio, mentre il Figlio, generato al di fuori del tempo dal Padre, creato e costituito prima dei secoli, non era prima di essere stato generato, ma essendo stato generato al di fuori del tempo prima di ogni cosa, è l'unico che ha ricevuto la sussistenza dal Padre. Infatti non è eterno, né coeterno, né ingenerato insieme al Padre, né ha l'essere insieme con il Padre, come alcuni dicono considerandoli relativi (*τὰ πρὸς τι*), quindi introducendo due principi (*ἀρχὰς*) ingenerati.¹⁶

Il punto di tensione è evidente: se la relazione è un mero accidente, la seconda Persona divina deve essere annoverata tra le sostanze e deve essere distinta in quanto tale dal Padre, proprio perché tra di essi si ha una *schesis*, secondo la formula usata da Origene stesso. Nella sua teologia si vede, infatti, che la relazione è situata sia a livello dell'essere

¹⁵ Origene, *Commentarii in evangelium Joannis* II,205,1-7: SCh 120,346.

¹⁶ Ario, *Epistula ad Alexandrum Alexandrinum*, in Atanasio, *De synodis*, 16,4: *Atanasius Werke*, II/7,244,8-12.

del Padre, del Figlio e dello Spirito, sia a livello del loro agire, anche se in forma partecipativa.

Ancora una volta, l'esegesi si rivela inseparabile dalle questioni metafisiche, come rivelano i *Commentarii in Romanos (III.5-V.7)* di Origene editi da J. Scherer,¹⁷ laddove si discute Rm 3,19-20. Qui si domanda se il testo paolino si riferisce alla Legge di Mosè o alla legge naturale iscritta nei cuori degli uomini. La conclusione dell'Alessandrino è che occorre leggere seguendo la seconda possibilità interpretativa, proprio perché l'Apostolo accusa ogni uomo di peccato e perché nella Scrittura si trovano casi di pentimento anche prima di Mosè, come per Caino, i fratelli di Giuseppe e Giobbe. Ancora una volta fa la sua comparsa la differenza tra nomi relazionali e nomi assoluti, con la sfida che i nomi propri delle Persone divine introducono quando si parla dell'essere di Dio rispetto al Suo agire:

In alcuni casi i nomi esprimono una relazione (κατὰ τὴν του πρὸς τι σχέσιν ὠνόμασται), come per padre che è padre di un figlio e figlio che è figlio di un padre, o per concittadino che è concittadino di un concittadino. Altre volte i nomi esprimono una differenza assoluta (κατὰ διαφορὰν), come uomo e cavallo. L'uomo non è uomo di qualcosa, né il cavallo è cavallo di qualcosa. Dunque, noi ricerchiamo a proposito della legge che dobbiamo esaminare ora, se il termine esprima una differenza assoluta (κατὰ διαφορὰν) come uomo o una relazione (κατὰ τὴν πρὸς τι σχέσιν) come padre.¹⁸

La questione fondamentale è che, per Origene, sia i nomi assoluti sia quelli relativi si riferiscono a sostanze, perché uomo, cavallo, padre e figlio sono tutti tali. Gli esempi da lui addotti non sono meramente logici o matematici. Questo passaggio teologico rinvia direttamente

17 Cf. Origene, *Commentarii in Romanos (III.5-V.7)*, ed. J. Scherer, 144,1-12 (Cairo: L'Institut Français d'Archéologie Orientale, 1957).

18 τινὰ μὲν κατὰ τὴν του πρὸς τι σχέσιν ὠνόμασται ὡς πατὴρ υἱοῦ πατρὸς καὶ υἱὸς πατρὸς υἱός, καὶ πολίτης πολίτου πολίτης, ἃ δὲ κατὰ διαφορὰν ὡς ἄνθρωπος ἵππος. οὐδενὸς γὰρ ἄνθρωπος ἄνθρωπος οὐδὲ ἵππος ἵππος. Ζητούμεν τοίνυν περὶ τοῦ νόμου, περὶ οὗ νῦν ἐξετάζειν χρὴ, πότερον κατὰ διαφορὰν ἐστὶν τὸ ὄνομα ὡς τὸ ἄνθρωπος, ἢ κατὰ τὴν πρὸς τι σχέσιν ὡς ὁ πατὴρ (Origene, *Commentarii in Romanos (III.5-V.7)*, ed. J. Scherer, 144,1-12 (Cairo: L'Institut Français d'Archéologie Orientale, 1957), 146,10-15).

a Nicea e alle difficoltà interpretative riguardo alle formule derivate del simbolo di fede. Infatti, il “Dio da Dio” o il “Luce da Luce” potevano essere intesi in senso relazionale oppure assoluto: si trattava di due sostanze connesse relazionalmente, come riteneva Ario (e probabilmente Eusebio), oppure di una relazione che distingueva nell’unica sostanza divina?

3. *La tensione in Eusebio*

La tensione riguarda proprio il passaggio da quella dimensione che nel sec. IV sarà identificata con l’immanenza divina a quella dimensione che sarà chiamata *oikonomia*. Le formule derivate di Nicea appaiono a volte accostate a “vita da vita”, espressione particolarmente interessante per la connessione semantica tra la vita e la generazione (e anche lo spirito), come dimostra la lettera di Eusebio di Cesarea scritta nel giugno del 325 ai fedeli della sua comunità.¹⁹ Qui egli professa di credere:

in un solo Signore Gesù Cristo il Verbo di Dio, Dio da Dio, Luce da Luce, Vita da Vita (ζωὴν ἐκ ζωῆς), Figlio unigenito, “generato prima di ogni creatura” (Col 1,15), generato dal Padre prima di tutti i secoli, per “mezzo del quale tutto è stato fatto” (Gv 1,3).²⁰

Alla doppia formula nicena segue il *Vita da Vita* come anche accade nel *De ecclesiastica theologia*, rivelando che l’espressione può essere ritenuta una caratteristica propria della teologia di Eusebio:

Dio da Dio, Luce da Luce e Vita da Vita, per ragioni inenarrabili, ineffabili, assolutamente ignote a noi ed imperscrutabili generato dal Padre per la salvezza dell’universo.²¹

19 Cf. H. von Campenhausen, “Das Bekenntnis Eusebs von Caesarea (Nicea 325)”, in *Zeitschrift fuer die Neutestamentliche Wissenschaft* 67 (1976), 123-130.

20 εἰς ἓνα κύριον Ἰησοῦν Χριστὸν τὸν τοῦ θεοῦ λόγον, θεὸν ἐκ θεοῦ, φῶς ἐκ φωτός, ζωὴν ἐκ ζωῆς, οὐκ ἰσὺς μονογενῆ, πρωτότοκον πάσης κτίσεως, πρὸ πάντων τῶν αἰώνων ἐκ τοῦ πατρὸς γεγεννημένον, δι’ οὗ καὶ ἐγένετο τὰ πάντα. (Eusebius, *Epistula ad Cesarienses* 4: H.G. Opitz, *Athanasius Werke*, vol. 2.1, p. 29, 12-14 e vol. 3.1, p. 43, 10-12).

21 θεὸν ἐκ θεοῦ καὶ φῶς ἐκ φωτός καὶ ζωὴν ἐκ ζωῆς, ἀλέκτοισ καὶ ἀρρήτοις καὶ παντάπασιν ἀγνώστοις ἡμῖν καὶ ἀκαταλήπτοις λόγοις ἐκ τοῦ πατρὸς ἐπὶ σωτηρίᾳ τῶν ὅλων γεγεννημένον. (Eusebius, *De ecclesiastica theologia*, I,8,2: GCS 14, p. 66, 20-23).

In questo contesto fa la sua comparsa l'espressione *αὐτοζωή* applicata al Figlio,²² al fine di evidenziare la radicale differenza della generazione da parte Sua del Figlio rispetto a quella delle creature. Tale generazione ha, però, come scopo la salvezza del mondo, anche se in modo imperscrutabile. Atanasio contesta tale uso,²³ che pone la ragione di essere del Logos nell'agire di Dio, quindi nella storia della salvezza, tanto da chiamare Eusebio *ἀρειανόφρονος*, nel titolo alla lettera ad essa premesso nel *De decretis Nicaenae synodi*.²⁴

In particolare ciò è connesso alla presenza dell'espressione “prima della generazione non era” (*πρὸ τοῦ γεννηθῆναι οὐκ ἦν*) alla fine della lettera stessa.²⁵

Per tale ragione, le formule derivate svolsero un ruolo fondamentale nella disputa sull'interpretazione di Dionigi di Alessandria, come rivela il seguente testo di Atanasio:

Ma la loro [degli Ariani] accusa che Egli [il Figlio] fosse creato dal nulla era annientata da lui [Dionigi di Alessandria] dicendo che il Logos è come un fiume dalla sorgente, come un germoglio da una pianta, e un bimbo da un genitore, e Luce da Luce, e Vita da Vita (*φῶς ἐκ φωτός και ζωὴν ἐκ ζωῆς*). E lui rigetta il loro escludere e separare il Logos da Dio, dicendo che la Trinità è senza divisione e senza diminuzione ricapitolata (*συγκεφαλαιῶσθαι*) nella Monade.²⁶

La tensione ermeneutica, in un contesto filosofico caratterizzato dal neoplatonismo, è evidente, perché gli esempi addotti possono venire interpretati in senso emanazionista. Ma quello che qui più conta è

22 Cf. *ibidem*, I,8,3 e I,8,4: p. 66, 25 e 33.

23 La valutazione teologica della lettera è complicata dall'esistenza di una versione caratterizzata da notevoli differenze e trasmessa da Socrate, il quale probabilmente l'ha conosciuta attraverso il vescovo macedoniano Sabino di Eraclea: cf. W.-D. Hauschild, “Die Antinizänische Sammlung des Sabinus von Heraclea”, in *Vigiliae Christianae* 24 (1970), 105-126, qui 108.

24 Cf. H.G. Opitz, *Athanasius Werke*, vol. 2.1, p. 28, 28.

25 Eusebius, *Epistula ad Caesarienses* 16: H.G. Opitz, *Athanasius Werke*, vol. 2.1, p. 31, 6 e vol. 3.1, p. 46, 16.

26 τὸν λόγον εἶναι ὡς ποταμὸν ἀπὸ πηγῆς και βλαστὸν ἀπὸ ρίζης και τέκνον ἀπὸ γονέως και φῶς ἐκ φωτός και ζωὴν ἐκ ζωῆς και τὸ μὲν ἀποσχοινίζειν και διαιρεῖν αὐτούς τὸν λόγον ἀπὸ τοῦ θεοῦ διαβάλλει λέγων αὐτὸς ἀδιαίρετον και ἀμείωτον τὴν τριάδα εἰς μονάδα συγκεφαλαιῶσθαι, (Athanasius, *De sententia Dionysii* 19.1.8-3.2: H.G. Opitz, *Athanasius Werke*, 2.1, p. 60, 15-18.

che la radice di tale tensione si può rinvenire nella stessa teologia di Origene, il quale ricorre alla formula “vita da Vita” in un senso di palese distinzione sostanziale tra il primo termine della formula e quello derivato:

Come si nasce dal Salvatore, sapiente dalla Sapienza, vero dalla Verità, vita da Vita (σοφὸς ἐκ σοφίας, καὶ ἀληθὴς ἐξ ἀληθείας, καὶ ζωὴ ἐκ ζωῆς), la quale è principio di ogni cosa e la sola generazione, così anche lo pneumatico nasce santo dallo Spirito Santo, cioè purificato dall’acqua, nasce irrigato da una copiosa produzione di frutti dall’acqua e dallo Spirito.²⁷

L’attenzione è ancora rivolta allo gnostico e alla connessione che gli permette di ricevere la grazia. Ma questo sposta le formule derivate verso un ambito semantico nel quale la seconda Persona divina che si fa carne per salvare l’uomo viene compresa come sostanza diversa dal Padre, seppur legata intimamente a Lui per la relazione e la spiritualità. Non è questa, ovviamente, la posizione di Origene, secondo il quale il Figlio è da sempre ed è una cosa sola con la prima Persona divina, perché puramente spirituale come Lui e lo Spirito Santo, a differenza delle creature.²⁸ Ma la tensione interpretativa, che scoppierà con Nicea e la crisi ariana, è già presente *in nuce*, perché l’esegesi pone delle questioni che chiamano in causa la metafisica e la mettono in crisi, nel senso etimologico di “giudizio”. Cristologia e dottrina trinitaria si rivelano prospettive inseparabili, perché richiedono la declinazione della terminologia tecnica dell’*ousia*, dell’*hypostasis*, della *physis* e del *prosôpon* sia per l’essere immanente di Dio, sia per la cristologia e, quindi, per l’antropologia e la creazione. Tale elaborazione e chiarimento, che

27 ὡς οὖν γεννᾶται τις ἐκ τοῦ σωτῆρος, σοφὸς ἐκ σοφίας, καὶ ἀληθὴς ἐξ ἀληθείας, καὶ ζωὴ ἐκ ζωῆς, ἐκ τῆς πάντων ἀρχῆς καὶ γεννήσεως μιᾶς οὐσίας, οὕτως καὶ ἐκ τοῦ ἁγίου πνεύματος ἅγιος καὶ πνευματικός, καὶ ἐκ τοῦ ὕδατος καθαιρόμενος. καὶ πρὸς καρποφορίαν ποτιζόμενος γεννᾶται ἐξ ὕδατος καὶ πνεύματος. (Origene, *Fragments in evangelium Joannis* 121bis: E. Preuschen, GCS 10).

28 Cf. John M. Dillon, “Origen’s Doctrine of the Trinity and Some Later Neoplatonic Theories”, in Dominic J. O’Meara (ed.), *Neoplatonism and Christian Thought*, State University of New York Press, Norfolk (VA) 1982, 19-23.

in termini contemporanei si potrebbe definire ontologico-trinitario,²⁹ sarà il contributo fondamentale dei Cappadoci, i quali raccolsero l'eredità di Atanasio e la svilupparono nel confronto non solo con gli eredi di Ario, ma anche con gli pneumatomachi e gli apollinaristi.

Quindi, le formule derivate inserite nel simbolo di Nicea del 325 puntano verso una tensione che attraversa la riflessione trinitaria e cristologica nella loro inseparabilità dal periodo precedente al concilio fino a quello ad esso successivo. Si veda, ad esempio, il simbolo del sinodo pro-ariano di Antiochia del 341, dove la derivazione viene presentata nel quadro di quella di due sostanze complete diverse, secondo l'accostamento dell'espressione "Dio da Dio" con "tutto da tutto" (ὅλον ἐξ ὅλου) e, plotinianamente, "solo da solo" (μόνον ἐκ μόνου):

In un solo Signore Gesù Cristo, Suo Figlio unigenito, Dio, per mezzo del quale sono state create tutte le cose, generato dal Padre prima di tutti secoli, Dio da Dio, tutto da tutto, solo da solo, perfetto da perfetto, Re da Re, Signore da Signore (Θεὸν ἐκ Θεοῦ, ὅλον ἐξ ὅλου, μόνον ἐκ μόνου, τέλειον ἐκ τελείου, βασιλέα ἐκ βασιλέως, κύριον ἀπὸ κυρίου), Verbo vivente, Sapienza, Vita, Luce vera, cammino di verità, Risurrezione, Pastore, Porta, immutabile ed inalterabile, immagine perfetta della divinità, della sostanza, della potenza, della volontà e della gloria del Padre.³⁰

È importante notare che le formule potrebbero essere spiegate con una lettura prossima a quella di Atanasio, perché il Figlio è unico e tutto, cioè completo, come il Padre, ma il solo modo per dirimere il senso in cui vengono utilizzate le espressioni è il contesto, in particolare il modo in cui l'immanenza di Dio viene raccordata con la sfera del Suo agire.

29 Si veda, G. Maspero, *Relational Being: The Cappadocian Reshaping of Metaphysics*, Cambridge University Press, Cambridge 2024, 7-11.

30 καὶ εἰς ἓνα Κύριον Ἰησοῦν Χριστὸν, τὸν Ὑῖὸν αὐτοῦ τὸν μονογενῆ Θεόν, δι' οὗ τὰ πάντα ἐγένετο· τὸν γεννηθέντα πρὸ πάντων τῶν αἰώνων ἐκ τοῦ Πατρὸς, Θεὸν ἐκ Θεοῦ, ὅλον ἐξ ὅλου, μόνον ἐκ μόνου, τέλειον ἐκ τελείου, βασιλέα ἐκ βασιλέως, Κύριον ἀπὸ Κυρίου, λόγον ζῶντα, σοφίαν, ζωὴν, φῶς ἀληθινόν, ὁδὸν ἀληθείας, ἀνάστασιν, ποιμένα, θύραν, ἀτρεπτόν τε καὶ ἀναλλοίωτον, τὴν τῆς θεότητος, οὐσίας τε καὶ δυνάμεως, καὶ βουλῆς καὶ δόξης τοῦ Πατρὸς ἀπαράλλακτον εἰκόνα (Socrate, *Historia Ecclesiastica* II,10,35-42).

Come si è visto, quest'ultima veniva connessa con la dimensione relazionale, rendendo particolarmente pregnante l'affermazione di Eusebio che il Logos non possa appartenere ai relativi:

Dice [l'evangelista]: non pensare, infatti, che Egli [il Logos] appartenga ai relativi (τῶν πρὸς τι), come il logos nell'anima o come il logos che si ode grazie alla voce o come il logos che si trova nei semi materiali o esiste negli enti matematici. Tutti questi, infatti, che sono dei relativi (τῶν πρὸς τι), sono considerati in un'altra sostanza ad essi preesistente. Mentre il Logos che è Dio non ha bisogno di nessun altro a Lui preesistente per essere sussistendo in esso, ma Egli è da sé, in quanto vive e sussiste come Dio.³¹

Evidentemente il vescovo di Cesarea sta difendendo la sostanzialità del Verbo, che non può essere ridotto ad accidente, in quanto sussistente. Ma ciò viene affermato a discapito dell'identità sostanziale con il Padre.

La questione è ancora una volta esegetica, in quanto si fonda sull'interpretazione della preposizione "in" nel prologo di Giovanni, già discussa da Origene:

Infatti, se avesse detto: "E il Logos era in Dio", come ammettendo un accidente nel sostrato (ἐν ὑποκειμένῳ συμβεβηκός) e un ente che inerisce ad un altro (ἕτερον ἐν ἐτέρῳ), avrebbe presentato Dio come ente composto, supponendolo come essenza priva di Logos o pensando il Logos come accidente dell'essenza (συμβεβηκός δὲ τῆ οὐσία τὸν λόγον).³²

L'essere in era, infatti, considerato la caratteristica definitoria dell'accidente, in quanto privo di una propria consistenza sostanziale che gli permettesse essere in sé. La questione (metafisica) dei relativi irrompe, così, nella discussione su come raccordare l'immanenza di Dio e il Suo agire, quindi nel rapporto tra Cristologia e dottrina trinitaria:

31 μὴ γὰρ τῶν πρὸς τι, φησὶν, νόμιζε εἶναι καὶ τοῦτον, ὡς τὸν ἐν ψυχῇ λόγον ἢ ὡς τὸν διὰ φωνῆς ἀκούμενον ἢ ὡς τὸν ἐν σωματικοῖς ὄντα σπέρμασιν ἢ ὡς τὸν ἐν μαθηματικοῖς ὑφ'εστῶτα θεωρήμασιν. οὗτοι γὰρ πάντες τῶν πρὸς τι ὄντες ἐν ἐτέρῳ προϋποκειμένη νοοῦνται οὐσία. ὁ δὲ θεὸς λόγος οὐχ ἐτέρου δεῖται τοῦ προϋποκειμένου, ἵν' ἐν αὐτῷ γενόμενος ὑποστή, καθ' ἑαυτὸν δὲ ἐστὶν ζῶν καὶ ὑφ'εστῶς ἄτε θεὸς ὢν. (Eusebio, *De ecclesiastica theologia*, II,14,2,1-3,1).

32 εἰ γὰρ εἰρήκει· καὶ ὁ λόγος ἦν ἐν τῷ θεῷ, ὡς ἐν ὑποκειμένῳ συμβεβηκός καὶ ὡς ἕτερον ἐν ἐτέρῳ δούς, σύνθετον ὡσπερ εἰσήγεν τὸν θεόν, οὐσίαν μὲν αὐτὸν ὑποτιθέμενος δίχα λόγου συμβεβηκός δὲ τῆ οὐσία τὸν λόγον. (Eusebio, *De ecclesiastica theologia*, II,14,4,1-5,1).

Ma come dall'evangelista "In principio era il Logos" (Gv 1,1) è scritto senza determinazioni, così anche "Il Logos era presso Dio", mentre non si trova "Il Logos di Dio", perché non si possa pensare che lo si consideri appartenere ai relativi (τῶν πρὸς τι), né come accidente (συμβεβηκότα) in Dio, ma come sussistente e vivente (perciò continua con "e Dio era il Logos", senza dire "e il Logos era di Dio").³³

Questo è lo sfondo sul quale sarà sviluppato il pensiero dei Padri Cappadoci, il cui contributo rivela ancor più la propria profondità, quando lo si legge alla luce delle tensioni e dell'ambivalenza che avevano preceduto Nicea.

4. La novità ontologica nei Cappadoci

La relazione risulta centrale nel confronto tra Basilio ed Eunomio, il quale introduce nella discussione il riferimento alla *schesis*, cui i neoplatonici avevano riconosciuto diritto di cittadinanza nel mondo intellegibile.³⁴ La discussione della teoria dei nomi di ispirazione platonica degli avversari del vescovo di Cesarea esigeva, infatti, la discussione del rapporto tra sostanza, ipostasi e relazione, come dimostra il seguente testo:

Perché chi non sa che, tra i nomi, quelli che si enunciano in modo assoluto e per se stessi (καθ' ἑαυτὰ) significano le realtà che sono loro sostrati (ὑποκειμένων), mentre altri, che sono detti in riferimento a qualcosa d'altro (πρὸς ἕτερα), fanno conoscere la sola relazione (σχέσιν) a ciò rispetto a cui sono detti (πρὸς ἃ)? Ad esempio, uomo, cavallo e bue significano ciascuna le realtà che indicano; figlio, servo e amico, invece, indicano solamente l'unione con i termini ai quali sono accoppiati. Dunque, sentendo fattura non si rivolge il pensiero a una sostanza, ma si comprende che essa è unita ad un altro essere [cioè colui che ha fatto]. Infatti, la fattura è detta fattura di qualcuno. Ma come può non essere

33 ἀλλ' ὡσπερ παρὰ τῷ εὐαγγελιστῇ τὸ ἐν ἀρχῇ ἦν ὁ λόγος ἀπολύτως ἐγράφετο, καὶ πάλιν ὁ λόγος ἦν πρὸς τὸν θεόν, καὶ οὐκ εἴρητο· ὁ λόγος τοῦ θεοῦ, ἵνα μὴ τῶν πρὸς τι νομίση τις αὐτὸν λέγεσθαι, μηδ' ὡς συμβεβηκότα ἐν τῷ θεῷ, ἀλλ' ὡς ὑφ' ἑστώτα καὶ ζῶντα (διὸ ἐπιλέγει καὶ θεὸς ἦν ὁ λόγος, οὐκ εἰπών· καὶ θεοῦ ἦν ὁ λόγος) (Eusebio, *De ecclesiastica theologia*, III,2,1,7-2,1).

34 Cf. Ilaria Vigorelli, *La reazione: Dio e l'uomo. Schesis e antropologia trinitaria in Gregorio di Nissa*, Città Nuova, Roma 2020, 89-108 e G. Maspero, *Relational Being*, 111-112.

grandissima stoltezza, stabilire che è sostanza ciò che non introduce la nozione di una ipostasi, ma solo significa la relazione ad un altro (πρὸς ἕτερον σχέσιν)?

E ancora, abbiamo mostrato poco sopra che tra i nomi perfino quelli che sono assoluti anche se sembrano mostrare massimamente un certo sostrato, invece non indicano la sostanza, ma definiscono alcune sue proprietà.³⁵

Mentre per Eunomio ad ogni sostanza corrispondeva un nome, secondo l'impostazione del Cratilo, per Basilio i nomi non esprimono una sostanza, ma solo le proprietà. Per questo la distinzione già vista in Origene tra nomi assoluti e relativi viene reinterpretata nel senso che i termini *padre* e *figlio* non possono essere opposti rispetto alla sostanza, ma solo per quanto riguarda la relazione che li configura. Secondo gli avversari del vescovo di Cesarea, invece, l'essere *fattura* implicava l'impossibilità di essere considerato ingenerato, caratteristica che da tale prospettiva era ritenuta esclusiva del Padre. Questa impossibilità era connessa proprio alla relazione che l'essere fatto / generato attribuiva al Figlio.

È interessante leggere il testo di Basilio in parallelo con quello di Origene nei *Commentarii in Romanos* (III,5–V,7), citato nella prima parte del presente studio (146,10-15). Lo sfondo metafisico è ovviamente differente, come rivela la terminologia. L'Alessandrino ricorre a *κατὰ διαφορὰν* e *κατὰ τὴν πρὸς τι σχέσιν*, mentre il vescovo di Cesarea utilizza *καθ' ἑαυτὰ*, *πρὸς ἕτερα* e *πρὸς ἕτερον σχέσιν*.

