THEOLOGIA AND OIKONOMIA: THE SOTERIOLOGICAL GROUND OF GREGORY OF NAZIANZUS'S TRINITARIAN THEOLOGY.

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THE SOTERIOLOGICAL GROUND OF GREGORY OF NAZIANZUS'S TRINITARIAN THEOLOGY

by

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A thesis submitted for the degree of
MASTER OF ARTS

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University of Durham

September, 2010

Abstract

This dissertation explores the soteriological ground of the trinitarian theology of Gregory of Nazianzus and establishes a consistent link in his thought between the spheres of *oikonomia* and *theologia*. His writings are studied against the background of contemporary theological and philosophical trends thus demonstrating the context within which he elaborated his main theological concepts as well as their novelty. Although Gregory drew heavily on the heritage of his intellectual master Origen, he significantly changed his perspective from cosmological speculations to reflections on the historical embodiment of Christ's salvific activity. This shift was to lead Gregory towards a positive view of the body and of bodily desire which he considered a vital force in human existence capable of union with God in the process of deification. Gregory thus fully identified Christ with humanity in its total manifestation, including the human mind with its fallen and rebellious desire, now assumed and redeemed in the incarnation. Hence Gregory placed the suffering image of Christ at the heart of his trinitarian theological construction. As this thesis argues, around this image evolves the whole dogmatic edifice of Gregory's theology. Christ's divine sovereignty is understood not in separation and independence from the passion on Cross. Rather, its full manifestation is only possible because of the cross, because of Christ's free and willing acceptance of it. The whole set of interrelationships between the suffering Christ and the Father and the Holy Spirit are depicted according to the logic of coincidence of sovereignty and humiliation. It is precisely in this combination of theological themes – expressed with our new concept of "kenotic sovereignty" – that the focus of the present thesis is located. This innovative spiritual disposition shapes both Gregory's theological epistemology and his hermeneutical strategy. Arguing for the possibility of knowing the divine in and through human bodily existence and corroborating this view with suitably interpreted Scriptural evidence, he opens the horizons for the human ascension to the realm of the divine trinitarian life. In this way Gregory envisages access to the transcendent theology of the Trinity which is understood by him in purely personal terms, insofar as it implies the intimate conversation of God with us "as friends" (Or. 38.7). This unique reworking of classical and Christian themes is possible because of Gregory's insistence that divine sovereignty and transcendence become intelligible exclusively in the context of Easter. Thus the habitually neglected narrative of the cross and resurrection of Christ in the thought of the Theologian is the only key to unlock his understanding of the luminous mystery of the Trinity.

Contents

Introduction 5

a) The scope of this study 5

b) The contributions of this study 6

c) The methodology and structure of the dissertation 7

d) Literature Review: The complexity of the definition of Gregory of Nazianzus's theology 7

Part One: The Interrelationship between the Son of God and Human Nature 23

1.1. The Anthropological Foundations of the Interrelation between the Son of God and Human Nature. 24

1.1.1. Interrelation of Logos with the Human Soul. 24

1.1.2. The Interrelation between Logos and the Human Body. 36

1.2. The Christological Foundations of the Interrelationship between the Son of God and Human nature. 45

1.2.1. The Unity of Christ. 46

1.2.2. The Deification of the Humanity in Christ 49

1.3. Conclusion 57

Part Two: The Interrelationship between the Persons of the Trinity in the Economy 58

2.1. The Interrelation between the Son and the Father 59

2.1.1. Mediatorship in the Creation 59

2.1.2. The Mediatorship in the Knowledge of God 68

2.1.3. The Mediatorship of the Son in the Salvific Activity and Will 71

2.1.4. The Priesthood of the Son 74

2.2. The Interrelationship between the Son and the Holy Spirit in the Economy 80

2.2.1. The Spirit as a Gift of the Salvation 81

2.2.2. The Dwelling of the Spirit in the Son in Their Relationship with the Father 88

2.3. Conclusion 94

Part Three: The Knowledge of the Immanent Trinity 96

3.1. The Theological Epistemology 97

3.1.1. The Desire for the Substance of God 98

3.1.2. The Spirit of the History of Salvation 109

3.2. Theology: The Ontology of Paradox 113

3.2.1. The Triune Light 114

3.2.2. The Triune Movement 123

3.3. Conclusion 133

General Conclusion 135

Bibliography 141

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Introduction

This study aims to explore the ways of formation of the trinitarian theology on the basis of the divine economy in the thought of Gregory of Nazianzus. There is a story how Thales could not notice a pit and fell in it while observing the sky. So during the centuries and even now there prevails the tendency to conceive the doctrine of the Trinity as a sky of abstract intellectual speculations that deprives us from seeing the actual problems in our interrelationship with God and with our fellow human beings. The last century, however, has seen a revival in the study of the Trinity. Prominent theologians of various Christian confessions began exploring the vital importance of the Trinity for the life of the Church as well as for each human person. Their striving to respond to the challenges of contemporary life by way of returning to the wisdom of the Church tradition is a very valuable enterprise. Yet, sometimes one is obliged to acknowledge that what people are finding in the tradition is what they already know. Thus modern theories of the so called social trinitarianism have failed to justify their claim to be heirs of the Trinitarian theology of the Church Father and especially of the Cappadocian Fathers.

This agenda in contemporary theology inspires the present study as well. The spiritual disposition of the theologians of that past which has motivated them to construct such a paradoxical vision of God represents great challenge for our minds today. Chief among the patristic thinkers who fall in this category is Gregory of Nazianzus. Perhaps more than anywhere else it is in his writings that we find an understanding of the Trinity which is at the same time an unreachable final mystery and an attainable “crown” of our saving confession.

a) The scope of this study

The research will be engaged with the elucidation of the link between the divine *economy* and the trinitarian *theology* as expressed by Gregory of Nazianzus. The study will explore Gregory’s concept of God’s creation and care for a man, his

anthropological and soteriological views, the doctrine of deification of man. Next we will turn to demonstrate how the Theologian envisaged the involvement and the interrelationship of the divine persons of the Trinity in this economic activity. We will examine the role and the application of Scripture in dealing with these theological matters. A question to which we will be returning throughout the thesis is to what extent and in what ways the Theologian's thought displays his debt to Platonic philosophy. Our main task will be to illustrate the theological strategies used by Gregory which gathers together the major themes taken from the realm of the economy for the construction of the doctrine of the Trinity in faithfulness to his commitment to the Pro-Nicene theology.

b) The contributions of this study

All our endeavor in the search for the reconciliation of the realms of the economy and theology will serve to *causa finalis* of support building of the bridges between the different poles the Christian life: the spiritual experience of belief and the theological thought about the Triune God, the revelation of Scripture and the dogma of the Church tradition, the heritage of the Christian past and the inquiry of a modern man. To this purpose is also closely related the ecumenical concern of contributing to the discovery of the common roots of the Western and Eastern Churches in the patristic theology.

The examination of the theological thought of Gregory of Nazianzus we believe will shed light on the deep insight that penetrates the poetic cover of his language the elusiveness of which has been less attractive for the historians of theology. However, exactly this flexible approach to the language is itself part of his theology as it is now becoming more obvious (see. Norris, 1993, p.237-249). Therefore, this study will try to emphasize the inseparable unity of Gregory's antinomic grammar and his way of thinking. The implications of these considerations will contribute to the invention of new forms of imagination for the deployment of Christian belief in the different cultural environments.

c) The methodology and structure of the dissertation

The writings of Gregory of Nazianzus will be set in the historical context of the contemporary theological and philosophical trends. We will try to demonstrate the originality of Gregory's thought against the background of the historical development of the previous tendencies. We will analyze his terminology, exegetical attitudes and patterns of argumentation and searched the traces of the influence on his theology.

But our main methodological approach, which serves to the clarification of the link between the levels of the economy and the theology in the thought of Gregory, will be embedded in the structure of the dissertation itself. The thesis will be divided into three parts. We start from observation of the soteriological foundations of anthropology and Christ's salvific activity, and then pass through the interrelationship of the persons of the Trinity in this salvific activity to the inner realm of the trinitarian theology. This direction from *ad extra* to *ad intra* will make evident the ways Gregory elaborated his trinitarian theology in the economic and scriptural framework.

d) Literature Review: The complexity of the definition of Gregory of Nazianzus's theology

Although during many centuries the greatest minds of the prominent Christian thinkers were occupied with the matters of what can be called theology, it is not clear anymore for modern mind what place could be yielded to theology in its thinking space. The way of our thinking hesitates between modern detached, "neutral", "objective" knowledge and the post-modern knowledge as a product of our desire, passion, i.e. knowledge involving us in itself. In the context of such a mental tension it is not easy task to answer on the questions: what was the appropriate object of the theological thought of the Church Fathers? In what way is it deduced from knowledge of the revelation given to us? And is at all possible for our limited mind to grasp something beyond the things designated directly *for us*?

Indeed, many contemporary famous theologians and scholars are at pains to provide with the responses on these questions, but as we will see no one of them are free from

all of the above mentioned extremities. This predicament could be clearly illustrated in theories dealing with an interpretation of the trinitarian theology of the Cappadocian Fathers, and, especially, of the *Theologian* among them, Gregory of Nazianzus.

St. Gregory was the theologian, as Daley put it, "who offered the clearest, most economical, and perhaps the most paradoxical parameters for articulating this Mystery and who most influently emphasized the centrality of this Trinitarian confession for the whole of Christian life" (Daley, 2006, p. 42). Nevertheless, his theological epistemology has not gained much interest among the patristic scholars yet. Perhaps, the reason for this is exactly "the most paradoxical parameters" of his trinitarian language that verges to silence and thus evades the confines of the modern scientific analysis.

The essay will review the current studies on the interrelation between *oikonomia* and *theologia* in the theology of the Nicene Fathers with special focus on Gregory of Nazianzus, and demonstrate that while one kind of stand positioned by some scholars wholly dissolves the theology into economy, another approach tends to annihilate theology faced with incomprehensibility of the mystery of Trinity.

First, we will underline the ambiguousness of the interrelation between theology and economy in the writings of Gregory that provoked critique of the scholars who charged the Nicene and especially Cappadocian theology in dissociation of theology from the scriptural ground of *oikonomia*. Second, the essay will analyze the defensive arguments of the scholars who refute the existence of evidences of the distinction between theology and economy in the writings of the theologian. Finally, we will demonstrate the irrelevance of the current interpretations for the proper understanding of the theological vision of Gregory of Nazianzus from both sides (supporters of the unity as well as of the distinction theology and economy) and the necessity of further exploration of his writings.

In the fourth-century Arian controversy the mystery of Triune God was increasingly attracting the most devoted Christians until captured entirely and took up from this

world the mind and the heart of the bishop of Nazianzus, who contemplated it in the brightness of its light and yet remaining an absolutely unresolved paradox for him:

> No sooner do I conceive of the One than I am illumined by the Splendour of the Three; no sooner do I distinguish Them than I am carried back to the One. When I think of any One of the Three I think of Him as the Whole, and my eyes are filled, and the greater part of what I am thinking of escapes me. I cannot grasp the greatness of that One so as to attribute a greater greatness to the Rest. When I contemplate the Three together, I see but one torch, and cannot divide or measure out the Undivided Light

Oration XL

But what was more paradoxical, Gregory did not think that the contemplation of the wholiness of the mystery of triune God was a luxury for a few with the higher calling than mere believers, for him it was *conditio sine qua non* for salvation as he put it: "For whatever you may subtract from the Deity of the Three, you will have overthrown the whole, and destroyed your own being made perfect" (Oration XLI).

Thus, the trinitarian formulation represented "one concise proclamation of our teaching, an inscription intelligible to all." (Or. XLII, 15) He witnessed that people "so sincerely worships the Trinity, that it would sooner sever anyone from this life, than sever one of the three from the Godhead: of one mind, of equal zeal, and united to one another, to us and to the Trinity by unity of doctrine." (ibid.) But when he follows to these words "brief run over its details", someone becomes astonished how it could be possible for simple flock of Church to understand and devote himself so eagerly to the doctrine exposed in such highly sophisticated manner, especially, if we take into account his sensitivity to the audience (See. Norris, 1993, p.246):

> That which is without beginning, and is the beginning, and is with the beginning, is one God. For the nature of that which is without beginning does not consist in being without beginning or being unbegotten, for the nature of anything lies, not in what it is not but in what it is. It is the assertion

> of what is, not the denial of what is not. And the Beginning is not, because it is a beginning, separated from that which has no beginning. For its beginning is not its nature, any more than the being without beginning is the nature of the other. For these are the accompaniments of the nature, not the nature itself. That again which is with that which has no beginning, and with the beginning, is not anything else than what they are. Now, the name of that which has no beginning is the Father, and of the Beginning the Son, and of that which is with the Beginning, the Holy Ghost, and the three have one Nature – God. And the union is the Father from Whom and to Whom the order of Persons runs its course, not so as to be confounded, but so as to be possessed, without distinction of time, of will, or of power. For these things in our case produce a plurality of individuals, since each of them is separate both from every other quality, and from every other individual possession of the same quality. But to Those who have a simple nature, and whose essence is the same, the term One belongs in its highest sense.

ibid.

In what ways could Gregory ground this kind of thinking on his faith of salvation preached by simple-hearted fishermen? The dense ambiguity of the passages like that above quoted questioned in terms of biblical epistemology the legitimacy of the Nicene trinitarian theology and particularly that of worked out by the Cappadocian Fathers. The distinction between the revelation of one God in Jesus Christ communicated in his Spirit and the doctrine of the triune eternal being of God seems to be so sharp that it is easy to doubt whether there exists any bridge between the good news of salvation and *theologia* at all.

Thus, Studer recognises danger of such doubt and he is not willing to justify drawing of line so sharply between theology and economy as it happened in IV century. According to his view the council of Nicea marked the margin that changed the way of theological thinking and from this period onward we face the development of “the

antithesis" between these two inseparable parts of the theology (Studer, 1993, p.2). Although he is quite aware of the importance to be emphasized the equality of Father, Son and Holy Spirit against decreasing hierarchy of Arian doctrine, but afterwards it became an impediment for the theologians to demonstrate "inner coherence" of the theology and the economy (ibid., p. 113-114).

However, Studer does not draw conclusion from these presuppositions without limitations. He states that the Cappadocian Fathers did not pursue aim to deepen trinitarian theology further than based on baptismal faith; rather they were occupied by economic Trinity and determined the interest of Eastern Church along these lines (ibid. p. 152).

Yet, LaCugna is not ready to accept this conclusion and she develops the critique of the Cappadocian Fathers to its extremities. She fully assumes Rahner's thesis: "The "economic" Trnity is the "immanent" Trinity and the "immanent" Trinity is the "economic" Trinity" (Rahner, 1970, p.22). But this is the only point that is common for her and Rahner, she is far more preocuppied with the notion of "God for us" than Rahner. Therefore, LaCugna conducts her examination of the interrelation between theology and economy along the lines of irreconcilability of these terms with each other.

First, she proposes the following definitions for both terms: "Theology is the science of "God in Godself"; the economy is the sphere of God's condescension to the flesh". (LaCugna, 1991, p.43) Then, she states that the doctrine of Trinity strictly deals with *theologia* that was elaborated by Athanasius and the Cappadocian Fathers and it remained unchanged from this period onward during the history of the Greek patristic theology (ibid.). Thus, for her the beginning of the Nicene theology marks the threshold that separates two periods in the history of theology: pre-Nicene and after Nicene. While she pais respect to the first phase, she neglects the value of the second one. Although she recognises that theology was brought about as a result of reflection based on economy of salvation, afterwards the very ground of the reflection was abandoned (ibid.). Therefore, theological reflection caused the "incongruity" between God's inner existence and his work of redemption and deification of man (ibid. p. 53).

So, she makes strict judgment: "*Theologia*, not a biblical concept at all, acquires in Athanasius and the Cappadocians the meaning of God's inner being beyond the historical manifestation of the Word incarnate." (ibid. p. 43)

There is to be pointed out that likewise Rahner recognizes impressive formalism of the Cappadocian theology even more than that of Augustine too, but he is also quite aware that this theology has strong ties to economy of salvation and these abstract trinitarian formulas in the Greek patristic theology were always considered in the scriptural framework. These terminological work solely dealed with language that expressed "only abstract, formal part" of the dogmas and not with the mystery of God's being as such and of His hypostases. Then he evaluates the western development of the trinitarian theology as reducing the whole theology to these abstract formulas without being conscious of their soteriological foundations. (Rahner, 1970, p. 18-19)

By contrast, LaCugna is unwilling to consider the trinitarian formulas elaborated by the Cappadocians as naturally presupposing its economical basis and claims that the Cappadocinas as well as Augustine later moved their reflection beyond scriptural teaching of economy when they placed relationship between Father, Son and Holy Spirit at the "intradivine" level. (ibid. p.54) Thus, she denies the possibility that after Nicea theology was perceived after the economy was clearly kept in mind, now it could be realized vice-versa: theology was considered as a starting point for reflection and, hence, without need of soteriological context (ibid.).

These contemporary sharp charges against traditional trinitarian theology reminds us the old one of Schleiermacher. He also recognized the validity of the Trinitarian doctrine to a very reduced extent, since it makes clear the soteriological and ecclesiological foundations of Christian belief, namely, the presence of "divine essence" in the human person of Jesus Christ and the presence of deity in the Church through the Holy Spirit. But according to him we should stop at this point inasmuch the further refinement of the dogma – concept of the eternal distinct persons of the Trinity – will imply incompatibility with the religious awareness of a Christian believer. (Schleiermacher, 1976, p. 739).

Weinandy challenges the arguments of LaCugnia with brief but weighty response. For him the concept of “God for us” is not in last degree valuable than for LaCugna and, as he claims, the very foundations of this concepts is put at stake when economic trinity is not rooted in ontology: theology “guarantees” the reality of the revelation in economy. According to his view the main contribution of the Nicene theology consists in giving the link between theology and economy and thus asserting that “the one who is wholly within the economy is the same one who is wholly other than the economy” (Weinandy, 1995, p.136). So, incapacity of the theological enterprise of LaCugnia to recognize the significance of this claim “ultimately runs aground on the rock of homoousios” (ibid.).

Along the lines of the argumentation offered by Weinandy is to be observed the majority of the defence of the Cappadocian doctrine of Trinity developed in current scholarship that seeks to balance between biblical premises of the notion of “God for us” and the ontological reality of the “persons” of the revealed Trinity. Thus, for Leonardo Boff the trinitarian theology provides us a certainty that the ways in which God appears to us is the same in its eternal being and, hence, “God is a Trinity (Father, Son, Holy Spirit) not just for us, but in itself” (Boff, 1988, p.96). But, among modern studies the theological approach that deserves particular attention is that of John Behr.

At the beginning of his opus he claims that he is not quite happy about using the term “Trinitarian theology” since it risks to reduce the achievements of IV century to “the shorthand formulae”, such as “three hypostases and one ousia” of “the consubstantial Trinity” and diminishes its soteriological content (Behr, 2004, p.3). Therefore, these abstract formulae should be considered in the scriptural framework in which they were worked out and are to be understood as it was earlier supposed by Rahner. But, Behr not only supposes, he provides us with deeply elaborated hermeneutical methodology of Christian theology. And for this enterprise one of his frequently stressed “slogan” is represented by Kirkegaard’s aphorism: “we only understand life backwards but we must live forwards”. This means that while we are waiting to meet Christ coming from the eschatological future we will become aware of His person and interpret our experience of meeting with him in the light of past, of Scripture, that serves as a treasure, “thesaurus” providing with the meaning for this new experience of

encountering with Christ (Behr, 2006, p.21-28). So, from this approach he defines the Christian theology, especially developed in the period of NIcene and Constantinople councils, not as a reflection on the abstract concept of God, but as "an exegetical task" (Behr, 2004, p.16). In view of this general definition he offers "the epistemological order of theological reflection" that begins from the work of Christ has been done for us and then proceeds towards grounding on it the identification of Him with true God (ibid. p.212). This task is achieved successfully by "partitive exegesis" elaborated at full length by Athanasius that allows to discern in Christ, on the one hand, His becoming man "for the needs of humans", and, on the other hand, His being, essence (Ibid. p. 208-215).

Seen from this perspective, he responds to the charges of LaCugna interpreting the famous passage of Gregory of Nazianzus that deals with the reflection on Christ (See. Or. 29, 18). Behr states that even in this sharp contrasting the eternal being of Christ with His work accomplished in the flesh, Gregory is speaking in two different ways but on the same subject and thus distinguishing in Christ between His engagement with economy and His nature without separating them from each other (ibid. p. 7-8). The clear case is the argumentation of the Cappadocian Fathers against Eunomius, that God is not to be understood as an object requiring appropriate words for its proper determination, but He is only comprehensible inasmuch as He reveals Himself within which is to be grasped who is He (ibid. p.16).

Thus, the deceptive impression about the ways of making theology by Nicene theologians is brought about when we detach their abstract theological formulations from "the scriptural grammar" lied under them and overlook the very matrix in which worked these theologians and is always preserved in their language (ibid. p. 8). In avoidance of this, he calls for permanent return to the scriptural roots of the Trinitarian theology in order not to allow separation of its "two dimensions", economic and immanent (ibid.).

However, in spite of apparent value and legitimacy of such approach to the Trinitarian theology of the Church Fathers supported by the evidences from their writings it seems to fails to interpret properly some passages in the writings of Gregory of Nazianzus.

Long times before Behr Winslow tried to apply strictly economical reading of the theological discourses of Gregory of Nazianzus. But, as it will be shown the result could evaluated as violence committed against the text.

First, Winslow distinguishes two meanings of theology that we find in the writings of Gregory. While first one is defined as a doctrine of God and hence Trinitarian theology in strict sense, it does not offer to theologian any positive knowledge and comprehension, and he "ends ultimately in humble silence before the divine mystery" (Winslow, 1979, p. 30). Therefore, this type of theology does not deserve any attention from the scholar, so he quickly abandons it and turns to second concept of theology, which he understands as a doctrine of "God as he is for us". In this perspective God is seen not in His inner life but as He reveals Himself to us, condescends to us in His activity as a Creator and Redeemer (ibid.).

Yet, he also recognizes Gregory's notoriety due to his theological discourses on the Trinity, especially worked out in his five Theological Orations. But he points to the economical basis (second type of theology) lied under his theological doctrine (first type theology), what he calls "conceptual theology" (ibid., p. 31). In contrast with this abstract theology he develops dynamical understanding of Gregory's economic theology. It comprises two phases of God's activity: His own "descend" to us and His "drawing [us] up". This dynamic aims to bridge being of God with us that enables us to grasp Him "to some extent". As a result of this, God becomes at the same time subject and object of theology, the process embraces God's activity and our strive for His search and hence "the distinction between the "first" and "second" kinds of theologia is eliminated", and "God and those who seek God are ultimately joined together" (ibid. p. 32-33). Nevertheless, Winslow gives up his reflections at this point and does not develop this new integral understanding of theology, but again focuses solely on the second type of theology -- economic theology.

The clear illustration of such reduction is represented by his attempt to interpret Gregory's widely known passage from 27th Oration that questions his thesis about prevailing position of economy in the thought of Gregory. So, we will quote the whole passage and then run through the main points of Winslow's argumentation:

> Philosophize as you will about the world or worlds,
> about matter, the soul, about good and bad rational
> natures, about resurrection, judgment and reward,
> about the sufferings of Christ. For, in such matters,
> to hit the mark is not useless, nor is it dangerous to miss.

(Or. 27.10. cit. ibid, p. 37)

In spite of clear assumption that provides the text Winslow offers striking reading of it. He asserts that this passage "indicates that such subjects as "world or worlds, matter, soul, good or evil rational natures, the sufferings of Christ," etc., must be approached with theological caution" (ibid. p. 38). As a support of this he recalls Gregory's another text from his second oration where discourse on the almost the same list of subjects is indeed declared as "no slight task" for a pastor who undertakes "distribution of the word" on these matters (Or. 2, 35). Hence, it is obvious that Gregory held these topics dealing with economy in no less esteem than the issues concerned with the Trinitarian theology. Another point emphasized by the scholar is Gregory's broad vision of economy not allowing to determine his interest solely by "suffering of Christ" but embraces the whole spectrum of God's salvific activity in which it has its real sense. This explains why the theologian does not pay particular attention to it but rather merely puts it in the list of God's other works, such as creation, providence, incarnation, resurrection and final judgment (Ibid. p. 40).

To sum up, all these what tries to state Winslow is that "the diverse elements which go to make up this oikonomia are therefore not of less importance when compared, let us say, to the doctrine Trinity, but form the very stuff out which this doctrine grew" (ibid. p. 41).

Although this statement might be true for Gregory's theology in general, it is not clear from Winslow's analysis at all in what ways is represented the importance of economy compared with trinitarian theology and why is the Trinity as such so important for Gregory while he could be content with simple soteriological doctrine and not growing

out of it so much sophisticated and logically the most ambiguous doctrine. This question will become even sharper in the light of the demonstration of Winslow's apparently misleading interpretations of the above mentioned texts.

First, in 27th oration there is stressed clear contrast between the economical issues enlisted here and the discourse about God. If we take the whole logical unit of the text and continue to read it from the point where stops Winslow, it will become unquestionable. Therefore, we quote the text with its logical end:

> Philosophize as you will about the world or worlds,
> about matter, the soul, about good and bad rational
> natures, about resurrection, judgment and reward,
> about the sufferings of Christ. For, in such matters,
> to hit the mark is not useless, nor is it dangerous to miss.
> But with God we shall have converse, in this life
> only in a small degree; but a little later, it may be,
> more perfectly, in the Same, our Lord Jesus Christ,
> to Whom be glory for ever. Amen.

Thus, permission for speaking on economic matters is juxtaposed with the restriction of theological discourse. So, it is impossible to state relied on this evidence that Gregory "did not intend to belittle 'the doctrine of salvation'" (ibid. p.38). Further, when Winslow recalls for support of his thesis second oration, he also fails to recognize that Gregory here as well obviously gives preference to "think of the original and blessed Trinity" (Or. 2, 36). In this case too we are obliged to quote it lengthy:

> In regard to the distribution of the word, to mention last the
> first of our duties, of that divine and exalted word, which everyone
> now is ready to discourse upon; if anyone else boldly undertakes it and
> supposes it within the power of every man's intellect, I am amazed at
> his intelligence, not to say his folly. To me indeed it seems no
> slight task, and one requiring no little spiritual power, to give in
> due season to each his portion of the word, and to regulate with

> judgment the truth of our opinions, which are concerned with such subjects as the world or worlds, matter, soul, mind, intelligent natures, better or worse, providence which holds together and guides the universe, and seems in our experience of it to be governed according to some principle, but one which is at variance with those of earth and of men.
>
> Again, they are concerned with our original constitution, and final restoration, the types of the truth, the covenants, the first and second coming of Christ, His incarnation, sufferings and dissolution, with the resurrection, the last day, the judgment and recompense, whether sad or glorious; I, to crown all, with what we are to think of the original and blessed Trinity.

But, then Gregory emphasizes the importance of Trinitarian doctrine and moves on the warning about "a very great risk" to talk on the Trinity, and enlists the possible distortions and "dangerous errors" concerning the theology:

> Now this involves a very great risk to those who are charged with the illumination of others, if they are to avoid contracting their doctrine to a single Person, from fear of polytheism, and so leave us empty terms, if we suppose the Father and the Son and the Holy Spirit to be one and the same Person only: or, on the other hand, severing It into three, either foreign and diverse, or disordered and unprincipled, and, so to say, opposed divinities, thus falling from the opposite side into an equally dangerous error: like some distorted plant if bent far back in the opposite direction.

Or. 2. 36

In view of this evidences it is quite clear in how much high esteem held Gregory the Trinitarian theology and even privileged it compared with economy. Therefore, we

should deem as more accurate interpretation of the text that of proposed by Jean Plagnieux whose reading does not suffer from such oversimplifications of the matter, in contrary, he is quite aware of the risking of "the destiny of Christology in favor of the Trinitarian doctrine", at first glance it seems that Gregory "sacrifices something accessory to the essential" (Plagnieux, 1951, p.178). Then, he offers possible solutions of this problem.

First, there is to be taken into account the historically conditioned theological agenda: in this period Gregory was not faced with christological errors and, hence, he has no "doctrinal prejudices" on this subject; Gregory can be "justified" by the absence of the christological controversies in his époque (Ibid.). What was felt as a real danger by him, distortion of the Trinitarian doctrine, forced him to "sacrifice" everything to the elimination of it, even "passions of Christ" (Ibid. p.179). But even when the priority is given to the trinitarian issues over the soteriology and christology not in order to downsize the significance of these topics but rather to strengthen them since Gregory considered them as being comprised (as he put it in 2nd oration, the "crown" of the whole Christian doctrine) by the former. Therefore, placing the sound trinitarian theology at the head of the doctrine made Gregory to expect that whole body of the Christian theology would be sound as well. Furthermore, his equal respect paid to the divine economy might be demonstrated by the fact that when Gregory's expectations had been failed and unanimity in the trinitarian theology had not achieve accordance in the doctrinal matters of the economy in the case of Apollinarius, he rushed in the struggle not allowing distortion in christology what he called overturning of Christianity (Ibid. p. 180).

Thus, given all these considerations, in the picture of the interrelationship between the theology and the economy according to Gregory there is to be suggested that he drew line of the link not from the side of economy towards theology but vice-versa. This model seems to matches with the view of Yves Congar who while agrees fully with the first part of Rahner's thesis – "the economic Trinity is the immanent Trinity" – he is by no means ready to sign on the second part of it – "and vice versa". As he put it, the Church Fathers in their combat against Arians asserted the absolute independence of the existence of the persons of the Trinity from the act of creation. Furthermore, he

denies the possibility for the mystery of God to be entirely exhausted in His revelation (Congar, 1983, p.13). So, he poses legitimate question: “the economic trinity thus reveals the immanent trinity – but does it reveals it entirely?” (Ibid. p. 16).

However, in the recent scholarship on Gregory of Nazianzus Beeley has tried to restate Rahnerian thesis. In his view Gregory’s vision of divine economy “implicitly contains the sense” of theology. Although Gregory places theology in the centre of his interest, he develops discourse on economy even far than other Cappadocians (Beeley, 2008, p. 196). He criticizes Karl Holl for his charges against Gregory’s seemingly separation of the theology from economy, and tries to refute his understanding of Gregory’s concept of theology along the lines of Aristotle’s purely speculative character as it is defined in his “Metaphysics” (Ibid. p.199). He denies the possibility to understand Gregorian theology in terms of “Being as it is”, since he does not recognise the distinction between theology and economy as “two different modes of human knowing”, for they are not “parallel or rival epistemological categories” (Ibid. p. 201). Although he points to the possibilities of an alternative interpretation of the texts where the theology seems to stand without referring to economy, as it is in the oration on Epiphany, one will wait in vain for such alternative offer from him. At the end of his discussion on the theme he simply coins ready-made definition for Gregorys’s theology – a “the theology of the divine economy” (Ibid. p.201).

