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The Mystery of the Holy Trinity in the Fathers of the Church

The Proceedings of the Fourth Patristic Conference, Maynooth, 1999

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FOUR COURTS PRESS

Set in 10.5 pt on 12.5 pt Bembo for
FOUR COURTS PRESS LTD
7 Malpas Street, Dublin 8, Ireland
e-mail: info@fourcourtspress.ie
http://www.fourcourtspress.ie
and in North America by
FOUR COURTS PRESS
c/o ISBS, 920 N.E. 58th Avenue, Suite 300, Portland, OR 97213.

A catalogue record for this title
is available from the British Library.

ISBN 978-1-85182-859-3

Printed in England
by Antony Rowe Ltd, Chippenham, Wilts.

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Editors' preface

The mystery of the Holy Trinity in the Fathers of the Church gathers papers from the Fourth International Patristics Conference at Maynooth held in June 1999. This set of proceedings follows on from three other very successful volumes, *The Relationship between Neoplatonism and Christianity* (1992), *Scriptural Interpretation in the Fathers* (1995) and *Studies in Patristic Christology* (1996), all of which were published by Four Courts Press. This and future proceedings will be published in the *Irish Theological Quarterly Monograph Series*, also published by Four Courts.

During the past century, the study of the development and structure of early Christian Trinitarian theology has been one of the most dynamic and important areas of Patristic study. At the same time, consideration of the Patristic articulation and defence of Trinitarian theology has played an important role – some would say an insufficiently important role – in the flood of literature on the Trinity by modern theologians. Readers will note that a number of the papers in this volume not only offer the fruits of research on Patristic figures, but also contribute to modern theological discussions (e.g. Clancy & Daley). Many of the contributions are marked by another significant feature of the past half-century's work, considering not just the Trinity *per se*, but the significance of Trinitarian theology for Christian life, thought and contemplation, and for politics. The Trinity is here considered as the central mystery of the Christian faith in its broadest sense (e.g. Rutherford, Madden, Ayres, Twomey). Although there are some forays outside these centuries, the temporal focus of the papers is the period between the articulation of the Church's Trinitarian faith at the Council of Constantinople in 381 and Maximus the Confessor in the second half of the seventh century. Our focus on this period highlights the extent to which the articulation of classical Nicene Trinitarian doctrine in the late fourth century was only the beginning of a highly creative period in Trinitarian theology (seen e.g. in papers by Lang and Madden). The paper by Fr Aidan Nichols reflects directly on the links between classical and modern Trinitarian theologies. In continuity with our earlier publications, which tried to recover the riches of the early Irish Church, usually ignored in patristic studies, Fr Thomas Finan's paper introduces the reader to the role played by the Trinity in early Irish Christian writings from St Patrick to John Scotus Eriugena.

This collection has been long in arriving before the public, a delay in part due to one of the editors being both tardy and having moved twice during the years that have passed since the original conference, while the other editor simply had too much on his plate. All that can be said in their defence (cf. Origen, *Princip.* IV, 1, 7) is that this has provided opportunity for a number of the papers included to undergo extensive revision. The contribution they now make is hopefully all the more significant.

The Editors wish to acknowledge the financial support of the Maynooth Scholastic Trust and of the German Province of the Salvadorian Order in holding the conference and to Frau Dr Ilse Deschauer and the Board of Directors of the *Irish Theological Quarterly* for their support in publishing these proceedings. We also gratefully acknowledge the patience of the publishers, Michael Adams and his staff, as well as the high standard of excellence which we have come to expect from Four Courts Press.

Lewis Ayres
D. Vincent Twomey SVD

The persons in God and the person of Christ in Patristic theology: an argument for parallel development[1]

Brian E. Daley SJ

It has become commonplace, in recent years, for theologians to argue that all serious Christian reflection must be, in some way or other, rooted in our understanding that God is a Trinity. Our sense of the Church, for instance, as a communion of persons gathered into one by the Holy Spirit around the Eucharistic table, worshipping the God of Mystery as our Father, at the invitation of Jesus our Saviour and brother, reveals and deepens our long-held conviction that God is, at the very core of the divine identity, a communion of what we also call – for lack of a better term – 'persons.' John Zizioulas has argued that even our modern notion of the person itself, which he identifies with 'being' at its most intense and authentic level, is revealed in the triune reality of God to be essentially communitarian, relational, ecclesial, eucharistic, since God's own being is eternally constituted as 'personal' by the dynamic mutual relations of Father, Son and Holy Spirit.[2]

Similarly, it has become a theological commonplace to recognize that our awareness of God's triune mode and structure of being is itself rooted in our historical experience of Jesus Christ as Saviour and Lord, the single person in whom God's long history of self-revelation and gracious involvement with humanity has reached its universally significant climax. Pope John Paul II, in the apostolic letter announcing his programme for the millennial celebrations of 2000, *Tertio Millennio Adveniente*, first called the Church's attention to the significance of this 'Great Jubilee' commemorating the Incarnation of the Son of God in time, and then remarked, as he turned to the details of his plan: 'the thematic structure of this three-year period, centred on Christ, the Son of God made human, must necessarily be theological, and therefore Trinitarian'.[3] 'Necessarily theological', presumably, because all reflection on the historical career of Jesus must lead the Christian to a confession of the divine Mystery, which Jesus, as Son of the Father and giver of the Spirit, reveals in word and action; and 'necessarily Trinitarian',

1 I am grateful to my colleague, Prof. Lawrence S. Cunningham, for his valuable suggestions on improving this article. Its flaws remain entirely my own. 2 See *Being as communion: studies in personhood and the Church* (Crestwood, NY, 1985), especially chapter one, 'Personhood and being'. 3 *Tertio Millennio Adveniente*, 39.

at the same time, because this God whom Jesus has revealed in his whole human history two millennia ago is precisely the single God we call, by a kind of emblematic shorthand, the Holy Trinity of Father, Son, and Spirit. The understanding of God that distinctively characterizes the Christian faith is the inevitable result of the Church's reflection on its historical experience of the immediate, active presence of the divine reality, beginning in the history of Israel and continuing through the life of Jesus and his disciples to the present history and present faith of the Christian community. The now-famous axiom from which Karl Rahner developed his own outline of a Christian understanding of God simply affirms this mutual dependence of our understanding of God acting in history and our mental image of God as he is in himself: 'The "economic" Trinity *is* the "immanent" Trinity, and vice versa ... The doctrine of the Trinity and the doctrine of God's saving plan cannot be adequately distinguished from one another.'[4]

In the early centuries of Christian reflection on the Gospel, this paradoxical way of conceiving the divine reality developed concurrently – by a process of curiously intricate mutual influence – with a growing understanding of the personal ontology of Jesus. The distinctive Christian way of understanding both God and Christ, as has often been remarked, is inextricably tied up with the distinctive Christian understanding of the salvation worked by Jesus.[5] The confession of both the triune God and the single person of Jesus, God and man, rests on the recognition that Jesus is the divine Saviour, sent into the world to free humanity from the destructive burden of sin and fear; that he must himself be truly divine in order to give our humanity a new beginning, yet that he must also be truly one of us, share our human life and choices, and even our human death, if he is to touch us effectively from within, to heal our humanity from its historic ills.

So Ignatius of Antioch, at the start of the second century, speaks constantly of the risen Jesus as 'our God',[6] yet insists with equal warmth that his flesh and blood, his human birth and his human suffering and death, were real, and that he remains 'in the flesh' even after his resurrection.[7]

> There is only one physician [he writes to the Ephesians] of flesh yet spiritual, born yet unbegotten, God incarnate, genuine life in the midst of death, sprung from Mary as well as God, first subject to suffering and then beyond it – Jesus Christ our Lord.[8]

4 'Der dreifaltige Gott als transzendenter Urgrund der Heilsgeschichte', in *Mysterium Salutis* (Einsiedeln/Cologne, 1967) ii, 328–9. 5 See, for example, the words of Aloys Grillmeier in the very first chapter of his monumental history of Christological dogma in the early Church, *Christ in Christian tradition* I (2nd ed.: London, 1975), 9: 'Soteriology remained the actual driving force behind theological inquiry, even – as we shall see especially in the period from the third to the fifth century – behind reflection on the identity of Christ and the Holy Spirit. It will not be possible, nor even necessary, always to demonstrate this connection between soteriology and the theology of the Trinity in the same way at every phase of their development. Nevertheless, we must never lose sight of it.' Cf. Basil Studer, *Trinity and Incarnation: the faith of the early Church* (Edinburgh, 1993), 4–10. 6 E.g., Eph Inscr.; Eph 18:2; Trall 7, 1; Rom inscr. 7 E.g., Smyrn 1, 1–3.1.

Through the course of the next five centuries, amid struggles to understand this set of paradoxes more richly and to affirm them without lessening their power, representatives of the Christian 'mainstream' came to be convinced more and more that the mystery of redemption, worked by God's plan in time, is itself the mystery of the person of Christ, understood in all its universal significance. So Maximus Confessor, commenting on Paul's assertion that 'the end of the ages has come upon us' (1 Cor 10:11), sums up the divine plan, or 'economy,' in the following way:

> That plan (οἰκονομία) was that he [the creator], without undergoing change, should be contained by human nature through true hypostatic union, and should, without alteration, join human nature to himself, so that he would become a human being, in a way known only to him, and should make the human person divine through union with himself.[9]

My argument here is that there is, throughout the development of early Christian theology, a much closer connection than historians of theology normally suspect between the development of the classically Trinitarian understanding of God – as a single infinite reality or substance which *is* three mutually related, eternally self-giving 'poles of energy', three concrete individual things or *hypostases*, which the Latin tradition came to call three 'persons'[10] – and the development of the classical shape of Christology, by which we confess Jesus Christ to be a single 'pole of energy' or hypostasis or person, a single divine subject or agent, who *is* at once fully God in 'substance' and fully human in 'substance,' without causing those human and divine realities to be either confused with each other or distanced from each other. Gregory of Nazianzus' famous formulation of this conceptual reciprocity between theology and Christology, in his *First Letter to Cledonius*, puts this mutual relationship between Trinitarian and Christological language with admirable, if almost untranslatable, simplicity:

> If we must speak concisely, the elements from which the Saviour has come to be are one thing and another (ἄλλο μὲν καὶ ἄλλο) – if indeed the visible and the invisible are not the same thing, nor the timeless and the temporal – but not one subject and another (ἄλλος δε καὶ ἄλλος) – no way! For both are one by combination, with God becoming human or a human

8 Eph. 7:2. 9 *Qu. Thal.* 22. 10 For a careful and informative account of the development of the language of *hypostasis* and *prosopon* or *persona* in the Latin and Greek Fathers, see especially André de Halleux, '"Hypostase" et "Personne" dans la formation du dogme trinitaire (ca. 375–381)', in *Revue d'histoire ecclésiastique* 79 (1984) 313–69, 625–70.

being becoming God, or however one might express it. But I say 'one thing and another,' the opposite of what is true of the Trinity. For there we speak of 'one subject and another' (ἄλλος καὶ ἄλλος), lest we confuse the individuals (ὑποστάσεις), but not of 'one thing and another,' for the three are one and the same in divinity.[11]

My conviction is that this sense of the intrinsic connection between a Trinitarian understanding of the divine Mystery and a balanced but unified conception of the person of Christ, the single Son of God who is at once truly human and truly divine, is, in fact, implicitly present in the growth of Christian theology from at least the second century – long before adequate terminology was available to give the connection words[12] – and that the development of the one classical scheme in theological language inevitably promoted, conditioned and even determined the development of the other.[13] More particularly, I believe one can see a kind of implied equation at work in the growth of early Christian understanding of the Mysteries of God and of Christ. If one eliminates the extremes that most serious Christian thinkers, from Ignatius on, quickly recognized as absurd – for instance, the notion that God ceases to be God in 'emptying himself' to save humanity, or the idea that that Jesus' bodily appearance was merely a phantom – then one notices an emergent pattern in the early Christian conceptions of both God and Jesus. The more ancient authors emphasize the complex personal *unity* of Christ as the agent of salvation, the more they are forced to acknowledge the irreducible *threeness* of God, even to the point of having to conceive of Father, Son and Holy Spirit as in some way ontologically ranked or subordinated, as sharing in the divine reality in differing degrees of fullness. Conversely, the more ancient authors emphasize the radical *unity* of the divine Mystery, and see the threeness of Father, Son and Holy Spirit in what we might call perspectival rather than ontological terms, as a threeness of manifestation in history, corresponding to a threefold human experience of the Divine – the more, in other words, they express the Christian sense of God in a 'modalist' rather than a Trinitarian direction – the more they are forced to see Jesus, the Saviour, as subjectively *double*, and to understand his saving role in terms of God's dwelling in a human being or acting in ways parallel to his human actions, rather than in terms of God's personal identity with him. To put it more concisely: one can see in the ancient debates, I believe, that a theology which emphasizes the threeness of persons in God – even a theology that is to some degree 'subordinationist' in conceiving how those three can still be one – tends to stress the oneness of person in Christ the Saviour, occasionally even to the point of seeming to compromise the fullness of his humanity. On the other hand, a theology with a weak conception of the distinction of persons in God – a theology with a more 'modalist' way of conceiving God's being – tends to stress the twoness of natures or substances in Christ, even to the point of tending to see him as a human person in whom the Word or Wisdom or Spirit of God has come to dwell, as a divine gift extrinsic to himself.

11 *Ep.* 101.20–21 (SC 208.44–46). 12 For helpful reflections on the process of growth in dogmatic terminology and in the 'differentiated consciousness' of the Church's continuing faith, see Bernard J.F. Lonergan, *De Deo Trino I. Pars Dogmatica* (Rome, 1964), 17–28; 98–112 (trans. Conn O'Donovan, *The way to Nicaea: the dialectical development of trinitarian theology* (Philadelphia PA, 1976, 1–17; 118–37). 13 This same connection has been argued for, more tentatively but at much greater length, by Basil Studer in *Trinity and Incarnation* (see above, n. 5). For a careful and suggestive study of the connection between the language of 'unconfused union' in Patristic debates on the Trinity and that of Christological reflection, see Luise Abramowski, 'Συνοφεία und ἀσυγχύτως ἕνωσις als Bezeichnungen für trinitarische und christologische Einheit', in *Drei christologische Untersuchungen* (Berlin, 1981), 62–109.

In general, Greek theologians through at least the sixth century tended to be more concerned about the dangers of modalism – usually under the pejorative label of 'Sabellianism' – than they were about subordinationism or even tritheism. The reason, I suggest, was that they instinctively saw that a thorough-going modalism in one's understanding of the God of biblical history implies reducing Jesus to being simply an inspired and inspiring human person, a Spirit-filled teacher and healer who is really no different in his ontological makeup from the other prophets and saints. The dominant theology in the Latin West, on the other hand, up to the sixth century – joined in the decades after Nicaea by Athanasius and his intellectual followers[14] – tended more to emphasize the transcendence, uniqueness and singleness of the divine Mystery, and at the same time to give greater emphasis to the distinction and balance, even the relative autonomy, of human and divine in Jesus. Behind all traditions, East and West, lay the real issue of both Trinitarian theology and Christology: how can we understand God as radically one and eternally transcendent with respect to creation, and still understand Jesus as a genuinely divine saviour, who genuinely acts in our history as a human being like ourselves?

To evaluate the validity of the scheme proposed here, one needs to move beyond abstraction and to look more deeply into the arguments proposed by a variety of authors in the ancient controversies over God and Christ. What I would like to do here is simply to offer four test-cases, in snapshot fashion, from ancient theological debates in which Christological concerns seem to play a determining role in Trinitarian argument, or vice versa. Even though we can only sketch out the details, I hope this may be enough to give at least a certain plausibility to the

14 See the thoughtful warnings against the standard, oversimplified typology of 'Eastern' and 'Western' approaches to the unity of substance and trinity of persons in God, articulated in the 1890s by Théodore de Régnon, in Michel R. Barnes, 'Augustine in Contemporary Trinitarian Theology', in *Theological Studies* 56 (1995) 237–50; cf. idem, 'The fourth century as trinitarian canon,' in Lewis Ayres and Gareth Jones (eds), *Christian origins: theology, rhetoric and community* (London, 1998), 47–67, esp. 61–2. For distinct but largely complementary new attempts to reconceive the entire narrative of fourth-century theological controversy, see Lewis Ayres, *Nicaea and its legacy* (Oxford, 2004) and John Behr, *The Nicene faith*, 2 vols. (Crestwood, NY, 2004).

hypothesis I am proposing, and to stimulate further reflection on the degree to which it holds good.

1. The first test-case to consider is that of the so-called 'monarchian controversy' of the late second and early third centuries. At the end of the fifth book of his *Ecclesiastical History*, Eusebius of Caesaraea gives several lengthy citations from an anonymous work apparently written early in the third century – known sometimes as 'The Little Labyrinth' – which tells of the doctrinal innovations of a number of Roman Christians who had recently been condemned by Popes Victor (189–199) and Zephyrinus (199–217).[15] According to Eusebius' source, these errant Christians were above all concerned to emphasize the radical oneness, the *monarchia*, of the divine power at work in the universe. Their principal deviation from the tradition of Christian faith, as it had developed by then, is said in the document to be their suggestion that since God is simple in being, Jesus was 'simply a man' (ψιλὸς ἄνθρωπος), a position that they reportedly reinforced by using both their own corrected version of Scripture in combination with Aristotelian dialectics. A heresiological work ascribed to Tertullian – which may in fact come from Pope Zephyrinus' chancery – adds the detail that some of these Christians also made use of late Jewish speculations about Melchisedech, seeing in him a more exalted mediatorial figure than Christ himself.[16] This line of thought, which Adolf von Harnack dubbed 'dynamic' or 'dynamistic monarchianism',[17] seems to have been part of a much wider pattern of early Christian argument, ranging in character from popular to highly learned, which set out to place Gospel faith within the longer tradition of both Jewish Biblical monotheism and its Hellenistic philosophical counterpart. In such thinking, Jesus is seen as the appointed spokesman, the messenger of the one and only God, but not as himself a genuinely divine figure.

Alongside this approach, the same decades around the turn of the third century saw the rise of what Harnack called 'modalistic monarchianism', a view of the divine

15 *H. e.* V 28. 16 Ps.-Tertullian, *Against all heresies* 8 (CSEL 47.225–6; repr. CCL 2.1410); Eduard Schwartz argued that this work was originally written in Greek by Pope Zephyrinus or one of his clerics, and translated into Latin in the early fourth century by Victorinus of Poetovio: *Sitzungsberichte der Bayerischen Akademie der Wissenschaften* 3 (Munich, 1936) 38–45. For Jewish speculations on Melchisedek, see especially the Qumran fragment 11Q13, first published by A.S. van der Woude, 'Melchizedek als himmlische Erlösergestalt in den neugefundenen eschatologischen Midraschim aus Qumran Höhle XI', in *Oudtestamentische Studien* 14 (1965) 354–73. For a discussion of this and other texts from Qumran referring to Melchisedek, as well as of the 'Melchisedekian' Christians of the late second and early third centuries, see F.W. Horton, *The Melchisedek tradition: a critical examination of the sources to the fifth century AD and in the Epistle to the Hebrews* (Cambridge, 1976), 60–82 (Qumran), 90–101 (Christian sects); and Claudio Gianotto, *Melchisedek e la sua tipologia: tradizione giudaiche, cristiane e gnostiche (sec. II a.C.–sec. III d.C.)* (Brescia, 1984), 61–80 (Qumran), 237–54 (Christian sects). 17 See Adolf von Harnack, *History of dogma* (Boston, 1899) III, 8–50.

being that seems also to have conceived of God as ontologically one, but as revealing himself in genuinely different ways, under different 'faces' (πρόσωπα), through sacred history; those who espoused this position, such as Noetus of Smyrna and his disciples, as well as the mysterious 'Praxeas' refuted by Tertullian, were charged with saying 'that the Christ was the Father himself, and that the Father himself was begotten and suffered and died';[18] in other words, they failed to make the necessary distinction between the divine Saviour presented in the Gospels and the Divine in itself. Both the former, 'adoptionist' or 'dynamic' kind of monarchianism and the latter, 'modalist' form – different as they may have been in their willingness to call Jesus divine – shared at least a strong sense of the evangelical priority of emphasizing the divine unity, the undivided 'monarchy' or rule of God in the world. Manlio Simonetti has argued plausibly that while these two forms of unitive Christian theology may well have been developed in the late second and early third century – in Asia Minor and in Rome, especially – in resistance to the more philosophically self-conscious and speculative Logos-Christology of Justin, Irenaeus, Clement, and Origen, their roots lay in the original Jewish and Christian instinct of rejecting all forms of polytheism.[19] Nevertheless, both approaches had clear implications for how one understood the person of Jesus.

The two main contemporary responses to the modalist form of 'monarchian' theology were Hippolytus' little treatise *Against Noetus* – a work whose authorship has been much disputed in recent years, but which seems to have been written by a Greek in Asia Minor sometime around 200[20] – and Tertullian's work *Against Praxeas*, composed in Carthage probably between 213 and 217. Although the arguments and assumptions of these works are different in important respects, they are also remarkably similar in their insistence that Christian faith demands an understanding of God that makes room – somehow or other – for calling Christ and the Holy Spirit both genuinely distinct from the Father and genuinely divine, all the while preserving the accepted biblical and philosophical principle that the divine power ruling creation is radically one in its being and action.

Hippolytus begins his refutation of Noetus' modalist doctrine by asserting what he calls – in Irenean fashion – 'the answer of the elders':

> We, too, know that there is truly one God.[21] We know Christ. We know that the Son suffered, in the way that he suffered; that he died, in the way

18 Hippolytus, *Noet.* 1.2; cf. Tertullian, *Adv. Prax.* 1: the devil, working through Praxeas, 'says that the Father himself came down into the Virgin, himself was born of her, himself suffered, in short himself is Jesus Christ'. 19 See M. Simonetti, 'Il problema dell'unità di Dio a Roma da Clemente a Dionigi', in *Rivista di storia e letteratura religiosa* 22 (1986) 439–74 (= *Studi sulla cristologia del II e III secolo*, Rome, 1993, 183–215); idem, 'Sabellio e il sabellianismo', in *Studi storico religiose* 4 (1980) 7–28 (= *Studi sulla cristologia* 217–38, esp. 236). 20 See M. Simonetti, 'Tra Noeto, Ippolito e Melitone', in *Rivista di storia e letteratura religiosa* 38 (1995) 393–414, for an argument in favour of this dating and a survey of the long controversy about the authorship of the works ascribed, in ancient or modern times, to Hippolytus of Rome. 21 Or, in the

> that he died; that he rose on the third day and is at the right hand of the Father, and that he is coming to judge living and dead. And we say what we have learned.[22]

Reliable Church tradition, in other words, affirms both the singleness of God and the story of the 'economy' of salvation by the death and resurrection of Christ; this twofold tradition must be the guiding norm for any further elaboration of Christian theology. 'After all,' Hippolytus asks rhetorically a few paragraphs later, 'would not everyone say that there is only one God? But not everyone would scrap the economy!'[23]

Hippolytus' own approach to explaining how the three 'faces' (πρόσωπα) of God encountered in sacred history can be a single divine Mystery is worked out mainly in terms of action and power – in functional terms, one might say. Christ rules over all things, Hippolytus observes in one passage, but is himself – according to 1 Corinthians 15:23–28 – also subject to the Father, 'so that in all things a single God may be revealed'.[24] A little further on, he compares the unity of Christ and the Father, which Jesus claims in John 10:30, to the unity Jesus prays for among his disciples (John 17:22–23): a unity not in substance (οὐσία) but 'in power (δυναυει), by our disposition towards single-mindedness'.[25] Still further on, in a passage Simonetti has characterized as a 'pioneering' statement of Trinitarian theology,[26] Hippolytus develops further his understanding of the unity of Father, Son, and Holy Spirit in terms of the single 'harmonious economy' (οἰκονομία συμφωνία), the unified historical work of revelation and salvation, which they achieve together:

> The Father gives orders, the Word performs the work, and is revealed as Son, through whom belief is accorded to the Father ... For the one who commands is the Father, the one who obeys is the Son, and the one who brings about understanding is the Holy Spirit. He who is Father is over all things [he adds, alluding to Eph 4:6] and the Son is through all things, and the Holy Spirit is in all things. We can get no idea of the one God other than by really believing in Father and Son and Holy Spirit.'[27]

Although God is always 'single' (μόνος), according to Hippolytus, he is also, in his own being, 'manifold' (πολύς): a multiplicity that is first revealed when God utters his Word of creation and revelation,[28] and when he inspires the prophets by his Spirit;[29] we have come to 'see' this manifold reality of God in the incarnate Word.[30]

translation of Robert Butterworth, *Hippolytus of Rome: Contra Noetum* (London, 1977), 44: 'We, too, have knowledge of a single God – in the true way.' **22** *Noet.* I 7. **23** Ibid., III 4 (trans. Butterworth, altered). **24** Ibid., VI 4. **25** Ibid., VII 3 (trans. Butterworth, altered; Butterworth translates δυνάμει here as 'virtually.' **26** Simonetti (above, n. 20) 395. **27** *Noet.* XIV 4–6 (trans. Butterworth, altered). **28** Ibid., X 2–11.3. **29** Ibid., XI 4. **30** Ibid., XII 5–13.1.

The real issue for Hippolytus, in arguing for a genuine plurality within the single being of God, is clearly to make possible an understanding of the 'economy' of salvation in which the Son and the Holy Spirit can be understood as genuinely divine, and yet as genuinely present and acting in the world as the New Testament portrays them, not distanced from the world in the way some ancient philosophical schools imagined divine agency. So the treatise closes with an extended passage in an exalted rhetorical tone, rehearsing the narrative of Jesus' birth, death and resurrection as the paradoxical story of 'God embodied': as one who truly suffered, mentally and physically, while remaining capable of miracles; as one sent into the world by the Father, returning his soul to the Father, raised by the Father from the dead, and finally breathing forth his living Spirit on the disciples.[31]

> So let us in the future believe, blessed brethren [Hippolytus writes at the start of this final meditation] in accordance with the tradition of the Apostles, that God the Word came down from the heavens into the holy virgin Mary, so that once he had taken flesh out of her, and taken a soul of the human kind – a rational one, I mean – and had become everything that a human being is, sin excepted, he might save fallen Adam and procure incorruption for such as believe in his name.[32]

The structure of Hippolytus' rhetoric here suggests that all his earlier speculation about the internal plurality and unity of God is really meant to lay an intelligible foundation for proclaiming this astonishing Gospel of the 'harmonious economy' of salvation.

Tertullian's treatise *Against Praxeas* is a much more elaborate work, with extended discussion of Scriptural passages that bear on the question of the inner unity and plurality of God; Tertullian also makes an original and important attempt to develop philosophical categories for expressing just what, in God, is single and what is threefold.[33] For Tertullian, as for Hippolytus, what is at stake in the discussion with those who assert a modalist view of God – who say, as his pseudonymous opponent 'Praxeas' is made to say, that 'the Father himself came down into the Virgin, himself was born of her, himself suffered, in short himself is Jesus Christ' – is really the Christian narrative of the saving economy. Citing what he calls the 'rule of the faith,' he insists that

31 Ibid., XVII–XVIII. **32** Ibid., XVI 2. **33** See especially chapters 2, 7, 9, 23, 26 and 27. Tertullian's theological vocabulary, and its background in Roman law and Hellenistic philosophy, has been analyzed at length by modern scholars: see especially Joseph Moingt, *La théologie trinitaire de Tertullien*, 4 vols. (Paris, 1966–9); René Braun, *Deus Christianorum: recherches sur le vocabulaire doctrinal de Tertullien* (2nd ed., Paris, 1977); and the introduction to the text and translation of the work by Ernest Evans (London, 1948). For the connections between Tertullian's Trinitarian and Christological use of the same terms, see also Abramowski (above, n. 13), 80–6. A good recent survey of Tertullian's theology is Eric F. Osborn, *Tertullian: the first theologian of the West* (Cambridge, 1997).

> we believe ... in one only God, yet subject to this dispensation (which is our word for 'economy'), that the one only God has also a Son, his Word, who has proceeded from himself, by whom all things were made ...; that this Son was sent by the Father into the virgin and was born of her both human and God ...; that he suffered, died, and was buried, according to the scriptures, and having been raised up by the Father and taken back into heaven, sits at the right hand of the Father ...; and that thereafter he, according to his promise, sent from the Father the Holy Spirit the Paraclete, the sanctifier of the faith of those who believe in the Father and the Son and the Holy Spirit.[34]

Tertullian makes several attempts to explain how it is that the single divine Mystery or monarchy at the heart of this 'economy' can at the same time be permanently and intrinsically manifold: a functional explanation, somewhat like that advanced by Hippolytus, which offers the analogy of an Emperor delegating rule to his son to carry out the administration of his empire more effectively;[35] an explanation in terms of differing rank within a single *status* or socio-legal category, like the various castes of Roman citizens;[36] even an explanation in terms of the process of thought itself, anticipating Augustine's more extended analogy in *De Trinitate* VIII–X, in which the physical uttering of words is always preceded by a kind of mental dialogue between reason (*ratio*) and language (*sermo*).[37] The predominant set of terms Tertullian uses, however, to grapple with the paradox of divine unity and multiplicity is a more material one: the category of substance (*substantia*), which can be one even while it takes on a variety of forms and shapes. So his use of what were to become three common Patristic analogies for the Trinity – water flowing from a spring to a river to a drainage canal; light issuing from the sun, first as a beam and then reflected as a bright spot on an object; the stalk of a plant issuing from a root and bearing fruit on its branches – are all, in Tertullian's treatment, essentially images drawn from the material world, reflecting his general assumption (borrowed from Stoic philosophy) that all real things, even the reality we call 'spirit,' are in some sense *material*, if they are not simply mental or imaginary.[38] In this latter sense, Father, Son, and Spirit all share the one divine 'substance' or 'stuff' that issues forth from the Father – 'not that the Son is other than the Father by

34 *Adv. Prax.* 2. In citing this work, I use the translation of Ernest Evans. In a short but perceptive article, Robert Markus has argued that Tertullian's use of the word οἰκονομία/*dispositio* in the *Adversus Praxean* seems to have a different sense from that in which Hippolytus uses it in *Contra Noetum*. Tertullian seems to be using it, Markus argues, in its 'original, secular sense', to mean the ordering or arrangement of the three constituent 'elements' of the Godhead; for Hippolytus, on the other hand, as for later writers, it clearly points to the incarnation of God's Word in history. See 'Trinitarian theology and the economy', in *Journal of Theological Studies* 9 (1958) 89–102. 35 *Adv. Prax.* 3. 36 Ibid., 2, 3, 4. 37 Ibid., 5. 38 See, for example, ibid. 26.

diversity, but by distribution ... For the Father is the whole substance, while the Son is an outflow (*derivatio*) and assignment (*portio*) of the whole ...'[39]

Towards the end of the treatise, however, Tertullian makes the same implicit connection that Hippolytus had made between the issue of divine unity and multiplicity and the person of the Saviour. As in the *Contra Noetum*, this rhetorical positioning of the Christological argument, at the conclusion of the treatise, gives it particular force. His opponents, Tertullian says – those who assert that in some sense it was the Father, the God of Israel, who was present in the world and who suffered as Christ – attempt to do justice to the New Testament texts by asserting that while the divine Word mentioned in the prologue to John's Gospel is essentially an act of God, a *vox et sonus oris*,[40] the one who audibly speaks of the Father and prays to the Father in the Gospels, the Jesus whom we call Son of God, is in fact simply a man; so the divine suffering that saves us is really only the Father's compassion for him, the sympathetic presence with the man Jesus of a God who is wholly other than he, and who bestows on him a share in the name of 'Christ' simply by being a powerful, 'anointing' presence within him.

> Those who contend that the Father and the Son are one and the same now [in the context of the story of Jesus] begin to divide them rather than to call them one. For if Jesus is one and Christ is another, the Son will be one and the Father another, because Jesus is the son and Christ is the Father.[41]

Tertullian's own reason for insisting on the personal distinctness of Son and Spirit from the Father, within the divine substance and activity, now becomes clearer: it is to make conceptually possible a real identification of the divine Word with human flesh, in such a way that Jesus can himself be personally 'the Christ', 'anointed' in his saving role by the gift of the Spirit who belongs uniquely to him, related to the Father as Son and related to the rest of humanity as brother and Lord. If Jesus is a single agent, a single Saviour who is both human and divine, he must be a single 'person', both over against the Father and over against us. So in a passage that remarkably anticipates both the *Tome* of Leo and the Chalcedonian definition of Christological faith, two and a half centuries later, Tertullian writes:

> Certainly we find him set forth as in every respect Son of God and son of man, since we find him as both God and human, without doubt according to each substance as it is distinct in what itself is. Because neither is the Word anything else but God nor the flesh anything else but human ... We observe a double quality (*status*), not confused but combined, Jesus in one person God and human ... And to such a degree did there remain unimpaired the proper being of each substance, that in him the spirit carried out

39 Ibid., 9. 40 Ibid., 7. 41 Ibid., 27; cf. also 29.

> its own acts, that is powers and works and signs, while the flesh accomplished its own passions ..., and at length it also died.[42]

Tertullian is affirming here the rich and complex texture of the person and activities of Christ, as they appear in the Gospels; but it is only the distinctness of persons within the divine reality that makes conceivable, within some kind of narrative and ontological unity, the genuine divinity and humanity, at once, of him whom the Scriptures call both Son of God and Son of Man.