Ma gli esempi sono sempre di ipostasi e sostanze che sono definite relazionalmente (e non semplici riferimenti a relazioni logiche o matematiche), in particolare l'esempio teologico per eccellenza della

35 Ἐπει τίς οὐκ οἶδεν, ὅτι τῶν ὀνομάτων τὰ μὲν ἀπολελυμένως καὶ καθ' ἑαυτὰ προφερόμενα, τῶν ὑποκειμένων αὐτοῖς πραγμάτων ἐστὶ σημαντικὰ, τὰ δὲ πρὸς ἕτερα λεγόμενα τὴν σχέσιν μόνην ἐμφαίνει τὴν πρὸς ἃ λέγεται; Οἶον, ἄνθρωπος μὲν, καὶ ἵππος, καὶ βούς, αὐτὸ ἕκαστον τῶν ὀνομαζομένων παρίστησιν. υἱὸς δὲ, ἢ δούλος, ἢ φίλος, μόνης τῆς πρὸς τὸ συνευγεμένον ὄνομα συναφείας ἐστὶ δηλωτικά. Ὁ τοίνυν ἀκούσας γεννήματος οὐκ ἐπὶ τινι οὐσίᾳ τῇ διανοίᾳ φέρεται, ἀλλ' ὅτι ἐτέρῳ ἐστὶ συναπτόμενον ἔννοσι. Τὸ γὰρ γέννημά τινος λέγεται γέννημα. Ὁ μὲντοι οὐχ ὑποστάσεώς τινος ἔννοιαν ἐμποιεῖ, ἀλλὰ μόνην τὴν πρὸς ἕτερον σχέσιν ἀποσημαίνει, τοῦτο οὐσίαν εἶναι νομοθετεῖν πῶς οὐ τῆς ἀνωτάτω παραπληξίας ἐστὶ; Καίτοιγε μικρὸν ἐμπροσθεν ἐδείκνυτο παρ' ἡμῶν, ὅτι καὶ τὰ ἀπολελυμένα τῶν ὀνομάτων, κὰν τὰ μάλιστα δοκῇ ὑποκείμενόν τι δηλοῦν, οὐκ αὐτὴν παρίστησι τὴν οὐσίαν, ἰδιώματα δὲ τινὰ περὶ αὐτὴν ἀφορίζει. (Basilio, *Adversus Eunomium*, II,9,11-27: SCh 305,36-38).

coppia padre-figlio è centrale in entrambi i testi. Quello che emerge con più forza nel sec. IV rispetto all'impostazione origeniana è l'identità relazionale di tali elementi, come il lavoro teologico dei due Gregorii mostrerà.

In particolare, con la sua abituale chiarezza, il Nazianzeno collegherà l'identità relazionale del Padre e del Figlio alla connaturalità, secondo un'argomentazione *a fortiori*:

Padre non è né nome di una sostanza, o sapientissimi, né di un'azione, ma di una relazione (σχέσεως) e del modo di essere del Padre nei confronti (πώς ἔχει πρὸς) del Figlio o del Figlio nei confronti del Padre. Infatti, come avviene anche tra noi, queste denominazioni fanno conoscere il legame di sangue e la parentela, così indicano la connaturalità (ὁμοφυίαν) del generato rispetto al generante. Ma ammettiamo, per voi, che il Padre sia una sostanza, allora includerà contemporaneamente (συνεισάξει) anche il Figlio e non lo escluderà, in base alle nozioni comuni e al significato di queste denominazioni.³⁶

Il testo è potente dal punto di vista speculativo. Se anche nel caso creato la condizione relazionale del generante rispetto al generato implica che essi appartengano ad un'unica natura, quanto più ciò avviene per le Persone divine. Così, anche qualora si volesse intendere Padre come nome sostanziale, contro Origene e Basilio, si dovrebbe concludere che le prime due Persone divine sono un'unica sostanza. Tale ragionamento non lascia scampo all'argomentazione eunomiana. Il seguente testo, sempre di Gregorio di Nazianzo, può essere considerato paradigmatico qualora si cerchi una spiegazione dell'inseparabilità della questione cristologica rispetto a quella trinitaria. Infatti, attraverso l'uso del neutro per riferirsi alla natura e del maschile per indicare la persona, egli scrive:

E se bisogna dirlo brevemente, posto che non è lo stesso l'invisibile e ciò che è visibile, ciò che è fuori dal tempo e ciò che è sottoposto ad esso, le realtà di cui è fatto il Salvatore sono cose diverse (ἄλλο μὲν καὶ ἄλλο), ma non persone

36 οὗτε οὐσίας ὄνομα ὁ πατήρ, ὃ σοφώτατοι, οὗτε ἐνεργείας, σχέσεως δὲ καὶ τοῦ πὼς ἔχει πρὸς τὸν υἱὸν ὁ πατήρ, ἢ ὁ υἱὸς πρὸς τὸν πατέρα. ὡς γὰρ παρ' ἡμῖν αἱ κλήσεις αὐταὶ τὸ γνήσιον καὶ οἰκεῖον γνωρίζουσιν, οὕτω κάκει τὴν τοῦ γεγεννημένου πρὸς τὸ γεγεννηκὸς ὁμοφυίαν σημαίνουσιν. ἔστω δέ, ὑμῶν χάριν, καὶ οὐσίας τις ὁ πατήρ· συνεισάξει τὸν υἱόν, οὐκ ἄλλοτριώσει, κατὰ τὰς κοινὰς ἐννοίας καὶ τὴν τῶν κλήσεων τούτων δύναμιν. (Gregorio di Nazianzo, *Oratio 29 (De filio)*, 16,12-17: SCH 270,210).

diverse (ἄλλος δὲ καὶ ἄλλος). Non sia mai! Infatti entrambe le realtà sono una cosa sola nell'unione (συγκράσει), poiché Dio si è fatto uomo e l'uomo è stato fatto Dio, o come si dica. Dico cose diverse (ἄλλο καὶ ἄλλο), mentre nella Trinità si dà all'inverso. Infatti, lì si hanno persone diverse (ἄλλος καὶ ἄλλος) perché non confondiamo le ipostasi, ma non cose diverse (ἄλλο δὲ καὶ ἄλλο), in quanto i Tre sono lo stesso per la divinità.³⁷

La distinzione assoluta tra Dio e il mondo, quindi tra il Creatore e la creatura, è affermata con grande forza, in modo tale che le due nature del Cristo sono evidenziate e distinte in modo netto (ἄλλο καὶ ἄλλο), mentre l'ipostasi è la stessa, cioè non è possibile predicare una differenza in termini di Persona (ἄλλος). Ed è proprio tale identità personale il fondamento dell'unione, la quale è dinamica perché la salvezza si fonda sul passaggio delle proprietà di una natura all'altra. Invece, nel caso della Trinità, inseparabile da quello cristologico perché è stata la seconda Persona divina a farsi carne, la distinzione è personale (ἄλλος καὶ ἄλλος), mentre non si ha differenza di natura (ἄλλο).

Ciò significa che la relazione che caratterizza le ipostasi divine deve essere immanente all'unica sostanza divina ed eterna, dove solo le relazioni distinguono le Persone, ciascuna delle quali si identifica perfettamente e assolutamente con la divinità. Tale immanenza delle relazioni, che quindi devono essere riconosciute come eterne, è dimostrata ancora *a fortiori*, attraverso una vera e propria analogia psicologica, che presenta anche nell'uomo le facoltà immanenti definite dalla reciproca relazionalità:

Ciò che noi pensiamo e riteniamo è di riservare quello che riguarda la relazione reciproca e l'ordine (ταῦτα πρὸς ἀλληλα σχέσεώς τε καὶ τάξεως) alla sola Trinità e a coloro che sono già purificati ai quali la Trinità stessa lo riveli ora o dopo. Ma noi conosciamo l'unica natura di Dio, a noi nota nell'essere senza principio, nella generazione e nella processione, come in noi la mente, il pensiero e lo spirito

37 Καὶ εἰ δεῖ συντόμως εἰπεῖν, ἄλλο μὲν καὶ ἄλλο τὰ ἐξ ὧν ὁ Σωτὴρ (εἴπερ μὴ ταῦτὸν τὸ ἀόρατον τῶ ὁρατῶ καὶ τὸ ἄχρονον τῶ ὑπὸ χρόνον), οὐκ ἄλλος δὲ καὶ ἄλλος μὴ γένοιτο. Τὰ γὰρ ἀμφοτέρα ἐν τῇ συγκράσει, Θεοῦ μὲν ἐνανθρωπήσαντος, ἀνθρώπου δὲ θεωθέντος, ἡ ὅπως ἂν τις ὀνομάσειε. Λέγω δὲ ἄλλο καὶ ἄλλο, ἔμπαλιν ἢ ἐπὶ τῆς Τριάδος ἔχει. Ἐκεῖ μὲν γὰρ ἄλλος καὶ ἄλλος, ἵνα μὴ τὰς ὑποστάσεις συγχέωμεν. οὐκ ἄλλο δὲ καὶ ἄλλο, ἐν γὰρ τὰ τρία καὶ ταῦτὸν τῇ θεότητι. (Gregorio di Nazianzo, *Epistulae theologicae* 101,20,1-21,6: SCh 208,44-46).

(ὡς νῶ τῶ ἐν ἡμῖν, καὶ λόγῳ, καὶ πνεύματι), per quanto si possa congetturare sulle realtà intelleggibili a partire da quelle sensibili, sulle grandi a partire dalle piccole, poiché nessuna immagine coglie la verità.³⁸

Evidentemente non si tratta di una proiezione dal basso verso l'alto, né di una prova della dimensione trinitaria di Dio. Ma semplicemente la stessa immanenza dell'uomo è presentata alla luce della relazionalità intratrinitaria a partire dalla creazione ad immagine e somiglianza per dimostrare che non è assurdo pensare la *schesis* dentro la sostanza nel caso di Dio.

Ancora una volta può risultare utile il confronto con Origene e il passo dei *Commentarii in evangelium Joannis* (II,205,1-7), citato nella prima parte. Infatti, il vescovo di Nazianzo introduce la *σχέσις* nella discussione sulla Trinità, come l'Alessandrino faceva in riferimento alla *θεολογία*, che nel sec. III aveva un significato più centrato sul rapporto tra il Padre e il Figlio, ma sempre indicava l'immanenza divina. Le differenze rispetto al sec. IV è l'estensione allo Spirito Santo dell'identità relazionale e il quadro epistemologico apofatico, che permette di rileggere in senso relazionale l'immanenza dell'uomo stesso.

Tale possibilità è legata ad una vera e propria riconfigurazione della metafisica classica operata dai Cappadoci per rendere ragione della rivelazione trinitaria nel Cristo. Si rilegga, infatti, il seguente testo, sullo sfondo dei passi di Eusebio presentati nella sezione precedente:

Questo Logos è distinto da Colui del quale è Logos: in certo modo anch'esso appartiene all'ambito della relazione (τῶν πρὸς τι λεγομένων), poiché è assolutamente necessario intendere con il Logos anche il Padre del Logos: non sarebbe infatti Logos, se non fosse Logos di qualcuno.³⁹

38 Οὕτω φρονοῦμεν, καὶ οὕτως ἔχομεν, ὥστε θῶπως μὲν ἔχει ταῦτα πρὸς ἀλλήλα σχέσεώς τε καὶ τάξεως, αὐτῇ μόνῃ τῇ Τριάδι συγχωρεῖν εἰδέναι, καὶ οἷς ἂν ἡ Τριάς ἀποκαλύψῃ κεκαθαρμένους, ἢ νῦν, ἢ ὕστερον. αὐτοὶ δὲ μίαν καὶ τὴν αὐτὴν εἰδέναι φύσιν θεότητος, ἀνάρχου, καὶ γεννήσει, καὶ προόδου γνωρίζομένην, ὡς νῶ τῶ ἐν ἡμῖν, καὶ λόγῳ, καὶ πνεύματι (ἴσον εἰκάσαι τοῖς αἰσθητοῖς τὰ νοητὰ, καὶ τοῖς μικροῖς τὰ μέγιστα, ἐπειδὴ μηδεμία εἰκὼν φθάνει πρὸς τὴν ἀλήθειαν) (Gregorio di Nazianzo, *Oratio 23 (De pace)*, II,1-9: Sch 270,302).

39 ὁ δὲ λόγος οὗτος ἑτερόσ ἐστι παρὰ τὸν οὐ ἐστὶ λόγος (τρόπον γάρ τινα τῶν πρὸς τι λεγομένων καὶ τοῦτό ἐστιν, ἐπειδὴ χρὴ πάντως τῶ λόγῳ καὶ τὸν πατέρα τοῦ λόγου συνυπακούεσθαι. οὐ γὰρ ἂν εἴη λόγος, μὴ τινος ὦν λόγος) (Gregorio di Nissa, *Oratio Catechetica Magna*, 1,73-77: GNO III/4,10,26-11,4).

Gregorio di Nissa riprende qui l'espressione "Padre del Logos" di origine platonica⁴⁰ per mostrare, in base alla teoria dei nomi sviluppata da Basilio nel confronto con Eunomio, che l'identità della seconda Persona divina è puramente relazionale. Si tratta di una novità radicale, perché implica l'introduzione di un nuovo principio di individuazione distinto da quello sostanziale, che era l'unico conosciuto dalla metafisica greca.

Il punto fondamentale per la cristologia è che tale relazionalità immanente è il fondamento della relazionalità economica del Verbo che si è fatto carne. Si ha, così, un unico Figlio, che proprio per la Filiazione al Padre acquisisce la filiazione a Maria, rivelando la Trinità in tale corrispondenza relazionale:

Il nome figlio indica l'uguale comunione della natura in entrambi i sensi. Infatti, come si parla di Figlio dell'uomo per la connaturalità (*συγγένειαν*) della Sua Carne con la carne di Colei [cioè Maria] dalla quale è stato generato, così lo si considera anche senza dubbio alcuno Figlio di Dio per l'unione (*συνάφειαν*) della Sua sostanza con quella dalla quale ha ricevuto la sussistenza (*ὑπέστη*).⁴¹

Qui l'argomento *a fortiori* del Nazianzeno assume un'ulteriore profondità attraverso una lettura relazionale della cristologia resa possibile dalla ricomprensione relazionale dell'Essere stesso, cioè del Dio uno e trino. Senza violazione alcuna dal velo apofatico, il ragionamento si sposta da una posizione difensiva ad una costruttiva.

In questo la teologia cappadoce risulta in anticipo sui tempi, come dimostra in particolare la cristologia del Nisseno. Egli afferma, infatti, con chiarezza che solo il pensiero può distinguere nell'unione delle due nature del Cristo nell'ipostasi del Figlio le caratteristiche di una natura rispetto a quelle dell'altra:

40 Cf. I. Vigorelli, *La relazione: Dio e l'uomo*, 40.

41 τοῦ υἱοῦ τὸ ὄνομα ἴσῃν κατ' ἀμφοτέρα τὴν τῆς φύσεως κοινωνίαν ἐνδείκνυται. ὡς γὰρ υἱὸς ἀνθρώπου λέγεται διὰ τὴν τῆς σαρκὸς αὐτοῦ πρὸς τὴν ἐξ ἧς ἐγεννήθη συγγένειαν, οὕτω καὶ τοῦ θεοῦ πάντως υἱὸς νοεῖται διὰ τὴν τῆς οὐσίας αὐτοῦ πρὸς τὴν ἐξ ἧς ὑπέστη συνάφειαν. (Gregorio di Nissa, *Contra Eunomium* III,1,91,7-92,5; GNO II,35,7-12).

La natura divina è sempre una, la stessa e identica a se stessa, mentre la carne è in se stessa ciò che il pensiero e i sensi conoscono di essa. Ma una volta unita al Divino, la carne non rimane rinchiusa nei suoi limiti e caratteristiche, ma è assunta in ciò che è predominante e superiore, anche se la considerazione intellettuale (ἡ θεωρία) delle proprietà sia della carne sia della divinità rimane scevra da ogni possibile confusione (ἀσύγχυτος), se ciascuna delle due è considerata in sé.⁴²

Qui si anticipano sia Calcedonia, sia il II Concilio di Costantinopoli, che esplicitamente si riferirà alla teologia Cappadoce, ed in particolare nissena, per reinterpretare in senso dinamico la cristologia di Cirillo.⁴³

Ancora una volta il confronto con Origene può risultare utile. Se si rilegge il passo del *Contra Celsum* (II,70,24-27: SCh 132,452-454) citato nella prima parte di questo lavoro si può notare come l'Alessandrino avesse fatto ricorso alla *σχέσις* per affermare che a livello esegetico le proprietà che i Cappadoci collocano nell'*oikonomia* potevano essere comprese dal lettore, mentre quelle assolute, riguardanti la divinità in sé e non il Suo agire fossero al di là di ogni possibilità di comprensione. Il confronto permette di apprezzare proprio il progresso a livello di cristologia tra prima di Nicea e dopo il Concilio del 325. Infatti, la riconfigurazione dell'immanenza divina in termini relazionali permette a Gregorio di riconoscere la relazionalità dinamica delle proprietà delle due nature che, senza confusione alcuna, possono essere individuate solo dalla *θεωρία*, cioè dalla contemplazione, proprio perché questa può "leggere" la prospettiva relazionale, laddove la differenza sostanziale è assoluta, come con grande chiarezza evidenzia anche Origene. Nel contesto della nuova riconfigurazione metafisica Gregorio di Nissa non applica la *schesis* all'unione ipostatica del Cristo,

42 ἡ μὲν θεία φύσις αἰεὶ μία καὶ ἡ αὐτὴ καὶ ὡσαύτως ἔχουσα, ἡ δὲ σὰρξ καθ' ἑαυτὴν μὲν ἐστὶ τοῦτο ὅπερ καταλαμβάνει περὶ αὐτῆς ὁ λόγος τε καὶ ἡ αἴσθησις, ἀνακραθεῖσα δὲ πρὸς τὸ θεῖον οὐκέτι ἐν τοῖς ἑαυτῆς ὅροις τε καὶ ἰδιώμασι μένει, ἀλλὰ πρὸς τὸ ἐπι κρατοῦν τε καὶ ὑπερέχον ἀναλαμβάνεται, διαμένει δὲ ἀσύγχυτος τῶν τε τῆς σαρκὸς καὶ τῶν τῆς θεότητος ἰδιωμάτων ἡ θεωρία, ἕως ἂν ἐφ' ἑαυτοῦ θεωρῆται τούτων ἐκάτερον. (Gregorio di Nissa, *Contra Eunomium* III,3,63,7-14: GNO II,130,11-19).

43 Cf. G. Maspero, *Re-thinking Gregory of Nyssa's Christology in the Light of its Use (chrêsis) in the Second Council of Constantinople*, in M. Brugarolas (ed.), *Fourth-Century Christology in Context: A Reconsideration*, Studia Patristica 112, Peeters, Leuven 2021, 159-178.

poiché l'identità relazionale si dà solo nell'immanenza divina, mentre la relazione continua ad essere un accidente a livello categoriale. Ma la Filiazione immanente si rivela nella relazionalità economica e, quindi, anche nella dinamicità delle proprietà della natura, che così uniscono senza confusione nell'unico Figlio l'economia e l'immanenza.

La radice di tale essenziale progresso dogmatico è esegetica, come dimostra la comune attenzione dai Cappadoci all'interpretazione di At 2:36,⁴⁴ testo centrale nella disputa con gli ariani. La distinzione tra economia ed immanenza, cioè tra le nature del Cristo, è ancorata proprio nella necessità di non cedere a coloro che affermavano l'inferiorità del Figlio perché Dio lo aveva costituito Signore:

Chiunque presti anche solo un po' di attenzione al senso del testo apostolico può riconoscere che questo non ci tramanda una forma della teologia, ma propone le ragioni dell'economia. Infatti dice che "Dio ha costituito Signore e Cristo quel Gesù che voi avete crocifisso" (At 2,36), appoggiandosi chiaramente al pronome dimostrativo per indicare il suo essere uomo e visibile a tutti.⁴⁵

Il pronome dimostrativo, dunque, indica la natura umana assunta dall'ipostasi del Verbo che da sempre è assolutamente una cosa sola con il Padre (e lo Spirito Santo). Il passaggio all'umanità della gloria divina è, dunque, espressione della dinamicità del rapporto tra l'immanenza e l'economia le quali, senza confondersi, sono inseparabili.

Così, la tensione presente in Origene ed Eusebio viene risolta da una riconfigurazione relazionale della metafisica greca che permette di leggere le formule derivate di Nicea in un senso non subordinazionista, ma dinamico all'interno dell'unica sostanza divina ed eterna del Padre, del Figlio e dello Spirito Santo.

44 Il passo è centrale già in Basilio, da cui Gregorio lo riprende: si veda *Adversus Eunomium*, PG 29,577A.

45 "... οὐ θεολογίας ἡμῖν παραδίδωσι τρόπον, φησὶν, ἀλλὰ τοὺς τῆς οἰκονομίας λόγους" ὁ λέγων ὅτι Κύριον αὐτὸν καὶ Χριστὸν ἐποίησεν ὁ θεός, τοῦτον τὸν Ἰησοῦν ὃν ὑμεῖς ἐσταυρώσατε, "τῇ δεικτικῇ φωνῇ πρὸς τὸ ἀνθρώπινον αὐτοῦ καὶ βλεπόμενον πᾶσιν ἐπειδόμενος." (Gregorio di Nissa, *Contra Eunomium* III,3,59, 1-5; GNO II,128).

5. Conclusioni: l'utilità di un confronto

Il confronto tra la cristologia di Origene, prima di Nicea, e quella dei Cappadoci, dopo il concilio, ha permesso di mostrare come la distinzione tra economia e immanenza fosse un'esigenza già chiara prima del 325. Le formule derivative del simbolo niceno puntano proprio a tale tensione, come si evidenzia dal raffronto tra Origene e Eusebio, che ne sviluppa l'eredità.

Per questo la relazione assume un ruolo chiave: l'essere da un altro era interpretato dagli uni come evidente negazione dell'essere divino, mentre dagli altri era invocato, per la connaturalità, proprio come prova dell'identità sostanziale delle Persone divine.

Per questo Ario ed Eusebio negano esplicitamente che il Logos possa appartenere ai relativi, i quali secondo la metafisica aristotelica erano meri accidenti. La seconda Persona divina doveva, invece, costituire una sostanza distinta da quella del Padre e inferiore a Lui.

I Cappadoci, invece, inserirono la relazione nell'immanenza, riconfigurando, così, la metafisica classica. In tal modo l'economia, cioè la cristologia e la soteriologia, venne presentata come espressione relazionale dell'immanenza trinitaria. Lo scambio dinamico tra le proprietà delle due nature del Cristo è, infatti, traduzione in termini corporali e storici dell'essere Figlio del Padre della seconda Persona divina.

La presente prospettiva permette di scorgere come il concilio di Nicea si sia giocato sull'esegesi di Origene. La grandezza dell'Alessandrino aveva aperto a livello esegetico una strada che solo un radicale confronto con la metafisica classica da parte dei Cappadoci aveva reso possibile percorrere. La distinzione senza confusione e senza separazione tra economia ed immanenza, fondata nell'identità relazionale delle Persone divine, permette di cogliere l'inseparabilità radicale di cristologia e dottrina trinitaria, suggerendo anche una rilettura dei primi sette concili ecumenici come unità, secondo una vera e propria grammatica teologica, che anche oggi può risultare preziosa opportunità nel cammino ecumenico verso l'unità.

Abstract

The approaching anniversary of the First Council of Nicaea suggests the opportunity to try new approaches to the study of this fundamental moment in the history of the Church and theology. In particular, instead of approaching such a study from a Trinitarian perspective alone, it is worth comparing the Christological issues before and after the council itself, particularly in the thought of Origen and the Cappadocians. From such a perspective, it emerges how Eusebius' mediation makes it possible to read the Arian crisis as the detonation of a tension, already inherent in the great Alexandrian's thought, between God's being and God's action when they are considered from a relational perspective. The Cappadocians succeeded in dissolving this tension by modifying Greek metaphysics, in particular by inserting relationality into the immanence of the one divine substance. This suggests the impossibility of separating Trinitarian doctrine and Christology in historical-dogmatic reflection, because this seems the only way to fully grasp the novelty introduced by the Council of Nicaea and its relevance also for contemporary times.



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Ousia in Christian Thought at the Turn of the Second and Third Centuries

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To Metropolitan Kallistos Ware
αἰωνία ἡ μνήμη αὐτοῦ

1. *Ousia* before IIIrd c. AD; 2. Pseudo-Origen, Hippolytus; 3. Christological usage; 4. Significance and influence of Hippolytus' and Pseudo-Origen's Trinitarian terminology

The Nicæan contribution to Trinitology has become synonymous with the term *homoousios*, which, however, is far from a self-evident development unless viewed retrospectively. Nevertheless, the word soon became a *shibboleth* for the orthodox confession and has later given rise also to sarcastic remarks, like in the best-known Hungarian drama, Imre Madách's *Tragedy of Man* (1861). The scene concerned is situated in Constantinople, where the main hero as a tired soldier returning from a fight for Christendom seeks refuge. Let me briefly quote:

FOURTH CITIZEN Do you believe
In *Homoiousion* or *Homoousion*?
ADAM I don't understand.
LUCIFER Refuse to tell them which.
It happens to be a burning issue here.