Thus, his study, valuable in many respects, suffers from lacking of the sufficient clarification of this matter. At this point it is to be stated that the concept of the economicaly founded theology has failed to gain support from the evidences in the writings of Gregory the Theologian. On the other hand, there is proposed another model of the interrealtionship. Zizioulas is more inclined to accept Congar’s thesis about impossibility to express the whole theology in economy. He turns back to the recent trend in theology and patristic scholaship that identifies these two spheres with each other, and appeals to the “traditional” definitions of the theology and economy: “the ‘theology’ proper, refers to how God is in himself”, while economy “refers to how God is *for us*.” (Zizioulas, 2008, p. 70). First, on the ground of Greek patristic apophatic approach to God’s being he insists on whole incomprehensibility of God’s

substance – “we can have no theology of God’s nature”. Then, he recognizes possibility to affirm the knowledge concerning the persons of Trinity: we are not grasping their existence logically, but rather participating in their living personal relationships existentially – “we speak about God by talking about his Trinitarian life, rather than about his ‘nature’”. Howsoever it seems that Zizioulas provides clear link between economy and theology, namely the concept of divine person, who could enable us to end this hesitation between God’s self and His “for us”, he does not develops his thought in this direction (though his all works apparently pursue this very aim). Rather he ends by entering apophaticism even into the personal relationships: “for the immanent Trinity we cannot say anything definitive about the attributes of the persons. Here there must be a proper element of apophaticism” (Ibid. p. 72). Thus, the gap emerges again, now proper life of the persons of the Trinity is to be understood as divided into their intertrinitarian being and their revealed attributes freely taken on for our sake (Ibid.).

To sum up our review of the contemporary trends in the scholarship of patristic theology concerning the Cappadocian, and specifically Gregory of Naziansus’s, Trinitarian theology, there is to be maintained that the studies does not provide us with convincing response on the question of how Gregory defined the task of theology in relation with biblical revelation. As it was supposed at the beginning of the essay the scholars have tended to choose one of the alternatives: either define theology as a matter of God’s being in itself as opposed to His economy “for us” and hence deny any possibility of *logos* about *Theos* (Zizioulas), or place whole theology in economy and thus reducing it to only “for us” (LaCugna), at the best recognizing its function only in ontological grounding of economy i.e. what is given in revelation to us is really existing in itself (Rahner, Behr, Weinandy, Winslow, Beeley).

But, as above exemplified texts have illustrated Gregory is unwilling to keep only silence on the theological matters and this cannot be explained by purely polemical motivations, for him Trinity is primarily a matter of adoration and contemplation (e.g. Oration XL). However, he does not allow us to simply identify doctrine of Trinity with the economy, he apparently grants it with priority over the topics of economy (Or. 2; Or. 27) and this does not mean that he wants to merely trace economy to its ontological

ground, in this case there is to be suggested that his discourse on Trinity would start intensively from the economical matters and then only limit it by pointing to its ontological background, while the texts witness to the opposite case. Thus, it is clear that definition of the notion of theology in Gregory's writings is not easy task since as a result of its formation it bears complicated connotation in relation to its biblical and philosophical sources. It is "stumble rock" for many minds when Gregory declares about the nature of Trinity like that: "separately one and united separate", so we find such evaluations of their enterprise: "it cannot fairly be claimed that they (i.e. the Cappadocians – Z.J) found any philosophical solution to their problem" (Wiles, 1967, p. 139. cited in O'Donnell, 1990, p. 43). Even Pelikan recognizes "unresolved contradictions evident in the Cappadocian theology" (Pelikan, 1971, p.224). Therefore, further study is required to establish clearly the meaning and value of the Trinitarian theology in relation with the biblical foundation of the Christian faith in the thought of Gregory of Nazianzus.

Part One: The Interrelationship between the Son of God and Human Nature

Gregory's theory of the economy of God has a very broad meaning. After he has finished dealing with the theology in the strict sense in Or. 38, he declares: "For now, there is no time, because theology (θεολογία) is not our theme but economy (οἰκονομία)". And he re-tells the story beginning with the creation of the world and ending with the Incarnation of Christ. Therefore, we must assume such an understanding of economy that includes in it "the whole range of divine activity, from creation to the eschaton" (Winslow, 1979, p. 39).

Gregory with his high skill in rhetoric playing with the words "oikos" – "oikonomia" manages to associate his concept of economy with the parable in the Gospel about finding a lost piece of money: "Because He lighted a candle – His own Flesh – and swept the house, cleansing the world from sin; and sought the piece of money . . . And He calls together those initiated in the mystery of the economy" (Or. 38, 14, 12-18). Thus, he provides us with an impressive image of the whole economy of God as caring for the world, with the world as the house God lives in. It is evident here that Gregory combines together both meanings of economy discussed by Prestige: the providential activity of God comprising the whole universe and the history of humankind with the Incarnation of the Son of God (Prestige, 1936, p.67; for the indebtedness of Gregory's idea of economy to Origen see. Trigg, 2009, pp. 83-104). It is also to be noted that in this image the "oikonomos" is the second hypostasis of the Trinity. Although the task of economy concerns all the persons of Trinity, it is only the Son who accomplishes it (συμπληρούμενον), he even calls the Son "creator Word" (δημιούργος Λόγος), and in his late "Poemata Arcana" – "the founder of the universe who steers its course" (κοσμοθέτης νωμεύς) (On the First Principles, 401.3., ed. and transl. by Sykes and Moreschini, 1997, p. 4).

Further, we will explore the interrelation between the persons of the Trinity in providential and salvific activity. But the special role of the Son played in the economy represents the matter of particular attention in the theology of Gregory and the point of

departure for every kind of theological reflection. Therefore, first the economic activity of the Son of God will be examined in relation to human nature.

1.1. The Anthropological Foundations of the Interrelation between the Son of God and Human Nature.

Gregory's "dynamic of salvation" is inseparable from his dynamic understanding of the human being. The description of the creation of angels as "second splendours" (λαμπρότητες δεύτεραι), "rational cosmos" (ὁ νοητὸς κόσμος) that is "akin" (οἰκιος) to the nature of the creator runs easily in the language of emanation and is named as the first "flow" (χεθῆναι) of the "goodness" of God. But, when Gregory moves on to the creation of the visible and sensible world, the logic of creating His akin is broken and we enter from the Platonic world into "the strange" (ξένος) world of Bible, where there rules not so much a logic of dialectics, as a logic of paradox. But the most paradoxical being is a man: a "fusion of the two", κραμα εξ αμφοτερων, a "certain mingling of the contraries", τις μιξις των εναντιων, - a "sign of the greater wisdom" and an "illustration of the whole richness of goodness", ὁ πας πλουτος τῆς ἀγαθοτητος γνώριμος (Or. 38. 11). Thus, there was formed the being which consisted of the noetic substance of soul that is "akin" to God and the body formed from "strange" matter. Later on there will be demonstrated the important role played in his rhetoric by this contrasting of what is akin to God and lofty with what is strange and low. But, now it will be asked, what kind of relationship is established between the Creator and this new creature? Let us begin by observing the part with which Gregory's seems to deal much more easily – the rational part of man. Afterwards we will enquire into the relationship between Logos and the human body.

1.1.1. Interrelation of Logos with the Human Soul.

In this case Gregory seems to be faithful to Origen. For him as for Origen the image of God is definitely placed in the soul of man and he similarly reads Gen. 1, 26 as a creation of an image of the Image of God, the Word of God. But Origen's complicated

anthropological structure does not seem to attract Gregory since it does not quite fit his poetical construction of theology, and he rather prefers to Origen's trichotomic nature a more simple though no less dynamic dichotomic design.

Origen in addition to the soul-body division distinguishes in the soul its higher element, for which he uses Platonic "nous", or Stoic "hegemonikon"; or sometimes the biblical term "kardia" (Crouzel, 1989, p. 88). The lower part of the soul is not considered to have been initially created by God, but added as a result of a primitive fall. From it stem the irrational instincts and the passions, and sometimes Origen talks about it in terms of the Platonic trichotomy and relates it to the "thymos" and "epithymia". He also finds its biblical equivalent in Rom. 8, 6 – "phronema tes sarkos", "setting the mind on the flesh", what is often suggested by the meaning of what he calls "sarx" or "caro" (in Latin translation). And it is to be separated from the strict meaning of body, which for Origen has by no means a negative ethical meaning (Ibid., p. 89). But this static structure of the soul becomes transformed in "dynamic or tendential order" when it is placed in relation to the highest constituent element of Origen's trichotomy, spirit, "pneuma" (Ibid. p. 88).

Although Gregory applies trichotomy occasionally, sometimes even a four-partite division (See. Or. 32. 9, PD 10.2; Ellverson, 1981, p.21), nonetheless he mostly prefers philosophical reflections on the Pauline words found in his first epistle to the Thessalonians (5, 23) and another expression of the same Paul with more apparent soteriological stress:

> What is man that thou art mindful of him' (Ps. 8: 5)? What is this new mystery concerning me? I am small and great, lowly and exalted, mortal and immortal, earthly and heavenly. I share one condition with the lower world, and another with God; one with the flesh, the other with the Spirit. I must be buried with Christ (cf. Rom. 6: 4), rise with Christ (cf. Rom. 6: 8; Col. 2: 12), be joint heir with Christ (cf. Rom. 8: 17), become a son of God (cf. Rom. 8: 14), a god myself.

Or. 7. 23; cf. Or.14. 23

It is clear that Gregory is not so much interested in anthropology as in soteriology, or more correctly in anthropology on the light of soteriology. In his thought the human being has more direct and equal access to the opposite existential poles of God and "the lower world" or even death, than in the case of Origen. For Gregory there does not exist such an intermediary element between the intellect of man and the Holy Spirit as it was with the spirit for Origen. As we will see later on in dealing with his pneumatology and mystical experience, he connects the soul of man to the Spirit in immediate participation in His activity. Sometimes he talks of the creation of the soul and its mingling with the earthly nature of the body in a very striking way:

> He took a portion of the new-formed earth and established with His
> immortal hands my shape, bestowing upon it a share in his own life.
> He infused Spirit, which is a fragment of the Godhead without form.
> From dust and breath was formed the mortal image of the immortal"

On the Soul, 70-75, Poemata Arcana.

Such a vision of the nature of the soul, where the distinction between creature and creator is blurred to some extent, makes the human soul open upward to the activities of the Holy Spirit: "Therefore to adore or to pray to the Spirit seems to me to be simply Himself offering prayer or adoration to Himself" (Or. 31.12). On the other hand, Gregory's soul is also much more vulnerable to the influence of the body and, in contrast to Origen, he seems not to make a distinction between body (σῶμα) and flesh (σαρξ), and he uses as well the words soul (ψυχή) and spirit (πνεῦμα) with identical meaning (Or. 2.17-18, 18. 3, 7.21, 38.9, 7.23, 38.9, 40.2), except in some texts, where the spirit is opposed to the "dust" in the context underlining its moral content (Ellverson, 1981, p.21). But he like Origen emphasizes that the soul as an image of God was initially created as rational - **νοερὰν ψυχὴν καὶ εἰκόνα Θεοῦ** (Or. 38. 11. 12). We can also find in at least one place an allusion to the Clementine and Origenian understanding of "phronema tes sarkos" in Or. 39. 11-12: "removing impure and material spirit from the souls when they had wiped and adorned their souls" (**τὸ ἀκάθαρον καὶ ὑλικὸν πνεῦμα τῶν ψυχῶν ἀπελάσαντες καὶ τὰς ἑαυτῶν ψυχὰς τῇ ἐπιγνώσει σαρώσαντες καὶ κοσμήσαντες**). But these examples

represent exceptions that only affirm the rule that Gregory held the dichotomic view of man.

After marking the central points of Gregory's anthropology we can turn to the more detailed analysis of his theory concerning the interrelationship between the soul and its creator. As was mentioned above, Gregory follows partly the same approach to this matter as is found in the system of Origen. Origen drew heavily on texts taken from Scripture when he ascribed the title of image in its first meaning to the Son of God (OT: Wis. 7, 25-26; NT: Col. 1, 15; Heb. 1,3). This definition provided him with the clear understanding of the begetting of the Son from the Father in an impassionate and immaterial way. Thus, among the other images illustrating the procession of the Son from the Father Origen uses the concept of the reflection by image (εἰκῶν) of its archetype (Crouzel, 1989, p. 186). For him the Son mirrors in Himself all the properties which are characteristic of the divine nature of God; therefore He is the "invisible image of the invisible God" in contrast to Irenaeus's association of the image of God with "the Incarnate Word in his double nature" (Ibid., p. 93).

Here attention should be paid to Origen's specific doctrine about the soul of Christ in the context of his image theology that will help us in examining Gregory's understanding of the role of the soul in the Incarnation. According to Origen the soul of Christ was created in the pre-existent state together with other souls. Though only this soul remained "faithful and united" to God since his creation, and that enabled the Word of God to become united with him in his Incarnation (Harl, 116). As a result of this original unity the soul of Christ was "fused and transformed into the Logos" and became "the Image of the Logos, the Image of God in a second degree", thus representing the pattern for all souls of believers (Crouzel, 1955, p. 137). And this pattern was revealed in the Incarnation of the Logos as a model for imitation that measures the degree "we participate in the divine nature" (De Princ., IV, 4, 4, cit in Harl, p. 118). The intermediacy of the soul of Christ also solved the ontological problem in Christology, since for Origen unity to body "does not contradict to the nature of soul" (Harl, 116).

Now we are able to highlight the reasons that lay beneath the famous expression of Gregory that the Word of God is conjoined to human nature "by the intervention of an intellectual soul, mediating between the Deity and the corporeity of the flesh", ˝διὰ μέσης ψυχῆς νοερᾶς μεσιτευούσης θεότετι καὶ σαρκὸς παχύτητι˝ (Or. 38, 13, 29-30). So, we can turn to the analysis of the interaction of anthropology and Christology in Gregory's thought.

R. Hanson has argued that when the Christology of the pro-Nicene theologians places human soul and mind between Godhead and human body in the person of Christ, they aimed to "shield the divine Word from human experience", and therefore, the Arian criticism of the doctrine of "mere man", ψίλος ἀνθρώπος, ascribed to their Nicene opponents was justified since they attacked it on the firm soteriological basis that "the divine Logos directly experienced human emotions and experiences and was not shielded from these", otherwise "a mere man who did not have the divine Logos as his mind could not save mankind" (Hanson, 1985, p.192-193). Thus, the scholar evaluates the achievement of Arian theological thought as "an important insight into the witness of the New Testament", which pro-Nicene fathers failed to recognize, and "unanimously shied away and endeavoured to explain away the scandal of the Cross" (203). In contrast to Arian bishop Asterius "neither Athanasius nor Hilary nor the Cappadocians could ever have envisaged the self-emptying of the Son" (Ibid.)

However, even if this assertion is true, in the case of Gregory "the shielding of the divine Word" should be sought not so much in his Christology as in his Platonic and Origenian metaphysical assumptions displayed in the narrative of the creation that was illustrated above according to which soul by its nature is "akin" οἰκειος, and "like", ὁμοιος, to the supreme being of God, while "the corporeity of flesh" is "strange", ξένος. The intermediary state of spiritual being is already established in the order of creation, when God "first conceived the Heavenly and Angelic Powers", "and so the secondary Splendours came into being, as the Ministers of the Primary Splendour" (Or. 38, 9). And there is also Origenian sustenance of all the rational being by the power of Logos: "And He is called Life, because He is Light, and is the constituting and creating Power of every reasonable soul" (Or. 30. 20). The same order is seen in man since only soul is to be named as "after the image", i.e. as after Logos. In the view of these

presuppositions it is natural to expect the same logic in the interrelation between the divine Logos and human nature in the Incarnation thus echoing Origen's theory on the soul of Christ.

But here lies one of the points of the Cappadocian, as Otis put it, "abandoning the Origenist anthropology" (Otis, 1958, p. 113). Gregory shifts Origen's unity of the soul of Christ with the divinity of Logos from the beginning of the creation to the time of the Incarnation of Logos. And in this we can suggest that he follows Athanasius.

Athanasius's early anthropology demonstrates close affinity to Origen and the Platonic metaphysical tradition. For him as well the image of God is Logos and man as image is created only according to Him and by Him, who transmits his power to him expressed as **μετάδοσις τῆς δυνάμεως τοῦ Λόγου.** Thus the human personality is realised in his relation to Logos, which makes him **τὸν ἀνθρώπον λογικόν** (Dragas, 2005, p. 9). Kannengiesser discovers the three main points of such similarity in his first theological treatise "De Incarnatione Verbis". First he emphasizes the original state of Adam "idealized in Platonic terms" that makes evident Athanasius's indebtedness to the tradition of Alexandrian thought of Christian (Clement, Origen) and maybe Neoplatonic writers. Further, there is no mention of the existence of the soul and instead he speaks of "(Adam's) mind fixed on God" (**τὸν νοῦν ἐσχέκηναι πρὸς τὸν θέον**). As a result, he even follows Origen in spiritualizing the original state of Adam, when he attributes what is **κατ᾽εἰκόνα** in a man not to the soul, as Origen does, but to the mind; and therefore he breaks with Origenian distinction between **κατ᾽ εἰκονα** and **κατ᾽ ὁμοιωσιν**, and bestows the latter on man already in his creation, contrary to Clement and Origen who preserve it for the final stage of spiritual growth. Therefore, Kannengiesser recognizes him as "the only one in the whole Origenist tradition who did not make such distinction" (Kannengiesser, 1973, p. 6-7). But there seems to be a reasonable explanation offered by Khaled, that Athanasius was preoccupied "to find correspondences rather than discontinuities between the orders of creation and redemption" (Khaled, 1998, p. 57). In this the very interest of Athanasius in soteriology forces him to abandon this kind of metaphysics and turn to pondering the Incarnated Logos and his relationship with us. Now the image of God is revealed not in

the purely divine state of Logos, but rather in His assumption of a human body. As a result, "the salvation of man henceforth takes place not through purification and spiritualization according to Origen's model, but through their personal encounter with the **εἰκων** of God who has become a man" (Kannengiesser, 1973, p.7).

Now, it becomes possible to shed light to some extent on the theological grammar of Gregory of Nazianzus as influenced by this Athanasian shift towards soteriology. As Ellverson maintains Gregory does not make any distinction between "**εἰκων** " and "**ὁμοιωσις**" (Ellverson, 1981, p.24). Therefore, we could assume that this is one point that makes his thought resemble that of Athanasius. But Ellverson has not provided us with any evidence from Gregory's writings, where these two terms are used with identical meaning. Indeed, Gregory seems to avoid juxtaposition of the term "**ὁμοιωσις**" with "**εἰκων** " at all. Apart from "**εἰκων**", Gregory also uses, as Ellverson points out, the word **θεοειδής**, which she tends to consider as a synonym of "**εἰκων**" (Ibid.). But all the examples that she draws, represent this term in the obvious dynamic context in contrast to the static ontological meaning of "**εἰκων**". Thus, in Or. 38. 7.18 we read **θεοειδεῖς ἐργάζηται;** in Or. 39.9.22 - **θεοειδεῖς ἐργάζομενοι;** in Or. 40. 5. 17 – **θεοειδέστεροι.** In all these cases an intentional ascetic and spiritual effort on the part of man is presupposed, rather than a gift bestowed on the part of God. Yet, at least one passage with apparent static and "ontological" meaning has escaped her attention. In his second "Theological Oration" Gregory speaks of the redemption of the human soul by Christ shaping it in the following way:

> "What God is in nature and essence, no man ever yet has discovered or can discover. Whether it will ever be discovered is a question which he who will may examine and decide. In my opinion it will be discovered when that within us which is godlike (**θεοειδὲς**) and divine (**θεῖον**), I mean our mind and reason, shall have mingled with its Like, and the image shall have ascended to the Archetype, of which it has now the striving. And this I think is the solution of that vexed problem as to "We shall know even as we are known." But in our present life all that comes to us is but a little effluence, and as it were a small effulgence from a great Light".

Or. 28. 17. 1-7.

But this eschatological fulfillment of the "striving", **ἔφεσις** towards our inmost ontological depth finds its ground only in the soteriology of Gregory as is clear from his Or. 1. 4-5:

> Let us give back to the Image what is made after the Image. Let us recognize our Dignity; let us honour our Archetype; let us know the power of the Mystery, and for what Christ died. Let us become like Christ, since Christ became like us. Let us become God's for His sake, since He for ours became Man.

Here we come to recognize the affinity of Gregory with Athanasius's abovementioned shift from metaphysical speculation to reflection on the salvific activity of the Incarnated Word of God. Before man "will discover", **εὑρήσει**, godlike, **θεοειδὲς**, and divine, **θεῖον**, Logos "lighted a candle - His own Flesh - and swept the house, cleansing the world from sin; and sought the piece of money, the Royal Image that was covered up by passions. And He calls together His friends the powers (**δυνάμεις**) on finding (**εὑρέσει**) the coin, and makes them sharers in His joy, whom He had made to be initiated in the mysteries of the economy (**τῆς οἰκονομίας μύστιδας πεποίητο**) (Or. 38. 12-18).

In view this perspective Gregory's sharp opposition to the Apollinarian Christology must be explained not as motivated by "shielding the divinity of Logos from human suffering", but rather on the basis of his soteriological presuppositions, as is aptly formulated in his famous passage: "the unassumed is the unhealed; only that which is united to the Godhead is saved" (Ep. 101.32). This is, as will be shown, the result of his shift from metaphysical interest in the original state of creation to reflection on the history of salvation, or rather, as Khaled has suggested concerning Athanasius, finding the link between creation and redemption. Indeed, Gregory's language of "discovery" must be understood as nothing other than an obvious sign that he held the view of redemption as a regeneration and restoration of the original pre-lapsarian state of a

man. Moreover, Or. 2. 23-24 supplies not only a sign, but it leaves no room for any doubt. So, it is worth citing it at full length:

> This is the wish of our schoolmaster the law, of the prophets who intervened between Christ and the law, of Christ who is the fulfiller and end of the spiritual law; of the emptied Godhead, of the assumed flesh, of the novel union between God and man, one consisting of two, and both in one. This is why God was united to the flesh by means of the soul, and natures so separate were knit together by the affinity to each of the element which mediated between them: so all became one for the sake of all, and for the sake of one, our progenitor, the soul because of the soul which was disobedient, the flesh because of the flesh which co-operated with it and shared in its condemnation, Christ, Who was superior to, and beyond the reach of, sin, because of Adam, who became subject to sin.
>
> This is why the new was substituted for the old, why He Who suffered was for suffering recalled to life, why each property of His, Who was above us, was interchanged with each of ours, why the new mystery took place of the dispensation, due to loving kindness which deals with him who fell through disobedience. This is the reason for the generation and the virgin, for the manger and Bethlehem; the generation on behalf of the creation, the virgin on behalf of the woman, Bethlehem because of Eden, the manger because of the garden, small and visible things on behalf of great and hidden things. This is why the angels glorified first the heavenly, then the earthly, why the shepherds saw the glory over the Lamb and the Shepherd, why the star led the Magi to worship and offer gifts, in order that idolatry might be destroyed. This is why Jesus was baptized, and received testimony from above.

Here is represented the whole arsenal of imagery reminding “recapitulatio” of the bishop of Lyons. Adam-Christ typology also includes the environment in the midst of which the events took place and comprises the circumstances that accompanied them, in order to draw detailed parallels and thus paint a vivid picture giving us the assurance of returning to the lost paradise.

Nevertheless, new features have appeared in the picture. In his rhetoric Gregory responds to the charge of "shielding the divinity of Logos" as if in anticipation of it, ceaselessly repeating as a refrain - "this is why", i.e. for our salvation. And here we encounter something new that could not be found in Irenaeus's typology – a link between the souls of Adam and Christ. For Irenaeus the entire salvific activity of the Incarnated Logos aimed "to recapitulate all things and to raise up anew all flesh of the whole human race" (Adversus Haereses, I, II. cit. in Wingren, 1959, p. 192), with clear stress on the salvation of the flesh. But Gregory includes into this consummation the human soul as well. And here again we should establish Gregory's Origenian vision of the order of creation and ontology: "God was united to the flesh by means of the soul, and natures so separate were knit together by the affinity to each of the element which mediated between them". In this case this order is seen in the interrelationship between Logos and human soul, and this also recalls Origen's concept of the soul of Christ as has been shown above. But now the unity of the soul with the Logos is shifted from pre-existence to the Incarnation. Gregory creatively reshapes Origen's cosmos in the light of Irenaeus's history, and as a result of this the theology of both of them obtains perfect maturity in the hands of Gregory. Thus, we are faced with an obvious novelty that could not be found even in Athanasius due to his "Logos-sarx" Christology.

However, here we must acknowledge the truth of the words of Brooks Otis: "It seems, in fact, a law of the history of thought that no great thinker of past generations can be revived except through the medium of the subsequent lesser thinkers who provide, so to speak the channel though which the return of the past can be made. In the case of the Cappadocians and Origen this lesser thinker was the late third-century bishop of Philippi, Methodius. It is indeed not too much to say that the Cappadocian system is a tremendous reworking of Methodius in the light of the Homoiousian theology" (Otis, 1958, p. 118). At this moment it will suffice to show the "reworking" and the further development of Methodius's soteriology drawing on the comprehensive study of Otis's disciple, Lloyd Patterson.

Seemingly, before Gregory it was Methodius who took the step from Origen towards Iraeneus. He, in his not always sound and just criticism of Origen, assumed the crucial points of Iraeneus's soteriology and from this position reshaped the Origenian system.

He displays the Incarnation and salvation of man in the very terms of recapitulation of his “new master”: “Christ became the very same as Adam through the descent into him of the Word [who existed] before the ages", because "it was fitting that the firstborn of God, his first offspring and only-begotten Wisdom, should become human and be joined to the first-formed human being, the first and firstborn of humanity" (Symposium III.4.60, cited in Patterson, 1997, p.79). This identity of Christ with Adam has confused scholars, Patterson explains by analyzing the context of the discourse where the parable about lost sheep is interpreted along the lines of the Origenian exegesis. Methodius relates the Incarnation to the shepherd leaving ninety nine sheep and descending from the mountain to find his one lost sheep, and he talks about Adam as "created incorruptible" prepared to enter "the ranks of the even and perfect number of immortal creatures" who "join the antiphon of the angels in praising God". After failing to fulfill this goal, Christ "who really was and is, being in the beginning with God and being divine [Jn. 1:1], came down to search for man, who remained included in this number. . . and put him on his shoulders and carried him back that he might not again be overwhelmed by the mounting waves and deceptions of pleasure" (6.6365). Then, Methodius expresses the Clementine as well as Origenian concept that all rational creatures are participating in Logos using Origen’s interpretation relating the number of sheep one hundred to the perfect number of rational creatures of which humanity is part. So, the restoration of humanity in Christ depicted by the analogy between Christ and Adam is accomplished for the perfection of the relationship between Adam and Christ which Adam possessed in the beginning of creation. Thus, Patterson concludes: “the version of the Adam-Christ typology offered by Thalia is a nice example of the way in which Irenaeus' broad picture of the divine economy is reworked in the light of an Alexandrian view of the perfection of humanity which is to be its final outcome” (Ibid. p.79).

In conclusion we can state that there is clear evidence that Gregory was not the first ground breaker to rework Origen’s and Irenaeus’s theology. Nevertheless it is true in no less a degree that Gregory made a significant leap compared with Methodius, and this is, we suggest, due to Theologian’s much more positive attitude and indebtedness to Origen’s legacy. Thus, the following passage from Or. 38. 13. 17-37 bears witness

to the perfect Christianization of the Platonic purely intellectual concept of "oikeiosis":

> The Imprint (τὸ ἐκμαγεῖον) of the Archetypal Beauty, the immovable Seal, the unchangeable Image (ἡ ἀπαράλλακτος εικων), the Father's Definition and Word, came to His own Image (ιδιαν εἰκόνα), and took on Him flesh for the sake of our flesh, and mingled Himself with an intelligent soul (ψυχῇ νοερᾷ) for my soul's sake, purifying like by like (τῷ ὁμοίῳ τὸ ὅμοιον ἀνακαθαίρων). And in all points except sin was made man. . . I participated in the image (μετέλαβον τῆς εἰκόνος); I did not keep it; He partakes of my flesh (μεταλαμβάνει τῆς ἐμῆς σαρκός) that He may both save the image and make the flesh immortal.

Here almost all Hellenic tools are used in the service of Christian salvation, or, to recall his own words, "laid down to the feet of Christ". On the one hand cold spiritual metaphysics is transformed into the dynamics of embodiment in the event of history and literally in the flesh of man, and on the other hand, it contributes to this event with fresh poetic and at the same time philosophic articulation. As a result of this "mingling" of the two different ways of thinking the perspective on things is changed: instead of thinking "protologically," seeking "arche" of being and detaching your mind from your actual existential state as far as possible, now everything is perceived from the perspective of the Christ event that involves my whole being with "flesh" and "intelligent soul". This last point is of immense significance since it presupposes that there has been a change of perspective in thinking about things not of the very things of thought. It means that "arche" is not abandoned at all, but now the point of departure in seeking it is a human body, and thus "being in so far as it is" is contemplated through the history of the Incarnation of the Logos, and this point is of crucial importance in establishing the interrelation between theology and economy in Gregory's writings.

1.1.2. The Interrelation between Logos and the Human Body.

After turning from the spirit to the body Gregory's thought is in a predicament: his dealing with bodily existence reminds us of Plato's definition of grasping the essence of the matter by "bastard thought". The determination of the meaning and destiny of the body makes Gregory's thought complex and constantly makes it problematic. But while the "strange" grossness of the body and its substrate, matter, forces the spiritual intellect of Plotinus to be inclined towards ascribing evil to it, the Christian concept of God as the creator *ex nihilo* does not allow Gregory to surrender to this temptation. He cries and complains about the sufferings imposed on him by his weak and mortal body and yet "honours" it as a "friend" (Or. 14. 6-7).This paradox of bodily existence leads him to find a proper place for the body in the spiritual realm through contemplation of the Incarnation and the Sufferings of Christ. So, the question arises: in what ways did Gregory's change of perspective as examined in the previous section affect his understanding of the meaning of the body in relation to Logos?

First, we will analyze the point of view from which Gregory observes the problem of the human body. Then, we will demonstrate the Theologian's evaluation of the benefits brought by the salvific activity of the Word of God for solving this predicament.

The most obvious example to illustrate his feeling of being uprooted and alienated from the world, yet, to which he is tied with his bodily "chains", could be taken from his poem "On Human Nature". Anxiously Gregory, who has escaped from "the others" (people with whom he could not deal all his life) seeks to obtain comfort for his soul to "speak quietly" with himself in the depth of nature. He describes nature in its beautiful and harmonious adornment:

> And the breezes whispered while the birds sang,
> granting from the branches a sound slumber,
> though for a soul quite weary. While, from the trees,
> deep chanting, clear-toned, lover of the sun,
> whirring locusts made the whole wood to resound.
> Nearby flowed cold water by one's feet,

gently coursing through the cool grove. But as for me, . . .