2. The second incident of theological and Christological controversy I would like to examine is the trial and deposition of Paul of Samosata, a civil servant from the Syrian kingdom of Palmyra, who became the autocratic and unpopular metropolitan of Antioch – doubtless through political pressure from local rulers – around the year 260. Paul was deposed by a provincial synod in 268, on grounds of both misbehaviour and unorthodox teaching, after two earlier attempts to remove him had failed. Once again, our main narrative source is Eusebius of Caesaraea, who tells us that Paul was finally deposed for heresy only after a local presbyter named Malchion, who was also a skilled professional rhetorician, had succeeded in unmasking Paul's heterodoxy in a public theological disputation.[43] Paul himself was clearly not a theologian, and left no written works of his own; the extant quotations attributed to him all presumably come from the record of the disputation with Malchion, which Eusebius tells us was taken down by stenographers, and most of them are preserved by later sources that are clearly hostile to Paul's memory. Paul became, in fact, for the later Patristic centuries a kind of classical theological villain, a poster-boy both for unsound doctrine about God and Christ, and for the personal depravity and self-promotion that was thought to be the natural accompaniment of heresy.[44] Controversy still rages among scholars over what Paul actually held and taught, and over the fairness of his trial;[45] despite the bias and the fragmentary, often questionable nature of the sources, however, it seems possible to form at least some opinion of the theological issues at stake between Paul and his episcopal critics at Antioch.

Paul was identified by later heresiology as having effectively denied both the personal, substantial existence of the divine Word or Wisdom within the Mystery of God, and the genuine union of any aspect of the divine reality with the man Jesus. The late-sixth century handbook of heresies called *De sectis* – in most cases

42 Ibid., 27. 43 *H. e.* VII 29. 44 See the long description of Paul's arrogant and disedifying behaviour in the letter of the Antiochene synod which deposed him, quoted in Eusebius, *H. e.* VII 30. 45 For a survey of recent literature on the sources and issues involved, see M. Simonetti, 'Per la rivalutazione di alcune testimonianze su Paolo di Samosata', in *Rivista di storia e letteratura religiosa* 24 (1988) 177–210 (= *Studi sulla cristologia* 239–71); Lorenzo Perrone, 'L'enigma di Paolo di Samosata. Dogma, chiesa e società nella Siria del III secolo: prospettive di un ventennio di studi', in *Cristianesimo nella storia* 13 (1992) 253–327.

a work known for its careful and nuanced treatment of aberrant theologies – describes Paul's approach as that of a simple unitarian:

> Concerning the nature of God, he spoke of the Father alone; concerning the incarnation, he said that Christ was a mere human being, and that the Word of God came to be in him ... Paul of Samosata did not say that the independently subsistent Word came to be in Christ, but he said that the Word was an order and a command: in other words, God commanded what he willed to be done by that man, and he did it. But Paul did not teach the same things as Sabellius concerning the nature of God. For Sabellius said that Father, Son and Holy Spirit are the same person, and said that God is something with three names – not believing at all in a Trinity. But Paul did not say that Father, Son and Holy Spirit are the same person, but he said that the Father is God, who created all things, while the Son is a mere human being, and the Spirit is the grace which came to dwell in the Apostles.[46]

A fourth-century witness, the homoiousian bishop George of Laodicaea, writing in the midst of the disputes over the reception of the Nicene formula in the year 359, compares Paul to his own contemporary, Marcellus of Ancyra (of whom more shortly); neither of them, he says, 'wanted to say that the Son of God is son in truth, but – taking their start, I think, from the name of Word – they wanted to say that the Son of God is a word from the mouth, an utterance ... the speech-activity (λεκτίκη ἐνέργεια) of God'.[47] And both Hilary of Poitiers and Athanasius, discussing the acceptability of the Nicene term *homoousios* for describing the relationship of Son to Father, admit that the Antiochene Synod of 268 rejected the term as it was used for God and his Word by Paul of Samosata, 'on the ground that by attributing this title to God (says Hilary) he had taught that He was single and undifferentiated, and at once Father and Son to himself'.[48]

The fragments of text actually attributed to Paul and his opponents in our sources,[49] in fact, do not have much to say about his understanding of the ontological status of the Word within the divine Being, but deal in a variety of ways with the relation of the Word to the humanity of Christ. Some of them sound

46 *De sectis* 3.3. 47 Letter of George of Laodicaea, quoted in Epiphanius, *Panarion* 73.12.2, 6 (GCS Epiphanius III, 285.1–4, 22). 48 Hilary, *De Synodis* 81; cf. Athanasius, *De synodis* 43. In accepting the term *homoousios* into its creed, the Council of Nicaea seem deliberately to have chosen a word with a notorious history of modalist connotations, perhaps in order to shock Arius' sympathizers, such as Eusebius of Nicomedia, with the deliberate extremeness of their affirmation of the Son's unity with the Father. See Hilary, *On the Trinity* 4.4; Ambrose, *On the Faith* 3.125; see also Michel R. Barnes, 'The fourth century as trinitarian canon' (n. 14 above), esp. 48–51. 49 These fragments can be found most fully, along with thorough commentary and extensive historical study, in the classic work of Gustave Bardy, *Paul de Samosate. Etude historique* (2nd ed., Paris, 1929).

almost orthodox by later standards, and speak of the Word of God as being 'united to the human body which he assumed',[50] or as existing 'in the whole man'.[51] Others, however, portray the relation of the Word of God to Jesus in much more extrinsic terms. The letter of the Synod which deposed him, for instance, quotes him as saying that the divine Wisdom dwelt in Jesus as in a temple,

> so that it was, in a sense, one subject within another (*alius in alio*); just as when a garment is wrapped around a human being, although it is something, it is not the same as the person, nor a part of him. In the same way, the Word is himself wrapped up in Jesus Christ, as in someone (or: something) other (*alio*) than the Word himself, but not as if God and the body were united in a substantial way, with each of them made into one thing.[52]

It is important to note that the general theological orientation of the bishops who condemned Paul of Samosata in 268 was that of a particular brand of late-third- and fourth-century Origenism, which not only strongly affirmed Origen's conception of God as three distinct and hierarchically ranked *hypostases* or concrete beings, but believed (in contrast to Origen) that the unity of Christ as a single, divine and human subject could only be secured if the divine Logos is understood, in him, to be the controlling mind behind his behaviour, rather than a purely human *nous*.

> What does it mean to say that the constitution of Jesus Christ was different from ours? [the Synod's letter asks.] We judge that in this one great respect his constitution was different, that God the Word was in him what the inner man is in us.[53]

This vision of the internal unity of Word and humanity in the one subject Christ was, in fact, to be the vision of most of those Greek theologians of the late third and fourth centuries who opposed a modalist or excessively unitary conception of the divine being: it was shared by Arius and most of his followers, who argued that the Son was essentially a divine creature, God by participation rather than by equality with the Father; and its most famous defender was the decidedly anti-Arian Apollinarius of Laodicaea. For all of these thinkers, in the tradition of Origen, the personal unity of Word and human in Christ demanded the distinct, personal existence of the Word within the divine substance. For Paul of Samosata, on the other hand, who probably drew on the long Antiochene tradition of Logos Christology but who seems to have wanted to ascribe to the Logos a minimal degree of ontological independence,[54] a strongly unitary view of God implied a

50 Frag. 20: Bardy 50. 51 Frag. 19: Bardy 49. 52 Frag. 14: Bardy 47. 53 Fragment of the Encyclical Letter of the Synod of Antioch, 268, quoted by Leontius of Byzantium, *Deprehensio et triumphus contra Nestorianos*, florilegium, no. 50. 54 See Simonetti, 'Per la rivalutazione' (above, n. 45) 270–1, for a judgment of Paul's likely place in the Antiochene theological tradition. 55 See especially Joseph T. Lienhard, 'Marcellus of Ancyra in modern research', in *Theological Studies* 43 (1982) 486–503; idem, 'The "Arian" controversy: some categories reconsidered', in *Theological Studies* 48 (1987) 415–37; Gerhard Feige, *Die Lehre Markells von Ankyra in der Darstellung seiner Gegner* (Leipzig, 1991); Klaus Seibt, *Die Theologie des Markell von Ankyra* (Berlin, 1994); and now Joseph T. Lienhard, *Contra Marcellum: Marcellus of Ancyra and fourth-century theology* (Washington DC, 1999). 56 See Barnes, 'The fourth century' (above, n. 14), 50–1. 57 See A.H.B. Logan, 'Marcellus of Ancyra and the councils of AD 325: Antioch, Ancyra, and Nicaea', in *Journal of Theological Studies* 43 (1992) 428–46.

view of Jesus in which the human was much more distant, ontologically, from the divine. Denying the Logos personal subsistence within the mystery of God meant for him attributing independent personal subsistence, over against God, to the human Jesus. On both counts, he was destined to shock pious Origenist ears.

3. A third controversy from the Patristic era which suggests a strong, if not always clearly expressed, reciprocal influence between the understanding of the persons of the Trinity and that of the person of Christ was the mid-fourth-century debate over the theology of Marcellus of Ancyra. Like Paul of Samosata, Marcellus is a figure who has attracted a great deal of attention from scholars in recent years; new attributions and identifications of pseudepigraphical works as his, new analyses of the fragments of his work in the polemical treatises of his opponents (notably Eusebius of Caesaraea), as well as a growing new way of reading the actual theological issues of the mid-fourth century, have all led to a fuller and more nuanced understanding of Marcellus' complex and subtle theological work than was generally possible twenty-five years ago.[55]

One of the most controversial and widely hated theologians of his time, Marcellus represented the strongest theological affirmation that was thinkable of the substantial inner unity of God in the decades following the Council of Nicaea. While most Eastern bishops, in the aftermath of Nicaea, were satisfied that the real benefit of the council had been its rejection of the crude ontological subordinationism popularized by Arius and his supporters, they also seem to have been far less than enthusiastic about the council's credal formulation of faith – particularly about the term *homoousios*, which had a provocatively over-unitive, even modalist ring.[56] Even Athanasius, who would become an impassioned promoter of the Nicene formula in the late 340s and 350s, as the only possible antidote to the continuing threat of 'Arianism' in its various forms, made little mention of it in the twenty years that immediately followed the council. The first committed advocate of the Nicene formulation of the divine Mystery whom we know of, perhaps one of its original architects, was Marcellus, bishop of Ancyra in Asia Minor and close associate of Eustathius of Antioch, who was himself one of the leading heirs of the anti-Origenist, strongly unitive theology represented by Paul of Samosata in the late third century.[57] As is well known, Marcellus emphasized in his writings that

God is radically one, and utterly inconceivable: one substance or ουσια, one concrete being or υποσιασις, one source of action or *persona* (προσωπον).[58] When we consider the economy of salvation, we can say that this divine monad has 'expanded' for our sakes into a plurality of *personae*, but biblical faith must continue to affirm that all of these forms – the God of creation and the God of Sinai, Father, Son and Holy Spirit – are fundamentally 'one and the same.' God's Logos or Word is eternally present in God as a power or potentiality (δυναμις), which becomes actual when God 'speaks the word' of creation, revelation or salvation. It is only in the event of the Incarnation, Marcellus holds – echoing a tradition reaching back to Hippolytus – that the Word can be said to be 'begotten' or can be called 'Son'; for this reason, Marcellus seems to conceive of Jesus, the distinct individual whom we call Son of God, not as himself the divine Word but as 'the human flesh, which God's Word took up'.[59] In another fragment, Marcellus makes it clear that the Incarnation does not imply any real duality of persons within God:

> For if spirit [which he uses as a generic term for the divine substance] is considered in its own right, the Logos rightly is understood as one and the same with God; but if the fleshly addition, which the Saviour [i.e., the one God] took on himself, is considered, the divinity appears simply to have expanded, in this regard, as an active power, so that the Monad remains, as we would expect, really undivided.[60]

In 'taking up' the human Jesus, Son of Man, Marcellus asserts in another passage, the Logos has 'prepared the Man' – and it is unclear whether he is using αμθρωπος here in an individual or a universal sense – 'to become, by adoption, Son of God, so that when all this is achieved it might once again, as Logos, be united with God' and become again simply what the Logos has always been: the Word of God. As a result, the presence of the Logos in the human Jesus always remains, in Marcellus' view, the presence of a transcendent power that is totally other in substance and agency from Jesus the man; the story of Jesus' agony in the Garden, for instance, makes it clear not only that Christ possesses two wills, but that these wills, in turn, reveal two willing subjects, two ontological sources of action:

> For that the Father has so willed is clear from the fact that what he willed came to pass; but that the Son did not so will is clear from what he asks for. After all, he says in another place, 'I seek not my own will, but the will of the Father who sent me.'[61]

One of Marcellus' most outspoken opponents throughout the 330s was Eusebius of Caesaraea: the heir of Origen's exegetical and theological legacy at Caesaraea

58 For a brief summary of Marcellus' theology, see Lienhard, 'The "Arian" controversy', 426–7; see also the other works mentioned in n. 55. 59 Frag. 63. 60 Frag. 71. 61 Frag. 73.

and the most articulate exponent of a nuanced, if still clearly subordinationist, Origenist view of God as a Trinity of distinct *personae*. Eusebius criticizes Marcellus not only for his denial of eternal reality to these divine 'persons', but for all that this denial implies for Christology. Like most fourth-century theologians, from the bishops gathered at Antioch in 268 until Apollinarius of Laodicaea a century later, Eusebius assumed that a true Christian confession of the divinity of Christ meant an affirmation that the eternal divine reason or Logos has become the subjective centre of Jesus the man, taking the place in him of a human intelligence or *nous*. So Eusebius asks rhetorically, in his anti-Marcellan work, *The Ecclesiastical Theology*:

> If Marcellus says that the Word, while in the flesh, spoke these phrases [Eusebius is referring to John 6:8, 'I am the bread of life,' and 6:1, 'I am the living bread, which has come down from heaven'] still why should we affirm this as grounds for confessing that he is not Son, but only Word? How did he exist in the flesh when he spoke these things? Surely as one who was alive, who subsisted, whose existence was 'outside' (εκτος) the Father! And what was the Father at that time, if did not have his own Word within him but existed without a Word? But when the Word dwelt in the flesh, when he engaged in his earthly activities, if he was 'outside' the Father – alive and subsistent and giving motion to the flesh in the way a soul does – surely he was another alongside the Father; and two hypostases existed, he himself and the Father ...[62]

Kelly McCarthy Spoerl has argued that in fact one of the driving forces behind the theological and Christological work of Apollinarius of Laodicaea, in the 360s and 370s, was his own equally fierce opposition to both Arius and Marcellus.[63] This is especially clear in his short synthetic work, Ἡ κατὰ μέρος πίστις (*The Faith* – or *The Creed – in Detail*). The first twelve chapters of this treatise, in Hans Lietzmann's modern edition,[64] are devoted to rejecting the 'Arian' assertion that the Word of God and the Spirit of God are creatures, sent to do God's work in the world; the Christian understanding of salvation requires instead, Apollinarius insists, the recognizably Athanasian confession that even 'while the word of God conducted himself like a man, carrying out his appointed tasks while uniquely joined to the flesh, still he preserved the divine presence to all things'.[65] The second, longer part of the treatise, however, is directed against those who deny that there are three persons in God, and 'say that the Father and the Son are really the same'[66] – Marcellus and his followers, in other words. After an elaborate investi-

62 Eusebius, *E. th.* 1.20.39–41. 63 Kelley McCarthy Spoerl, 'Apollinarian Christology and the anti-Marcellan Tradition', in *Journal of Theological Studies* 45 (1994) 545–68. See also Abramowski (above, n. 13), 103–5. 64 Hans Lietzmann, *Apollinaris von Laodicea und seine Schule: Texte und Untersuchungen* (Tübingen, 1904; repr. Hildesheim, 1970), 167–71. 65 *Fid. sect. pt.* 12 (Lietzmann 171); cf. Athanasius, *Gent.* 41–5; *Inc.* 8, 41–2. 66 Apollinarius, *Fid. sect. pt.* 13:

gation of the Scriptural basis for speaking of three distinct and eternal 'persons' (πρόσωπα) or sources of activity in God, Apollinarius shows that this very conception of God is the basis for what he understands to be an orthodox view of the person of Christ:

> We believe that God became incarnate in human flesh; that nevertheless he possesses his own proper activity unadulterated, since his mind is untrammelled by the sufferings of spirit and flesh; that he directs the flesh and its fleshly motions in a divine and sinless way ... He is true God, who, though not Himself flesh, has appeared in the flesh, perfect with a true and divine perfection, neither two persons nor two natures. After all, we do not say that we worship four – God, and the Son of God, and a human being, and the Holy Spirit ... But we say that the Word of God became human for our salvation, in order that we might receive the likeness of the heavenly man and that we might be divinized in the likeness of him who is by nature the true Son of God, and in his flesh the Son of Man, our Lord Jesus Christ.[67]

A little further on, Apollinarius sums up his integrated view of the Son of God, as central to the Christian confession both of God and of the person of the Saviour:

> There is one Son, the same before and after the incarnation, God and human, one and the same in each state. The divine Word is not another person alongside the man Jesus; but rather he, the pre-existent Son, came to unite himself to flesh taken from Mary, and established himself as a perfect and holy and sinless man; and thus he worked the renewal of humanity and the salvation of the whole world.[68]

Whatever questions would later be raised about the adequacy of Apollinarius' conception of the humanity of Christ, in which the divine Logos or Wisdom took the place of a human *logos* or *nous* – a conception, as I have said, that he shared with more than a century of predominantly Origenist theologians before him (although not with Origen himself), including the opponents of Paul of Samosata, Arius, Eusebius of Caesaraea and possibly even Athanasius – his insistence here on the intrinsic connection between the real existence of the Son in the Trinitarian Mystery and his real existence as a single Saviour, who is necessarily both divine and human if he is really to bring humanity face to face with God, is itself a classical expression of what would become orthodox Christology.

4. As a final tableau in this rogues' gallery of ancient Trinitarian and Christological disputes, let us look briefly at the fifth-century controversy over the constitution

Lietzmann 171–2. **67** Ibid., 30–1: Lietzmann 178–9. **68** Ibid., 36: Lietzmann 181.

of Christ's person, especially as it involved the Antiochene approach to theology and Scripture, represented by Diodore of Tarsus, Theodore of Mopsuestia, Nestorius of Constantinople, and Theodoret of Cyrrhus, over against what is commonly called the 'Alexandrian' tradition, represented above all by the Archbishop Cyril.[69] By the third decade of the fifth century, of course, when this tempest had reached gale force, open debate in the Greek-speaking Church over the unity and trinity of God had, to a large extent, subsided. While the Council of Constantinople in 381 had made no attempt to define formally the ways in which the divine Mystery is one and is three, or to specify the relationship of the unity of God to the person of Christ, still the Cappadocian conception of a God one in root being and in all activity, yet eternally and irreducibly three concrete *things*, three hypostases, because of the distinctive ways in which Father, Son, and Spirit share and realize the divine being, was clearly the unspoken background both for the Council's new, extended version of the Nicene formula of faith and for its anathemas against Arians, modalists and Apollinarians alike. For Eastern bishops and theologians who wished to remain in the 'mainstream' imperial Church, the controversy over the substance and persons of God had essentially been settled, by consensus, in Cappadocian terms.

Yet it can be argued that the real distinction in thought between the Antiochene and Alexandrian 'schools' of theology in the late fourth and fifth centuries was not simply a quarrel about the structure of Christ's person as an isolated issue; their debate, rather, revealed fundamentally different conceptions of how God is involved in creation and history. In the theology of Theodore of Mopsuestia and his pupils, and perhaps even in that of Theodore's teacher, Diodore of Tarsus, sound theology and sound exegesis were both thought to rest on their ability to preserve the transcendence of God – even of a God conceived

69 Theological scholarship has undoubtedly over-simplified the process of Christological debate and exegetical practice in the fourth and fifth centuries by speaking of the 'schools' of Antioch and Alexandria as if they were parallel phenomena, mutually shaping each other by their polemics. It would be more accurate to say that the work of a century of Scriptural interpreters based in Antioch – beginning with Diodore of Tarsus and continuing especially in Theodore of Mopsuestia and Theodoret of Cyrrhus – grew up as a reaction against the exegesis of late-fourth-century Origenist scholars based in Egypt, especially Didymus the Blind and Evagrius of Pontus. The difference between these two approaches was theological, rather than 'methodological' in a modern sense; it involved varying conceptions of the shape and significance of sacred history, and differing ideas of how God is related to the world. But it is important to remember that the approach to both the Bible and to God's presence in history represented by Didymus and later by Cyril of Alexandria was much more representative of the 'mainstream' position of early Christian writers than was that of their Antiochene critics. For contemporary scholarly analysis of the relationships of these two schools, see especially Frances Young, *Biblical exegesis and the formation of Christian culture* (Cambridge, 1997), esp. 161–212; and John J. O'Keefe, 'Impassible suffering? Divine passion and fifth-century Christology', in *Theological Studies* 58 (1997) 39–60; 'Theodoret's line in the sand: Saying "No" to Diodore,' forthcoming.

as eternally Trinitarian – from the compromise of a too-direct involvement in the categories and events of history, especially from the compromises of circumscription and passibility. Alongside this concern to emphasize God's otherness, God's distance from the limitations of the created order, the early Antiochenes showed a concern to protect, in their account of God's acts in history, the autonomy and narrative causality of the created order itself. God beckons to us, they argued, through the typological events of history, guides us providentially by his grace and by the influence of the Holy Spirit in us, reveals to us in the resurrection of Jesus the eschatological salvation to come. But to speak of God acting directly, personally, in human history, in such a way that God can be personally encountered in human events by human beings, was, for them, to introduce a confusion of the divine and the human that was potentially destructive of a right understanding of both.[70]

Because of this overall concern to protect the Christian understanding of God's transcendence and inner unity – the unity of all three πρόσωπα or *personae* who share the divine substance – all the representatives of the 'school' of Antioch were bitter opponents both of the Arian and the Apollinarian theologies. Theodore of Mopsuestia, for instance, in the third of his *Catechetical Homilies*, seems to continue to use *hypostasis*-language[71] for the divine substance, in pre-Cappadocian style, as a synonym for οὐσία[72] and emphasizes, in the following homily, both the 'unbridgeable gulf' in being between God and creation and the identity of 'substance' between God the Father and the Son who 'took on' the human being, Jesus of Nazareth.[73] The historian Socrates tells us that when Theodore's pupil Nestorius came to Constantinople as the new Patriarch in April of 428, he immediately attacked the remnants of the Arian community there with a reformer's zeal;[74] he later defended his campaign against the Marian title *Theotokos* as essentially a way of protecting the 'coessential Godhead' from the 'Arian' suggestion that any one of the three 'persons' in God is subject to passi-

70 For a fuller discussion of the predominant understanding of the relationship of God to creation in the Antiochene writers, see G. Koch, *Die Heilsverwirklichung bei Theodor von Mopsuestia* (Munich, 1965); idem, *Strukturen und Geschichte des Heils in der Theologie des Theodoret von Kyros. Eine dogmen- und theologiegeschichtliche Untersuchung* (Frankfurt, 1974); Joanne McWilliam Dewart, *The theology of grace of Theodore of Mopsuestia* (Washington DC, 1971); G. Hellemo, *Adventus Domini: Eschatological thought in fourth-century apses and catecheses* (Leiden, 1989), 208–31. **71** In the extant Syriac translation, *qnomā*, which is normally the equivalent of Greek ὑποστάσεις. See also Greek fragments 7 and 8 of Theodore's work *On the Incarnation*, where the separate divine and human realities in Christ are referred to as ὑποστάσεις. **72** At the beginning of the chapter, Theodore says of the Logos: 'To indicate that he was with God – not from outside, as a stranger, but of the very nature (*kyonā*) of the substance (*ithutha*) – he was called Word.' *Cat. Hom.* 3.14 (ed. R. Tonneau and R. Devreesse, *Les Homélies catéchétiques de Théodore de Mopsueste*, Vatican City, 1949, 73). For Theodore's use of the word *hypostasis* (*qnomā*) in the same sense in the same chapter, see p. 74. **73** See *Cat. Hom.* 4.6–13 (Tonneau and Devreesse 83–91). **74** *H. e.* VII .29. **75** See especially his "second letter" to Cyril of Alexandria (*Collectio*

bility or limitation.[75] And Silke-Petra Bergjan has shown, in her study of Theodoret of Cyrus' Trinitarian theology, that that last, most centrist representative of the fourth- and fifth-century 'school of Antioch' also weighted his presentation of the Trinity 'auf die Einheit Gottes hin,' and put particular stress on the infinite ontological distance between God and creation.[76] Theodoret's discussion of the unity of God, Bergjan convincingly argues, is mainly developed in terms of the divine attributes recognized by Greek philosophy, buttressed by Biblical texts but not primarily derived from the Biblical narrative or conceived in biblical categories.[77] Although Theodoret accepts the now-canonical Cappadocian language of one οὐσία and three ὑποστάσεις when speaking directly of the Trinitarian Mystery, he is generally unwilling to apply that same terminology to the complex being and simple subjective centre of Christ. Both terms, presumably, still suggested too much metaphysical density, so that Theodoret speaks of Christ almost exclusively in the more dynamic, behavioural terms of two irreducibly different 'natures' (φύσεις) united in the common self-presentation or role of a single *persona* (πρόσωπον).[78]

Cyril of Alexandria, the prime opponent of these Antiochene theologians in the second quarter of the fifth century, also habitually uses the Cappadocian terminology in speaking of the unity and trinity of God;[79] like the Antiochenes, he uses this terminology also in speaking of the unity and difference in the person of Christ, without ever explicitly clarifying the connection between the two fields of discussion.[80] Even more than the Antiochenes, however, Cyril's voluminous treatises on the Trinity stress the permanent threeness of Father, Son and Holy Spirit within the single, simple being of God.[81] Although Father and Son cannot

Vaticana 5.4–7: ACO I, 1.1.30.5–32.4); also his *Heracl.* II/1 (tr. S.R. Driver and L. Hodgson [Oxford, 1925] 162, 174–175). **76** Silke-Petra Bergjan, *Theodoret von Cyrus und der Neunizänismus* (Berlin, 1993), 192–3. **77** Ibid., 192, 195. **78** For references in the works of Theodoret, see Bergjan (above, n. 77), 195, 203–5, 207–10. Bergjan acknowledges her indebtedness to K. McNamara, 'Theodoret of Cyrus and the unity of person in Christ', in *Irish Theological Quarterly* 24 (1957) 313–28. On the development of Theodoret's terminology and conception of the unity of substances in the person of Christ, see Aloys Grillmeier, *Christ in Christian tradition* I (2nd ed., Oxford, 1975) 488–95. Grillmeier observes (489) that although, in some works written after the Council of Chalcedon, Theodoret seems to have been willing to speak of the one Christ as a single hypostasis, his earlier writings suggest that he, like Cyril, continued – in spite of the Cappadocian attempt to regulate the use of these terms – to take ὑπόστασις as a synonym for φύσις or nature: the reality that something is, and according to which it operates. **79** See, for example, Cyril's *Pulch* (ed. Philip E. Pusey, Oxford, 1877) 7.321.11–322–7, where he carefully summarizes the Cappadocian picture of a God one in substance and activity, but three in hypostases because of the relationships of origin among them; cf. *Nest.* 4.1 (Pusey 6.179.17–27); 4.2 (Pusey 6.185.24–186.1; 187.1–18); 5.6 (Pusey 6.122–17–30). **80** See Bergjan (above, n. 77), 190–1. **81** See, for example, *Dial. Trin.* 7 (641.6–17: SC 246.171); *Nest.* 4.1 (Pusey 6.179.17–27); 4.2 (Pusey 6.185.24–186.1). See Bergjan (above, n. 77), 181, n. 58.

be thought of apart from each other, he argues in his second *Dialogue on the Trinity*,[82] still the Son is constituted a distinct hypostasis – a real, individual, concrete 'thing' – by the Father's causal relationship to him.[83] Even though the first chapter of the Letter to the Hebrews speaks of the Son as the 'stamp' (χαρακτήρ) of the Father's *hypostasis* (Heb 1:3), Cyril insists this must not be taken to suggest the Son is simply an accident, an ἀνύπαρκτος ... χαρακτὴρ), of some unitary divine substance.[84] Cyril's sense of the urgency of affirming the distinctness of persons within the Mystery of God seems to be inherently linked to his Christological concern to emphasize that the Saviour is a *single* Son, a single acting subject, even though Cyril never reflects on the link explicitly. So he readily makes use of the phrase 'union in hypostasis (ἕνωσις καθ' ὑποστάσιν)' in his earlier controversial writings – a phrase that to Theodoret seemed to compromise the Son's transcendence as a hypostasis within the being of God, and even to suggest a return to Arianism.[85] For Cyril, only language such as this, with its unmistakably Trinitarian overtones, can convey the full reality of who it is that we encounter, who it is that is acting among us, in Christ. So he writes, in his *Apology for the Twelve Anathemas, against Theodoret*:

> The phrase 'in hypostasis' signifies nothing else than simply that the nature or hypostasis of the Logos – that is, the Logos himself – joined in truth to a human nature without any kind of change or confusion ..., is recognized and is in fact one Christ, the same both God and a human being.[86]

It is this single hypostasis, whose primordial *nature* or principle of activity is that of the divine substance, whom Cyril – even in his writings before the Nestorian crisis – recognized as the ontological centre of the person of Jesus, the source of the divine gifts and energies manifested in him.

> 'We must attribute priority (τὸ πρεσβύτατον), then, to him,' he writes in his dialogue *On the Incarnation*, 'even when united to flesh: to God, that is, naturally united to flesh and accustomed to share with his own body the riches of his proper nature.'[87]

Much more than either the Christology or the theology of any of the Antiochenes, Cyril's understanding of the person of the Son – both within the divine Mystery and as he is encountered in history – is in fact derived from the New Testament: from the narrative of the preaching and miracles of Christ; from

82 *Dial. Trin.* 2 (449.31–38: SC 231.318); see Bergjan (above, n. 77) 178. 83 *Dial. Trin.* 2 (431.29–39: SC 231.264–6). 84 Ibid., 5 (557.32–40: SC 237.298); ibid. (558.30–43: SC 237.302). 85 See Cyril, *Apol. Thdt.* 4 (ACO I,1,6.121.2–4), 2 (114.10–12). 86 Ibid., 2 (ACO I,1,6.115.12–16). 87 *Inc.* (SC 97.292.13–15). On the dating of this dialogue, see the introduction by G.M. de Durand, ibid. 52.

his suffering, which Christians confess as redemptive; from his resurrection, which revealed the full meaning of his Sonship and the full power and promise of his Holy Spirit. In his tract *On the True Faith, to the Princesses Pulcheria and Eudokia*, for instance, from the year 430, Cyril explains St Paul's reference to God the Father as 'the one who raised our Lord Jesus from the dead' (Rom 4:24) by giving a detailed reflection on the rhythmic flow of life among the persons of the Trinity.[88] He immediately goes on to consider Paul's treatment of our own baptism 'into the death of Christ,' in Romans 6:3–8, and insists that if this baptism is done 'in the name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit,' then the mortal, passible Son whose death gives us life in baptism must be identical with the eternal Son of the Father and the giver of the eternal Spirit:

> It is necessary to recognize, then, that the Word of God, having come to be as we are, willingly suffered in the flesh. For these are the conditions under which we are baptized into his death: that he is one Son, impassible in the nature of Godhead, but passible in the flesh. How, then, could anyone doubt that Christ shapes us anew, by his resurrection, into newness of life? For he presents us to himself and to the Father 'as if we had come alive from the dead' (Rom 6.13), as Scripture says: dead to sin, but alive in righteousness (cf. Rom 6.10–11).[89]

For Cyril, the identification of the eternal Son of God as the one who has offered for us the sacrifice of his own human death, and who continues to intercede for us with the Father as our priest, 'vested in the robes of divinity as God and offering priestly service as a man (λειτουργῶν ἀνθρωπίνως)',[90] is precisely the reason it is so essential to maintain a clear understanding of the abiding distinction of persons within the divine Mystery. Otherwise we are left with the absurd alternatives of either imagining the risen Jesus, the eternal priest of the Letter to the Hebrews, as a human 'Son' who has now become an honorary fourth member of the Trinity,[91] or of ruling out the continuing role of the Son in the historical sanctification of humanity.

At the end of this somewhat sketchy survey of early Trinitarian and Christological debate, let us attempt to draw a few more general conclusions.