1 The situation appears to echo ultimately Gregory of Nyssa's *De deitate filii et spiritus sancti* PG 46,557: Πάντα γὰρ τὰ κατὰ τὴν πόλιν τῶν τοιούτων πεπλήρωται, οἱ στενωποὶ, αἱ ἀγοραὶ, αἱ πλατεῖαι, τὰ ἄμφοδαι, οἱ τῶν ἱματίων κάπηλοι, οἱ ταῖς τραπέζαις ἐφειστηκότες, οἱ τὰ ἐδώδιμα ἡμῖν ἀπεμπολοῦντες. Ἐὰν περὶ τῶν ὀβολῶν ἐρωτήσῃς, ὁ δέ σοι περὶ γεννητοῦ καὶ ἀγεννήτου ἐφιλοσόφησε· καὶ περὶ τιμήματος ἄρτου πύθιοιο, Μείζων ὁ Πατήρ, ἀποκρίνεται, καὶ ὁ Υἱὸς ὑποχείριος. Εἰ δὲ, Τὸ λουτρὸν ἐπιτήθειόν ἐστιν, εἶποις, ὁ δὲ ἐξ οὐκ ὄντων τὸν Υἱὸν εἶναι διωρίσατο. Οὐκ οἶδα τί χρῆ τὸ κακὸν τοῦτο ὀνομάσαι, φρενίτιν μανίαν, ἢ τι τοιοῦτον κακὸν ἐπιδήμιον, ὃ τῶν λογισμῶν τὴν παραφορὰν ἐξεργάζεται.

which phrase becomes meaningful when Adam has to witness an *auto-da-fé* of a group of persons condemned to the stake for their *homoiousian* confession. His reaction is summarized in the play in the following way:

LUCIFER Why stand so silently? Why are you trembling?
You think this is a tragedy. Regard it
As comedy instead: it will amuse you.

ADAM O do not joke about it! That one can die
So resolutely for the letter 'i'.
What then can we call sublime or noble?²

Let me disregard the crude anachronism – whether intentional or not – that the scene is set to the time of the first Crusade, long after the Nicaean controversy and well before the time of the western inquisition pictured, and linger only on the claim that an ‘i’ makes no real difference. Well, who does not recognize that it is not quite the same to be thrown at by an ἰσβόλος (a venomous arrow) or an ὀβολός (a good hour’s wage). Neither encountering an image produces the same experience as meeting a mage, nor would I agree that quality and equality are interchangeable. Of course, this counter-remark may be as frivolous as the playwright’s original *bon mot*. Edward Gibbon expressed his position not unlike to that of Madách in a more learned and nuanced way:

The Greek word which was chosen to express this mysterious resemblance bears so close an affinity to the orthodox symbol, that the profane of every age have derided the furious contests which the difference of a single diphthong excited between the Homoousians and the Homoiousians. As it frequently happens that the sounds and characters which approach the nearest to each other

2 The work has several English versions (by Charles Percy Sanger, Joseph Horne, Iain Macleod, Ottó Tomschey, and George Szirtes) Both quotes are from the last mentioned translation available online: <http://mek.oszk.hu/00900/00918/html/madach7.htm>. The drama was actually used as a script for an opera by Clive Strutt, *The Tragedy of Man*, 1985. Madách’s great-grandson, the American actor and professor of literature has recast the play as a musical, replacing the original deist message with a Christian one: Michael Madách, *Manchild* cf. <https://litera.hu/irodalom/publicisztika/michael-madach-madach-imre-elfelejtett-dedunokaja-es-a-manchild.html>.

accidentally represent the most opposite ideas, the observation would be itself ridiculous, if it were possible to mark any real and sensible distinction between the doctrine of the Semi-Arians, as they were improperly styled, and that of the Catholics themselves.³

These considerations thus invite us to a deeper investigation into the puzzling term, as has been summarized in a brief judgement on a student's essay on the subject by the late K. T. Ware: "Hm, you should wrestle more with *homoousios*."⁴

I. Ousia before IIIrd c. AD

In the following I aim to contribute to this wrestling by uncovering an episode in the history of the critical part of the term *homoousios*, i.e. the concept of *ousia*. I shall focus on authors writing in Greek at the end of the second and the first decades of the third century who are connected in various ways to the dialect and network of early Christian thought that has been termed Asian; first and foremost, Hippolytus and the Roman cleric whose writings were transmitted in the Ancient and Byzantine periods under the name of Origen or Josephus and were attributed in modern times by conjecture to Hippolytus. Both used the concept of *ousia* in an original albeit dissimilar way and have made a deep impact on later Trinitarian theology and Nicæan terminology in their own different ways. In order to assess their contribution, I shall overview both the prehistory of the term in Greek philosophy and the immediate developments of its Christian usage subsequent to their activity, namely in Tertullian and Origen. Tertullian will appear to exhibit a uniquely intimate relation to both authors in the focus of my inquiry, while Origen will offer a telling parallel and contrast. While

3 Edward Gibbon, *Decline and Fall of the Roman Empire*, John Bagnell Bury (ed.), London 1901-3, II,354 (originally published in 1781).

4 The point of the anecdote, as has been reported to me, was that the sentence had been uttered to a Benedictine student wearing his habit just like the bishop and was preceded by a long silence, all which were unintentionally witnessed by a renovation worker at Pembroke College, Oxford.

he introduces the term *hypostasis* in the Trinitarian language and Plotinus will take a further step to the neo-Nicaean understanding of the terms, Hippolytus will be shown to have introduced the concept of *prosōpon* in its later meaning and anticipate some further devices in clarifying the key Trinitarian concepts. In this way the authors I discuss will appear closer to the Constantinopolitan (or Cappadocian) understanding of Nicaea rather than to the original Nicaean definition as we know it.

The most thorough and comprehensive analysis of the prehistory of the Nicaean term *homoousios* and its component *ousia* known to me is that of the late Chr. Stead in his book *Divine substance*.⁵ The reason why in the following I shall also attempt at a brief survey of the history of the concept *ousia* is double. First, a scheme partially different from and a pattern simpler than that of Chr. Stead will help us to map the terminology of the early Christian authors more clearly. Second, while establishing this pattern I shall use partly different sources than he did in his groundbreaking monograph.

It was Plato in his middle period of literary activity who transformed the everyday noun *ousia* meaning ‘property’ into an abstract philosophical term meaning ‘reality’, the real, truthful and eternal aspect of the world as opposed to the sensual.⁶ He meant that *real estate* is to be found elsewhere than in earthly possessions. The ground for this transformation was that – as we all know it – this noun

5 Christopher Stead, *Divine Substance*, Clarendon, Oxford 1977; cf. Id., “The Significance of the *Homoousios*”, in *Studia Patristica* 3 (1961), 397-412, and for a non-standard interpretation of the history of the phrase see Pier Franco Beatrice, “The Word ‘Homoousios’ from Hellenism to Christianity”, in *Church History* 71 (2002), 243-272.

6 Let me enumerate only some characteristic examples throughout Plato’s literary activity out of the 274 instances found in the *THESAURUS LINGVAE GRAECAE: A Digital Library of Greek Literature* <https://stephanus.tlg.uci.edu> database: (1) ‘possessions’, ‘property’: *Gorgias* 486c; *Crito* 53b; *Republic* 329e; 330bd; 361b; 416d; *Phaedrus* 232c; 240a. 241c; *Theaetetus* 144cd; (2) ‘essence’: *Euthyphro* 11a; *Meno* 72b; *Phaedo* 65d; 76d; 77a; 78d; 92d; 101c; *Republic* 359a; *Phaedrus* 245e; (3) ‘existence’, ‘the real existent’, ‘the intelligible world’, *Phaedrus* 247c; *Republic* 485b; cf. *Cratylus* 401c; *Theaetetus* 155e; *Philebus* 53c; 54a; (4) more vaguely, in a sense in between the previous two: ‘substance’: *Cratylus* 388c, 385e; 386a; *Philebus* 27b; cf. also Chr. Stead, *Divine Substance*, 25-54.

is formed out of the root of the verb meaning when used absolutely ‘to be’ or ‘to be true’.⁷ A surprising parallel to this building can be found in the non-Indo-European Hungarian, where the word for possession (*vagyon*) is also formed from – in fact identical with an archaic form of – the verb ‘is’ (*van*).⁸

Aristotle elaborated on Plato’s innovation with a critical intent. His explanation of the term *ousia* in his *Categories* is all too well known.⁹ However, besides other more complex analyses in the *Metaphysics*,¹⁰ the most revelatory passage can be found in *De anima*, where – as he would put it – he draws from a higher science, i.e. first philosophy, a tenet to be used as a kind of axiom in psychology. Here he is not exercising an *epagōgē* (*inductio*) cutting through the difficulties (*aporiai*) surrounding the concept but takes over a pattern fully established – as he is convinced – by him earlier and, consequently, his views on the correct usage of *ousia* appear in a crystallized, or, with a different metaphor, in a distilled form. Thus, in his introduction – or, better said, *inductio* –, leading to the definition of soul he bases his claims as on a firm ground on his views on the structure of reality. ‘Real existent’ or ‘reality’ is primarily the sensible, tangible object, which can be analysed into ‘form’ or ‘species’ (*deuterē ousia*, ‘secondary reality’) and matter (‘third reality’). While his ‘secondary *ousia*’ is a

7 Charles Howard Kahn, “The Greek Verb ‘To Be’ and the Concept of Being”, in *Foundations of Language* 2 (1966), 245-265; cf. id., *The Verb ‘Be’ in Ancient Greek*, Reidel, Dordrecht, 1973, 2nd ed., Hackett, Indianapolis 2003.

8 An even earlier form of the same word for possession in Hungarian (‘vagy’) found in an early-fifteenth-century Bible translation is identical in form with the second person singular of the same verb and can also mean abilities, capacities (its usage is attested also in the beginning of the sixteenth c.). The form ‘vayyon’ as noun is attested possibly from the end of the sixteenth century the earliest and in early usage can also mean ‘matter’.

9 Chr. Stead, *Divine Substance*, 55-88 discusses *Categories* and *Metaphysics* Z.

10 Cf. also Aristotle, *Metaphysics* Δ 1017b10-26. The authorship of this treatise (i.e. *Metaphysics* Δ) in its present form is dubious, but the scope of the work (ποσαχώς λέγεται [in how many different senses a certain term is used] – a phrase echoed more than a dozen times in Aristotle) is thoroughly Aristotelian, even if the reference to such a work of his own in *Metaphysics* E 1028a5 were a later addition.

direct heir of Plato's 'real existent', i.e. the Forms meant individually or collectively, his ranking it as secondary has a critical overtone. While he gladly embraces the view suggested by Plato's middle dialogues on the epistemological priority of the Forms, he disagrees on their ontological status. The real and primordial existent is the concrete, individual, and, with a single exception, sensual one, while forms or species are dependent on it.

Aristotle's guide to the concept is a pattern on which all later usages can be quite well explained. Thus, the Stoics, who had made the most enduring impact on late antique conceptual development besides Plato and Aristotle, drew on Aristotle's ontology but reserved the usage of the term *ousia* to the third Aristotelian domain of meaning, i.e. substrate or matter. It is thus economic to classify later usages of the term according to Aristotle's threefold scheme, without forgetting though about Plato.¹¹ An interesting development is what we find in Philo of Alexandria and the roughly contemporary Pseudo-Aristotelian *De mundo*. Here the Stoic cosmological distinction between *ousia* and *dynamis* is elaborated and transformed, perhaps through the mediation of Posidonius,¹² into a theory that Divine Substance (*ousia* – taken perhaps in the first and the second Aristotelian sense) is unknowable, but divine effects (*dynamis*) are graspable for humans.

Following the pattern just established, one can say, for example that Tertullian's usage of *substantia*, which by his time had become, by accident (in the sense of *Umfall*) the Latin equivalent of the Greek *ousia* and is commonly characterized as Stoic,¹³ takes the third meaning

11 On Middle Platonism see Chr. Stead, *Divine Substance*, 118-125. Philo in *De Opificio mundi* 1 echoes the Stoic concept.

12 A reconstruction of this development can be found (in Hungarian) in my "Úszia és dünamisz. Egy ontológiai és ismeretelméleti megkülönböztetés történetéhez", in *Passim* 5 (2003), 35-47; on the issue generally with a focus on the 4th century and precedents, see the volume Tomas Stępień – Karolina Kochańczyk-Bonińska, *Unknown God, Known in His Activities: Incomprehensibility of God during the Trinitarian Controversy of the 4th Century*, Peter Lang, Berlin 2018.

13 See e.g. Eric Osborn, *Tertullian, First Theologian of the West*, Cambridge University Press, Cambridge 2001, 131; 135.

according to the Aristotelian classification. The case of the Valentinians is more delicate. They appear to be the first to use the term *homoousios* in Christian context and, for sure, are the first to be attested to use the term at all.¹⁴ What they generally mean by it is that two entities belong to the same ontological sphere, i.e. that of the spirit, of the soul, or matter.¹⁵

This may echo a Stoic language as in Tertullian but can also be classified with Aristotle's second meaning in the broad sense as 'of the same kind' or, in a more Platonic sense, 'belonging to the same sphere of being'.¹⁶ The same ambiguity applies to Irenaeus' use of the term.¹⁷

Looking from the other end of the story, the Trinitological controversies of the fourth century can be seen as turning on the different interpretations of the term *homousios* in the Nicæan creed, where it is left rather ambiguous, or even "triguous". My question in the following will then be, where Christian authors of the turn of the second and third centuries stand within this scheme.

14 Chr. Stead, *Divine Substance*, 190-209. The *Poemandres* is hardly an independent witness to the use of the term as belonging to the same context of ideas and terms with the Gnostic texts. The only possible candidate for an independent attestation of the term would be Aetius IV,7,1 DG 392,8. Here, however, the testimony used to reconstruct the doxographical work is Theodoret. Mansfeld, indeed, accepts Theodoret as the superior witness to this section of Aetius' work but rejects the term *homousion*, just like its explanatory *homogenes*, since neither appear in Pseudo-Plutarch, an earlier and non-Christian author reproducing Aetius' passage: Jaap Mansfeld – David Runia, *Aëtiana V: An Edition of the Reconstructed Text of the Placita with a Commentary and a Collection of Related Texts*, Philosophia Antiqua 153, Brill, Leiden 2020, I,1503.

15 At least Irenaeus, *Adversus haereses* I,5,1 suggests that the term can be used also for the psychological sphere at least and not only to the spiritual. The passage is quoted also by Chr. Stead, *Divine Substance*, 192-193.

16 This is confirmed by the language used in Ptolemaeus' *Letter to Flora* 7,8 (SC 24bis), where the First Principle is said to "beget by nature entities similar to and *homoousia* with itself". The examples of begetting, however, implies in Aristotle both material and formal identity.

17 Cf. the examples in Chr. Stead, *Divine Substance*, 200; see also Jonatan Simons, "God and *eiusdem substantiae* in Irenaeus, *Against Heresies* 2.17-18", in *Studia Patristica* 109 (2021), 55-68 where it is argued that Irenaeus is the forerunner of the Nicæan (and neo-Nicæan) usage of the term. In this passage Irenaeus seems to use *ousia* in the third Aristotelian (or Stoic) sense, like in IV,9, where *ousia* is understood to function as material names.

2. Pseudo-Origen, Hippolytus

Let me first say a few words about the authors concerned. First, I take it more than well established by P. Nautin,¹⁸ M. Simonetti,¹⁹ A. Brent,²⁰ and already by R. A. Lipsius²¹ that the attribution of the *Refutatio omnium haeresium* to Hippolytus is baseless and impossible. Since the work was ascribed to Origen in Late Antiquity²² and preserved under his name in manuscripts and since the author obviously cannot be Origen of Alexandria, I shall call him pseudo-Origen. Secondly, I take it also established by M. Simonetti²³ and others that he is younger than the renowned pre-Nicaean author Hippolytus and is partially dependent on him. Thirdly, the identity of Pseudo-Origen with Pseudo-Josephus, the author of *On the Universe against Plato* is also firmly proven by

- 18 Pierre Nautin, *Hippolyte et Josippe*, Etudes et Textes pour l'Historie du Dogme de la Trinité, 1, Cerf, Paris 1947; Id., *Le dossier d'Hippolyte et de Méliton dans les florilèges dogmatiques et chez historiens modernes*, Patristica I, Cerf, Paris 1953; Id., „L'homélie d'Hippolyte sur le psautier et les œuvres de Josipe”, in *Revue de l'histoire des religions* 179 (1971), 137-179.
- 19 Manlio Simonetti, “A modo di conclusione: una ipotesi di lavoro”, in *Ricerche su Ippolito*, Studia Ephemeridis Augustinianum 13, Institutum Patristicum «Augustinianum», Roma 1977, 151-156; Id., “Aggiornamento su Ippolito”, in *Nuove ricerche su Ippolito*, Studia Ephemeridis Augustinianum 30, Institutum Patristicum «Augustinianum», Roma 1989, 75-130; Id., “Una nuova proposta su Ippolito”, in *Augustianum* 36 (1996), 13-46; Id., “Per un profilo dell'autore dell' Elenchos”, in Gabriella Aragione – Enrico Norelli (eds.), *Des évêques, des écoles et les hérétiques. Actes du colloque international sur la “Réfutation de toutes les hérésies”, Genève, 13-14 juin 2008*, Éditions du Zèbre, Lausanne 2011, 257-273. Cf. also John Andrew Cerrato, *Hippolytus Between East and West*, Oxford University Press, Oxford 2001.
- 20 Allen Brent, *Hippolytus and the Roman Church in the Third Century: Communities in Tension Before the Emergence of a Monarch-bishop*, Vigiliae Christianae Supplements, Brill, Leiden 1995; Id., “The Elenchos and the identification of Christian communities in second – early third century Rome” in G. Aragione – E. Norelli (eds), *Des évêques* (2011), 275-314.
- 21 Richard Adelbert Lipsius, *Die Quellen der ältesten Ketzergeschichte, neu untersucht*, J. A. Barth, Leipzig 1875.
- 22 See e.g. Theodoret, *Haereticarum fabularum compendium*, I,19 (Theodoret, elsewhere, quotes several passages from Hippolytus, all of which he attributes to Hippolytus); Photius, *Bibliotheca* cod. 48 (Photius also quotes works by Hippolytus as by Hippolytus: see e.g. *Bibliotheca* cod. 121; 202)
- 23 Manlio Simonetti (ed., tr., intr., com.), *Ippolito, Contro Noeto*, Dehoniana, Bologna 2000, 60-68; 121-122.

P. Nautin and E. Castelli.²⁴ I have also advanced a plethora of arguments in support of these three claims in my monograph a few years ago.²⁵

As for their usage of the term *ousia*, Pseudo-Origen and Hippolytus follow a totally different path in spite of their common criticism of the monarchian and psilathropist theology. The former uses the term *ousia* in his brief history of Greek philosophy²⁶ and summarizes Aristotle's analysis of the concept of *ousia* in the *Categories*,²⁷ obviously following his sources. *Homoousios* also occurs in his description of the teaching of various Gnostic sects, partially based on Irenaeus in this respect, too.²⁸ What interests me here is, however, the use of the concept in his own theological and philosophical exposition. This we find partly attached as a *demonstratio* to the end of the *Refutatio*, partly in his polemics against Kallistos (Callixtus) of Rome, and partly in the fragments of his *On the substance of the Universe*. In the case of the latter, already the title of the work contains the word *ousia*. While in the caption of later fragments and in Photius' description of the work there are variations on this title,²⁹ the author definitely refers to this treatise of his in the *Refutatio* with a phrase, which occurs several times elsewhere

24 Emanuele Castelli, "The Author of the *Refutatio omnium haeresium* and Flavius Iosephus", in *Vetera Christianorum* 46 (2009), 17-30. For the fragments of this work and a detailed analysis of the context see István M. Bugár, "Pseudo-Origen against Plato: a chapter in the history of interactions between Platonist and Christian thought before Origen and Plotinus", in Z. Pogossian – A. Kraft – L. Giginishvili (eds.), ΠΟΛΥΤΡΟΠΙΑ, Bibliothèque de Byzantion, Peeters, Leuven forthcoming.

25 István M. Bugár, *A teológia kezdetei – a jánosi tradícióban: A Melitón- és a Hippolütosz-dosszié* [The Formation of Christian Theology and the Asiatic Tradition: The Dossiers of Melito and Hippolytus], Caténa monográfiák 16, Kairosz, Budapest 2016, 151-403; for an English summary see *ibidem*, 432-436; for *De universo* see my "Pseudo-Origen Against Plato" (cited in the previous note).

26 Pseudo-Origen, *Refutatio omnium haeresium* (= *Ref.*) I = *Philosophumena* (7 examples); but the term appears quite often in the description of the teachings of several Christian sects in the later books.

27 A curious feature of this description is the threefold division of the meaning of *ousia* as *genus*, *species* and *individuum*.

28 See Chr. Stead, *Divine Substance*, 204-206.

29 See Bugár, "Pseudo-Origen Against Plato", n. 28.

in the same work³⁰ as Περὶ τῆς τοῦ παντὸς οὐσίας. Now what does *ousia* mean in this title? Both Photius' description of the work and the author's reference to its content make it clear that in the cosmological description therein *ousia* stands for the cosmic elements:

He first fashioned four different first principles for future beings, namely fire, spirit, water, and earth. From these four principles he made his diverse creation. Some things were made from one substance (οὐσία), others he bound together from two, others from three, and others from four. (Ref. X,32,2 tr. Litwa = *De universo* T1 Bugár³¹)

These he calls *prōtai ousiai*, in sharp contrast to Aristotle's classification.³²

As we may gather from a direct quote of the work in Photius (F2 Bugár) and from the subtitle of the work (*Against Plato*),³³ this fact may be taken in itself as a direct corporealist polemic against Plato's ontology and cosmology. The real existent in the universe are the elements and not the immaterial and eternal archetypes of the world, which are called both collectively and distributively *ousia* in Plato's *Timaeus*.³⁴ A further point Pseudo-Origen makes is that the elements are created out of nothing, unlike in the *Timaeus*, but indestructible, like the soul-gods in the cosmology of Plato. While this second point is inconsistent with Stoic cosmology, the first – his insistence on the ontological priority of matter compared to universals – is largely dependent on Stoic ontology.³⁵ All the more so, since in Pseudo-Origen's doctrine of elements spirit (*pneuma*) takes the place of air and is the principle of life and cognition in humans (F2 ed. Bugár). This is

30 Ref. IV,51; VII,38.

31 Fragments of *De universo* (= *un.*) are cited according to the text in the appendix of István M. Bugár, *Pseudo-Origen Against Plato*. Translation is from the bilingual text of Matthew David Litwa (tr., intr. notes), *Refutation of All Heresies*, Writings for the Graeco-Roman World 40, SBL Press, Atlanta (GA) 2016.

32 Ref. X,33,4.

33 See the reference in n. 29.

34 Plato, *Timaeus* 29c, 35ab; 37ae.

35 This is reinforced by the phrase in Ref. IV,51: τὴν τοῦ παντὸς οὐσίαν καὶ δύναμιν.

congruent with the anthropology of Irenaeus and Tertullian, the first of which influenced, while the second was influenced by our author.³⁶ What we have said here stands also for Pseudo-Origen's use of *ousia* in Christology, to which I will return in the next section.

By analogy, however, he uses *ousia* also for the Divine Substance of the Son, which, by contrast, is not generated out of nothing: "His Word alone is out of Him and is thus god, too, since He is the substance (*ousia*) of God."³⁷

Here, like in Tertullian, *ousia* is used in a way that a kind of divine matter is suggested as opposed to created elements. This usage is actually in line with the archaic language of the Nicæan definition ἐκ τῆς οὐσίας τοῦ πατρὸς and the condemnation of ἐξ ἑτέρας ὑποστάσεως ἢ οὐσίας.³⁸

There are two further occurrences of *ousia* in *De universo*. The first is a reference to the "numerous births (*genesin*) and innumerable substances (*ousian*) of gods"³⁹ in Hesiod and Homer, where the usage is close to the first Aristotelian domain of the noun, i.e. individual being but the parallelism of *genesis* and *ousia* might also recall a Platonic language. Since at least the critique of these literary authors for their claims that gods are born goes back to Xenophanes, the phrase quoted in the invective may actually have been borrowed and is thus of little telling for our author's terminology. It is in fact reinforced by the repetition of the same structure in his description of Paradise,

36 Charles Edward Hill, "Hades of Hippolytus or Tartarus of Tertullian? The Authorship of the Fragment *De Universo*", in *Vigiliae Christianae* 43 (1989), 105-126; István M. Bugár, "Pseudo-Origen Against Plato".

37 *Ref. X* 33,8 τοῦτου <δὲ> ὁ Λόγος μόνος ἐξ αὐτοῦ· διὸ καὶ θεός, οὐσία ὑπάρχων θεοῦ.

38 Eusebius, *Epistula ad Caesarienses* 8 = Athanasius, *De decretis Nicaenae Synodi* 33,8; 37,2 (cf. *ibid.* 33,13 and *Epistula ad Jovianum* PG 26, 817); Basil of Caesaria, *Epistulae* 125,2; 140,2; Socrates, *Historia Ecclesiastica* (= HE) I,8; IV,12; Epiphanius, *Ancoratus* 118,13; 119,12; *Panarion* III,266; Theodoret, *HE* 215; Cyrillus of Alexandria, *De sancta trinitate dialogi i-vii*, Aubert (ed.), 390; Justinianus Imperator, *Contra monophysitas* 87,58skk). See also Athanasius, *De decretis* 27,1 (referring to the authority of Origen) and Socrates, *HE* III,7.