(5-11)

But then comes the vision of another world, dark and horrible, - “a mind cloaked round with sorrows”, being torn into pieces by the questions: “Who was I? Who am I? What shall I be?”; and in response the cry of despair – “I don’t know clearly. Nor can I find one better stocked with wisdom. But, as through thick fog, I wander every way, with nothing, not a dream, of the things I long for” (17- 21); all over his existence death rules: “I am. Think: what does this mean? Something of me’s gone by, something I’m now completing, another thing I’ll be, if I’ll be. Nothing’s for sure. I’m indeed, a troubled river’s current” (25-28).

In Gregory’s “an exquisite sensibility, almost in the pathological sense of that word” (L. Buyer, 1960, p. 412. cit. in Winslow, 1979, p. 2) exemplified here we can discern the Theologian’s attitude to the human body. It is death that makes him perplexed: he tastes death in all this worldly being, no matter how wonderful and eye-catching the beauty of its “cosmos” is, for everything fades in the face of death and this constantly corrupting beauty sharpens his painful feelings even more. However, what strikes us most of all in Gregory is his standing firm in the face of death, although full of sorrow, lamenting, even hesitating, nevertheless, finally, not escaping from it in the impassible heavens of metaphysics. Indeed, as Plagnieux rightly points out: “Gregory is not sure that the particular illness of our flesh was the fruit of original sin . . . in contrast to Gregory of Nyssa, our doctor is not certain that the body was closer to the good state before the fall than it is in present”. So, the scholar concludes that in his writings “we are far from Plato, Philo, Plotinus and Origen, and from Augustine himself” (Plagnieux, 1951, p. 427).

Already at the beginning of the creation of a man Gregory includes the weakness of the body in his paradoxical “mixture of the opposites” and not without reason. It is worth quoting at length the whole passage of the creation of a man, in order to follow to the inner logic of Gregory’s thought:

Mind, then, and sense, thus distinguished from each other, had remained within their own boundaries, and bore in themselves the magnificence of the Creator-Word, silent praisers and thrilling heralds of His mighty work. Not yet was there any mingling of both, nor any mixtures of these opposites, tokens of a greater Wisdom and Generosity in the creation of natures; nor as yet were the whole riches of Goodness made known. Now the Creator-Word, determining to exhibit this, and to produce a single living being out of both--the visible and the invisible creations, I mean--fashions Man; and taking a body from already existing matter, and placing in it a Breath taken from Himself which the Scripture knew to be an intelligent soul and the Image of God, as a sort of second world. He placed him, great in littleness on the earth; a new Angel, a mingled worshipper, fully initiated (ἐπόπτην) into the visible creation, but only partially (μύστην) into the intellectual; King of all upon earth, but subject to the King above; earthly and heavenly; temporal and yet immortal; visible and yet intellectual; half-way between greatness and lowliness; one and the same (τὸν αὐτὸν) spirit and flesh; spirit for grace (διὰ τὴν χάριν) ; flesh for pride (διὰ τὴν ἔπαρσις); the one that he might continue to live and praise his Benefactor, the other that he might suffer, and by suffering be put in remembrance, and corrected (ὑπομιμνήσκεται καὶ παιδεύηται) if he became proud of his greatness. A living creature trained (οἰκονομούμενον) here, and then moved elsewhere (ἀλλαχοῦ μεθιστάμενον); and, to complete the mystery, deified by its inclination to God (καὶ πέρας τοῦ μυστηρίου τῇ πρὸς Θεὸν νεύσει θεούμενον). For to this, I think, tends that Light of Truth which we here possess but in measure, that we should both see and experience (ἰδειν καὶ παθειν) the Splendour of God, which is worthy of Him Who united us [with body], will separate and will unite us again after a loftier fashion (συνδησαντος και λυσαντος και αυθις συνδεσαντος υψηλοτερον).

Or. 38. 11

Gregory no more sees in the creation of body result of fall, but rather revelation of God's more abundant wisdom and "the whole riches of His Goodness". So his positive

attitude towards body is firmly established already in the creation of a man. Therefore, "placing in it" of His "Breath" has nothing to do with declination and fading of His light and divinity in the emanation, but forms "a sort of second world", **τινα κόσμον δεύτερον**. But this is more than "microcosmos": it breaks the proportions of the harmonious world of ancient Greeks, since it is "great in littleness on the earth". Further, we are again in the world of language of the Greek mysteries, but only to strangely spread these mysteries on the profane world of "temporal" and "visible". After this the Theologian sheds light on the meaning of this "mixture" for our life: "spirit for the grace **(διὰ τὴν χάριν)**; flesh for pride **(διὰ τὴν ἔπαρσις)**", - here, we believe, he provides us with a key for proper understanding of the place of body in his thought. For him the intelligent soul is created "to praise his Benefactor" and in this to "continue to live", but here the modern English translation does not transfer precisely the meaning put by Gregory in the word **μενῃ**, it becomes clear when it is juxtaposed to its counterpart designated by him for flesh – **πασχῃ**. Gregory makes contrast between bodily life in suffering and instability, on the one hand, and impassible and stable intellectual life, on the other hand. So, **μενῃ** should be translated more literally, "to stay" or "to remain", i.e. to live unchanged, unaltered. Now, we are much closer to Gregory's perception of the meaning of human body: it represents the dynamic aspect of human existence: in contrast with soul it is a drive force of a man not giving rest to him neither when he is living in the fallen state nor even in paradise. Thus, flesh by imposing on a man the "suffering" of change does not allow him to "remain" self-satisfied in his pride, but breaks the shell of self constantly "putting him in remembrance" and "correcting". And this is not its work after fall, but even in the pre-lapsarian state, where man is "a living creature trained **(οἰκονομούμενον)** here" – mingled with this bodily and earthly being, - by means of this body he is "moved elsewhere **(ἀλλαχοῦ μεθιστάμενον)**" for his task "to complete the mystery" **(πέρας τοῦ μυστηρίου)** and, as a result of this, be "deified by its inclination to God" **(τῇ πρὸς Θεὸν νεύσει θεούμενον)**. But in what way does Gregory relate "suffering" in flesh with the notions of **παιδεία** and **οἰκονομία?**

Here it is worthwhile to examine his concept of free will for which he designates, like Origen, the word **αὐτεξούσια**. Man was placed in paradise not only to enjoy the benefits bestowed upon him, but rather "having been honoured with the gift of Free

Will" to undertake the cultivation of "the immortal plants, by which is meant perhaps the Divine conceptions (ἐννοιῶν), both the simpler and the more perfect". It seems that for Gregory free will is nothing else than the expression of free choice between obedience to the prohibition of "law" not to eat from the "Tree of Knowledge" and transgression of the commandment. And this would be expected from the man who was one of the editors of Origenian "Philokalia", where one chapter is specially devoted to the issue of free will, where free will is represented as the only cause of evil and the following definition of it is given: "for if we were to ask him (man, - Z.J.) what Free Will is, he would say that my will is free when I purpose to do something, and nothing from without opposes and incites to the contrary" (XXI, 4). Then the author draws on scriptural examples, where free will is demonstrated as the capacity of man to choose between good and evil, in order to protect God from blaming him as a cause of evil and proving that only human free will is a source of it. Therefore, Winslow naturally ascribed to Gregory's concept of "autexousia" "the assertion that we were endowed by our Creator with the natural ability to choose between good and evil, between God and ourselves" (Winslow, 1979, p.57). Indeed, Gregory talks about human will as "free to act in either direction" (Or. 2.17).

To establish the link between free will and body we should appreciate the work of Winslow, where he insightfully points to the importance of body for the dynamics of the realization of free will: "the body, in a word, assumes a pedagogical role in its relation to the soul, testing it and forcing it to grasp the good through its own efforts" (Ibid., p. 55). Nevertheless, later the scholar is convinced that the pedagogical measures and sufferings inflicted upon a man through his bodily life on the earth aiming at his "correction" was "in fact, a failure, at least at this stage of the oikonomia" (ibid., p. 74), since there was not any positive effect seen in human life. In order to explain this discrepancy in the thought the Theologian, we should observe his vision of the interrelation between body and free will more profoundly.

Let us return again to Or. 38. We have seen the function attributed by Gregory to his mortal human body is the correction of a man and his driving towards deification. In the same passage Gregory envisages the partial, measured vision of this divine light as a cause for this movement towards God. Exactly this lack of fullness causes "striving",

πόθος, which is a constitutive element in his whole concept of *theognosia*, as is quite clear in the following passage, where he suggests the explanation of "measured", μετριως, comprehension of God:

> . . . in order as I conceive by that part of it which we can comprehend to draw us to itself (for that which is altogether incomprehensible is outside the bounds of hope, and not within the compass of endeavour), and by that part of It which we cannot comprehend to move our wonder, and as an object of wonder to become more an object of striving (ποθῆται), and being desired (ποθούμενον) to purify, and by purifying to make us like God (θεοειδεῖς ἐργάζηται).

Or. 38. 7. 14-18.

Here is represented the gradual involvement of the chain of the human faculties which in the knowing of God leads man towards deification. This way of knowing will be explored in detail in a separate chapter, where we will deal with the Cappadocian's theological epistemology, but now this place might serve as sufficient evidence for maintaining the crucial significance of the faculty of "striving" for contemplation, deification and, hence unquestionably, for the salvation of a man. But what must be emphasized at this stage is Gregory's double-sided association of the striving: 1) striving originates from the mortality of flesh; 2) striving is directed towards God. Such a concept of striving, we assert, revolutionizes the understanding of free will. It becomes clear that for Gregory free will is by no means reduced to free choice between good and evil, God and death, but rather it is identified with striving rooted in human nature that finds its fulfillment only in God.

In view of these considerations, there is no doubt that mentioning the mortality of man already in the narrative of his creation and linking it with "striving" leaves no room for any negative ethical or ontological understanding of flesh even if it is mortal and suffering. So, it is an obvious misunderstanding of the Theologian by Otis, who ascribes to him the view that sin was "a property of the low and synthetic" (Otis, 1958, p.111-112) (here must be recognized that his free translation of Gregory's words: της κατω συνθεσεως, does not necessarily suppose "property of" but as well "derived

from", which allows us to ask: under what conditions?). The question should be posed: in what ways does the weakness of flesh contribute to striving towards God? The flesh by its capacity of suffering and mortality provides the gap and distance that serves as a space for a free realization of striving. The further analysis of Gregory's thought will prove this thesis unequivocally.

If we turn to the fallen state of man, we should ask: in what ways the sufferings of the flesh provide a positive meaning to our life? By what means does it "correct" and lead us towards God? Gregory offers to look at all disasters and benefits of this fallen world with the eyes of Ecclesiastes: "Vanity of vanities, all is vanity and vexation of spirit", which makes him suggest in this state the meaning of "some unreasoning longing of the soul, and distraction of man condemned to this from the original fall"; but here comes a turning point for the soul: "but hear, he says, the conclusion of the whole matter, Fear God". From this he draws the following conclusion: "This is his stay in his perplexity, and this is your only gain from life here below, to be guided through the disorder of the things which are seen and shaken, to the things which stand firm and are not moved" (Or. 7. 19). Thus, for the Church Father the very earthly and fleshly suffering and lack of stable and impassible life impels "striving" towards God and in this way this very "perplexity" and "disorder of the things" "guides" the soul.

However, if we cut this idea from the entire context of his thought, we will be obliged to recognize the influence of Origen. But insofar as we have been convinced, Gregory ascribes to the striving and flesh the crucial role in deification, while Origen reduces its pedagogical role solely to the fallen state. Therefore, we must state that the Church Father has gone far beyond his master.

Gregory definitely determines bodily sufferings and lack as a cause of striving and desire towards God, so we can even put it into a sort of Lacanian formula: "Lack of being (manqué a l'etre) causes desire". Moreover, Gregory could agree with Lacan, when the latter maintains the constant lack of satisfaction and frustration in the fulfillment of desire. But for Gregory there exists another world, or precisely, another aeon with its different logic, where this endless desire will be fulfilled no less

endlessly. And this begins, for him, in the historical event of the Incarnation of the Word of God.

This section has began with a quotation of his poem “On Human Nature”, where he lamented the sufferings and mortality of this nature, then through the whole poem we are unceasingly coming to the depths of Gregory’s despair, but suddenly in the very heart of “Tartarus”, we hear him shouting: “Stop! Everything is secondary to God. Give in to reason. God didn’t make me in vain”. So, “I am turning my back upon this song: this thing was from our feeblemindedness. Now’s a fog, but afterwards the Word, and you’ll know all” (124-127). Thus, the striving before Christ is nothing other than the labor of Sisyphus, work on “the cursed land” that grows only thorns.

However, the fruitlessness of striving by fallen existence does not mean for Gregory that all previous efforts were not worth undertaking. He insists that God is unwilling to give us His deifying grace “as the gift of God. This, indeed, was the will of Supreme Goodness, to make the good even our own, not only because it is sown in our nature, but because it is cultivated by our own choice, and by the motions of our will, it is free to act in either direction” (Or. 2.17). Thus, the initial “immaturity” and seeming weakness of man is in fact the precondition for gaining the sovereignty, this is the other side of the coin: “The second reason [for creating the body] is that it may draw to itself and raise to heaven the lower nature, by gradually freeing it from its grossness, in order that the soul may be to the body what God is to the soul, itself leading on the matter which ministers to it, and uniting it, as its fellow-servant, to God” (Ibid.). This we can call a kind of “kenotic sovereignty”, that is fully revealed in the salvific activity of the Son of God and demonstrating, at the same time, the archetypical activity for imitation on the part of man. Therefore, this “second reason” becomes lucid only when the Word of God “partakes of my flesh that He may both save the image and make the flesh immortal”. So, in this way He bestows on us with the restoration of our original capacity to “till the immortal plants” and “to reach maturity of habit (τοὺς τὴν ἕξιν τελεωτέρους) to enter” into the contemplation of God (Or. 38. 12.15); He transforms in his suffering and resurrection the suffering weakness of the flesh into the creative power of the human free will after which “union with the resurrected Christ guarantees the resurrection” (Mossay, 1966, p. 173).

Indeed, the Theologian "initiates" us in his vision of the ultimate goal of this transformation:

> Then, a little later, it receives its kindred flesh, which once shared in its pursuits of things above, from the earth which both gave and had been entrusted with it, and in some way known to God, who knit them together and dissolved them, enters with it upon the inheritance of the glory there. And, as it shared, through their close union, in its hardships, so also it bestows upon it a portion of its joys, it up entirely into itself, and becoming with it one spirit and mind and god, the mortal and mutable being swallowed up of life.

Or. 7. 21

There Gregory talks about the unity of flesh with soul in the same language as in the case of the unity of the human nature with the divine in Christ: "since [human existence] was blended (συνανεκράθη) with God and he was born as a single entity (ἓἳς), because the one who is more powerful prevailed (κρείττονος ἐκνικήσαντος) [over his assumed humanity], so that we might be made divine to the same extent (τοσοῦτον) that (ὅσον) he was made human" (Or. 29.19). However, this "prevailing" of the "powerful" or "swallowing up" by no means indicates absorption. If we set this text in the context of the analysis set out in these pages, then it will become clear that this "dangerous" language describes not the absorption of the weak by the powerful, but rather quite the other way round: strengthening the weak by the powerful by means of making it paticipate in his own power and thus transforming the suffering weakness and mortality of the body and, accordingly, the fruitless striving of the free will into its successful growth and fulfillment in the life of Christ.

This new concept of free will establishes an exceptional view on the interrelationship between the whole existence – soul and body - of man and God in the salvific act of restoration which shapes our entire theological epistemology to an immense extent. If in the previous section observing the Theologian's soteriology of soul we stated the change of perspective from metaphysical and protological to historical and existential,

now we are witnessing his turning to and "striving" towards the spiritual. However, this turning is achieved not in a state of disembodied spiritual contemplation, but the very flesh is what drives man towards its opposite pole, God. And we believe this concept will contribute to shedding light on Gregory's foundations for his theological vision of the Trinity.

1.2. The Christological Foundations of the Interrelationship between the Son of God and Human nature.

Having established the anthropological structural premises for the interrelationship between Logos and human nature, it is now possible to demonstrate in what ways it was activated in and by the person of Christ. As we have seen Gregory is not so much preoccupied in finding the original ontological connections between God and human being (he only points to the kinship of one, spiritual aspect of our existence). Moreover, even when he discusses the creation of man, he turns our attention to the weakness of the flesh of man that became later so apparent in our fallen state and he finds its remedy, or more precisely "maturity" and positive realization solely in the salvific action of Christ. So, we can state that for him Christ is an axis around which is concentrated his whole theological vision. Although for Gregory the incorporeal light of the Trinity was the central object of contemplation, he calls us to "look at and be looked at by the Great God" through the history of his earthly life which ended with his crucifixion, death and resurrection (Or. 38, 18, See for comment Plagnieux, p. 191-192); after this he declares that this "Great God" is "worshipped and glorified" in the Trinity. So, he apparently assumes the biblical narrative about God incarnate as a foundation and a point of departure for his trinitarian reflections. But, how does the embodied Christ provide the vision of the eternal Trinity?

We assume that the peculiar features of Gregory's christological views are in accordance with his trinitarian theology and serve as a bridge connecting with the uncreated realm of Godhead. First, we will observe his terminology used for emphasizing the unity of the person of the Incarnated Logos. Afterwards, we will try to demonstrate the soteriological logic of the unitive dynamics in Christ that at the same time sets forth the way for proceeding towards the Trinity.

1.2.1. The Unity of Christ.

Gregory coined his Christological terminology in his polemics carried out simultaneously against such mutually exclusive theological trends as were represented by Eunomius, Apollinarians and silently presupposed Antiochienes. But what is more surprising, against all of them he deployed his Christological insights in one and the same strongly unitive language. Therefore, it would be right to suggest that, as Beeley puts it, "the unity of Christ is the central tenet of Gregory's Christology and lies at the heart of his disagreement with all three of his major christological opponents" (Beeley, 2009, 17:3, p. 188). But what kind of economic and soteriological intuition led him in this direction? In order to answer this question, we must clarify several points of his theological strategy as they apply to the construction of his Christology.

So, first we will demonstrate the ways this unitive language operates in the exposition of his Christological principles, mostly drawing on Beeley's examination (Beeley, 2009, 17:3). In the next section we will move on to the analysis of the themes that conditioned the formation of this language which otherwise remains vulnerable to the charges raised against it.

Gregory prefers to talk about two states of the existence of the Word, before incarnation as purely divine being and in incarnation as "composite" being, thus aiming to preserve his unity: "The one who is now human was at one time not composite (ἀσύνθετος)"; and these two stages interrelate in an uninterrupted continuity of the existence of Word: "what he was, he continued to be; what he was not, he assumed" (Or. 29.19). But for this "assumption" he uses such strong unitive terms that seemingly do not leave a room for any kind of distinction of human nature from the divinity in Christ, in so far as it "was blended (συνανεκράθη) with God" and hence Christ "was born as a single entity (ἓν ὂς)" (Ibid.). He uses the same σύγκρασις insisting in Or. 37. 2 that in Christ there are "not two sons", and calls us not to give "a false account of the blending". Beeley points out that although Cyril of Alexandria drew on Gregory's Christology in his early writings, later he was forced even to oppose this "mixture language" to reconcile with Antiochenes who suspected in it

Apollinarianism (Beeley, 2009, 17:3, p. 416). Norris supposes that this term, and the similar one - "intermingling", **μίξις**, describe the unity understood along the lines of Stoics thought "in which a new whole was formed without a change in the elements that composed it" (Norris, 1991, p. 50).

However, it seems that Gregory does not allow us to interpret this unity in this way. He denies the possibility for the natures, or more correctly the human nature, to remain in the same state as it was before the unity: "Not that he became two things, but he deigned to be made one thing out of two (**οὐ δύο γενόμενος, ἀλλ᾽ ἕν ἐκ τῶν δύο γενέσθαι ἀνασχόμενος**). For both are God, that which assumed and that which was assumed, the two natures meeting in one thing (**δύο φύσεις εἰς ἕν συνδραμούσαι**). But not two sons: let us not give a false account of the blending (**ἡ σύγκρασις**)" (Or. 37. 2). From this Beeley concludes that "almost without exception, Gregory signifies two natures when he is describing the elements *from* which Christ was composed, as distinct from Christ's incarnate state as God-made-human" (Beeley, 2009, 17:3, p. 401). Thus, in opposition of Antiochenes' two-nature Christology Gregory asserts: "The things out of which the Saviour [is composed] are different things, . . . but not different entities (**ἄλλο μεν καὶ ἄλλο . . . οὐκ ἄλλος δὲ καὶ ἄλλος**)" (Ep. 101. 20). Here as well Beeley sees Gregory's abstention from "making two-nature language a technical christological construction and he solely indicates the elements "out of which" Christ is composed (Ibid., p. 402). Gregory distinguishes the natures in Christ only in "conceptions" – **αἱ φύσεις διίστανται ταῖς ἐπινοίαις** (Or. 30. 8. 9).

Yet, these "dangerous" formulations for Gregory serve only one aim, to assert as strongly as possible that "we do not separate the human being from divinity, but we teach one and the same God and Son" (Ep. 101). As Beeley points out, this phrase obtained "a programmatic technical meaning" first in Irenaeus, whom Gregory followed though most likely mediated by Apollinarius and Eusebius of Caesarea (Ibid., p. 393).

There is also another term that fourth-century theologians mainly preserved for intra-trinitarian discourses, but Gregory became forced by the Apollinarian controversy to apply it to Christology only in order to respond to his opponent in their own language

(Ibid. p. 391). Thus, Gregory speaks of **ἕνωσις** of Christ in Ep. 101.30 and 102, 28. Beeley traces the same usage back to Origen that seemingly shaped Gregory's understanding of the unity in Christ. So, Origen maintains in defence of Christian faith against Celsus that Jesus's "mortal body and the human soul in him received the greatest elevation not only by communion (**κοινωνία**) but by union and intermingling (**ἕνωσις καὶ ἀνακράσει**), so that by sharing in His divinity he was transformed into God" (Contra Celsum, 1980, p. 156, cit. in Beeley, p.391).

And here we find the logic of this unity which is illuminated by the concept of deification. Indeed, in Ep. 101 Gregory directly points to the unity in Christ conditioned by deification: "For both natures are one by the combination, the Deity being made Man, and the Manhood deified or however one should express it." But now we should ask whether this deification leaves any room for the actual human being in Christ. Beeley sees in such terminology an indication of "the crucial asymmetry between God and creation in incarnation" (Ibid. p. 400). Indeed, Gregory apparently speaks of "the prevalence" of "powerfull" divinity over his creature in Christ: "since [human existence] was blended (**συνανεκράθη**) with God and he was born as a single entity (**ἓις**), because the one who is more powerful prevailed (**κρείττονος ἐκνικήσαντος**) [over his assumed humanity]" (Or. 29. 19). And this dominance of divinity leads Gregory, as Beeley points out, "to speak only of Christ's divine nature, using other terms instead to refer to his humanity" (Ibid. p.400). The scholar states that the Theologian's "single-nature language" is "fundamental to the rationale and saving purpose of the incarnation, and hence to the theological definition of who Christ is", in so far as Gregory is willing to stress that in the Incarnation "God is made visible" (Ibid., p.401). But this theology applied to explain "ignorance and growth" in Luke 2:52 (See. Or. 43.38) according to the judgment of Winslow illustrates "a kind of "revelatory docetism," if you will" (Winslow, 1979, p. 94).

However, one aspect of Gregory's christology is left that does not match at all with this "monophysite" and "docetic" picture. By contrast, it even might be called "a nascent Nestorianism" (Norris, 1991, p. 48). First Mason listed twelve passages within the Theological Orations in which there is not seen any "impersonality of his [Christ's] human nature apart from the divine" (Mason, 1899, pp. XVI-XIX, cit in Ibid.). Norris

adds one passage where is expressed with much clarity the subjectivity of his humanity:

> For His will cannot be opposed to God, being wholly from God; but conceived as from the nature according to us, inasmuch as the human will does not completely follow the Divine, but for the most part struggles against and resists it. For we understand in the same way the words, 'Father, if it be possible, let this cup pass from Me; Nevertheless let not what I will but Thy Will prevail' (Matth. 24, 39). For it is not likely that He did not know whether it was possible or not, or that He would oppose will to will".

Or. 30.12

Norris does not agree with Mason, who appeals to the "poetic sense or grammatical slips" of the passage, in contrast he considers it as evidence that Gregory had in mind the subjectivity of Christ's humanity (Ibid. p. 49).

In view of these perspectives, we are faced with a serious predicament in orienting in the Christological thought of the Theologian. On the one hand, he makes a strong affirmation of the unity of Christ, and even the existence of the human soul in Christ does not prevent him from using "one-nature language" and finding a solution in the particular Origenian concept of christological deification. Nevertheless, he paradoxically includes the concept of a human will in this christology. So, we should pose the question: has this paradox any solution, or should we simply recognize the still non-mature character of Gregory's christology? To answer on this question we should first explore Gregory's christological deification in the light of its anthropological foundations examined by us in the previous sections of this chapter.

1.2.2. The Deification of the Humanity in Christ

It is quite clear from Gregory's writings that he did not envisage forming his Christology on the basis of an internal structural analysis of Christ's person. He altogether avoids thinking about Christ along the lines what Khaled calls "analytical

Christolgy", and instead he prefers to use the term designated by the same scholar for Athanasius, "**ἵνα** Christology" (Khaled, 1998, p. 147) or what we might call "teleological Christology". Wherever the Theologian speaks of the humanity assumed by Christ, he almost always highlights the *raison d'etre* – "for us", "that you might be saved". Therefore, in order to find the answer to the question that has arisen, how he understands the unity in Christ, we should seek first of all his response to the question, why was it necessary?

We will demonstrate that Gregory's Christology aims to respond to the need for salvation and deification on the grounds of the anthropological premises that have been observed in the previous sections.

Our argument falls into two parts. First, we will return again and analyze Gregory's concept of **περιχωρησις** in connection with above-mentioned peculiar feature of his exegesis. Afterwards, we move on to explore in what ways Gregory's anthrolopology finds its fulfillment in his Christology and thus provides a clear account of his concept of deification raising human existence from the historical realm of economy up to the eternal realm of the trinitarian theology.

Sometimes Gregory speaks of the revelatory and mediating function of the flesh assumed by the Son of God, thus "conversing with us through the mediation of the flesh as through a veil (**πραπετάσματος**); since it was not possible for that nature which is subject to birth and decay to endure His unveiled Godhead (Or. 30. 13. 16-18; see also his poem "On the Testaments and the Coming of Christ", 54: **πετάσματι δ'ἀμφικαλυφθεὶς**). Yet, he is by no means willing to reduce the purpose of this assumption to any kind of instrumental function and we can even feel the polemical tones in his words as if he has someone in mind:

> So He is called Man, not only that through His Body He may be apprehended by embodied creatures, whereas otherwise this would be impossible because of His incomprehensible nature; but also that by Himself He may sanctify humanity, and be as it were a leaven to the whole lump; and by uniting to Himself that which was condemned may release it from all condemnation, becoming for all men all things

that we are, except sin;—body, soul, mind and all through which death reaches—and thus He became Man, who is the combination of all these.

Or. 30. 21. 3-9.

Thus, what Gregory tries to express by his unitive language is nothing other than to indicate that by means of this unity God aims "to release" the human being and this unity is realized by "becoming for all men all things that we are"; then he lists what he means by "we": "body, soul, mind", since "all through" this "death reaches". So, in this way he asserts the necessity of His "coming" – **χωρεῖ** - in such a play of the antinomies: "who is full emptied", **ὁ πληρες κενοῦται** (Or. 38. 13. 32).

In this case Gregory is but one theologian of 4th century who based his Christology on God's entry into human history and participation in its sufferings with exceptional strength. This will become obvious if we compare his approach to two prominent pro-Nicene theologians, Athanasius and Apollinarius.

Thus, Athanasius sees it as a "truly paradox that it was He himself who suffered and did not suffer. He suffered, because his own body suffered, and he was in that which suffered. Yet he did not suffer because the Word, being by nature God, is impassible" (Ad Epict, 6; PG 26, 1060C, cit in Khaled, 1998, p. 144). Anatolios tries to protect Athanasius from charges of not taking "Christ's humanity seriously" and to explain this "tension" in Christ according to the view that "the human attributes of Christ are not simply juxtaposed to the divine; they are transformed . . . into an orientation toward the divine attributes" (Ibid, p. 149). Beeley rightly criticizes this view since it does not respond to "the crucial question of the identity of the redeemer, and thus the means of redemption" (Beeley, 2009, n. 165, p. 411-412). In contrast to Athanasius, Gregory discerns "the paradox", or, precisely, "more great paradox", **παραδοξοτέραν**, in the "communion" of the Son of God with humanity exactly when He "participates in the worse", **μεταλαμβάνει τοῦ χείρονος** (Or. 38. 13. 40).

On the other hand, the opposite is to be found in the thought of Apollinarius, who asserted unity in Christ with such strength that he did not speak of "the assumption of

the man" in his critique of Gregory of Nyssa, as the latter reports (Behr, 2004, p. 392). Apollinarius seems to have envisaged the exchange of the properties in Christ in such a way that he attributed an eternal being to the human flesh of Christ, and he stated: "the man Christ pre-exists, not because the spirit, that is, God, is other than him, but because the Lord, the divine spirit, is in the nature of God man" (Frag. 32, 33 (GNO 3.1, p. 147. 12-15; p. 148.6-10), cit in Behr, 2004, p. 393). Gregory of Nazianzus understood this kind of statement as asserting "that his [Christ's] flesh descended from heaven, but is not from here and from us" (Ep. 101.30).

Gregory, as we have seen, stresses the unity of Christ no less than Apollinarius and he also deploys his Christology in the language of *communicatio idomatum*. However, according to Behr his concept of "singularity does not legitimize a confusion about how, or in what respect, we speak of him; we cannot say, for instance, that it was *as human* that Christ created the world or that divinity itself has its origin in Mary"; consequently, the interchange of properties operates "with respect to the one subject about whom we are speaking in various ways, not with respect to a coalesced, unified nature (Behr, 2004, p. 405). Indeed, it seems that Gregory is ready to make such a distinction between subject and "speaking in various ways" in his famous statement: "the Saviour consists of one [thing] and another (ἄλλο καὶ ἄλλο τὰ ἐξ ὧν ὁ Σωτήρ) – the invisible is not the same as the visible, nor the timeless as the temporal – but not one [person] and another (οὐκ ἄλλος δὲ καὶ ἄλλος) (Ep. 101.5, cit. in Behr, 2004, p. 403). Grillmeier evaluates this passage as "a first step towards a conceptual distinction of "person" and "nature". But he immediately makes a reservation that Gregory's Christology "springs not so much from speculative theological reflection as from his spiritual disposition" (Grillmeier, 1975, p. 370). So, what is Gregory's "spiritual disposition"?