88 *Pulch.* 35 (Pusey 7.321.11–322.17). 89 Ibid., 36 (Pusey 7.324.1–9). 90 Ibid., 28 (Pusey 7.313). 91 Theodoret, too, in several of his letters from the period of the most intense Christological controversy in the late 440s, insists that he does not hold Christ to be 'two Sons', and that the notion of adding a fourth person to the Trinity is blasphemy: e.g., *Epp.* 126, 143, 144, 146. As Bergjan rightly observes, however, 'Wie sich ... trinitarische Differenz und christologische Einheit zueinander verhalten, bleibt völlig offen. Theodoret formuliert, dass der Menschgewordene kein anderer als die zweite trintarische Person sei, ohne aber auszuformulieren, was die Einheit der person meint.' (above, n. 77) 204.

1. The reason there seems to be so strong a link – a kind of reverse proportion – between the way we understand unity and distinction in God and the way we understand unity and distinction in the person of Christ is that these are not merely independent theological ideas, separate areas on the dogmatic map, or separate chapters in the catechism. 'Trinitarian theology' and 'Christology' are modern terms, not ancient ones, and represent tracts in the theological curriculum of the modern Western university rather than categories of Patristic discussion. Both of them are really *about* one thing: the distinctively Christian understanding of how God is related to the world and to history; how God can be both transcendent Mystery – ultimate, infinite, free of creaturely limitations, uncircumscribed by human thought – and also 'Emmanuel,' God-with-us, God personally encountered in Jesus, God speaking today in the Scriptures and in the Church. The doctrine of the Trinity is really a narrative creed in miniature, a formulaic way of speaking about a God who is active in history, who reveals himself genuinely in the 'economy' of salvation witnessed to by the Bible, while remaining beyond history, beyond all human knowing. For Christian faith, Jesus reveals this God to us in his own person as Son, and draws us into this God's inner life, in which his existence as Son is rooted. That is the ultimate reason we call Jesus Saviour and Lord.

2. There seem to be, throughout the history of Christian reflection, two basic casts of mind, two pre-dogmatic perspectives that set the stage for the differing approaches to the Trinity and to Christ that we have been discussing here. One tends to place the strongest emphasis on God's *otherness*, God's absoluteness and simplicity as the source and goal of all being; it draws on the biblical narrative, and biblical categories for support, of course, but its driving engine seems to be critical reason applied to faith, a philosophical assumption of what God must be like if faith is to be credible. The other mind-set tends to place the strongest emphasis on God's *activity within history*, on God's personal, concrete presence and accessibility in the world and in religious language and action; it makes use of philosophical language and argument, of course, but its driving engine is religious response to the biblical proclamation. The first mind-set – which is clearly that of a minority in the early Church, even if it was at times an influential minority – shows itself in monarchian and modalist forms of theology, and in the Antiochene tradition of Christology and exegesis; its strength is clearly its reasonableness, but when exaggerated it can become a bloodless and pedantic rationalism. The second, more widespread mind-set shows itself in the Origenist tradition of Trinitarian thought, in Apollinarianism, and in Alexandrian Christology and exegesis; its strength, surely, is its existential character, its sacramental and ecclesial implications, and its spiritual intensity, but when it becomes exaggerated – as in the massive, often violent rejection of the Chalcedonian formula that swept the Greek East in the late fifth century – it can be the root of pious fanaticism. And there were clearly some extraordinary thinkers in the early centuries

of theological reflection – Athanasius, the three great Cappadocian Fathers, and Maximus Confessor in the East, as well as Augustine in the West – who are more difficult to identify, precisely because they seem to have avoided both extremes and to have reached out for a carefully-constructed theological and Christological equilibrium.

3. It seems to me at least possible that these two casts of mind with respect to God and the world may also be most typically at home with two rather different perspectives on the role of the *Church* in the world – perhaps even fostered by two different kinds of Church community. Let me advance this further, more tentative suggestion in the form of questions: is it plausible that the more unitive approach to theology, which emphasizes both God's distance from the world and the human completeness of Jesus, in distinction from the divine Logos, tends to be more congenial to those with a more robust view of human authority and a more favorable attitude towards secular institutions and secular forms of behavior? Is it likely that the more Trinitarian approach to theology, with its more integrated and Logos-centered view of the person of Christ, tends to appeal more to Christians who are intensely concerned with maintaining the boundaries between Church and world, who are more willing to challenge human authority, learning and reason?

Clearly such identifications are conjectural, and run the risk of sociological reductionism. Clearly, too, many questions can be raised about the application of such a scheme to the historical evidence we have. But a few aspects of the Patristic cases we have been considering might give this further suggestion some credibility:

a) Despite their condemnation of some of the more extreme representatives of monarchian theology, the bishops of Rome, from the time of Pope Victor until at least the mid-third century, seem strongly to have favored a monarchian or unitive brand of theology; they were also, by and large, strong Church leaders at that period, willing to exercise their own authority in reconciling the *lapsi* and other public sinners to communion at home, and eager to affirm their leadership in Churches outside Rome's immediate geographical area. Their Trinitarian critics – Hippolytus,[92] Tertullian, Novatian – on the other hand, tended to be 'rigorists' on the question of the reconciliation of sinners, sceptical about the degree to which human authority may be relied on in determining the boundaries of the community of grace. The communities around them were generally regarded as schismatic Churches, and were especially critical of the Roman bishops.

b) Paul of Samosata, deposed from his episcopal dignity for holding a unitarian view of God and for teaching that Christ was a 'mere man', was repeatedly

92 This is especially true if we identify the Hippolytus assumed to be the author of *Noet.*, which we have discussed above, with the author of the *Refutation of all heresies* often associated with him. In any case, the author of the second work is sharply critical both of the theology and the reconciliation policy of Pope Callistus: see *Haer.* 9.12.15–26.

accused of being authoritarian, and of taking an overly secular approach to the exercise of power.

c) Klaus Seibt, in his recent massive study of the theology of Marcellus of Ancyra, argues at length that Marcellus' way of viewing the theological tradition before him was strongly influenced by his close relationship to the Emperor Constantine. Seibt views Marcellus' work as an attempt to develop, in the early years of imperial patronage of the Church, a theology suited to an *ecclesia triumphans*: a Christology 'borne by a concern for the exaltation and self-confidence of the Church as it became part of the world, as well as for a positive evaluation of humanity in general'.[93] Although a similarly triumphalistic tendency has often been noted in the historical and apologetic work of Eusebius of Caesaraea, Marcellus' Origenist contemporary and his arch-enemy in things theological,[94] Eusebius' reasons for celebrating Constantine seem to have been quite different. For him, the Emperor represents the conclusion of God's saving work, which began in the history of Israel; the emergence of Christianity from the shadows of persecution for him was the fulfillment of God's promise to his faithful ones, rather than the glorification of the human in the person of Jesus. There is, in other words, a more biblical and eschatological dimension to Eusebius' affirmation of the value of imperial structures than to that of Marcellus. The centre of Eusebius' enthusiasm, in fact, is not the Empire at all, but the Church, which prefigures the Kingdom of heaven.[95] This is a point of comparison, however, that clearly calls for further study.

d) In the Christological disputes of the fifth century, it was principally the Antiochene writers, with their emphasis on the internal unity of God and the irreducible distinction of divine and human in Jesus, who expressed, on occasion, strong support for the providential role of the Christian Emperors.[96] After the Council of Chalcedon, on the other hand, the strongest advocates of Cyril's theology and Christology separated themselves quickly from the imperial Church, and eventually, in large part, from the Christian Empire as well, setting up their own episcopates, which continued to subdivide, as controversy over confessional details continued, into new and more exclusive communities. In Rome and the West during the fifth and sixth centuries, where relations with the Empire varied in warmth but where papal authority, even outside of Italy, grew steadily stronger to fill the vacuum left by the shrinking of imperial authority, theological sympathy remained strongly pointed in the pro-Chalcedonian (and pro-Antiochene) direction.

These are tentative identifications, all of which invite further reflection. What is clear is that amid all the hypotheses we may care to form or choose to reject, neither our way of conceiving and talking about God nor our way of conceiving and talking about Christ can be isolated from each other, or treated as distinct, self-contained 'fields' of Christian reflection, and that both of them are inseparably connected with our way of understanding the Church and the world.

In the year 375, Basil of Caesaraea wrote a letter 'to the learned (λογιωτάτοις) in Neocaesaraea' in Polemonian Pontus – to Christians, in other words, in that city of eastern Asia Minor whose education seemed to make them both more vulnerable to deception by fads and more capable of intellectual leadership. One of the subversive movements of which Basil warns them is 'the evil of Sabellius': the ontological modalism of Marcellus and his followers that, in Basil's view, leads to a kind of spiritual 'drunkenness' – intoxicating, but ultimately destructive.

> For the person who says that Father Son and Holy Spirit are one thing with many faces (ἕν πρᾶγμα πολυπρόσωπον), and who proposes a single concrete reality (μίαν … ὑπόστασιν) for all three – what else is he or she doing but denying the existence of the Only-begotten before all ages? That person denies, too, his presence among men and women, in realization of the divine plan, his descent into Hades, his resurrection, his judgment; and he denies the characteristic activities of the Spirit.[97]

Rejecting that God is inherently and eternally a Trinity, in Basil's view, implies a rejection of the economy of salvation narrated in the Christian Bible, because it denies the real existence of the Son and the Holy Spirit as agents capable of making God personally present in history.

As people who profess to 'see the glory of God in the face of Christ' (2 Cor 4:6), we can only imagine and describe that divine glory, in this present life, in

93 *Die Theologie des Markell von Ankyra* (Berlin, 1994), 517; for an extended argument towards interpreting Marcellus in this direction, see 460–520. 94 See, for example, Erik Peterson's famous essay, *Der Monotheismus als politisches Problem: Ein Beitrag zur Geschichte der politischen Theologie im Imperium Romanum* (Leipzig, 1935), in which he argues that the Christian theological defense of monotheism in terms of a single divine μοναρχία had, almost inevitably, political overtones supportive of universal imperial government, until the Cappadocians developed a viable model of God as both three and one, in a way without parallel in the created world (see esp. 97–9). George Huntston Williams attempted to draw the same parallel between 'the conception one has of Christ and his several offices' and imperial claims to authority in Church and world: 'Christology and Church-State relations in the fourth century', in *Church History* 20 (1951) 3.3–33; 4.3–26. Both these positions, along with the similar approach of Hendrik Berkhof, have been elaborately contested by Jean-Marie Sansterre, 'Eusèbe de Césarée et la naissance de la théorie "césaropapiste"', in *Byzantion* 42 (1972) 131–95, 532–93; nevertheless, Sansterre argues that Eusebius's "political theology" of exalting Constantine was a strategy to persuade him to take a more active role in Church affairs, and specifically to annul the Nicene credal formula. 95 See, for example, *Laus Constantini* 5.2–5; 16.6; *In Psalmos* 86.2–4. For a discussion of Eusebius's theological understanding of the Kingdoms of God and the world, see F. Edward Cranz, 'Kingdom and polity in Eusebius of Caesaraea', in *Harvard Theological Review* 45 (1952) 47–66.

96 See, for example, Diodore's comments on Rom 13.1 (K. Staab, *Pauluskommentaren aus der griechischen Kirche*, Münster, 1933, 107; Theodoret, Dan. 2 (PG 18.1308). See Peterson (above, n. 95) 82–3 for further references. 97 *Ep.* 210.

terms of what we have encountered in him. Our theology and our Christology implicitly contain each other, and offer us together – but never separately – the intelligible framework for Christian meaning and Christian hope. Our God is the God of the economy revealed in the Church's Scriptures; but this God, whom we have encountered and encounter still in Scripture and Church, is, we believe, God as he truly is.

'It's not for eatin' – it's for lookin' through': *memoria, intellegentia, voluntas* and the argument of Augustine's *De Trinitate* IX–X[1]

Lewis Ayres

THE UNIQUENESS OF THE 'DE TRINITATE'

The purpose of this paper is to offer a reading of the place of *memoria, intellegentia* and *voluntas* in Augustine's *De Trinitate*. My point of departure will be to note that the extensive and developed use of this triad is a feature only of this one work. Accordingly, we can best understand its significance by following closely the argument of which its deployment is the final stage. This argument, developed through Book IX, initially revolves around a distinction that Augustine makes between a self-knowing necessary to the mind but constantly distorted by our attachment to the material world, and an eschatalogical perfected self-knowing that would most fully image the Trinity. In our attempts to use the mind as a site for thinking the Trinitarian unity and diversity we find ourselves straining from the former toward the latter. In Book X, Augustine develops a subtly different account of the mind's necessary *and constantly perfected* self-knowing which accompanies all our thinking. Here Augustine builds on his earlier distinction by continuing to show how the perfected self-knowing intrinsic to the mind is constantly forgotten or distorted by the fallen thinker who generates a mistaken knowledge of the soul. Indeed, Augustine's argument here is structured not only by the move from one analogy for the Trinity to another but by an increasingly sophisticated analysis of the ways in which the generation of *verba interiora* is at the core of all acts of self-knowing. Thus accounts which treat these books only as an exploration of the analogical adequacy of different accounts of the mind's structure miss

1 The title of the paper is homage to Chief Dan George, who co-stars in *The Outlaw Josey Wales*. Lone Wadi (played by George) is asked by Wales (played by Clint Eastwood) if he has any food. Producing a piece of hard candy, George holds it to his eye and utters the immortal line quoted in the title, little knowing how well it encapsulates Augustine's approach to the trinitarian analogies he considers in *Trin.* 9–10. I am grateful to audiences at Maynooth and at Emory University for comments on earlier versions of the argument, and to numerous friends and colleagues who have commented on various drafts. All abbreviations of Augustine's works are those of Cornelius P. Mayer (ed.), *Augustinus Lexicon* (Basel & Stuttgart, 1987–). The argument of the paper here summarizes chapters six and seven of my *Augustine's trinitarian theology* (Cambridge, forthcoming).

something vital: one of Augustine's central concerns in these Books is to analyze the dynamics of fallen self-knowing and hence of analogical practice itself. In many ways it is this analysis that gives fundamental structure to the argument he offers.

At the beginning of our investigation it may help to note in a little more detail the evidence for my claim that the triad *memoria, intellegentia* and *voluntas* has a remarkably close connection with the *De Trinitate*. Including some variations on the third term found in Book XV of the *De Trinitate*, Augustine uses the triads *memoria, intellegentia, voluntas* and *memoria, intellectus, voluntas* around 35 times in his corpus. This rather vague figure stems from the difficulty of assessing passages where the triad and its constituent terms are discussed over a number of complex sentences. Even with such imprecise figures it is striking that over 20 of these uses occur in the *De Trinitate*. Indeed, the triad is used in directly Trinitarian contexts outside this work in just three texts.[2] And so, from all the homilies on John's Gospel and First Letter where Trinitarian topics frequently occur, from the *Confessions*, from his extensive expositions of the Psalms, as well as from the vast majority of his sermons and letters this triad it is simply absent as a basic tool for illustrating Trinitarian doctrine. The triad is not then a standard feature of Augustine's Trinitarian theology. Equally importantly, the triad is not a standard feature of Augustine's description of the human soul. Its absence from Augustine's discussions of the soul in his early works being only one important indicator. Reflection on the will and on memory is of course a central thread in Augustine's corpus, but this particular triad is not.

In what follows, I proceed by offering a sequential account of the argument that runs through Books IX and X. I will interrupt this sequence twice to discuss some of Augustine's most important source engagements.

'DE TRINITATE' IX 1,1–5,8: THE PARADOX OF SELF-KNOWING[3]

Mens, Notitia, Amor

We can best begin to understand Book IX by noting some of its connections with the previous book. At the culmination of Book VIII, Augustine imagines one who both 'sees' love and believes that love is God, but cannot see how that love is Trinitarian. Augustine's answer is, first, to reinforce his insistence that the love with which Christians love is God and then, second, to offer a reading of that love as Trinitarian.[4] In this argument it is the logic of Trinitarian faith itself that enables this reading of love in the face of what we think we 'see'. This culminating argument of Book VIII itself builds on an extensive discussion of how we should seek to understand the Trinity given a) our inability to sustain our gaze on the truth itself and b) our lack of categories within which we can place the Trinity.[5] The question of how we should seek is further focused by Augustine's argument that we know both mind and God by their presence to and within the Christian, not as objects found externally.[6] This is then the immediate context for Augustine's insistence that we may use the Trinitarian logic known in faith to interpret the love that we perform as Christians. This argument reveals what will be a central dynamic of the argument of Books VIII–X: although Augustine certainly sees the mind as the most fruitful analogical site for exploring the Trinity, he assumes that the logic of Trinitarian faith is also a tool that will aid our exploration of that site. We should notice an important shift from Book VIII to Book IX: in the former Augustine uses the Trinitarian logic to interpret the love that he has argued is God; in the latter he uses the same logic to interpret the structure of the *mens* understood as *imago Dei*.

At the very beginning of Book IX, Augustine suggests that we turn from exploring the triadic shape of loving in general to the particular case of self-love.[7] The introduction of the mind's self-knowing occurs as Augustine refocuses the question he had asked in Book VIII: seeking presumes knowledge of that which is sought, but from where do we know the mind?[8] The seemingly paradoxical truth that we search for that which must in part be already known is true even of the mind itself. Augustine's brief further discussion of this here introduces a strand of reflection on the mind's incorporeal and intelligible life that is vital to the argument of both these books. The mind knows corporeal things through the senses, but knows incorporeal things through itself. Because it is incorporeal, the mind must know itself through itself.[9] At this point Augustine's account of the mind's intellectual self-presence serves mostly to heighten the paradox that the searching mind must already know itself; as it is developed through Books IX and X, this account will take on a central role both enabling the mind to serve as an important analogical site for exploring the Trinity, and enabling Augustine to explain why our attempts to think beyond the categories of the corporeal world so easily fail. Thus, in this and the previous paragraph we meet with two of the central dynamics of these books: seeing how they interact will take the rest of the paper.

2 *Serm.* 52, 19–21 (3); *ep.* 169, 2 & 6 (3); *c. s. Ar.* 9, 16 (3–4). 3 Throughout the paper I have spoken of 'self-knowing' rather than 'self-knowledge' in order to emphasize that Augustine's concern is with the 'life' of knowledge in the mind, not merely with knowledge as objective content. 4 *Trin.* VIII 8,12–10,14.

5 *Trin.* VIII 2,3 & VIII, 5,8. 6 *Trin.* VIII 6,9. 7 *Trin.* IX 2,2 (CCSL 50A, 294): *nondum de supernis loquimur, nondum de deo patre et filio et spiritu sancto, sed de hac impari imagine attamen imagine, id est homine … ecce ego qui hoc quaero cum aliquid amo tria sunt, ego et quod amo et ipse amor … tria ergo sunt, amans et quod amatur et amor. quid si non amem nisi me ipsum, nonne duo erunt, quod amo et amor?* 8 *Trin.* IX 3,3 (CCSL 50A, 295–6): *mens enim amare se ipsam non potest nisi etiam nouerit se. nam quomodo amat quod nescit?* 9 *Trin.* IX 3,3 (CCSL 50A, 296): *ergo et semetipsam per se ipsam novit, quoniam est incorporea.* This discussion takes up the latter half of VIII 6, 9.

Before moving to the next section of Book IX, two further points must be made. Whereas one might think that *mens, notitia* and *amor* must parallel a triadic structure in one of Augustine's theological and philosophical predecessors, I suggest that it is better understood as a formalizing of the relationship between love and knowledge sketched in Book VIII under the pressure of the demands of the Trinitarian logic itself.[10] Just as Augustine read love as trinitarian on the basis of his Trinitarian faith in that book, here self-loving and self-knowing in the mind is constructed as a triad for the very same reason. Noting this is important, I suggest, because it focuses some of our attention away from the search for triadic parallels in his predecessors towards exploring the influence here of a series of questions about the interrelationship between memory, desire, knowledge and the presence of Truth that have been central to Augustine's anthropology since the emergence of his understanding of the centrality of memory to human desire and understanding in the very late 380s.[11]

Throughout this section of the paper I have spoken of Augustine as concerned with the 'mind's' self-knowing. It is important to note that, although he speaks through the latter half of the *De Trinitate* about both *animus* and *anima*, Augustine locates the *imago Dei* and both of the triads he considers in Books IX and X in the *mens*, the highest 'part' of the soul. Augustine distinguishes fairly consistently between the 'higher' and 'lower' soul and identifies the higher reasoning functions of the *mens* as the governing 'part' of the soul.[12] Augustine does not offer any dense account of the nature of the difference between 'higher' and 'lower' parts of the soul, but he sees the *mens* as a better image of the divine simplicity because it is here that the human ability to know and love God finds its seat.[13]

Unrolling the Mind

Having come to the view that the mind knows and loves itself, Augustine launches into an excellent example of the way in which he reads the mind partly through the use of Trinitarian logic but in order to render more comprehensible that logic itself. Augustine begins by telling us that the three are 'equal' when they are 'perfected' or 'completed.'

10 This view is also that of Albrecht Schindler, *Wort und Analogie in Augustins Trinitätslehre* (Tübingen, 1965), ch. 6. 11 At *Ord.* 2. 2.6–7 (387) Augustine argues that memory is of significance only with reference to the material world. By *quant.* 33. 71–2 (388) he locates even the principles of logic and number learnt through the 'liberal arts' in the memory. In *ep.* 7.1.1 (388–91) the act of remembering through images is central even to thinking the idea of eternity. In many ways this shift represents a turn back to the centrality of the power of memory in Latin rhetorical literature 12 For the varying and sometimes inconsistent ways in which Augustine divides the soul see the useful summary in Gerard O'Daly, *Augustine's philosophy of mind* (London, 1987), 11–15. 13 *Trin.* XIV 12,15. Cf. *lib. arb.* III, 25, 75.

> The mind therefore and its love and knowledge are three things, and these three are one, and when they are perfected they are equal. If the mind loves itself less than it is ... then it sins and its love is not complete. Again if it loves itself more than it is, for example, if it loves itself as much as God is to be loved, though it is incomparably less than God, here too it sins by excess, and does not have a complete love of itself. It sins of course with even greater perversity and wickedness when it loves the body as much as God is to be loved.[14]

Thus, while the three necessarily exhibit part of the Trinitarian logic in being three and one because they exist in the incorporeal mind and are nevertheless distinct, they most fully exhibit that logic only when the three are 'completed' through achieving relative equality and rest. The conditions under which the three lack perfection are those of distorted and inappropriate desire – conditions that for Augustine mark even the existence of those within the body of Christ. Their perfection will involve, he explains, the mind not loving itself as something greater or less than it is (either as only body or as God).[15] Whereas the discussion of love as Trinitarian in Book VIII assumes that the love with which the Christian loves is necessarily Trinitarian, the discussion of the mind's self-knowing here presumes that perfected and equal self-knowing is only possible in the purified mind.

We are then told that *mens, notitia* and *amor* are 'rolled up' in the soul (*anima*) and must be unrolled so that they may be seen and numbered.[16] This 'seeing' and 'numbering' of the three as substantial realities comes through the *exercitatio* of reading them according to the logic of the Trinity and in the light of Augustine's account of the mind's incorporeal and intellectual existence. Thus the immateriality of the three and the mind's immediate and total self-knowledge means that we cannot conceive of *mens, notitia* and *amor* as parts within a whole. The same principles prevent us understanding the three according to any language of mixture. The three are in each other and yet are each whole by themselves and all in all. The three are spoken of relative to each other and yet are inseparable. That which Augustine seeks to show about the three is determined by the structure of Trinitarian faith, but his means of illustration are the conditions of the mind's intellectual existence (the sources for which are discussed in the next section of the

14 *Trin.* IX 4,4 (CCSL 50A, 296–7): *Ipsa igitur mens et amor et notitia eius tria quaedam sunt, et haec tria unum sunt, et cum perfecta sunt aequalia sunt. Si enim minus se amat quam est ... peccat et non est perfectus amor eius. Item si amplius se amet quam est uelut si tantum se amet quantum amandus est deus, cum incomparabiliter minus sit ipsa quam deus, etiam sic nimio peccat et non perfectum habet amorem suit Maiore autem peruersitate et iniquitate peccat cum corpus tantum amat quantum amandus est deus.* 15 *Trin.* IX 4,4. 16 *Trin.* IX 4,5 (CCSL 50A, 297–8): *Simul etiam admonemur si utcumque uidere possumus haec in anima exsistere et tamquam inuoluta euolui ut sentiantur et dinumerentur substantialiter uel, ut ita dicam, essentialiter, non tamquam in subiecto ut color aut figura in corpore aut ulla alia qualitas aut quantitas.*

paper). We should also note that throughout Augustine makes use of a variety of other analogies from the material world to explore the existence of the *mens*, including the remarkable use of a 'social' analogy to illustrate relative predication.[17]

Augustine here demonstrates what we might call a practice of 'discursive analogy'. Although I use the term 'analogy' it is important to bear in mind that throughout the *De Trinitate* Augustine appears to avoid the term *analogia* in favor of a number of terms that indicate a much looser set of likenesses.[18] *Analogia* implies to Augustine the possibility of our grasping the proportion between the terms involved, and we can grasp no such relation between Creator and any part of the creation. Throughout this mature work, Augustine sustains from his earliest engagement with the 'liberal arts' tradition belief that the good practice of 'analogy' involves training the mind to understand and move between the conditions of intelligible and sensible reality.[19] As he performs such movement for his readers, Augustine does not move consistently from corporeal likenesses that are easier to grasp but less revealing to likenesses more difficult to grasp but that better reveal relationships or modes of existence possible within the intelligible realm. His text involves a discursive interplay between these levels as he tries to draw the mind into recognizing both its abilities to reason about the intelligible and the constant threat that it will be seduced into importing inappropriate material conditions. This discursive quality is only enhanced by the use of the Trinitarian logic as a tool for investigation and as that which we seek to understand.

At one level, the discussion we are considering in Book IX focuses on the mind's love and knowledge under any circumstances. Augustine's argument that knowledge and love are irreducible *substantiae*, named relatively and existing in an incorporeal quasi-simple mode of existence, is not a comment about the perfected mind, but about the mind as such. At the very end of this discussion, however, Augustine turns again to the possibility of the mind's perfection:

> How they are all in all we have already shown above; it is when the mind loves all itself and knows all its love and loves all its knowledge, when these three are complete with reference to themselves ...[20]

Thus, at both the beginning and the end of this discussion, Augustine opens up a space between the self-knowing and self-loving mind on the path to purification and the self-knowing and self-loving of the perfected mind. The former has already been identified as both necessary and yet mysterious, forgotten and yet inescapably present; only in the latter is there a fully Trinitarian image in the equality of love and knowledge.

17 *Trin.* IX, 4,6. 18 See my '"Remember that you are Catholic" (*serm.* 52, 2): Augustine on the Unity of the Triune God' in *Journal of Early Christian Studies* 8 (2000) 59–63. 19 There is a long tradition in Augustinian scholarship of describing the latter half of *Trin.* as an 'ascent' following neoplatonic exemplars. For the purposes of this paper, I have avoided such language. For more extensive discussion see my *Augustine's trinitarian theology*, ch. 2. 20 *Trin.* IX 5,8 (CCSL 50A, 301): *Tota uero in totis quemadmodum sint iam supra ostendimus cum se totem mens amat et totem nouit et totum amorem suum nouit totamque amat notitiam suam quando tria ista ad se ipsa perfecta sunt.*

The structure of the perfected mind's self-knowing is thus not simply discovered in the mind, but partly constructed out of the mind partly from the logic of Trinitarian faith (in which the perfect equality and rest of the three is asserted), and partly abstracted from his own understanding of the character of our fallenness. That which would offer the best analogy is here held out as future possibility, and as the product of reasoned construction not simply insight: Augustine's description of this analogy is not, as the man said, 'for eatin', it's 'for lookin' through'. My brief mention of human fallenness enables us to note a theme here heard only *sotto voce*, but which becomes central through the rest of Book IX. In his initial account of the character of self-knowing in the mind not yet perfected, Augustine speaks of knowledge as 'a kind of life in the reason of the knower,' greater than body 'not by mass, but by power' (a statement to which we will return). Self-knowing goes astray when the mind is perceived along with other things; the mind that can separate itself from what it is not and know itself as the power that it is may know itself perfectly and rest in that knowledge. The failure of unpurified self-knowing lies in the corrupted and constantly active life of the fallen mind's strange inability to separate itself from images of what it is not. The presence of this theme should not surprise us – it is already a familiar one in Augustine's corpus before this date. But we should note how its gradual emergence as the two versions of self-knowing are delineated enables Augustine to place discussion of our search for better self-knowing at center stage. The emphasis on knowledge as continually active 'life' will enable Augustine to give this frequent theme in his work a new subtlety – and poignancy.

'DE TRINITATE' IX 6,9–12,18: 'VERBUM INTERIOR'

At the beginning of IX 6,9, Augustine steps back from his account of the perfected self-loving mind resting in its own knowledge to ask about the character of the knowledge in which one might rest and the manner of our progress towards such knowledge. He suggests that we know in two ways, either in ourselves (and these things may then be communicated via signs to one who believes) or in the truth itself which is present to us (such things can be spoken of and may be seen identically by others who know them in the truth).[21] The truth that is spoken of here is the divine Wisdom and Word who informs all things. When we speak of the mind well, and judge rightly how the mind ought to function

21 *Trin.* IX 6,9.

we make judgments in the light of the Truth itself. These judgments are not made through the sensory organs but with what Augustine names here as the mind's own *visus* or *intuitus*.[22]

The true knowledge that results from our judging in this truth involves generating or 'uttering' something analogous to a 'word' in the mind.[23] Such 'words' born in the mind are at the root of all human action for good or ill. Augustine offers a basic division between types of 'word': they occur either as a result of a fundamental love for the Creator or for creatures.[24] In the case of 'words' founded in an inappropriate love for the created order we can distinguish between the *verbum* as *conceptum* and *natum*: the word is conceived when we desire its fulfillment but born only when that desire is actually fulfilled. Only in the case of words conceived in the true love of spiritual realities are they simultaneously born: one who loves justice has a will or love that rests in the knowledge that is conceived because that which is desired is immediately present.[25] Augustine then asks whether all *notitia* can be considered a word. His answer is that while it can in a loose sense the words with which he is concerned are those that are joined with love.[26]

We should remember at this point that when Augustine introduces the concept of the *verbum interior* he is careful to define it as *tamquam verbum*: *verbum* is not by itself fully adequate to grasp the reality he attempts to describe. That is particularly clear here, for now he turns to the notion of image (*similitudo* and *imago*) to describe the same reality. All positive knowledge of form (*species*) is like that which is known. Our knowledge of God is in some manner like God and we become like God when we know God. Knowledge of bodies misleads when we judge ourselves to be in the same class as that of which we have a likeness within us. Thus when the mind knows and loves itself appropriately an image is born within the mind that perfectly matches the mind: the knowledge or image is expressed from the mind and known as perfectly equal.[27] At this point we have circled back to the account of the perfect equality of mind, love and knowledge sketched at the end of IX 5, 8, except that now we have a clearer understanding of the conditions under which such equality is possible.

22 *Trin.* IX 7,12 (CCSL 50A, 303–4): *In illa igitur aeterna ueritate ex qua temporalia facta sunt omnia formam secundum quam sumus et secundum quam uel in nobis uel in corporibus uera et recta ratione aliquid operamur uisu mentis aspicimus* … 23 *Trin.* IX 7, 12 (CCSL 50A, 304): (immediately following the text quoted in the previous note) *atque inde conceptam rerum ueracem notitiam tamquam uerbum apud nos habemus et dicendo intus gignimus, nec a nobis nascendo discedit.* 24 *Trin.* IX 7–8, 13 (CCSL 50A, 304): *Quod uerbum amore concipitur siue creaturae siue creatoris, id est aut naturae mutabilis aut incommutabilis ueritatis. Ergo aut cupiditate aut caritate…* 25 *Trin.* IX 9, 14. 26 *Trin.* IX 10, 15. 27 Trin. IX 11, 16 (CCSL 50A, 307–8): *Ex quo colligitur, quia cum se mens ipsa nouit atque approbat sic est eadem notitia uerbum eius ut ei sit par omnino et aequale atque identidem quia neque inferioris essentiae notitia est sicut corporis neque superioris sicut dei. Et cum habeat notitia similitudinem ad eam rem quam nouit, hoc est cuius notitia est, haec habet perfectam et aequalem qua mens ipsa quae nouit est nota. Ideoque et imago et uerbum est quia de illa exprimitur cum cognoscendo eidem coaequatur, et est gignenti aequale quod genitum est.*

In these sentences we see one aspect of Augustine's earlier comment that knowledge is 'like a life in the mind of the knower' being a little more filled out. Augustine adapts from his platonic sources (discussed in the next section of the paper) a conception of knowledge as an activity and as a desire to aid his account of the moral shape of the mind's activity. The production of the 'word' or 'image' in the mind creates a dynamic to our desiring: an economy of lack when we desire inappropriately and seek those things that cannot satisfy and an economy of fullness when we desire spiritual goods and may rest in our knowledge. Thus Augustine's account of the life of knowing emphasizes the reflexive function of recollection. The movement of knowledge and love involved in the bringing forth of 'words' necessarily shapes one's desire and self-understanding (especially when we see that *notitia* is image as well as word). To find ourselves between the perfect self-knowing of the purified mind and the necessary but hidden self-knowing of the mind as such is to find ourselves in the life of the fallen mind drawn by the power of the mind's habitual gaze and struggling to see the reality of the Truth in which our true judgments are made.