39 *un.* FI,1 ed. Bugár.

where “nor will there be generation (*genesis*) of wild beasts again, nor the bursting substance (*ousia*) of other creatures”.⁴⁰ This points to a poetic-rhetorical idiomatic phrase that is of little terminological or philosophical import.

Hippolytus, by contrast to Pseudo-Origen, uses *ousia* in his Trinitarian exposition at the end of his own heresiological work, the *Syntagma* in a completely different way:

If, again, he {Noetus} alleges His own word when He said, “I and the Father are one,” (Jn 10:30) let him attend to the fact, and understand that He did not say, “I and the Father am one, but are one.” For the word ‘are’ is not said of one person (*prosōpon*), but it refers to two persons, and one power (*dynamis*). [2] He has Himself made this clear, when He spake to His Father concerning the disciples, “The glory which Thou gavest me I have given them; that they may be one, even as we are one: I in them, and Thou in me, that they may be made perfect in one; that the world may know that Thou hast sent me.” (Jn 17:22-23) [3] What have the Noetians to say to these things? Are all one body in respect of substance [*ousia*], or is it that we become one in the power [*dynamis*], and disposition of unity of mind [*homonoiā*]? In the same manner the Son, who was sent and was not known of those who are in the world, confessed that He was in the Father in power [*dynamis*] and disposition. For the Son is the one mind of the Father.⁴¹

Thus, in his Trinitology identity of *ousia* means numerical identity.⁴² In other words, it represents what Aristotle called the first *ousia*. The Father, the Son and the Holy Spirit are separate in *ousia* as are different human beings, but one in power and mind. As we learn later in his treatise, *ousia* is synonymous with person (*prosōpon*):

[2] If, then, the Word was with God, and was also God, what follows? Would one say that he speaks of two Gods? I shall not indeed speak of two Gods, but of

40 *un.* F5 ed. Bugár, translation by Stewart Dingwall Fordyce Salmond from *The Ante-Nicene Fathers*, vol. 5, *Hippolytus, Cyprian, Caius, Novatian, Appendix*. Alexander Roberts – James Donaldson (eds.), Arthur Cleveland Coxe, D.D. (rev.), T&T Clark, Edinburgh 1886 (= ANF 5), 221-223.

41 Hippolytus, *Contra Haeresin Noeti* 7,13, translation from ANF 5, 226.

42 The question “Are all one *body* in respect of substance?” signifies possibly a material connotation of the use of *ousia*, but it still denotes an identity more radical than material identity, of which materiality is but an aspect. Nevertheless, since the expression ‘one body’ is a reference to the Pauline concept (Rom 12:5; 1Cor 10:17; 12:13; Eph 4:4) conveying a similar message to Jn 17:21-4 quoted by Hippolytus, one should be cautious to read too much (even implicit) philosophical theory into this phrase.

one; of two persons however, and of a third economy (disposition), viz., the grace of the Holy Ghost. [3] For the Father indeed is One, but there are two persons, because there is also the Son; and then there is the third, the Holy Spirit.⁴³

It is thus Hippolytus who introduces the term *person* into Trinitology⁴⁴ and by connecting it to *ousia* taken in the sense of *proté ousia*, which becomes *hypostasis* in the Cappadocian terminology, he detaches *prosōpon* from its original meaning as mask and role.⁴⁵ The *Contra haeresin Noeti* – the authenticity of which some debated on insufficient grounds⁴⁶ – is not the only text, where we find the new

43 Hippolytus, *Contra Haeresin Noeti* 14,2-3; translation from ANF 5,228.

44 See also Manlio Simonetti, “«Persona» nel dibattito cristologico dal III al IV secolo”, in *Studium* 91/4-5 (1995), 531. There are, however, earlier texts that prepared the way: Justin Martyr, *Apology I* 36,2; *Dialogus* 36,6; Theophilus, *Ad Autolyicum* II,22 (where it still rather means just ‘role’); Clement of Alexandria, *Stromata* V,6: 34,1 (where it signifies ‘face’. i.e. the Son is the Father’s face; cf. *Excerpta ex Theodoto* 1,12,1; 1,23,5); Origen, *De engastrimytho* 4 (the Holy Spirit is termed a *prosōpon*, but in the sense of being one of the *dramatis personae* of the story besides other *human* characters. cf. also Mt 18:10 on seeing the Father’s *prosōpon*, i.e. ‘face’). It is remarkable, that the part of the *Dialogue of Timothy and Aquila* that is supposed to represent an earlier redaction dated to the (late) second or the third century describes the Father and the Son as two *πρόσωπα* (29,1, and in 25,1 with less likelihood original but especially reminiscent of Hippolytus, *Contra haeresin Noeti* 14,3 just quoted). On the problem of the dating of the dialogue and its incoherent Trinitarian language see Jacqueline Pastis, “Dating the Dialogue of Timothy and Aquila: Revisiting the Earlier Vorlage Hypothesis”, in *The Harvard Theological Review* 95 (2002), 169-195, esp. 173-174.

45 For the later development and a philosophical analysis of the concepts see e.g. John Zizioulas, *Personhood and Being*, in *Being as Communion*, Norman Russel (tr.), St Vladimir’s, New York 1985; (repr. 1993), 27-65.

46 Marcel Richard, s.v. ‘Hippolyte’, in *Dictionnaire de Spiritualité*, VII, Beauchesne, Paris, 1969, coll. 531-571, 545-568; vö. Josef Frickel, *Das Dunkel um Hippolyt von Rom: Ein Lösungsversuch: die Schriften Elenchos und Contra Noëtum*, Grazer Theologische Studien 13, Eigenverlag des Instituts für ökumenische Theologie und Patrologie an der Universität Graz, Graz 1988. Their position directly followed from their attributing the *Ref* to Hippolytus, since the theology of the latter work is indeed different from that of the *Contra haeresin Noeti*. Butterworth in his edition shared their rejection of the attribution to Hippolytus: Hippolytus of Rome, *Contra Noetum*, Heythrop College (University of London), London 1977, 1-42. More recent authors, whom I follow, saw no point in denying the authenticity witnessed by Epiphanius of Salamis, who quotes the treatise (in fact the final chapter of Hippolytus’ heresiological work, the *Syntagma*): A. Brent, *Hippolytus*, 180-183; M. Simonetti, Ippolito, *Contro Noeto*, 62-68; similarly already P. Nautin, *Hippolyte contre les hérésies: Fragment*, Cerf, Paris 1949. I have argued for the authenticity on double grounds: the difference from the *Refutatio* (the recognition of which is shared by both parties) and the remarkable uniformity of terminology and thought in the remnants of the authentic *oeuvres* of Hippolytus: I. M. Bugár, *A teológia kezdetei*, 226-231; 239-263; 287-289. I have also supported with further arguments Simonetti’s claim (based on the relationship of *Contra haeresin Noeti* and

Trinitarian terminology in Hippolytus. It occurs also in his exegetical oeuvres, which fact shows its central place in his theology:

“Iuda, my son, you are a lion’s whelp from a blossom” – now when Jacob said “lion” and “lion’s whelp”, he showed obviously the two persons, that of the Father and the Son.⁴⁷

Actually, traces of the Trinitological use of *prosōpon* coupled with *ousia* is attested in Pseudo-Origen’s polemic against Kallistos of Rome, where he describes his opponents’ view in the following way:

He is also called and addressed as Son in word but in reality (*ousiāi*) he is <one>⁴⁸ with him. Since – he says – God is spirit (*pneuma*), God is not different from the Son, neither is the Son different from God. (4) Thus, it is one person (*prosōpon*) that can be divided on word (*onomati*) but not in reality (*ousiāi*).⁴⁹

Here, if we are inclined to believe verbally to Pseudo-Origen, in Kallistos *ousia* represents *pneuma*, thus it is used in the third Aristotelian sense, just like in Pseudo-Origen’s own terminology and unlike in that of Hippolytus;⁵⁰ nonetheless it serves as a basis to

Tertullian’s *Adversus Praxean*) that Hippolytus is – in contrast with Brent’s dating – earlier than the *Refutatio ibid.* 232-238.

47 Hippolytus, *De Benedictionibus Isaac et Jacob*, Constantin Diobouniotis – Nicholas Weis (eds.), *Hippolyts Schrift über die Segnungen Jakobs*, Texte und Untersuchungen 38-39, 1914, 76,3-4: Σκύμνος λέοντος Ἰούδα ἐκ βλαστοῦ, υἱέ μου, ἀνέβη. λέοντα οὖν καὶ σκύμνον λέοντος εἰπὼν σαφῶς τὰ δύο πρόσωπα ἐπέδειξεν, τοῦ πατρὸς καὶ υἱοῦ.

48 The text appears to be truncated (although taken out of the context “is with [in] Him” makes perfect sense as in the passage quoted from Hippolytus’ *Contra haeresin Nocti* above [n. 41] but is inappropriate in a description of the theology of Kallistos), so Wendland and Marcovich in their editions rightly emend it based on the authority of *Ref* IX,12,16, but their addition “spirit” (based again on the same parallel passage in *Ref*) is not necessary and the omission could not be accounted for, unlike in the case of <ἐν> ὄντα with haplography (Marcovich, actually, rewrites the text with the insertion of other unnecessary phrases as he does throughout his otherwise exceptionally learned edition). M. D. Litwa, *Refutation of All Heresies*, 736 accepts only the insertion πνεῦμα and rejects ἐν.

49 *Ref.* X,27,3-4 (in the “summary”; cf. the detailed description in IX,12,18.

50 There is a fragment attributed to Hippolytus by Anastasius of Sinai (*Fragmentum de resurrectione et incorruptione* (ap. *Anastasio Sinaitam, Viae dux* CPG 1901) that uses *ousia* in a vague sense (beings, substances) that best fits the second Aristotelian meaning but can involve all three. As, however, it seems to suggest an incorporeal eschatological state that is contrary to Hippolytus’ strong emphasis on the presence of the body in the *eschaton*, it is highly suspicious (I. M. Bugár, *A teológia kezdetei*, 369; P. Nautin, *Le dossier d’Hippolyte et de Méliiton*, 84-85 comes to the same conclusion for different reasons).

personal identity, just not that of the three divine persons but of the sole and unitary God.

3. Christological usage

It is even more significant that we find the traces of the use of *ousia* in a Christological sense. It is especially Hippolytus who, following a long Asian theological tradition, emphasizes the paradox unity of divinity and humanity in Christ.⁵¹ In an exegetical fragment, however, if we can trust the verbal fidelity of Leontius of Byzantium,⁵² Hippolytus used the term *ousia* to express this conviction: “that he may be shown to have both the substance (*ousia*) of God and that of humans in himself”.⁵³ The passage then states that it is in this way that Christ mediates between two (legal) persons (*prosōpon*). Although one might suggest that the initial clause quoted summarizing the rest of the passage may have originally belonged with the lemma of the *testimonium*, or was a gloss at an earlier stage of the transmission of the quotation, that the terminology therein, however, is not anachronistic

51 Hippolytus’ “love for Christological antitheses” is highlighted already by Aloys Grillmeyer, *Christ in Christian Tradition I: From the Apostolic Age to Chalcedon*, John Bowden (tr.), A. R. Mowbray & Co, London 1975 (2nd ed.), 113. More on the issue: István M. Bugár, “Can Theological Language be Logical? The Case of ‘Josipe and Melito’”, in *Studia Patristica* 54 (2012), 154-155; *A teológia kezdetei*, 68-71; 107-108; 325-333.

52 Hans Achelis (ed.), *Hippolyt’s kleinere exegetische und homiletische Schriften*, Die griechischen christlichen Schriftsteller 1.2., Hinrichs, Leipzig 1897, 82 from (1) Leontius <of Jerusalem>, *Contra monophysitas* (CPG 6917) PG 86,1836C (and Munich, BSB gr. 67, s. xvi) and (2) Leontius <of Byzantium>, *Contra Nestorianos et Eutybianos libri III* (CPG 6813) PG 86,1312A. I have collated Achelis’ text with one of the two earliest manuscripts (Vat. gr. 2195, 35) of the latter (in fact earliest of all codices containing either of the two works concerned) but found no textual variants. The previous testimony in the florilegium of Leontius of Byzantium is attributed to Irenaeus in the lemma (Irenaeus fr. 8., Harvey (ed.)) but is most probably rightly restored to Hippolytus by P. Nautin, *Le dossier d’Hippolyte et de Méliton*. Misattribution of Hippolytean texts to Irenaeus was actually common, like in the case of his *De benedictionibus Isaac et Jacob*. Leontius of Jerusalem cites only the first clause quoted above (as in Achelis, PG and the 16th century manuscripts the editors used; I had currently no possibility to check the two earlier codices).

53 *De benedictione Balaam* (fragmentum ex Leontio) H. Achelis (ed.) *Hippolyt’s kleinere Schriften*, 82, line 5: “Ἦνα δὲ δειχθῆναι τὸ συναμφοτέρον ἔχων ἐν ἑαυτῷ, τήν τε τοῦ θεοῦ οὐσίαν καὶ τὴν ἐξ ἀνθρώπων [...]

in itself for Hippolytus' time at least is shown by Pseudo-Origen's exposition of the true doctrine. He says:

If that man (i.e. Jesus Christ) had been actually of a different substance (*ousia*), how could he command to me, a weak man, to be and do things like him?⁵⁴

Here, however, Pseudo-Origen again uses *ousia* in the sense peculiar to him, i.e. meaning substrate and matter, just as when he criticizes Apelles whom he alleges to have claimed that the body of Christ was of a different matter than ours.⁵⁵ He also suggests that Kallistos of Rome confessed a two-*prosōpon* Christology saying that "He (Kallistos) does not want that in Christ the Father (i.e. God) and the Son (i.e. the man) be the same person (*prosōpon*)."⁵⁶ We may gather from this that Pseudo-Origen favoured a two-substance and one-person Christology.

4. Significance and influence of Hippolytus' and Pseudo-Origen's Trinitarian terminology

Thus, with Pseudo-Origen we come very close to Tertullian's Christological terminology: *duae substantiae in una persona*.⁵⁷ The first half of this definition, as we have seen, is possibly professed already by Hippolytus. In Tertullian's Trinitarian formula, conversely, the first half (*una substantia*) is attested by Pseudo-Origen⁵⁸ in sharp contrast to Hippolytus' language, while *tres personae*⁵⁹ comes quite obviously from Hippolytus.⁶⁰ The realization of the influence of these authors on Tertullian, which can be shown also in spheres other than Trinitology

54 Ref. X,33,16 εἰ γὰρ ἐκεῖνος ὁ ἄνθρωπος ἑτέρας ἐτύγγανεν οὐσίας, τί τὰ ὁμοία κελεύει ἐμοί, τῷ ἄσθ(ενεῖ) πεφυκότι, καὶ πῶς οὗτος ἀγαθὸς καὶ δίκαιος;

55 Ref. X,20 ἐς VII,38.

56 Ref. IX,12,19.

57 Tertullian, *Adversus Praxean* 27,11. On Tertullian see E. Osborn, *Tertullian*, 131-135 and Chr. Stead, *Divine Substance*, 202-204.

58 See above n. 37. This, in its turn, might be due to an influence from Irenaeus: see n. 17.

59 Tertullian, *Adversus Praxean*, 6,1; 7,9; 12,3.

60 See M. Simonetti, *Contro Noeto*, 60-68; 121-122 with further literature.

and Christology⁶¹ – enables us to understand both Tertullian and generally the history of Christian doctrine better. Of course, we can detect the differences not only between Hippolytus and Pseudo-Origen, but also between Tertullian and the latter even where they agree on one *ousia-substantia*, since Pseudo-Origen, unlike Tertullian (and supposedly Kallistos of Rome) distinguished sharply between *pneuma* and divine substance. As for their common difference from Hippolytus' three-*ousiai* formula, it is explained by their different understanding of the term falling under different headings in the Aristotelian classification. Hippolytus' conceiving of it as individual being, while non-standard after Nicaea, is not surprising at this stage, since it is echoed also by Origen⁶² and through him it influenced the neo-Nicaean efforts to clarify the meanings of the term when used for Trinitological discussion. Hippolytus' direct influence in these debates might be evidenced by Epiphanius' quotation of *Contra haeresin Noeti* in his *Panarion*.⁶³ Whatever the scale of this direct impact might have been, it appears established that Hippolytus and Pseudo-Origen played a decisive role in introducing the philosophical term *ousia* into Christian theological language. While at the latter of the two authors the inspiration through Irenaeus from the Gnostic (and Hermetic) concept *homoousios* played a major role beside Stoic ideas, Hippolytus

61 See literature above in n. 36.

62 On the synonymy of the two terms see esp. *Commentarii in Iohannem*. I,151 discussed with other passages of the same work in a wider investigation of the meaning of *hypostasis* in Origen in Vito Limone "Hypostasis in Origen: The Roots of the Fourth Century-Trinitarian Theology", in *Eastern Theological Journal* 7/2 (2021), 139-163, here 150-152. Already in *De principiis* Origen appears to have used *ousia* and the emerging term *hypostasis* interchangeably when corresponding to Aristotle's 'first substance', as we may gather from Rufinus' translation: *subsistentia*: I,1,3 (cf. V. Limone, 'Hypostasis', 161, n. 57); 3,1 (used for the Holy Spirit); I,2,2; 4,5; 2,6; 2,9 (for the Son); II 1,2 (for intelligent creatures); *substantia vel subsistentia* in I 2,8 probably translates the single Greek word *hypostasis* in a reference to Heb 1:3 (perhaps Rufinus had found *substantia* in the Latin translation he used); *substantia* I praef. 5 (soul); I,3,2 (Holy Spirit) I 1,6 (as a synonym for *natura*); 1,7 (sensual substance); I,2,2 (*substantialiter*) etc. On *homoousios* in Trinitological context in Origen see Chr. Stead, *Divine Substance*, 209-214 (on *ousia* *ibid.* 138-140).

63 Epiphanius of Salamis, *Panarion*, 57, Karl Holl (ed.), *Die griechischen christlichen Schriftsteller* 31, Hinrichs, Leipzig 1922, 343-349.

follows an independent path in identifying *ousia* with Aristotle's 'first substance'. While this differs from the consensus established in the fourth century, nevertheless through Origen – who according to the testimony of Jerome⁶⁴ at least knew and respected Hippolytus – it prepared the way for the formula accepted later universally. Further, as Hippolytus appears to be the first to introduce the term 'person' into the discussion, he, on the one hand, obviously influenced – through Tertullian and Novatian⁶⁵ – the preferred Trinitarian formula in Latin milieu. His way of expressing divine unity through common *dynamis* and *homonoia*, on the other hand, comes very close to the neo-Nicaean position as formulated in St. Gregory of Nyssa's *Ad Ablabium*.

Abstract

My paper aims at assessing the role of two authors in the prehistory of Nicaean theology. Hippolytus and Pseudo-Origen were both active at the beginning of the third century, probably both at Rome, and certainly both influenced by Irenaeus in their own different ways. Although they were speculatively and unsuccessfully identified by many scholars from the middle of the nineteenth to the middle of the twentieth century, their method, style, attitude, and theological horizon is radically different. This is obvious also from the present perspective, where I examine their usage of the term *ousia* in Trinitarian context. To distinguish between the different meanings of the philosophical term,

64 Jerome, *De uiris illustribus* 61, Ernest Cushing Richardson (ed.), *Texte und Untersuchungen* 14/1a, Hinrichs, Leipzig, 1896, 35-36).

65 Novatian seems to have been influenced both through Tertullian and directly by Hippolytus in the use of the term *personae* (*De Trinitate* 26,2; 27,3-4; 6-7; 9; 31,5). While he is closer to Tertullian's Trinitological and Christological formulas (*substantiae communio* – *De Trinitate* 31,20), Hippolytus' direct impact can be discovered in *De Trinitate* 17 (the exegesis of Jn 10:30), and in the description of the unity of *personae* as *concordia* in *De Trinitate* 27,3. On Novatian's *De Trinitate* in general see James Louis. Papandrea, *Novatian of Rome and the Culmination of Pre-Nicene Orthodoxy*, Princeton Theological Monograph Series 175, Wipf and Stock, Eugene (OR) 2008.

I use as a basis the simple but useful scheme described in Aristotle's terminological and metaphysical introduction to the definition of the soul in *De anima* II 1. This threefold division describes fairly well also the diverse understandings of the Nicæan definition in its fourth-century aftermath. It appears that the two authors scrutinised in this paper use the term consistently but differently from each-other. Nonetheless, they both contribute decisively to the later Trinitarian developments, especially by influencing Tertullian and through Hippolytus' possible impact on, or at least certain convergence with Origen.



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Verrat an der Bibel?

Der biblische Gottesglaube und das Homoousios

Bernard MALLMANN

1. Hinführung; 2. Arius und das Homoousios auf dem Konzil von Nicäa; 3. Das jüdische Selbstverständnis Jesu; 4. Das subordinatianistische Verständnis des Homoousios bei Eusebius und Kaiser Konstantin; 5. Thesen

1. Hinführung

Das Neue Testament zeichnet Jesus von Nazaret als einen jüdischen Rabbi, der Jünger um sich scharte und in der prophetischen Tradition das Wort vom Reich Gottes verkündete. Insbesondere in den letzten vier Jahrzehnten wurde das Jude-Sein Jesu wieder in das theologische und dogmatische Denken aufgenommen. Es ist nicht als eine zufällige Nebensächlichkeit zu werten, dass Jesus in das Volk Israel hineingeboren wurde, geboren von einer *virgo israelitica* – wie Augustinus formuliert.¹ Die Verheißungsgeschichte Israels wird in der Person Jesus von Nazaret weitergeschrieben, womit das monotheistische Bekenntnis zum einen und wahren Gott Israels, der der Gott der Väter Abrahams, Isaaks und Jakobs ist, auch zum Bekenntnis des Christentums geworden ist. Das Bekenntnis zu Jesus als dem Messias ist für das Neue Testament kein Widerspruch dazu, sondern kann als heilsgeschichtliche Fortschreibung der Schriften Israels gedeutet werden. Damit ist das Christusbekenntnis nicht nur in einer neutestamentlichen Christologie verankert, sondern muss sich an einer gesamtbiblischen Theologie ausweisen.

¹ Augustinus, *Contra Faustum Manichaeum* 16,21; *In Ioannis evangelium tractatus* 4,4.

Nur vor diesem Hintergrund kann der Christusglaube als Gottes Offenbarkeit in der Geschichte formuliert werden.²

Das Konzil von Nicäa schreibt in seinem Symbolum, dass der Sohn ὁμοούσιος τῷ πατρὶ³ sei. Was sich in Texten des Neuen Testaments nur vorsichtig angedeutet hat (vgl. Joh 10,30), wird hier mit begrifflicher Präzision verkündet. Steht nun das Bekenntnis von Nicäa in einem "scharfen Gegensatz zum jüdischen und mittelplatonischen Gottesverständnis", wie es Alois Grillmeier ins Wort bringt?⁴ Um dieser Frage nachzugehen, soll in einem ersten Schritt das Anliegen des Konzils von Nicäa beleuchtet werden. Ein zweiter Gedankengang wird zeigen, dass das Verständnis des Homoousios nicht rein hellenistisch interpretiert werden darf, sondern dass es biblische Vorentwürfe und Entwicklungslinien dazu gibt. Vor diesem Hintergrund zeigt sich drittens, dass die Politik Kaiser Konstantins, der als Verteidiger des nicänischen Bekenntnisses auftrat, den eigentlichen Riss zwischen biblisch-jüdischem Erbe und christlichem Bekenntnis darstellt, die nach Nicäa eine entsprechende Rezeptionsgeschichte gefunden hat. Christliche Theologie hält allerdings am monotheistischen Glauben Israels als ihr verpflichtendes Erbe fest, was ein stetes Ringen und Kontextualisieren des Bekenntnisses der Wesensgleichheit des Sohnes bedeutet.

2 Vgl. Karl-Heinz Menke, *Jesus ist Gott der Sohn. Denkformen und Brennpunkte der Christologie*, Pustet, Regensburg 2008, 24-92.

3 Vgl. zum Begriff Homoousios: Heinz Kraft, "ΟΜΟΟΥΣΙΟΣ" in *ZKG* 66 (1954-55), 1-24; Friedo Ricken, "Nikaia als Krisis des altchristlichen Platonismus", in *ThPh* 44 (1969), 321-341; Wolfgang A. Bienert, "Das vornicaenische ὁμοούσιος als Ausdruck der Rechtgläubigkeit", in *ZKG* 90 (1979), 151-175; Pier Franco Beatrice, "The Word «Homoousios» from Hellenism to Christianity", in *CH* 71 (2002), 243-272; Jan-Heiner Tück, "«Der Vater wäre ohne den Sohn nicht Vater». Zur Revolution des Gottesbegriffs auf dem Konzil von Nicaea 325", in *IKaZ* 44 (2015), 22-36.

4 Alois Grillmeier, *Jesus der Christus im Glauben der Kirche. Von der Apostolischen Zeit bis zum Konzil von Chalcedon (415)*, Bd. 1, Sonderausgabe der 3. Auflage von 1990, Herder, Freiburg i. Br. 2004, 410: "Aber mit der Annahme einer innergöttlichen Zeugung und der wahren Wesensgleichheit wie auch der wirklichen Verschiedenheit von Vater und Sohn (und Geist) war das Problem des christlichen Monotheismus in scharfen Gegensatz zum jüdischen und zum mittelplatonischen Gottesverständnis gestellt".