The Theologian expresses it in a striking way when he speaks of the need of "an Incarnate God, a God put to death, that we might live", ἐδεήθημεν Θεοῦ σαρκομένου καὶ νεκρούμενου; so Christ is "God crucified", Θεὸς σταυρούμενος (Or. 45.28-29), "God capable of suffering", Θεὸς παθήτος (Or. 30. 1. 10). God enters into our humble and suffering condition and assumes it in its fullness, but with only one aim: to bestow on us his divine power and immortality. He recognizes in Christ's

very sufferings and emptiness the revelation of the redemptive power of God, which is His love of humankind, his "philanthropia" and of which Gregory's opponents are unaware:

> Do you reproach God with all this? Do you on this account deem Him lessened, because He girds Himself with a towel and washes His disciples' feet, and shows that humiliation is the best road to exaltation? Because for the soul that was bent to the ground He humbles Himself, that He may raise up with Himself the soul that was tottering to fall under a weight of sin? Why dost thou not also charge upon Him as a crime the fact that He eats with Publicans and at Publicans' tables, and that He makes disciples of Publicans, that He too may gain somewhat…and what?…the salvation of sinners.

Or. 38. 14.

And this redemptive power of love acts according to logic: "like purifies by like", **τῷ ὁμοίῳ τὸ ὅμοιον ἀνακαθαίρων** (Or. 38. 13. 21). Therefore, his "perichoresis" and *communicatio idiomatum* is embodied in the particular order:

> And He Who gives riches becomes poor, for He assumes the poverty of my flesh, that I may assume the richness of His Godhead. He that is full empties Himself, for He empties Himself of His glory for a short while, that I may have a share in His Fulness.

Ibid. 13.

Thus, this is a movement with double direction starting from "above". It might be also called as a movement of "double-assumption". So, by this logic the meaning of his vision of Christ's agony in the garden of Gethsemane becomes quite lucid, which is a "stumbling block" for many scholars. It seems Gregory could agree with his contemporary Arian Alexandrian bishop Lucian when he states: "But if he [Christ] also had a [human] soul, the impulses from God and from the soul would necessarily have conflicted. For each of the two is self-determining and strives towards different activities" (Doctrina Patrum, ed. Diekamp, 65, 15-24, cit. in Grillmeier, 1978, p. 245).

But in contrast, he deliberately places a human soul in Christ expecting this very effect of "striving towards different activities", which is expressed in the words of Matth. 24,39. (See. Or. 30.12). And he responds to his opponents who seemingly shared the arguments of Lucian in this way:

> But look at it in this manner: that as for my sake He was called a curse,
> Who destroyed my curse; and sin, who took away the sin of the world;
> and became a new Adam to take the place of the old, just so He makes
> my disobedience His own as Head of the whole body. As long then as
> I am disobedient and rebellious, both by denial of God and by my passions,
> (πάθεσιν) so long Christ also is called disobedient on my account.

Or. 30. 5

Here we can find apparent traces of Origen's doctrine of the obedience of Christ's soul. But we are also witnessing Gregory's significant divergence from Origen as was demonstrated by us in the previous sections: while Origen's soul of Christ exercises his obedience to Logos in its primordial state, Gregory makes a shift from the origins of creation to the history of redemption. This obedience for Gregory first takes place now in the earthly life of Christ. Moreover, according to Origen the soul of Christ is a distinct person and chooses his faithful obedience to the Logos freely and deliberately, but for Gregory there is only one subject of obedient will, the Logos himself; and this is possible because of his concept of assumption of, what we may call, the "psychological world of a man". Further, from the juxtaposition of this passage to the Jesus's prayer in Gethsemane, where his "struggle", **ἀντιπίπτω**, and "resistance", **ἀντιπαλαίοω**, is referred to "the human will", **ἀνθροπική θελήμα**, it becomes beyond doubt that Gregory in this "will" meant nothing other than "my passion", **πάθος**, that is denying God, rebellious and hence has need for the cure. Consequently, we face here not the will of a human subject, **αὐτοεξούσια**, but the assumption of human natural property, though very close to subjectivity and, therefore, capable of determining the subjective feelings and experience of the divine person in his voluntary assumption of it:

> And thus He Who subjects presents to God that which he has subjected, making our condition His own (ἑαυτοῦ ποιούμενος τὸ ἡμέτερον). Of the same kind, it appears to me, is the expression, "My God, My God, why hast Thou forsaken Me?" It was not He who was forsaken either by the Father, or by His own Godhead, as some have thought, as if It were afraid of the Passion, and therefore withdrew Itself from Him in His Sufferings (for who compelled Him either to be born on earth at all, or to be lifted up on the Cross?) But as I said, He was in His own Person representing us (ἐν αὐτῷ δὲ … τυποῖ τὸ ἡμέτερον). For we were the forsaken and despised before, but now by the Sufferings of Him Who could not suffer, we were taken up and saved. Similarly, He makes His own our folly and our transgressions; and says what follows in the Psalm, for it is very evident that the Twenty-first Psalm refers to Christ.

Or. 30.5.

After this examination it would be a great mistake to suspect Gregory of any kind of "docetism" or even "a nascent Nestorianism", since he states but true Christian soteriology based on the experience of Easter that, as we maintain, reaches its climax in the articulation in his concept of "double-assumption".

Yet, this concept of assumption is conditioned by Gregory's theological and anthropological presuppositions. His understanding of the divine being of the triune God will become the topic of exploration in the next two parts of the thesis, though now we can only make some remarks about it, which are already obvious. As we have recalled above Grillmeier's words, Gregory makes some attempts to distinguish person and nature in Christ, and he especially makes such an impression when he speaks of the Incarnation in the following way: "what [Christ] was he set aside; what he was not he assumed" (Or. 37. 2). It looks as if he sets free the person of the Logos from his divine nature in order to make him capable of the assumption of humanity. Nonetheless, he states: "what he was, he continued to be; what he was not, he assumed" (Or. 29.19). Thus, there is no evidence at all that Gregory knows the person as existing prior to his substance, transcending its boundaries and freely determining

his relations with it. His way of thinking has nothing to do with that of Sartr, though he has strong existential motivations as we have seen. At this stage we might only suppose that his understanding of the substance is dynamic and flexible enough to follow the free will of the person in his descent from his glory and in his assumption of the "strange", ξενος, nature. After our exploration of the anthropological foundations of his Christology there should be no doubt that he has the dynamic concept of man and this dynamics achieves its realization in the deification in Christ.

We have seen that the weakness and grossness of the human flesh caused the feeling of lack and hence striving in the soul towards God in order to find its fulfillment in him. Now in the above passages this bodily lack and its effect – desire of deification (what we have called above "psychological world of man), which is fallen and hence causes rebellious passion, παθος, and denial of God instead of striving, ποθος, towards Him, is assumed by the divine Logos, the fulfillment of which Gregory expresses in the old Judeo-Christian (certainly accepted through Clement and Origen) language of ascension and transition: "He ascended that He might draw to Himself us, who were lying low in the Fall of sin (Or. 1. 5.); he "was Incarnate—yes, for it is no worse thing to say, was made Man, and afterwards was also exalted. The result will be that you will abandon these carnal and grovelling doctrines, and learn to be more sublime, and to ascend with His Godhead" (Or. 29. 18); and finally we will conclude our observation with the passage where the ascension as conditioned by the salvation is directly linked with the fulfilment of desire towards the knowledge of "nature and essence", τὴν φύσιν καὶ τὴν οὐσίαν, of God: "In my opinion it will be discovered when that within us which is godlike and divine, I mean our mind and reason, shall have mingled with its Like, and the image shall have ascended to the Archetype, of which it has now the desire (ἔφεσιν)" (Or. 27. 17. 4-7).

1.3. Conclusion

As we have seen Gregory paints very dynamic picture of the divine economy. The human being is open for a relationship with God by his/her very constitution of soul-body. Flesh with its vulnerable nature bearing the capacity of suffering (pathos) and mortality is not any more considered as something evil from which we should seek an escape as if from the "tomb". By contrast, Gregory remains very optimistic even in the midst of his personal sufferings, insofar as the pain reminds and drives him towards the fulfillment of humanity's high destiny (like for Novalis), the economy of deification. Without a material body man would be without "desire" (efesis) and "striving" (pothos) towards God, but self-sufficient being closed in his "pride" (eparsis). The free will and sovereignty of man (autoexousion) is to be fashioned and exercised in free acceptance of this "wound" open to Other.

Such a revolution in the Platonic - and to some extent Origenian - anthropology was caused by reflection on the object of human striving – the incarnate and crucified God. Indeed, we can state that Gregory took the inspiration for his whole theological edifice from the contemplation of his God on the Cross, for he felt the need for "an Incarnate God, a God put to death, that we might live". This paradoxical fusion of the ultimate power of divinity with the weakness of man in the person of the Son implied the formation of an understanding of the sovereignty that renounces itself for the sake of other. Therefore, for such a concept of supremacy we have devised the name of "kenotic sovereignty".

Thus, the economy of salvation and deification of man is achieved in such mutual openness and mutual sacrifice of God and man, which has its source in God. The "equality" of man with God (for such a view on the deification see. e.g. Or 40. 43) and his/her ascension is possible only by means of the descent to humility and obedience. And because since the original fall this strange logic is already obscured and we affirm our dignity in rebellion, God himself reveals and gives us his absolute supremacy by assuming our rebellion and disobedience in himself and transforming it in its initial state. This is, we believe, what Gregory was wanting to maintain by his sophisticated language of Christology.

Part Two: The Interrelationship between the Persons of the Trinity in the Economy

The Son of God is who acts the salvation of humanity in His assumption and deification of human nature; nonetheless He does not work alone, but in co-operation with other persons of the Trinity. For Gregory the active subject of the whole economy, beginning from the creation of the world to its redemption, always is the second person, but in his work there is always involved the other persons of Godhead in different ways. Thus, in the economy we do not lose the sight of all persons of the Trinity in contrast with ante-Nicene (and even some pro-Nicene) theologians, who ascribed the revelatory function exceptionally to Logos. Therefore, there arises a question quite logically whether this economic trinitarian interrelations has any substantial relation with the eternal immanent interrelations.

For Gregory the point of departure for his theological reflections on the Trinity always is the revelation of the Trinity and he establishes the immanent interrelations between the persons of the Trinity on the ground of their interactions *ad extra*. However, for such operation the interrelations in the economy should not only reveal the ontology of the Trinity as something additional to His being, as stemming from the self-sufficient source of the Godhead, but also involve the receiver of the revelation in the very being of the Trinity and grant him with the participation in it. Indeed, we state, Gregory does not consider the trinitarian theology in the isolated transcendence and establishes it by no means apart of an actual involvement of a man in the inner life of God. As a result of this, the economy is represented as owing its source in Trinity as well as having its ultimate goal not in itself but rather in transmitting a man beyond itself towards intimate life of God.

The demonstration of this thesis will be based on the observation of two kind of the interrelations revealed in the economy. First, we will explore the language and the logic that is used for the definition of the interrelation between Son and Father. Then, we will turn to the same kind of analysis of the co-operation between the Son and Holy Spirit in the economy.

2.1. The Interrelation between the Son and the Father

Gregory's language deployng Son's relation to the Father has many similarities with the terminology of the Middle Platonics and the Homoiousian theologians. As it is widelly acknowledged, he was a promoter of the monarchian model of the Trinity, which presuppoeses moderate suborditionism: Father as an origin and cause is considered as "greater" than the other persons of the Trinity. Besides, he seemingly holds linear and emmanational views about the order according to which the persons of Trinity interrelate with each other. This places his thought in the Platonic tradition. Especially, this could be exemplified in the interrelationship between Logos and Father.

Yet, this is only part of the truth. Gregory's briliant philological knowledge and free linguistic approach to the theological truths allows him to explose and deconstruct the conceptual grammar of the Platonic language skillfully and take critical attitude to the contemporary philosophical and theological trends. As a result, he constructs new theological rhetoric by means of which he articulates the tenets of the Nicene faith at full length. This creative work is observable first of all in the exposition of the interrelationship between the Father and the Son in the economy, where he offers total rethinking of the concept of the supremacy and sovereignty.

In order to demonstrate this, we will examine the different aspects of his theology of the mediatorship of the Son. We will begin with the examination of His intermediary activity in the creation of the world. Then we will shift on his mediating role in the comprehension of the knowledge of God. After this we will observe the ways the Son's activity relates to the will of the Father in the work of redemption, which, finally, leads us to the analysis of Gregory's theory of the Son's priesthood.

2.1.1. Mediatorship in the Creation

Gregory was the one of the theologians who insisted to trace the involvement of all the persons of the Trinity in every kind of the activity of God with the greatest force of

consistency. So, in the economic narrative of Oration 38 there is quite apparent that creation of the world is a work of all the persons of Trinity. Yet, the immediate agent of the activity is the Son, he is one who "fulfills" the work. Thus, one of the names Gregory designates for him as expressing his personal particularity emphasizes His exceptional activity in the creation of the world – "the creator", **δημιούργος**, while the Father in functional relation to Him bears the name of "the cause", **αἰτίον** (Or. 34. 8). Here is not quite clear the ways of the relation yet, but it becomes obvious when the concept obtains its place in wellknown metaphysical tradition: Gregory uses another set of names in conceptional complementarity to these ones – "the Mind" and "the Logos". There are two passages in Gregory's writings that represent the functional roles of this set of names played in the creation juxtaposition of which with each other reconstructs the whole picture.

Thus, in Or. 30. 11 Gregory asserts the equality of the Son with the Father against Eunomius on the ground of equal engagement both of them in the activity of economy and the sameness of this activity. He arises questions having in mind the words of Christ in John 5:25 and provides responces from the position of whom L.Ayres calls "the theologians of the true wisdom" (L.Ayres, 2004, p.43):

> But how does He see the Father doing, and do likewise? Is it like those who copy pictures and letters, because they cannot attain the truth unless by looking at the original, and being led by the hand by it? But how shall Wisdom stand in need of a teacher, or be incapable of acting unless taught? And in what sense does the Father "Do" in the present or in the past? Did He make another world before this one, or is He going to make a world to come? And did the Son look at that and make this? Or will He look at the other, and make one like it? According to this argument there must be Four worlds, two made by the Father, and two by the Son. What an absurdity! He cleanses lepers, and delivers men from evil spirits, and diseases, and quickens the dead, and walks upon the sea, and does all His other works; but in what case, or when did the Father do these acts before Him? Is it not clear that the Father impressed the ideas of these same actions, and the Word brings them to pass . . . ?

The another passage makes less stress on the equality and unity between the Son and the Father, but demonstrates more analitical clarity that bears far-reaching metaphysical significance and deserves special exploration, but now we will suffice to treat it concerning our scope of interest. Nonetheless, it is worth to be quoted at full length:

> The world-creating Mind (κοσμογόνος Νοῦς) was stirred and gazed within his mighty thoughts (μεγάλοισι νοήμασσι) upon the forms of the world to come into existence later, a world present to God. All things stand before God, future, past, and presently existing. For me, time has created division between events which come before and after. But where God is concerned, all things come together into unity and within the arms of his powerful Godhead they are supported. Therefore, I ask you, my listeners, to the point my mind has reached. It was Mind (Νοῦς) which brought forth the universe when later, at the right time, the fruit of travail burst into existence, the mighty Word (μέγας Λόγος) revealing it.

On the Universe, 67-76.

Everyone unaware of Gregory's authorship of these passages but acquainted with the Neoplatonic thought without any doubt could attribute them to the letter. So, these passages once more witnesses against R. Ruether's judgement: "we would be wrong if we were to suppose that Gregory either acknowledges or is aware of any dependence of Christianity on those [philosophical] traditions" (Ruether, 1967, p. 174, cit in Norris, 1984, p. 455). This concept of mediatorship we can trace back to Numenius of Apamea, who discusses in one of his fragments about interrelation between primary and secondary gods:

> Now if essence and the idea is discerned by the mind, and if it was

> agreed that the mind (νοῦς) is earlier than this and the cause of it, then mind itself is alone found to be the good (τὸ ἀγαθον). For if God the Creator is the beginning of generation, the good is the beginning of essence. And God the Creator is related to the good, of which He is an imitator, as generation is to essence, of which it is a likeness and an imitation. For if the Creator who is the author of generation (δημιουργος ὁ τῆς γενεσεως) is good (ἀγαθος), the Creator also of essence(δημιουργος ὁ τῆς οὐσιας) will doubtless be absolute good (αὐτοαγαθον), innate in essence.

(fr. 16, see also fr. 15, cit in Hagg, 2006, p. 107)

Hagg rightly points to the influence of such the Middle Platonic interpretation of famous dialogues of Plato on the thought of Clement of Alexandria (Hagg, 2006, p.71), but among the evidences supporting this thesis he has not mentioned one passage from "Protrepticos" which illustrates, on the one hand, close similarity to the concept of Numenius, and, on the another hand, probability of being the source of Gregory's passages: "The Icon of God" is his Logos, and the Son of Mind is the true divine Logos (καὶ υἱος τοῦ Νοῦ γνησιος ο θεος Λογος), the light of archetypal light" (36). However, there is also to be supposed availability of direct source for Gregory as well, through Eusebius of Caesarea, whose "Preparatio Evangelica" preserved the most of fragments of Numenius's writtings (including above quoted one). As we will see later there is to be recognized high probability that Gregory was acquinted with Eusebius's works very well. Nevertheless, the christian reworks of this theory in Clementian style is also evident in Origen (Cf. De Principiis 1, 2, see also Crouzel, 1989, p.186). And the traces of it we can find in Basil as well, who calls the Father αιτια and the Son – δημιούργος, who creates the world according to the will stemming from the "first cause" (Contra Eunomius, II, 21, 7-33).

Now, here we should acknowledge that dealing with these passages we are faced with some kind of paradox: the theologian who struggled against "Arians" of all sorts with great zeal and did not allow any shadow of unequality between the persons of Trinity, uses the concept with apparent subordinationist character the aim of which was

preserving of the transcendence and supremacy of God in relation to the world; and the socondary god's function was to fill this ontological gap. Indeed, his prominent opponent, Eunomious could sign under this theory with great pleasure. He strove to protect the supremacy of the "unbegotten" God with no less strength. In his survived "Brief Confession" he calls the Son with the following titles: "most perfect Minister of the whole creation and will of the Father (ὑπούργον τελειοτάτον πρὸς πᾶσαν δημιουργίαν καὶ γνώμην πατρικὴν), ministering for the maintenance and preservation of all existing things . . . for the ordering of the world and for all providential care (πρὸς οἰκονομίαν καὶ πάσαν προνοίαν)" (Eunomius, Apologia Apologiae, Vaggione, 2002 p. 70-71). Then, after description of the Son's accomplishment of the salvific economy in obedienece of the will of the Father, he concludes: "In all these things the pre-eminence and sole supremacy of God (τῆς ὑπεροχῆς τοῦ θεοῦ καὶ μοναρχίας) is preserved" (Ibid.). Elsewhere he clarifies interrelation of the Son with the Father in his "demiurgic" activity that resembles to Gregory's view to some extent: "For we acknowledge, in conformity with the blessed John, that "all things were made through Him" since the creative power (τῆς δημιουργικῆς δυνάμεως) was begotten coexistentially in him from above; he is therefore the Only-begotten God of these things which came into existence after him and through him" (Ibid. p. 52-53). Thus, we are on the ground that is common to the both opponents and it was provided by the above-mentioned Middle Platonic metaphysical tradition, that seemingly served to IV century thought as a matrix conditioning knowledge, a sort of Foucaultian "episteme". This becomes unequivocally evident, when we move on the strange and eclectic gnostic world of Evagrius of Ponticus, who was proud of being disciple of Gregory. His concepts of the double creation of the world and the mediatorship of Christ's demiurgic role in the creation of sensible material world (see. Konstantinovsky, 2009, p. 120) makes us suggest that he and Gregory shared in the same circle of readings or he substantially re-shaped the views of "the very mouth of Christ" leading by his personal spiritual disposition.

M. Barnes also acknowledges this unity of anti-Nicene and pro-Nicene theologian's opinions on the demiurgic role of the Son in creation, but he points to the difference of the conclusions drawn from this: while for the first it is the evidence of the

subordination of the Son to the Father, the latter assert that “any creative power must be united to the essence” (M. Barnes, 2001, p. 210). He gives to the Cappadocian’s argumentation such formulation: “where there is power, there is the essence” (Ibid.). However, Gregory’s application of this concept not only demonstrates the unity of the essence between the Son and the Father, but as well the difference of the functional roles and the degrees of them in the involvement of the act of the creation: from the above-quoted passages it is quite clear that for him the Son not so much shares in the creative activity of the Father as He is creator in the strict sense of the word as it denotes his particular hypostatic faculty not transmittable to any other persons of the Trinity (See especially Or. 34.8 where he lists the names revealing the distinctiveness of the persons). Therefore, there is to be supposed that in this case he was concerned with “power” terminology less than his friends, especially Gregory of Nyssa. So, we should seek another way of articulation of the unity between the Father and the Son in the act of the creation.

Since Gregory pursued aim to protect Nicene faith not only from Arianism but no less from “Sabelianism”, i.e. from elimination of the distinctiveness of the persons in the Trinity, the emphasis on these different roles and, consequently, names of the Father and the Son in the creation matched well enough to his second interest. Indeed, this is clear from the passage where, in the set of names of the Trinity, he keeps the distinction between the persons delineating their respective functions in the creation:

> The Former is called God, and subsists in Three Greatest, namely, the Cause, the Creator, and the Perfecter; I mean the Father, the Son, and the Holy Ghost, who are neither so separated from one another as to be divided in nature, nor so contracted as to be circumscribed by a single person; the one alternative being that of the Arian madness, the other that of the Sabellian heresy; but they are on the one hand more single than what is altogether divided, and on the other more abundant than what is altogether singular. The other division is with us, and is called Creation, though one may be exalted above another according to the proportion of their nearness to God.

Or. 34.8

It seems that for Gregory the language of mediatorship served the purpose of clarifying the personal distinction between the Father and the Son. The same was in the case of Eusebius of Caesarea. This latter even gave up using analogy of radiance-light interrelation of his admirable master, Origen, to stress distinctiveness of the Son: “the radiance is inseparable from the light of sense, while the Son exists in Himself in His own essence apart from the Father” (Eusebius, Demonstratio Evangelica, IV,3 cit. in Robertson, 2007, p. 48); and “the ray has its range of activity solely from the light, whereas the Son is something different from a channel of energy, having His being in Himself” (ibid.). So, he is forced to find other imagery and “takes refuge in the alternative metaphor of a fragrant odour” (Stead, 1971, p.91, cit in Ibid. p.49). Supposedly, this intention to underline the personal existence of the Son is discernable long before he attacked Marcelius, in the “Apology” of the common authorship with his master, where there is made an attempt to defend Origen from the charge of teaching that the Son was “underived” (innatus) from the Father (Behr, 2004, p. 55). Afterwards this theological preoccupation to distinguish the personal existence of the Son from the Father becomes more mature in his struggle against pro-Nicene Marcellus:

> If they coexist, how is the Father the Father and the Son the Son? Or how is one the first and the other the second? And how is one unbegotten while the other is begotten? For if the two were equally coexisting each with the other, both would be considered worthy of equal honour, as I said, each would be unbegotten or begotten. But neither of these would be true, for neither would there be the unbegotten or the begotten.

(The Letter to Euphration of Balanea, 3.1. cit. in Robertson, 2007, p. 79).

However, here we see how Eusebius tries to legitimize by this logic of distinction his another concern, which was probably the initial purpose of the whole mediatorship language: protection of the sole sovereignty of God and his transcendence from the

world. He like later Eunomius is unwilling to share God's supremacy and monarchy to anyone else as well as to come in touch with his creation directly. For him the latter supposition is the same as if the sun "came down from heaven and lived among men, it would be impossible for anything on Earth to remain undestroyed, for everything alive and dead would be destroyed together by the rushing stroke of light". From here he makes conclusion for his exclusive sovereignty: "why, then, are you surprised to learn the like about God (Whose work is the sun, and the whole heaven, and the Cosmos)? That it is impossible for any to exist to have fellowship in His unspeakable and inexplicable Power and Essence ..." (Demonstratio Evangelica, IV, 6. cit in Robertson, p. 45). Now we will approach closer to Gregory's above concept of the creation recalling the following passage, where Eusebius directly compares God the Father to mind "living apart like a sovereign in his unapproachable inner chambers, he alone decides what must be done, and from him proceeds the only-begotten Logos, begotten from the most private, innermost recesses of the Father by indescribable means and unnamable power." (ibid.). Thus, we stand again on the common ground with Gregory and anti-Nicene Eusebuis. But, after this we shall see to what extent reworks Gregory this language in order to grant the Nicene faith with theological-cultural legitimacy, i.e makes it persuasive and expressible in the current thinking milieu. This operation might be called the deconstruction of the language.

The main point unacceptable for this language of mediatorship is the Nicene assertion of the sameness of the divinity of the Son and the Father. For Eusebius, as we have seen, it is beyond the question that the unbegotten and the begotten could to be "considered worthy of equal honor", while Gregory's interest is exactly this. So, how could he manage to accept the mediatorship of the Son for securing his distinctiveness and at the same time assert his absolute equality of "the will" and "the power" in eternity? Apparently not without explosion of the whole logical system of his contemporary language. We have abrupt intentionally the above-quoted passage taken from Or. 30.11 exactly at the point where he starts putting in the concept of mediatorship something new and alien for it. After the comparative analysis has been accomplished by us the omitted part of the passage will shed light on his masterful work of deconstruction. We continue from the last sentence of the quotation:

> Is it not clear that the Father impressed the ideas of these same actions, and the Word brings them to pass, yet not in slavish or unskilful fashion, but with full knowledge and in a masterly way, or, to speak more properly, like the Father? For in this sense I understand the words that whatsoever is done by the Father, these things doeth the Son likewise; not, that is, because of the likeness of the things done, but in respect of the Authority.
>
> Or. 30.11.

After offering his solution of the question stemming from John 5:25 Gregory is hurrying to make qualification of his theory for his pro-Nicene position and scatters any doubt that this dependence of the Word's activity on the Father might imply diminishing the former's honor and equality with the Father. But, on the other hand, he is ready by no means to make void the Father's "authority". His designation of the term "cause" for the Father, recognition of His personality as a "union" of the Trinity (see Or. 42.15) and his stress on the supremacy of the Father with the more strength than other pro-Nicene fathers did, renders us to suggest that he was not forced at all to use this the Middle Platonic subordinationist language unless it was "to a certain extent compatible with Jewish-Christian thinking" (Hagg, 2006 .p. 116). Although Hagg makes this conclusion for Eusebius of Caesarea, but we believe it might be justified in the case of Gregory as well, yet with significant reservations.

So what we see is an obvious inconsistency in the logic of Gregory. But at this stage our aim is to show that Gregory accepts traditional language and the ways of argumentation, however, not uncritically and tries to express something new that proceeds beyond the expressive capacities of the current language, yet, not deserving to be kept in silence. Further we will demonstrate that Gregory does not add simply his reservations about equality of the Son with the Father God to the idea of the supremacy of the Father, but he totally transforms the very notion of supremacy and sovereignty. This new concept not only matches with equality, but even logically demands it.

2.1.2. The Mediatorship in the Knowledge of God

In the above-quoted passage from the poem "On the Universe", 67-76 the Son's demiurgic activity is delineated in the term of revelation: in the creation of the world the Word does nothing else than reveals the "mighty thoughts" within which were "stirred and gazed" by the Mind "upon the forms of the world". Elsewhere Gregory sets forth clear definition of the divine Mind-Logos interrelationship: "He is called the Word, because He is related to the Father as Word to Mind; not only on account of His passionless generation, but also because of the union, and of His declaratory function" (Or. 30. 20). But the word does not reveal only thoughts of the Father-Mind about the world, but His very being as well. Gregory goes on in the same passage clarifying more and more this kind of relationship:

> Perhaps too this relation might be compared to that between the Definition and the Thing defined since this also is called Logos. For, it says, he that hath mental perception of the Son (for this is the meaning of hath seen) hath also perceived the Father; and the Son is a concise demonstration and easy setting forth of the Father's Nature. For every thing that is begotten is a silent word of him that begat it. And if any one should say that this name (Only-Begotten, z.j.) was given Him because He exists in all things that are, he would not be wrong.

Thus, Gregory's attempt is apparently construction of his pro-Nicene theology by reworking the old purely cosmological understanding of the function of Logos. Here should be noticed that he makes this shift appealing to the traditional philosophical epistemology. But the most striking thing in this passage is that he returns back to the cosmological background and allows it to coexist with his new functional concept of the Logos, since it is not deemed by him as a "wrong". As a result of the marriage of these concepts the Word of God is represented not only as revealing the being of the Father but the being of the world as well. This kind or activity of the Son in two

different directions will become more lucid when we examine another aspect of his notion of the mediatorship, the priesthood of Christ.

The revelatory function of the Word is naturally connected by Gregory to another one, the concept of the image of God. After listing some names of the Son that unfolds the meaning of his title "Only-Begotten" and providing it with pro-Nicene interpretation, he moves on more detailed analysis of the name "image":

> And the Image as of one substance with Him, and because He is of the Father, and not the Father of Him. For this is of the Nature of an Image, to be the reproduction of its Archetype, and of that whose name it bears; only that there is more here. For in ordinary language an image is a motionless representation of that which has motion; but in this case it is the living reproduction of the Living One, and is more exactly like than was Seth to Adam, or any son to his father.
> For such is the nature of simple Existences, that it is not correct to say of them that they are Like in one particular and Unlike in another; but they are a complete resemblance, and should rather be called Identical than Like.

(Ibid.)

Here we see the concept of image developed to the extremities. The image not only bears in himself signs of the resemblance of the characters with his archetype, but expresses his very substance and existence in his very substance and life. So, according to this logic the substantial identity is formed on the ground of "complete resemblance". This resemblance is very paradoxical and completely deconstructs Hellenic understanding of the image. According to the Platonic theory the image reflects and reveals an inaccessible archetype only to some very weak extent. Movement from the letter to the former is always depicted in terms of declension, that of oneness, power, sovereignty, beauty, goodness, etc. In view of these changes, we can maintain that "overturning of Platonic understanding of the image" took place not in XX century Post-Structuralist philosophical thought, as claimed Deleuze, but long

before accomplished by pro-Nicene church fathers in the struggle with Arianism. This process started already at the beginning of the Arian controversy as it is evident in the argumentation of Alexander of Alexandria based on the notion of "**ἀπαραλάκτον εἰκων**" (the greatness of the change is illustrated by the fact that the same term was used by Arian Asterius but with traditional meaning) and afterwards developed by Athanasius. But in the hands of the Cappadocians it underwent new changes and was enriched with new meaning once more, insofar they were concerned to articulate the distinction between the Son and the Father more than Athanasius.

Indeed, Gregory struggled to find path between Scylla and Charibda, to avoid at the same time errors of "Arian madness" and "Sabelian heresy". But he did not undertake this task first. It seems that before him had begun work on this problem another Cappadocian. Basil proposes the following doctrine of the Son as an icon of God:

> "the image of the invisible God" should be understood not as artificial images made later in accordance with archetype, but coexisting and subsisting with the archetype by substance **(συνυπάρχουσαν καὶ παρεφεστηκυῖαν τῷ ὑποστάντι)**, and being that the archetype is, fashioned not by imitation, but as upon a seal signed the whole nature of the Father upon the Son."