Thus the discussion of the *verbum interior* relates to the initial section of Book IX *both* by offering an account of the life of knowledge in the perfected *mens* as the continual production of a revealing image in love, *and* an account of how our searching and desiring is currently distorted. Indeed, it is the latter concern that appears to be at the forefront. While consideration of these books has tended to focus on the viability of the analogy offered by Augustine and on the details of his account of the *mens*, Augustine finds it equally important to reflect on the foundations of analogical practice in the structure of even the fallen mind's life in the Truth itself, the character of the moral progress and the life of faith that must accompany growth in reflection on the *imago* in even those able to think the mind as incorporeal.

Book IX does not end here. As soon as he has returned to the unity and equality of mind, knowledge and love in true contemplation of self, Augustine asks why knowledge or image or Word are said to be born (*gignit*), but love is not. This is a question, he tells us, that many ask of the Trinity itself: why is the Son begotten and the Spirit not?[28] In an attempt to answer the question by exploring the *imago*, Augustine offers a distinction between knowledge as a type of 'coming into' what is known (*inventum est*) while love is an *appetitus* that must precede and focus the act of knowing. This appetite may not be the love with which the known is loved, but the two are related and may both be called will.[29] The argu-

28 *Trin.* IX 12,17. 29 *Trin.* IX 12, 18 (CCSL 50A, 309–10): *Sed ideo non recte dicitur genitus ab ea sicut notitia sui qua se nouit quia notitia iam inuentum est quod partum uel repertum dicitur, quod saepe praecedit inquisitio eo fine quietura. Nam inquisitio est appetitus inueniendi, quod idem ualet si dicas reperiendi. Quae autem reperiuntur quasi pariuntur, unde proli similia sunt. Ubi nisi in ipsa notitia? Ibi enim quasi expressa formantur. Nam etsi iam erant res quas quaerendo inuenimus, notitia tamen ipsa non erat quam sicut prolem nascentem deputamus … Qui appetitus, id est inquisitio, quamuis amor*

ment ends abruptly, but as with the link between Books VIII and IX, it is this question that will shape the beginning of the next book.

PLOTINUS, PORPHYRY AND MARIUS VICTORINUS

So far I have discussed Book IX with little reference to its sources. In this section of the paper I want to explore where and how Augustine's readings in Platonism have shaped his text. Doing so will offer us a much clearer view of the distinctive qualities of the argument. The most important engagement with non-Christian Platonism in Book IX is to be seen in Augustine's account of the mind's existence as an incorporeal, indivisible unity of intellectual life in which the whole of the mind must necessarily know itself. These doctrines find close parallels in Plotinus *Ennead* V 3 and the passages of Porphyry's *Sententiae* that interpret and summarize *Ennead* V 3:

> Does he then see himself with another part of himself? But in this way one would be the seer and another the seen; but this is not self-knowledge. What, then, if everything of this kind is, in a way, composed of exactly similar parts, so that the seer does not differ in any way from the seen?[30]
>
> Intelligence, therefore, is simultaneously thinker and thought, all that thinks and all that is thought ... It does not contain one part that thinks, while another would not think.[31]

It is not clear which version of these arguments Augustine encountered, although the closeness of Augustine's account to both these texts renders direct borrowing on either highly likely.[32] Augustine's assumption that incorporeal reality does not occupy place also finds direct parallels in Plotinus and Porphyry.[33] Similarly, his account of knowledge as a 'life' finds echoes at Plotinus *Enn.* V 1, 6, V, 3, 6 and VI 2, 8.[34] It is unclear whether Augustine knew Plotinus' *Enn.* VI 4–5 ('On the

esse non uideatur quo id quod notum est amatur (hoc enim adhuc ut cognoscatur agitur), tamen ex eodem genere quiddam est. Nam uoluntas iam dici potest quia omnis qui quaerit inuenire uult, et si id quaeritur quod ad notitiam pertineat, omnis qui quaerit nosse uult. **30** Plotinus, *Enn.* V 3, 5. **31** Porphyry, *Sent.* 44. Exploration of the Plotinian texts that Porphyry uses or alludes to is much aided by Cristina D'Ancona's tabulation in Luc Brisson (ed.), *Porphyre: Sentences*, 2 vols. (Paris, 2005), here 248–50. **32** Jean Pépin, 'Le tout et les parties dans la connaissance de la *mens* par elle-même (*De Trin.* X 3, 4–4, 6),' in Johannes Brachtendorf (ed.), *Gott und sein Bild. Augustins* De Trinitate *im Spiegel gegenwärtiger Forschung* (Paderborn, 2000), 105–26, offers the most extensive consideration of this theme. Not surprisingly he opts for Porphyrian influence, but the evidence is extremely uncertain. **33** E.g. Plotinus, *Enn.* VI 4, 1 & 8–11; Porphyry, *Sent.* 42. **34** For example, Plotinus, *Enn.* V 1, 6: οἷον καὶ ἡ ψυχὴ λόγος νοῦ καὶ ἐνέργειά τις, ὥσπερ αὐτὸς ἐκείνου. We should note, however, especially in the light of my comments about

Presence of Being, One and the Same, Everywhere as a Whole'), although Robert O'Connell argued fairly persuasively that he did.[35] If Augustine knew this text, it also may have shaped his account of mind.

There is nothing new in these observations. The vast majority of commentators are also agreed that one feature of Augustine's engagement with his non-Christian Platonist sources is a willingness to ignore the careful distinctions between *Nous* and *Psyche* that are of deep concern to both Plotinus and Porphyry. Thus, while Plotinian or Porphyrian discussion of the three primary 'realities' do not appear to have functioned as a source in this text for Augustine's discussion of the inter-relationships between Father, Son, and Spirit, aspects of their discussions of soul and intellect have deeply influenced his account of the mind's mode of existence. When we ask if other neoplatonic triadic structures have influenced Augustine, especially the 'noetic' triads of being-life-thought or being-thought-life apparent within the reality of *Nous* itself, a similar situation obtains. At a number of points in the *De Trinitate*, Augustine either willfully misinterprets or simply misunderstands these triads as naming levels of being (except in the case of God where the three are equal).[36] Thus the noetic triad itself appears not to have shaped his account, even while some of that which is predicated of intellectual existence almost certainly has.[37]

Augustine's lack of interest in this noetic triad has been one of the standard reasons why scholars have been wary of suggesting that Augustine engaged or sometimes even knew the one Christian text in which such triads are the basis for a Trinitarian ontology: Marius Victorinus' *Adversus Arium*. For Pierre Hadot, while Victorinus offers a highly complex ontology of divine being based on applying Porphyry's triad of being-life-mind, Augustine has no developed ontology of divine being – certainly not one that is directly imaged by the created soul – and has followed a highly personal and more 'psychological' path.[38] In recent years, the assumption that Augustine did not engage Victorinus has been strongly opposed in a series of articles by Nello Cipriani.[39] Even without considering Cipriani's strong

Victorinus as a possible alternate source, that if Augustine knew *Enn.* VI, 2, 8, his adaptation of the language of life and movement to describe both knowledge in the *mens* and the Word itself involved either ignoring or not understanding the complexities of Plotinus' argument. **35** See Robert J. O'Connell, '*Ennead* VI 4 and 5 in the works of Saint Augustine' in *REAug* 9 (1963) 1–39. **36** *Trin.* VI 10,11; X, 10, 13. **37** On the history of this triad in Latin theology, see David N. Bell 'The Tripartite Soul and the image of God in the Latin tradition' in *Recherches de théologie ancienne et médiévale* 47 (1980),16–52; idem. '"Essere, vivere, intelligere": the noetic triad and the Image of God' *RTAM* 52 (1985) 5–43. **38** An argument most clearly developed in Pierre Hadot, 'L'image de la Trinité dans l'âme chez Victorinus et chez saint Augustin' in *SP* 6 (1962) 409–42. **39** See especially Nello Cipriani, 'La presenza di Mario Victorino nella riflessione trinitaria di Agostino' in *Aug(R)* 42 (2002) 261–313 (on *Trin.* IX, see 300–4: he does not consider the text I discuss in the next paragraph). See also his 'Le fonti cristiana della dottrina trinitaria nei primi Dialoghi di S. Agostino' in *Aug(R)* 34 (1994) 253–312, summarized 308ff.

evidence for the presence of an engagement with Victorinus in Augustie's earliest work, Book IX of the *De Trinitate* itself bears the marks of Augustine's on-going engagement with and rejection of his North African forebear.

As background we should note that the uniqueness of Victorinus, especially in relation to his sources has become increasingly apparent since the seminal works by Hadot in the 1960s and 1970s. Hadot's account of the relation between the two in part depends on accepting his account of the centrality to Porphyry of the being-life-mind triad. Hadot's account placed much weight on this triad's presence in one fragment of the anonymous commentary on the Parmenides that he attributed to Porphyry.[40] The question of whether one can use this commentary as a key to the rest of what remains of the Porphyrian corpus has, however, only been compounded by some significant subsequent scholarship that has questioned Hadot's attribution.[41] This recent scholarship has not questioned Hadot's immense achievement in showing the extent to which Victorinus was deeply part of mid-fourth century Latin non-Christian interest in platonic traditions. It has, however, emphasized Victorinus' original contribution to these traditions: his extensive development and application of the *esse-vivere-intellegere* triad is without clear parallel in either Plotinus or Porphyry – although it probably represents an engagement with both, and perhaps with other writers besides.

Augustine's attempts to restrict the usefulness of this triad to designating the hierarchy of existence may well represent a critique of any other use. Although he may well be offering such a critique on the basis of its occasional usage in Plotinus or Porphyry, the one author we know that he could have read in whom the triad received extensive discussion is Victorinus. A number of other general and specific parallels present themselves. Most generally, the *Adversus Arium* offers the *only* extensive Latin predecessor to Augustine's attempt to explore triadic structures in (some part of) the human soul understood as possessing by nature an image of the Trinitarian persons as mutually indwelling and operating inseparably within the divine simplicity.

At IX, 4, 5, Augustine argues that knowledge and love have substantial existence in the mind while also being one. This assertion may echo Plotinus' assertion in *Ennead* V, 3 that in the necessary multiplicity of self-thinking *Nous* there are a number of activities all of which are *ousiai*.[42] Plotinus offers his opinion as a critique of peripatetic accounts of the simplicity of intellect, and we may see in Augustine's endorsement a similar implied critique of Aristotle's presentation in *Categories* of

40 Pierre Hadot, *Porphyre et Victorinus*, 2 vols (Paris, 1968). 41 E.g. Mark Edwards, 'Porphyry and the intelligible triad' in *JHS* 110 (1990), 14–25; Matthias Baltes, *Marius Victorinus. Zur Philosophie in seinen theologischen Schriften* (München, 2002); Gerald Bechtle, *The Anonymous Commentary on Plato's 'Parmenides'* (Bern, 1999). Whereas Baltes wishes to date the commentary after Porphyry (and Iamblichus), Bechtle argues for a pre–Plotninian date. 42 *Enn.* V, 3, 12. One might also draw parallels with Plotinus's account of the substantive existence of some 'qualities' in the One at *Enn.* II 6, 1.

knowledge as accidental to the *nous*.[43] Nevertheless, we should also note a parallel passage in Victorinus. At *Adversus Arium* IB.63, he insists that as the soul is the image of the Trinity the soul is at once 'to be', 'to live', and 'to understand':

> ... these three are individuated as in their own substances, without being separated by sectioning, by division, by overflow, by extension or reproduction, but they are always three, each one really existing in the other which really exists also, and this, substantially ... And just as the Father is 'to be,' while the Son is twofold in movement and act, likewise the soul as soul is as the paternal power, while vivification and understanding are in movement.[44]

This paragraph offers three parallels with Augustine's account. Like Augustine, Victorinus makes use of the language of movement and life to describe both the second person and *intellegentia* in the soul: while Augustine may have taken this idea independently from Plotinus, it receives far more extensive development in Victorinus.[45] Victorinus also insists on the idea that each of his three has substantial existence. It is particularly important that he does so on the basis that the soul must possess such a diversity in unity *because* the divine being which it images is likewise structured. This last move parallels Augustine's own much more extended practice of reading the soul's structure by using the language of the Trinitarian logic he seeks also to comprehend more deeply. Thus while we might seek to explain Augustine's argument about the substantial existence of knowledge and

43 See Aristotle, *Cat.* 8b 25ff. That Augustine is to some extent engaging *Cat.*, at least in his discussion of relations, in Book IX, is clear from his discussion of the example of 'headed' beings: cf. *Cat.* 7a 15ff and *Trin.* IX 4,6. Johannes Brachtendorf, *Die Struktur des menschlichen Geistes nach Augustinus: Selbstreflexion und Erkenntnis Gottes in 'De Trinitate'* (Hamburg, 2000), 130ff, offers the most extensive and best reading of these sections of Book IX as a refutation of Aristotle. For discussion of Brachtendorf's book, see my *Augustine's trinitarian theology*. 44 *Adv. Ar.* IB, 63 (CSEL 83/1, 163): *... et sicuti pater esse est, filius autem duo, sed in motu et in actu, sic anima in eo quod anima ut potentia patrica, vivificatio autem et intellegentia in motu.* With this we should compare *Adv. Ar.* IA, 19 (CSEL 83/1, 84): *λόγος autem in manifesto, actio enim. Quae actio, habens omnia quae sunt in potentia, vita et cognoscentia, secundum motum producit, et manifesta omnia.* With these texts one can also compare I 58; IV 16; III 7 and especially III 9 (CSEL 83/1, 206): *Hoc igitur satis clarum faciet esse quod pate rest et vitam quod est filius et cognoscentiam quod est spiritus sanctus unum esse et unam substantiam, subsistentias tres ...* Augustine shows no awareness of the distinction between *substantia* and *subsistentia*. 45 See also Victorinus *Adv. Ar.* I 32 (CSEL 83/1. 112): [discussing the *anima*] *Hoc enim ipsius quod est esse ipsi est moveri et motionem esse, et quod est motio, hoc vita est, et quod vita est, hoc est intellegentia.* This passage is offered as an analogy to help in understanding of the preceding discussion of God, where we find, *Adv. Ar.* I 31 (CSEL 83/1. 110–11): *Ipsum deum iuxta quod est esse, quod dicimus aut lumen, aut spiritum, aut ipsum esse, aut potentiam eius quod est esse, aut intellegentiam universalem, aut potentiam universalis intellgentiae aut universalis vitae vel actionis aut aliorum istius modi ... Et ipse λόγος forma, quae cognoscentia est dei ... et ipse lumen existens operator omnia, λόγος existens, a se se movens...*

love on the basis of his engagement with Plotinus (or Aristotle) alone, to do so would be to ignore Victorinus' similar account of *three substantiae* that are also movements (not simply a *plurality* of substantial activities) and his insistence that this is so in the soul because it is so in the Trinity. The case remains circumstantial, but Victorinus may well be providing a framework within which Augustine adapts Plotinian dynamics in his account of the mind as *imago Dei*.

There are also a number of points at which Augustine may well be directly disagreeing with Victorinus. In Book XII, he famously condemns any presentation of the generation of Son and Spirit via the language of male and female principles.[46] While commentators usually assume Augustine is condemning some form of Gnostic theology, once again the one surviving parallel for such ideas within the Latin Trinitarian theology of his immediate context is Victorinus. I have already noted Augustine's refusal to see the *esse–vivere–intellegere* triad as expressing a movement constituting the life of intellect as such. Whether this reflects misunderstanding or disagreement we cannot tell, but if the latter then it may well represent part of the background against which Augustine insists that the *imago Dei* is located only in the *mens*, the seat of intellect.

It is, then, true that Augustine has little time for (or perhaps understanding of) the well-developed ontology of divine being Victorinus offers. He offers an account of 'analogy' that intentionally avoids the claim that the soul and God demonstrate shared ontological dynamics.[47] He has no interest in applying the noetic triad of neoplatonic provenance in his Trinitarian theology. And yet we should not forget that disagreement is an important form of engagement, if one sometimes more difficult to trace. Indeed, if one may fairly see the positive parallels between the two texts, the strong disagreements that Augustine may also be registering perhaps explain why the name of Victorinus is absent from the work. Indeed, it is noteworthy that the presentation of knowledge and love as *substantiae* is a move unique to this passage and one that Augustine appears to ignore by his summary in Book XIV. Even if it is legitimate to trace a reading of Victorinus here, Augustine soon reworks his argument in directions that opened an ever greater distance between the two North African writers.

This brief discussion helps to make clearer two points about the character of Augustine's 'Platonism' in the *De Trinitate*. First, and unlike Victorinus, Augustine only barely participates in the particular traditions of questions and particular textual traditions of late antique Platonism. This is most clear when we contrast Augustine's lack of interest in the particular triadic structures of neoplatonic tradition with Victorinus' own creative adaptation of them. The same division is also revealed when we contrast Victorinus' ability to use gendered language of the 'production' of Son and Spirit in a way that may well show the continuing usefulness to him of the *Chaldean Oracles*, with Augustine's immediate and horrified rejection. Second, there is no doubt that Augustine's thought is deeply imbued with some platonic *doctrines* here, but the deepest influence of those doctrines on his arguments here is to be found in his use of a series of cannibalized themes from neoplatonic accounts of the life of *Nous*, not in the detailed engagement of triadic structures as such.

46 *Trin.* XII 5,5. The relevant Victorinus passages are *Adv. Ar.* I 51, 58, 64. 47 Cf. Victorinus, *Adv. Ar.* I 63.

This should not, however, be taken as an argument for interpreting the particular triads that Augustine discusses as the product of his own genius for psychological observation. In the last section of the paper I noted that Augustine's interest in the relationship between memory and the development of understanding is the product of a revision in his thought that can be dated to the very late 380s. We might characterize that revision as a turning back to and reinterpretation of themes from Latin rhetorical traditions in the light of his own account of the nature of the mind. As we shall see, such a characterization may well be appropriate here: the second and fuller version of his argument that constitutes Book X is a remarkable blending of Ciceronean and neoplatonic themes.

SETTING UP BOOK X: 'SE NOSSE – SE COGITARE'

In the first sentence of Book X, Augustine describes his task as one of approaching that which he seeks to explain with a more thorough or precise attention.[48] Treatments of the relationship between the two books usually focus on the relative adequacy of the two triads of *mens, notitia, amor* and *memoria, intellegentia, voluntas*. I suspect, however, that 'those things which must be explained' are, most importantly, the complexities of arguing that the mind knows itself in all acts of knowing and seeking, even in those that constitute an on-going process of increasing forgetfulness of self amid the created order. Book X continues to locate discussion of particular mental triads within the context of the constantly desiring mind driven by the life of knowledge and love: for this reason the question of how we may grow in self-knowing (and why we so easily fail in our attempts) remains at the heart of the investigation.

Augustine begins the book with the very theme that was the focus of the final paragraphs of Book IX: the relationship between love and knowledge in the mind's self-knowing.[49] Desire for knowledge of something must, Augustine argues, be preceded by some sort of knowledge about that which is desired.[50] What then is the knowledge that precedes the mind's search for its own nature? Augustine argues

48 Trin. X, 1,1 (CCSL 50A, 310): *Nunc ad ea ipsa consequenter enodatius explicanda limatior accedat intention.* 49 *Trin.* X 1,1 (CCSL 50A, 310–11):*Nunc ad ea ipsa consequenter enodatius explicanda limatior accedat intentio. Ac primum quia rem prorsus ignotam amare omnino nullus potest, diligenter intuendum est cuiusmodi sit amor studentium, id est non iam scientium sed adhuc scire cupientium quamque doctrinam.* 50 *Trin.* X 1,2–2,4.

that the mind that seeks to know itself must already know itself: The mind knows itself knowing, and when it seeks knowledge of itself, it already knows itself as seeking (*deinde cum se quaerit ut noverit, quaerentem se iam novit*).[51] Further, given the mind's existence as incorporeal intelligence, the mind's knowledge of itself is knowledge by the whole of itself of its whole self.[52] Augustine's initial discussion of the mind's necessary self-knowing offered in Book IX is here clarified by an account of the mind's self-knowledge as present in every act of seeking and knowing. This clarification has a rhetorical function in heightening the paradox of our knowing that for which we seek, but it also sets out the ground on which Augustine can move forward. This account of the mind necessarily knowing itself in its own searching links even more closely our search for knowledge of self as *imago Dei* to our search to understand what prevents that understanding and how we may overcome that impediment. Augustine shapes a metaphysics of mind that further enables his particular linking of epistemology and Christian moral development.

In a deft stroke, Augustine now asks why the Delphic oracle commands 'know thyself' if we cannot but know ourselves.[53] Much ancient commentary interpreted the famous apothegm as a call to knowledge of one's soul, and Augustine offers a Christianized version of a reading that combines stoic and platonic themes: the oracle commands us to know ourselves so that we may live according to our nature, in awareness of our place in the ontological order, and living with rightly ordered desire.[54] The ignorance of God that is the consequence of wrongly ordered desire has as its corollary an ignorance of the true nature of the human being. Even as we recognize the beauty of things through the presence of the divine beauty, we do not desire divine beauty for itself or seek to mirror it with

51 *Trin.* X 3,5 (CCSL 50A, 318). 52 *Trin.* X 3,6–4,6. As I have noted in the last section of the paper, the most extensive discussion of this last concept is that of Pépin. But we should note also that some of the discussion continues to contain hints a dialogue with Victorinus, eg. *Trin.* X 3, 5 (CCSL 50A, 318–19): *Deinde quid eius ei tam notum est quam se uiuere? Non potest autem et mens esse et non uiuere quando habet etiam amplius ut intellegat, nam et animae bestiarum uiuunt sed non intellegunt. Sicut ergo mens tote mens est, sic tote uiuit. Nouit autem uiuere se; totem se igitur nouit.* 53 *Trin.* X 5, 7 (CCSL 50A, 320): *Utquid ergo ei praeceptum est ut se ipsa cognoscat? Credo ut se cogitet et secundum naturam suam uiuat, id est ut secundum suam naturam ordinari appetat, sub eo scilicet cui subdenda est, supra ea quibus praeponenda est; sub illo a quo regi debet, supra ea quae regere debet.* 54 *Trin.* X 5,7 (CCSL 50A, 320): *Utquid ergo ei praeceptum est ut se ipsa cognoscat? Credo ut se cogitet et secundum naturam suam uiuat, id est ut secundum suam naturam ordinari appetat, sub eo scilicet cui subdenda est, supra ea quibus praeponenda est; sub illo a quo regi debet, supra ea quae regere debet. Multa enim per cupiditatem prauam tamquam sui sit oblita sic agit. Videt enim quaedam intrinsecus pulchra in praestantiore natura quae deus est. Et cum stare debeat ut eis fruatur, uolens ea sibi tribuere et non ex illo similis illius sed ex se ipsa esse quod ille est auertitur ab eo, moueturque et labitur in minus et minus quod putatur amplius et amplius quia nec ipsa sibi nec ei quidquam sufficit recedenti ab illo qui solus aufficit.* Augustine's place in late antique use of the Delphic oracle is discussed in great detail by Pierre Courcelle in his *Connais-Toi Toi-Même de Socrate a Saint Bernard* (Paris, 1974), i, 113–63. The discussion of *Trin.* IX and X begins at 151. His account is, unfortunately, strongly indebted to a highly Porphyrian reading of Augustine sources.

the Spirit's aid: we seek to possess beauty itself for our own sake. In such desire, we love more intently that which is only increasingly distant from God, becoming more and more uncertain of our ability to retain the objects of our desire. The love of material things is thus a glue that makes it harder and harder for us not to think of ourselves as like those things that we most love.[55]

In the midst of this account of the link between fallen desire and fallen self-knowing Augustine distinguishes between knowing oneself as *se nosse* and as *se cogitare*.[56] The former is the innate self-knowing which cannot but be there even as we become increasingly unable to separate ourselves from the images of that which we desire.[57] Augustine then uses this analysis as an index for ranking ancient speculation on the nature of the soul: the more the soul is understood as a physical reality the more we see the effects of desire as it falls away from God.[58] But even as it falls further into ignorance the mind knows itself as someone may be said to know a subject even when they are thinking of something very different. The latter, *se cogitare*, is for the moment undefined except by implication as an active process of thinking oneself.

In the paragraphs that follow Augustine begins to outline the character of a true self-knowing, a true *se cogitare*. The most basic dynamic of *se cogitare* is a distinguishing of oneself from what one is not that does not lose the fleeting recognition of oneself that still obtains. We see the first part of this dynamic in the refrain heard throughout this passage: the mind searching for itself must learn to see itself as already present in its own searching:

> Therefore the mind does not have to look for itself as if it were not available to itself ...[59]
>
> Let [the mind] then recognize itself and not go looking for itself as if it were absent, but rather turn on to itself the attention of its will, which had it straying through other things ...[60]
>
> Let the mind then not search to perceive itself as if it were absent, but rather take pains to identify itself as present.[61]

55 *Trin.* X 5,7 (CCSL 50A, 321): (immediately following the text quoted in the last note but one) ... *tanta uis est amoris ut ea quae cum amore diu cogitauerit Bisque curae glutino inhaeserit attrahat secum etiam cum ad se cogitandam quodam modo redit.* 56 *Trin.* X 5,7 (CCSL 50A, 321): *Ita cum aliud sit non se nosse, aliud non se cogitare (neque enim multarum doctrinarum peritum ignorare grammaticam dicimus cum eam non cogitat quia de medicinae arte tunc cogitat), cum ergo aliud sit non se nosse, aliud non se cogitare ...* 57 *Trin.* X 6,8 (CCSL 50A, 321): *Errat autem mens cum se istis imaginibus tanto amore coniungit ut etiam se esse aliquid huiusmodi existimet. Ita enim conformatur eis quodam modo non id exsistendo sed putando ...* 58 *Trin.* X 7,9–7,10. 59 *Trin.* X 7,10 (CCSL 50A, 323): ... *ideoque non se tamquam sibi desit mens requirat.* 60 *Trin.* X 8,11 (CCSL 50A, 325): *Cognoscat ergo semetipsam, nec quasi absentem se quaerat, sed intentionem uoluntatis qua per alla uagabatur statuat in se ipsa ...* 61 *Trin.* X 9,12 (CCSL 50A, 325): *Non itaque uelut absentem se quaerat cernere, sed praesentem se curet discernere.*

The latter two of these quotations occur after Augustine characterizes active self-knowing as an *inventio* (a heavily freighted term whose significance we shall discuss shortly). Augustine plays with the idea that one 'comes into' (*in-venire*) knowledge: how can the mind 'come into' knowledge about itself? Being told to know oneself is not like being told to know an object. But, he continues, 'when it is said to the mind: 'know thyself', in that instant in which the mind understands what is meant by 'yourself', it knows itself.'[62]

This statement draws us back to one of the central paradoxes of Book VIII, but it does so in a context that offers many new tools for negotiating that paradox.[63] In the first place, simply by the fact of the mind's necessary presence to itself, self-knowledge follows in an instant of self-recognition. And yet existence of this knowledge is inseparable from the character of the desire that is its context. As Augustine has already explored, the knowledge which necessarily results from self-presence is obscured by the mind's joining to itself images of those things which are external and not the mind. Hence asserting the necessary existence of a self-knowledge known in the instant of recognizing 'yourself', enables Augustine to turn again to the importance of a temporal growth towards self-knowing that will enable the sort of self-knowing that most truly deserves the name. The *se cogitare* that would enable us to see ourselves truly as image is consequent upon a thinking of oneself shaped by reformed desire (and knowledge).

'DE TRINITATE' X 10,13–12,19: 'MEMORIA, INTELLEGENTIA AND VOLUNTAS'

At X 10, 13, Augustine suggests that we try to distinguish those acts of the mind that we can be certain are intrinsic to the mind as mind. We are certain that we are, that we live and that we understand. Augustine treats these three as indicating levels of existence, and thus the mind should know that it can exists and lives as intelligence, the highest activity of the mind.[64] Having once again misunderstood or consciously rejected the noetic triad of which Victorinus makes so much, Augustine now begins to discern within the life of intelligence a range of activities. First he identifies willing (*velle*), remembering (*meminisse*) and understanding (*intellegere*), and then offers a list of the mind's powers (*vis*): living, remembering, understanding, willing, thinking, knowing, judging.[65]

Augustine once again reads ancient disputes about the nature of the soul as resulting from varying degrees of desire for corporeal objects. He rejects again any

62 *Trin.* X 9, 12 (CCSL 50A, 326): *Sed cum dicitur menti: Cognosce te ipsam eo ictu quo intellegit quod dictum est te ipsam cognoscit se ipsam* … 63 Cf. *Trin.* VIII 2,3, further taken up at VIII 7,11–8, 12. 64 *Trin.* X 9, 13 (CCSL 50A, 326): *Certe enim nouit sibi dici, sibi scilicet quae est et uiuit et intellegit. Sed est et cadauer, uiuit et pecus; intellegit autem nec cadauer nec pecus. Sic ergo se esse et uiuere scit quomodo est et uiuit intellegentia.* 65 The former in *Trin.* IX 10, 13; the latter in IX 10, 14.

account of the mind's activities as accidental to the mind as a body or to the body itself, insisting that the mind must know itself as a whole when it searches for itself and must thus know its own *substantia* in knowing itself. Were the mind's activities to be understood as accidental, knowledge of the mind would be knowledge through images of a distinct reality. The oracle is now given a further twist:

> the whole point of its being commanded to know itself comes to this: it should be certain that it is none of the things about which it is uncertain, and it should be certain that it is that alone it is certain it is.[66]

This certainty is achieved by distinguishing between things that are known as absent through the imagination and those activities – like living, remembering, understanding and willing – that it thinks 'with some inner, non-simulated but true presence' (*quadam interiore non simulate, sed vera praesentia*).[67]

We should pause here to note that the relationship between love and knowledge, and the production of an interior 'word' that Augustine has been using to explore the notion of the mind's self-knowledge is now increasingly revealed as only analogous to the reality he is seeking to describe. There is no temporal sequence involved in the mind's self-thinking: the mind does not reach into the memory for an image of itself and then form a 'word'. The character of this 'presence' is not examined further – as we shall see Augustine returns to it some years later in Book XIV.

At X 11, 17, Augustine now takes forward the discussion by asking us to focus on just three of the things about which the mind can be certain: *memoria, intellegentia, voluntas*. Augustine is clear that there are other activities about which the mind is certain: this triad represents a choice from a range of possibilities and thus (as I argued earlier) should not be understood as an identification of 'faculties' constitutive of the soul.[68] We consider these three, he tells us, when we assess the aptitude of a child for education.[69] In the second place, we consider the formed relationship of these three when consider a mature person's learning and the use they make of their learning.[70]

66 *Trin.* IX 10, 16 (CCSL 50A, 328–9): *Totumque illud quod se iubetur ut nouerit, ad hoc pertinet ut certa sit non se esse aliquid eorum de quibus incerta est, idque solum esse se certa sit quod solum esse se certa est.* 67 *Trin.* IX 10, 16 (CCSL 50A, 329). 68 Cf. David Manchester, 'The noetic triad in Plotinus, Marius Victorinus, and Augustine,' in Richard T. Wallis (ed.), *Neoplatonism and Gnosticism* (Albany, 1992) 219: '… the phenomenology of *memoria, intelligentia*, and *voluntas* which he drives to ever greater interiority, transparency and self-sufficiency is a *noetic* analysis and not, as so often expressed, a "psychology". The three moments … are the self-constituted life of the *mens animi*, the mind of the soul. They are not, in the medieval or modern sense, 'faculties' of the soul, but instead the internal structure of spiritual self-disclosedness.' 69 *Trin.* X 11, 17 (CCSL 50A, 330): *Remotis igitur paulisper caeteris quorum mens de se ipsa certa est, tria haec potissimum considerata tractemus memoriam, intellegentiam, uoluntatem. In his enim tribus inspici solent etiam ingenia paruulorum cuiusmodi praeferant indolem.* 70 Trin. X 11, 17 (CCSL 50A, 330): *Cum*

In the final paragraphs of the book, Augustine sums up how these three exhibit the Trinitarian logic. The three are one in that they are one life, mind and being: they are the one life of intelligence discussed above. Each one is also fully life, mind and being. At the same time the three are named relatively to each other. Each contains each of the others, and each contains all of them. The three are also equal (*aequalia*). This statement marks an important distinction between this triad and that of *mens, notitia* and *amor*. In the case of the earlier triad, Augustine was clear that the three would be equal only when they were perfected. This new triad offers a more complex negotiation of the relationship between the mind's necessary (but seemingly forgotten) self-knowing and the perfected self-knowing of the purified soul. The mind necessarily knows itself in a movement of self-presence that Augustine can articulate only with difficulty: he offers the temporal analogy of our movement into knowledge combined with an attempt to remove all temporal movement. Yet even though the mind can now be conceived (at least in the abstract) as necessarily-self-knowing, Augustine combines with it a more developed notion of the mind's cognitive 'gaze'. The force of that gaze is such that the mind focuses only on what is before it and thus the habitual force of our fallen attraction to the corporeal renders increasingly difficult our self-knowing. Augustine no longer describes the *imago* as being perfected with the soul's purification, rather our ability to know the image goes and our ability to attend to its creator grows, such that we grow into the *likeness* of the image. But this is to look ahead to Book XIV, and to the last section of the paper.[71] Nevertheless, these observations do not yet offer a clear account of why Augustine has chosen this particular triad; to make progress on that task we must turn again to Augustine's sources, this time to his engagement with the rhetorical tradition.