2. Arius und das Homoousios auf dem Konzil von Nicäa

Auch wenn es viele unterschiedliche theologische Stränge sind, die im Konzil von Nicäa zusammenlaufen, so ist das Symbolum besonders gegen Arius⁵ und seine Anhänger formuliert. Sein Ausgangspunkt und stetiger Referenzpunkt ist das Kerygma des Monotheismus, das er streng am Literalsinn der Schrift auslegt. Den biblisch-christlichen Schöpfungsgedanken kombiniert der Presbyter Arius mit einer mittelplatonischen Stufenlehre. In den *Thaleia* lehrt Arius, dass der Vater dem Sohn wesensfremd ist, da er ohne Ursprung als eine ewige Monas anzusehen sei; die Dyas ist hierbei noch nicht, weil sie noch nicht aus dem Ursprung hervorgegangen ist.⁶ Arius kann eine gleichwesentliche Dyas von Vater-Sohn nicht annehmen, da dies in seinem (mittel-)platonischen Denken eine Minderung des Seins des Vaters darstellen würde. “Der Vater ist dem Sohn wesensfremd, da er ohne Ursprung west. Wisse, dass die Einheit (μόνας) war, die Zweiheit (δύας) aber nicht war, bevor sie ins Dasein trat. Solange der Sohn nicht ist, ist der Gott nicht Vater”⁷ So lautet sein Glaubensbekenntnis:

Wir kennen nur einen Gott, den allein ungeschaffenen (ungewordenen, ungezeugten = ἀγέννητον), den allein ewigen, allein ursprungslosen, allein wahren, allein die Unsterblichkeit besitzenden, allein weisen, allein guten; [...] den Gott des Gesetzes, der Propheten und des Neuen Bundes, der den eingeborenen Sohn vorewigen Zeiten hervorgebracht hat (γεννήσαντα [...]), durch den er auch die Äonen und das All schuf (πεποίηκε); er hat ihn hervorgebracht (γεννήσαντα) nicht dem Scheine nach, sondern in Wahrheit, als in eigenem Willen [...] Wesenden, als Unwandelbaren und Unveränderlichen, als Gottes vollkommenes Geschöpf, aber nicht wie eines der Geschöpfe, hervorgebracht (γεννήσαντα), aber nicht wie eines der Hervorgebrachten. [...] So gibt es drei Hypostasen. Und Gott ist die Ursache aller, ganz allein ohne Ursprung, der

5 Vgl. A. Grillmeier, *Jesus der Christus*, 356-373; Thomas Böhm, *Die Christologie des Arius. Dogmengeschichtliche Überlegungen unter besonderer Berücksichtigung der Hellenisierungsfrage*, EOS Verlag, St. Ottilien 1991.

6 Vgl. Athanasius, *De Synodis* 15 (PG 26,708A).

7 Hans-Georg Opitz, *Athanasius Werke*, Bd. II, Walter de Gruyter, Berlin – Leipzig 1934, 1,1: 242,27-243,1.

Sohn aber, vom Vater zeitlos hervorgebracht (*γεννηθείς*) und vor den Äonen geschaffen und gegründet, war nicht, bevor er hervorgebracht wurde; er ist zeitlos vor allen hervorgebracht, er allein hat vom Vater seine Existenz erhalten. Denn er ist nicht ewig oder gleich ewig oder gleich ungeworden mit dem Vater, noch hat er zugleich mit dem Vater das Sein, wie einige von den aufeinander Bezogenen sprechen und so zwei ungewordene Archai einführen [...].⁸

Für Arius ist hiermit einzig die Monas des Vaters im strengen Sinne des Wortes göttlich. Alles, was den Sohn und den Geist betrifft, haben sie durch geschöpfliche Teilhabe am Vater und stehen unter dem Vater; eine Einheit des Sohnes mit dem Vater gibt es einzig in der Übereinstimmung des Willens, jedoch nicht in der Natur. Der Sohn ist somit Schöpfungsmittler, jedoch kein Offenbarungsmittler,⁹ da die Kluft zwischen ihm und dem Vater unüberwindbar ist.

Arius untermauert seine subordinatianistische Christologie mit Schriftbeweisen. Die Geschöpflichkeit des Sohnes wird mit Spr 8,22, Kol 1,5 oder Hebr 3,2 begründet, Joh 14,28 und 17,3 dienen als Beweis der Unterordnung des Sohnes. Die Menschlichkeit Jesu leitet er aus Lk 2,52, Mt 4,3 oder Joh 4,6 ab, alles Stellen, die Hunger, Leiden oder Unwissenheit Jesu beschreiben. Darum steht der Sohn im Kontrast zum unveränderlichen, ewigen Vater. Der Monotheismus des arianischen Systems soll damit begründet werden, indem Gott *in extremis* in die Transzendenz verschoben wird, ohne dabei die biblisch begründete Weltzuwendung Gottes würdigen zu können. Auch wenn hierbei dem geschaffenen Sohn eine gewisse Transzendenz zugesprochen werden kann, bleibt er dennoch nur Mittler der geschaffenen Wirklichkeit. Der Sohn ist ein "zweiter Gott" (*δευτερος θεός*). Doch warum überhaupt ein zweiter Gott? Arius führt ein schöpfungstheologisches Argument

8 Glaubensbekenntnis des Arius und seiner Genossen an Alexander von Alexandrien A. W. III 1,1: Urk. 6, nr. 2-5, 12f., zitiert nach A. Grillmeier, *Jesus der Christus*, 364-365.

9 Athanasius argumentiert gegen die Arianer, dass der Sohn Offenbarungsmittler sein muss: "Es ist nämlich wirklich der Sohn im Vater [...] wie der Abglanz aus dem Licht und dem Fluss aus der Quelle, so dass, wer den Sohn sieht, auch das sieht, was dem Vater eigen ist, und begreift, dass die Existenz des Sohnes, wie aus dem Vater, so im Vater ist. Es ist aber auch der Vater im Sohn, weil das, was aus dem Vater stammt und ihm eigen ist, der Sohn ist". Idem, *Contra Arianos* III, 3.

ein: "Um unsertwillen ist er [der Sohn; *Anm. d. Verf.*] geschaffen worden, damit Gott uns schaffe durch ihn wie durch ein Organon; und er würde nicht existieren, wenn nicht Gott uns hätte schaffen wollen".¹⁰ Der Preis, den Arius für sein System zahlen muss, ist die Übernahme des starren und unveränderlichen Gottesgedankens und seiner Emanationen des (Mittel-)Platonismus.

Das Konzil von Nicaea stellt sich gegen die subordinatianistischen Tendenzen und lehrt die Gleichwesentlichkeit des Vaters und des Sohnes. Nicäa konnte auf die Synoden von Antiochien 268 und 325 zurückgreifen, auf denen bereits gegen Paul von Samosata und gegen die Arianer die Zeugung des Sohnes aus dem Vater und seine ganze Ebenbildlichkeit gelehrt wurde. Zudem griff die Synodenversammlung auf das Bekenntnis Alexanders von Alexandrien zurück und erweiterte es. Dabei geht es besonders um die Eindeutigkeit der Aussagen über das Verhältnis der drei göttlichen Personen.

Der christliche Monotheismus wird vor der arianischen Hellenisierung bewahrt. [...] Das innergöttliche Verhältnis von Vater und Sohn wird in seinem heilsökonomischen Rahmen belassen. Jesus Christus ist der einzige und wahre Sohn des Vaters, nicht ein Geschöpf.¹¹

So lautet dann das nicänische Bekenntnis: Wir glauben

an (den) einen Herrn Jesus Christus, den Sohn Gottes, als Einziggeborener aus dem Vater gezeugt, das heißt [a] *aus dem Wesen des Vaters*, Gott aus Gott, Licht aus Licht, [b] *wahrer Gott aus wahren Gott*, [c] *gezeugt, nicht geschaffen*, [d] *wesensgleich dem Vater*, durch den alles geworden ist, was im Himmel und was auf der Erde ist. (DH 125)

Der Sohn ist im nicänischen Symbolum nicht Geschöpf des Vaters. Das Bekenntnis sagt, dass der Sohn vom Vater gezeugt ist, womit der Sohn das Wesen des Vaters erhält; er hat keine andere Hypostase [a]. Dasselbe erklärt der zweite Einschub [b] nochmals, dass nämlich der Sohn wie der Vater wahrer Gott ist. Gegen die arianische Vorstellung,

¹⁰ Zitiert nach A. Grillmeier, *Jesus der Christus*, 370.

¹¹ A. Grillmeier, *Jesus der Christus*, 406-407.

der Sohn sei zeitlich geschaffen, unterstreicht das Bekenntnis mit der Zeugung [c] den ewigen Hervorgang des Sohnes aus dem Vater. Hier erweist sich das Konzil als innovativ, indem es die Ausdrücke *γεννήτος* und *γένητος* unterscheidet. Der Sohn ist gezeugt, aber nicht geworden, es gab also keine Zeit, in der er nicht war. Gerade damit sprengt das nicänische Bekenntnis den griechischen Wesensbegriff, indem mit der Zeugung eine Relation in den Gottesbegriff eingeschrieben wird. Das göttliche Wesen ist nicht eine Monas, sondern Dialog.¹²

Das Homoousios [d] besagt nicht, dass der Sohn das Wesen des Vaters mindert oder ihm etwas wegnimmt, sondern dass der Sohn dasselbe Wesen wie der Vater hat, ohne jedoch mit ihm identisch zu sein.¹³ Das arianische Verständnis von Gott-Vater und Gott-Sohn wird umgedreht: Gott-Vater ist ohne den Sohn nicht Vater und das von Ewigkeit her.

Ist nun das Homoousios als Hellenisierung¹⁴ des monotheistischen Erbes zu werten oder darf es als die Klärung dieses Glaubens verstanden werden? So dunkel die Herkunft des Homoousios im christlichen Kontext ist, so eindeutig ist die Tatsache, dass er keiner Partei im antiarianischen Streit zuzuschreiben ist. Nicäner wie Arianer dachten mit dem Begriff oder lehnten ihn vehement ab.¹⁵ In der Gnosis ist der Begriff seit dem 2. Jhd. bekannt und beschreibt die Gleichartigkeit des Seins und die Zugehörigkeit zur selben Seinsstufe, auch wenn in gnostischen Schriften damit noch nicht die Beziehung zwischen

12 Vgl. Helmut Hoping, *Jesus aus Galiläa – Messias und Gottessohn*, Herder, Freiburg i. Br. 2019, 196: „Gott ist nicht der von der Welt unberührte Ursprung (*ἀρχή*), der unbeweglich in sich steht, sondern reine Beziehungswirklichkeit“. Auch J.-H. Tück, „Zur Revolution des Gottesbegriffs“, 30, der in der „Einheit in Beziehung“ die Revolution des Gottesbegriffes sieht.

13 Vgl. dazu Susanne Hausamann, *Zum Verständnis von „homoousios“ in der Alten Kirche*, in Eadem, *Annäherungen. Das Zeugnis der altkirchlichen und byzantinischen Väter von der Erkenntnis Gottes*, Vadenhoeck & Ruprecht, Göttingen 2016, 46-55.

14 Vgl. J.-H. Tück, „Zur Revolution des Gottesbegriffs“, 29-33; Manuel Schlögl, „«Um möglichst viele zu gewinnen» (1Kor 9,19). Zur Transformation der hellenistisch-jüdischen Antike durch das Christentum“, in *IKaZ* 50 (2021), 422-429.

15 Vgl. Kegan A. Chandler, „Deuteros Theos: Constantine’s Christology at Nicaea“, in *Journal of Early Christian History* 11 (2021), 1-17, 6-7.

Vater und Sohn umschrieben ist.¹⁶ Tertullian übernimmt den Begriff und übersetzt ihn mit *consubstantialis* oder *consubstantivus*.¹⁷ Origenes verwendet wohl als erster christlicher Theologe den Begriff in einem Fragment zu Hebr 13, um das Verhältnis zwischen Vater und Sohn zu beschreiben.¹⁸ Selbst Arius ist der Begriff nicht fremd, wenn er die Unterscheidung von Vater und Sohn beschreiben will: “Er (der Sohn) trägt kein Characteristicum (ἴδιον) Gottes an seiner individuellen Subsistenz, denn er ist ihm nicht gleich (ἴσον), ja auch nicht ἁμοούσιος”.¹⁹ Die Gefahr beim Begriff *Homoousios* bestand darin, dass es besonders in der Mitte des dritten Jahrhunderts mit einer sabellianischen und monarchischen Tendenz verbunden war, was zur angeblichen Verurteilung von Paul von Samosata auf der Synode von Antiochien 268 führte, der eine Art Geistchristologie vertrat.²⁰ Dass hier der Begriff verurteilt wurde, doch keine sechs Jahrzehnte später im nicänischen Bekenntnis bestätigt wird, wird wohl an der körperlichen Interpretation durch Paul von Samosata liegen, dass Vater und Sohn *einer* und nicht *eins* wären.²¹ Erwähnung findet das *Homoousios* auch im Streitgespräch

16 P. F. Beatrice, “The Word «Homoousios»” 248-251.

17 Tertullian, *Adversus Hermogenes* 44,3 (CCL 1,433); *Adversus Valentianos* 12,5 (CCL 2,764); 18,1 (767); 37,2 (778).

18 Pamphilius, *Apologia pro Origene*, 99 (FC 80,321): “Beide Vergleiche [des Hervorgangs Christi als Weisheit und als Hauch; *Anm. d. Verf.*] zeigt ganz deutlich, dass Sohn und Vater ein gemeinsames Wesen haben. Der Ausfluss ist offensichtlich ἁμοούσιος, das heißt eines Wesens [*unius substantiae*] mit dem Körper, von dem der Ausfluss oder Hauch ausgeht”.

19 Arius, *Thaleia*, nach Athanasius, *De Synodis* 15; H.-G. Opitz, *Athanasius Werke*, 1,9: 242, 16,17.

20 Siehe hierzu Hanns Christof Brennecke, “Zum Prozeß gegen Paul von Samosata: Die Frage nach der Verurteilung des *Homoousios*”, in *ZNW* 75 (1984), 270-290, 290: “Als gegen Ende der fünfziger Jahre des vierten Jahrhunderts das ἁμοούσιος zum theologischen Panier der von den Abendländern seit Serdika konsequent vertretenen Einhypostasenlehre wird und man *μία ὑπόστασις* mit ἁμοούσιος identifizieren kann, wird in den Augen der Homöusianer auch Paulus von Samosata, der in Antiochien vor fast einem Jahrhundert verurteilte Bischof der östlichen Metropole, zum Vertreter des ἁμοούσιος, nicht eher! [...] [S]o gehört auch die Zurückweisung des ἁμοούσιος auf der antiochenischen Synode von 268/9 nicht in die Vorgeschichte des arianischen Streites, ja überhaupt nicht in die theologische Diskussion des dritten Jahrhunderts, sondern in die Spätphase des arianischen Streites, in die Geschichte der Neubesinnung auf das ἁμοούσιος und die Debatte zwischen Homousianern und Homöusianern [...]”.

21 Hilarius von Poitiers urteilt lakonisch: “male homoousion Samosatenu confessus est” (*Epistula de synodis* 86 [PL 10,538B]).

zwischen Dionysius von Alexandrien und Dionysius von Rom und wird hierbei in die römische Lehrentscheidung aufgenommen. Der ursprünglich gnostische Begriff entwickelte sich dann als Mittelweg zwischen Modalismus und Zwei-Götter-Lehre. Es ist anzunehmen, dass er über Rom, Alexandrien und Antiochien nach Nicäa gelangte, auch wenn der Terminus noch keine präzise Bedeutung einnahm.²² Erst fünfzehn Jahre nach dem Konzil wird dann das Homooousios von Athanasius im Sinne des Konzils von Nicäa genannt werden.²³ Es ist auch Athanasius, der eine Beschreibung davon gibt, wie letztendlich das Homooousios in das nicänische Bekenntnis kam. Er schildert, dass die Konzilsväter nach biblischen Begriffen suchten wie *ἐκ θεοῦ*, um das arianische *ἐξ οὐκ ὄντων* zu widerlegen. Allerdings konnten die Arianer die biblischen Begriffe ebenfalls in ihrem Sinn deuten. Darum war es laut Athanasius das Anliegen der Bischöfe, “das, was die Hl. Schrift eigentlich meint, zusammenzufassen, und [...] deutlicher zu sagen und (deswegen) zu schreiben: *ὁμοούσιος τῷ πατρὶ*”.²⁴

Arius vertritt die negative Homooousie, um den Sohn als Geschöpf und nicht auf derselben Seinsstufe wie den Vater auszuweisen. In einem waren sich Arius und die Vertreter des nicänischen Homooousios jedoch einig: in der Ablehnung der Verdinglichung und Anthropomorphisierung des Vaters, der durch den Sohn etwas von seinem Wesen verlieren und dadurch zu einer Dyas werden würde. Die innergöttliche Einheit von Vater und Sohn teilt den Monotheismus nicht in einen Binitarismus, sondern bleibt

22 Vgl. Wilhelm Gessel, “Das «Homooousios» als Testfall für die Frage nach der Geltung und dem Verhältnis von Schrift und Tradition auf dem Konzil von Nizäa”, in *AHC* 17 (1983), 1-7,7: “Das heißt, die Homooousios-Tradition der wichtigsten sedes apostolicae ist in Nizäa gemeinkirchlich und verbindlich rezipiert worden zur Abwehr des Arianismus. Der Ursprung des kirchlichen Homooousios war dabei Rom”. Gegen die These, dass das Homooousios von Konstantin auf Drängen seines Beraters Ossius von Cordova auf dem Konzil von Nizäa eingeführt worden sein soll, argumentiert: Adolf Lippold, “Bischof Ossius von Cordova und Konstantin der Große”, in *ZKG* 92 (1981), 1-15; ebenso P. F. Beatrice, “The Word «Homooousios»”, 247.

23 Athanasius von Alexandrien, *Orationes aduersus Arianos* I,9 (PG 26,29A).

24 Athanasius von Alexandrien, *De decretis Nicaini synodi*, 17,7-8.

auf der Grundlage des Schriftzeugnisses. Was das Bekenntnis von Nicäa jedoch dem innergöttlichen Hervorgang des Sohnes ebenfalls zuspricht, ist das Hervorgehen des Sohnes im Rahmen der geschöpflichen Heilsökonomie. Das Anstößige an Nicäa ist nicht nur die Wesensgleichheit mit dem Vater, sondern auch das Bekenntnis zur Inkarnation des Logos. Arius dagegen denkt streng neuplatonisch und steigert die Transzendenz Gottes so stark, dass in ihm nichts anderes sein kann. Damit ist jedoch keine Beziehung auf Gott hin mehr möglich. Andererseits gelingt es ihm auch nicht, das Menschsein Jesu voll und ganz zu denken, wenn er als Geschöpf dennoch einer transzendenten Sphäre zugehören soll.²⁵

Auch wenn das Bekenntnis aufgrund seines kerygmatischen Charakters nicht klärt, wie das Homoousios zu verstehen und zu deuten sei, lässt sich das Verständnis mit Athanasius zusammenfassen:

Wir anerkennen einen (einigen) Ursprung; vom Schöpfer-Logos sagen wir, dass er nicht eine andere Weise der Gottheit habe als der einzige Gott, da er aus ihm hervorgegangen ist. Vielmehr können die Arianer der Vielgötterei oder der Gottlosigkeit angeklagt werden, da sie ungeschickterweise behaupten, der Sohn sei ein außer(-göttliches) Geschöpf und auch der Geist sei aus dem Nichts (geschaffen). [...] Dies wird uns niemals in den Sinn kommen. Denn es gibt nur eine Weise der Gottheit, wie sie auch in dem Logos ist; und einer ist Gott der Vater, der in sich ist, indem er über allen ist; der aber im Sohn erscheint, indem er alles durchwaltet, und der im Pneuma ist, indem er in allem durch den in ihm seienden Logos wirkt.²⁶

Das Nicänum und die Rezeption des Bekenntnisses hält daran fest, dass Jesus kein zweiter und untergeordneter Gott ist. Das Homoousios

25 Vgl. Florian Bruckmann, *Trennt der Glaube an Christus? Zum Verhältnis von Judentum und Christentum*, in Markus Luber – Roman Beck – Simon Neubert (Hg.), *Christus und die Religionen. Standortbestimmung der Missions-theologie*, Weltkirche und Mission 5, Pustet, Regensburg 2015, 101-122, 110: "Arius war eindeutig Anhänger eines logos-sarx-Schemas, so dass er konsequent die Seele Jesu leugnete und sie durch den göttlichen Logos ersetzt sehen wollte. Gegen diese wiederum unbiblische und anti-jüdische Verkürzung des Menschseins Jesu hält das Konzil von Nizäa fest, dass der göttliche Logos «Fleisch und Mensch» wurde, so dass hier ein unverkürztes Menschsein Jesu mit eigenständiger menschlicher Seele gedacht werden muss".

26 Athanasius, *Orationes adversus Arianos* III, 15 (PG 26, 343AB).

kann sogar als eine Kommentar zu jungen jüdischen Schriften wie das Danielbuch und deren überzogenen Deutung verstanden werden, in dem von zwei Göttern im Himmel die Rede ist.²⁷ Stringent wird der Monotheismus vorausgesetzt, durchgehalten und verteidigt. Hierbei folgt das Nicänum in funktionaler Hinsicht der Überzeugung, dass es der *consensio antiquitatis et universitatis* bedürfe.²⁸ Die *antiquitas* besteht darin, dass nur definiert werden dürfe, was aus Schrift und Tradition erweisbar ist, die dann in die *universitas* übersetzt wird. In dieser Rezeption können Formulierungen der Gegner aufgenommen und theologisch gedeutet werden. Das Homoousios von Nicäa muss in diesem Sinn nicht als Abgesang des jüdischen Erbes gelesen werden, sondern das Bekenntnis ist mit dem außerbiblischem Begriff Rezeption der biblischen Tradition.²⁹ Das Homoousios von Nicäa muss daher als die heilsgeschichtliche Explikation der biblischen Aussagen zum Monotheismus verstanden werden, weil damit innertrinitarische und trinitätsökonomische Spekulationen in das Denken aufgenommen werden. Wenn später das Konzil von Chalcedon die Gott-Menschheit Jesu mit den vier privativen Ausdrücken ἀσυγχύτως, ἀτρέπτως, ἀδιαίρέτως und ἀχωρίστως (DH 302) wiedergibt, dann ist das ὁμοούσιος in seiner positiven Aussage auch als privative Definition des Wesensgleichheit zu lesen.³⁰ Das Konzil von Nicäa wehrt mit dem Begriff eine usurpative Aussage über die Transzendenz Gottes ab, die mehr darüber aussagen möchte, als sie kann. Das Bekenntnis

27 Vgl. F. Bruckmann, *Trennt der Glaube an Christus?*, 109.

28 Vgl. Hermann Josef Sieben, *Die Konzilsidee der Alten Kirche*, Ferdinand Schöningh, Paderborn 1979, 516.

29 Vgl. W. Gessel, "Das Homoousios als Testfall", 4; F. Bruckmann, *Trennt der Glaube an Christus?*, III: "Die Konzilsentscheidung von Nicäa darf 1. keinesfalls antijüdisch verstanden werden, weil es sich 2. bei ihr (nach christlicher Interpretation) eindeutig um eine konsequente Weiterentwicklung biblischen Denkens handelt, das sich von sich her spätestens seit dem späten 4. Jh. v. Chr. in einem hellenistischen Rahmen bewegt hat".

30 Wolfgang Bienert sieht das ὁμοούσιος als negative Formel, wenn er schreibt: "Noch immer aber war das ὁμοούσιος eine schillernde Kompromißformel, die ihre Berechtigung lediglich in ihrer negativen Bestimmung besaß, als Abgrenzung gegenüber Polytheismus einerseits und Modalismus andererseits [...]". Idem, "Das vornizänische ὁμοούσιος", 175.

bestätigt den biblischen Monotheismus, indem es privativ die Gleichwesentlichkeit aussagt und damit die Gottheit Gottes bewahrt, indem es in das Jerusalemer Taufsymboldie vier antiarianischen Einschübe einschließt. Wenn der Sohn mit dem Vater wesensgleich ist, kann nicht mehr definiert werden, wie der Vater seine Gottheit im Sohn bewahrt.

3. *Das jüdische Selbstverständnis Jesu*

So wie die Paulusexegese *The new perspective on Paul*³¹ das Paulusbild wieder in seinen jüdischen Kontext zurückgeführt hat, so gibt es neuere Arbeiten zum jüdischen Verständnis Jesu. Daniel Boyarin hält es für möglich, dass Jesus sehr wohl ein Wissen als Messias und Gottessohn gehabt haben kann. Er argumentiert in seiner Studie *Die jüdischen Evangelien*³² dafür, dass Vorstellungen Jesu als Menschensohn oder als Messias keine Einschreibungen *ex eventu* der Evangelisten seien. Konnte die jüdische Umwelt, so fragt Boyarin, zur Zeit Jesu einen Menschen als Gottessohn bezeichnen, oder ist dies nur ein Wissen der neutestamentlichen Autoren, das sie aus einem paganen Gottes-Sohn-Kult kannten? Um die Frage zu beantworten, greift Boyarin auf die Menschensohn-Vorstellung in Dan 7,9-14 zurück.³³ Der Menschensohn erscheint mit dem Hochbetagten auf dem Thron. Beiden wird Göttlichkeit zugeschrieben und sind gleichwertig inthronisiert. Auch

31 Vgl. Stefan Schreiber, "Paulus und die Tradition. Zur Hermeneutik der «Rechtfertigung» in neuer Perspektive", in *TbRv* 105 (2009), 92-97.