Contra Eunomius, II, 16.33-38 (SC. 305, 64).

This obviously more emphasis on the more independent existence of the Son (the whole context of the passage makes it more evident) compared with Athanasius already points towards further refinement of the trinitarian terminology. But it will become clear when we deal with the interrelation of the will of the Son with that of the Father in the salvific activity of the former, then Basil's influence on Gregory's thought will become beyond any doubt. Therefore, there should be recognized the maturity of Gregory's thought in Or.30.20, where he draws parallels between Archetype-Image relationship and Adam-Seth personal relationship. In this analogy the image is already fully personalized. So we should wait for His distinct free will expressed in the relationship with the Father.

2.1.3. The Mediatorship of the Son in the Salvific Activity and Will

The above examined different aspects of the intermediary activity of the Son between the Father and the world might be assumed as preliminary steps introducing and leading to the quintessence of the whole economy that is salvation and deification of a man. Moreover, it seems that for Gregory the salvific activity itself was the model for any kind of economic activities. Indeed, in the salvation and deification there takes place the renewal of the act of the creation of the man what Gregory calls "regeneration" (see e.g. Or. 34.12; Or. 41.14), "recreation" (Or. 45.19), and the most full knowledge of God is revealed to us by the Image of God only through his Incarnation, as we have seen this in the first chapter on the interrelationship between the Word and the human soul. Therefore, we should hope that Gregory will disclose his vision on the mediatorship of the Son in the exposition of His salvific activity and hence, provide us with the possibilities to "ascend" to the inmost depths of his trinitarian theology.

When we examined Gregory's exegesis of the accounts on Christ, we have found that his approach was characterized by preferring to make distinction between two states of the person of the Word to that of between the divinity and the humanity in Christ, as it was in the case of Marcellus and Athanasius. And this was conditioned by his concern to protect the sameness of the person of the Son. This feature of his exegesis has been pointes out by scholars (especially by Norris), but another peculiarity of his approach, we suppose, has not been accentuated yet.

The Theologian unfolds his understanding of the will of the Son in relation to the will of the Father in his discussion of the salvific mission of the former that seemingly diminishes his honor and refutes his equality with the Father. First, Gregory contradicts to the arguments of his opponents on the basis of Athanasian partitive exegesis: "He was sent, but sent according to His manhood (for He was of two natures), since He was hungry and thirsty and weary, and was distressed and wept, according to the laws of human nature" (Or. 45. 28). Though afterwards he agrees to his opponent's supposed

exegetical treatment of the mission: “but even if He were sent also as God, what of that?” Then he undertakes the task to defeat him using his own weapon:

> Consider the mission to be the good pleasure of the Father, to which He refers all that concerns Himself, both that He may honour the eternal principle, and that He may avoid the appearance of being a rival God. For He is said on the one hand to have been betrayed, and on the other it is written that He gave Himself up; and so too that He was raised and taken up by the Father, and also that of His own power He rose and ascended. The former belongs to the Good Pleasure, the latter to His own Authority; but you dwell upon all that diminishes Him, while you ignore all that exalts Him. For instance, you score that He suffered, but you do not add "of His own Will." Ah, what things has the Word even now to suffer! By some He is honoured as God but confused with the Father; by others He is dishonoured as Flesh, and is severed from God.

Or. 45. 28

Here we see the Son represented with clear features of the distinctive self-conscious will. He is not a tool in the hands of God as it was the Logos of Philo, but rather He freely “refers” to and “honours” Father, that points to his potentiality to be – ability to choose to be – “rival God”. Moreover, Gregory proposes here with ultimate clarity (which we have already found above) what we call the concept of “kenotic sovereignty”: one’s suffering does not affect his sovereignty if he wills it. In fact, the suffering that aims to make void ones strength and freedom turns into much more strength and freedom when it is received freely: the Son “have been betrayed”, but “he gave himself up”. In addition, the free consent to the dependence of one’s life on the other’s will does not diminishes ones freedom at all, but instead it bestows one with other’s same power: the Son’s life is depended on the Father’s activity to “raise and take him up” from the death, but at the same time the Son stands on the side of the Father, on the opposite side to his own self who suffers and dies, and he also himself raises and ascends himself up.

What we face here, might be called deconstruction of the traditional notion of the sovereignty and freedom, which has the theological and philosophical implications of the immense importance and deserves special study with much broader scope. So, we should suffice for the interest of our thesis to notice that according to this understanding of the will of the Son there is no discernable any division between the Son's and the Father's personal interrelationship in the eternal realm of Godhead and their interrelationship in the historic mission of the salvation. Concerning probable origins of this doctrine, we should mention Basil the Great. In his famous treatise "On the Holy Spirit", 7, we are reading:

> Therefore, the economy that accomplished the Son, should be assumed not as involuntary service of the slavish humilation, but as free care, with which the Son bestowed his creation by his kindness and love of humankind in accordance with the will of the Father and God.

There might be suggested that Basil owed this teaching to his "homoiousian" background, since we find the notion of the "agreement", **συμφωνία** as a principle of the unity in substantial likeness of the persons of the Trinity in the creed of Dedication council. If this is true, then we cannot agree with McGuckin's supposition that Gregory unlike Basil was not "burdened" with "traditional" Cappadocian theology that bore Homoiousianism in "embryonic form" due to the heritage of Gregory Thaumaturgos (McGuckin, 2001, p. 106). On the other hand, it seems quite plausible that this doctrine "goes back to Origen" (L.Ayres, 2004, p.119. see. Contra Celsum 8.12).

There should be acknowledged that this doctrine sheds light on the other side of the economical relations, namely, on the interrelationship between divine and human wills in the Christ. Concerning human will of Christ, we have demonstrated that this problem is to be solved on the basis of Gregory's concept of the salvific activity of Christ as a "double-assumption". In the previous chapter we have answered to the question "what", i.e. what happened in the Christ, now this concept allows us to provide answer on the question "how", how is it possible and be conditioned on the part of the person of the Son, how is it accomplished by his distinctive property of the

Sonship. Here Gregory offers as a key another concept of mediatorship, the concept of the priesthood of Christ that represents the way humanity is involved in this free voluntary interrelationship between the Father and the Son, and thus participates in the eternal being of Godhead.

2.1.4. The Priesthood of the Son

The scholars of Gregory's soteriology usually tend to focus on the Easter narrative and the effects of the salvation accomplished by and in Christ, but then there is left without attention another narrative, or more correctly another meaning of the narrative that lies underneath the former. In fact, in Gregory's soteriology we face one narrative of salvation but unfolding interplay of the two different levels of the meaning. If we do not take into account this two-fold character of his soteriology, we will not be able to reconstruct the whole picture of his doctrine, since loose clear understanding of some his crucial passages.

We can illustrate this by his famous but very dense passage from Or. 45.22. The exceptional importance of the matters discussed here for Gregory is stressed by him right at the beginning: "now we are to examine another fact and dogma, neglected by most people, but in my judgment well worth enquiring into." Then he poses the question which had already received answers from two different perspectives in his time, but he is not content of them at all and he criticizes them from the point of view of compassioante love and justice of God the Father.

So the question is: "to whom was that blood offered that was shed for us, and why was It shed? I mean the precious and famous blood of our God and High priest and sacrifice." Afterwards he restates the question underlying his "understanding of Christ as a ransom", so significant for him as rightly points out Winslow (Winslow, 1979, p. 108): "We were detained in bondage by the evil one, sold under sin, and receiving pleasure in exchange for wickedness. Now, since a ransom belongs only to him who holds in bondage, I ask to whom was this offered, and for what cause?" The first alternative is "to the Evil One", but that is "an outrage". The second – "to the Father"

(the idea we meet in “On the Mysteries” 5.10 by Cyril of Jerusalem). However, “on what principle did the blood of His Only begotten Son delight the Father, Who would not receive even Isaac, when he was being offered by his Father, but changed the sacrifice, putting a ram in the place of the human victim?” Yet, Gregory does not offer third alternative answer, but stops on this latter and interprets it in the way that renders the apparently horrible and sadistic image of the Father into the absolutely opposite one, the liberator of the humankind from the tyrant:

> Is it not evident that the Father accepts Him, but neither asked
> for Him nor demanded Him; but on account of the Incarnation,
> and because Humanity must be sanctified by the Humanity of God,
> that He might deliver us Himself, and overcome the tyrant, and draw
> us to Himself by the mediation of His Son.

This is one aspect of the economical interrelations between the Son and the Father, that reveals what was done “for us” by them. The theologians and the scholars, who deal with this passage, usually notice this one aspect of the passage. Thus, Lossky solely points to the meaning of the liberation of a man from the power of the death (Lossky, 1991, p.152-153). Winslow comes closer when he discovers deep insight in this refashioning of the “popular soteriological metaphor”: “the divine oikonomia has God, not only as its object, but also as its subject”, since “Gregory’s insistence that the Son is God stems from his assertion that God himself is active in the economy of salvation” (Winslow, 1979, p.111). So, next step should be taken and be recognized in this passage the reflection of the eternal activity of “its subject”, the Son, exactly because he is God. But, there is needless to apply any deductive method, if we continue reading of the passage, Gregory himself will expose this side as well: the Son “also arranged this to the honour of the Father, Whom it is manifest that He obeys in all things” (Or. 45.22). Thus, in the picture intervenes the interrelationship of the wills of the Father and the Son, which has been analyzed in the previous section. The complexity of the picture of the salvation becomes more obvious, when Gregory puts human will in the midst of it. The best illustration of this widening of horizons comes from the Oration on the Son:

> Take, in the next place, the subjection by which you subject the Son to the Father. What you say, is He not now subject, or must He, if He is God, be subject to God? You are fashioning your argument as if it concerned some robber, or some hostile deity. But look at it in this manner: that as for my sake He was called a curse, Who destroyed my curse; and sin, who taketh away the sin of the world; and became a new Adam to take the place of the old, just so He makes my disobedience His own as Head of the whole body. As long then as I am disobedient and rebellious, both by denial of God and by my passions, so long Christ also is called disobedient on my account. But when all things shall be subdued unto Him on the one hand by acknowledgment of Him, and on the other by a reformation, then He Himself also will have fulfilled His submission, bringing me whom He has saved to God. For this, according to my view, is the subjection of Christ; namely, the fulfilling of the Father's will.

Or. 30.5.

As we see, here again Gregory does not reject the exegetical methodology of the opponent, but follows to his non-partitive treatment of the accounts on the Christ: if the Son's relationship with the Father is depicted in the language of the subjection and submission, he is not against to refer this to his eternal position in relation with the Father. But the point that is unacceptable for him is to imagine another person with free will along side of the Father as "some robber, or some hostile deity". The emphasized "disobedient and rebellious" mode of freedom has its place only in the fallen condition of a man, where "passion" has lost its initial direction (on the passion in Gregory's thought in details see above 1.2). Hence, when Christ "makes my disobedience his own" and he himself becomes "called disobedient", this reveals by no means his personal will and freedom, but rather the assumed human will, that is in fact nothing else than the expression of our slavish obedience to "the tyrant". Therefore, the only way that brings us freedom is the identification of our will with his divine will: to the act of rendering me "subdued unto" the Father follows His own "submission" and in this way He brings me to the Father.

However, at this stage there is not seen any explanation how is it possible for obedience and subdual to be understood as an ultimate divine freedom and sovereignty, there has not appeared yet an assurance that our obedience to God will be turned into authentic freedom. But Gregory does not leave us within such ambiguity and initiates us in the mystery of his paradoxical notion of freedom as obedience. So he goes on:

> But as the Son subjects all to the Father, so does the Father to the Son;
> the One by His Work, the Other by His good pleasure, as we have already said.
> And thus He Who subjects presents to God that which he has subjected,
> making our condition His own. Of the same kind, it appears to me, is
> the expression, "My God, My God, why hast Thou forsaken Me?"
> It was not He who was forsaken either by the Father, or by His own
> Godhead, as some have thought, as if It were afraid of the Passion, and
> therefore withdrew Itself from Him in His Sufferings (for who compelled
> Him either to be born on earth at all, or to be lifted up on the
> Cross?) But as I said, He was in His own Person representing us.

Thus, there is reciprocal movement of subjection: the Father does the same in relation to the Son. There is difference only in the modes of the subjection: while the Son subjects “by His work”, the Father responds “by His good pleasure”. Now, it is not difficult to recognize in this kind of interrelationship that what Gregory uncovered was an idea of freedom as mutual life-bestowal. Here freedom is not exposed in terms of self-affirmation, but rather affirmation of the other. And in the heart of this loving communion is brought a man by the Son’s priestly service by “representing us in His own person”, i.e. at the same time being Himself “sacrifice”.

We suggest the concept of the priesthood of the Son Gregory owes to Eusebius of Caesarea insofar as in the writings of the latter we can find the striking simirality of the concept:

> He then that was alone of those who ever existed, the Word of God,
> before all worlds, and High Priest of every creature that has mind
> and reason, separated one of like passions with us, as a sheep or lamb

> from the human flock, branded on him all our sins, and fastened on him as well the curse that was adjudged by Moses' law, as Moses foretells: 'Cursed is every one that hangs on a tree.' This he suffered 'being made a curse for us; and making himself sin for our sakes who knew no sin,' and laid on him all the punishments due to us for our sins, bonds, insults, contumelies, scourging, and shameful blows, and the crowning trophy of the cross. And after all this when he had offered such a wondrous offering and choice victim to the Father, and sacrificed for the salvation of us all, he delivered a memorial to us to offer to God continually instead of a sacrifice.

(Demonstatio Evangelica, I.10. cit. in Robertson, 2007, p.67)

Yet, there is to be found substantial difference as well. Although the Word by His subjection to the Father in His priestly service revaels His eternal relationship with Him (for Eusebius this priesthood was eternal as it is evident in his Demonstratio. 5.3) and in it He involves humanity representing us and offering our humanity as a "choice victim" to the Father, nevertheless we cannot see any shadow of mutuality, there is definitely one way subjection. And this is not surprising since for Eusebius the Father is sole monarch, "living apart like a sovereign in his unapproachable inner chambers, he alone decides what must be done" (Laudes Constantini, XII.3. cit. in Robertson, 2007, p.45).

By contrast, Gregory turns on its head this idea of sovereignty and offers absolute re-thinking of it: the Father is "greater" and the Son is "subjected" to Him, "honors" His "authority", and "fulfills His will", not because of His "pre-eminence", ὑπεροχή, that does not leaves any room for equality (Eunomius, Liber Apologeticus, Vaggione, 2002, p. 46-47), or His destructive "unspeakable and inexplicable Power and Essence" (Eusebius, Demonstratio Evangelica, 4, 6, cit in Robertson, 2007, p.45), but quite vice-versa, "because He has His Being from Him beyond all time, and beyond all cause (Or. 30.11); and insofar as this being is very being of the Father, "their Being itself is common and equal, even though the Son receive it from the Father" (Ibid.). As a result of this the logic of causality is totally deconstructed:

> I should like to call the Father the greater, because from him flows both the Equality and the Being of the Equals (this will be granted on all hands), but I am afraid to use the word Origin, lest I should make Him the Origin of Inferiors, and thus insult Him by precedencies of honour. For the lowering of those Who are from Him is no glory to the Source. Moreover, I look with suspicion at your insatiate desire, for fear you should take hold of this word Greater, and divide the Nature, using the word Greater in all senses, whereas it does not apply to the Nature, but only to Origination. For in the Consubstantial Persons there is nothing greater or less in point of Substance.

Or. 40. 43

One can read this passages but in admiration, how masterly uses Gregory his rhetoric skills relaying on the cultural values of the society and yet essentially transforming their meaning by softly shifting the accents and thus changing the grammatical matrix of the articulation of the idea. As a result, he proposes new definition of the idea of monarchy, that bears the implications of decisive significance for ethico-political thinking: “monarchy that is not limited to one Person, for it is possible for Unity if at variance with itself to come into a condition of plurality; but one which is made of an equality of Nature and a Union of mind, and an identity of motion, and a convergence of its elements to unity” (Or. 29. 2).

This rework of the concept of sovereignty allows us to grasp the revelation of the eternal loving communion between the Son and the Father in their economic interrelation. However, since the logic of this interrelationship remains not fully comprehensible in terms of systematic thinking and evades encapsulation in any kind of syllogism, we can perceive it not by reflecting on it, but by receiving it in its lucidity and then following beyond itself in the participation of the Son’s priestly sacrificial ascend to the divine bosom of the Father. In this direction leads us Gregory’s pneumatological vision.

2.2. The Interrelationship between the Son and the Holy Spirit in the Economy

In the writings of ante-Nicene theologians we can hardly find in the definition of the third person something substantially different from that of the Word of God. Hence it was not easy task for the Alexandrian (Athanasius, Didymus) and the Cappadocian Fathers to defend the divinity of the Spirit and find a place for Him in the eternal realm of Godhead when they encountered various sorts of "Pneumatomachians" and Eunomians. Yet in the second half of the century we are witnessing mature formation of the pneumatology in the theological thought of Gregory of Nazianzus. Indeed, the significance of the dogmatic confession of the Holy Spirit was elevated by him to such a high and articulated with such clarity that had never taken place before in the history of dogma. As a result he formed the doctrine with peculiar features that are not evident in the treatises of other contemporary theologians, even in that of his closest Cappadocian friends and collaborators.

Gregory asserts the divinity of the Spirit along the lines of the argumentation of the previous Nicene theologians as belonging to the Son and the Father and received from them in the economy of salvation, but at the same time he affirms the independence and sovereignty of the Spirit, who acts "where he wills". The latter effort of Gregory leads him to puzzling language and imagery deploying the relationship of the Spirit with the Son as well as his own activity in the economy.

The analysis of the interaction between the Spirit and the Son provides us with the link between economic and eternal interrelationships. So we state that this link is straight and not mediated by adjustments to the weakness of the comprehension of a man or to any kind soteriological plans.

The examination will be divided into two parts. We will begin by focusing on Gregory's exegesis for the determination of the interrelation between the Son and the Spirit. Then, we will move on to the consideration of the status of the Spirit in this interrelation with reference to His cause, the Father.

2.2.1. The Spirit as a Gift of the Salvation

The order of the names proposed by the Gospels made early theological tradition suggest to define being of the Holy Spirit in close relation with the previous person, the Son, and sometimes even subordinate to him. Therefore, when Athanasius faced the group of the people called by him "Tropici", who held views on the Spirit that diminished his divinity, considering him as a creature or superior angel, he deployed the argumentation against them in the same language though now reshaping it on the ground of his Nicene logic. As a result his assertion took the form of the following analogies: "such order and nature has the Spirit in relation to the Son as the Son has in relation to the Father" (Ad Serap. 1, 21. cit. in Swete, 1876, p.91). Therefore, the Spirit is "united with the Son as the Son is united with the Father", because the Son is "own of the substance of the Father", insofar as he is "from the Father", so the Spirit is "own according to the substance to the Son", since He also is "from the God" (ibid. 25). Even Basil in his mature pneumatology uses the same formulations: "in what manner relates the Son to the Father in the same manner relates the Spirit to the Son" (De Sp.S. cited in ibid., p. 99).

But for the opponent of the Cappadocians, Eunomius, who did not accept Nicene premises of the consubstantiality of the Son with the Father this analogy served quite well for arguing the Spirit's subordination to the Son: "In all these things the pre-eminence and the sole supremacy of God is preserved, for the Holy Spirit is clearly subject to Christ, as are all things, while the Son himself is subject to "God and the Father" (Apology, 27, Vaggione, 2002, p. 70-71).

Nevertheless Gregory still continued to employ this theological strategy against him (see for example Or. 31. 4.). However, he also aims to expose the salvific role of the Spirit shadowed by the figure of Christ. So when he provides the argument for His sharing activity with the Son with the Scriptural narratives depicting the crucial events for our salvation, he accentuates his activity in the way that enables affirmation of the essential importance of these activities for the accomplishment of his mission by Christ:

> Look at these facts: Christ is born; the Spirit is His Forerunner. He is baptized; the Spirit bears witness. He is tempted; the Spirit leads Him up. He works miracles; the Spirit accompanies them. He ascends; the Spirit takes His place. What great things are there in the idea of God which are not in His power?

Or. 31. 29.

There is apparent that using such emphatic words as “leading”, “accompanying”, “taking Christ’s place” Gregory is not willing to allow any idea of the Spirit’s subordination to the Son and in his attempt he provides a new basis for argumentation different from that of Athanasius. This novelty is to be found in his view on the liturgical life and baptism as a milieu where there takes place the appropriation of the salvation bestowed by Christ to humankind. Thus he states: “I would honour the Son as Son before the Spirit, but Baptism consecrating me through the Spirit does not allow of this”, inasmuch as in baptism we are bestowed with the gift of salvation which is the Spirit (Or. 40. 43).

Certainly, the Spirit as a gift of salvation had already been known very well. In the theological trend in which can be situated Gregory, we can point to Origen who defined the activity of the Spirit in the following way: “I think, the Holy Spirit bestows upon those who, through Him and through participation in Him, are called saints, the material of the gifts, which come from God; so that the said material of the gifts is actuated by God, is ministered by Christ, and owes its actual existence in men to the Holy Spirit” (Comm. On John. II. 10.77). The same doctrine of the Spirit as primary gift or as “the substance” of the gifts and graces bestowed by God we find in the early pneumatological elaborations of the Nicene Fathers. Thus Didymus repeats the terminology of his master: “himself is substance of the gifts that is given by Lord” (ipse subsistens in his bonis quae a Domino largiuntur) (De Spiritu Sancto, I. 11). Elsewhere he represents the Spirit in striking definition: “flowing (ξέχεεν) as if water proceeding consubstantially from Him (God)” (De Trinitate, II. 2. cit. in Swete, 1876, p. 93). Athanasius as well in his “Letters to Serapion” the primal concern of which is to

defend the divinity of the Spirit this task is accomplished by broadening of the "idios" terminology over the Spirit-Son interrelationship (Ad Serap. I. 25.) applied before to the Father-Son interrelationship (see Louth, 1987, p. 199-200) and defining the Spirit as a gift given by the Father through the Son: "[He] is spoken to be proceeded from the Father, insofar as He shines forth (ἐκλάμπει), is sent and given by the Son confessed as being from the Father" (Letters, 20, cit in ibid. p. 92).

From such descriptions of the divinity of the Spirit as having the nature of passive, "liquid" and dependent character it was very difficult to refute the arguments of those who assumed him as an energy and activity of God (see. Eunomius, Apology 25-26), which finally reduced the Spirit to the "not essential" existence as for Eunomius the action "cannot be unending" (Apology 23:7-8, cit in Barnes, 2001, p.194). Therefore, Gregory was definitely in need of much higher pneumatology which would be nonetheless compatible with the soteriological-christological presuppositions of the scriptural and traditional "gift-pneumatology".

The Theologian finds solution in the same concept of sovereignty that, as we have seen, was elaborated by him in the description of the Son-Father interrelationship. Thus he elaborates the same two-fold understanding of the sovereignty for the being of the Spirit and his interrelation with two other persons of the Trinity what we have called "kenotic sovereignty". The best illustration of the interplay between these two levels – obedience-sovereignty – of the "kenotic sovereignty" applied to the Spirit is set forth by him in the following passage:

> I will ask the Father, He says, and He will send you another Comforter, even the spirit of Truth. This He said that He might not seem to be a rival God, or to make His discourses to them by another authority. Again, He shall send Him, but it is in My Name. He leaves out the I will ask, but He keeps the Shall send, then again, I will send,--His own dignity. Then shall come, the authority of the Spirit.

Or. 31.16.

Gregory clearly extends the interrelationship he envisages for the Father and the Son to the interrelationship between the Son and the Spirit. There is preserved the main principle of the dependence of the Spirit's mission on the Son that was underlined by the previous pneumatology and founded on the scriptural narrative. Yet his focus on the word "come" allows him to discover another deeper level in the plain sense of the Scripture suggesting the sovereign will and divine authority of the Holy Spirit. In the following passage on the basis of this kind of exegesis there is established the definition with far reaching implications for the whole Trinitarian theology:

> Coming because He is the Lord; Sent, because
> He is not a rival God. For such words no less
> manifest the Unanimity than they mark the separate
> Individuality.

Or. 41.11.

Here is everything that is necessary for mature pneumatology, and moreover, there is already formulated general rule for articulation of the unity and distinction of the persons in the Trinity on the ground of the economic interrelations depicted in the Scripture. The level of obedience in the salvific mission represents the unity, "unanimity" of the persons in the Godhead, while the willing assent and acceptance of the same obedience reveals their freedom of distinctiveness in eternal life of the Trinity.

In view of these observations, we can agree with the judgment of Beeley only partly that Athanasius and Basil "neither developed the full range of doctrinal and practical dimensions of the doctrine of the Spirit that Gregory would show to be fundamental to Christian theology". Insofar as, when the scholar proposes the evidences of his statement, he misleads reader. Thus he makes surprisingly bold rejection of the dependent character of the Spirit on the Son (Beeley, 2008, p. 281. note 52).

By contrast, Gregory does speak of the Spirit as belonging to the Son in Or. 31. 29: "He is called the Spirit of God, the Spirit of Christ, the Mind of Christ, the Spirit of The Lord", but then immediately makes a qualification in faithfulness to the above examined logic: "and Himself The Lord". Moreover, when Gregory undertakes the demonstration of the soteriological importance of Pentecost to his flock, although he is willing to stress the divine sovereignty of the Spirit and calls him "my Lord" as equal with the Christ, yet he in the same place calls the Spirit as the Spirit of Christ and makes very striking shift from the theme of the Christ's salvific activity on the earth to the coming of the Spirit:

> We are keeping the feast of Pentecost and of the Coming of the Spirit, and the appointed time of the Promise, and the fulfillment of our hope. And how great, how august, is the Mystery! The dispensations of the Body of Christ are ended; or rather, what belongs to His Bodily Advent (for I hesitate to say the Dispensation of His Body, as long as no discourse persuades me that it is better to have put off the body [4236]), and that of the Spirit is beginning.

Or. 41.5

Thus the coming of the Spirit is the final stage of the salvation of the mankind for which the Christ's earthly life was only a promise, while the great and exalted mystery, the fulfillment of Joel's prophecy is preserved for the dispensation of the Spirit. However, this is not another dispensation different from that of the Christ as Lossky thought (Lossky, 1991, p. 156), but rather it is the same dispensation although the first took place according to his "Body" while the second is according to his "Spirit". So again the Spirit remains belonged to Christ even when he is coming independently by his free will to reveal and teach us the mysteries that the Christ apparently could not do before him.

So Gregory does not designate any new ontological terminology for the Spirit rejecting the notion of his being as a gift of salvation bestowed by the Christ. Gregory apparently establishes the interrelationship between the Christ and the Spirit as Giver-

Gift in the work of the salvation: “As Christ the Giver of it is called by many various names, so too is this Gift” (Or. 11. 4). Moreover, he associates the Spirit with breath of Christ (even calling the Spirit directly “the breath of his mouth”, Or. 41.14), when he discusses His permanent accompaniment and co-operation with the Christ in his earthly life:

> Now the first of these manifests Him--the healing of the sick and casting out of evil spirits, which could not be apart from the Spirit; and so does that breathing upon them after the Resurrection, which was clearly a divine inspiration.

Or. 41.11 (see also Or. 31.26).

Yet we can agree with Beeley that Gregory avoids connecting the Spirit with the anointing of the humanity in the Christ (Ibid.) in contrast to Basil. So Gregory states: “He was anointed with Godhead, for this anointing is of the manhood” (Or. 30.2), and he apparently associates anointing not with the Spirit but with the Son’s personal “presence in his fullness” in humanity (Or. 30. 21). By contrast Basil argued for the soteriological importance of the Spirit and hence for his divinity by claiming that the one who anoints humankind is precisely the Spirit: “first of all He accompanied (συνῆν) the flesh of the Lord, being anointing and inseparably presenting according to the written: “He on whom you see the Spirit descend as a dove from the heaven, and it remain on him, He is my beloved Son” (John. 1, 33; Lk. 3, 22). And also: “Jesus from Nazareth, whom God anointed by the Holy Spirit” (De Spiritu, 16, 39). Here it is noteworthy, how Gregory changes the exegesis of the same account according to his pneumatological concerns:

> And the Spirit bears witness to His Godhead, for he descends upon One that is like Him, as does the Voice from Heaven (for He to whom the witness is borne came from thence), and like a Dove, for He honours the Body (for this also was God, through its union with God) by being seen in a bodily form.

Or. 39.13.

There is clear that Gregory is willing to emphasize the personal distinctiveness of the Father and especially that of the Spirit in relation to the Son articulated by the terminology of "bearing witness". As for the Spirit, he goes beyond the limitations of the concept of the inwardness of the Spirit in the Christ aiming to stress the activity of the Spirit as of the person accompanying and witnessing to the Christ as one like him, i.e. of equal divinity with Him. Nevertheless, this imagery of descent does not deny actually the internality of the Spirit to the Son as well as Basil's above quoted passage also points to the accompanying activity of the Spirit to the Son – **συνῆν**. Moreover, we can suggest that Gregory's two-fold pneumatology owed its development to Basil, who devotes the whole 27 chapter of his "On the Holy Spirit" to the question of two kinds of doxologies, where the Spirit is mentioned as "with" and "in" respectively.

In view of this consideration, we will try to interpret Gregory's sophisticated theological reflections on Pentecost. He represents the Spirit's coming as a gradual process developed in manifold stages. First He "wrought" (**ἐνεργει**) in the creation of the world, then in inspiration of the Old Testament patriarchs and prophets, and at the end with Christ. His revelation in the works of Christ is crowned in breathing him by Christ onto the disciples. But although the latter manifested Him "more distinctly" compared with Old Testament manifestations, nevertheless both of them were equally the presentation of Him "only in energy" (**ἐνεργείᾳ**), while His coming in Pentecost presents Him "in its very being (**οὐσιοδῶς**), so to speak, associating with us and dwelling among us" (Or. 41. 11). This distinction between his breathing from Christ and his substantial indwelling are not to be understood as a distinction between the Spirit in the economy and in the theology, since His indwelling among us cannot take place but in the economy. On the other hand, as we have seen, in the same sermon Gregory calls this personal coming the coming of the same Christ, but now according to his Spirit (Or. 41.5). Therefore, the only valid explanation needs to provide the recognition of the same concept of two-fold personality as it is in the case of the Son as well as the Father: breathing of the Spirit by the Christ points to the "low", "kenotic", relative dimension of the personality of the Spirit, which emphasizes His non-rival attitude to Him, concordance, communion and unity with Him, while His coming **οὐσιοδῶς** which He elsewhere also calls a "clearer demonstration of Himself" (Or

31. 26), reveals His sovereign, free dimension. Indeed Gregory illustrates the play with these aspects even in the account of the division of tongues on the Pentecost: “And the tongues were cloven, because of the diversity of Gifts; and they sat to signify His royalty and rest among the saints, and because the cherubim are the throne of God” (ibid. 12).