A CICERONEAN TRIAD

That the triad of *memoria, intellegentia* and *voluntas* finds its origin in Cicero has long been noted, but rarely commented on in any depth.[72] I suspect, however, that attention to the resonances this triad had for one deeply imbued with its rhetorical background will be of great help in explaining Augustine's choice at the end of Book X. The triad first appears fairly early in Augustine's writing career. At *De diversis quaestionibus* 31, Augustine quotes *verbatim* a passage of Cicero's *De inventione* in answer a question about how Cicero defined the virtues.[73] The *inven-*

ergo dicuntur haec tria ingenium, doctrina, usus, primum horum consideratur in illis tribus quid possit quisque memoria, intellegentia, uoluntate. Secundum eorum consideratur quid habeat quisque in memoria et intellegentia, quo studiosa uoluntate peruenerit. Iam uero usus tertius in uoluntate est pertractante illa quae memoria et intellegentia continentur, siue ad aliquid ea referat siue eorum fine delectata conquiescat. **71** *Trin.* XIV 16,22–19,25. **72** E.g. Schindler, *Word und Analogie*, 58–60, notes but sees no significance in the triad's Ciceronean origins. **73** *Div. Qu.* 31 (the purpose of the question

tio of Cicero's title was the practice by which orators chose the appropriate style and content for a speech. An extended tradition of reflection on the practice of *inventio* resulted in a large body of literature that categorized varieties of speech, varieties of legal case, causality, morality and appropriate styles of reasoning. The passage with which we are concerned comes from a section of the work in which Cicero offers an account of virtue as part of his initial division of those things to which the orator should appeal in deliberative speeches. Invoking a traditional discussion, Cicero speaks of the relationship between what is 'useful' (*utilis*) and what is 'honorable' (*honestum*). In common with Stoic ethics Cicero insists that even though it might seem that an orator must choose whatever is useful to make a case, whether or not that accords with what seems to be good or honorable, the two are never truly in conflict. One learns what constitutes appropriate behavior only by learning to attend to the Good itself. Thus Cicero moves on to describe the *honestum*, the honorable.[74]

That which is simply honorable is virtue. Virtue is a habit of mind by which the mind may live in harmony with nature and reason. The very first thing to be considered under the heading of virtue is *prudentia*, wisdom, and this, Cicero tells us, is constituted by the appropriate interplay of three activities of the mind: memory (*memoria*), understanding (*intellegentia*) and foresight (*providentia*).[75] The reasons for the subtle difference between Cicero's triad and Augustine's are laid out by Augustine himself. At *De Trinitate* XIV, 11, 14, Augustine again tells us that Cicero divided *prudentia* into three parts, *memoria, intellegentia* and *providentia*. But, he continues, those like Cicero who offered this account were mistaken, for human beings have no ability to foresee the providentially ordained future. Thus, it is now *voluntas* which joins together memory and understanding so that the human being may be attentive to the Good.

Within the rhetorical tradition observation of these activities is frequently mentioned as fundamental to the assessment of ability and formed character. As we have seen, Augustine alludes to this traditional usage in Book X, and while only

is given at *retr.* 1,26); Cicero, *De inv.* II 53, 160. **74** Cicero's brief account of the *honestum*, the honorable, can be supplemented from Seneca's *Letter* 120 (which Augustine probably did not know). Seneca here describes two approaches to ethics. For some the good and the honorable are defined by reference to what is useful and what constitutes appropriate duty. Seneca's account of the one who possesses true virtue will probably be familiar to all readers of Augustine; such a one, writes Seneca, will have the hope of eternity set before her eyes, she will know that nothing except God is superior to the soul and will never lose sight of the true nature of virtue and vice. The one who possesses virtue in this way will live a life of harmony with nature and with the order of things. **75** There are other definitions clearly in the same orbit, although none use exactly Cicero's form. For a roughly contemporary example see *Ad Herr.* III, ii, 3. The author divides the *honestum* into the *rectum* and the *laudabile* and then of the rectum writes: *Id dividitur in prudentiam, iustitiam, fortitudinem, modestiam. Prudentia est calliditas quae ratione quadam potest dilectum habere bonorum et malorum. Dicitur item prudentia scientia cuiusdam artificii, item apellatur prudentia rerum multarum memoria et usus compluriam negotiorum.*

Cicero brings together these three in this order, discussion of *memoria* and *intellegentia* (or *cogitatio* understood as a closely related term) in this context is commonplace. For example, Quintilian writes:

> As soon as a boy is entrusted to him, the skilled teacher will first spy out his ability (*ingenium*) and character (*natura*). In children the principal sign of ability is memory.[76]

Quintilian then cautions a teacher to watch how well a child memorizes, how fast and accurately a child can recall things from memory, and how discerning a child is in the imitation of examples. On at least one occasion, Augustine also uses the triad in a related fashion to name the structuring activities of the moral life. In a numerological section of *Contra Faustum* XII, we read, in the midst of commentary on the fact that 27 (the day of the month on which Noah entered the ark) is 3 cubed:

> There is a trinity in the means by which we are, as it were, squared or fitted for every good work. By the memory we remember God, by the understanding we know him, by the will we love him.[77]

Augustine's adaptation of Cicero's triad in the context of a very broadly platonic account of the mind's nature must also be read against the background of Cicero's own interweaving of rhetorical and platonic themes. While we cannot be certain which commentaries on the Delphic oracle Augustine knew, there appear to be a number of parallels in *De Trinitate* X to Cicero's own discussion of the Delphic 'Know Thyself' in the *Tusculan Disputations* I and V (a text Augustine certainly knew). Here I will indicate only parallels with *Tusc.* I. At *Tusc.* I 22, 52, Cicero argues that the Delphic oracle is a command to the soul to know and see itself through itself, an argument based on doctrine that the soul is a self-moving reality that knows itself as self-moving.[78] On this basis Cicero assumes that the oracle encourages a knowledge of the soul as the immortal and divine element of the human composite.

This reading obviously enough differs from Augustine's attempt to consider the *mens* as the 'highest' part of the soul not because of its 'divinity' but because it is the site of a knowing and desiring occurring in the presence of Truth itself. Nevertheless, Cicero proceeds to describe the unique powers (*vis*) of the soul by drawing attention to *inventio*, *cogitatio* and *memoria*.[79] In a way readers of Book X should find familiar, the act of *cogitatio* is interwoven with *inventio* and thus with *memoria*, but memory not understood as powerful because of its capacity to contain many things, but as powerful when considered with *inventio* to be the source of recollection and reasoned thought. The path between Aristotle's *On Memory and Recollection* and Cicero's understanding of *cogitatio* as an intellectual activity involving recalling, organizing and reflecting on the contents of memory is complex, but the distinction that Aristotle articulates may well lie in the background of the rhetorical traditions' characterization of *inventio* and *cogitatio*.

76 *Inst.* I 3,1. 77 *C. Faust.* XII 19. 78 Tusc. I 22, 52: *Est illud quidem vel maximum animo ipso animum videre...* At I 23, 53–4, Cicero quotes and endorses *Phaedrus* 245's assertion that the soul is self-moving and knows itself to be so. 79 Cicero, *Tusc.* I 25, 61 & 26, 65. Cf. Augustine, *An. et or.* IV 9 & 14 where his own triad is used not to describe the structure of the mind as such, but to identify some of the mind's unique powers.

Understanding something of the Ciceronean echoes that run through Book X will help us understand the resonances this triad had for Augustine. Previous scholarship has tended to focus on the relative adequacy of the triad over against *mens*, *notita*, *amor*, and it is certainly the case that this new triad seems better able to provide an image of the mutual inherence of the three divine persons. In the previous triad, *notitia* and *amor* can too easily be understood as merely inherent in the first. Nevertheless, this new triad is much more deeply and intrinsically related to the wider character of the argument that we have followed.

Indeed, I suspect that one reason this triad appealed to Augustine is precisely its utility in describing the interrelationship of the different noetic phenomena with which Augustine has been concerned since Book VIII. This triad identifies both the three activities that name both the human capacity for attention to the God in whose light all good action must occur, and also the constant activity of the mind as a desiring being moving towards or away from the Creator. As a whole, Book X focuses a series of questions found through Book VIII and Book IX about the task of coming to a better knowledge of the soul by conceptualizing the task as one of *inventio* and *cogitatio*. Doing so highlights the importance of *memoria* in guiding such searching – a theme found already in Book VIII. This focusing of questions that are never far beneath the surface lays the groundwork for the invocation of the very triad of activities whose co-ordination would have to be at the center of any recognition of self, or growth towards such recognition.

But when we examine how he deploys this triad we see how deeply and idiosyncratically Augustine has transformed Cicero's account. An account (from either Plotinus or Porphyry) of the mind as intellectual life and movement enables Augustine to describe the self-knowing and loving that must be intrinsic to the mind's very life by means of this same triad in ways entirely beyond Cicero's rather vague references to the various 'powers' of the soul. The idiosyncrasy of Augustine's account can be seen in the manner by which he describes the mind's necessary and complete activity of self-knowing: he does so not by adapting non-Christian accounts of the character of intellect in relation to that which is its source, or accounts of the necessary duality of intellect (let alone the complex relations of *nous* and *psuche*), but by trying to suggest notions of *memoria* and *cogitatio* – themselves adapted from Latin educational and rhetorical tradition – removed from their normal temporal connotations. To one who assumes here only a dialogue with Plotinus, the moves Augustine makes may seem strange: to one aware of Augustine's constant dialogue with Latin rhetorical traditions, they may appear

less surprising and a more sophisticated version of Cicero's own attempt to engage platonic in the service of Latin educational theory.

Augustine now has new resources for describing the relationship between necessary human-self-knowing and the search for self-knowing that he presents as constituting such a key aspect of Christian life. The final paragraphs of Book X, which lead up to the deployment of this new triad, depend on our having understood that *cogitare* is a movement from *memoria* to *intellegentia* (and resulting in the production of internal 'words' or 'images') which must be carefully trained if our desire is not to wallow increasingly helplessly among material realities. The triad of *memoria, intellegentia* and *voluntas* fits naturally here, identifying the three activities whose coordination shapes our intellectual and moral life. And yet there is also a bifurcation at this point.

In the first place, this triad now names the deepest and constantly perfected self-knowing (through the production of an image in which desire may rest). The mind as intellectual life is necessarily *imago Dei* and can never lose the capacity to know and love its creator as well as itself. Although Augustine does not clearly articulate the importance to him of showing that the image is necessarily present even in the fallen mind until Book XIV, he seems already to assume that any account of the *imago Dei* must be an account of that which persists. As is clear from Augustine's attempts or struggles to articulate the character of *intellegentia* as a form of presence that run through Book XIV and yet the clarity with which he can articulate how the *memoria, intellegentia* and *voluntas* of the mind's self-knowing demonstrate a Trinitarian logic, it is still the case that Augustine sees us struggling both towards recognition or perception of the mind's self-knowing and using the logic of that which we seek to illustrate as a tool in our struggle.

But, and in the second place, the preparatory explanations offered before he deploys the triad also culminate the ongoing reflection on the character of our analogical exploration of the Trinity that I have traced from the beginning of Book IX. Against this background, it seems that Augustine also picks on this triad because it better enables him to conceive of the relationship between our ongoing acts of intellectual and moral *cogitatio* and *memoria* and the mind's necessary self-knowing activity. His account here remains inchoate, although, as we shall see in the next and last section of the paper, it is further developed in Book XIV. Already in Book IX, Augustine had offered the analogy of one who remembers many things even as her or his mind focuses on only one, and linked that analogy to the production not so much of word but of the 'interior image' that effects the likeness of the mind to that which it approves and desires.[80] This account is reprised in Book X in terms of the adhesive character of fallen love. Such love, habituated to desire material objects, leads us to judge images of material objects as images of our souls.[81] Augustine is groping towards an account of the mind's activity as wounded because multiple; the mind's activity of self-knowing is constitutive of the mind as intellectual life and yet

80 *Trin.* IX 10, 15–11, 16.

the force of epistemological habit has corrupted the mind's attention such that we confuse that which our mind's attention is drawn towards with the mind itself. It is the very force of our focused desire or will – which when reformed enables an attention to all things in God – that produces this experience of diremption in the 'mind's eye'. Augustine's account of the divided attention of the mind here interestingly mirrors his famous account of the divided will in *Confessions* VIII. *Memoria, intellegentia* and *voluntas* thus resonates with Augustine as it names both the triad that constitutes us as *imago Dei* and points towards the fact that our inability to perceive this *imago* stems from the same mental triad in act with reference to all acts of cognition.

RETROSPECTIVE: DE TRINITATE XIV

Maybe a decade after Augustine had written *De Trinitate* IX–X, he returned to the same subject in Book XIV, offering what amounts to a gloss on the argument of Book X.[82] In particular we find him returning to the distinction between *se nosse* – the self-knowing that must necessarily be part of the mind's own existence – and *se cogitare*, the active thinking of oneself when one appears to come into a knowledge that must have pre-existed. After an initial statement of the inescapability of self-knowledge Augustine states,

> ... such, however, is the power of thinking that the mind cannot even set itself in some fashion in its own view except when it thinks about itself. Nothing is in the mind's view except what is being thought about, and this means that not even the mind itself ... can be in its own view except by thinking about itself. Though, as a matter of fact, how can it not be in its own view when it is not thinking about itself, seeing that it can never be without itself ... I cannot really fathom.[83]

Again, Augustine circles familiar ground. We should not think we can explain the mind's forgetting of itself by means of a corporeal division of the mind, rather we should think that the mind's gaze (*conspectus*) belongs to its nature and that that gaze brings things into its own 'sight' by acts of cognition that are otherwise hidden in a 'secret knowledge' (*arcana quadam notitia*) called the memory.[84]

81 *Trin.* X 5, 7–7, 9. 82 He has little to say about Book IX, leading us to think that he considered Book X the more successful argument. 83 *Trin.* XIV 6, 8 (CCSL 50A, 430–1): *Tanta est tamen cogitationis uis ut nec ipsa mens quodam modo se in conspectu suo ponat nisi quando se cogitat, ac per hoc ita nihil in conspectu mentis est nisi unde cogitatur ut nec ipsa mens qua cogitatur quidquid cogitatur aliter possit esse in conspectu suo nisi se ipsam cogitando. Quomodo autem quando se non cogitat in conspectus suo non sit cum sine se ipsa numquam esse possit quasi aliud sit ipsa, aliud conspectus eius, inuenire non possum.* 84 *Trin.* XIV 6, 8 (CCSL 50A, 431–2): *Proinde restat ut aliquid pertinens ad eius naturam sit conspectus eius, et in eam quando se cogitat non quasi per loci spatium sed incorporea conuersione reuocetur. Cum uero non se cogitat, non sit quidem in conspectu suo nec de illa suus formetur*

This division immediately pushes Augustine to ask whether we can say that understanding (*intellectus*) pertains to acts of cognition while knowledge (*notitia*) pertains to the memory.[85] It might seem that Augustine has promoted just such a distinction both here and in Book X, but no. If it were so, then the mind's self-knowing would not be permanent. Augustine argues that one who knows a discipline necessarily understands that discipline even if he is actively thinking about something else.[86] The hidden depths of the mind thus contain *notitiae* that are brought into the open, but these *notitiae* may in some sense be said to be already understood.[87] There is then a permanent image in the mind's deepest self-knowing even when that knowing is hidden from our direct gaze.[88] This argument pushes Book X a little further, reworking the analogy of one who knows many things offered in Book IX to describe the possibility of a self-knowing that is both constant and a form of presence.

But we should be wary of stopping here, a few further steps in Augustine's argument must be followed. A little later Augustine states:

> The truth of course is that from the moment it began to be it never stopped remembering itself, never stopped understanding itself, never stopped loving itself, as we have already shown. And therefore, when it turns to itself in thought, a trinity is formed in which a word too can be perceived. It is formed of course out of the very act of thought, with the will joining the two together. It is here more than anywhere that we should recognize the image we are seeking.[89]

obtutus, sed tamen nouerit se tamquam ipsa sibi sit memoria sui. Sicut multarum disciplinarum peritus ea quae nouit eius memoria continentur, nec est inde aliquid in conspectu mentis eius nisi unde cogitat; caetera in arcana quadam notitia sunt recondita quae memoria nuncupatur. **85** *Trin.* XIV, 6, 9 (CCSL 50A, 432–3): *quaerendum est quonam modo ad cogitationem pertineat intellectus, notitia uero cuiusque rei quae inest menti etiam quando non de ipsa cogitatur ad solam dicatur memoriam pertinere. Si enim hoc ita est, non habebat haec tria ut et sui meminisset et se intellegeret et amaret, sed meminerat sui tantum, et postea cum cogitare se coepit tunc se intellexit atque dilexit.* **86** *Trin.* XIV 7, 7. **87** *Trin.* XIV 7, 9 (CCSL 50A, 433–4): *Hinc admonemur esse nobis in abdito mentis quarundam rerum quasdam notitias, et tunc quodam modo procedere in medium atque in conspectus mentis uelut apertius constitui quando cogitantur; tunc enim se ipsa mens et meminisse et intellegere et amare inuenit etiam unde non cogitabat quando aliunde cogitabat. Sed unde diu non cogitauerimus et unde cogitare nisi commoniti non ualemus, id nos nescio quo eodemque miro modo si potest dici scire nescimus.* **88** *Trin.* XIV 7, 10 (CCSL 50A, 434–5): *Nam si nos referamus ad interiorem mentis memoriam qua sui meminit et interiorem intellegentiam qua se intellegit et interiorem uoluntatem qua se diligit, ubi haec tria simul sunt et simul simper fuerunt ex quo esse coeperunt siue cogitarentur siue non cogitarentur, uidebitur quidem imago illius trinitatis et ad solam memoriam pertinere. Sed quia ibi uerbum esse sine cogitatione non potest (cogitamus enim omne quod dicimus etiam illo interiore uerbo quod ad nullius gentis pertinet linguam), in tribus potius illis imago ista cognoscitur, memoria scilicet, intellegentia, uoluntate.* **89** *Trin.* XIV 10, 13 (CCSL 50A, 441): *cum profecto ex quo esse coepit, numquam sui meminisse, numquam se ntellegere, numquam se amare estiterit sicut iam ostendimus. Ac per hoc quando ad se ipsam cogitatione conuertitur fit trinitas in qua iam et uerbum possit intellegi. Formatur quippe ex ipsa cogitatione, uoluntate utrumque iungente. Ibi ergo magis agnoscenda est*

The importance of this passage lies in its clear statement that the image of God is not simply to be found by uncovering the mind's continuous self-knowing structure. The image is found in the mind's active cognition of itself as remembering, understanding and willing. Augustine's point in these sentences is that in the active thinking of the mind a trinity is not formed through a coming into knowledge that was previously absent, but that the very act of cognition focuses the mind's attention on its own self-presence – beginning to overcome the diremption of the mind's attention that comprises (and compromises) fallen knowing.

Second, Augustine adds in the next paragraph:

> This trinity of the mind is not really the image of God because the mind remembers, understands and loves itself, but because it is able also to remember and understand and love him by whom it was made. And when it does this it becomes wise. If it does not do it, even though it remembers, understands and loves itself, it is foolish.[90]

It becomes clear in the following paragraphs that the last sentence refers to the one who undoubtedly remembers, understands and loves her or himself simply because it cannot be taken away from the human mind, and yet is consumed by love of created things and ignorant of God – ignorant, in fact, of the one in whom he or she exists. The mind exhibits best its nature as image when it remembers, understands and loves God, or does so 'in' God. Augustine's language here is strong: the mind that 'cleaves' to God shares in the divine nature and sees all that it sees in that unchangeable nature.[91] The mind is perfected as *imago Dei* not merely when the object of desire is God, but when its act as mind is towards, from and in the divine reality.

Yet, as ever, running through these paragraphs is a strong sense that we are not yet there: the mind now cries out in repentance to God, aware that it cannot master its own loves.[92] 'For the time being,' Augustine tells us, 'when [the mind] sees itself it does not see anything unchangeable.' This paragraph may well begin in conscious imitation of *De Trinitate* IX 6,9, which introduces Augustine's discussion of the very same topic, the *verbum interior*.[93] Our unhappiness is a result of

imago quam quaerimus. **90** *Trin.* XIV 12, 15 (CCSL 50A, 442): *Haec igitur trinitas mentis non propterea dei est imago quia sui meminit mens et intellegit ac diligit se, sed quia potest etiam meminisse et intellegere et amare a quo facta est. Quod cum facit sapiens ipsa fit. Si autem non facit, etiam cum sui meminit seque intellegit ac diligit, stulta est.* **91** *Trin.* XIV 14, 20 (CCSL 50A, 448–9): *Denique cum illi penitus adhaeserit, unus erit spiritus, cui rei attestatur apostolus dicens: Qui autem adhaeret domino unus spiritus est accedente quidem ista ad participationem naturae, ueritatis et beatitudinis illius, non tamen crescente illo in natura, ueritate et beatitudine sua. In illa itaque natura cum feliciter adhaeserit immutabile uidebit omne quod uiderit.* **92** *Trin.* XIV 14,18. **93** *Trin.* XIV 15,20–1 (CCSL 50A, 449): *Se ipsam uero nunc quando uidet non aliquid immutabile uidet. Quod ideo certe non dubitat quoniam misera est et beata esse desiderat, nec ob aliud fieri sperat hoc posse nisi quia est mutabilis. Nam si mutabilis non esset, sicut ex beata misera sic ex misera beata esse non posset.* Cf. *Trin.* IX 6,9 (CCSL 50A, 301):

the strange forgetting that characterizes the fallen life that is still in some sense necessarily 'in' God. The mind begins to recall God when it accepts his Spirit and knows that it needs God's grace to rise. Such a mind does not remember its former happiness, but must be reminded of it by the Scriptures; such a mind can, however, remember God because it is admonished by grace to turn and recognize the presence of the one in whom the mind exists.[94] The renewal of the Spirit of the mind (Eph 4:23) is the process within which the mind is gradually turned to the love of spiritual things.[95] This whole section of the book may be read as a gloss on the significance of the discussion of the *verbum interior* in Book IX. The Christian life is here cast as a gradual education in the production of 'words' about things in awareness of the truth itself, in awareness of the presence of the Word. The process of growing in ability to think the mind as an analogical site for contemplating the Trinity both grows as one comes to share more fully in the Trinitarian life itself and as one grows in the ability to live the Christian life. Book XIV makes clear the extent to which Books IX and X are both about the search for an image of the Trinity within the *imago Dei*, and about the conditions within which we practice the analogical imagination. If so, then Book XIV also helps to confirm for us the multiple utility Augustine saw in the rhetorical triad of *memoria, intellegentia* and *voluntas* as he sought to interweave these two themes.

The title of this paper alludes to one of the great films of the 1970s. At the end, another allusion is appropriate. In *The Usual Suspects* (1995) Kevin Spacey, as the con-man 'Verbal' Kint, narrates the rise of the Hungarian underworld boss Keyser Soze to a DEA agent who sees 'Verbal' only as a pawn used by the man he truly seeks. 'Verbal' constructs for Agent Kujan a complex story of himself and of the elusive underworld boss that eventually leads Kujan to think he has broken his witness. In retrospect only one of his statements is certain; 'Verbal' says of Keyser Soze, 'You think a guy like that comes this close to getting caught and sticks his head out? ... my guess is you'll never hear from him again.' We become certain of this statement as 'Verbal' is released and hobbles away from the precinct, his hobble disappearing as he turns the corner. He leaves behind only the literary and intertextual masterpiece of his testimony to Kujan. Any modern reader of Augustine's *De Trinitate* is tempted to treat the complex arguments of Books IX and X as a summative and paradigmatic statement of Augustine's thought. We should not forget that other than in the reprise of Book XIV, after Augustine gave up dictating Book X, extensive discussion of *memoria, intellegentia* and *voluntas* as a Trinitarian image disappears from his corpus, and is never seen again.

Sed cum se ipsam nouit humane mens et amat se ipsam, non aliquid incommutabile nouit et amat. 94 *Trin. XIC* 15, 21. 95 *Trin. XIV* 16, 22–17, 23.

Praying the Trinity in Diadochos of Photike

J.E. Rutherford

'The kingdom of God is perception of the holy Trinity, co-extensive with the composition of the intellect and surpassing its immortality.'[1] So writes Evagrios in his *Praktikos*, a manual for the practice of asceticism. Standing before his instruction of passion and dispassion, the nature of the eight *logismoi* and how to combat them, are three abstract statements of dogmatic assertion, of which this, the third, is the most abstract. What exactly does it mean? And equally importantly, what is it doing prefacing a work of instruction on the ascetic life and the spiritual experience of prayer? We might expect this sort of statement in Evagrios' *Gnostic Centuries*, where speculative theology is often condensed and abstracted into the fewest possible words, and left standing in such pristine isolation that one suspects a deliberately hermetic intent. But what is this doing in the *Praktikos*?

These questions are not simply of academic interest. With statements such as this proposition that the Kingdom of God is perception of the holy Trinity, Evagrios laid the foundation for an entire tradition of asceticism in which the practice of prayer is based firmly on the belief that the Triune God as affirmed in Christian doctrine is the God one should expect to encounter in prayer. In the Gospels, we hear Jesus speak of the kingdom of God in terms of humanity being in its proper state, understanding things as God intended us to see them. In this statement, Evagrios indicates that to be in that state of proper understanding the intellect must be completely filled with perception of God as Trinity. The ascetic culture we trace back to Evagrios subsequently produced a detailed and coherent theology which had at its heart the belief that the presence of God can be experienced in prayer. Through long years living a hidden life, this theology would eventually reach maturity in the practice of hesychasm and the theology of Gregory Palamas, emerging as an essential factor of Orthodox Christian culture. So I propose in this paper to discuss the implications for Trinitarian theology of those who in the Evagrian tradition strove, and continue to strive, in the words of Diadochos of Photike, to 'get hold of God' in prayer.[2] Such an expectation led inevitably to priorities in speculative theology which differed sharply from those of theologians whose driving motivation was to establish logical safeguards for the unity and distinct divinity of the Godhead. Indeed, when

1 'Basileia Theou estin gnosis tes agias Triados sumparekteinomene ten aphtharsian autou.' Evagrios, *Logos Praktikos* 3 (SC 170/171.). 2 See Janet E. Rutherford, *One hundred practical texts of perception and spiritual discernment from Diadochos of Photike* (Belfast, 2000), 134/135 (text 91).

these differing theologies met, as in the case of the controversy over hesychasm, the result was usually dramatic.

But before turning to the mature theology of prayer which was to follow, it is worthwhile to look more closely at Evagrios, because of his importance to those who were to follow after him. Scattered among the *Gnostic Centuries* we can find several elements from which Diadochos of Photike was to construct his closely reasoned Trinitarian theology, Christology, and soteriology. To what extent they were joined into a coherent theology by Evagrios is hard to determine. His adoption of the desert genre of short, numbered texts to express complex abstractions does not make for clarity or conceptual cohesion. Not only are individual observations condensed often to the point of near incomprehensibility; more importantly, this structure leads to disjointed statements whose underlying relationship, if any, is often difficult to discern. In addition, Evagrios' allegorical inheritance lent itself to providing explanations of individual passages of Scripture, or spiritual experiences, which, while logically consistent themselves, do not necessarily add up to a logically consistent theory when taken together. With that caveat, it will be informative to look at some of the texts from the *Gnostic Centuries* from the perspective which a genuinely systematic theologian, Diadochos of Photike, took on them.

First of all, it is important to clarify the significance of *gnosis* as we find it in Evagrios, since this was to become a key Diadochan technical term. In the passage I have quoted from the *Praktikos*, I have translated it as 'perception'. This is very much the Diadochan sense of *gnosis*, and it seems also to express Evagrios' meaning accurately. Evagrios like Diadochos spoke of an *aesthēsis noos*, an intellectual sense faculty, apprehending intelligible reality. Evagrios did not, it should be stressed, believe that God could be comprehended rationally. *Gnostic Centuries* 2.11 explicitly affirms that neither God nor the place of his dwelling are comprehensible, while 5.55 and 5.62 state that the Godhead is without components or qualities. It is important to note this, in view of Evagrios' statements to the effect that we will become co-heirs with Christ in *gnosis* of God. Evagrios seems to be thinking of an experienced (and thus 'perceived') relationship with the Trinity, and this is certainly what Diadochos means by *gnosis*.

But how is one to attain perception of the holy Trinity which is co-extensive with the composition of the intellect and surpassing its immortality? The starting point is, not surprisingly, the incarnate second person of the Trinity. First and foremost for Evagrios, Christ is God manifest to us. *Gnostic Centuries* 4.41 tells us that 'Christ, before his coming, appeared to men in various forms; and in his coming, he appeared to them in the truth of their body.' Consequently 'the body of Christ has received "the wisdom full of varieties", that through which the perception of the holy Trinity is manifest for us'.[3] This 'wisdom full of varieties' is that which the second person of the Trinity utilized in the creation of the world.[4]

3 *Keph. Gnost.* 3.11: ed. A. Guillaumont, PO 28 i. Quotations are based on the text S1. 4 *Keph. Gnost.* 2.2.

Evagrios does not develop, as Diadochos will, an explicit theory of the importance of patterning our lives on the manifest example of Christ which we find in the Gospels; but given his adoption of the ascetic life, and his instruction in the *Praktikos*, it is reasonable to assume that this is implicit in his thinking. This is supported by the statement we find in *Gnostic Centuries* 2.22: 'Just as the likeness of the Father, the true Word, his Son, our Lord Jesus Christ, has made him manifest and shown him to the rational nature, so also does *his* likeness, the rational nature, show him.'

Emphasis on humanity as created in the image and likeness of the Son, who is the Father's perfect image and likeness, is an enduring and essential feature of Eastern asceticism. As I have discussed before,[5] this is indeed the linchpin of Diadochos' thinking, consolidating his anthropology, Christology, soteriology, and Trinitarian theology. Evagrios does not, as Diadochos will, develop a technical distinction between the significance of 'image' and 'likeness'. But the belief that human rationality involves a kinship with God which enables relationship with Him lies at the heart of the Evagrian legacy. As Evagrios says in *Gnostic Centuries* 1.70, 'The perfect image of God is that which obtains perception of the holy Trinity.' And later in 6.73: 'It is not because the intellect is incorporeal that it is the likeness of God, rather it is because it is capable of perception of the holy Trinity.' Although damaged by the primal disobedience, this rationality has not been obliterated. The soul's ability to follow Christ's example and respond to grace lie at the heart of a soteriology of the restoration of the soul's divine likeness. 'The sinful soul is the pure intellect which, by its negligence, loses the contemplation of the holy Unity and needs to obtain by great effort the perfect image of the holy Trinity, which it has lost.'[6]

Restoration of the image of God in which we were created involves the remoulding of ourselves on the pattern of Christ. 'The intellect of the *logikoi* who are moulded to the resemblance of their Creator is the Christ, our Saviour; and it is he who perfects them in the perception of the holy Trinity.'[7] Evagrios does not speak of the process by which Christ perfects souls, and we are left to suppose that this comes about through the practice of askesis. But he speaks of the result in terms of inheritance. 'The inheritance of Christ is the Unity of the holy essence; and all those who will become heirs with him will become participants with him in this holy perception. But it is not possible for them to become heirs with him unless they first become his heirs.'[8] 'The heir of Christ is he who arrives in the Unity, delighting in its contemplation with him.'[9] '... [I]t is evident that the *logikoi*, who have been created in the image of the Son, will themselves be his heirs by relationship with the Father.'[10]

5 See 'Sealed with the likeness of God: Christ as Logos in Diadochos of Photike', in T. Finan and V. Twomey (eds), *Studies in patristic Christology* (Dublin, 1998), 67–83. 6 *Keph. Gnost.* 2.28. 7 Ibid., 1.77. 8 Ibid., 3.72. 9 Ibid., 4.8. 10 Ibid., 4.9.