32 Daniel Boyarin, *Die jüdischen Evangelien. Die Geschichte des jüdischen Christus*, Echter, Würzburg 2015. Vgl. dazu Josef Wohlmuth, *Der jüdische Jesus und die Christologie des Konzils von Chalkedon*, in Christian Danz – Kathy Ehrensperger – Walter Homolka (Hg.), *Christologie zwischen Judentum und Christentum. Jesus, der Jude aus Galiläa, und der christliche Erlöser*, Mohr Siebeck, Tübingen 2020, 319-332, besonders 320-324. Zur Kontextualisierung Daniel Boyarins siehe Jan Gühne, "Kreuz und quer verlaufende Linien der Geschichte". *Ein kritischer Blick auf Daniel Boyarins Thesen zur Entstehung von Judentum und Christentum*, Pontes 31, Lit, Münster 2006.

33 Zu Dan 7,9-14 siehe auch Peter Schäfer, *Die Geburt des Judentums aus dem Geist des Christentums. Fünf Vorlesungen zur Entstehung des rabbinischen Judentums*, Tria Corda 6, Mohr Siebeck, Tübingen 2010, 65-96.

das äthiopische Henochbuch spricht von einem Hochbetagten und von einer zweiten Gestalt, “dessen Gestalt wie das Aussehen eines Menschen (war), und sein Angesicht voller Güte wie (das) von einem der heiligen Engel”. Auf Nachfrage wird die zweite Gestalt vorgestellt: “Dies ist der Menschensohn, der die Gerechtigkeit hat und bei dem die Gerechtigkeit wohnt, der alle Schätze des Verborgenen offenbart, denn der Herr der Geister hat ihn erwählt, und sein Los ist unübertrefflich durch die Gerechtigkeit vor dem Herrn der Geister in Ewigkeit”. Der Menschensohn ist allerdings nicht ein zeitlich geschaffenes Wesen, sondern ihm wird Präexistenz zugeschrieben, indem sein Erscheinen mit einer Worttheologie verbunden wird: “Und bevor die Sonne und die beiden (Tierkreis-)Zeichen geschaffen wurden, bevor die Sterne des Himmels geschaffen wurden, ist sein Name vor dem Herrn der Geister genannt. [...] Und darum ist er erwählt worden und verborgen vor ihm, ehe der Äon geschaffen wurde, und bis in Ewigkeit (wird er sein)”,³⁴ Boyarin hält die Danielperikope als eines der ältesten Visionsfragmente Israels, worauf sich das Judentum zur Zeit Jesu und die neutestamentlichen Schriftsteller bereits berufen konnten. Auch dürften die Vorstellungen aus dem Henochbuch bekannt gewesen sein. Die Texte zeigen, dass bereits der israelitische Monotheismus einen “binarischen Strang” der Gott in gleichwesentlicher Beziehung als Mittlerfigur und als Gott-Mensch kennt. Der davidische König als erhoffter Messias wird mit der Menschensohn-Gestalt identifiziert. ÄthHen 62,7 kann von ihm sogar eine Präexistenzaussage machen: “Denn zuvor ist der Menschensohn verborgen gewesen, und der Höchste hat ihn angesichts seiner Macht bewahrt und ihn den Auserwählten offenbart”. Das ‚zuvor‘ kann hier auch als ‚von Anfang an‘ verstanden werden.

34 ÄthHen XLVI,1-3; XLVIII,3-6 (JSHRZ V,587; 590-591). Vgl. dazu Peter Schäfer, *Zwei Götter im Himmel. Gottesvorstellungen in der jüdischen Antike*, C. H. Beck, München 2017, 52-60.

Jesus konnte nach Boyarin ein Verständnis des Menschensohnes haben. “Wenn Daniel die Prophezeiung ist”, – so der Judaist – “so sind die Evangelien die Erfüllung”.³⁵ Jesus bezeichnet sich in seiner Glaubenstradition als Menschensohn, weil in ihm als Menschen die Göttlichkeit in der Welt ist.³⁶ Hier geht der Selbstanspruch Jesu über das hinaus, was die jüdische Tradition aus Dan 7 und ÄthHen 46 vorbereitet hat. Jesus identifiziert sich als der Menschensohn und nimmt die Göttlichkeit vollkommen für sich in Anspruch. Dabei vertritt Boyarin die Meinung, dass der Titel “Menschensohn” nicht auf einzelne Erzählungen des Lebens Jesu verengt werden dürfe, sondern dass er das ganze Leben und Bewusstsein Jesu umschreibt.

Eine hohe Christologie wäre dann nicht ein hellenistischer Einfluss, sondern entspränge dem jüdischen Verständnis selbst. Darum vertritt Boyarin die These, dass “die älteste Version der Hohen Christologie sich innerhalb eines jüdischen Kontextes” entwickelt hat.³⁷ Nach Boyarin verstand sich Jesus selbst als Gottessohn, weil die jüdische Tradition daran glaubte, dass der Messias ein Gott-Mensch sein werde.³⁸ Die

35 D. Boyarin, *Die jüdischen Evangelien*, 62.

36 Zum Titel “Menschensohn“ siehe D. Boyarin, *Die jüdischen Evangelien*, 44-62.

37 D. Boyarin, *Die jüdischen Evangelien*, 64. Der Judaist fährt fort: “Ich gestehe zu, dass es nur möglich ist, das Evangelium zu verstehen, wenn sowohl Jesus als auch die Juden um ihn herum zu einer Hohen Christologie gestanden hätten, wonach der Anspruch der Messianität auch ein Anspruch war, ein göttlicher Mensch zu sein”. Ebenso David Flusser, “Das Schisma zwischen Judentum und Christentum”, in *EvTh* 40 (1980), 214-239, 216 und 220: “Jesu Lehre war jüdisch, und das gleiche gilt für die Christologie und alle ihre Bestandteile. Die Christologie entwickelte sich einerseits aus Jesu starkem Selbstbewusstsein und [...] aus den verschiedenen Leitgedanken der jüdischen Religion, die man mit Jesus in Verbindung brachte” – “Rabbinisches und hellenistisches Judentum sind daher die geeigneten Anwärter für den jüdischen Ursprung der kirchlichen Christologie”.

38 Vgl. D. Boyarin, *Die jüdischen Evangelien*, 65-67. Auch Klaus Beyer sieht in Jesus ein Menschensohn-Bewusstsein gegeben, das apokalyptisch konnotiert ist: “Jesus hat also die Ankündigung des «Menschensohnes» durch Johannes den Täufer auf sich bezogen, denn in dieser Gestalt – von Jesus zu seiner Selbstbezeichnung, seinem persönlichen Titel gemacht – verkörperte sich in vollkommener Weise sein enormes Selbstbewusstsein. Und zwar wird er nicht erst in Kürze das Amt des «Menschensohnes» übernehmen, sondern er ist bereits der göttliche «Menschensohn»”. Idem, *Der Menschensohn als Gott der Welt: Der Ursprung der hohen Christologie bei Jesus selbst*, in Sophia G. Vashalomidze – Lutz Greisinger (Hg.), *Der Christliche Orient und seine Umwelt*, FS Jürgen Tubachs, StOR 56, Harrassowitz, Wiesbaden 2007, 11-19, 15.

Diskussion zwischen Judentum und Christentum um den Anspruch Jesu als des Christus sieht der amerikanische Judaist daher schon als eine innerjüdische Kontroverse um Dan 7 und um eine binitarische Einschreibung in den monotheistischen Glauben Israels. Erst eine spätere Interpretation der Menschensohngestalt überträgt diese auf das ganze Volk, wohl schon in Ablehnung zur christlichen Christologie und Trinitätslehre. Für Klaus Beyer ist es vor allem die apokalyptische Tradition aus Dan 7, in der Jesus steht und aus der heraus er sein Selbstverständnis zieht. “Die Apokalyptik ist ein Sonderfall des Judentums” – so schreibt Beyer – “und Jesus ist ein Sonderfall der Apokalyptik. [...] Die Gottheit Christi steht also nicht am Ende der Entwicklung der Christologie, sondern an ihrem Anfang, bei Jesus selbst”.³⁹ Wenn Jesus wie in Mk 2,5, das Boyarin als eines von mehreren Beispielen anführt, für sich die Vollmacht der Sündenvergebung in Anspruch nimmt, dann sei hier das Verständnis des Menschensohnes aus Dan 7,14 gegeben. Jesus agiert hier in göttlicher Vollmacht, da er um seine Göttlichkeit weiß, mehr noch: die Göttlichkeit mit sich identifiziert, wenn er in Mk 14,62 sich selbst mit dem Sohn des Hochgelobten identifiziert (Ἐγώ εἰμι). Mit dieser Antwort beziehe sich Jesus auf Dan 7 und erkenne sich als dieser Menschensohn, woran sich dann auch der Prozess um Jesus entzündete.⁴⁰ Boyarins Thesen hängen natürlich an der Überzeugung, dass diese Perikopen dem historischen Jesus zuzusprechen sein müssen. Jesus sieht sich demnach als der Menschensohn, weil er der Offenbarer Gottes ist.⁴¹ Folgt man aber einmal den Gedanken Boyarins, dann darf die konziliar-dogmatische

39 K. Beyer, *Der Menschensohn als Gott*, 16.

40 Vgl. D. Boyarin, *Die jüdischen Evangelien*, 125-145, der dieses Kapitel überschreibt: “Der leidende Christus als ein Midrasch zu Daniel”.

41 Vgl. Jürgen Habermann, *Präexistenzchristologische Aussagen im Johannesevangelium. Annotationes zu einer angeblich verwegenen Synthese*, in Rudolph Laufen (Hg.), *Gottes ewiger Sohn: Die Präexistenz Christi*, Ferdinand Schöningh, Paderborn 1997, 115-141, 130: “«Sohn Gottes», «Sohn» und «Menschensohn» sind nicht deckungsgleich, aber auch nicht völlig unterschiedlich. «Sohn Gottes» drückt immer die Relation zu Gott dem Vater aus, der «Menschensohn» ist personales Instrumentarium Gottes für die Kommunikation mit den Menschen”.

Explikation des Christusglaubens nicht mehr als eine Verfremdung oder Verabschiedung vom jüdischen Erbe gesehen werden. So tritt der Judaist auch dafür ein, dass der Christus des Glaubens kein *vaticinium ex eventu* sei, sondern das originäre Selbstverständnis des jüdischen Jesus und seiner Anhänger. “Jesus erfüllte für seine Anhänger” – so Boyarin – “die Idee des Christus; der Christus wurde nicht erfunden, um Jesu Leben und Tod auszudeuten”.⁴² Vielmehr erweisen sich die christologischen Konzilien als Erben des jüdischen Glaubens, wie er in der Zeit Jesu gelebt wurde.⁴³ Damit ist der Auftrag gegeben, respektvoll und fruchtbar mit diesem Erbe zu glauben und zu denken.

4. Das subordinatianistische Verständnis des Homoousios bei Eusebius und Kaiser Konstantin

Eusebius von Caesarea gilt nicht als Verteidiger des Homoousios. Auch wenn er das Bekenntnis unterschrieben hat, meidet er den Begriff. Als binitarischer Subordinatianist stellt er den Vater über den Sohn. Seine mittelplatonische Hypostasenspekulation lässt Vater und Sohn im Verhältnis von Bild und Abbild erscheinen: Der

42 D. Boyarin, *Die jüdischen Evangelien*, 82.

43 So zeigt Josef Wohlmuth Sympathien für den Ansatz von Daniel Boyarin, wenn er schreibt: “Nach meiner Sicht trägt Boyarins Hermeneutik des frühen Judentums und deren Rezeption im Neuen Testament also sehr wohl dazu bei, auch noch im Konzil von Chalkedon die jüdischen Elemente der Jesusinterpretation klar zu entdecken. Daniel Boyarin kann deshalb von der christlichen Theologie durchaus erwarten, den Nachweis zu liefern, dass das Glaubensbekenntnis von Nicäa/Konstantinopel und seine Auslegung in Chalkedon trotz sprachlicher Transformationen den jüdischen Ursprung einer Hohen Christologie nicht verlassen hat und auch nicht verlassen darf”. J. Wohlmuth, *Der jüdische Jesus*, 330. Vgl. zur hohen Christologie auch Hubert Frankemölle: “Nimmt man nicht die spätere pharisäische, immer stärker normativ gewordene Richtung jüdischen Glaubens zum hermeneutischen Maßstab, sondern das vielgestaltige hebräisch-aramäische und griechische Judentum, sind die im Neuen Testament belegten Denkmodelle auch der «hohen» Christologie ohne Ausnahme jüdisch”. Hubert Frankemölle, *Wie hoch darf die «hohe» Christologie sein? Hermeneutische Reflexionen zu biblischen und päpstlichen Konzepten im christlich-jüdischen Dialog*, in Martina Bär – Markus-Liborius Hermann – Thomas Söding (Hg.), *König und Priester. Facetten neutestamentlicher Christologie*, FS für Claus-Peter März, EThS 44, Echter, Würzburg 2012, 43-59, 55.

Sohn erhält sein Gottsein vom Vater, der der wahrhaft Seiende ist; der Sohn dagegen ist der Zweite und als solcher Mittler.⁴⁴ Nur der erste Gott (ὁ πρῶτος θεός⁴⁵) ist der absolut Transzendente, Seiende und Gute, und damit im Gegensatz zum geschaffenen Logos (θεὸς δεύτερος⁴⁶) völlig unzugänglich und unerkennbar. Der Logos ist Mittler zwischen dem absoluten Wesen und dem geschaffenen Sein und ist die welterschaffende Kraft und wird somit zur leitenden Weltseele. Sein Anliegen ist, die absolute Monarchie des Vaters zu verteidigen. Wenn er das Bekenntnis von Nicäa “gezeugt aus dem Vater” unterschrieb, dann nur im Wissen darum, dass der Logos dadurch nicht ein Teil des Vaters sei und ein Anthropomorphismus vermieden würde.⁴⁷ Auch wenn Eusebius das ὁμοούσιος stets vermeidet, versucht er mit seiner Formel ἐκ τοῦ πατρὸς die arianische Subordination des geschaffenen Sohnes ἀπο τοῦ πατρὸς zu umgehen und damit den Monotheismus zu bewahren und zugleich dem Logos eine eigene Hypostase zusprechen zu können, womit er sich vom Sabellianismus des Marcell von Ankyra distanziert. Dass Eusebius damit jedoch den Monotheismus nicht mehr wahren konnte, hat er nicht eingesehen. Obwohl er auf eine Distanz zum Arianismus hinwirkte, gelangte er immer mehr und mehr in dessen subordinatianistische Nähe. Nicht die Ablehnung des Homoousios verbindet Eusebius mit Kaiser Konstantin, aber eine ähnliche Interpretation davon.

44 Vgl. A. Grillmeier, *Jesus der Christus*, 306: “Die Aktivität des Logos ist jedenfalls immer die eines Organon, um die Ordnung des Vaters durchzuführen oder wiederherzustellen. Seine Hauptaufgaben sind es, die Wahrheit über Gott zu «offenbaren» und alle Menschen zur Moral zu «erziehen». Siehe zu Eusebius und seiner Logostheorie den informativen Aufsatz Friedo Ricken, “Die Logoslehre des Eusebios von Caesarea und der Mittelplatonismus”, in *ThPh* 47 (1962), 341-358.

45 Eusebius von Caesarea, *Demonstratio evangelica* 4,3.

46 Eusebius von Caesarea, *Demonstratio evangelica* 5,1.

47 Vgl. Eusebius von Caesarea, *Demonstratio evangelica* 1,9-10: “Es ist nicht recht, zu sagen, dass der Sohn aus dem Vater hervorgegangen sei nach Art der Zeugung der Lebewesen bei uns, Wesen aus Wesen mit Erleiden und größter Trennung. Denn das Göttliche ist ganz und gar unteilbar (ἄμερες καὶ ἄτομον), kann nicht zerschnitten, auseinandergenommen, herausgeschnitten, nicht zusammengesetzt, nicht gemindert werden”.

Auch wenn der Einfluss Kaiser Konstantins auf das Konzil geringer ist, als es Eusebius darstellt, ist doch seine Auffassung des Homoousios ohne seine philosophische Anschauung nicht zu verstehen. Alois Grillmeier zeigt, dass Kaiser Konstantin nicht, wie von Eusebius inszeniert, die führende Autorität auf dem Konzil von Nicäa war, da er dies schon rein theologisch nicht leisten konnte; vielmehr verstand er sich subsidiär zu den Bischöfen, denen die Aufgabe der Glaubensdefinition zukam. Dennoch kann angenommen werden, dass das Homoousios zumindest auf Anraten Konstantins in das Bekenntnis aufgenommen wurde.⁴⁸ Konstantin setzte zwar das Homoousios als Bekenntnis im Reich durch, um die Reichseinheit zu wahren, jedoch dürfen Zweifel daran angemeldet werden, dass er das Homoousios im Sinne des nicänischen Glaubens interpretierte. Pier Franco Beatrice zeigt, dass Konstantin die ägyptisch-gnostischen Hermetik kannte und von ihr auch beeinflusst war. Er interpretierte das Homoousios aus dieser Tradition: “if *homoousios* was unwelcome to all the bishops of Nicaea without distinction, Constantine’s decision to insert it in the Creed can be explained only as an expression of his personal familiarity with the Hermetic tradition [...]”.⁴⁹ Die ägyptisch-gnostischen Lehre zeigt eine Nähe zum christlichen Gottes- und Inkarnationsglauben, sodass Gedanken des heidnischen *Poimandres* in die *Theosophia* aus dem sechsten Jahrhundert aufgenommen werden

48 Vgl. A. Grillmeier, *Jesus der Christus*, 400-403. Dagegen spricht Pier Franco Beatrice dem Kaiser ein größeres Gewicht zu. Er vertritt die Meinung, dass Konstantin sehr wohl den Begriff in das Bekenntnis einschreiben ließ. Jedoch versteht Konstantin das Homoousios aus seiner hermetischen Bildung, deutet ihn aber nicht subordinatianistisch: Beatrice vertritt die Meinung, “that in Constantine’s view *homoousios* was a pregnant technical term, with its own precise, traditional Hermetic meaning. In his thought the word *homoousios* did not contradict the distinction of two divine *ousiai*, precisely because it was the heritage of the ancient Egyptian theology and of the revelation of Hermes Trismegistus, and had therefore nothing to do with the Sabellian or monarchian identification-theology of the one hypostasis. Hermetism forms the conceptual background of the emperor’s theology”. P. F. Beatrice, “The Word «Homoousios»”, 264-272, hier 270. Siehe auch K. A. Chandler, “Deuteros Theos”, 1-17.

49 P. F. Beatrice, “The Word «Homoousios»”, 264, weiter siehe auch ebd. 264-269.

konnte.⁵⁰ Gott wird als Nous und Logos bezeichnet, der Logos jedoch auch als Sohn des Vaters. Der Logos-Sohn wird als gleichwesentlich mit dem Nous-Vater angesehen. Der Gedanke des *Poimandres* klärt jedoch die Gleichwesentlichkeit des Vaters und des Sohnes nicht auf einer Seinsebene, sondern als das Verhältnis des Gott-Vaters zu seinen Emanationen. Konstantin kam besonders durch seinen theologischen Berater Lactantius in Berührung mit dem hermetischen Vorstellungen, der heidnische Vorstellungen mit dem christlichen Monotheismus zu vereinbaren suchte. In seinen *Divinae institutiones* zitiert er mehrmals *Poimandres*. Hier zeigt sich die Ähnlichkeit zur *Oratio* des Konstantin mit der christologischen Aussage:

Ein einziger dürfte nun also, wenn man es genau nimmt, der Gott sein, der über alles die Aufsicht führt und für alles sorgt, der durch seinen Logos die Ordnung von allem eingerichtet hat. Der Logos aber, der selber ebenfalls Gott ist, ist zugleich auch Sohn Gottes. Denn welchen anderen Namen könnte man ihm beilegen außer der Anrede "Sohn" ohne schwere Fehler zu machen? Denn in der Tat dürfte ja der Vater von allem auch wohl zu Recht "Vater" des eigenen Logos genannt werden.⁵¹

Konstantin verteidigt zwar das Homoousios in der Reichskirche, allerdings interpretiert er es auf dem Hintergrund seines philosophischen Hermetismus subordinatianistisch. Wenn das Homoousios die Aufgabe des jüdischen Erbes bedeuten soll, entspricht dies nicht der Absicht des nicänischen Symbolums, sondern ist in der Interpretation Konstantins zu suchen und zu finden. Konstantin spricht in seiner *Oratio* vom "zweiten Gott" einen Gedanken, den der Kaiser mit Platon als wahr erklärt. Das christologische Verständnis wird dem platonischen Verständnis untergeordnet, um den christlichen

50 P. F. Beatrice, *Anonymi Monophysitae Theosophia. An Attempt at Reconstruction*, SVigChr 56, Brill, Leiden – Boston – Köln 2001. Zu *Poimandres* siehe Jens Holzhausen, *Der "Mythos vom Menschen", im hellenistischen Ägypten. Eine Studie zum "Poimandres", (= CH I), zu Valentin und dem gnostischen Mythos*, Theoph. 33, Hain, Bodenheim 1994, 7-79.

51 Konstantin, *Orationes* 9,4 (FC 55,153). Vgl. K. A. Chandler, "Deuteros Theos", 5: "Lactantius's influence thus provides the most direct and obvious answer for how Constantine learned to read Plato in the Hermetic way that he did".

Monotheismus mit dem paganen zu vereinen. Gott ist das Höchste, Jesus ist aber numerisch der zweite und dem Namen nach Gott. Der Kaiser, der sich erst auf dem Totenbett taufen ließ, darf daher wohl als “monotheistic polydeist” bezeichnet werden.⁵² Kegan A. Chandler fasst schließlich das konstantinische Verständnis zusammen:

For him [Constantine], there had first existed a transcendent, immaterial, and solitary God, who at some point emanated out of his individual immaterial substance a second entity, the *logos*. There was no literal eternal generation per se – the *logos* was immanent in God and did not literally exist as a distinct entity until his generation [...]. This second being was made of the same immaterial stuff as the first God, though his generation did not diminish the substance of the first deity in any way. There were ultimately two gods, *homoousios* (made of the same kind of stuff), and the Son was the subordinate agent of the Father.⁵³

Besonders hier zeigt sich der hermetische Einfluss, den Konstantin durch Laktantius erhalten hat. Für den byzantinischen Kaiser schuf der Vater den Sohn in der Weise, wie der Sohn die Ursache für die geschaffenen Dinge ist. In dieser Stufenontologie gibt es ein Sein des Vaters ohne den Sohn, wie es den Sohn vor der geschaffenen Welt gibt. Der Sohn hat ein ewiges Wesen, das er jedoch vom Vater her hat.⁵⁴ Wenn in der *Oratio* des Kaisers vom Sohn gesagt wird, dass er göttlich oder ewig sei, dann ist dies so zu verstehen, dass er die Göttlichkeit und Ewigkeit *per participationem* und nicht *ex se* hat. Das konstantinische Verständnis des *Homoousios* ist ein *logisches*, jedoch kein *ontologisches*.

Konstantin und sein Biograph vertreten also eine ähnliche Christologie. Wenn sie das Bekenntnis von Nicäa unterschreiben konnten, dann nur, weil sie es in ihrem Sinn und in einem

52 K. A. Chandler, “Deuteros Theos”, 8.

53 K. A. Chandler, “Deuteros Theos”, 10.

54 K. A. Chandler, “Deuteros Theos”, 11: “In the same way, for Constantine, the Son had a divine and eternal nature, being derived from the essence of the eternal Father, but before his begetting before all ages, he existed only potentially with God”.

subordinatianistischen Verständnis auslegten.⁵⁵ Mit dieser Interpretation ist jedoch das jüdische Erbe verloren gegangen. Der biblische Monotheismus wurde zugunsten einer Interpretation aufgegeben, die es dem Kaiser erlaubte, christliche und pagane Vorstellungen in der christlichen Religion zu bündeln. Die Auseinandersetzung zwischen Arius und Alexander sieht er laut seinem Biographen als unnützes Theologengezänk, das die Reichseinheit gefährdet. Hier liegt der politische Grund der kaiserlichen Entscheidung: “Also muss bei solchen Dingen die Vielfalt der Lehrmeinungen unterbunden werden, damit nicht etwa, wenn wir aufgrund der Schwäche der Natur das vorgelegte Problem nicht erklären können, oder wenn die Hörer aufgrund ihres langsamen Verstandes zu einem präzisen Verständnis des Gesagten nicht gelangen können, aus dem einen oder anderen dieser Gründe das Volk entweder in die Notwendigkeit der Gotteslästerung oder der Spaltung gerät”.⁵⁶

Kaiser Konstantin verstand es, die Ökonomie des Heils für die ganze Ökumene seines Reiches zu nutzen. “Erscheinen des Messias und kaiserlicher Friede, Christentum und Reich, werden zu einer unauflöselichen Einheit durch die Idee der Providentia verklammert”.⁵⁷ So stilisiert Eusebius Kaiser Konstantin als den Gottgesandten, der den moralischen Fortschritt der hellenistisch-römischen Kultur mit Theologie und Politik zu vereinen versteht: Römisches Imperium und Christentum gehen in seiner *Praeparatio Evangelica* (I 4,1-6) Hand in Hand, um Polytheismus und Polyarchie in die Einheit zu überführen. Die irdische Monarchie soll zum Abbild der himmlischen, göttlichen Monarchie werden. Hier liegt es nicht fern, Kaiser Konstantin als die

55 Vgl. K. A. Chandler, “Deuteros Theos”, 13: “If Eusebius, who did not believe in the eternity of the personal Son, found a way to not only sign the creed, but to speak of the Son as «eternal» in some sense, then so could Constantine. There are ultimately good grounds for concluding that while Constantine’s Christology travelled along a similar axis as Eusebius’s in regard to the Son’s generation, he had (along with Eusebius) interpreted the creed to fit his theology for the sake of concord at Nicaea”.