To sum up Gregory’s pneumatological strategy, we can state that he crowns the striving of the theological trend (especially that of Didymus and Basil) at full length aiming to express not only the divinity but the essentiality and sovereignty of the Spirit. His success in this undertaking was conditioned by broadening his two-fold christology based on his particular exegesis over the pneumatology. Thus, he established two-fold understanding and hermeneutic for the being of the Spirit. So there is to be distinguished the two dimensions of his being. On the one hand, the Spirit as a gift of the salvation accomplished by Christ and hence bestowed, “breathed” by him represents not the particular activity that takes place only in the economy and is designated for the specific purposes of the salvation, but this is the revelation of the very being of the Spirit and his eternal relationship with the Son. However, this does not diminish the being of the Spirit as a fully divine person. In addition, there is left another important question the exploration of which would contribute to the more clarification of the Spirit’s status in Godhead, namely his interrelationship with the Father.

2.2.2. The Dwelling of the Spirit in the Son in Their Relationship with the Father

We should acknowledge that Gregory does not offer any clarification concerning the interaction between the Spirit-Father and the Spirit-Son relationships. Nevertheless, there are some traces in his writings that allow reconstruction of this side of his pneumatology. Here will help us his understanding of the interplay of the lofty and low aspects of the Spirit’s being.

As we have seen, Gregory represents the different accounts of the Scripture on the Spirit in analogy to that of the exegetical approach to the accounts on the Son. However, we can notice that in spite of the identity of the exegesis in general there is

to be perceived a difference of the mode of its application. Thus, while in the Son-Father interrelationship there are represented the aspects of the obedient activity and equal sovereignty, the Spirit's interrelationship to the other persons of the Trinity is deployed in the same high-low logic although the levels are depicted in the different fashion. Here the Spirit is situated either in the internality of the person as "breath" and "indwelled", or out of him, "accompanying" and "bearing witness" to him.

Consequently, Gregory is aware as well of the dual character of the inspiration of a man by the Spirit's indwelling and bestowal upon him as a gift:

> As to the things of the Spirit, may the Spirit be with me, and grant me speech as much as I desire; or if not that, yet as is in due proportion to the season. Anyhow He will be with me as my Lord; not in servile guise, nor awaiting a command, as some think. For He bloweth where He wills and on whom He wills, and to what extent He wills. Thus we are inspired both to think and to speak of the Spirit.

Or. 41. 5

Thus, on the one hand, the Spirit is subjected to my "desire", yet, on the other hand, he is "my Lord" with his sovereign free will inspiring not only my speech but my intimate thoughts as well. He reigns over me in my very internality, exactly in his state of being owned and desired by me. So "I am an instrument of God", and yet "rational instrument" (Or. 8. 1).

Now we will turn to the relationship of the Spirit with the divine persons and will see whether this logic works in eternity. When Gregory discusses the gift of divine knowledge bestowed upon us by the Spirit, he represents him as coming to our internality from another internality, from the inwardness of God:

> To search all things, yea, the deep things of God is, according to the testimony of Paul, the office of the Spirit,

not because He is ignorant of them, but because He
takes delight in their contemplation".

Or. 43. 65.

The picture will become more lucid if we quote the words of Paul which he has in mind: "For the Spirit searches everything, even the depths of God. For what person knows a man's thoughts except the spirit of the man which is in him? So also no one comprehends the thoughts of God except the Spirit of God" (1 Cor. 2. 11). So this internality, belonging and passivity of the Spirit should be considered as the dynamic of the intimate "search" of the inmost depths of the person not for taking knowledge from him as from higher than he but rather "taking delight" in the contemplation of his beauty as from one whom he loves.

This general view should be awaited to be found in relation of the Spirit to the Father and to the Son. First should be noticed that Gregory designates for the characteristic features of the Holy Spirit the two sets of the titles in the same way as in the case of the Son, – in low and exalted names, although not only in the description of the Spirit-Son relationship, but that of the Spirit and the Father:

All the less exalted expressions which talk of his being
given, sent, divided, or his being a grace, a gift, an inspiration, a promise,
a means of intercession or anything else of the same character – all these
are to be referred back to the Primal Cause, as indicating the Spirit's
source and preventing a polytheistic belief in three separate causes.
It is equally irreligious to make them a combined personality, like
Sabellius, as to disconnect them like the Arians.

Or. 31. 30.

What is also noteworthy here, Gregory "refers back" these "low titles" to the Father not to the Son in contrast with previous Nicene theologians. Indeed, this matches to his logic by means of which he expresses the unity of God, when he recognizes the Father

as cause and origin of the Trinity to whom obeys other persons, yet with necessary reservation that He himself pays the obedience by his good pleasure to no less extent. Thus, first Gregory gives list of the lofty titles emphasizing the Spirit's self-sufficiency and divine dignity:

> Invisible, eternal, incomprehensible, unchangeable,
> without quality, without quantity, without form, impalpable,
> self-moving, eternally moving, with free-will, self-powerful,
> All-powerful.

But afterwards he adds immediately: "even though all that is of the Spirit is referable to the First Cause, just as is all that is of the Only-begotten" (Or. 41.9). So when the Spirit is presented by His low names, this also denotes His being caused from the Father in addition to his status as given by the Son.

Now this notion of the Spirit's "referring back to the primal cause" leads us to consider the Spirit as proceeding from the Father as a distinct person and yet remaining in him as "searching". In the same way, as we have been convinced, he is in the Son as his own "breath", "mind" and "spirit", and yet the same Spirit accompanies him as a distinct being from and out of him. But if so, what prevents us from supposing that the Spirit comes out from the internality of the Father and dwells in the internality of the Son? Certainly, Gregory's age was not anxious of such concern and he does not offer any clear speculation on this matter, nonetheless he gives us some additional hint. In Or. 41.11 the Theologian describes the activity of the Spirit in creatures beginning from the "perfection" and bestowing the "brightness" upon the angels, then goes through inspiration of the patriarchs and prophets and reaches the disciples of Christ, where the logic of the discussion forces him not to leave the matter of the Christ as a blind spot and provides clarification: "I omit to mention Christ Himself, in Whom He dwelt, not as energizing, but as accompanying His equal". It is clear that the Spirit could not work in the Son in the same way as in his creatures purifying, "molding" their mind, "leading" and "carrying them away" by his strength (ibid. 11-13). This would mean placing the Son in the rank of creatures. Nevertheless, it is no less obvious that He "dwells" in the Son, pointing to the difference of the mode of indwelling,

compared with that of creation, and this mode is defined as accompanying his equal. So we can assume that in each case when Gregory mentions the term "accompaniment" or its synonym, "bearing witness", it is meant to suggest not denial of the application of the notion of dwelling in the Son but rather the exceptional mode of it that takes place only in the divine person of the Godhead.

In view of this established equation of the meanings of the accompaniment and indwelling, Gregory's theology of Jesus' baptism in Jordan will shed light on the eternal role of the Spirit in the Father-Son interrelationship. Thus in Or. 39.13, quoted above, Gregory paints the following icon of the Trinity. The Holy Spirit "descends upon one that is like him", i.e. here we face not the Spirit-humanity relationship in the incarnated Christ, but the communion grounded in eternity. In addition owing to the incarnation he descends on "the body" as well "honouring" it as "God through its union with God", so the humanity is involved in this kind of relationship as well as it happens for the Father-Son eternal relationship as we have seen in the previous chapter. But where does the Spirit descend from? According to Gospel from the same place as the voice of the Father, from heaven and this would suffice for linking the Spirit to the Father as his point of descent, but Gregory makes further clarification not allowing any shadow of the doubt and matching his image of the Trinitarian relationships to the narrative in details: the Father bears witness from heaven in order to point to the place "from thence came" the Son, i.e. the Father who sent him that also reveals the eternal origination of the Son from the Father in the economy. Now we can suggest that the Theologian understood the eternal procession of the Spirit from the Father as "descent" and "dwelling" of him in the Son.

Our statement will find further support, if we draw parallels with the dense theological reflections provided by Didymus on the same episode:

> And with Him there was present (παρῆν) the Holy Spirit as well as the Father. The latter from the heavens was bearing witness (ἐμαρτύρει) to the genuineness of his own offspring, while the Holy Spirit, when the heavens were opened for him, as being king and above the nature of the angels, descended and rested upon the Son of God (κατελθὸν ἐπέμενεν ἐπι

τὸν Υἱὸν τοῦ Θεοῦ) . . . So ponder who is the Holy Spirit, who makes his own temple, us, to be enthroned, glorified and being king with the highest God, whenever He rests (μένει) upon the only-begotten Son."

De Trinitate 2.12.

Here we can find whole set of the interrelations that, we believe, served for Gregory as the material for the development and formation of his own two-fold concept of the Spirit, that make us suggest Didymus as an important source for his pneumatological reflections. Nevertheless in Gregory we never find notion of the Spirit in which the Son is ἐξεικονίζεται in the same way as the Father in the latter (De Trin. 1. 5.26).

However, there is also imagery in the writings of Gregory to which A. Golitzin recently called for attention, the "family imagery" aiming the clarification of the procession of the Spirit. Fr. Alexander tries to find parallels in the Syriac sources. Certainly, we acknowledge the importance of this effort, but here we see closeness to Didymus as well. The latter found the analogy for the mode of derivation of the Spirit from the Father in the form of the derivation of Eva from Adam being as different as that of the begetting of their offspring. So he asks: "and how is it written that they are begotten and she is neither his child nor called as sister of the born children?" (ibid. 5.27). Gregory pursued the same aim and posed the questions in the same rhetoric style (Or. 31.11) and he repeated the same argumentation in his late poems: "Eva was not begotten, while Seth was, yet both were equally human" and warns us: "With this in mind, refrain from dishonouring Godhead in any way, bearing in mind this your analogy drawn from below" (On the Spirit, 37-43). This analogy strengthens the position of the Spirit to such extent that, as Congar rightly pointed out, "if it is taken further, then it would have to be said that the Son was begotten *a Patre Spirituque*" (Congar, 1983, p. 33). Therefore, Gregory's pneumatology should be considered as successive restoration of "a sense of the reciprocity in the relations between the Son and Holy Spirit" (Golitzin, 2001), or in his own words, as "being glorified by Him, and giving back glory to Him" (Or. 41. 13). However, we state again that this does not mean for Gregory the abandonment of the Spirit's passive, "breathable" characters, but

they are to be considered as only one, “low”, or “kenotic” dimension of the same personality.

So we maintain that Gregory establishes the divinity and sovereignty of the Spirit on the basis of the interrelationship of the divine persons in the economy as it was in the case of the Son. In this work the Theologian applies his well elaborated exegetical approach, which allows him to deal with the different accounts of the Scripture without causing a split in the personality of the Spirit which would depict him as acting somewhat differently from his authentic personal self-expression, as if his true face were hidden under a deceptive mask. In contrast to this, the Spirit in the economy is represented as revealing himself in his relationship with the Son and the Father as absolutely identical with what is implied in the immanent realm of Godhead. This operation shapes his understanding of the personal being of the Spirit, which is to be once more defined by the terminology of “kenotic sovereignty” that we have devised in relation to Christ.

2.3. Conclusion

So Gregory broadens the paradigm of God-man “kenotic” relationship in and through Christ over the trinitarian relationship in the economy. On the other hand, this economic relationship does not differ from their eternal inner life but directly reflects it. According to his concept of the sovereignty and relationship each divine person has two dimensions, “kenotic” and “sovereign”. The Son accomplishes his economic activity of the creation of the world and the salvation of it in obedience of the will of the Father and this reflects His eternal subordination to the Father. Yet, the Father’s sovereign will aims nothing else than obedience ot the Son. Thus in this kenotic-sovereign relationship is consisted their care for the creation as well as their life. However, for Gregory the person of the Spirit represents the dimensions in different modes compared with that of the Son and the Father: the “low” dimension of the Spirit could be defined as allowing himself to be in possession in the inwardness of one’s person and acted by him as his life “breathed” out, bestowed as “gift” and hence the means of a deep existential communication with another person (or persons). As a

result, this relative dimension of the will allows arguing the unity of the persons on the basis of the following principle, as Barnes puts it: “unity of the operation proves the unity of nature” (Barnes, 2002, p.489). In addition, this latter capacity of the Spirit is revealed to us in his being divided conditionally into two phases: on the one hand, he is “before”, “above” the Son proceeding from the Father and resting upon the Son, on the other hand, he is after and from the Son in his breathing him out. And we cannot reduce the completion of his personal procession to either of these phases, since his personality consists in both of them; or rather he is both of them authentically and wholly without any division and separation. So this kenotic dimension of the Spirit might be called as “extensiveness”. Yet exactly in this “extensiveness” he overflows and transcends the margins of distinction of each divine person and “blows” in his absolute freedom, – this is another side of his existence.

Therefore, we face quite different logic from that we usually expect in Trinitarian relationship. So we agree with Bolotov when he asserts that “the historical order of the revelation contains the reflection of the mystery of the internal interrelationships of the Trinity” (Bolotov, 1914, p.82). However, we by no means accept the idea that this order presupposes the logic of sequence, especially when the scholar tries to illustrate this on the basis of Gregory’s well-known passage from Or. 29. 2 where he describes the Trinitarian eternal movement the symbolical language of Platonic arithmetic (Ibid. p.83). Gregory’s two dimensional logic rather establishes something like “trinitarian equilibrium” (Boff, 1988, p. 6), which brings about the “re-invigoration” of strong pneumatology (Barnes, 2006, p. 5). Moreover, we believe, in Gregory’s pneumatology we witness a far more coherent doctrine built on the firm exegetical ground, than we find in early Judeo-Christian strong pneumatology (ibid). Consequently, this does not allow us to evaluate the achievements of pro-Nicene pneumatology as a “little progress” (Ayres, 2004, p.217).

Part Three: The Knowledge of the Immanent Trinity

The exploration of the relations of the persons of the Trinity in the economy has unequivocally demonstrated that we should not seek, or suggest any kind of different interrelationships between them beyond their revelation. As we have seen, the freedom and sovereignty of each person is not preserved out of the relation with each other, but rather in the very midst of the relation, moreover, it is constituted in and conditioned by the very relationship. So, why we must assume, that the same open relations of the persons of the Trinity with us and the whole creation would violate their freedom (Cf. Zizioulas, 2008, p.72)? So there is the only one rule for the divine relationship without exception: the sovereignty and immanent being of the divine person should be sought only in the revelation of Godhead.

However, there can be envisaged the contradiction of the notion of person with that of substance as of freedom with necessity in existentialist manner. Consequently, nothing prevents us to suppose: maybe the divine persons reveal their authentic existence in their striving to transcend the boundaries of their substance. But here Gregory is adamant against such assumption. He turns into *reductio ad absurdum* Eunomius's contrast of will and nature. So he asks: "the Father is God either willingly or unwillingly; and how will you escape from your own excessive acuteness? If willingly, when did He begin to will? It could not have been before He began to be, for there was nothing prior to Him . . . And if unwillingly, what compelled Him to exist, and how is He God if He was compelled--and that to nothing less than to be God?" (Or. 29. 7) Thus, the substance of God should be understood as being in concordance with his will and following his personal activity in his eternal realm as well as in the external communication with the creation.

In view of this considerations, then we should arise the question about the conditions of the knowledge of the triune substance, i.e. theology in proper sense of the word, and hence the nature of the divine transcendence.

First, we will examine Gregory's epistemological principles and his concept of revelation through the historical narrative of the salvation of Scripture that will allow

us to find the ways of penetration from the economy into the sphere of theology. Afterwards, we will undertake an analysis of the content of the trinitarian vision as it is comprehended and experienced by theologian by means of successful application of his epistemology.

3.1. The Theological Epistemology

In the previous chapters we have witnessed the impressive coherence of Gregory's thought notwithstanding his fascination with very unsystematic, poetic style of expression. So the same unpredictable situation waits for us in his mystical exaltations towards the Trinity. At first glance his vision of the triune God seems to breaks every rule of logic and takes us in the world of paradox and pure contingency: we should accept the Trinity only because it is revealed and experienced as a reality and if we cannot understand, it does not matter, there is demanded from our reason only obedience. Yet, Gregory truly was "a champion of human liberty in the face of God" (Plagnieux, 1951, p. 75) and the capacity of human knowledge reaches its full self-realization exactly in his trintarian paradox.

The first sign of the consistency of his theological epistemology is already discernable in its anthropological ontological foundations that have been discussed in our first chapters. Furthermore, he draws the close connections between these anthropological tenets and the above examined concept of two-dimensional "kenotic sovereignty". And when this perfectly elaborated knowledge conditioning edifice works in concert with his exegetical theory, then emerges the light of the Trinity with all its characteristic features that shapes his language of dogmatic formulations.

Thus, the aim of this chapter is to demonstrate in what ways Gregory involves the above mentioned concepts in the construction of his trinitarian epistemology. Hence, the task will be divided into two parts which we can call conditionally philosophical and theological premises of the knowledge. So in the first part we will analyze his understanding of the human existential need and capacity of the comprehension of the

divine reality. After this we will try to determine the role of the Scripture which it plays in this comprehension.

3.1.1. The Desire for the Substance of God

Usually the scholars of Gregory begin the study of his theological epistemology from the notion of purification that is recognized as the first stage for acquiring the divine knowledge. Thus, for Beeley Gregory "typically begins with the purification that is required in order to know God" (Beeley, 2008, p. 64). Plagneux ascribes to his thought the evaluation of the purification as "the moral foundations of the apostolic doctrine" (Plagnieux, 1951, p. 83), and Spidlik calls it "preludy to illumination" (Spidlik, 1971, p.119).

However, the texts that serve the illustration of this statement are mostly taken from Gregory's orations (especially "Theological Orations") that have more polemical character and are intended to refute Eunomius's closed and self-sufficient epistemology. Therefore, here Gregory "deals cautiously with" the weakness of human knowledge more than in his other writings (Norris, 1991, p. 116). Moreover, in these sermons he is willing to stress not only limitations of human knowledge but even limited access to this limited knowledge as well. And hence enters his aristocratic concept of purification (Or. 28.2. See also Or. 20. 1.) and fear as "the beginning of wisdom" (Or. 39. 8).

But in the same set of his texts we can also find something that betrays the other side of Gregory's view on human knowledge that is much more optimistic and less rigorous. Thus, in Or. 39 where he speaks about the fear and purification we come across with the understanding of the divine knowledge as satisfying our desire:

> For we must not begin with contemplation and leave off with fear (for an unbridled contemplation would perhaps push us over a precipice), but we must be grounded and purified and so to say made light by fear, and thus be raised to the height. For where fear is there is keeping of commandments; and where there is

keeping of commandments there is purifying of the flesh, that cloud which covers the soul and suffers it not to see the Divine Ray. And where there is purifying there is Illumination; and Illumination is the satisfying of desire to those who long for the greatest things, or the Greatest Thing, or That Which surpasses all greatness.

Or. 39. 8.

There are the stages gradually leading to the knowledge of God: fear, keeping commandments, purification flesh. The reward for these efforts is the illumination. But this illumination is "satisfying desire" something that seemingly should be counted as a totally contradicting to the restrictions of purification: which desire will be satisfied if I have rejected it from the very beginning as something impure and dangerous like "beast"? It is impossible to solve this conundrum if we do not take into consideration his specific understanding of mind-body duality. In the previous chapter, dealing with the anthropological premises of the soteriology we have demonstrated the crucial significance of the body with its weakness for salvation of man and we have suggested the immense impact of this concept on his theological epistemology. Now we can observe the ways this anthropology affected Gregory's *theognosia*.

Gregory is fully aware of the sovereign position of a man in the universe – "great in littelness", "a new angel", "king of all upon the earth", and yet he is "subject to the king above". Then exactly this antinomic condition of his sovereignty fashions the dual constitution of his existence: "earthly and heavenly; temporal and yet immortal; visible and yet intellectual", so personality of a man is split between these extremities: "half-way between greatness and lowliness; one and the same (τὸν αὐτὸν) spirit and flesh". Nevertheless Gregory does not merely leave a man in this "half-way" and in the brief formula delineates the dynamic concept of the cooperation of these parts with each other in the interrelation with God: "spirit for the grace (διὰ τὴν χάριν); flesh for pride (διὰ τὴν ἔπαρσις)". This primordial state of tension in which God designed us is already beginning of gaining the divine knowledge and the unity with God:

in order as I conceive by that part of it which we can comprehend to

> draw us to itself (for that which is altogether incomprehensible is outside the bounds of hope, and not within the compass of endeavour), and by that part of It which we cannot comprehend to move our wonder, and as an object of wonder to become more an object of desire, and being desired to purify, and by purifying to make us like God; so that when we have thus become like Himself, God may, to use a bold expression, hold converse with us as Gods, being united to us, and that perhaps to the same extent as He already knows those who are known to Him.
>
> Or. 38. 7.

Thus, the first stage is not an compulsory ascetic effort imposed on our nature from outside, but our very existence, more precisely bodily desire and strive towards the comprehension of God in order to achieve its full realization in the dignity of becoming God and conversing with him as equal. The purification intervenes as naturally linked to this desire as an intermediary stage and a means of its fulfillment.

However, since Gregory recognizes the possibility of change of the direction of the same striving, the purification serves as a borderline between the right and wrong directions of bodily desire: while the right direction leads to its natural fulfillment, the wrong pushes in thirst and dissatisfaction without end. Therefore, the purification and the associated virtues with it, such as “fear”, “keeping commandments” and “obedience” do not restrict the desire but, in contrary, provides its restoration in right path. Hence, Gregory’s understanding of Law is not negative in relation to free will but it is “a material” for will “to act upon”:

> This Law was a Commandment as to what plants he might partake of, and which one he might not touch. This latter was the Tree of Knowledge; not, however, because it was evil from the beginning when planted; nor was it forbidden because God grudged it to us…Let not the enemies of God wag their tongues in that direction, or imitate the Serpent…But it would have been good if partaken of at the proper time, for the tree was, according to my theory, Contemplation, upon which it is only safe for those

> who have reached maturity of habit to enter; but which is not good for those who are still somewhat simple and greedy in their habit; just as solid food is not good for those who are yet tender, and have need of milk.

Or. 38. 12.

Here we face an obvious paradox: the prohibition of desire by law leads to its satisfaction. We should abstain from the pursuit of our desire in order to fulfill it. God bestowed us with the "gift of free will", yet we should obey him and keep the commandment "in order that God might belong to him as the result of his choice, no less than to Him who had implanted the seeds of it" (Ibid.).

To find solution we should remember our formula devised for Gregory's theory of bodily desire: "lack causes desire". The weakness and suffering, i.e. lack of fullness of life and mortality of flesh (Lacan's *manque à l'etre)* causes desire and drives a man towards divine light as the source of "life of every reasonable" being (Or. 30.20). But at the same time lack marks, fixes distance and gap between subject and object of desire. So Law and the prohibition is not to be understood as something external to our existence but as the very constituent element of our bodily desire, - it is another side of the same coin. Consequently, the obedience of law denotes the voluntarily acceptance and recognition of our current condition of lack; it is something like *amor fati*.

Such dialectical nature of desire was already discovered by Plato for whom loving desire was the offspring of Penia (poverty) and Porros (wealthy). First he proposes definition already containing contradiction: "This is what it is to love something which is not at hand" (Symposium, 200 d), therefore, love "needs good and beautiful things, and that's why he desires them – because he needs them (Ibid. 202 d). Afterwards Plato illustrates the double nature of love, the same desire, in resemblance with Gregory: "Then, what could Love be?' I asked; 'A mortal?' 'Certainly not' 'Then, what is he?' '. . . He is in between mortal and immortal' (Ibid.). And directed towards ultimate Goodness, i.e. God it plays intermediary role: "Gods do not mix with man; they mingle and converse with us through spirits instead, whether we are awake or asleep. . . . these spirits are many . . . and one of them is Love" (Ibid. 203 a). Moreover,

this love and striving towards God is because “Love must desire immortality” (Ibid. 207 a). But Plato is not willing to ascribe to everyone the faithfulness to love although everyone desires good for himself and thus partakes in love: “we divide out a special kind of love, and we refer to it by the word that means the whole – ‘love’; and for the other kinds of love we use other words” (205 b), so “you may say generally that all desire of good and happiness is only the great and subtle power of love; but they who are drawn towards him by any other path, whether the path of money-making or gymnastics or philosophy, are not called lovers—the name of the whole is appropriated to those whose affection takes one form only—they alone are said to love, or to be lovers” (205 d). In *Phaedrus* he draws sharper line of division between love in its true sense and its distorted, fallen state:

> Now a sick man takes pleasure in anything that does not resist him,
> but sees anyone who is equal or superior to him as enemy.

.

238 e.

So there is clear that the distortion of love is impelled by nothing else than contradicting to the very nature of love which consists in desire of what “he has not”, i.e. what is “opposed to him” and hence is “equal or superior”. Therefore, in such corrupted state of love and desire man “goes after unnatural pleasure” (250 e). And again we can find in the spiritual contemplation close affinity with Gregory’s “wonder” and tension: “recent initiate, however, one who has seen much in heaven – when is he sees a godlike face or bodily form, that captured Beauty well, first he shudders and a fear comes over him like those he felt at the earlier time; then he gazes at him with the reverence due to a god” (251 a).

Such tension between “I” and “other”, “already” and “not yet” is intrinsically constitutive of Gregory’s whole theology and epistemology. So he has strong feeling of, what Lunea calls, “constructive nature of time” (Luneau, 1965, p. 155, cited in Winslow, 1979, p. 65). And here we face crossroad between Plato and Gregory. For Plato this tension will be eliminated after “awakening” of the inherent knowledge of

eternal Truth and Beauty in soul, insofar as “knowledge — true knowledge — is remembering what the soul once knew” (Louth, 2007, p.1). Hence, the striving towards knowledge is nothing else than “its homecoming” (Ibid. p. 3). Therefore, it is even hard to perceive it as a real striving and movement, since in fact you are always at home. To such logical conclusion afterwards pushed Plotinus for whom as well “knowledge implies desire” (Ennead. V.3.10.), but nonetheless he rejects any “coach or ship” for this intellectual journey, and only demands to “close the eyes and call instead upon another vision which is to be waked within you, a vision, the birth-right of all, which few turn to use” (I.6.8–9, cit. in Louth, 2007, p.39).

By contrast, Gregory’s Truth is eternal “Other” and, consequently, striving and moving towards Him faces real gap – “Law”. So the obedience to law is nothing else than recognition of this condition of de-centralization of our existence and discontinuity in our consciousness. While the fall is neglect of this gap (maybe from fear of it), violent, “immature” reduction of the distance between present and future, and taking in “greed” what still belongs to “Other”. And he quite lucidly associates this gap to human body:

> Therefore this darkness of the body has been placed between us and God, like the cloud of old between the Egyptians and the Hebrews; and this is perhaps what is meant by "He made darkness His secret place”.

Or. 27. 16.

Thus, for Gregory human body is an epistemological constructive element even when he insists that it is obstacle for our comprehension of God. Yes, it is an obstacle, since it causes problems to our consciousness, but consciousness must be problematized in order to operate properly, i.e. face other in its otherness. Such understanding of consciousness that demands awareness, “obedience”, of its limitations for its full realization can be called “kenotic consciousness” analogous (or identical) of the notion of “kenotic sovereignty”.

Yet, our consciousness not limited only in relation to God whose incomprehensibility could be justified in view of his transcendence, but Gregory finds “other” in creation as

well and attacks Eunomius in long discourse overwhelming him by the mysteries of the nature like book of Job: “But I would have you marvel at the natural knowledge even of irrational creatures, and if you can, explain its cause” (Or. 28.25). Therefore, for him it is ridiculous to claim to know God’s essence and even name it (though *via negativa*) by “unbegotten”. It seems that Eunomius was sympathetic to the philosophical tradition interpreting Plato’s Cratylus as giving to name the capacity of revealing inner meaning of thing (R.M. van der Berg, 2008, p.54). On the other hand, Gregory might found something common in the camp of Alexandrian Neoplatonists who accepted Aristotelian approach and understood name as purely human invention (Ibid.).

In view of these considerations, it is not surprising that the activity, the pursuit of virtue, *praxis* for Gregory is of crucial importance in contrast to Plotinus who “draws a distinction between civic virtues, which are essentially concerned with the conduct of life here on earth, and purificatory virtues, which help the soul to detach itself from the world and prepare it for contemplation (see I.2.3) which is tranquility – “where will be no battling in the soul’ (I.2.5) (Louth, 2007, p. 43). Naturally this worldview should be totally acceptable for Gregory whose “whole self-identification as a Christian” was “in monastic terms of ascetical withdrawal” (McGuckin, 2001, p. 169), and who dreamed: “to be free of practical affairs and to devote myself peacefully to the contemplative life” (Or. 10. 1). However, his self-identification as Christian “considered as the imitation to Christ” forced him to “practice all the virtues of the Savior and follow him ‘by action and contemplation’ (**ἔργῳ καὶ θεωρίᾳ**)” (Spidlik, 1971, p.127). As a result of this tension in him, there was “equally self-conscious” both his longing to escape the world and his “desire to “return” into the world” (Winslow, 1979, p.15). Indeed, paradoxically in Or. 25 Gregory, suffering from the illness of his body, praises Hieron who “encompassed in every action private and communal” and he goes on arguing the priority of socially active life developing the whole Christian doctrine of charity:

> For everyone received his being not for himself but for everyone,
> who has the same nature as he and is created by one Creator, and
> for the same reasons. In addition, I have seen that the anachoretic
> life in desert that escapes relations with people, although is important

> and high, even exceeds the human capacities, but it is reduced only by the persons who succeeds in it and rejects relations and compassion – properties of love . . . By contrast, communal life, which is pursued in the surrounding of other people, in addition to being judge of virtue, is spread over many and it more closely approaches to the providence of God, who created everything and tied everything by the bonds of love, and our generation, after losing its goodness by entering the sin, called again back by uniting and being in communion with us.

Or. 25. 5.

Indeed, the communal life is a real imitation of the Trinity whose "movement of self-contemplation alone could not satisfy Goodness, but Good must be poured out and go forth beyond Itself to multiply the objects of Its beneficence, for this was essential to the highest Goodness" (Or. 38. 9). Therefore, his demand of purification for theological contemplation although has obvious affinity to Neoplatonism nonetheless Gregory deployed in this language purely biblical understanding of "keeping commandments" (Or. 39. 8). Here again we face what we can call the deconstruction of Platonism.

Consequently, his objection to Eunomius's gnoseological optimism is far from being something negative as diminishing the value of human knowledge, insofar as this recognition of the limitations, i.e. the obedience to the bodily law by keeping commandments is a necessary pre-condition for gaining complete knowledge in future. So a man is "a living creature trained (οἰκονομούμενον) here, and then moved elsewhere (ἀλλαχοῦ μεθιστάμενον); and, to complete the mystery, deified by its inclination to God (καὶ πέρας τοῦ μυστηρίου τῇ πρὸς Θεὸν νεύσει θεούμενον) (Or. 38.11). Thus, a man enters into the very midst of the divine nature in his movement of deification and "partaking" of the Tree of Knowledge "at the proper time" (Or. 38. 12):

> What God is in nature and essence, no man ever yet has discovered or can discover. Whether it will ever be discovered is a

> question which he who will may examine and decide. In my opinion it will be discovered when that within us which is godlike and divine, I mean our mind and reason, shall have mingled with its Like, and the image shall have ascended to the Archetype, of which it has now the desire. And this I think is the solution of that vexed problem as to "We shall know even as we are known" (1 Cor. 13:12).