Here we can see the importance of understanding Evagrian *gnosis* as experienced perception, in order to realize that he does not envisage human beings having the same 'knowledge' of the Father as Christ has. As he makes clear in *Gnostic Centuries* 5.79, '... to see the holy Trinity pertains not to the intellect's power alone; rather it is a superior gift of grace.' Nonetheless, to be the image of the image of the Father is more than a convenient metaphor for him; he means exactly that: 'When the intellect has succeeded in being in contemplation of the holy Unity, it will also be called God by grace, because it will be perfected in the image of its creator.'[11]

So where does this leave us in terms of the intellect's co-extensive perception of the Trinity? In *Gnostic Centuries* 5.63 we are told that 'In the contemplation of beings there are ascents and descents, depending on diligence or negligence. But it isn't like this in the contemplation of the holy Trinity. It is a vision equal to itself, where there is neither ascent nor descent.' It seems to me that this implies a theory that complete perception of the Trinity involves the complete pattern of the image of God being restored in the intellect, unifying the intellect in perfect, seamless relationship with God. It is certainly along these lines that Diadochos develops the concept of the intellect being in the image and likeness of God. In what sense the intellect perceives the *Trinity*, in terms of apprehending the persons of the Trinity, and the distinction between perceiving the Trinity and perceiving the Unity of the Godhead, are things which Evagrios frustratingly doesn't develop in the works we have. This is probably because the effect of *gnosis* is fundamentally unifying – the whole intellect being completely filled with the perfect pattern of the indivisible God; which is why our inheritance from Christ is perception of God's Unity.[12] The role of the Holy Spirit is, again, in an embryonic state compared to what we will find in Diadochos. In *Gnostic Centuries* 3.55 we read that 'To begin with, the rational intellect has as teacher the revelation of the Spirit; but it has turned round and become the disciple of the senses; and by its consummation in Christ, it obtains the first teacher again.' This is not very edifying. At 6.34 however we have something which might have come straight from Diadochos, containing several elements which we find in his developed theology: 'By the practice of his commandments, God returns us to the seal of his purity; and by the manifestation of his Holy Spirit, he perfects in us his true image.' For Diadochos the Spirit is the illumining activity of the Light which is Christ, which can only work in an intellect held steady by prayer. Similarly we find in Evagrios' work *On Prayer*: 'The holy Spirit comes to us even when we are unclean, out of compassion for our weakness. If only he finds our intellect truly praying to him, he enters it and puts to flight the whole array of *logismoi* and thoughts circling within it, and he arouses it to works of spiritual prayer.'[13]

Evagrios' understanding of human perception of the Trinity in prayer is frustratingly incomplete, like so much of his theological speculation. But observations such as those we have been considering exerted a powerful influence in Byzantine asceticism. And when a crisis arose in interpreting the significance of experiences of prayer, they served as the basis for a complete and consistent theology formulated by Evagrios' most formidable successor. I have argued extensively elsewhere[14] that Diadochos of Photike's painstakingly developed psychology and soteriology of prayer were articulated in direct response to the threat of Messalianism. Many of the Messalian elements he criticized are in fact to be found in the text of the Makarian *Homilies* with which we in the West are familiar.[15] In an effort to wrest the best elements of this tradition of asceticism (itself dependent upon an Evagrian inheritance) from heretical associations, Diadochos sought to explain the proper understanding of such characteristically Messalian emphases as longing, unceasing prayer, and manifestations of light in Christian experiences of prayer.

In order to do so, he realized that it would be necessary to establish some reliable criterion by which fallen humanity can discern true from false spiritual experiences. He sought this criterion by referring to revealed truth as contained in Scripture. On the one hand, he made a detailed refutation of the Messalian exegesis of their key proof texts, particularly the Johannine prologue. These exegetical interpretations, which drew on allegory and typology, tried to argue from Scripture that the devil remains in the soul after baptism. Diadochos' detailed refutation of the Messalian exegesis of the Johannine prologue (which we find in the collection of Makarian *Homilies* familiar to us) led to his articulation of a soteriology of the free gift of baptismal grace, as opposed to the Makarian emphasis on the acquisition of merit through continual penance.

But Diadochos' grounding in Scripture went beyond exegetical refutations of Messalian proof texts. He based his entire understanding of human psychology, and thus of humanity's capacity to apprehend God, on the three theological virtues of faith, hope, and love, developed through a life lived after the example of Christ manifest to us in the Gospels. And beyond that, he founded his criterion of spiritual discernment on the Pauline statement that the fruit of the Spirit is joy; he sought a New Testament, usually Pauline, basis for every reliable spiritual experience. Since so much depended on his use of Scripture as a solid basis for Christian epistemology, Diadochos developed an explicit hermeneutical theory for the relationship between Gospels and Epistles. The Gospels necessarily hold primacy for Diadochos, as accounts of God manifest; but they are not always easy to understand. Likewise the Psalms, in their prophetic statements about the Incarnation. It is the Epistles which 'state these things clearly'[16] in a way we can understand; and they are thus guarantors of our own experience.

11 Ibid., 5.81. 12 See *Keph. Gnost.* 3.72 and 4.8, as quoted above. 13 *Orat.* 63 (PG 79. 1165–1200).

14 See above n. 2. 15 The so-called 'second collection'; see G. Maloney, *Pseudo-Macarius: 50 spiritual Homilies and the Great Letter* (New York, 1992), for a discussion of the text of the Makarian *Homilies*. 16 *Ascens.*, paragraph 3.

Diadochos, then, was intent on preserving the belief that the presence of God is genuinely experienceable in prayer; and it is our capacity to have this experience, which he often describes in terms of 'taste', which lies at the heart of his understanding of *gnosis*. In text 63 of his 100 *Texts on Judgement and Discernment*, one who participates in holy *gnosis* is described as 'tasting the sweetness of God'. In text 69, the activity of grace is said to lead to a 'great sensation' of being kindled in its light. In text 91, we read of one who experienced *gnosis* of the love of God to such a high degree that his soul was urged on by an overwhelming joy and love to 'step out of the body and go away to the Lord.' If the nature of Evagrian *gnosis* is not always clear, in Diadochos it has become a fully-fledged technical term for spiritual perception. As he states in text 9, '*gnosis* binds man to God through evidence;' and in the fifth of his introductory 10 definitions, full perception, *epignōsis*, is defined as 'to be unaware of oneself in being taken up to God.' *Gnōsis* ('perception') is related in Diadochan psychology specifically to the intellect's *aesthēsis*, its sensing faculty, that which perceives both divine consolations and demonic *logismoi*.

This leads to Diadochos' great problem, out of which his anthropology was to grow. How are genuine experiences of grace to be distinguished from the deception of Satan? Having refuted the Messalian claim that the presence of deluding *logismoi* in the intellect proves the continuing presence of Satan in the soul after baptism, Diadochos was still left with the indisputable fact that such *logismoi* do indeed continue to plague the baptized. And even referring experiences back to Scripture cannot on its own guarantee their correct interpretation, as the Messalian exegesis of the Johannine prologue illustrated.[17] To establish a criterion of discernment to act in conjunction with Scripture, Diadochos developed an understanding of intellectual *elenchos* which involves a balanced psychology of perception and reason. This is arguably his greatest, and least appreciated, achievement – one which makes him, in effect, the Kant of late antiquity. For Diadochos the intellect has two complementary faculties: *aesthēsis* and *dianoia*. As we have seen, *aesthēsis* is responsible for perceiving spiritual realities, up to and including the active presence of God in the soul. *Dianoia*, on the other hand, is brought into play by conscious acts of the will, *thelēsis*, to critique these experiences, assessing them against the criterion of Scripture, in particular that of the Pauline statement that the Spirit is known by its fruits: love, joy, and peace. *Elenchos*, the conscious assessment not only of spiritual experience but also, through the exercise of conscience, of the state of our soul vis-à-vis God and neighbour, produces fruit which can accurately be discerned as indicating the presence or absence of God:

> No one can either love or have faith genuinely unless he doesn't have himself as an accuser; for whenever our conscience stirs itself up with self-examinations, the intellect no longer has the capacity to sense the perfume of those good things which are above the world, rather it is immediately divided in doubt. It reaches out in an ardent movement because of the previous evidence of faith, but it can no longer lay hold of it by the Sense of the heart through the power of love, because of the multiplicity of stings (as I said) of an accusing conscience. But when we cleanse ourselves by a more ardent attention, we will obtain what we long for, with greater evidence in God.[18]

17 For Diadochos' arguments against Messalianism see Rutherford (above, n. 2), 100–25, texts 76–86.

This evidence results in 'complete assurance', the *plerophōria* we also find in the Makarian *Homilies*. But, detaching the word from its Makarian context, Diadochos makes 'full assurance' of our discernment the result of something very Evagrian. In text 40, he advises those who pursue *askēsis* to do so not in the hope of visions of light, which are often erroneous, but in order to 'succeed in loving God alone, in a whole Sense and complete assurance of heart, which is in the whole heart and in the whole soul and in the whole reasoning. For whoever is activated to this by the grace of God, is away from the world, even if he is present in the world.' Love for Diadochos is the substance of the illumining presence of God; the risen Christ is the perfect manifestation of the Father's light and love, so that human love, and the 'light of the intellect', are the perfect image of God in us. Love which is in the whole heart and in the whole soul and in the whole reasoning is co-extensive with the intellect; and insofar as it is divine, it must surpass the intellect's immortality.

Perfect, deifying love in the whole soul can only be attained by the entire intellect co-operating with grace in unified harmony of Sense and reason; and this lies behind Diadochos' emphasis on integration. We must seek God with an integrated disposition; hence, in the passage above, the conscience being 'divided in doubt' is evidence that something is amiss. Fragmentation of desire, attention, and will, are for Diadochos the chief legacy to humanity of the primal disobedience, so that restoration, loving God and neighbour with the whole heart, is fundamentally a matter of functioning as a properly integrated human being. This emphasis on integration may indeed account for Diadochos' determination to produce in his *One hundred practical texts* a fully coherent theology, soteriology, and anthropology – rather than addressing Messalian error alone. According to his own psychological theory, only perception which is a unified and consistent whole can be reliably free from error; so he might well have regarded this a necessary criterion for any speculation about God's relationship to humanity. What is certain is that it is impossible to take Diadochos' thinking piecemeal. Each element depends on all the others.

But for all Diadochos' concern for integrated theological speculation, he never loses sight of what is for him the primary aim of Christian life: perception of God.

18 Rutherford (above, n. 2), 32/33, text 23.

His discussion of dreams and *logismoi* is designed to preserve his readers from delusion, not to encourage them to indulge in or even analyze such experiences. As far as he is concerned, dreams and visions, even visions of light, are best ignored, even at the risk of rejecting something sent from God. In text 38, he advises ignoring all fantasies, and states that God will not be angry with us for rejecting a vision of his because of our susceptibility to demonic deceit. As a result of the primal disobedience and our consequent liability to errors of discernment, our *dianoia*, responsible for the work of safeguarding our discrimination, cannot be completely relied upon to judge such things. As he says, 'when the soul is soiled from some imperceptible beguilement (from which no one is exempt I should think), it correspondingly comes to lose the track of precise distinction, and believes that those things which are good are not good'.[19] What the harmonious co-operation of will, reason, and Sense can achieve, however, is the identification of that joy and love which are the guarantors of the presence of the Holy Spirit. By tasting God's sweetness and being gladdened by joy the soul can 'track down, by an intellectual Sense, that which is unseen'.[20]

The necessary complement to this psychology is a theory of the primal disobedience which leaves to fallen humanity some capacity for direct experience of God. It is here that the biblical assurance that humanity was created the image and likeness of God is so important to Diadochos. Like Evagrios and the Alexandrians before him, Diadochos sees the evidence of humanity's resemblance of God in our reasoning capability; and thus he says, 'we are in the image of God in the intelligent movement of the soul'.[21] It is obvious that as the world stands, human beings, though subject to the grossest errors and delusions, have not become thoroughly irrational and beyond the useful exercise of will. Both the image and likeness of God in us are damaged as a result of the primal disobedience, but they are not obliterated. Diadochos speaks of the 'outlines of the soul' having been 'smudged' by the primal disobedience, in the way a portrait's might be.[22] This smudging leads to the fragmentation of the unified *aesthēsis*, which divides, some of it sliding into the impassioned part of the soul while the remainder continues to seek God, being 'gratified by rational and intelligent movement, whereby our intellect stretches out to run towards heavenly beauties'.[23] The restoration of our 'integrated disposition' towards God is thus the object of our efforts of will, and this lies at the heart of Diadochos' soteriology.

Distinguishing between image and likeness, Diadochos posits a two-fold restoration of the soul, effected by a two-fold soteriology of the incarnate Christ of Scripture on the one hand, and the presence of the risen Christ in the intellect on the other. He bases this soteriology on the sacrament of baptism, the efficacy of which the Messalians rejected. And so we read in text 78:

19 Ibid., 52/53, text 38. 20 Ibid., 14/15, text 1. 21 Ibid., 104/105, text 78. 22 Ibid., 128/129, text 89. 23 Ibid., 38–41, text 29.

> We are in the image of God in the intelligent movement of the soul; for the body is as its house. Because through the disobedience of Adam not only were the outlines of the figure of the soul smudged, but our body also fell into mortality; and so it was for this reason that the holy *Logos* of God was made flesh, freely giving us water of salvation into regeneration through his own baptism, as God. So we are regenerated through water by the activity of the Holy and life-giving Spirit, through which we are immediately cleansed, both soul and body (if indeed one comes to God from a complete disposition) when the Holy Spirit encamps in us, and sin is put to flight by it ... Through holy baptism divine grace with boundless affection fits itself closely to the outlines of what is 'in the image', on a pledge of likeness ... For the bath of sanctity removes from us the smudge which comes from sin, but it does not transform the duality of our will yet, nor stop the demons making war on us or telling tales of beguilement ...

By distinguishing between the image and likeness of God in us, Diadochos is thus able to account for the continuing presence of demonic *logismoi* in the soul while affirming baptism as a genuinely efficacious and necessary vehicle of grace. The restoration of the 'intelligent movement of the soul', the image of God, in baptism, is the necessary precursor of the re-creation of the soul in the likeness of God, that is, the pattern which is Christ himself. And this is accomplished by acting upon reliable direct experience of the presence of God in the soul during prayer:

> Through the baptism of regeneration holy grace procures two good things for us, of which one infinitely surpasses the other. It freely gives the first straight away; for it renews us in water itself, and restores all the outlines of the soul (that is, what is 'in the image') washing us clean from all the smudges of sin. But the other waits so that it might make the 'in the likeness' together with us. So whenever the intellect begins to taste the excellence of the Holy Spirit with a great sensation, then we should know that grace begins to portray, as it were, the 'in the likeness' in the 'in the image'. For in the way portraitists first draw the shape of the man in one colour, but then decorate it little by little colour on colour (thus preserving the form of the sitter, even down to the hair), so the grace of God also first composes the 'in the image', through baptism into that which man was when he came into being. But when grace sees us desiring the beauty of the likeness with a complete purpose, and standing naked and undaunted in its studio, then, colouring virtue upon virtue, and restoring the form of the soul from glory unto glory, it preserves the character of the likeness. And so the Sense shows that we are being shaped according to the 'in the likeness', but it is from illumination that we will perceive the perfection of the likeness. For the intellect receives all the virtues through the Sense, as it progresses according to a measure and inexpressible rhythm; but one is not able to acquire spiritual love unless one is

> illuminated with absolute complete assurance by the holy Spirit; since unless the intellect receives the 'in the likeness' perfectly through the divine light, it can have nearly all the other virtues but still remain without a share of perfect love. Because whenever it is made like to the virtue of God (I mean, inasmuch as a man accepts to be made like God) then the intellect also carries the likeness of divine Love. And as in portraits the whole brilliance of colours added to the image preserves the likeness of the sitter even to the point of smiling, so it is also for those who are painted in the divine likeness by divine grace; the illumination of love being added indicates that the 'in the image' is entirely in the comeliness of the 'in the likeness'. For no other virtue can procure dispassion for the soul, only love alone; for 'love is the completion of the law'. So as our inner man is renewed day by day in the taste of love, he is completed in its perfection.[24]

In order for this transforming work to take place, the slippery, fragmented intellect must be held steady. And so the human will must actively hold to the name 'Lord Jesus', 'recollecting' him in the Jesus prayer. In text 97, we read 'Whoever intends his heart to be cleansed, let him set it on fire by the recollection of the Lord at all times, having this alone as his concern and unceasing work.' And in text 59, we read more fully:

> The intellect demands us back absolutely whenever we block up all its exits by the recollection of God – which is the work which ought fully to occupy its industry. So one must give it the 'Lord Jesus' alone for a perfect undertaking of this end; for it says, 'No one says "Lord Jesus" except in the Holy Spirit'. Let one constantly contemplate this phrase carefully in his own treasuries in this way, lest he turn aside into any fantasies. As many as attend to this holy and glorious name ceaselessly in the depth of their heart are always able to see the light of their intellect – since governed by reason with a strict solicitude, it burns up the sordidness which prevails in the soul, with a strong sensation; for it also says 'Our God is a consuming fire'. As a result the Lord then invites the soul into great affection for his own glory; for when this glorified and much-longed-for name tarries in the ardour of the heart through the recollection of the intellect, it produces in us a habit of loving its excellence completely, there being nothing to hinder it. And this is the pearl of great price which, selling all that one has, one can acquire, to have inexpressible joy in one's finding of it.

Diadochos views God's transforming work in a soul held steady by the Jesus prayer, from the defining standpoint of the Johannine prologue. The *Logos* of the incomprehensible Father is his perfect pattern and manifest presence, divine light

24 Ibid., 128–31, text 89.

giving rational form to creation and being the mould on which humanity was created originally, and on which it must be remoulded in illumining re-creation into the perfect likeness of the perfect likeness of the Father – when we consent to be made 'like God.' In text 94, he speaks of receiving this likeness as a seal set in wax, and quotes Psalm 4:7, 'The light of your countenance, O Lord, was printed on us.' The second person of the Trinity is for Diadochos first and foremost the divine light of creation and illumination, the perfect manifestation of the Father in the cosmos. Our creation in the Father's image and likeness involved receiving the imprint of the *Logos* directly upon our souls, and our restoration involves being remoulded on the risen Christ's pattern through the presence of his transforming light within us, made possible by holding on to him through love and longing in the prayer 'Lord Jesus'. In this work of re-creation, it is the Holy Spirit which complements the imperfect effort of our damaged will, in specific acts of grace:

> For then the intellect has grace itself which attends with the very soul and calls out the 'Lord Jesus' with it, just as a mother might teach and practise over again with her inarticulate child the name 'Father', to the point where she brings it into the habit of calling 'Father' distinctly instead of any sort of other childish babbling, even in sleep. For this reason the Apostle says 'Likewise also the Spirit participates in our weakness; for what it is that we pray (in terms of what is necessary) we do not know, but the Spirit itself intercedes for us with unutterable sighs'. For since we are ourselves like children in terms of the perfection of this virtue, we need the Spirit's help completely, that by its unutterable sweetness, all our imaginings being constrained and gladdened from a complete disposition, we might be moved towards the recollection and love of our God and Father. And so we call out in the Spirit (again as the divine Paul says) when we are trained by it to call on God the Father ceaselessly: 'Abba, Father'.[25]

Diadochos' understanding of the Trinity is thus in general terms one of progressive emanation: the likeness of the incomprehensible Father manifest in the cosmos as creative and ordering illumination, with the Spirit effecting specific instances of divine assistance in conveying the presence of the illumining *Logos* to the damaged likeness of God in the human soul. This downward movement of divine love is met by an impetus of desire and longing by the damaged, but not thoroughly depraved, soul, whose Sense urged on by hope, and whose reason motivated by faith, are held by the will in the prayer 'Lord Jesus'. The integrated soul thus embarks on a trajectory of love which meets God at the point of his manifest Love, Christ.

Diadochos' theology is thus firmly based on John's Gospel and on Paul, and his *Logos* theology harks back to Alexandria. It is hard, reading him, to remem-

25 Ibid., 76–9, text 61.

ber that he wrote in the fifth century and was to become a bishop. His Greek is atticizing and full of literary and philosophical allusions. He understood, as few patristic theologians genuinely did, the inter-relatedness of anthropology, soteriology, and Trinitarian theology, so that his thinking can only be understood as a unity. It is not possible that such a man could have been unaware of the Trinitarian and Christological developments in Christian doctrine during the preceding two centuries, but he pays them only the slightest attention. The only heresy which worries him is Messalianism, since this could lead Christians into erroneous understanding of the nature of God and one's relationship with him, through mistaking the significance of experiences in prayer.

Related to the puzzle of Diadochos' lack of interest in what we have been taught to regard as the dominant trends in fifth century theology is the equally strange problem of his name. He can hardly have been Christened 'successor'. To what was he the successor? Are we to suppose that the only allusion is to his succession, as a bishop, to the place of the apostles? Or as the head of a monastic community? No one as educated as he obviously was can have been unaware of the significance of this title for philosophers. To the guardianship of what tradition are we to suppose that he succeeded?

The one mantle Diadochos certainly inherited was that of Evagrian prayer; though it should be noted that there is much in Evagrios which Diadochos did not adopt. Like any good successor to a philosophical tradition, Diadochos takes elements of his inheritance and builds them into a fresh theoretical framework. In his anti-Messalian treatment of Christian *askēsis*, developing Evagrios' distinction between *praktikē*, *physikē*, and *theologikē* was not useful to him. He has his own technical use for *theologia*, and the contemplation of natures is not a major concern.[26] It should also be noted that Diadochos is not in the Alexandrian exegetical tradition, or indeed in any exegetical tradition at all. The passages of Scripture to which he gives detailed exegetical treatment, particularly the Johannine prologue, are characterized, as is all Diadochos' writing, by a concern for the precise interpretation of words rather than allegorizing or typology, which are indeed more characteristic of the Makarian *Homilies*. And this is itself significant. Understanding the inter-related complexity of Diadochos' thinking requires a precise understanding of his extensive technical vocabulary, which he nowhere defines. Even his ten introductory 'definitions', if they are genuinely his own, themselves require prior knowledge of his technical vocabulary. What was the reason for this hermetic style? It is perhaps not too far-fetched to suggest that Diadochos was the inheritor of a theology of ascetic prayer based on Evagrian terminology and concepts. If this were so, his defence of that theology and his expansion of it, as the conscious guardian of the Evagrian tradition against the rival interpretation of

26 Diadochos does explore the relation between angelic and human nature in *Vis.*; but this interest seems to have been motivated by speculation on the parameters of human *perception* arising from writing the *One hundred practical texts*.

Evagrios contained in the Makarian *Homilies*, would be natural. In the *One hundred practical texts*, Diadochos addresses his readers as 'those who practise askēsis in towns or cities ... or those who do so in desert places', indicating a geographically diverse flock who may, or may not, all have lived in one region. An isolated reference to a North African as a 'disciple of Diadochos' has been taken to indicate that Diadochos spent time in North Africa;[27] but a more plausible explanation would be that Diadochos' disciples were widely distributed. Taking Diadochos as the head of a distinctive, but geographically scattered 'school of prayer', so to speak, would also explain the fact that, though his work survived, it seems to have exerted little influence on wider theological discussion until Maximos.

What is clear is that the works of Diadochos lived on among Byzantine ascetics, who transmitted them and continued to follow his instruction on prayer, itself based on a Trinitarian theology of emanation and a soteriology of illumination. I would like to suggest that the absence of dialogue between this theology and that of developing Trinitarian and Christological doctrine represented in successive ecumenical councils can be explained in part by the very different aims the two groups had. On the one hand, from the fourth century at least, attempts to safeguard the divinity of the second person of the Trinity led to increasing emphasis being placed on the otherness of creator and creature, with the *Logos* being placed firmly on the divine side of the division. The twofold insistence on humanity's complete difference from the Godhead, and the Son's absolute equality in transcendent divinity with the Father, ran counter to the aims of those who sought, by virtue of having been created in the image and likeness of God, and encountered in the Father's incarnate Son, to encounter God as 'thou', present in the prayerful heart.

Developments in Trinitarian doctrine threatened to sever the slender ontological thread connecting the human soul to God. At their worst, they left Christians in a position not much better than their pagan forbears, making propitiatory petitions for mercy to a remote and unpredictable Providence. It is interesting that, in later Byzantine apocalypses, we find Christ represented as enthroned in heaven with the Father, as a stern and uncompromising judge.[28] It is left to Mary to intercede for suffering humanity, berating her son for his lack of compassion. These apocalypses were popular literature, and reflect the deep-seated anxiety of a significant proportion of Byzantines. The ontological divide moved from having been drawn in the Trinity above the Son to being located below him, and ended up running through his middle, precipitating the Christological crisis. This ontological schism in turn was eventually closed by Maximos Confessor's integrating Christology, though centuries of theological insistence on the full divinity of the Son, and God's

27 See H. Marrou, 'Diadoque de Photicé et Victor de Vita', in *Revue des Études anciennes* 14 (1943) 225–32. 28 See J. Baun, 'Middle Byzantine apocryphal visions', in D. Smythe (ed.), *Strangers to themselves* (London, 2000). This image was of course greatly influenced by the tendency to see the heavenly hierarchy as a prototype for the imperial hierarchy; which itself contributed to the sense of God being unapproachable.

complete otherness from humanity, left an enduring mark on Christian theology.

But the Evagrian/Diadochan tradition of closeness to God lived on in Byzantine ascetic culture, reaching its full development in hesychasm and the theology of Gregory Palamas, for whom the incomprehensible God is experienceable by the whole person. But, for Palamas, it was no longer possible to assert, as Diadochos had done, an imminent *Logos* in the soul. When confronted by objections to the possibility of being able to experience God, Palamas had to safeguard the divine transcendence of the Son by positing a distinction between divine essence and divine energies. The *Logos*, having started out as, effectively, *being* the immanent *energeia* of the Father, ends up having half of himself taken off to be transcendent, as the Father is. Palamas got away with this, but all distinctions between transcendent and imminent aspects of the Son are inherently dangerous, inviting a redrawing of the ontological dividing line.

The problem of an interface between immutable divinity and mutable cosmos was of course inherited from pagan philosophy. To begin with, the second person of the Trinity, identified on the basis of the Johannine prologue with an Alexandrian, Philonic *Logos*, effectively solved the problem for Christians. Acting as an imminent creative principle in the cosmos, the Son both served as pattern for the human soul, and by virtue of the Incarnation acted as an emulsifying agent between Godhead and humanity. Every subsequent attempt to tidy up the status of the Son, either by locating him neatly on the divine side of the ontological divide or by regarding him as creature, re-opened the old problem of how immortal and mortal can interact and relate at all. Solutions to this which are logically satisfying can easily return humanity to a state of dereliction from God; and this is profoundly unhelpful to those who assume the possibility of having a relationship with God in prayer. It was not the least of Diadochos' achievements to realize that any speculation about God or human nature has consequences for every aspect of theology, and that only theories which elucidate our entire understanding of Creator and creature, and their relation to each other, can be relied upon. In Jostein Gaarder's novel, *Vita Brevis*, Floria Aemilia writes to Augustine, 'It's not God I'm afraid of. I feel I live with him already ... It's theologians I'm afraid of.'[29] Whenever theologians try to resolve the tension inherent in the Son's involvement in creation, and of humanity's kinship with God, they risk undoing the emulsifying achievement of the Incarnation; and this was understood by Diadochos, Maximos and Palamas. Diadochos' emphasis on the complementarity of reason and spiritual experience can serve today as a particularly useful safeguard in this respect. What is true of God, will be both logically consistent and able to be experienced in our relationship with him; and where either aspect is wanting, we must take it as a warning. For those created in the image and likeness of God, whose image is restored in baptism on a pledge of likeness, the proof of the doctrine must be in the praying.

29 Jostein Gaarder, *Vita Brevis* (London, 1998), 159.

Patristic argument and the use of philosophy in the Tritheist controversy of the sixth century

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ANCIENT AND MODERN GENEALOGIES OF TRITHEISM

When the acrimonious controversy over the Council of Chalcedon cooled down to some extent, over a hundred years after it had begun, the Christian East witnessed the outbreak of a dispute over the doctrine of the Trinity. Towards the end of the fourth century, this issue seemed to have been settled with the Cappadocians' momentous contribution to Trinitarian theology. At the same time, there was a shift of attention to Christology, mainly owing to the questions raised by Apollinaris of Laodicea. In the second half of the sixth century, however, the problems that had troubled Gregory of Nyssa, for instance, in his *Ad Ablabium* and *Ad Graecos*, re-emerged. The rise of Tritheism is usually connected with the teaching of the Syrian Miaphysite John Ascoutzanges, the sobriquet meaning literally 'with bottle-shaped boots'. According to the information given in Michael the Syrian's *Chronicle*, Ascoutzanges, a native of Apamea, studied Greek philosophy in Constantinople under Samuel (also called Peter) of Rešaina. After his master's death, he began to state in public that there were 'as many natures, substances and godheads as hypostases' in the Trinity.[1] Michael the Syrian insinuates that the origin of Ascoutzanges' heresy was associated with his philosophical studies. In order to sustain his doctrine of a plurality of natures and godheads in the Trinity, Ascoutzanges produced a collection of Patristic testimonies, which is no longer extant. An entry in the chronology of Elias of Nisibis assigns to these events the year 556/7.[2]

A prominent advocate of Tritheism was the Alexandrian philosopher and theologian, John Philoponus (*c.*490–575), best known as a prolific commentator on Aristotle and member of the Neoplatonic school of Ammonius Hermeiou. Philoponus was probably reared a Christian – despite scholarly attempts to distinguish between pagan and Christian periods in his life.[3] Among historians of

1 Michael the Syrian, *Chronicon* IX. 30 (J.-B. Chabot [Paris 1899–1910] iv, 313 [ii, 251]); see also the shorter report in Gregory Barhebraeus, *Chronicon ecclesiasticum* (J.B. Abbeloos & T.J. Lamy, Louvain, 1872–7, i, 223). 2 Elias of Nisibis, *Opus chronologicum: Pars prior* (CSCO 62* [63*]. 121 [59]); Jacob of Edessa, *Chronicon*, in *Chronica minora III* (CSCO 5 [6]. 322 [244]), dates the rise of Tritheism in the 344th Olympiad, i.e. between 557 and 560. 3 See esp. A.

ancient thought his reputation has been established as an outstanding philosopher who launched an overall attack on the dominant Aristotelian scientific world-view of his day. In 529, Philoponus published his important treatise *On the Eternity of the World against Proclus*. This work aimed at a refutation of Proclus' arguments that the world did not have a beginning in time. Philoponus saw in them an assault on the Christian faith and felt obliged to counter them. In his *On the Eternity of the World against Aristotle*, written only a few years later, Philoponus argued the same point against the Stagirite. This work contained significant elements of Christian doctrine. That Philoponus composed his commentary on Aristotle's *Meteorologica* after these two polemical writings certainly shows that, in the words of Christian Wildberg, he 'cherished his dual interest [*i.e.* philosophy and theology] throughout his intellectual development'.[4] Still, there is a transition of some kind in his literary activity from philosophical to theological writings. It was only on the eve of the Second Council of Constantinople in 553 that Philoponus turned to specifically doctrinal subjects.

Philoponus, most likely a prominent figure in the Miaphysite community of Alexandria, was asked by his co-religionists to give a defence of their doctrine. In the heated controversy over the doctrine of Chalcedon, he adopted the posture of an impartial arbiter of the claims put forward by the rival factions; at the same time, however, he presented Miaphysite Christology, in the moderate form developed by Severus of Antioch, as the only consistent exposition of the Incarnation of the Logos. To Philoponus, Chalcedonian Christology was simply unintelligible. These Christological treatises were all written in the 550s. Some scholars have detected the seeds of his later Tritheism in them; however, Philoponus still appeared there as a defender of the orthodox doctrine of the Trinity, and insisted on the oneness of the divine substance in his polemical work *Against Andrew*, written some time before 567.[5]

Gudeman & W. Kroll, 'Ioannes (No. 21, Ioannes Philoponus)', in *PRE* 9 (1916) 1764–95; this view was refuted by É. Evrard, *Les convictions religieuses de Jean Philopon et la date de son Commentaire aux 'Météorologiques'*, *BAB.L*, sér. 5, 1953, 299–357. K. Verrycken, 'The development of Philoponus' thought and its chronology', in R. Sorabji (ed.), *Aristotle transformed: the ancient commentators and their influence* (London, 1990), 233–74, has presented a modified version of this thesis. For criticism of Verrycken, see C. Scholten, *Antike Naturphilosophie und christliche Kosmologie in der Schrift 'De opificio mundi' des Johannes Philoponos*, PTS 45 (Berlin and New York, 1996) 118–43. 4 C. Wildberg, 'Prolegomena to the Study of Philoponus' *contra Aristotelem*', in R. Sorabji (ed.), *Philoponus and the rejection of Aristotelian science* (London, 1987), 197–209, at 209; see also his comprehensive study *John Philoponus' criticism of Aristotle's theory of aether*, Peripatoi 16 (Berlin and New York, 1988). On Philoponus' theological writings, see the chapter written by T. Hainthaler in A. Grillmeier, *Jesus der Christus im Glauben der Kirche, Band II/4: Die Kirche von Alexandrien mit Nubien und Äthiopien nach 451*, unter Mitarbeit von T. Hainthaler (Freiburg i. Br., 1990), 109–49, H. Chadwick, 'Philoponus the Christian theologian', in Sorabji, *Philoponus*, 41–56, and now U.M. Lang, *John Philoponus and the Controversies over Chalcedon in the sixth century: a study and translation of the* Arbiter, SSL 47 (Leuven, 2001). 5 Edited by A. Van Roey, 'Fragments

Philoponus was not widely known to be a Tritheist until the publication of his treatise *On the Trinity* in 567. This date is rather well attested. On the occasion of the first condemnation of Tritheism by the Oriental archimandrites who had been assembled in the monastery of Mar Bassus in Bitabô on 17 May 567, Philoponus was not mentioned at all. However, when the same archimandrites at the same place anathematized Tritheism for the second time on 3 January 568, they were concerned with a Tritheist treatise that had apparently been circulated anonymously.[6] Shortly before this, in 567, bishop John of Cellia and the Miaphysite clergy of Alexandria had condemned Philoponus and his *On the Trinity*.[7] That the same treatise was also the object of the archimandrites' second anathema is suggested by a letter written by Miaphysite bishops resident in Constantinople, in which the events connected with the rise of Tritheism until the second assembly at Bitabô in 568 are briefly recapitulated. The untitled work seems to be identical with Philoponus' *On the Trinity*, which had fallen under the anathema of the Alexandrian bishop.[8] This would mean that the treatise was published in the second half of the year 567.[9] Philoponus soon became notorious as the heresiarch of the Tritheists, especially for Greek-speaking Chalcedonian polemicists. While this ascription is not correct, it is indicative of the importance attached to the systematic underpinning Philoponus provided for the Tritheist doctrine.