56 Eusebius von Caesarea, *De Vita Constantini* 2,69,3 (FC 83,299).

57 A. Grillmeier, *Jesus der Christus*, 389.

Verkörperung des göttlichen Logos zu sehen, so wie der Logos-Sohn die Verkörperung des Vaters ist.⁵⁸ Auch wenn Eusebius den Caesaropapismus erst spät in seiner ganzen Schärfe vertritt, so entwickelt sich zuvor schon seine politische Theologie. Ausschlaggebend für die kirchliche Macht Konstantins dürfte die Synode von Jerusalem 335 sein, auf der die Arianer nach einem dem Kaiser vorgelegten Glaubensbekenntnis wieder in die Catholica aufgenommen wurden. Die Synode spricht dem Kaiser das Recht zu, über die Orthodoxie zu urteilen. Hier dürfte der Beginn der Stilisierung Eusebius' liegen, den Kaiser als oberste Instanz auf Konzilien und Synoden vorzustellen. Gegen die Idealisierung Konstantins durch Eusebius muss allerdings festgehalten werden, dass sich der Kaiser selbst nicht als Glaubensautorität über den Bischöfen verstand, sondern eigene reichspolitische Ziele verfolgte. Für den Glauben entscheidend waren und sind die Kanones.⁵⁹ Eusebius schreibt hier Konstantin eine größere Autorität zu, als dieser für sich selbst in Anspruch nahm. Die theologischen Auseinandersetzungen drohten die Einheit des Reiches zu sprengen, darum setzte sich Konstantin für das nicänische Bekenntnis ein. Er selbst allerdings hielt für sich an seiner subordinatianistischen Anschauung fest. Sein Anliegen war, die politische Monarchie durch den Monotheismus zu legitimieren. Nach dieser Maßgabe sollte das Homoousios ausgelegt und verstanden werden.⁶⁰ Das jüdisch-biblische Erbe aber war damit endgültig verlassen.

58 Zum Kaiserbild des Eusebius siehe A. Grillmeier, *Jesus der Christus*, 391-398. Hiernach "ist der Kaiser das Abbild (εἰκὼν) des Herrschers der Welt. Zugleich ahmt er den Logos-Christus nach. So ist eine doppelte Mimesis gegeben: eine erste zwischen Kaiser und Gott, eine zweite in der Nachbildung der Mimesis, die zwischen Vater und Sohn gegeben ist. [...] Kraft dieser doppelten Mimesis tritt der Kaiser in eine Art von triadischem Verhältnis zu Vater und Logos" (391).

59 Vgl. Hermann Josef Sieben, *Sola Traditione? Zur Rolle der Heiligen Schrift auf den Konzilien der Alten Kirche*, in Georg Schölgén – Clemens Scholten, *Stimuli. Exegese und ihre Hermeneutik in Antike und Christentum*, FS für Ernst Dassmann, JbAC.E 23, Aschendorff, Münster 1996, 270-283.

60 K. A. Chandler, "Deuteros Theos", 14-15: "as a divinely-appointed magistrate, tasked with the religious harmony of the realm, it was his [Constantin's] God-given duty to enforce public unity around his theological statement. As a theologian, however, indeed, as the model theologian of his ideal monotheistic empire, his work was to interpret that statement into submission to his own views.

5. *Thesen*

Ist nun das nicänische Bekenntnis des *ὁμοούσιος* Verrat am jüdischen Erbe und der Durchbruch der Hellenisierung des Christentums? Auch wenn das *Homooousios* aus der griechischen Philosophie genommen ist, wird man das Anliegen der Konzilsväter hervorheben müssen, dass damit nichts anderes als der monotheistische Glaube bewahrt werden soll. Erst die nachnicänische Tradierung des konziliaren Bekenntnisses wird dem Glaubenssatz ein Verständnis zuschreiben, das gegen das biblische Gottesbild gelesen werden kann.⁶¹ Wichtig ist jedoch zu beachten, dass sich das junge Christentum in Auseinandersetzung mit dem rabbinischen Judentum befand, in dem es ebenso hellenistische Einschreibungen in die theologischen Traditionen gab. Das Christentum stand im Austausch und in Auseinandersetzung mit der jüdisch-hellenistischen Tradition, ist zugleich aber geprägt von der neuen Glaubenserfahrung in Jesus Christus. So darf mit Hubert Frankemölle gefolgert werden: “Alle christologischen Vorstellungen sind primär im hellenistischen Judentum vorgegeben, werden jedoch im NT – und dies ist das wirklich Neue – auf den konkreten Menschen Jesus von Nazaret übertragen, der als die Epiphanie JHWHs auf Erden geglaubt wird”.⁶² Jesus Christus ist nach christlichem Glauben die Offenbarkeit Gottes in der Geschichte, weil er der ewige Sohn des Vaters ist. Dieses Bekenntnis darf allerdings nicht für sich stehen bleiben, sondern es bedarf auch Konsequenzen daraus zu ziehen, die für das jüdisch-christliche Gespräch fruchtbar werden.

61 A. Grillmeier, *Jesus der Christus*, 300: “Nicaea wurde zu einer Wende, dies aber erst im Laufe einer längeren Rezeptionsgeschichte”.

62 Hubert Frankemölle, *Frühjudentum und Urchristentum. Vorgeschichte – Verlauf – Auswirkungen (4. Jahrhundert v. Chr. bis 4. Jahrhundert n. Chr.)*, KStTh 5, Kohlhammer, Stuttgart 2006, 79. Vgl. auch F. Bruckmann, *Trennt der Glaube an Christus*, 105: “Man kann die Anfänge des heutigen Christentums also ganz im Rahmen der innerisraelitischen Auseinandersetzung zwischen einem orthodox-biblischen Judentum und dem Hellenismus deuten”; Peter Schäfer, *Die Geburt des Judentums aus dem Geist des Christentums*.

Hans Urs von Balthasar sprach von Israel als “formaler Christologie”.⁶³ Israel und sein Glaube ist nicht einfach die religionsgeschichtliche Vorstufe des Christentums, sondern der Beginn der geschichtlichen Offenbarung Gottes. Eine israelsensible Christologie kann dem gerecht werden, indem eine jüdischen Kontextualisierung einbezogen wird. Gerade die kontextgebundene Vergewisserung des Sohnes Gottes in seinem jüdisch-biblischen Glauben wird einen neuen Zugang zur hohen Christologie erschließen, die Jesus als den Christus nicht in der Absetzung zum Glauben Israels skizziert, sondern in seiner bleibenden und eschatologischen Offenheit gegenüber dem jüdischen Nein zu ihm. Wenn die Gnadengaben, die Berufung durch Gott und damit die Erwählung Israels unwiderruflich sind (vgl. Röm 11,29), dann ist der christliche Glaube an Jesus als dem Christus in das bundesgeschichtliche Denken Israels einfügt. Gott bleibt seinem Bund treu und schafft in Jesus Christus keinen neuen Bund, der den Bund mit Israel ablöst und ersetzt. Gerade das Bekenntnis zur Gleichwesentlichkeit des Sohnes zum Vater verpflichtet das Christentum darauf, alle Elemente einer punitiven, ökonomischen und strukturellen Substitutions-Christologie⁶⁴ zu eliminieren und eine bundesgeschichtliche Christologie zu entwerfen. Gott, der als Schöpfer der Welt gepriesen wird, ist der Gott, der Jesus von den Toten auferweckt hat. “Christologie ist so vom Ursprung her Theologie, ist Lob des Gottes Israel”.⁶⁵ Auch wenn die Konzilsväter von Nicäa einen philosophischen Begriff in ihr Bekenntnis aufgenommen haben, so darf das christologische Bekenntnis nichts anderes sein als der doxologische Ausdruck dessen, wofür die biblische Theologie die Grundlage bildet. Damit wird die Kontinuität von Theologie zur Christologie, von Schöpfung zur Eschatologie gezogen und gleichzeitig

63 Hans Urs von Balthasar, *Einsame Zwiesprache. Martin Buber und das Christentum*, Johannes Verlag, Einsiedeln 1959, 76.

64 Vgl. R. Kendall Soulen, *The God of Israel and Christian Theology*, Fortress Press, Minneapolis 1996, 31-32.

65 Klaus Wengst, “Perspektiven für eine nicht-antijüdische Christologie. Beobachtungen und Überlegungen zu neutestamentlichen Texten”, in *EvTh* 59 (1999), 240-251.

gewahrt. Es ist das eine Wort Gottes, das am Anfang schafft und am Ende vollendet. Die frühchristliche Tradition konnte auf ein plurales Bild aus dem jüdischen Kontext zurückgreifen, aus denen sich Aussagen einer hohen Christologie entwickeln lassen. Christologie ist nicht der Gegensatz und Trennpunkt zum jüdischen Glauben; eine israelsensible Christologie kann vielmehr die Kontinuität bei aller Diskontinuität nachzeichnen und damit selbst die Christologie biblisch-systematisch begründen.

Die Geschichtstheologie und das Geschichtsdenken Israels wird christologisch dahingehend zu bedenken sein, dass das nicänische Bekenntnis eine Transformation eines philosophischen Gottesbildes ist, das geschichtsenthoben und deistisch wirkt. Der Gott Abrahams, Isaaks und Jakobs, der der Gott Jesu ist, erscheint in der Geschichte und offenbart sich damit als der Gott der *compassio* mit den Menschen hat.⁶⁶

Der Bundesgott geht den geschichtlichen Weg der Menschen soweit mit, dass er in Jesus Christus bis zum Kreuz schreitet und Leid und Qual zum Heil der Menschen erträgt. Tiefer und konkreter kann sich Gott nicht auf die Geschichte einlassen.

Damit verbunden ist die Herausforderung des Homoousios, dass die konkrete Menschheit Jesu in den theologischen Blick genommen werden muss. „Das Wort wurde – nicht «Fleisch», Mensch, erniedrigter und leidender Mensch in irgendeiner Allgemeinheit, sondern *jüdisches* Fleisch“ – so das berühmte Wort Karl Barths.⁶⁷ Das

66 Vgl. zur *compassio* Gottes Jan-Heiner Tück, „Passion Gottes? Zum unerledigten Disput um die Rede vom leidenden Gott“ in *Ephemerides Theologicae Diacovensenses* 23 (2015), 9-34.

67 Karl Barth, *Kirchliche Dogmatik IV/1: Die Lehre von der Versöhnung*, Kaiser, Zürich-Zollikon 1953, 181. In dieser Linie stehen auch die Worte Johannes Pauls II.: „Manche Menschen betrachten die Tatsache, daß Jesus Jude war und daß sein Milieu die jüdische Welt war, als einfachen kulturellen Zufall, der auch durch eine andere religiöse Inkulturation ersetzt und von der Person des Herrn losgelöst werden könnte, ohne seine Identität zu verlieren. Aber diese Menschen verkennen nicht nur die Heilsgeschichte, sondern noch radikaler: Sie greifen die wahre Menschwerdung selber an“. Johannes Paul II., *Ansprache an die Teilnehmer des vatikanischen Kolloquiums über die Wurzeln des Antijudaismus im christlichen Bereich* am 31. Oktober 1997, in Hans Hermann Henrix – Wolfgang Kraus (Hg.), *Die Kirchen und das Judentum II: Dokumente von 1986-2000*, Verlag Bonifatius-Druckerei, Paderborn 2001, 109.

“jüdische Fleisch” wird der jüdische Stachel im Christentum bleiben und vor der gnostischen und spiritualistischen Versuchung warnen, nur allgemein von einer Menschwerdung des Logos zu sprechen, das alles andere als geschichtlich kontingent abtut. Der Logos Gottes ist jedoch im Juden Jesus von Nazaret Mensch geworden, der beschnitten wurde und die Tora befolgte.⁶⁸ Als männlicher Jude ist er der Christus. Die Gleichwesentlichkeit Jesu mit dem Vater bedeutet aber auch, die wahre Menschheit Jesu, die nicht in der Gottheit aufgelöst werden darf, entsprechend zu würdigen.⁶⁹ Gerade freiheitstheoretische Überlegungen in der Christologie werden in der antiarianischen Stoßrichtung des nicänischen Bekenntnisses die doppelte Ausrichtung des Homoousios auf die Gottheit und Menschheit Jesu zu bedenken haben.⁷⁰

Abstract

The article “Betrayal of the Bible? The Biblical Faith in God and the Homoousios” explores the question of whether the *ὁμοούσιος* of the Creed of Nicaea was an apostasy from the biblical faith in God. It is shown that the bishops at the Council wanted to explain and specify biblical monotheism with the Hellenistic term. Only the policy of Emperor Constantine leaves the biblical context in the aftermath of the Council. The statements of the pre-existence and consubstantiality of the Son with the Father can be interpreted in such a way that they

68 Vgl. Jan-Heiner Tück (Hg.), *Die Beschneidung Jesu. Was sie Juden und Christen heute bedeutet*, Herder, Freiburg i. Br. 2020.

69 A. Grillmeier, *Jesus der Christus*, 386: “Die *fides Nicaena* forderte durch ihre These von der wahren Gottheit des Sohnes (und des Pneumas) eine erneute Anstrengung der theologischen Reflexion, und zwar für die Deutung sowohl des Verhältnisses von Vater und Sohn im einen Gott als auch des göttlichen Logos zu seinem Fleische”.

70 Vgl. hierzu Manuel Schlögl, *Die Freiheit des Sohnes. Christologie und Schriftauslegung bei Maximus Confessor*, StSSTH 58, Echter, Würzburg 2022.

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correspond to Jesus' self-understanding in the biblical testimony. It is possible to identify aspects of a "high Christology" in the religious self-understanding of Jesus' time. This has consequences for a contemporary Christology that tries to think and argue in an Israel-sensitive way.



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The Appointment of Bishop Miklós Dudás to the Episcopal See of Hajdúdorog in 1939

Tamás VÉGHSEŐ

1. Introduction; 2. First opinions delivered to the nunciature in Budapest; 3. First contacts between the Holy See and the Hungarian government; 4. The unusual proposal of the Budapest government; 5. Bishop Bazil Takács's candidature; 6. The appointment of Miklós Dudás; 7. Conclusion

1. Introduction

When István Miklósy, Bishop of Hajdúdorog (1913-1937) died in the early hours of 29 October 1937, the chief consideration about the appointment of his successor was the expectation for the new bishop not only to be energetic but also to be open to compromise, a quality inevitable both for survival in the realm of politics and for cooperation with the Latin-rite bishops. Conditions prevailing in the Eparchy are well illustrated by a letter sent to the Budapest Nunciature via the Jesuit Béla Bangha.¹ The writer of the letter, a prominent official of the Greek Catholic parish of Debrecen, committed his thoughts to writing on the very day(!) of Bishop Miklósy's death in order to draw the attention of the influential Jesuit father to the sorry state of the Eparchy, as well as to the Basilian monks Miklós Dudás and Imre János Liki, whom he saw as the promise of revival and progress.

Not a single Latin-rite bishop attended Bishop Miklósy's funeral. Even the Budapest Nunciature entrusted the responsibility of representing itself to Arch-Provost Jenő Bányay.² The government

1 Archivio Apostolico Vaticano (=AAV) Archivio della Nunziatura Apostolica in Ungheria (=Arch. Nunz. Ungheria) busta 54, fasc. 2, fol. 254r-256v.

2 AAV Arch. Nunz. Ungheria, busta 54, fasc. 2, fol. 251r.

of the Eparchy of Hajdúdorog was assumed by Arch-Provost Jenő Bányay, as Vicar Capitular. Of this, the Vicar himself notified Nuncio Angelo Rotta,³ who began to request information necessary for the selection of a successor two weeks later.

2. First opinions delivered to the nunciature in Budapest

At the Archives of the Budapest Nunciature, a letter dated 17 November, addressed to Lajos Szmrecsányi, Archbishop of Eger, has been preserved,⁴ yet the first reply of 20 November came not from him but from Gyula Czapik, Canon of Nagyvárad (Oradea) who had been requested orally to do this task. In his response,⁵ Gyula Czapik, living in Budapest, emphasises that he does not convey his personal view but provides a summary of the information obtained from the Greek Catholic priests he has consulted. In his report, he mentions eight names altogether in three sets, the arrangement of which, along with the quantity of information for the individual names, also suggests a kind of ranking. The first part contains two names, supplied with numbers as well. Number one is István Szántay-Szémán, Vicar of the Apostolic Exarchate of Miskolc, while number two belongs to the Basilian monk Miklós Dudás. The inclusion of Szántay-Szémán on the list of eligible candidates is somewhat surprising. It is almost certain that the name of the Greek Catholic priest and scholar was added to the list – actually to its top – in response to the Nuncio's express interest. It seems obvious that the Nuncio's attention was primarily captured by Szántay-Szémán's academic activities and he had no knowledge of the fact that he was a married man. Thus, despite occupying the first place on the list compiled

3 AAV Arch. Nunz. Ungheria, busta 54, fasc. 2, fol. 259r.

4 AAV Arch. Nunz. Ungheria, busta 54, fasc. 2, fol. 260rv.

5 AAV Arch. Nunz. Ungheria, busta 54, fasc. 2, fol. 261r-263r. On Gyula Czapik's covering letter, Nuncio Rotta wrote that he had orally requested Zoltán Meszlényi, Auxiliary Bishop of Esztergom, as well to formulate his opinion. However, the opinion of the Bishop, who would later suffer martyrdom, is nowhere to be found in the records.

by Czapik (in all probability, in line with the Nuncio's interest), the epithet *uxoratus* next to his name also indicates that he could not be accounted with in selecting the new Bishop of Hajdúdorog.

Conversely, considerably more extensive information is provided about the Basilian monk Miklós Dudás, listed as number two. In it, his Máriapócs and rural origins are highlighted – a detail made significant by the potential concomitant implication that the detrimental influence of a sizeable clerical extended family was not to be feared. His thorough theological training, which he acquired at the Collegio Germanico ed Ungarico in Rome, is also accentuated. It is noted that, in addition to Italian and German, he is fluent in some Slavic languages as well. No-one may question his Hungarian sentiments and patriotic attitude, which have played a central part in building his political network. As Superior of the Basilian Order in Hungary, he has demonstrated his aptitude not only by constructing the Basilian Religious House of Hajdúdorog but by settling Basilian sisters in Máriapócs as well. His rhetorical and public-speaking skills appear to be suitable in every respect. Among the candidate's negative traits, Canon Czapik's informants stressed his autocratic character. However, on this point, Czapik remarks: Given the torpid church life of the Hungarian Greek Catholics, this characteristic of the candidate may rather prove to be a virtue for a leader.

With no number attached, separated from the previous and the following set, the third candidate in Czapik's report is the Basilian monk Imre János Liki. Two years younger than Miklós Dudás, this candidate was also a native of Máriapócs and boasted a similarly thorough theological education. As opposed to Miklós Dudás, he was less well-known to the clergy of the Eparchy as, authorised by the Order, he had primarily been active in Czechoslovakia. His outstanding intellectual abilities were matched with great modesty. Canon Czapik notes that he has not been given a real chance to prove his abilities and readiness to act yet.

In the third part of the report, five members of the Chapter of Hajdúdorog – Jenő Bányay, László Sereghy, Sándor Mihalovics, István Bihon and Viktor (Nicefor) Melles – are listed. Their brief descriptions reveal that the only reason for their inclusion among the candidates was their widowed or celibate status. In his summary, Canon Czapik comments that the clergy of the Eparchy look forward to the appointment of Miklós Dudás. Some also evaluate the chances of Canon István Bihon as good because he is said to enjoy the support of Prince-Primate Jusztinián Serédi. His appointment would mean the continuation of the Miklósy Era though, which is not desired by the *zelanti* seeking to renew the Eparchy.

The chronologically second opinion is from Lajos Szmrecsányi, Archbishop of Eger.⁶ The Archbishop of Eger did not wish to avail himself of the opportunity to express his views about specific candidates. Instead, he primarily devotes his letter to discussing the grievances inflicted upon him by Bishop Miklósy. He resents the Greek Catholic Bishop striving to restrain those intending to switch to the Latin Rite, though he himself assessed the justifications of the requests as fully founded in every instance. He suggests that, in selecting a successor, it must be ensured that the Greek Catholic Bishop will show greater flexibility and readiness to accept compromise in relation to Latin prelates. By raising the subject, Archbishop Szmrecsányi touches upon the gravest Greek Catholic issue of the interwar period and gives it a completely one-sided interpretation. Naturally, Bishop Miklósy sought to stem the wave of rite changing but all he could achieve with his attempts was provoke the antipathy of the Latin prelates.

6 AAV Arch. Nunz. Ungheria, busta 54, fasc. 2, fol. 264r-265v. The opinion of Lajos Szmrecsányi, Archbishop of Eger. Ibid. fol. 266r. Rotta thanks Szmrecsányi for the report.

3. First contacts between the Holy See and the Hungarian government

After Bishop Miklósy's death, contemporaneously with the actions of the Budapest Nuncio – as a matter of course – the Hungarian Government also took some steps. As early as 6 November, the Hungarian Embassy to the Holy See dispatched a note in French to the Secretariat of State of the Vatican, requesting that, in selecting the new Bishop of Hajdúdorog, the Holy See not make a decision or make a promise to anybody until it discussed the question with the Hungarian Government.⁷ From the Secretariat of State, Archbishop Giuseppe Pizzardo sent the note to Nuncio Rotta, quoting the opinion of the Secretary of the Congregation for the Oriental Churches, Cardinal Eugène Tisserant, in his enclosed letter.⁸ Archbishop Pizzardo ordered the Nuncio to find out what special requirements the Hungarian Government might have concerning the matter. In the note, he felt the sentence alluding to the active involvement of the Hungarian Government in the process of choosing a successor peculiar. He asked the Nuncio to clarify this point.

Cardinal Tisserant deemed the situation of the Eparchy of Hajdúdorog to be extremely delicate and voiced his fear that substantial damage could be done by unwanted interference of a political nature in the process of selecting the new bishop. On 22 November, the Secretary of the Congregation for the Oriental Churches himself wrote a letter to Nuncio Rotta,⁹ even making concrete suggestions about the new Bishop of Hajdúdorog. In Cardinal Tisserant's proposal, as a possible successor to Bishop Miklósy, Bishop Bazil Takács, Hierarch of the Ruthenian Greek Catholics in the United States (1924-1948), could also be considered. He signals to the Nuncio that Lajos Shvoy, Bishop

7 AAV Arch. Nunz. Ungheria, busta 54, fasc. 2, fol. 269r. In the note, the Ambassador misnames Bishop Miklósy as Miskolczy, as an additional sign of the deceased prelate's isolation.

8 AAV Arch. Nunz. Ungheria, busta 54, fasc. 2, fol. 267rv.

9 AAV Arch. Nunz. Ungheria, busta 54, fasc. 2, fol. 268rv.

of Székesfehérvár, knew the candidate well.¹⁰ Simultaneously, he also requested him to engage in cautious information gathering about the person of Bazil Takács so as to discover whether the Hungarian Government would have any objections to him on grounds that he was originally from the territory of the current Czechoslovakia, as well as to gauge how the clergy and the faithful of the Eparchy of Hajdúdorog would receive his appointment. Furthermore, Cardinal Tisserant also referred to the fact that, conveying his purely personal opinion, the Adviser for Church Relations of the Hungarian Embassy to the Holy See, Ferenc Luttor, had also proposed the appointment of Archbishop Antal Papp, Apostolic Exarch of Miskolc, which was immediately rejected by the Cardinal though. He thought that such a choice would not be received favourably and the Archbishop was simply too old to assume governance of the Eparchy of Hajdúdorog.

Nuncio Rotta replied to Archbishop Pizzardo and Cardinal Tisserant on 6 December.¹¹ In his letter, he notes that he has not been able to collect meaningful information because Prince-Primate Serédi has been away for three weeks and he hopes to learn about the Government's intentions through him. He means to use his correspondence to clarify the role of the Hungarian Government. He furnishes a reminder that, according to the established practice in Hungary, prior to episcopal appointments, the Holy See gives the Hungarian Government two months to communicate its observations and submit its proposals. The agreement named *intesa semplice*, i.e. 'simple consensus', was in force between the Holy See and Hungary from 1927. Under the agreement, episcopal appointments would be preceded by bilateral negotiations, at the end of which the Government could make observations about the candidates. In practice, this meant that the Ministry of Foreign Affairs handed over the list of the names

10 On 13 December, the Nuncio actually sent Bishop Shvoy the letter requesting information. AAV Arch. Nunz. Ungheria, busta 54, fasc. 2, fol. 270rv.

11 ASV Arch. Nunz. Ungheria, busta 54, fasc. 2, fol. 273r-275v.

of candidates acceptable to the Government on an ordinary sheet of paper to the Nuncio. As Bishop Miklósy died on 29 October, the Government had time practically until the end of December. Thus, in response to the request in the note, it could be stated that the Holy See would at all times respect the rights of others and would not take any action before the expiry of the two months' deadline.