Or. 28. 17

Here we should search for his source of the trinitarian theology. But first we should ask how could he achieve the reconciliation of these extremities of unmerciful skepticism and naïve "rationalism"? Does it not make void the tension which is so crucial for his epistemology? In order to answer on this question we should remind his concept of two-dimensional personality devised by him for the divine persons: "low" aspect does not diminish the "high", but rather affirms it. Gregory is willing even to draw direct parallels between the divine persons and deified human person: we will come to know God in such extent as it is known by the divine persons (**γνῶσῃ τοσούτον, ὅσον ὑπ᾽ ἀλλήλων γινώσκονται**) (Or. 25. 17). But what happens with the transcendence of God? First of all Gregory denies understanding of God's transcendence in terms of "resentment" of our knowledge by God: "it is not that he treasures his own fullness of glory, keeping his majesty costly by inaccessibility. It would be utterly dishonest, utterly out of character not merely for God but for an ordinary good man with anything of a proper conscience about him to get the top place by keeping others out" (Or. 28.11). And exactly moved by such ultimate kindness and compassion God meets our counter movement towards him and, so to put it, transcends his own transcendence:

> And Jesus Himself in an Upper Chamber gave the Communion of the Sacrament to those who were being initiated into the higher Mysteries, that thereby might be shewn on the one hand that God must come down to us, as I know He did of old to Moses; and on the other that we must go up to Him, and that so there should come to pass a Communion of God with men, by a coalescing of the dignity. For as long as either remains on its own footing, the One in His Glory the other in his lowliness, so long the Goodness of God cannot mingle with us, and

> His loving kindness is incommunicable, and there is a great gulf between, which cannot be crossed; and which separates not only the Rich Man from Lazarus and Abraham's Bosom which he longs for, but also the created and changing natures from that which is eternal and immutable.

Or 41.12.

But this communication becomes much stronger and closer in another “Upper Chamber” on Pentecost (Ibid.) - the Holy Spirit “in its very being (οὐσιοδῶς), so to speak, associating with us and dwelling among us” (Or. 41.11). Thus, the transcendence is overcome by the personal activity of the Son and in the Spirit we have already access to the substance of the Trinity and not only to the divine persons. And this is quite consistent with the logic of Gregory who does not contradicts persons and substance with each other, but the latter is amenable to the voluntary activity of the former. Though this seems to be inconsistent in terms of philosophical reason: there is abolished the definition of the substance of God as “the only truly simple reality” in contrast with creation, which Pro-Nicenes were “always bearing in mind” (Ayres, 2004, p.278). But Gregory is quite happy rejecting the notion of God’s simplicity being well aware of its uselessness for his epistemology:

> Even though one may conceive that because He is of a simple Nature
> He is therefore either wholly incomprehensible or perfectly comprehensible.
> For let us farther enquire what is implied by "is of a simple Nature?" For it is quite certain that this simplicity is not itself its nature, just as composition is not by itself the essence of compound beings.

Or. 45. 3

In contrast to Basil, who distinguished God’s activity (ἐνεργεια) and work (ποιήματα) of God with their gnoseological correlate, Origenian “epinoia”, from the divine essence (Hanson, 1988, p.690), Gregory proposes the concept of “limitless substance” which certainly exceeds human comprehension and “is outlined by the mind” not “by things that represent him completely, but by the things that are peripheral to him as one representation (φαντασια) is derived from another to form a

kind of singular image of the truth (ἐν τι τῆς ἀληθειάς ἴνδαλμα): fleeing before it can be mastered, escaping before it can be conceived, shining on our guiding reason (provided we have been purified) as a swift, fleeting flash of lightning shines in our eyes" (Or. 38.7). However, Gregory by no means cuts the "periphery" from the divine essence as well as "image of truth" from truth itself, but he attains the wholeness of the knowledge in unceasing dynamics, movement from knowledge to knowledge thus making us friends equal (on deification as making equal to God see e.g. Or. 34.12; 45.13) to the persons of the Trinity:

> And he does this, it seems to me, so that to the extent that the Divine can be comprehended (τῷ ληπτῳ) it may draw us to itself—for what is completely incomprehensible (ἀληπτον) is also beyond hope, beyond attainment; and that to the extent that it is beyond our comprehension (τῷ ἀληπτῳ) it might stir up our wonder, and through wonder might be yearned for all the more, and through our yearning might purify us, and in purifying us might make us like God; and when we have become this, that he might then associate with us intimately as friends—my words here are rash and daring! — uniting himself with us and making himself known to us as God to gods, perhaps to the same extent that he already knows those who are known by him.

Ibid.

Thus, the concept of God's infinitude we should consider as Beeley insightfully states, not only limiting our intellectual capacities but as well bringing "a direct and continuous relationship between God's being and the human knowledge of God" (Beeley, 2007, p.107). So we should assume that when Gregory stresses the limitation of human intellect, he is willing to deny encapsulation of the truth (even of creaturely order) in the totality of rationalism, but instead he wants us to "walk in the paths of infinite" (Or. 27.12).

This concept of endless desire for and approaching the elusive essence of God we also find in Gregory of Nyssa. According to him Moses in his unsatisfied desire of the knowledge of God "demands to obtain, beseeches to God to manifest himself not in

measure according to which he could participate (ὡς μέτεχειν δύναται), but how he is in himself (ὡς ἐκεινός ἐστι)" (Life of Moses, XLIV, 401 C, cit in Danielou, 1944, p. 303). In this passage Danielou sees the two constitutive elements of Nyssa's notion of epectasis: "this is preciselly the union of the real participation and growing in δυνάμεις, but which remains at the same time tending towards the infinity of οὐσία" (Danielou, 1944, p. 304). Yet, Nazianzen seems to be much bolder since he is willing to build his trinitarian dogmatics on this epistemology and his vision of a human person in the community of the divine persons and its definition articulated by the same logic of two-dimensionality already points towards positioning a man beyond the economy in the realm of the theology of trinitarian light. But for Gregory even this widening of human boundaries takes place on the basis of the history of salvation revealed in the Scripture and, therefore, now we should examine how does respond his exegesis to his epistemological demands.

3.1.2. The Spirit of the History of Salvation

Gregory develops his exegetical attitudes mostly when he deals with "a strange and unscriptural God" – the Holy Spirit (Or. 31. 1). He fairly acknowledges that "Scripture does not very clearly or very often write Him God in express words (as it does first the Father and afterwards the Son) (Or. 31. 21), so he seems to be forced to find the justification for his argumentation of the deity of the Spirit from non-scriptural sources as it was in the case of Basil. Therefore, he develops the doctrine of gradual unfolding of the "order of theology" (τάξις θεολογίας) of the Trinity in the history:

> The Old Testament proclaimed the Father openly, and the Son more obscurely. The New manifested the Son, and suggested the Deity of the Spirit. Now the Spirit Himself dwells among us, and supplies us with a clearer demonstration of Himself. For it was not safe, when the Godhead of the Father was not yet acknowledged, plainly to proclaim the Son; nor when that of the Son was not yet received to burden us further (if I may use so bold an expression) with the Holy Ghost.

Or. 31. 24

Scholars unequivocally recognize here influence of Origen (Cf. Hanson, 1988, p. 782; Beeley, 2007, p. 170; McGuckin, 2001, p. 309), who talks about “gradual advance” and “ascension”, and calls the Old Testament law “a sort of schoolmaster” which conducts “to Christ, in order that, being instructed and trained by it, they might more easily, after the training of the law, receive the more perfect principles of Christ” (De Princ. 3.6.8). This process of ascension to its consummation he envisages accomplished sometimes in the end of history as a “possession” of “a truth that Gospel which is called everlasting, and that Testament, ever new, which shall never grow old” (ibid); sometimes this “truth of the events described in the historical books” is revealed by “Christ who came and embodied Gospel, and did everything as Gospel according to Gospel”, and this truth is “that “God is spirit” (Comm. Jn. 1.6. 34-35). So, there is unity of the spiritual and eschatological dimensions of Scripture.

Although here is apparent similarity to Gregory’s view on the Scriptural revelation, we are witnessing again the conceptual rework of Origen. While for Origen “spirit” is “divine attribute common to the Father, the Son and the Spirit” (Harl, 1958, p. 278), for Gregory if the substance of God is named as “spirit” and “holly” only by contribution of the person of the Holy Spirit (Or. 31.4). And this changes Gregory’s reading of Scripture significantly: while for Origen spiritual sense of Scripture as an purely intellectual truth is to be achieved by ascension, for Gregory it is rather brought to the earth by the Spirit himself and is communicated in his living dwelling in a man. This change of general perspective can be demonstrated in his concrete readings of Scripture.

The application of this Origenian methodology to the doctrine of the Holy Spirit Hanson evaluates as “serious and honest answer” that is grounded not so much on Scripture itself as on its interpretation “in the context of, the religious experience of the church and of the Christian individual” (Hanson, 1988, p. 783). Certainly, this is true and Gregory sees the stumbling at the word of the Scripture in his opponent’s ignorance of the Spirit, calls them to “meet one another in a spiritual manner” (Or. 41.7) and promises them “bringing back from the letter to the sense, as we do with the Old and New Testaments” (Or. 42.16). However, he is not willing to detach from the

literal “earth” of Scripture unlike Origen for whom “ultimate truth of Scripture does not belong to the historical order, but must belong to the spiritual” (Crouzel, 1989, p. 105). By contrast, Gregory clearly refutes the idea of end of “dispensation of the body of Christ” – “as long as no discourse persuades me that it is better to have put off the body” - presumably having in view some of his contemporaries (Or. 41.5). So, in the clarification of his exegetical approach he draws parallels between human bodily existence and the literal level of Scripture like Origen but with different conclusion:

> For in that Mount itself God is seen by men; on the one hand through His own descent from His lofty abode, on the other through His drawing us up from our abasement on earth, that the Incomprehensible may be in some degree, and as far as is safe, comprehended by a mortal nature. For in no other way is it possible for the denseness of a material body and an imprisoned mind to come into consciousness of God, except by His assistance . . .
>
> But we, standing midway between those whose minds are utterly dense on the one side, and on the other those who are very contemplative and exalted, that we may neither remain quite idle and immovable, nor yet be more busy than we ought, and fall short of and be estranged from our purpose--for the former course is Jewish and very low, and the latter is only fit for the dream-soothsayer, and both alike are to be condemned.

Or. 45. 11-12.

Thus, Gregory avoids any allegorical extremities and instead of Origen’s “heavens” (who mentions another heaven even after the heavenly earth of saints) he prefers image of raised earth – mountain. So, on the one hand, he recognizes dissociation of the words from their corresponding realities in some places of Scripture: “Some things have no existence, but are spoken of; others which do exist are not spoken of; some neither exist nor are spoken of, and some both exist and are spoken of” (Or. 31.12). But when he provides with concrete examples illustrating “difference in terms and

things" to "a slave to the letter", and "a follower of syllables at the expense of facts", we are surprised seeing mere human logic instead of some kind deep spiritual gnosis:

> But if, when you said twice five or twice seven, I concluded from your words that you meant ten or fourteen; or if, when you spoke of a rational and mortal animal, that you meant Man, should you think me to be talking nonsense?

Or. 31. 24.

Indeed, Gregory in his pneumatological argumentation after seemingly going beyond the plain sense of Scripture in fact gives ''a densely packed and beautifully expressed cento of biblical allusions'' (Hanson, Basil's Doctrine of Tradition, p. 254, cit. in Beeley, 2007, p. 181). But this faithfulness to Scripture is indebted to deeply personal understanding of its ultimate truth which means that "all things should be taught us by the Spirit when He should come to dwell amongst us" and "of these things was the deity of the Spirit Himself (Or. 31. 27).

To sum up Gregory's epistemology, we should state that he constructs communicative concept of knowledge. For him knowledge by no means refers to static, objective truth lying beyond human historical condition and its Scriptural narratives for access to which the earth serves as a starting point that should be abandoned once you are detached from its surface. Rather the Theologian envisages human bodily existence as well as its Scriptural historical correlate as an intrinsic dimension of human cognitive constitution and it serves as a mean of interrogation of the ultimate truth which responds in the same "kenotic" way coming out from His transcendence and thus placing His very transcendence, i.e. sovereignty in this disclosure, i.e. the Spirit in history, in body. We maintain that only such concept of the theological truth could form Gregory's doctrine of the Trinity the ontological foundations of which will be explored in the following chapter.

3.2. Theology: The Ontology of Paradox

The doctrine of God deployed in the trinitarian language seems to aim at intensifying the feeling of the weakness of the human mind in the face of God's ultimate supremacy and transcendence. The shocking contradiction of the miraculous one-and-three leaves us without hope of achieving any solution and paralyzes our mind, the Kantian autonomous *ratio*. Yet, we can suggest that as modern quantum physics demanded a substantial revision of Kant's epistemology without rejecting the very notion of comprehensibility (See. Heisenberg, 1971, pp.117-125), so the Trinitarian "physics" questions us almost in the same way when it "destabilizes our epistemic 'certainties'" (Ayres, 2004, p.322). This instability is also found in the thought of Gregory of Nazianzus where it is destined to eventually find its way "back to non-positivistic knowledge of God" (Douglas, 2006, p.87).

As we have seen, Gregory's concept of knowledge implies the direct participation in the being of the object of knowledge: the existential communication with it rather than simply the gathering and analyzing of neutral information about it. This might be formulated in such way: during the experiment the observer affects the object of his observation and the received information mirrors the intervention of the observer in the "life" of the object. So, if we ascribe this type of gaining knowledge to the Theologian's contemplation, then we should await the content of knowledge to be shaped by the God-human interaction.

However, in contrast with physics, in theology the very possibility of knowledge is conditioned by the initiative on the side of the "object" – God, who confers knowledge to us and after our loss of it restores it again. In the light of this presupposition, the object of our knowledge is to be perceived in the very act of the theological observation as constantly preceding and thus running away beyond the temporal horizon of our grasp. Therefore, the divine knowledge not only bears the signs of the "purification" of our mind but by provoking the desire it "draws near to him" (Or. 23.11.), and bestowing the property of sonship of the divine "archetype", the Son, in the deification (Or. 1.4; 27.17.) stretches us beyond ourselves and enables us to identify ourselves with "the object". As a result, we become able to attain the two-fold

knowledge of God: on the one hand, knowledge about Him in His relation to us, and on the other, about Him "before" his *ad extra* relation, yet not in his being, but in his archetypal "drawing" us as his icons for the identification with him in the deification. So the language describing this experience would consist from two interchangeably used grammars: the one describing "God for us" and another - God in his sublime existence towards which he calls us. In this way we find two interconnected "grammars of participation" (Ayres, 2004, p.322).

We argue that Gregory's doctrine of the Trinity is but a result of pushing to its logical conclusion the biblical and the pro-Nicene vision of God. In this vision, God is an absolutely transcendent and self-sufficient being and yet disclosing himself in the events of the Incarnation and Pentecost with no lesser fullness. The latter point allows us to assume the transcendent and absolute substance of the subjects of the divine revelation in the very disclosure, the structure of which is constituted by the eternal Trinitarian relations (**σχέσεις**) of the same subjects.

In order to demonstrate the plausibility of this thesis, we will investigate Gregory's two kinds of construction of the trinitarian relationships. Our focus will be on the dynamics of the light of revelation and on the inner movement of the Trinity. We will start with the ontological meaning of Gregory's light imagery and then will turn to his understanding of the Trinitarian movement.

3.2.1. The Triune Light

Gregory sometimes designates the name of "theologian" to someone who has knowledge about God seemingly in the abstract Aristotelian sense and hence he sees no problem to ascribe it to everyone who is recognized as being such outside the boundaries of pro-Nicene orthodoxy and even Christianity (See. Beeley, 2004, p.196). Yet, his view on the proper way of theologizing is restricted by the particular conditions of personal as well as communal way of life. These preconditions are fully summarized in the following passage:

> Approach [God] by the way you live, for what is pure can only be acquired through purification. Do you want to become a theologian someday, to be worthy of the Divinity? Keep the commandments. Make your way forward through observing the precepts, for Christian practice (πρᾶξις) is the stepping-stone to contemplation (θεωρία).

Or. 20.12.

Further, if we ask about the meaning and significance of contemplation (which is a synonym of the illumination), he unfolds it by the whole set of scriptural concepts of the salvation before his congregation on Epiphany, the "Feast of the Lights":

> Illumination is the splendour of souls, the conversion of the life, the question put to the Godward conscience. It is the aid to our weakness, the renunciation of the flesh, the following of the Spirit, the fellowship of the Word, the improvement of the creature, the overwhelming of sin, the participation of light, the dissolution of darkness. It is the carriage to God, the dying with Christ, the perfecting of the mind, the bulwark of Faith, the key of the Kingdom of heaven, the change of life, the removal of slavery, the loosing of chains, the remodelling of the whole man. Why should I go into further detail? Illumination is the greatest and most magnificent of the Gifts of God.

Or. 40.3

Thus, the contemplation of God as an ultimate goal of the practical effort is itself "the Gift" of salvation. As such it retroactively creates the very conditions for its attainment. So without forceful attempts on our part which embrace the whole of our existence, theology remains a sealed book. Yet, all our attempts are but the work of Sisyphus unless "the aid" comes to "our weakness". Indeed, Gregory states such retroactivity of the theological contemplation explicitly: "It appears to us to the extent that we are purified; it is loved to the extent that it appears; and in turn it is conceived to the extent that it is loved" (Or. 40.5).

This awareness of the retroactivity of the goal in relation to the efforts leading to it shapes the very consciousness of a theologian. Commenting on the famous verse from Psalm 41(42), Gregory writes: “I proceed from one depth to another, calling upon deep after deep, and finding light after light” (Or. 43.67), i.e. finding light as a result of my effort after light bestowed upon me. This reduplication of the object of the contemplation into the object itself and the means by which it is accomplished has already been discernable in Gregory’s reading of the Scripture: the double account of the divine persons in the revelation paradoxically reveals what is beyond the revelation, the source of this revelation – intra-Trinitarian relationships. So this type of exegesis might be called Trinitarian as well as Christological. With the help of this hermeneutical tool Gregory builds a particular concept of sovereignty which has a far-reaching effect on the formation of his trinitarian thought in the strict sense of this word.

Firstly, the persons of the Trinity are perceived as the different stages of light stemming from and leading back to its originating light. Secondly, the substantial identity of these lights turns this ladder of light from its vertical to a horizontal dimension and recapitulates its linear unfolding towards the creation into eternal reciprocal relationship. This could be illustrated with great clarity in Gregory’s juxtaposition of the trinitarian interpretation of two biblical imageries, what we can call Davidian and Johannine imageries of light:

> With David be enlightened, who said to the Light, In Thy Light shall we see Light, that is, in the Spirit we shall see the Son; and what can be of further reaching ray? With John thunder, sounding forth nothing that is low or earthly concerning God, but what is high and heavenly, Who is in the beginning, and is with God, and is God the Word, and true God of the true Father, and not a good fellow-servant honoured only with the title of Son; and the Other Comforter (other, that is, from the Speaker, Who was the Word of God). And when you read, I and the Father are One, keep before your eyes the Unity of Substance; but when you see, "We will come to him, and make Our abode with him,"

remember the distinction of Persons; and when you see the Names, Father, Son, and Holy Ghost, think of the Three Personalities.

Or. 34. 13.

Here Gregory climbing on the Davidian ladder of light reaches the Johannine “arche”, where no previous step is lost but all of them are represented in parallel order, in absolute equality and substantial unity with each other. So, we can assume the reversal order as well:

> The Father was the True Light which lightens every man coming into the world. The Son was the True Light which lightens every man coming into the world. The Other Comforter was the True Light which lightens every man coming into the world. Was and Was and Was, but Was One Thing. Light thrice repeated; but One Light and One God. This was what David represented to himself long before when he said, In Thy Light shall we see Light. And now we have both seen and proclaim concisely and simply the doctrine of God the Trinity, comprehending out of Light (the Father), Light (the Son), in Light (the Holy Ghost).

Or. 31. 31

Gregory uses the imagery of light not only with a revelatory function; light for him has an ontological ground as well. But it is noteworthy that Gregory does not separate these imageries and grammars from each other and hence his ontology is not to be perceived as objectification of the Trinity. So we agree with Beeley’s objection to the view of Lossky and Williams who criticize Gregory for abandoning the soteriological grammar and for shifting to the grammar which reverts the doctrine of the Trinity “to the simple human subject-divine object antithesis” (Williams, 1990, p.67, cit. in Beeley, 2004, p.225). However, we suggest that Beeley’s way of argumentation, somewhat oddly, supports in fact the view he wants to reject: the first grammar he calls “inclusive of the believer” within intra-Trinitarian relations, while the second – “exclusive”, “properly unitive, consubstantial and Trinitarian” (Ibid.); then the first is

"quasi-subjective" and the second – "quasi-objective" (Ibid. p.226). In fact, what we face here is the logic of retroactivity of the "object" of the contemplation which enables to hold together the two grammars of participation – the participation of man in the Trinity and the unity of the persons of the Trinity in the eternal realm. This latter suggestion is further clarified by Gregory's use of the revelatory language of light for the purpose of defining the divine transcendent nature:

> God is light – supreme, inaccessible and ineffable – which can be neither comprehended with the mind nor uttered in speech, and which illumines every rational nature. It is among intelligible things what the sun is among sensible things.

Or. 40.5.

Here again we see the apparent emphasis on the inner continuity between God's being in his incomprehensible transcendence and His sustenance of rational creatures articulated by the concept of divine light. On this evidence, we support Beeley's refutation of Egan's view that "light" for Gregory is not an ontological term. Beeley rightly refers light not only to the communication of the divine nature but to His inner being as well and summarizes Egan's point that light is "God's illuminative causality and human being's resemblance to him, as in the work of Plotinus" (Ibid., p.104; Egan, 1971, pp.134, 141). Despite the impossibility to accept Egan's conclusion, however, the question that he raises, regarding the affinity of Gregory's light imagery to that of Plotinus, deserves more attention. It is to this connection that we now turn in order to shed more light on Gregory's usage of light imagery.

We agree with Moreschini's judgment that Plotinus's influence on Gregory "must be assessed in individual instances, rather than assumed in some general way" (Moreschini, 1997, p.75), and that under the latter's Platonic language one should expect to find exclusively Christian content (Ibid.). Yet, in the case of the language of light, we believe, the borrowed language itself prompts the thought towards further elucidation of the Christian doctrine. Concerning light imagery Hanson notes the difference of the stress made by the Cappadocians in the usage of the imagery

compared to the earlier writers: the latter underlined “derivation within unity while the Cappadocians employ the same image to emphasize simultaneous co-existence of the source and that which is derived from it” (Hanson, 1982, p.110). For this aim Origen’s heritage could not help Gregory since Origen was quite happy to call the Son δεύτερος θεός (ibid.); moreover, the Alexandrian *magister* does not place “the title of ‘light’ among the great divine attributes”, but influenced by his exegesis of the prologue of John gave it the meaning of Logos as a reason (Harl, 1958, p.135). By contrast, Gregory broadens the attribution of light as well as the notion of rationality from the Johannine Logos over to all the divine persons. And here he founds very helpful the famous passage from Plato’s *Republic* 508C quoted above which draws him closer to Plotinus (Or 40.5).

Thus, Plotinus applies light imagery to the examination of the primordial state of the One. Plotinus poses the questions:

> From such a unity as we have declared The One to be, how does anything at all come into substantial existence, any multiplicity, dyad, or number? . . . What happened then? What are we to conceive as rising in the neighbourhood of that immobility?”

(Enn. V. 1. 6.)

And he provides the following answer:

> It must be a circumradiation – produced from the Supreme but from the Supreme unfaltering – and may be compared to the brilliant light encircling the sun and ceaselessly generated from that unchanging substance.
>
> All existences, as long as they retain their character, produce – about themselves, from their essence, in virtue of the power which must be in them – some necessary, outward-facing hypostasis continuously attached to them and representing in image the engendering archetypes:

> thus fire gives out its heat; snow is cold not merely to itself; fragrant substances are a notable instance; for, as long as they last, something is diffused from them and perceived wherever they are present.

(Ibid.)

Here the light produced by the One is not subject to any causation but rather it is the very cause of everything that comes after the One. Thus, the One, in its pure transcendent existence, is already represented being "one with its activity (VI.8.7.47), with its will (VL8.13.56-7), and with its "essence" (VI.8.12.14-17)" (Bussanich, 2006, p. 48). Yet, Plotinus makes reservations for this identity by "as if", οἷον [cf. VI.8.16.15-18, 25] (Ibid.). In our passage this qualification is made by expression "about themselves, from their essence", i.e. after all this light should not be understood as the One's self and essence. So in the end, he cannot find any logical solution for the conundrum of the causation from the One and instead proposes the apophatic concept of "ontogenetic wonder" (Slaveva, p.30): "Oh, yes, it is a wonder (*thauma*) how the multiplicity of life came from what is not multiplicity" (Enn. III.8.10.14–19; cit. in ibid.).

After the preliminary observation of some important points of Plotinus's concept of emanation, we can turn to Gregory's light and undertake a comparative analysis of his famous passage from the Second Oration on Easter. This text contains all the main tenets of Gregory Trinitarian ontology and deserves to be quoted at full length:

> God always was and always is, and always will be; or rather, God always Is. For Was and Will Be are fragments of our time, and of changeable nature. But He is Eternal Being; and this is the Name He gives Himself when giving the Oracles to Moses in the Mount. For in Himself He sums up and contains all Being, having neither beginning in the past nor end in the future...like some great Sea of Being, limitless and unbounded, transcending all conception of time and nature, only adumbrated by the mind, and that very dimly and scantily...not by His Essentials but by His Environment, one image being got from one source and another from

another, and combined into some sort of presentation of the truth, which escapes us before we have caught it, and which takes to flight before we have conceived it, blazing forth upon our master-part, even when that is cleansed, as the lightning flash which will not stay its course does upon our sight ... in order, as I conceive, by that part of it which we can comprehend to draw us to itself (for that which is altogether incomprehensible is outside the bounds of hope, and not within the compass of endeavour); and by that part of It which we cannot comprehend to move our wonder; and as an object of wonder to become more an object of desire; and being desired, to purify; and purifying to make us like God; so that, when we have become like Himself, God may, to use a bold expression, hold converse with us as God; being united to us, and known by us; and that perhaps to the same extent as He already knows those who are known to Him.

Or. 45.3

Here it becomes truly difficult to resist a temptation to accept Harnack's thesis about "intrusion of the Hellenic spirit in the soil of Gospel". First, Gregory postulates God as an absolute being and borrows the image of "the sea of being" from Plato's Symposium, 210d, which in all its transcendence is partly accessible to mind solely. Then we see Greogry using Plotinus's distinction between essence and its "what are peripheral to him ", **ἐκ τῶν περὶ αὐτόν**, which is translated by S. Mackenna and B.S. Page as "about themselves" (See. above quoted Enn. V.I.6.). The manifoldness of the images in the process of comprehension of the Supreme being by the mind is also a well-known Middle Platonic concept which is further developed in Plotinus. Thus when Plotinus raises question about the way of derivation of the many from the One, he imitates the stand of the Divine Mind and begins "by considering the images stationed at the outer precincts, or, more exactly to the moment, the first image that appears". He gives the general rule for a cognitive process:

…there can be no intellection except of something containing separable detail and, since the object is a Reason-principle [a discriminated Idea] it has the necessary element of multiplicity", consequently, "the Intellectual-Principle, in the act of knowing the Transcendent, is a manifold. It knows the Transcendent in very essence

but, with all its effort to grasp that prior as a pure unity, it goes forth amassing successive impressions, so that, to it, the object becomes multiple" (Enn. V,11).

Immersed in this language, Gregory fills the gap of incomprehensibility by the concept of *thauma* almost in the same way as does Plotinus (See. above Enn. III.8.10.). However, notwithstanding these obvious similarities, Gregory turns on its head all Platonic tradition by adding his favourite "bold" expression: "God may . . . hold converse with us as God; being united to us, and known by us; and that perhaps to the same extent as He already knows those who are known to Him" (Or. 45.3).

The assumption that Gregory is here more of a Platonist than a Christian is challenged by the obvious impossibility, in the Platonic scheme, to hold "converse" with the One and to be, at the same time, in "equal" ontological as well as gnoseological status with him, i.e. as God, the One. Would this not split the oneness of the One and hence eliminate its transcendence once and for all? But as we have seen in the previous chapter, Gregory can live with this split without any problem, or more precisely he does not perceive this problem as something negative. Plotinus constructs his philosophy by invoking "God Himself, not in loud word but in that way of prayer which is always within our power, leaning in soul towards Him by aspiration, alone towards the alone" and seeks "the vision of that great Being within the Inner Sanctuary - self-gathered, tranquilly remote above all else" (Enn. V. 1.5). By contrast, Gregory breaks this tranquility of the sanctuary by his Trinitarian noise: "Glorify Him with the Cherubim, who unite the Three Holies into One Lord!" (Or. 34.13.).

The difference, therefore, between Gregory and Plotinus lies not in the consistency of their concepts of Goodness as maintained for example by Spidlik (Spidlik, p.18). Because, to quote Bussanich, for Plotinus the transcendent One "simply causes the existence of everything by the principle that what is perfect produces" and "this perfection is the Good's freedom to be itself beyond necessity, to which all its products are subject" (Bussanich, 2006, p.50). Thus, contrary to Spidlik's view, the One can in this way "communicate itself without coming out of unity" (ibid.), and there is not to see in this view any inconsistence in terms of philosophical logic. On the other hand, Spidlik quite rightly defines Gregory's understanding of Goodness as *diffusivum sui*:

"if the goodness of God and his beatitude is *diffusivum sui*, this is in the eminent fashion: towards the Son and the Spirit" (Spidlik, 1971, p.18). Exactly such theory of goodness – different in spirit and not in logical consistency from that of Plotinus - pushes Gregory to ascribe to the Supreme being "self-contemplation" which was alien for Plotinus's One, and moreover, to define this "self-contemplation" as "movement" (Or. 38. 9.), while Plotinus logically denies any kind of movement in the One: "origin from the Supreme must not be taken to imply any movement in it" (Enn. V.I.6.). Such diversification of the being of God in the inner movement and self-contemplation for Gregory corresponds to the intra-Trinitarian relations. It becomes accessible to us as a result of Gregory's essential reworking of the Platonic ontology on the ground of the biblical doctrine of salvation. Therefore, we will now proceed to an interpretation of the famous passage from Or. 29 depicting the dynamics of the origination of the Trinity and thus contribute to the further clarification of Gregory's theology in the light of the above explored ontological elaborations.