That this curious theology of the Trinity was a phenomenon found within the Miaphysite party can be illustrated by the fact that Chalcedonians were usually observers of and not participants in this controversy. For instance, John Scholasticus, Patriarch of Constantinople, presided at a fruitless debate between 'orthodox' and 'Tritheist' Miaphysites. This meeting was held in the capital in 569/570 under the Emperor Justin II at the initiative of the Tritheist monk Athanasius, the grandson of Justinian's wife Theodora and a member of the Imperial court.[10]

antiariens de Jean Philopon', in *OLP* 10 (1979) 237–50, at 239–41. 6 *Documenta ad origines monophysitarum illustrandas* (CSCO 17 [103]. 167 [117]). This important collection of sources will henceforth be cited as *DM*. 7 *DM*, 160–1 [111–12]. 8 *DM*, 145–55 [101–8], esp. 151–2 [105–6]; see also A. Van Roey, 'La controverse trithéite jusqu'à l'excommunication de Conon et d'Eugène (557–69)', in *OLP* 16 (1985) 141–65, at 162. 9 See H. Martin, 'Jean Philopon et la controverse trithéite du VI^e siècle', in *SP* 5 (1962) 519–25, at 522–5; E. Honigmann, *Évêques et évêchés monophysites d'Asie antérieure au VI^e siècle*, CSCO 127 (Louvain, 1951) 183, holds that this anathema was directed against all the writings of Philoponus and was issued before the actual publication of the treatise in question. 10 A. Van Roey, 'La controverse trithéite depuis la condamnation de Conon et Eugène jusqu'à la conversion de l'évêque Elie', in W.C. Delsman et al. (ed.), *Von Kanaan bis Kerala: Festschrift J.P.M. van der Ploeg* (Kevelaer, 1982), 487–97, at 487–8. A few years later, Anastasius I of Antioch acted as the arbiter between two rival Miaphysite factions, see A. Van Roey, 'Une controverse christologique sous le patriarcat de Pierre de Callinique', in *Symposium Syriacum 1976*, OCA 205 (Rome, 1978) 349–57, at 350–1. P. Allen, 'Neo-Chalcedonism and the Patriarchs of the late sixth century', in *Byz.* 50 (1980) 5–17, inquires into the attitude of Chalcedonian Patriarchs in the late sixth century towards the

Many Chalcedonian heresiologists of the Patristic age perceived an intrinsic link between Miaphysitism and Tritheism. They considered both to be deeply entrenched in pagan philosophy and particularly in Aristotelian ontology. Anastasius I, Chalcedonian Patriarch of Antioch (559–70 and 593–8), argued in his dialogue with a Tritheist that the distinction between γενικὴ οὐσία and ἰδικὴ οὐσία was at the heart of their doctrine. If the generic divinity exists only *in* the particular substances, that is, in the Father, the Son, and the Holy Spirit, and is seen only by rational abstraction, then the divine unity has no foundation in reality.[11] Although Anastasius does not explicitly reflect upon the relation between Christian theology and pagan philosophy in this dialogue, it is evident that the distinction between particular and generic substance corresponds to the distinction between first and second substance in Aristotle's *Categories*. Similar criticism was offered by Eutychius, Patriarch of Constantinople (552–565 and 577–582),[12] and by Pamphilus towards the end of the sixth century.[13] Eulogius, Chalcedonian Patriarch of Alexandria (580/1–607/8), regarded Tritheism as a logical development of Miaphysite Christology. According to the report in Photius, he argued that if '(particular) nature' and 'hypostasis' are identified, the consequence will be either to say that along with the one nature of the godhead, there is also one hypostasis, or, since there are three hypostases, to divide the one nature into three natures. At the root of this evil Eulogius saw a rationalistic subjection of the Christian doctrine of God to human criteria, without accounting for the difference between the created and the uncreated order.[14] In the late seventh century, Anastasius of Sinai overtly denounced the Christology of Severan Miaphysitism as a consequence of allowing Greek philosophy to intrude into Christian teaching. Adopting the Aristotelian doctrine of individuals as particular substances, he argued, the Miaphysites came to identify φύσις and πρόσωπον. This fallacious identification had grave consequences. The formula 'one incarnate nature of the God-Logos' could be understood to imply a particular nature for each Person of the Trinity, not only for the

many Miaphysite splinter groups. See also A. Van Roey & P. Allen, *Monophysite texts of the sixth century: edited, translated and annotated*, OLA 56 (Leuven, 1994) 105: 'For the dogmatic writers on the Chalcedonian side tritheism posed apparently no great problem, since there is only the evidence of Anastasius I of Antioch ... who wrote a dialogue against tritheists, and that of Eulogius of Alexandria and Maximus Confessor ... tritheism for all these writers is synonomous [sic] with John Philoponus, and they know nothing at all about the earlier stages of tritheist doctrine'. **11** Anastasius I of Antioch, *Adversus eos qui divinis dicunt tres essentias* (K.-H. Uthemann, 'Des Patriarchen Anastasius I. von Antiochien Jerusalemer Streitgespräch mit einem Tritheiten', in *Traditio* 37 [1981] 102–3). **12** Eutychius, *De differentia naturae et hypostaseos* 1–12 (P. Ananian, 'L'opuscolo di Eutichio, patriarca di Costantinopoli sulla « Distinzione della natura e persona »', in *Armeniaca: Mélanges d'études arméniennes, publies à l'occasion du 250e anniversaire de l'entrée des Pères Mékhitaristes dans l'Ile de Saint-Lazare (1717–1967)* (Ile de Saint Lazare & Venise, 1967), 364–78 [Italian translation of the ancient Armenian version]). **13** Pamphilus, *Diversorum capitum seu difficultatum solutio* XI,42–112 (CCSG 19). **14** Eulogius, in Photius, *Bibliotheca*, cod. 230 (R. Henry [Paris, 1969–91] v, 39).

Son, but also for the Father and for the Holy Spirit, and thus give rise to the Tritheist heresy.[15] John of Damascus (*c.*650–750) restated this criticism and accused the Tritheists of introducing 'Saint Aristotle' as their thirteenth apostle and preferring his idolatry to the teaching of the inspired Fathers.[16]

The Chalcedonian authors of the sixth and seventh centuries present a similar picture regarding Philoponus' endorsement of Tritheism. A dramatic portrait of Philoponus as the 'heresiarch of the Tritheists' is found in the treatise *De sectis*, composed between 580/1 and 607/8,[17] in the form of a dialogue between Philoponus and the personified Church. Philoponus attempted to show that the Chalcedonian doctrine of two natures necessarily implied two hypostases, since nature and hypostasis are the same. When *Ecclesia* contested that in that case we would have to speak of three natures of the Trinity, Philoponus replied that it was perfectly legitimate to do this. He said so,

> taking his starting-point from the Aristotelians. For Aristotle says that of individuals there are particular substances and one common [*sc.* substance]. Thus Philoponus said likewise that there are three particular substances in the Holy Trinity, and one common [*sc.* substance].[18]

Of the many heresiologists who assigned to Philoponus a prominent role among the Tritheists, it will suffice to mention the priest-monk George (first half of the seventh century), who enjoys a good reputation among scholars for the quality of the information he provides, which is based on his use of source material.[19] George accused Philoponus of using ἀριστοτελικαὶ τεχνολογίαι, and of subjecting the apostolic teachings of the inspired Fathers to the δόξαι of the Greeks. Thus Philoponus divided the single and indivisible substance of the Godhead into three substances. Moreover he reduced the common substance to a mere mental abstraction with no existence of its own (ἀνύπαρκτον) apart from the three individual substances.[20]

These ancient genealogies of Tritheism have been echoed by most modern students of this crisis. Philoponus is thought to have provided a theoretical foundation for the Tritheist doctrine that had been spread mainly by the activities of Ascoutzanges, Athanasius the Monk, and the Bishops Conon and Eugenius. The German scholar J.M. Schönfelder suggested in 1862 that Philoponus had antici-

15 Anastasius Sinaita, *Viae dux* VI,2,9–17, IX,2,65–78, XXIII,3,20–43 (CCSG 8). **16** John of Damascus, *Contra Jacobitas* 10 (PTS 22. 113–14); see also A. Louth, *St John Damascene: tradition and originality in Byzantine theology* (Oxford, 2002), 100. **17** U.M. Lang, 'The date of the treatise *De Sectis* revisited', in *OLP* 29 (1998) 89–98. **18** Leontius Scholasticus, *De sectis* V, 6 (PG 86. 1233). **19** This has been noted regarding his reports on the Origenist controversies of the sixth century; see M. Richard, 'Le traité de George Hiéromoine sur les hérésies', in *REByz* 28 (1970) 239–69, at 244–8. **20** Georgius Hieromonachus, *De haeresibus* 13.2 (Richard, 'Le traité de George Hiéromoine [above, n. 19], 266.2–267.7).

pated the Nominalist position in the Medieval controversy on the ontological status of universals.[21] According to Schönfelder, Philoponus adopted the Aristotelian doctrine of nature and individuals and applied it to the doctrine of the Trinity. The point made by Schönfelder is that what is true for the created order (for instance, regarding human nature there is no real unity but only a conceptual or abstract one) was erroneously transferred to the divine nature. Thus Philoponus fell into the same trap as Roscelin of Compiègne in the eleventh century. Both of them had too much confidence in the possibility of inferring from the ontological structure of the created order to the immanent doctrine of the Trinity. They were not sufficiently aware of the essential principle to be followed when reasoning about God by means of analogies from the created order, which the Fourth Lateran Council expressed succinctly as '*maior dissimilitudo*'.[22]

Recently, the rise of Tritheism has been examined by Rifaat Ebied, Albert Van Roey, and Lionel Wickham in the course of their research on the Trinitarian controversy between Peter of Callinicus and Damian, the Miaphysite Patriarchs of Antioch and Alexandria in the 580s.[23] Similarly to Schönfelder, they extract Philoponus' Tritheism from the *Arbiter*, his major Christological work. The distinction made between common and particular nature, they claim, bears on the relationship between the one nature and the three hypostases of the godhead. The single divine nature is nothing else than the common intelligible structure that is recognized when one abstracts from the properties of the individual hypostases of Father, Son, and Holy Spirit. Ebied, Van Roey and Wickham discern here the nucleus of Philoponus' Nominalist position on the ontological status of universals, which made him espouse Tritheism. Nonetheless, they concede that in the *Arbiter*

> the question whether the common nature or substance really exists or whether it is only a product of the mind remains undiscussed, though it is asserted in passing that a nature cannot exist in itself but only in an individual.[24]

21 J. M. Schönfelder, *Die Kirchen-Geschichte des Johannes von Ephesus: Aus dem Syrischen übersetzt mit einer Abhandlung über die Tritheïten* (München, 1862), 286–97; his analysis is based on the extracts from chapters four and seven of the Arbiter in John of Damascus, *Liber de haeresibus* 83, now available in the critical edition of PTS 22. 50–5. 22 G. Furlani, 'Una lettera di Giovanni Filopono all'imperatore Giustiniano', in *AIVS* 79 (1920) 1247–65, at 1265: 'Egli [*sc.* Philoponus] è monofisita e triteista, perchè egli è aristotelico'; G. Maspéro, *Histoire des patriarches d'Alexandrie depuis la mort de l'empereur Anastase jusqu'à la réconciliation des églises jacobites, (518–616)*. Ouvrage revue et publié après la mort de l'auteur par A. Fortescue et G. Wiet, BEHE.H 237 (Paris, 1923) 207: 'Le trithéisme était donc, indéniablement, un fils du monophysisme: mais un fils compromettant. L'horreur excitée presque universellement par cette nouvelle doctrine, qui semblait aux yeux de beaucoup menacer le monde chrétien d'un retour soumois aux polythéisme, rejaillit en partie sur la doctrine sévérienne'; L. Duchesne, *L'Église au VI^e siècle* (Paris, 1925), 342–6; H. Martin, *La controverse trithéite dans l'empire Byzantin au VI^e siècle*, doctoral diss. (Louvain, 1959), 161–83; and G. Weiß, *Studia Anastasiana I: Studien zu den Schriften und zur Theologie des Patriarchen Anastasius I. von Antiochien, 559–598* (München, 1965), 161–6. 23 R.Y. Ebied, L.R. Wickham and A. Van Roey, *Peter of Callinicum: anti-Tritheist dossier*, OLA 10 (Louvain, 1981) 25–33.

In their edition of Peter of Callinicus' treatise *Against Damian*, Ebied, Van Roey and Wickham have developed their reading of Philoponus by referring to the Alexandrian philosopher's Aristotelianism. If Aristotle's distinction between first substance and second substance is applied to the Trinity, the result is a doctrine of three particular natures the unity of which can only be apprehended by the abstracting intellect.[25]

JOHN PHILOPONUS' CONTRIBUTION TO THE TRITHEIST CONTROVERSY

The Tritheist controversy of the sixth century is a curious episode in the history of doctrine, and its ancient and modern genealogies do not appear entirely satisfactory. In particular, the role of the Patristic argument and the use of philosophy in different stages of the dispute need to be studied in greater depth. Thus in the second part of this paper I shall argue that:

1 The rise of Tritheism cannot be explained merely by reference to the philosophical tenets of its first proponents. The argument of the 'Proto-Tritheists' was above all Patristic, not philosophical.

2 There were theological reasons for the genesis of Tritheism; it emerged from unresolved difficulties in Miaphysite Christology. John Philoponus' reasons for espousing Tritheism were connected with these problems.

3 Philoponus' view on universals cannot simply be categorized as 'Nominalist'. It would seem that he held the 'conceptualist' position common to the sixth-century Neoplatonic commentators of Alexandria.

24 Ebied, *Peter of Callinicum*, 26. 25 R.Y. Ebied, A. Van Roey and L.R. Wickham (CCSG 29. XVI): 'It will be enough to say here that his teaching on the Trinity develops from his interpretation of the Aristotelian distinction between "first" and "second" substance: only first substance (*πρώτη οὐσία*), in the fullest sense of the particular, is, for John, actual; second substance (*δευτέρα οὐσία*) the generic concept, is a creation of the abstracting intellect ("a posterior fabrication and invention of the mind", in a phrase often repeated by Peter of Callinicum). Applied to the doctrine of God in the Trinity, this means that each divine hypostasis is equally God (the three are "consubstantial" in this sense but there is no actual Godhead distinct from the particular Godhead each is. Consequently we may indeed speak of three Gods and three Godheads, three substances and natures; the "one" of the Godhead is in the viewing mind alone.' Note, however, that the texts adduced to substantiate this claim do not serve this purpose: Philoponus, *In Aristotelis Categorias Commentarium* (CAG XIII. 1): 9.6–8, 167.13–14, 103.18–19. In these three passages Philoponus reports the opinions of other commentators, and it is not clear that he subscribes to them.

4 Philoponus found this theory on universals instrumental for giving Tritheism a systematic foundation. This emerges from the extant fragments of his writings on the Trinity.

1. *The Origins of Tritheism*

Many authors have seen in Tritheism a rationalistic attempt to account for the doctrine of the Trinity by means of concepts derived from a particular philosophical system. More recently, this case has been made by Ebied, Van Roey and Wickham:

> Tritheism's starting-point was a philosophical one. The patristic arguments they adduced in favour of it were later arrivals. It was the concept of substance or nature which led John Ascoutzanges to affirm three substances or natures in God.[26]

However, the rise of Tritheism cannot be explained simply as an intrusion of pagan philosophy into Christian theology. We are told by Michael the Syrian that John Ascoutzanges studied philosophy, but the impact of his studies on the genesis of his Tritheist beliefs is not clear. John Philoponus certainly applied his philosophical acumen to a defence of Ascoutzanges' doctrine, but this was a decade after the latter had started to speak about three natures, three substances, and three godheads. Michael the Syrian also tells us that Ascoutzanges produced a Patristic florilegium to substantiate his views. Indeed, I should like to suggest that the origins of the Tritheist controversy in the sixth century lie in a particular interpretation of Patristic authorities on the Trinity. In other words, Tritheism was originally centred on a Patristic, not a philosophical argument.[27] This is certainly the impression one receives when reading the earliest extant document that engages with the Tritheists, the *Theological Discourse* by Theodosius, the Miaphysite Patriarch of Alexandria. Theodosius wrote this work during his exile in Constantinople after the outbreak of the controversy in 556/7 and before 564, most likely not long after 560.[28] Subsequently, it became the most authoritative refutation of Tritheism within the Miaphysite party.

The *Encyclical Letter* Theodosius attached to the *Discourse* indicates that the controversy arose over the interpretation of Patristic authorities:

26 Ebied, *Peter of Callinicum*, 25. **27** Ibid., 33, concedes: 'It is somewhat surprising that despite the philosophical origins (John Ascoutzanges, it will be recalled, was a philosopher) the first writing to give us knowledge of it, Theodosius' Treatise, is completely patristic without a single word on the philosophical ideas we have just touched on.' **28** I accept the dating suggested by Van Roey, 'La controverse trithéite jusqu'à l'excommunication de Conon et d'Eugène (557–569)' (above, n. 8) 143–4. In 564, the new Patriarch of Antioch, Paul of Beit Ukkâmê, wrote a synodical letter to Theodosius in which he expressed his approval of the latter's theological discourse: *DM*, 106.7–14 [73.37–74.6]. On Theodosius' writings against the Tritheists, see Van Roey & Allen, *Monophysite texts* (above, n. 10), 124–43.

> At first they had a fight about small words and the interpretations of some expressions of the Fathers. They thought they agreed with one another in doctrine, but each party stuck to some word or other.[29]

What kind of conclusions some participants in this controversy actually drew from their reading of the Fathers is made clear in an extant *Overview* to Theodosius' *Discourse*.[30] These 'Proto-Tritheists' spoke of three substances or natures of the Trinity

> because in the tractates of the Holy Fathers, they found that each of the persons or hypostases was also termed 'substance' and 'nature' and that on several occasions there was written 'its substance' and 'its own nature' in connection with each hypostasis; and because we all confess and say 'one incarnate nature of God'; and because they found that Chrysostom had said concerning the only-begotten Son of God: *Οὗτος ὁ Λόγος οὐσία τις ἐστιν* [*In Ioh.* IV: PG 59,47].[31]

The main point of controversy appears to have been that in the Fathers the term 'substance' is used individually for each of the three Persons of the Trinity. In the *Overview* to Theodosius' *Discourse*, this is put as follows:

> The Trinity in its entirety is called a substance; but separately God the Word is also called a substance, for example by John Chrysostom; and the Holy Spirit is also called a substance, for example by Gregory the Theologian; one finds also that the Father is called a substance.[32]

For this reason, some considered it permissible and indeed consequent to speak of three substances in the Trinity as well. That they contended for a certain interpretation of Patristic authorities rather than relied on philosophical arguments seems clear from Theodosius' reply. His refutation is exclusively concerned with the correct interpretation of doctrinal statements found in the writings of the Fathers.[33]

29 Theodosius, *Epistula encyclica* (Van Roey & Allen, *Monophysite texts*, 145.24–7 (the Syriac version of the manuscript Brit. Libr. Add. 12,155); translation: ibid., 127). **30** According to Van Roey & Allen, *Monophysite texts*, 273, the overview was probably not written by Theodosius himself. **31** *Tractatus theologici ratio et scopus: DM*, 36.23–37.2 [24.12–19] (tr. Van Roey & Allen, *Monophysite texts*, 127). **32** *Tractatus theologici ratio et scopus: DM*, 37.10–15 [24.27–31]. **33** Theodosius, *Oratio theologica* (Van Roey & Allen, *Monophysite texts*, 149–50/185–6 [223]). Theodosius recalls the advice of Basil of Caesarea, *Ep.* 52, 24–6 (Y. Courtonne [Paris, 1957] 134), not to rely on human arguments but on the testimonies of the Fathers. See also Van Roey & Allen, *Monophysite texts*, 138–9: 'Theodosius' argument is merely a Patristic one … This is somewhat disappointing. We shall have to assume that the tritheists themselves in this period, particularly if not exclusively, had recourse to the testimony of the Fathers in order to proclaim

Startled by such an interpretation of Patristic texts that was obviously at odds with the traditional doctrine of the Trinity, some of those who opposed the Tritheists went to the other extreme. They maintained that since there is only one substance or nature in the Trinity, it is this nature that became incarnate in its entirety. While the Tritheists were denounced as Arians, for denying the consubstantiality of the three Persons in the Trinity, their opponents were quickly accused of Sabellianism, for failing to account for the distinction between Father, Son and Holy Spirit. Notably, Theodosius engaged in controversy with those who argued in a more or less crude way that the entire Trinity was made man along with the Logos.[34] Only the first part of his *Theological Discourse* is concerned with the doctrine of the Trinity; the second part is dedicated to Christology.[35]

2. *Philoponus' Endorsement of Tritheism*

Philoponus' motive for entering the debate can be discerned at this point in the early stage of the Tritheist controversy, when the staunch opponents of Ascoutzanges reached problematic conclusions that had a bearing on the relationship between *theologia* and *oikonomia*. They overemphasized the unity of divine nature to such an extent that they could not explain sufficiently how one hypostasis of the Trinity, the Son, became flesh apart from the Father and the Holy Spirit. It would seem that Ascoutzanges' theology appealed to Philoponus as the more conclusive answer to this question. We should take into account the doctrinal reasons properly speaking that brought him to his endorsement of Tritheism. Reconstructing this history is an intriguing task, since only a number of fragments in Syriac translation have come down to us from Philoponus' writings on the Trinity. However, his major Christological treatise, the *Arbiter*, provides us with an idea of his theological concerns.

In the seventh chapter of the *Arbiter*, Philoponus sets down his understanding of nature, hypostasis and person. The teaching of the Church, he says,

> holds that nature is the intelligible content of being common to participants in the same substance (*τὸν κοινὸν τοῦ εἶναι λόγον τῶν τῆς αὐτῆς μετεχόντων οὐσίας*), as every man is a rational and mortal living being, capable of reason and understanding; for in this respect no single man is

their teaching.' **34** Theodosius, *Oratio theologica*: 178–84/209–14 [247–51]. Van Roey & Allen, *Monophysite texts*, 137, suggest that the opponents of the Tritheists who arrived at this conclusion may be the Condobaudites noted by John of Ephesus, *Historiae ecclesiasticae pars tertia* II,45 (CSCO 105 [106]. 111–12 [81–2]) and Timothy of Constantinople, *De iis qui ad ecclesiam accedunt* (PG 86. 57). **35** Compare this with Anastasius I of Antioch's dialogue with a Tritheist. Three quarters of the dialogue deal with Christology, not with the doctrine of the Trinity. The question whether the whole Trinity was made flesh in its entirety is raised by the 'Dissenter' in response to the 'Orthodox', who defends the traditional doctrine of the Trinity; *Adversus eos qui divinis dicunt tres essentias*: 103–8 Uthemann.

> distinguished from another. Substance and nature amount to the same. Hypostasis, however, or prosopon, is indicative of the concrete individual existence of each nature (*τὴν ἰδιοσύστατον τῆς ἑκάστου φύσεως ὕπαρξιν*) and, so to speak, a circumscription compounded of certain properties (*περιγραφὴν ἐξ ἰδιοτήτων τινῶν συγκειμένην*), whereby the participants in the same nature differ, and, to say it in brief, those which the Peripatetics usually call individuals (*ἄτομα*), those in which the division into genera and species comes to an end. The doctors of the Church name them hypostases, sometimes also prosopa.[36]

In ecclesiastical terminology individuals are called hypostases because in them genera and species assume existence (*ὕπαρξις*), and they do not subsist apart from them (*χωρὶς τούτων οὐχ ὑφιστάμενα*).[37]

Philoponus' use of the term 'the *logos* of so-and-so' here is indebted to Aristotle who employs it in the formulae *λόγος τοῦ τί ἦν εἶναι* and *λόγος τῆς οὐσίας*.[38] There it means 'the *logos* that says what it is to be so-and-so', which is elucidated by Aristotle's explanation of synonyms:

> For if one is to give the *logos* of each [*sc.* man and ox] – what being an animal is for each of them – one will give the same *logos*.[39]

The term *οὐσία* in *λόγος τῆς οὐσίας* indicates 'being' in general, and is thus not restricted to the first Aristotelian category; however, there was some reticence to employing this technical expression for individuals.[40]

Crucial to Philoponus' understanding of nature and hypostasis is his distinction between common and particular nature. The common nature, for instance, of man, is such that *qua* common nature no individual man is distinguished from another. But when it is instantiated in an individual it is proper to this individual

36 Philoponus, *Arbiter* VII, 21: ed. A. Šanda, *Opuscula Monophysitica Ioannis Philoponi* (Beirut, 1930) 20.20–21.3 – 51.31–9 Kotter (tr. Lang, *John Philoponus* [above, n. 4], 190). **37** Philoponus, *Arbiter*, VII, 21: 21.10–13 Šanda (Syriac) – 51.46–50 Kotter (Greek). **38** Aristotle, *Metaphysics* D.29: 1024^b29, Z.1: 1028^a35 et al., Categories 1: 1^a1, 1^a10–12. **39** Aristotle, *Cat.* 1: 1^a10–2. It is difficult to find an adequate translation. C. Kirwan, *Aristotle's* Metaphysics. *Books G, D and E: translated with notes* (Oxford,2 1993) 179, uses 'formula', which is also accepted by M. Frede & G. Patzig, *'Metaphysik Z': Text, Übersetzung und Kommentar* (München, 1988), i, 20. This has a decidedly linguistic connotation, which seems misleading in some contexts of ancient philosophical and theological debate. For this reason I opt for 'intelligible content', which would correspond to Aquinas' understanding of *ratio*; see J.F. Wippel, 'Metaphysics', in N. Kretzmann & E. Stump (eds), *The Cambridge companion to Aquinas* (Cambridge, 1993), 85–127, at 94–5. See also J. Zachhuber, *Human nature in Gregory of Nyssa: philosophical background and theological significance* (Leiden, 2000), 71–3. **40** Aristotle, *Cat.* 5: 2^a14–17; Philoponus, *In Cat.*, 20.9–14. Porphyry, *Isagoge* (CAG IV. 1): 9.14–6, argues that the λόγος τῆς οὐσίας comprises only specific differentiae, not individual properties.

exclusively. Here Philoponus refers to a distinction between the common and the particular made in the fourth chapter of the *Arbiter*. Thus the 'rational, mortal living being in me (*τὸ ἐν ἐμοὶ ζῷον λογικὸν θνητόν*)' is not common to anyone else.[41] Philoponus illustrates this point by a few examples: when a man or an ox or a horse suffers, other individuals of the same species (*τὰ ὁμοειδῆ τῶν ἀτόμων*) do not suffer; when Paul dies, this does not entail that any other man dies; and when Peter is born and comes into existence, the men to be born after him do not yet exist. So nature is spoken of in two ways:

> in one way, when we look at the common intelligible content of each nature on its own, such as the nature of man or of horse which does not exist in any of the individuals; in another way, when we look at the same common nature which exists in the individuals and assumes a particular existence (*μερικωτάτην ὕπαρξιν*) in each of them, and does not fit with anything else except this alone. For the rational and mortal living being which is in me is not common to any other man.[42]

Subsequently, Philoponus applies these concepts of nature and hypostasis to the doctrine of the Trinity: one nature of the Father, Son and Holy Spirit, but three hypostases, of which each differs from the other ones by a certain property:[43]

> For what should the one nature of the divinity be if not the common intelligible content of the divine nature seen on its own and separated in the conception (*τῇ ἐπινοίᾳ*) of the property of each hypostasis?[44]

Philoponus is concerned here with the interaction between Christology and Trinitarian theology; he is anxious to be consistent in the terminology he uses for both *oikonomia* and *theologia*.[45] In order to achieve this he argues that in the Trinity there are particular natures which are distinct from the one common nature of the Godhead. Philoponus' train of thought would seem to be as follows: the common intelligible content of the nature of each individual or hypostasis is proper

41 Philoponus, *Arbiter* VII. 22: 22.17 Šanda – 52.55 Kotter. Philoponus' philosophical teacher, Ammonius, states that in the individual the common species is 'circumscribed (*περιγέγραπται*)', or 'fenced off (*περιώρισται*)'; Ammonius Hermiae, *In Porphyrii Isagogen* (CAG IV. 3), 63.19–21. 42 Philoponus, *Arbiter* VII, 22: 21.23–22.1 Šanda – 52.60–6 Kotter (tr. Lang, *John Philoponus* [above, n. 4], 191). For a similar distinction between *οὐσία* and *ὑπόστασις*, see Severus of Antioch, *Homilia cathedralis CXXV* (PO 29. 234–6). Severus also remarks that 'nature' is said in two ways, sometimes denoting *οὐσία*, sometimes *ὑπόστασις*, *Contra impium grammaticum: Oratio* II,2 (CSCO 111 [112]. 69–70 [55]); *Ep. VI* (PO 12/2. 196–8); *Ep. LXV* (PO 14/1. 28–9). 43 Likewise Severus, *Hom. cath. CXXV* (PO 29. 236–40); also *Hom. cath. CXI* (PO 25. 790–1). 44 Philoponus, *Arbiter* VII,23: 22.6–7 Šanda – 52.72–3 Kotter (tr. Lang, *John Philoponus* [above, n. 4], 191). 45 This has become a commonplace by the sixth century; see

to it and does not fit with any other member of the same species. This has significant ramifications, if we consider that in Christ there is a union of two natures, the divine and the human. The common nature of the divinity that is recognized in the Trinity has not become incarnate; otherwise we would predicate the Incarnation also of the Father and the Holy Spirit. Neither has the common human nature been united with the God-Logos, otherwise the whole human race before and after the advent of the Logos would have been united to him. In fact, if we say 'nature of the divinity' we mean the nature that has become individual, as distinct (*ἐξιδιασθεῖσαν*) from the common nature of the divinity, in the hypostasis of the Logos. It is in this sense that we confess 'one incarnate nature of the God-Logos',[46] distinguishing it from the Father and the Holy Spirit by the addition 'God-Logos'; it is the divine nature proper to the second Person of the Trinity. By 'nature of humanity' we understand that particular existence which alone out of all the Logos has assumed. The union of divinity and humanity in Christ is a union not of common but of particular natures:[47]

> So that in this meaning of 'nature', 'hypostasis' and 'nature' are, as it were, the same, except that the term 'hypostasis' in addition also signifies those properties which, apart from the common nature, belong to each of the individuals, and by which they are separated from each other.[48]

Philoponus' analysis of nature, substance and hypostasis in the seventh chapter of the *Arbiter* leads us to the core not only of his Christology, but also of his Trinitarian theology. Before turning to the extant fragments of his writings on the Trinity I shall discuss Philoponus' view on the ontological status of universals. It is often contended that the Tritheists of the sixth century were rationalists who applied their 'Nominalist' understanding of common nature to the Trinity and thus failed to account sufficiently for the real unity of the three divine Persons. Hence what Philoponus thought about universals is a crucial issue for understanding his Trinitarian theology.

3. Philoponus on Universals: Neoplatonic 'Conceptualism'

The ontological status of universals is a difficult topic and has been much disputed in the history of philosophy. At the risk of simplifying matters, it would appear expedient to distinguish between three basic positions: 'Realism' affirms that uni-

B.E. Daley, 'Boethius' theological tracts and early Byzantine scholasticism', in *MS* 46 (1984) 158–91, at 171. 46 The only occurrence of this formula in the *Arbiter*: VII,23: 22.17–18 Šanda – 52.86–53.87 Kotter. 47 That the union is not a union of universals comprising many hypostases is also stated emphatically by Severus, *Ep. II* (PO 12/2. 186–96), and *Contra impium grammaticum: Oratio* II,21 and II,28 (CSCO 111 [112]. 179–84 [139–44], 218–25 [170–6]). 48 Philoponus, *Arbiter* VII, 23: 22.21–4 Šanda (Syriac) – 53.92–5 Kotter (Greek) (tr. Lang, *John Philoponus*, 192).

versals *qua* universals exist independent of the human mind; 'Conceptualism' affirms that universals *qua* universals exist only in the human mind; 'Nominalism' affirms that universals do not exist at all, not even in the human mind.