4. The unusual proposal of the Budapest government

On 17 December, the Hungarian Government exercised its right guaranteed by *intesa semplice*. This is reported in Nuncio Rotta's detailed letter to Secretary of State Pacelli from 23 December, with a copy sent to Cardinal Tisserant as well.¹² To the letter, he encloses the list of names personally handed over by Minister of Foreign Affairs Kálmán Kánya,¹³ no doubt dispensing with all the properties of an official document. The text of the no more than five-line long document in French, without a heading, date or signature, is the following:

Évêché catholique de rite oriental de Hajdudorog. Basile Takács, évêque catholique de rite oriental d'Amérique. Nicolas Dudás, provincial de l'Ordre des Basilites, supérieur du Monastère Basilite à Mária-Pócs.

At the top of the sheet, the Nuncio wrote in pencil that it had been given to him by the Minister of Foreign Affairs on 17 December 1937, during their personal meeting. However, the bottom features a positively surprising note, written in ink, also by Nuncio Rotta. It relates that, the next day, i.e. on 18 December, the Minister of Foreign Affairs sent his Chief of Staff, Count Csáky, to the Nunciature, informing the Nuncio that an error had been made in compiling the list and the first place was not supposed to be occupied by Bishop Takács but by the Basilian Miklós Dudás. This interlude is recounted by the Nuncio in his letter as well, but he adds that, after all, the person

¹² ASV Arch. Nunz. Ungheria, busta 54, fasc. 2, fol. 276r-279r.

¹³ ASV Arch. Nunz. Ungheria, busta 54, fasc. 2, fol. 27r.

of Bishop Takács continues to be acceptable to the Government. At the same time, it may be taken for granted that it did matter to the Government who was in the first place. By this time, the information that – as will be seen – would arrive at the Nunciature only a month later might already have reached the Ministry of Foreign Affairs.

At the beginning of his detailed letter, Nuncio Rotta unequivocally states that now he has all the essential information necessary for the selection of the new Bishop of Hajdúdorog. First he deals with the person of Archbishop Papp. As even the Secretary of the Congregation for the Oriental Churches has indicated that the Archbishop is too old to assume governance of the Eparchy, his candidacy cannot be seriously counted with. He also hints at the fact that the Archbishop has a great many relatives in the Eparchy, posing a not insignificant obstacle to efficient governing. Relying on information from Gyula Czapik, he effectively excludes the Hajdúdorog Canons (László Sereghy, Sándor Mihalovics, István Bihon and Viktor Melles)¹⁴ from the category of eligible candidates. He also quotes Canon Czapik's words in describing the next two candidates, Miklós Dudás and Imre János Liki. In the way of a summary, he declares that, out of the Hungarian candidates, Miklós Dudás may be considered, to whom only his young age (only 35 at the time) might be raised as an objection.

5. Bishop Bazil Takách's candidature

However, as the candidate of the Congregation for the Oriental Churches was Bishop Bazil Takács, the Nuncio sought the opinion of Prince-Primate Serédi on him and also requested him to find out about the position of the Hungarian Government without mentioning the Congregation's intention. The Prince-Primate took no exception to the appointment of Bishop Takács. Moreover, he convinced the Minister of Culture that his name should be admitted to the Government's list.

¹⁴ He makes no mention of Arch-Provost Jenő Bányay.

The Nuncio gives an account of the private discussion with Bishop Lajos Shvoy as well. The Bishop of Székesfehérvár provided a positive characterisation of Bishop Takács, describing him as a zealous prelate faithful to Rome. He argues that his transfer to the See of Hajdúdorog would free him from the heavy cross that he must carry on his shoulders in his present place of service owing to opposition from the faithful and the priests. To his knowledge, Archbishop Cicognani, Apostolic Delegate to the United States already advised Bishop Takács of the plans of the Holy See during his trip to Washington. Shvoy opines that Miklós Dudás could be Bishop Takács's successor in the United States, where he currently performs popular missions.

All in all, the Nuncio takes the view that a principal expectation for the new Bishop of Hajdúdorog is to be truly faithful to Rome and dedicated, as well as to have the will to maintain friendly ties with the Latin Church. He narrows down the list of eligible candidates to Bishop Takács and Miklós Dudás. Rotta also attempts to answer the question how the faithful and the clergy of the Eparchy would receive the appointment of either candidate. Citing his sources, he declares that the priests and the faithful expect the appointment of Miklós Dudás and that they would receive it favourably. On the contrary, they do not even talk about the possible appointment of Bishop Takács. The latter would not be met with general approval, and he would need to do much to have himself accepted. The Nuncio also solicited Prince Primate Serédi for his opinion. He gave the not so flattering reply that the always complaining 'Greeks' would not receive either Bazil Takács or Miklós Dudás – or anyone else – in a favourable way.

In addition, the Nuncio indicates that the Holy See need not contemplate the danger of a schism. Thus, it is not to be feared that the clergy or part of the faithful will reject the bishop appointed by the Holy See and switch to Orthodoxy. If a candidate who is welcome by the Government is appointed, there will be no major impediments to his governing activity.

Nuncio Rotta closes his letter with the conclusion that the Holy See has complete freedom in its decision. The only request he makes is that the selection of the candidate should be communicated to him in due course so that he may forward the news to the Government, avoiding competent ministers receiving information about the decision from the press.

By the end of the year 1937, thus virtually everything was in place for a swift decision to be made. Nevertheless, the new Bishop of Hajdúdorog would not be appointed for more than a year. The main reason for the delay was the circumstance that word about Bishop Takács's candidacy spread in January 1938. In his letter cited above, Nuncio Rotta pointed out that Bishop Takács was not really counted with or talked about in Hungary. However, when the news was leaked – as Rotta alleged – from the Ministry of Foreign Affairs that the number one candidate of the Holy See was the prelate living in the United States, the Nunciature received information that, at first, made decision makers at the Vatican uncertain and, subsequently, convinced them that they should choose Miklós Dudás instead. In the archival materials of the Budapest Nunciature, two records appearing to be sufficient in themselves to explain the turn of events have been preserved from the start of 1938.

The first document is from Gyula Czapik, who, it seems, was the most important source of information on this issue for the Nunciature. The covering letter that speaks of an Italian translation of Czapik's Hungarian report is dated 11 January 1938. Therefore, it is likely that the Canon penned the document in the early days of the year. The next day, the Nuncio sent a notification about the content of the letter to Secretary of State Pacelli and Cardinal Tisserant.¹⁵ Gyula Czapik summarised the information he had acquired about Bishop Takács, whom he did not know personally, in seven points. Already in the first point, he

15 AAV Arch. Nunz. Ungheria, busta 57, fasc. 1, fol. 9r-12v.

makes it clear that the Greek Catholic clergy consider the appointment of Bazil Takács as Bishop of Hajdúdorog, as well as of Dudás as Bishop for the United States so unlikely that his informants simply dismiss even the mere suggestion as a canard and believe it is impossible that Rome would do any such thing. Point 2 delineates perceptions of the candidate in Hungary: 'It is widely known here that Takács did not live up to the expectations in America'. This was not said of him by priests who had switched to Orthodoxy in America but by clerics who had remained Greek Catholic and were in intensive correspondence with their relatives in Hungary. These letters depict Bazil Takács as a bishop unable to govern, incapable of dealing with people and even bungling in his actions. One of Canon Czapik's informants even claims to know (Point 3) that, prior to his appointment as bishop, during his activities in Ungvár (Uzhhorod), Bazil Takács, as Director of the Episcopal Fund Management Office,¹⁶ was obliged to tolerate 'severe inquiries', on the details of which Archbishop Antal Papp, former Bishop of Munkács (Mukachevo) may supply more information. Information regarded as most serious by Czapik is contained in Points 4 and 5. The prevailing conviction among Hungarian Greek Catholics was that Bazil Takács's episcopal appointment had been enabled by his friendly relations with Czechoslovak President Masaryk. Seen as highly disadvantageous by the general public in Hungary, this information was complemented by the circumstance that Bishop Takács was a Czechoslovak citizen. In the final point of his letter, Point 7, even Canon Czapik emphasises that the 'Czechoslovak connection' represents a major drawback, making Bishop Takács vulnerable to attacks. In Point 6, he also mentions an episode from Bishop Takács's past, given great publicity in Hungary and vastly exaggerated by those opposing his appointment. A photograph of Bishop Takács, taken at a banquet organised in his honour, showing

¹⁶ He was Director of the Episcopal Fund Management Office of Munkács (Mukachevo) and Administrator of the Printing Press *Unió* from 1911.

the Bishop in the company of ‘half-naked girls’ was widely circulated. Even his ill-wishers would have been reluctant to allege that he made merry in the company of frivolous ladies, but he would be reproached for not being thoughtful enough to avoid the situation.

Nuncio Rotta forwarded Canon Czapik’s report almost word by word, subsequently presenting his position on each point. First, he comments on the scandalous photograph and qualifies the event as a mere ‘accident’, which may happen to anyone and in no way undermines the candidate’s morality. He refuses to express his views on Bazil Takács’s leadership skills, leaving the exploration of the issue to other organs of the Holy See. He would deem the problem of Bishop Takács’s Czechoslovak citizenship relevant if it were also objected to by the Hungarian Government. However, as the Government has given its approval to the appointment of Bishop Takács, the Nuncio considers the question of citizenship insignificant.

Rotta also reports that he has had the opportunity to exchange a few words about Bishop Takács with Prince-Primate Serédi as well. The Prince-Primate noted in advance that he did not know the candidate personally and could therefore not speak of his leadership skills or their absence. Serédi argues that the accusations against Bishop Takács ought not to be accorded much importance, either. He shared the Nuncio’s opinion that, for many (‘thank God, not all’) of the ‘Easterners’, truth was a rather relative concept and their conscience was not particularly troubled if they engaged in hyperbole, spread calumnies or simply invented things. The Prince-Primate also agreed with the Nuncio that the Hungarian Government would have made it known if the candidate’s Czechoslovak citizenship were to pose an impediment. He also confided to the Nuncio that, over the preceding days, he had received a few anonymous letters in which – as he supposed – the Hajdúdorog Canons eliminated one another as

potential candidates,¹⁷ but not a single indication had been supplied against Bishop Takács. Thus, the Nuncio draws the pragmatic conclusion that, notwithstanding his young age, Miklós Dudás appears to be the right candidate. Good-minded, vigorous and educated, he is preferred by the Government and is known and accepted by the clergy and the faithful alike. Should the Holy See nonetheless choose Bishop Takács, that would imply to the Nuncio that he is fit to govern the Eparchy of Hajdúdorog, which is in need of full spiritual renewal after a long period of torpor and neglect. Bishop Takács may expect massive resistance and little sympathy, but one need not be concerned about schism.

Secretary of State Pacelli thanked the Nuncio for the notification on 21 January.¹⁸ In his letter, he points to the fact that the Hungarian Government actively concerns itself with the question of succession. He ends his letter by expressing his hope that the pre-selected candidate, i.e. Bishop Takács, will be able to enlist the support of the clergy and the faithful of the Eparchy of Hajdúdorog. This concluding sentence implies that, in spite of the apprehensions, the Holy See invariably continued to regard the transfer of Bishop Takács as the best solution.

A few days later, however, the case took a dramatically different direction. On 31 January 1938, Nuncio Rotta sent Cardinal Tisserant a solicitor's brief and a notarial act verifying its authenticity, accompanied by a short letter. The brief was from a woman by the name of Anna Males, who, in 1931, had commissioned Emil Neviczky, a lawyer living in the United States, to start a paternity suit against Bishop Bazil Takács. The woman claimed that her daughter called Mária was born of him. Although Takács, serving as a director of spiritual life at the time, had promised her to support her in raising the child, he did not

17 '...i Canonici di Hajdudorog, possibili candidati, pare si demoliscano caritatevolmente a vicenda...' – the Nuntio quotes the Prince-Primate's words with a touch of irony (underlining the word *caritatevolmente*). AAV Arch. Nunz. Ungheria, busta 57, fasc. 1, 11r.

18 AAV Arch. Nunz. Ungheria, busta 57, fasc. 1, fol. 13r.

keep his promise. This was the reason why she decided to initiate proceedings for the declaration of parentage.

The Nuncio points out that the document, which he received as an anonymous letter, must have been uncovered by those seeking to prevent Bishop Bazil Takács's appointment as Bishop of Hajdúdorog. In fact, the brief was issued as early as 1931, while the notarial attestation was signed at the District Court of Ungvár on 20 January 1938. The document sent to the Nunciature amounted to more than mere rumour or calumny. The brief and the woman's claim are of course insufficient to establish the veracity of the accusation. Nevertheless, it is undeniable that Bishop Takács's work in Hungary would have been considerably hindered by the repeated surfacing of documents about the paternity suit. It is by no means a far-fetched idea to posit that this record eventually played a decisive part in the Holy See's withdrawal of Bazil Takács's appointment as Bishop of Hajdúdorog and in its final decision in favour of Miklós Dudás.

6. The appointment of Miklós Dudás

At the same time, it is also clear that the working papers of the joint discussion of the Congregation for the Oriental Churches and of the Congregation for Extraordinary Ecclesiastical Affairs held on 20 March 1939¹⁹ did not contain this allegation. The document submitted to the decision makers emphasises that it would be inappropriate to transfer Bishop Takács, faithful to the Holy See, because that might be assessed as the victory of local factions opposed to Rome over the issue of married clergy. Albeit a completely legitimate argument, this point

19 Archivio della Congregazione per le Chiese Orientali (=ACO) Bizantini – Hajdudorog 545/37. fol. 52/1-15. ACO Rutheni – Hajdudorog 192/57. fol. 53r-54v. & Archivio della Sezione per i Rapporti con gli Stati della Segreteria di Stato (=ASRS) S. Congregazione per gli Affari Ecclesiastici Straordinarii (=AA.EE.SS.) Pio XII, Parte I, Ungheria, Anno 1937-1959, pos. 76. fasc. 56. fol. 35r-36r.

was far from being a novelty: The possibility envisaged in it could be expected even when Bishop Takács's transfer was first considered.

Thus, the Cardinals of the two Dicastries were not faced with the question whether to choose Bazil Takács or Miklós Dudás as the new Bishop of Hajdúdorog but simply if the appointment of the latter would be possible. Answering the question was further aided by an additional set of incoming opinions, which were summarised by Cardinal Ermenegildo Pellegrinetti, who was put in charge of the case. Benedictine Abbot Neuzil Procopius, who headed a Russian Catholic mission at the Abbey of Lisle, Illinois, had a particularly positive opinion about Miklós Dudás's missionary tour in 1937-1938. The young monk was seen as fit for the episcopacy by his religious superior, Archimandrite Dionysius Dmytro Tkachuk, Superior General of the Basilian Order of St Josaphat, as well. He voiced concerns in no more than two areas. During his American missionary tour, the locals inferred from some of Miklós Dudás's remarks that he was supportive of the preservation of the institution of married clergy. This, however, was contrary to the ideas of the Holy See. His other worry was prompted by the candidate's 'excessive nationalism'. Also consulted on the matter, Archbishop of Zagreb Alojzije Stepinac, who had been a fellow seminarian of Miklós Dudás at the German-Hungarian College, shared this sentiment as well. Even then, he paid special attention to the Basilian seminarian, who conspicuously cherished his Hungarian identity, conducting services in Hungarian in the College Chapel as well despite the prevailing prohibitions issued by the Holy See. The Cardinal in charge of the case would dispel these concerns with the assistance of the Congregation for the Oriental Churches. Cardinal Tisserant indicated that he had discussed the worries about married clergy with the candidate in person and was reassured that the only priority for Miklós Dudás was to treat married clergy and their families tactfully and equitably in the course of the gradual introduction of obligatory celibacy. He did not voice any criticism

about the decision of the Holy See. Regarding the misgivings of the Archbishop of Zagreb (as well as, actually, of the Basilian Superior General), the Secretary of the Congregation for the Oriental Churches gently pointed out that Stepinac's expressions were also suggestive of a nationalistic approach, in connection with which a certain amount of scepticism was always acceptable. By using this polite wording, he meant to stress that whatever was felt by a Croat or Ukrainian to be an instance of excessive Hungarian nationalism might not even be noticed by an impartial observer. Cardinal Tisserant did not consider the use of the Hungarian liturgy as a major obstacle, either, as it would no longer be a source of scandal in post-Trianon Hungary.

The majority of the cardinals were convinced by these arguments; only Cardinal Francesco Marmaggi placed yet another hurdle to the appointment of Bishop Dudás. The former Bucharest and Prague Nuncio was not free from his earlier negative sentiments about Hungarians as a curial cardinal, either. He began his contribution by warning that the Hungarian Government ought not to have stated its opinion in the first place. Although Cardinal Secretary of State Luigi Maglione explained the essence of *intesa semplice* to him, that failed to pacify him. He proposed that Miklós Dudás's appointment be suspended as long as the opinion of Dionizie Nyárádi, Bishop of Kőrös (Kriş), whom he regarded as an absolute authority and who was widely known for his anti-Hungarian feelings, was received. Though only one of his fellow cardinals supported him in this move, Pope Pius XII finally opted for this arrangement on 25 March. He approved the recommendation of Miklós Dudás for the Episcopal See of Hajdúdorog, unless Bishop Nyárádi was to present a position thwarting it.

Bishop Nyárádi stayed in Rome at the time, so Cardinal Tisserant sought his opinion in person on 31 March.²⁰ Somewhat surprisingly,

20 AA.EE.SS. Pio XII, Parte I, Ungheria, Anno 1937-1959, pos. 76. fasc. 56. fol. 34rv.

Bishop Nyárádi orally described the candidacy of Miklós Dudás as the ‘best possible choice’. At the same time, his position committed to writing on the same day does not reflect what he spoke about previously.²¹ His enthusiasm is nowhere to be found. He recalls Archbishop Stepinac’s concerns cited above about Miklós Dudás’s alleged nationalism, alludes to the fears of certain Basilians and emphasises that, in the event of his appointment as bishop, the Holy See is to issue clear and unmistakable directives for him concerning the liturgical use of the Hungarian language. Although Bishop Nyárádi did not explicitly state that he supported Miklós Dudás’s episcopal appointment, Cardinal Tisserant thought he did not offer any significant counter-arguments, either. Therefore, he asked Cardinal Secretary of State Luigi Maglione to take the steps necessary in such a situation and ensure that Basilian monk Miklós Dudás be appointed to the Episcopal See of Hajdúdorog.²²

The official machinery was set in motion, so much so that, on 6 April, Nuncio Rotta could report that Miklós Dudás had accepted appointment to the episcopacy. Aware ‘what a heavy cross was placed upon his shoulders’, he called the news of his appointment ‘an unwanted Easter present’.²³

7. Conclusion

In hindsight, it would be appropriate to say that he could not even suspect how heavy the cross of the episcopacy would become for him in reality. The trials and tribulations awaiting him as Bishop of Hajdúdorog during the years and decades following the World War seemed to reside in the realm of the inconceivable in 1939.

21 ACO Rutheni – Hajdudorog 192/57. fol. 59rv. AA.EE.SS. Pio XII, Parte I, Ungheria, Anno 1937-1959, pos. 76. fasc. 56. fol. 37r.

22 AA.EE.SS. Pio XII, Parte I, Ungheria, Anno 1937-1959, pos. 76. fasc. 56. fol. 34rv.

23 AA.EE.SS. Pio XII, Parte I, Ungheria, Anno 1939-1948, pos. 81. fol. 76r-77r.

When the hard times came, it proved to be a decisive factor that the Hungarian Greek Catholic community was led by a young and firm bishop. The circumstances of Bishop Dudás's appointment in 1939 are rendered particularly meaningful by the fact that, in 1948, his 'rival', Bishop Bazil Takács, died of a serious illness in the United States at the age of 69 – at a time when the Communist regime composed the scenario for the abolition of the Greek Catholic Church in Hungary. It would be no exaggeration to suppose that the Communist regime would have easily accomplished the abolition of the Hungarian Greek Catholic Church, had the Episcopal See of Hajdúdorog been vacant in those years.²⁴

Abstract

Quando István Miklósy, vescovo di Hajdúdorog (1913-1937), morì nelle prime ore del 29 ottobre 1937, la considerazione principale sulla nomina del suo successore era l'aspettativa che il nuovo vescovo non solo fosse energico ma anche aperto a compromessi, una qualità inevitabile sia per la sopravvivenza nel mondo della politica che per la cooperazione con i vescovi di rito latino. Sulla base dei documenti conservati negli archivi della Santa Sede, vorrei presentare in questo breve saggio il processo che nel marzo del 1939 ha portato alla nomina del giovane monaco basiliano, Miklós Dudás – dopo un anno e mezzo di trattative e spiacevoli sorprese.

²⁴ Translated by Dávid Veljanovszki.



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Review of Rowan Williams, *Looking East in Winter. Contemporary Thought and the Eastern Christian Tradition*, Bloomsbury, London 2021, 265 pp.

Without a doubt, Rowan Williams belongs to the few authors who are equally known and appreciated in scholarly circles and among the representatives of the wider public. Since his Oxford dissertation on Vladimir Lossky's theology (1975) and his reappraisal of Arius' imagination in *Heresy and Tradition* (1987), a modern classic in patristic studies, he has been a major authority on Eastern and patristic theology, whose works on Sergii Bulgakov (1991) or Augustine (2016) witness not only an exceptional erudition but also an original theological vision rarely found among his contemporaries. A veritable modern classic, Rowan Williams has paid significant attention to the theology of Maximus the Confessor at the latest from his *Christ the Heart of Creation* (2018), where he calls the Confessor "possibly the most important of all Byzantine theologians" (99). *Looking East in Winter* is a comprehensive venture in summarizing the elements of the Eastern theological vision, centered mostly on Maximus, that can have a fruitful impact on contemporary Western thought.

The title, *Looking East in Winter* is borrowed from a sentence in Diadochus of Photike, which tells about the winter experience of a person who feels the cold in his back, but can turn his face towards the rising sun. Williams does not regard Eastern theology as a saving and radiant power for the "cold" Western world but is convinced that the Eastern tradition can offer an understanding of the human person, the world, and the deity that proves indispensable in the contemporary context. It seems to be not impossible, to sum up briefly the content and the aim of the work, despite its richness and originality: Williams seems to argue for a new understanding of human rationality, in the sense of a human *logos* that is rooted in the divine *Logos*, and thus is connected to the Trinitarian life of God as a plurality in perfect

unity. But the content of the book cannot be reduced to the problem of the connection between diversity and unity, as in stressing “the plurality of participations in Logos” (49). Williams also emphasizes the significance of relation: to turn outward, to turn to the other is for the human person an elementary form of participation in divine life mediated through the Logos, and to live in the world is to be placed in a “network of finite interrelation” (74). Since the medium of connectedness is the human body, the book demands attention to the carnal reality of the human person. This way it becomes possible to discern the theoretical path that the book follows: embodied existence is part of a network of relations, where the fallen state of human beings prevents them from perceiving and living properly in the reality of the world, and that is why they need to purify their senses in order to occupy their proper place in reality and to become able to participate in the life of the Logos. The inner dynamics preventing people from this are the passions, which are irrational because they keep people away from fulfilling their real destiny: partaking in divine life.

Williams summarizes the thread that connects moral life, ascetic struggle, sensory perception, and rationality in this way: “The early Christian theologians who saw moral discernment as educating us in the truthful perception of the natural order, and that perception opening up to the reality of God, were articulating the belief that contemplative openness to the divine act is the thread that connects prayer, perception, and action, and that the life of what they called nous, the sheer capacity for receptive and transformative understanding, was where the divine image was to be sought” (117-118). The unusually rich sentence highlights Williams’ logic that enables him to say that the “path to theosis is a path to rationality” (77), because it helps people to perceive the world as it really is, independently of the illusions caused by the passions. What is said about the ecclesial and liturgical rootedness of the Christian existence has intimate links with this “rational” demand.

The book consists of three parts, divided into eleven chapters. The individual units usually apply a different method from analyzing the theological and spiritual world of the *Philokalia* through rather abstract speculations based on a debate with the Lacanian understanding of human desire to a historical overview of the ecclesiological ideas of major Russian thinkers or literary excursions to the world of Russian fiction. Still, the single chapters witness a completely unified view developed from an unusually rich variety of perspectives. It is not surprising that a lot of figures appear in the book, who play a significant role in Williams' earlier books: the reader meets, among others, Theresa of Avila, Maximus, and Dostoevsky, but also unlikely couples, like Evagrius and Bonhoeffer, along with subversive revolutionaries, like Maria Skobtsova, and new literary figures, like Eugene Vodolazkin. The erudition of the book is exceptional, but never obtrusive.

Obviously, there are thought experiments in the book that can raise doubts in the reader concerning the way they are developed. The way Sophrony of Essex is presented as a thinker holding the view that to become a person is to lose one's inner defenses and to become utterly vulnerable is undoubtedly very impressive and coherent, but sometimes seems to raise the question if Sophrony's ideas are not tuned to a previously conceived idea of human descent into suffering and vulnerability. But doubts of this sort are raised rarely in the reader, who can be utterly grateful for a comprehensive, sophisticated, and rich assessment of human existence on the horizon of a Trinitarian ontology and a Christological anthropology. Anyone who experiences a winter of any sort can be justified in hoping for rays of light from Williams' erudite wisdom.

Tibor Görföl



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