3.2.2. The Triune Movement

Before we begin our discussion of Or. 29, we need to clarify the two main ontological categories of Gregory's Trinitarian theology: infinity and eternity. As we have seen, he favours the former more than the latter, since infinity suits better his open epistemology. In this regard, as we shall see, the Theologian diverges his thought from that of Platonism due to his pro-Nicene commitment. Thus in Or. 45. 3 he interprets (or maybe more precisely accepts as already interpreted) the divine name revealed to Moses borrowing Plato's imagery: "He is eternal being . . . like some great sea of Being" (Beeley points to Symp. 210d as a source; Beeley, 2004, p. 95). This imagery of the sea serves as a definition for Gregory's understanding of infinity as "limitless and unbounded, transcending all conception of time and nature", which he relates to the contemplation by mind, which is overflowed by the multitude of the images stemming from it. Such concept of infinity, as we have seen earlier, was taken by Gregory not so much for the demonstration of God's substantial ineffability but rather to show God's dynamic (or partitive) accessibility to man. In general, the concept of infinity was not unusual for Plato and Plotinus, and maybe Gregory was also

influenced by them as is the case with the great bishop of Nyssa. Yet, as far as Plotinus is concerned, there is still a debate among scholars on his understanding of infinity which is not a "central and constant topic" in his works (Rist, 2006, p.399).

In contrast, Gregory's intention was not merely to establish openness of the divinity towards creation, but constitution of its ontological ground in the intra-Trinitarian openness, which can solely condition any genuine *ad extra* relationship. Indeed, what Balas points out about Gregory of Nyssa could be applied to Nazianzus as well. Against the doctrine about "more and less" relations between the persons of Trinity preached by Eunomius, Nyssa asserts equal divinity of the persons as being one perfect infinite substance excluding any inner gradation (Balas, 1966, p.130-132). On the basis of similar argumentation Gregory constructs the following formulation: "the infinite conjunction of Three Infinite Ones, each God when considered in Himself; as the Father so the Son, as the Son so the Holy Ghost; the Three One God when contemplated together" (Or. 40.41).

The next question to address is how Gregory relates to this kind of infinity the category of eternity. For him eternity is the "measure" of infinity:

> And when Infinity is considered from two points of view, beginning and end (for that which is beyond these and not limited by them is Infinity), when the mind looks into the depths above, not having where to stand, and leans upon phaenomena to form an idea of God it calls the Infinite and Unapproachable which it finds there by the name of Unoriginate. And when it looks into the depth below and at the future, it calls Him Undying and Imperishable. And when it draws a conclusion from the whole, it calls Him Eternal. For Eternity is neither time nor part of time; for it cannot be measured. But what time measured by the course of the sun is to us, that Eternity is to the Everlasting; namely a sort of timelike movement and interval, coextensive with Their Existence.

Or. 45.4.

In this passage we encounter again Plato for whom eternity is "exemplar and archetype of time". However, in spite of drawing a similar analogy between eternity and time, Gregory confers on the notion of infinity connotations quite different from those found in Plato. This crucial point is misunderstood by Tzamalicos. Recognizing Origen's vocabulary in Gregory's linguistic usage, Tzamalicos charges Gregory with distorting in an un-Origenist and virtually Platonic vein the views of the *magister* (Ibid., p. 265-6). But Tzamalicos treats the issue very superficially. He builds all his argumentation on the one short passage from Gregory: "the Aeon, that interval which is coextensive with the eternal things", **συμπαρεκτεινόμενον τοῖς αἰδίοις** (Or. 29.3.). It is clear that Gregory was aiming at something special by applying "aion" to eternity. This use is in sharp contrast to Origen's position for whom the term denoted "a purely and exclusively *natural* reality, a spatio-temporal reality" (Danielou, 1970, p. 198). Similar here is also Nyssa, who designates "aion" as a term for space and time in creation (ibid.). Gregory, on the other hand, defines "aion" as a "timelike movement", unlike Parmenides' unmovable being (Parmenides, XXIII). Such complex operations with infinity and "aion" served Gregory's purpose to establish a kind of ontology which would admit movement in eternity. With this, we believe, he succeeds in the preparation of good foundations for his *theoria* of the paradoxical being of the Trinity.

Let us now look at how all these work together. As an illustration, we suggest, the most suitable would be the following passage the comments on which will help us to develop our argumentation:

> Monarchy is what we value – not Monarchy that is not limited to one person, (after all, self-discordant unity can become plurality) but one which is made of an equality of nature (**φύσεως ὁμοτιμία**) and a harmony of will (**γνώμης σύμπνοια**), and an identity of movement (**ταὐτότης κινήσεως**), and a convergence (**σύννευσις**) towards unity of what springs from it – a thing which is impossible to the created nature – so that though numerically distinct there is no severance of substance (**τῇ οὐσίᾳ μή τέμνεσθαι**). Therefore Unity having from all eternity arrived by motion at Duality, found its rest in Trinity (**μονὰς ἀπ' ἀρχῆς, εἰς δυάδα κινηθεῖσα, μέχρι τριάδος ἔστη**). This is what we mean by

Father and Son and Holy Ghost. The Father is the Begetter and the Emitter; without passion of course, and without reference to time, and not in a corporeal manner. The Son is the Begotten (γέννημα), and the Holy Ghost the Emission (πρόβλημα); for I know not how this could be expressed in terms altogether excluding visible things.

For we shall not venture to speak of "an overflow of goodness" (ὑπέρχυσιν ἀγαθότητος) as one of the Greek Philosophers dared to say, as if it were a bowl overflowing (οἷον κρατήρ τις ὑπερερρύη), and this in plain words in his Discourse on the first and second Causes. Let us not ever look on this generation as involuntary (ἀκούσιον την γέννησιν), like some natural overflow, hard to be retained (οἷον περίττωμά τι φυσικὸν καὶ δυσκάθεκτον), and by no means befitting our conception of Deity.

Or. 29.2.

A number of scholars have laboured identifying possible Neoplatonic sources for this dense passage (Moreschini, 1974, pp. 1390-1391; Whittaker, 1975, pp. 309-313; Majercik, 1998, pp. 286-292). Of importance for us here, however, are not the sources for Gregory's idea but what he does with it. Reading the passage we witness a fundamental deconstruction of the concepts adapted for the purposes of Christian theology. Firstly, the concept of "monarchy" was, of course, a common ground shared not only by the Christian Gregory and his forefathers the Platonic philosophers, but also by the pro-Nicene Gregory and the anti-Nicene Eunomius as well. As we have seen in the previous chapters, the latter attacked his opponents precisely because of his strong believe that the only way to defend the Christian monotheism was the affirmation of the monarchy of the Father (See. e.g. Eunomius, Apologia Apologiae, Vaggione, 2002 p. 70-71). However, here Gregory contradicts this idea by expounding his different understanding of monarchy as a monarchy of equal nature, concordant will and identical activity of three persons. It seems that Gregory not only contradicts Eunomius but his own writings as well. Beeley declares on the basis of clear evidence that "the monarchy of God the Father . . . lies at the heart of each of Gregory's major doctrinal statements, and it proves to be the fundamental element of his theological

system" (Beeley, 2004, p.206). He charges Meyendorff for "grossly" misrepresenting Gregory (Ibid. p.212) by envisaging him as one of the supporters of the "personalistic emphasis" in the Trinity. This emphasis, Meyendorff claims, is contrary to "the post-Augustinian West" which instead, favoured "common essence" (Meyendorff, 1987, p. 203). Yet, Beeley reasserts the same presuppositions in a softer version: although Gregory unites the divine essence and hypostasis in the Father as *arche* of the Trinity, he rejects "any notion of Trinitarian perichoresis that conceives of the divine life as being purely reciprocal and not eternally based in the monarchy of the Father" (Ibid. p.212). The apparent weakness of this argument in the light of our passage leaves us without alternative explanation: what does the *arche* of the Trinity represent: the person of the Father or the nature equally shared by all the three persons?

Let us consider the synonymous expressions used by Gregory concerning the "equality of nature". The list includes: "harmony of will", "identity of movement" and a "convergence towards unity of what springs from it". All of these notions as encountered in the inner "space" of God have already been examined in the preceding sections devoted to the interrelationship between the divine persons in the economy. Our conclusion there was that the key to unlock their power in Gregory's thought lies in his reliance on what we called "kenotic sovereignty". According to the logic of this new type of sovereignty, the "harmony of will" and the "identity of movement" are established in the affirmation of the sovereign will and activity of the persons in their mutual obedience and service. Concerning the notion of "convergence" (**σύννευσις**), although Ayres detects here the influence of Plotinus (Ayres, 2004, p.246), we should notice also Gregory's use of the biblical distinction between the created and uncreated. In this case, the "convergence" means nothing else but our well-known "reference back to the Primal Cause" (Or. 31.30). Moreover, this "convergence" towards the cause of the caused entities reflects Gregory's understanding of causality that revolutionizes Platonism, as witnessed mainly in his anti-Eunomian polemics. This concept is expressed in the following concise formulas: "the Cause is not necessarily prior to its effects" (Or. 29.3.) and "that which is from such a Cause is not inferior to that which has no Cause; for it would share the glory of the Unoriginate, because it is from the Unoriginate" (Or. 31.7). Hence, the Theologian's thought revolves around the paradoxical affirmation of simultaneous existence of both greatness and equality:

> I should like to call the Father the greater, because from him flows both the equality and the being of the equals (this will be granted on all hands), but I am afraid to use the word Origin, lest I should make Him the Origin of Inferiors, and thus insult Him by precedencies of honour. For the lowering of those Who are from Him is no glory to the Source.

Or. 40.43.

Here we see unambiguously what drove Gregory towards radical reworking of Plato: his radically new understanding of "honour" and "glory". The Supreme sovereign seeks his glory and honour not in his supremacy but, quite the contrary, in humble equality with his inferiors and thus abolishing their inferiority by the very exercise of his sovereignty over them. Consequently, the "kenotic sovereignty" is what forms this paradoxical co-existence of the supremacy of the Father and the equality of the Three. So again there are two levels: "high" level – the Father "before", "above" the Son and the Spirit, causing their being, and "low" level – the Father being equal with them serving them by his good pleasure and thus structuring his divine nature in the relations with them (see chapter 2.1.3. above). Then the Son who shares in an absolute way in the divinity of the Father is also a God who "lacks nothing" and the same can be said of the Spirit as well. The sole difference which remains, or, more correctly, is to be affirmed, lies in the "'manifestation' or mutual relationship (σχέσις)" (Or. 29.16.). Consequently, the Father is not only cause of the equal persons but also cause of their very equal relationship as explicitly stated by Gregory: the Father is from whom "flows" not only "the being of equals", of the Son and the Spirit, but "the equality" as well, i.e. "equality of nature" of the Trinity.

This situation logically redoubles the position of God the Father as simultaneously being outside and inside of the relationship:

> When we look at the Godhead, the primal cause, the sole sovereignty, we have a mental picture of the single whole, certainly. But when we look at the three in whim

the Godhead exists, who derive their timeless and equally glorious being from the primal cause, we have three objects of worship.

Or. 31.14.

This passage has become a stumbling block for the scholars of Gregory. Norris after the survey of the unsatisfactory views of Meijering and Meyendorff issues the following verdict declaring Gregory guilty of inconsistency:

Nazianzen is neither consistent nor ontologically penetrating at these points. His attempt to provide a framework in which Biblical statements, theological and soteriological theory, and liturgical practice make most sense has serious weakness . . . occasionally he falters badly at the metaphysical level, such as here with the concept of a primal cause (Norris, p. 199).

However, in the light of the above demonstrated specific concept of causality we fully accept the solution proposed by McGuckin: "Causality is the Father's *proprium* and the root of the inner dynamic of trinitarian relations" (McGuckin, 1991, p.22, cit. in Egan, 1993, p.27). So, this reconciliation of the Father's causality and reciprocity depends on the following logic: the Father exercises such kind of "kenotic" causation which causes reciprocity; He places himself in the absolute openness towards the Son and the Spirit in his infinite "trust" in them as if "hoping and awaiting" from them the affirmation of his own self as a cause and only in this way retroactively being affirmed in his own being as well as in his primacy. It seems that Gregory does not recognize any other way of the affirmation of the sovereignty when he assumes the monarchy "limited to one person (πρόσωπον)" to be "self-discordant unity" and hence "become plurality" (this is, we believe, another striking example of Gregory's rework of Plato's arguing against Thrasymachos's unjust ruler in the Republic). According to this logic then the status of "Monarchy" shifts from the person of the Father to the "equal nature". This intuition leads Gregory to employ "Plotinus's non-personalist metaphysical language" for the construction of his ontological framework for the Biblical personalism of covenant. This personalism, we note, is neither Cartesian nor Sartrian but Biblical. Thus, the concept of "kenotic sovereignty" provides us with a key

for solving the trinitarian paradox which Gregory “deliberately embraces” (Noble, 1993, p. 99).

After this analysis we can return with fresh strength to the interpretation of the similarly dense expression in the above quoted passage from the Oration on the Son:

> Unity having from all eternity arrived by motion at Duality, found its rest in Trinity. This is what we mean by Father and Son and Holy Ghost. . . . For we shall not venture to speak of "an overflow of goodness" (ὑπέρχυσιν ἀγαθότητος) as one of the Greek Philosophers dared to say, as if it were a bowl overflowing (οἷον κρατήρ τις ὑπερερρύη), and this in plain words in his Discourse on the first and second Causes.

Or. 29.2.

Norris agrees with Moreschini’s suggestion that this is “probably an echo of Plotinus” (Norris, p.134), and Majercik traces the imagery of “bowl” to the “Chaldean Oracles” which Porphyry linked to Plotinus’s Enn.V.2.1. (Majercik, 1998, p. 292). However, a note should also be made of the almost literal source of it in Iamblichus’s “The Theology of Arithmetic”:

> just as the sap of the fig tree congeal liquid milk because of its active and productive property, so when the unificatory power of the monad approaches dyad, which is the fount of overflowing and liquidity, it instills limit and gives form (i.e. number) to the triad.

Iamblichus, The Theology of Arithmetic, tr. Waterfield, 1988, pp.41-42.

Nevertheless, Gregory’s connection of the contemplation to the movement in Or. 38. 9 prompts us to investigate the parallels with the trinitarian ideas of Plotinus. Thus, among the ontological categories list by Plotinus we also find those of Gregory’s:

> Thus the Primals [the first "Categories"] are seen to be: Intellectual-Principle;

> Existence; Difference; Identity: we must include also Motion and Rest: Motion provides for the intellectual act, Rest preserves identity as Difference gives at once a Knower and a Known, for, failing this, all is one, and silent.

Enn. 5. 1. 4-5

The category of motion, which is duality and creation of the Intellectual-Priniciple, is conceptualized in Plotinus' "Indefinite Dyad". The latter is "the indefinite (*aoristos*, V.1.5.8), shapeless (*amorphos*, II.4.4.20) productive effluence from the One resulting in movement and otherness from the One (*kinesis kai heterotes*)" (Slaveva-Griffin, 2007, p. 69). For Plotinus this "act of Dyad" takes place when:

> … seeking nothing, possessing nothing, lacking nothing, the One is perfect and, in our metaphor, has overflowed, and its exuberance has produced the new: this product has turned again to its begetter and been filled and has become its contemplator and so an Intellectual-Principle. That station towards the one [the fact that something exists in presence of the One] establishes Being; that vision directed upon the One establishes the Intellectual-Principle; standing towards the One to the end of vision, it is simultaneously Intellectual-Principle and Being.

Enn.5.2.1.

As we see, the perfect One in its overflowing (cf. above Or. 29.2.) moves towards production of the second hypostasis, as "an Intellectual-Principle" which in its turn rests in contemplation towards the One and "establishes" itself with the third one, "Being". The latter is also called by Plotinus "Number" and "Soul" (Enn. V.1.6.).

In spite of an impressive echo of this Plotinian metaphysics in Gregory, the echo is merely on the level of language. Gregory in fact proceeds to totally deconstruct this language and his Trinitarian thought unfolds in reverse order. While Plotinus ascribes the perfectness to the One and all other hypostases participating in it stand in the lower degree, Gregory clearly prefers three to one and shifts the perfectness from the One to the Three:

> A perfect Trinity consisting of three perfect (Τριάδα τελείαν ἐκ τελείων τριῶν), we must abandon a concept of a monad for the sake of plenitude (διὰ τὸ πλούσιον) and go beyond a dyad (for God is beyond the duality of a matter and a form which constitutes material things), and we must define God as a Trinity for the sake of completeness (διὰ τὸ τέλειον).
>
> Or. 23.8. trans. in Ayres, 2004, p. 245

Thus, for Gregory each step beyond the monad leads to the completeness. Firstly, he "abandons" the monad, because it is "narrow", "somewhat grudging and ineffectual" (Or. 25.15-16) and leads to a "Judaizing" kind of monarchy. For him the source, i.e. the Father moves towards begetting the Son, which relativizes His being and supremacy in a dyad since He as the Father exists only in relation to the Son. Secondly, Gregory turns to the procession of the Spirit. He sees the main attribute of the Spirit as "perfect-making" (τελεσιοποίησις) which is by no means reduced to the realm of the economy but is the Spirit's eternal quality; it is his eternal contribution to the Godhead, without whom there would be an "imperfect Godhead" (Or. 31.4.). In addition, if we take into account the conclusions of chapter 2.2. above, we can suppose that the first phase of "emission" already takes place simultaneously in a voluntary "overflowing" towards the begetting of the Son and hence "the completeness" represents the completion of "procession" as well. Finally, Gregory's strong emphasis on the voluntary process of this origination makes it clear how far removed he is from Plotinus and from the whole Platonic metaphysical tradition. Even if Plotinus admits the existence of freedom and will in the One, this is to be understood as a self-affirming will: "He is, then first himself his will" (Enn. VI.21, 14-16; see also Armstrong, 1982, p. 397-406). This vision of the One's self-affirming will is in sharp contrast with Gregory's understanding of the will of the Father as that by which the Father is serving the "Other", the Son.

Gregory's theological ontology could be briefly summarized in the following way. The person of the Father is the first cause who by his personal will begets and emits simultaneously the Son and the Spirit, and thus constitutes His own being exclusively

in terms of his relations with them. Yet, precisely in this exercise of His kenotic sovereignty as a cause of the equality of persons and the equality of nature, the Father subjects Himself to the other persons and to the nature at the same time. Hence, it is only in the substantial relations with the Son and the Spirit that the Father receives the affirmation of his own sovereignty. The Son and the Spirit on their turn freely obey to the Father in the recognition of His primacy. To this obedience they contribute with their own properties received in their derivation from the Father. This contribution is made simultaneously to the Father and to each other through the same substantial relations. According to this logic of reciprocity, we can discern in the Trinitarian interrelationship how one divine person can appropriate "an attribute or an action that is common to the Godhead and thus to all divine persons" (Ayres, 2004, p. 207). This exceptional kind of reciprocity, however, not only relativizes the persons due to the "low" dimensions of their personality, but also affirms their absolute independence. In the midst of this very relativization "low" becomes the same "high", a true *coincidentia oppositorum*. Therefore, with the appropriation coincides the contribution. In this representation the Trinity is a free ontological structure. Each constituent element is at the same time freely situated outside of it. The relational structure is conditioned by the person of the Father and as such he is outside of it. Through the very process of conditioning the Father offers it as a gift to the Son and the Spirit who in its reception receive the very freedom from it. They are thus enabled to offer their personal gift to the Father through this structure of relations. The Son's gift is rationality and power; the Spirit's gift is sanctity and spirituality. The definition of Trinitarian theology is thus extended with one additional element: the "ontology of gift".

3.3. Conclusion

Our argument has shown that in the construction of the epistemological and ontological foundations of Gregory's trinitarian theology the term "kenosis" is of utmost importance. Of course, we advance our conclusion on the key role of "kenotic sovereignty" in full awareness that Gregory avoids any attempts at systematizing his positions. The "kenosis" in the comprehension of God turns the process of gaining

knowledge into a living communication with God. A witness to this type of communicational knowledge is found in the stream of human history and in the divine economy described in Scripture. Gregory's skepticism concerning the usefulness of theological language is driven exactly by this openness towards transcendence: no word and thought can exhaust the truth of being (not only of the divine but of created beings as well) since this would mean the break of the communion, abolition of the otherness of the "other" and the encapsulation in the self-sufficiency of pride (ἔπαρσις). This openness towards God is represented in the completion of the "law' of obedience and humiliation and it leads humanity to the innermost realm of the Godhead. This participation in the life of the Trinity is possible insofar as the very nature of God is constituted by the relationship and the mutual openness shared between the divine persons. Thus, in the revelation of God to man the divine persons are revealed in their relationship to each other, and man moves from one degree of revelation to another revelation, from openness to openness, from glory to glory, from the history to the eschatology, from the letter of Scripture to the spirit of Scripture, from the Cross to the Trinity, and thus from the economy to theology.

General Conclusion

Under the largely unsystematic presentation of Gregory's writings, and beneath his rhetorical and poetic pathos, one quickly notices a robust and coherent theological vision. We can even assume that the Theologian purposefully chose such free associative forms of conceptualization as more suitable to the true aims of theology as a human *logos* about God, who cannot be reached by way of rigid syllogistic constructions. No other Pro-Nicene theologian was so much preoccupied with the paradoxical nature of the Trinitarian God and hence their views are deployed in less antinomic and more explanatory language. But Gregory is keen to use antinomies not only when he deals with questions of Trintarian theology but also in relation to anthropological and soteriological themes as well. Therefore, it would not be an exaggeration to say that his work is not just an avenue for a display of his rhetorical training but is, rather, a manifestation of his constant spiritual disposition.

Although Gregory does not explicitly provide us with the key for his thought, we can discern the permanent existence of such a key concept through all his theological work. For this concept we have devised the name of "kenotic sovereignty". We have demonstrated how this idea permeates his thought beginning from "below" – anthropology and the interrelationship of the persons of the Trinity in the economy of salvation – to "above", the Trinitarian theology as such, and vice-versa.

We began in the first chapter with the examination of the anthropological foundations of Greogry's soteriology, where argued that his vision was a development of the earlier thought of Athanasius rather than of his main teacher Origen. Thus, although remaining interested in the pre-historic cosmic state of "the second lights"(the angels), Gregory is by no means downgrading the "third light"(humanity) as lower in the purely intelligible realm. In contrast to Origen, human kind is for Gregory an initially embodied creation living in the visible, material world. Here lies the first paradox in the Theologian's vision: the spiritual effluence of the divine light which becomes mixed with strange matter (ξένος). Humanity is thus a world "greater in the little", an intelligible creature with the sensual grossness. Humanity is for Gregory the ultimate expression of God's creative power and wisdom. Its two-fold constitution conditions

its problematic position towards its Creator: on the one hand, with its intellect humanity is capable of receiving God's grace and "drawing near" to Him, but, on the other hand, "the grossness" of the flesh (intrinsically bearing the possibility of death) creates an obstacle in the way of deification. This paradoxical state of existence naturally forms the appropriate psychology. For Gregory the hindrance of the flesh is turned into the force which promotes and even completes the movement towards God. The flesh pulling back down to the earth causes humanity's lack of awareness of the presence of God. This tension gives the soul its desire for life (**πόθος, ἔφεσις**), which for Nazianzen is equivalent to the will (free in the pre-lapsarian and redeemed state and "rebellious", "passionate" in the fallen state). What human being needs, therefore, is to freely accept the grace bestowed by God. Then the salvation is envisaged being nothing else than a response of this longing will. Thus the "divided self" of a human being is constituted by the mutually penetrating and supporting dimensions of a free acceptance, or sovereignty, **αὐτεξούσιον**, and humility, or openness in the striving towards God represented by the soul and the flesh respectively. This "mixture" of opposites we called the "kenotic sovereignty" of man.

After the initial clarification of the anthropological foundations of Greogry's soteriology, we turned, in chapter two, to his understanding of the Christological side of salvation. What we encountered here, was, firstly, the novelty in the exegetical strategy of the Theologian. Alongside the well-known Marcellian-Athanasian partitive exegesis Gregory applies a strategy for reading Scripture which refers the different – "exalted" and "low" – accounts on Christ not to his divine and human natures, but to the pre-existent and incarnated states of the person of the Son. This allows him to stress the sameness of the person of Christ and to elaborate a type of Christology which we have called the Christology of double assumption. Thus Gregory develops further what Khaled calls the "**ἵνα** Christology" of Athanasius: the "names" of Christ refer not to the static ontological entities, the natures, but to the phases of the dynamics of the Son's personal will and activity. Such a theological strategy represents Christ assuming humanity and thus identifying himself with it fully including the soul and hence the whole "psycho-emotional" world of a man – "rebellious" will (which express itself in the garden of Gethsemane) and the state of abandonment by God. This first phase of assumption aims to elevate humanity up to the divine realm after which

comes the re-assuming of the divinity “set aside” by God (Or. 37.2) for the purpose of the incarnation. In this dynamics of the double-assumption the will and the activity of the Son become divided into “exalted” and “low” levels like that of the embodied existence and sovereignty of man.

Thus the first part of our thesis illustrates the central role played by the concept of “kenotic sovereignty” in the construction of a theory of the salvation. The two sides, the Saviour and the saved, exercise a mode of willing which is open and strives towards the other in order to obtain affirmation from the other. Although this mutual strive, certainly, is to be understood asymmetrically: while a man strives towards God seeking sustenance of his/her being in Him, God strives towards a man to give His own life to him/her.

In the second part we have undertook an investigation of the interrelationships of the divine persons in the economy of the salvation: first, the interrelationship between the Son and the Father, afterwards, the place of the Spirit in this interrelationship.

The interrelation between the Father and the Son reveals the same logic articulated in the mutual affirmation and “service” of the Father and the Son. Here it becomes clear that Gregory takes his second kind of exegesis very seriously even to the extent of coming to an agreement with his opponents. For him the Son pays obedience to the Father not only under the guise of the assumed humanity but in the pre-existent eternal state as well. He draws heavily on the “mind-logos” language of the Middle Platonists, especially Numenius of Apamea (supposedly through Eusebius of Caesarea, also borrowing the idea of Christ’s eternal priesthood from him). However, he reverses this subordination of the Son to the Father and asserts the service carried out by the Father for the Son by His “good pleasure”. Thus Gregory establishes something similar to a dynamic equilibrium in the interrelations inscribing the feature of humility and obedience in the very notion of the Father who as “anarchos” retains his supreme sovereignty.

Analogous is the interrelation and hence the exercise of sovereignty in the case of the Holy Spirit. Indeed, the key concept of kenotic sovereignty helps Gregory to “elevate”

the previously diminished status of the Spirit without denying His soteriological dependence on the activity of Christ. The Spirit is a gift of salvation owned, bestowed and sent by Christ but at the same time He himself comes and is given by His own sovereign will. Moreover, Gregory spreads the same logic over the interrelations between the Spirit and the Father: the Spirit is equal to the Father and yet He is obedient to Him in His "reference to the Primal Cause" since He owns everything to the Father. This type of exegesis identifying the ways the divine persons relate to each other in the economy to that of eternity allows us to assume that for Gregory the descent of the Spirit from the Father on Christ in His baptism reveals His eternal descent and dwelling in the Son. Consequently, the "low" dimension of the Spirit could be divided into two phases: (1) "obedience" to the Father due to the procession from Him and (2) "obedience" to the Son in whom the Spirit dwells and from He is bestowed on the world. Therefore, if in the case of the Father-Son interrelationship the service of the Son is equalized by the service of the Father's good pleasure, the sovereignty of the Spirit is also affirmed by the property of "extensiveness": the Sprit overflows the margins of the distinctiveness of each person, in whom He dwells and to whom He belongs.

This direct revelation of the eternal interrelationships in the economy aims at nothing else than at humanity's involvement in it as "a new member". Hence in the third part of the thesis we turned to the way in which scriptural interpretation provides the basis for a movement towards the inner theology of the Trinity. We began this exploration by analyzing the epistemological and scriptural conditions for such a movement. Here we focused on the way Gregory elaborates the communicative concept of knowledge which becomes accessible through the historic "flesh" of Scripture. What is involved in this way of comprehension of the infinite essence, **οὐσία** – or what is around God, **περὶ αὐτόν** – is the "lacking" bodily existence of humanity which therefore gains divine knowledge "kenotically". On the other hand, God responds to human search in the same "kenotic" way placing His very transcendence and sovereignty in His revelatory disclosure.

In view of this perspective, the inner structure of intra-Trinitarian relations which is for Gregory the theology in its strict sense is to be discovered in the revelation and at the

same time paradoxically beyond it. This paradox – analyzed in the second chapter – is presupposed by Gregory's understanding of the revelation as a means of the transformation of our existence, i.e. its deification by granting the identity of the sonship of the second person in the Spirit. Therefore, the participation in the deifying knowledge of God simultaneously involves us in the second type of communication of the Son and the Father. So the interplay of these two types of interrelation causes the effect of the retroactive presence of the intra-trinitarian relationship in the God-man relationship. Thus Gregory keeping together these "two grammars of participation", and applying them in his trinitarian interpretation of the Johannine and Davidian light imagery achieves the successful formation of his Trinitarian ontology firmly on scriptural ground. The involvement in the inner life of the Trinity in its turn enables the Theologian to grasp the very structure of God's Trinitarian being.

The Father as a sole "arche" of the divine persons and the Trinitarian interrelationship bestows the very notion of his "arche" to this process of causation and relation with the other persons. This is described by Gregory as "equality of the nature". Hence in the inner life of the Trinity life there takes place a permanent shift of "monarchy" from the person of the Father to "the equality of the nature", i.e. the nature structured in the relations of the mutual obedience and service of the wills of the divine persons. Thus, the concept of "kenotic sovereignty" is represented in the activity of the Father as causing "the equality and the being of the equals" (Or. 40.43). So we can say that the theology of the Trinity is also built on the concept of "kenotic causality". Further, the structure of the relations caused by such kenotic act places the Father at the same time inside and outside of His relations with the other persons: outside as a cause of the relationship and inside due to the kenotic character of this very causation. According to this logic, the caused persons of the Son and the Spirit receive their sovereignty from the Father in the latter's self-relativisation in the relations with them: the Father does not exist prior to the Son insofar as He is father of the Son, and God is holy and spirit due to the eternal divine existence of the Spirit. So in this reciprocal self-bestowal and mutual affirmation there is a double movement: the persons of the Trinity, as fully sovereign, appropriating the attributes of the common nature, as well contributing their own attributes to that nature.

The results of this study are relevant to the discussion of classical Christian theology. They can, however, be used also as outlines of possible solutions to problems faced by contemporary theology. There are at least two reasons that substantiate this claim. There is, firstly, the close reading of Scripture and the engagement with the world one lives in without which Christian theology is meaningless. Gregory is here a preeminent figure among the ancients. As our thesis has demonstrated, his theology is a constant dialogue between scripture and the current cultural and philosophical trends. Secondly, we can use Gregory's key concept of "kenotic sovereignty" upon which stands the whole edifice of his theological thought. This unique understanding of sovereignty reveals a new dimension of monotheism, one that was by no means obvious in the fourth century and is not obvious today, and it can certainly contribute to the deepening of modern ecumenical dialogue. Finally, in the engagement with wider contemporary issues, kenotic sovereignty could be used for a fresh engagement with modern philosophical and psychoanalytic thought. But these subjects are worthy of their own treatment to which we hope to return in a future project.

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