The term 'Nominalism' is ambiguous. Here it is not used in the broad sense as the claim contrary to realism denying any reality or separate existence of universals. The realist position is of course connected with Platonism. However, Porphyry and most Neoplatonic philosophers since the fourth century did not hold that universals, represented in logic by general expressions, had any extramental reality. Their theory could thus be characterized as Nominalist, if one takes nominalism in the sense that for it universal names have no reference apart from concepts; but with A.C. Lloyd I prefer to call it conceptualist.[49] Conceptualism was the position of Aristotle as interpreted by philosophers in late antiquity, including the influential Alexander of Aphrodisias.[50] It would be anachronistic to ascribe a strictly Nominalist understanding of universals to any school of philosophy in the sixth century and beyond.[51]

What would have been the generally accepted theory of the universal since the fourth century is conveniently summarized by the Alexandrian Neoplatonist Simplicius in his commentary on Aristotle's *Categories*. According to him there are three kinds of common items or universals (*τὸ κοινόν*): (1) the transcendent or separate from the particulars, for instance, the 'first animal' (*αὐτοζῷον*) that endows all animals with animality; (2) the form that exists in the many individuals; (3) the concept that results from a process of abstraction (*ἐξ ἀφαιρέσεως*), when we remove all differences that modify animality in the external world; it is 'posterior' (*ὑστερογενές*) and in turn predicated of the individuals.[52] Now (1) is a common cause, transcending what it effects, rather than a common nature; (2) is the common item that constitutes the individual and is not really the same in different species; only (3) is a genuine universal.

This 'multiplication of the universal' originated in the Middle Academy, when a distinction was introduced between the separate or transcendent form (*χωριστὸν εἶδος*), the Platonic idea, which is the paradigm of the demiurge, and the inseparable or immanent form (*ἔνυλον εἶδος*) which could be equated with the Aristotelian *λόγος ἔνυλος*. The doctrine of the Platonic ideas as thoughts in the mind of an Aristotelian self-thinking intellect is attested in Alcinous and may go back to Antiochus (or even Xenocrates).[53] It was also held by Philo of Alexandria, and so exerted a significant influence on Christian theology.[54]

49 A.C. Lloyd, *The anatomy of Neoplatonism* (Oxford, 1990), 68–75; see also his 'Neoplatonic logic and Aristotelian logic', in *Phronesis 1* (1955–6) 58–72 and 146–60, and *Form and universal in Aristotle* (Liverpool, 1981). 50 On Alexander and Porphyry, see also M. Tweedale, 'Alexander of Aphrodisias' views on universals', in *Phronesis* 29 (1984) 279–303, and R. Chiaradonna, 'Essence et prédication chez Porphyre et Plotin', in *RSPhTh* 82 (1998), 577–605, esp. 587–9. 51 Lloyd, *Anatomy* (above, n. 49), 68–70, has a section entitled 'The myth of a Neoplatonic nominalism'. See also K. Kremer, 'Die Anschauung der Ammonius (Hermeiou)-Schule über den Wirklichkeitscharakter des Intelligiblen. Über einen Beitrag der Spätantike zur platonisch-aristotelischen Metaphysik', in *PhJ* 69 (1961/2) 46–63; dependent upon Kremer, but to be read with caution: L. Benakis, 'The problem of general concepts in Neoplatonism and Byzantine thought', in D.J. O'Meara (ed.), *Neoplatonism and Christian thought* (Albany, 1982), 75–86. 52 Simplicius, In *Aristotelis Categorias Commentarium* (CAG VIII) 82.35–83.20; similar Ammonius, *In Porphyrii Isagogen*, 41.10–42.26, 68.25–19.11; Lloyd, *Anatomy*, 65–8.

The term *ὑστερογενές* is of course taken from Aristotle's description of the genus in *De anima* I.1 402^{b}7: *τὸ δὲ ζῷον τὸ καθόλου ἤτοι οὐδέν ἐστιν ἢ ὕστερον*, 'the universal living being is either nothing or posterior'. This passage caused difficulties for the Neoplatonic commentators. Philoponus argues that it does not contradict the Platonic doctrine of ideas as the transcendent principles (*λόγοι*) in the mind of the demiurge, for Aristotle does not speak here of the Platonic ideas or genera prior to the species, but about the 'posterior items' (*τὰ ὑστερογενῆ*). There is no simple or absolute 'living being' unless it exists as a particular. In this respect, then, it is right to say that 'living being' *qua* universal and *qua* genus is either nothing or posterior, that is, conceptual (*ἐννοηματικόν*). The universal living being has concrete existence (*ὑπόστασις*) only in being thought. Philoponus endorses the doctrine of the Platonic ideas as transcendent principles in the mind of the demiurge, but, like the other Neoplatonic commentators of the sixth century, he does not maintain that the intelligible realm is a separate world of ideas subsisting in the same way as the individual entities in the visible. There is considerable anxiety among the later Neoplatonists to avoid the problem of a *χορισμός*, which is raised by Plato's theory of self-subsisting ideas, as found in the dialogues of his middle period. As in Simplicius, only the *ὑστερογενῆ* are genuine universals in the proper sense, and they are mental concepts formed by abstraction.[55]

Later in his *De Anima Commentary* Philoponus discusses the distinction Aristotle draws between sense-perception (*αἴσθεσις*) and knowledge (*ἐπιστήμη*). Object of the former are particulars, that is, those entities that have concrete existence (*ἐν ἰδίᾳ ὑποστάσει*), object of the latter are universals 'that are somehow in the soul itself', as the Stagirite says in *De Anima* II.5: 417^{b}23–24. Philoponus comments:

> Universals have their existence (*ὑπόστασις*) in the particulars, but when they are understood as universal or general terms (*ὡς καθόλου καὶ κοινὰ*

53 See Alcinous, *Didascalicus* IV,155.13–156.23 (ed. J. Whittaker, Paris, 1990); also Lloyd, 'Neoplatonic logic and Aristotelian logic', 59–60, and H.J. Blumenthal, *Aristotle and Neoplatonism in late antiquity: interpretations of the De Anima* (London, 1996), 13. 54 Philo, *De opificio mundi* V, 20 (LCL Philo I. 16–18). 55 Philoponus, *In Aristotelis de Anima Libros Commentaria* (CAG XV) 37.17–38.17. In his Treatise to Sergius (written before 557/8) on the difference between parts and elements and the relationship between wholes and parts Philoponus quotes Aristotle's famous line that the universal is either nothing or posterior and explains: 'For genera and species exist only in the thought (*ἐν θεωρίᾳ*) of the mind, when the mind abstracts them from the particulars, as we have often shown'; *Ad Sergium* 2: 84 Šanda. The last clause is obviously a reference to the author's philosophical commentaries.

> λαμβάνεται), they are found in the mind, for their being general consists in their being thought of as general, and thoughts are mental.[56]

Philoponus affirms that universals exist – and, we may add, exist only – in the particulars (ἐν τοῖς πολλοῖς). Lloyd observes that in Alexander of Aphrodisias ὑπόστασις denotes 'concrete or physical existence', possibly even in the sense of 'substratum'; this is likewise with Philoponus, even though for the school of Ammonius in Alexandria ὑπόστασις had become a 'straightforward synonym of εἶναι'.[57] As general predicates, universal are mental concepts and, in the words of Philoponus' *Categories* commentary, are applied and thus posterior to the particulars (ἐπὶ τοῖς πολλοῖς).[58]

One of the few texts in Aristotle that can be construed to commit him to universals in nature is *Posterior Analytics* II, 100^{a}3–^{b}5. But even here Aristotle can be read as a conceptualist, and the same holds for Philoponus' commentary on the passage in question. Aristotle analyses how the mind recognizes universals by induction from the less to the more general. This process can be consistently explained as a becoming aware that what as been perceived as particular is in fact more general. Such is achieved by a repeated procession through perception, thought, and the two combined, until it has been done a sufficient number of times. There is no need to take this in a strictly realist way.[59] In his commentary Philoponus presents a threefold account of universal, which closely resembles that of Simplicius.[60] Again it would seem that only the third kind of common item, the mental concept abstracted from and applied to the particulars, is a universal in the proper sense.[61]

4. The extant fragments of Philoponus' writings on the Trinity

The original Greek text of Philoponus' treatises *On the Trinity*, *On Theology* and *Against Themistius* has been lost. Only fragments of them have been preserved in

56 Philoponus, *In De Anima*, 307.33–308.1 (tr. Lloyd, *Anatomy*, 71); see also 307.3–4. Ammonius, *In Aristotelis Categorias Commentarium* (CAG IV. 4) 40.19–21, 41.13–15. 57 Lloyd, *Anatomy*, 71. 58 Philoponus, *In Cat.*, 58.13–59.2. 59 Lloyd, *Anatomy*, 72, and J. Barnes, *Aristotle: Posterior analytics* (Oxford, ²1994), 267. 60 Philoponus, *In Aristotelis Analytica Posteriora Commentaria* (CAG XIII. 3), 435.11–12. 61 R. Cross, 'Perichoresis, deification, and Christological predication in John of Damascus', in MS 62 (2000) 69–124, at 75–8, is right in criticizing my realist interpretation of Philoponus. Hence my discussion of the subject in Lang, *John Philoponus* (above, n. 4), 64 and 69–70, and in 'Notes on John Philoponus and the Tritheist controversy in the sixth century', in *OrChr* 85 (2001) 23–40, at 37–9, is unsatisfactory. E.G.T. Booth, 'John Philoponos, Christian and Aristotelian conversion', in *SP* 17 (1982) 407–11, and *Aristotelian aporetic ontology in Islamic and Christian thinkers* (Cambridge, 1983), 56–61, sees a conversion in Philoponus from the commonly accepted Neoplatonic metaphysics to a 'radical Aristotelianism'. According to Booth, Philoponus' adoption of nominalism led to his 'virtual Tritheism'. The force of Booth's argument is seriously impaired by the fact that his case for 'radical Aristotelianism' rests chiefly on the *Scholia on Metaphysics*, which were most likely written after 1100, according to S. Ebbesen, *Commentators and Commentaries on Aristotle's 'Sophistici Elenchi'*, CLCAG 7 (Leiden, 1981), iii, 86–7.

Syriac translation; they were found in anti-Tritheist manuscripts and conveniently edited by Van Roey.[62] It goes without saying that their interpretation is an intricate undertaking.

As is evident even from these scarce fragments, Philoponus adduced philosophical arguments in defence of the peculiar Trinitarian theology he adopted late in his life. That his view on the ontological status of universal was instrumental in giving Tritheism a systematic underpinning emerges from what is left of his treatise *On the Trinity*, written in 567. In a fragment from its first book he argues that genera and species are posterior to particulars; our mind abstracts from the particulars what is common to them. The ancients have appropriately referred to these common items as 'posterior' and 'conceptual'. Philoponus then cites the celebrated passage from Aristotle's *De Anima* that 'the universal is either nothing or posterior', and goes on to explain that it is called 'nothing' because it does not have proper existence and our concept of it is not a substance properly speaking. Echoing Aristotle's *Categories*, Philoponus comments that the particulars are called first substances, whereas genera and species are substances only in a secondary sense. For this reason in theological discourse hypostases are also termed substances.[63]

In the second fragment Philoponus expands on this argument:

> Nothing common has an existence of its own nor does it exist prior to the particulars; on the contrary, the mind abstracts it from these latter, and it only exists in [the mind]. But [the common] is not indivisible; otherwise it would not be common. Rather it can be divided into all those of which it is said to be common. Neither is it numerically one, when it has existence in the soul of each man and is divided into those that are said to participate in it.[64]

The common item, being instantiated in the many particulars, is not numerically one but divided in the many. This has consequences for our understanding of the Trinity, for the λόγος τῆς οὐσίας of the godhead, that is, the intelligible content of its substance, while being complete in each hypostasis, is divided into three. In other words, the godhead common to the three divine Persons is numerically different in each of them.[65]

Philoponus conceives of Father, Son and Holy Spirit as different species of the generic godhead:

> [The three divine Persons] do not possess consubstantiality in the properties whereby one is Father, one is Son and the last is Holy Spirit, for as

62 A. Van Roey, 'Les fragments trithéites de Jean Philopon', in *OLP* 11 (1980) 135–63. 63 Philoponus, *De Trinitate*, fr. 1: 148 [158]. 64 Philoponus, *De Trinitate*, fr. 2: 148–9 [158]; *Against Themistius*, fr. 18: 154 [161] and 22: 156 [162]. 65 Philoponus, *De Trinitate*, fr. 3: 149 [158]; Philoponus claims the authority of the Sacred Scriptures and the doctors of the Church for this way of speaking in fr. 4: 149 [159].

> such they belong to different species and are separated from each other. Moreover they do not possess consubstantiality in their totalities in so far as there is God the Father, God the Son and God the Holy Spirit. In fact, when the property of each of the hypostases is added to 'God', this makes each of them completely different in species from the rest. Likewise, when 'rational' or 'irrational' is added to 'animal' (which is used generally of all the animals of different species), this makes them different in species, namely rational animal and irrational animal. In the same way, when 'Father', 'Son' or 'Holy Spirit' is added to the godhead, this makes God the Father different from God the Son or the divine Spirit. Thus each of them is different from the two others related to him.[66]

When Philoponus speaks of the different 'property' of each divine Person, what he means is the Porphyrian notion of specific differentia. Such 'differences that belong by themselves (αἱ καθ' αὑτάς)' are contained in the λόγος τῆς οὐσίας.[67] In the *Arbiter*, Philoponus speaks of 'substantial difference (οὐσιώδης διαφορά)'. For instance, 'man' and 'horse' are two different substances or natures, the one being a rational animal and the other being an irrational animal. Although they are under the same genus, namely animal, they cannot be subsumed under the same λόγος τῆς οὐσίας, that is, the same species.[68]

For Philoponus, the name 'God' refers to the generic divinity or divine substance that has no existence of its own apart from the three divine hypostases in which it is constituted; otherwise one would introduce a fourth divine Person apart from Father, Son and Holy Spirit. This theory emerges from several fragments of his *On the Trinity* as well as from his later works *On Theology* and *Against Themistius*:

> The nature of God is nothing other than God.[69]
>
> When I say 'God' I mean nothing else than the divine substance.[70]
>
> The divine substance is constituted in three-fold fashion in the Father, Son and Holy Spirit. This substance is divided not only by number but by the

66 Philoponus, *De Trinitate*, fr. 6a: 150 [159]; see also fr. 5: 149–50 [159]. See also the later *Against Themistius*: 'Just as, for example, undefined and undifferentiated "man" is common to us, so the undefined, adorable Trinity is what is called the common godhead'; *C. Themistium*, fr. 24: 156 [162]. This comparison would seem at odds with what Philoponus says elsewhere, because 'man' is not a genus but a species. Perhaps its context was a discussion of Gregory of Nyssa's 'one-man' argument in the *Ad Ablabium*. **67** Porphyry, *Isagoge*, 9.14–16; Philoponus, *In Aristotelis de Anima Libros Commentaria* (CAG XV) 4.4–32. **68** Philoponus, *Arbiter* VIII, 31–2: 28–30 Šanda. See Boethius' final definition of natura in his *Contra Eutychen et Nestorium* I.57–8 (LCL 80), following Aristotle's Physica B.1: 193²28–31: 'Nature is the specific differentia that gives form to anything (*natura est unam quamque rem informans specifica differentia*)'. **69** Philoponus, *De Trinitate*, fr. 10: 152 [160]. **70** Philoponus, *De Trinitate*, fr. 11: 152 [160].

> properties themselves. And therefore they are entirely different from one another in species (ἑτεροειδεῖς).[71]
>
> There is not another fourth God apart from the Father, the Son and the Holy Spirit, having his own hypostasis.[72]

In another fragment from the *On the Trinity* Philoponus argues that if the three hypostases are not accidents, they are necessarily substances and natures. Therefore it is correct to speak of a plurality of natures in the Trinity.[73] Philoponus' claims that it is in accordance with tradition to affirm three consubstantial substances in the Trinity. The doctors of the Church only rejected three substances that are not consubstantial and different in genus. To corroborate this claim, he appeals to the authority of Dionysius of Rome and Gregory (presumably Nyssen).[74]

Philoponus even insists that the doctrine of consubstantiality can only be upheld if the three Persons of the Trinity are not taken to be numerically one:

> From what is said by the Church, that the Father is consubstantial with the Logos, Arius has drawn the absurd conclusion that therefore the Father and the Logos are the same. But you, while admitting the real absurdity deduced by him (namely that Father, Son and Holy Spirit are the same), by saying that the godhead of Father, Son and Holy Spirit is the same numerically, have denied the consubstantiality. For consubstantiality is not in one thing but in many.[75]

As argued already in *On the Trinity* (fr. 6; see above), the divine Persons are consubstantial not in their totalities but insofar as the share the common godhead that is different in each.

In his third treatise *Against Themistius* Philoponus reaffirms his understanding of the Trinity with a remarkably polemical edge. Nothing called 'common' has existence of its own apart from the particulars; there is only this horse, only this man, only this angel. 'God' alone does not exist apart from the Father, Son and

71 Philoponus, *De theologia*, fr. 13: 153 [160]; fr. 12: 152–3 [160]. **72** Philoponus, *C. Themistium*, fr. 25: 156 [162]; fr. 22: 156 [162]. **73** Philoponus, *De Trinitate*, fr. 9: 152 [160]. **74** Philoponus, *De Trinitate*, fr. 7: 151 [160–1]; *C. Themistum*, fr. 21: 156 [162]. Gregory of Nyssa, however, insisted that the divine nature was one in species (μονοειδής, a word going back to Plato, *Symposium*, 211e and *Phaedo*, 80b) in *Adversus Macedonianos de Spiritu Sancto* (GNO III/1. 89–91) and *In Canticum Canticorum V* (GNO VI. 158). It would seem likely that the use of μονοειδής for the Trinity in sixth- and seventh-century authors like Pamphilus and Maximus Confessor is a reaction to the Tritheist doctrine of Philoponus. This might even be the case with Dioscorus of Aphrodito's encomium of 568, since by then the division among the Miaphysite party caused by Tritheism had reached Egypt as well. L.S.B. MacCoull, '*Uniformis Trinitas*: once more the Theopaschite trinitarianism of Dioscorus of Aphrodito', in *GRBS* 42 (2001) 83–96. **75** Philoponus, *De theologia*, fr. 16: 153–4 [161].

Holy Spirit Philoponus emphasizes against the 'Sabellianisers' who overstate the divine unity at the expense of the (numerically) distinct reality of the three hypostases.[76] Whoever rejects Philoponus' understanding of the Trinity is bound either to confess only a trinity in number (*τριωνυμία*) like Sabellius or to affirm a plurality of godheads different in nature, which is branded Arian or even atheist.[77]

In the course of time the Tritheist controversy obviously became increasingly acerbic. Thus Philoponus writes in an otherwise unknown letter to a partisan:

> The cause of all these evils has been the treatise which they say was composed by Theodosius, but is not his.[78]

The treatise mentioned in this fragment presumably is Theodosius' *Theological Discourse*, the most influential refutation of Tritheism among the anti-Chalcedonians, or the *Overview* of it. Apparently, the Patristic argument was an issue even at this later stage in the controversy. This is also suggested by two fragments of uncertain origin, which are contained in the first of six anti-Tritheist treatises in Syriac:[79]

> John the Grammarian also attests that 'three substances' or 'three natures' is not said by the Fathers. He states: As far as I know, the number 'three' is not found *ipso verbo* in the Fathers applied to either substance or nature.[80]

> They have proscribed not only [to affirm] three substances and natures, but also three particular (τινες) substances and three particular (τινες) natures; as the Grammarian, your father, has said, [the word τινες] distinguishes the individuals from the common.[81]

The point in Philoponus' philosophical defence of Tritheism is that the divine nature cannot be understood of in terms of a particular substance with an existence of its own. Rather, the generic divinity exists only in the three hypostases and constitutes a numerically different species in each of them. Philoponus' earliest critics took him to mean that the unity between the three Persons of the

76 Philoponus, *Against Themistius*, fr. 22: 156 [162]. 77 Philoponus, *Against Themistius*, fr. 20 and 18: 154–5 [161–2]. 78 Philoponus, *Epistula ad consentaneum quemdam*, fr. 26: 157 [162]. 79 Edited by G. Furlani, *Sei scritti antitriteistici in lingua sirica* (PO XVI. 673–766). 80 Philoponus, fr. 27: 157 [162]. 81 Philoponus, fr. 28: 157 [162]. See also *Tractatus theologici ratio et scopus: DM*, 37.3–10 [24.21–7] (tr. Ebied, *Peter of Callinicum* [above, n. 23] 53, n. 41): 'This word τις the fathers have used in a philosophical sense as Aristotle teaches. When τις is added to a word embracing a plurality, it distinguishes and indicates a particular being amongst the others included in the general, comprehensive term. He who says "man" understands in this word the whole human race. But when one adds τις to it and says τις ἄνθρωπος one separates and indicates one man in the totality.'

Trinity is not real, but only a mental abstraction. Damian of Alexandria in his *Synodical Letter* quotes two Tritheist text attributed to Philoponus:

> The godhead and substance that is in the adorable Trinity is one not in reality (*ἐν πράγματι*) but only in mind and abstraction (*ἐν λόγῳ*). In this way God is understood as one, but there are three substances of God, with the substances and natures being divided in the hypostases. Thus the Father is another God, the Son another God and the Holy Ghost another God.

> Just as all of us are one only when understood in the common intelligible content of substance (*τῇ κοινότητι τοῦ λόγου τῆς οὐσίας*) whereas, however, we see that in reality and truth we are many men; so there is a single God only in our thought by virtue of their having the substance in common. In reality and truth there are three of them, while the godhead being divided in the hypostases; regarding what they have in common, however, it is the same.[82]

Arguably, Philoponus' understanding of universals as mental concepts abstracted from and applied to the particulars, when used to explain the doctrine of the Trinity, does not account sufficiently for the unity of God. This was the pertinent criticism of Peter of Callinicus' *Anti-Tritheist Dossier*, where Philoponus is charged with making the divine substance a mere figment of the mind and posterior abstraction.[83]

To conclude, at the origin of the Tritheist controversy of the sixth century, there was an infelicitous interpretation of Patristic testimonies. As I have argued, Philoponus endorsed Tritheism not because it was a consequence of his theory of universals but rather because he found it a convincing solution to problems in the relationship between the doctrine of the Trinity and Christology. He then used his intellectual acumen to defend Ascoutzanges' heterodox language on the Trinity and gave it a philosophical foundation. The rise of Tritheism was the sign of genuine crisis in the way of expressing the mystery of the Triune God in human speech.

82 Philoponus, fr. 29 and 30: 157–8 [162–3]. 83 Ebied et al., *Peter of Callinicum* (above, n. 23) 32.

Maximus Confessor on the Holy Trinity and deification

Nicholas Madden OCD

PRELIMINARY REMARKS

In the theology of St Maximus, the world does not have an immanent end, but, in the eternal *boulē* of God, it was destined to be united to Him through the mediation of man become son in his Son. Maximus sees this realized in the *kenōsis* of the Logos, so that everything that he has to say in the *Pater Noster*,[1] for instance, is set in the framework of *kenōsis-theōsis*. It was only the *kenōsis* of the Logos that enabled God to enter the tragic condition of human beings and revive them in their vocation to become children of God. In this way, human freedom is left intact; no external pressure was brought to bear; salvation would not be effected by the violent imposition of a divine nature on a human nature. For this reason, Maximus would find the traditional image of the union of soul and body defective as an analogy for the mystery of the redemptive incarnation.[2] That mystery for him was a grace, something that entirely transcended natural necessity. It was a mystery in another dimension of being. In the incarnation and redemption, the divine nature acts through the movement of *kenōsis*. It is in this sense that the Logos, while not forsaking his divinity nor the mysterious *perichōrēsis* with the Father and the Spirit which is the eternal life of God, can be said to be the *autourgos* of the incarnation.[3] It is in him alone that it is wrought hypostatically. It is his hypostasis that enhypostasizes the human being and life of Jesus, thus opening to men the new birth as sons of God in the Spirit through his obedience unto death, death on a cross.

The dynamism of the filialized being and life and death of Jesus is *agapē*. As Maximus sees it, the law of nature and the written law are surpassed and perfected by the law of grace: 'for there is no greater love than this that a man should lay down his life for his friends'.[4] Because in him we find a hypostatic subject of human being and life, we find too a hypostatic transposition of the laws of nature. *Agapē* is the impress of the hypostasis of the Logos on a human freedom enabling his human will to move freely from within, preserving the *asunchytōs, atreptōs* of

1 PG 90, 872D–908D. 2 J.M. Garrigues, 'La Personne composée du Christ d'après saint Maxime le Confesseur' in *RevThom*, 74 (1974) 189–96. 3 PG 90, 876C; 905D. 4 *Qu. Thal.* PG 90, 924C–928A.

Chalcedon not merely in the natures, but in his willing and activity, as Maximus would have occasion to remind the Monothelites and Monenergists in his tireless defence of orthodoxy.[5]

Maximus' doctrine of the *hypostasis sunthetos* enables him to see that the Logos, enhypostasizes a human nature by assuming it into his personal mode of existence so that the hypostasis of the Son becomes the source and mode of the human existence of Jesus.[6] It is the Son who innovates this individual human nature by transposing it into his filial mode so that the mode of the Economy in the flesh is the hypostatic mode of the eternal Logos. The individual traits of this human nature express the hypostatic uniqueness of the Logos:

> By the things through which he is distinguished from the extremes (natures), he showed the identity of the parts in the hypostasis. Therefore Christ had the common and the proper of the parts of both of which he was composed. The common by reason of the identity of nature between the extremes and his parts, an identity according to which he keeps and saves the difference of the parts among themselves, after the union. The proper by reason of the hypostatic union of the parts, in so far as he is distinct from the natures, keeping unconfusedly his distinction in their regard.[7]

As Garrigues says so aptly: 'for Maximus, the hypostatic union rests on two isomorphic but asymmetrtical distinctions: the individuation of the human nature in the existence of Jesus and the irreducibility of the hypostasis of the Son in the divine existence'.[8] We do not have a *tertium quid* in the mystery of the hypostatic union, but we know that it is the identical person who makes the divinity his in the mystery of the Trinity and the humanity his in the incarnation. It is because of this that he manifests the Father and leads men reconciled in the Spirit to the Father. It is the philanthropic *kenōsis* which enables us to penetrate to the eternal counsel of the Trinity. Because Christ, one of the Three, has become the 'angel of the great counsel' we can surmise why incarnation has to be rooted in the mystery of the Trinity. The created reality of Jesus of Nazareth, because it subsists in the eternal Logos, expresses the eternal counsel of the Trinity in man's regard. 'As the Father has loved me, so have I loved you'; 'having loved his own who were in the world, he loved them to the limit'. The fact of Jesus is a revelation of the divine philanthropy:

> For the Word remained in possession of his intelligence and his life and was comprehended by no one at all in substance except by the Father alone

5 See M. Doucet, *La dispute de S. Maxime le Confesseur avec Pyrrhus, introduction, texte critique, traduction et notes* (unpublished thesis, Montreal, 1972), 339–52. 6 See N. Madden, 'Composite hypostasis in Maximus Confessor' in *Studia Patristica* 27 (1993) 175ff. 7 *Ep.* 15, PG 91, 557CD. 8 J.M. Garrigues, *Maxime le Confesseur* (Paris, 1976), 171.

> and the Spirit and effected the hypostatic union with the flesh because of his philanthropy.[9]

Just as each of the persons of the Trinity possesses the nature, substance, power and energy of God in a distinctive way,[10] so each of the persons possesses the divine will and *boulē* in regard to man in a characteristic manner. In the same way the three persons were involved in the mystery of the incarnation according to their hypostatic identities; referring to the Father and to the Spirit, Maximus says: 'for the former delighted in and the latter co-operated with the Son, who himself effected the incarnation (*autourgounti*)'.[11] While the Son assumes flesh, the Father and the Spirit do not renounce their eternal properties in their relationships with the Son; where he is they are; where he acts they act. The Son in the flesh can embody the eternal counsel of God the Father because the eternal Son makes his own entirely what he receives from his Father: his nature, his energy, his will, his counsel:

> The great counsel of God the Father is the secret and unknown mystery of the divine economy. By accomplishing it through the incarnation, the only-begotten Son has revealed it and has become the angel of the eternal counsel of God the Father.[12]

Maximus does not merely include his trinitarian meditations here to satisfy a need for formal completeness, to present a comprehensive picture of Christian doctrine. The very fact of the *kenōsis* would be unintelligible, as he knows, without the mystery of the irreducibility of the persons to the nature in God. In the *Pater Noster* he insists that in the dominical prayer the Lord 'initiates them into the mode of existence of the creative cause of beings',[13] that is, into the mystery of that irreducibility, which he goes on to account for in terms of relationship: 'for relationship possesses the power of simultaneously demonstrating the terms of which it is and is said to be a relation, without allowing them to be thought of as one subsequent to the other'.[14]

Because theology has to rely on human language, a human logical category has to be invoked to try to account for what transcends the order of nature, even in God. The co-subsistence and the co-inherence of the divine persons can be intimated, if not explained, by insisting that the one nature is identical with three persons whose distinctness cannot be abstracted from their relationship to one another and whose character of being persons cannot be deduced from, nor reduced to, the mystery of the unique divine substance:

> The knowledge which man has of the movement according to which the Monad is a Triad is incapable of grasping the simultaneous manifestation in God of his principle of being and of the mode of his hypostatic existence.[15]

9 *Or. Dom.* PG 90, 876C. 10 *Cap. Theol.* 2,1. PG 90, 1124D–1125C. 11 *Or. Dom.* PG 90, 876C. 12 *Cap. Theol.* 2,23. PG 90, 1136A. 13 *Or. Dom.* PG 90, 884B. 14 Ibid., 884C. 15 R. Canart, 'La deuxième lettre à Thomas' in *Byzantion* 34 (1964) 433. 16 C. von Schönborn, *Sophrone de Jerusalem* (Paris, 1972), 127. 17 *Ep.* 44, PG 91, 644A. 18 J.M. Garrigues, *Maxime le Confesseur* (Paris, 1976), 156–8. 19 Ibid., 158. Cf. von Schönborn, op. cit., 130–1. 20 *Ep.* 19, PG 91, 592D.

The incomprehensibility of the trinitarian mystery is partly bound up with the inability of man to conceive of threeness without opposition of individuals in nature and to conceive a unity that does not remove distinctness. In God, 'the absolute irreducibility of three persons among themselves is not in conflict with the absolute uniqueness of the divine nature'.[16] Maximus uses the language of the Cappadocians to account for this transcendence of the mystery and its supreme ineffability. In this mystery it is the contrast between the *logos* and *tropos* in God which allows us to grasp in faith why One of the Three can assume human nature and also to have some idea of why the *agapē* that is manifested in the redemptive incarnation is an expression of the mysterious possession of one nature by three persons and how they communicate to each other the fullness of divinity in perfect freedom. As Maximus says, God is 'more than good',[17] which is glossed by Garrigues as meaning that the life of the Holy Trinity transposes hypostatically the properties of the divine essence and enables God to come in person as philanthropist and messenger of the eternal *boulē* of the Trinity.[18] In this way, because of the hypostatic emphasis in interpretation, Maximus can find the trinitarian economy through the *kenōsis*, without that dread of implying subordinationism which overshadowed theological reflection since the Arian controversy. He can hold in creative tension the complementary doctrines of the consubstantiality of the three persons and, like the ante-Nicene Fathers, the 'condescension' of the Three in their economy centred on the *kenōsis* of the eternal Logos.[19] Christology and anthropology are seen to have their ultimate source in the life of the Trinity and mystery of God's plan to draw men into union with himself in *theōsis* to be accomplished in the *kenōsis* of the Logos:

> The voluntary *kenōsis* of God gave rise to the mystery through his good will towards men. But his voluntary condescension (*sugkatabasis*) through the flesh was not a falling away from divinity. For being immutable, He remained what he was and he became what he was not. He preserved what he had become, while remaining what he was in the beginning, for he is a lover of men.[20]

NOTES ON TERMINOLOGY

While it is true that we do not find a systematic treatment of the doctrine of the Trinity in the theology of Maximus , it is equally true that this doctrine is so fundamental to his Christian vision that his Christology and anthropology would be

senseless without it. One might say that the mystery of the Trinity is the alpha and the omega of his contemplation. He inherited a classical terminology to use in his references to the Trinity and he used it masterfully and with originality. In the *Theological Orations* of Gregory of Nazianzus, we have a splendid formulation of 'the Cappadocian settlement' where we find the fruit of the laborious development of a theology that is in harmony with the rule of faith laid down at Nicea.[21] Maximus was in full .possession of that elaboration. Before we address a typical instance of his Trinitarian reflection, it will be in place to review some of the principal terms hammered out by the great masters from Athanasius to Gregory of Nazianzus. By the time of the 'settlement' the term 'consubstantial' *(homoousios)* designates not merely the situation of the Son in relation to the Father, but of each hypostasis *(hypostasis)* in relation to the divinity. It was held that the three hypostases did not alone go back to a unity-source among themselves (the Father), but that they constituted a unity in themselves. The formula accepted as most precisely orthodox was that there are three distinct hypostases in the unique nature *(physis)* or substance *(ousia)* of the divinity and finally that if there are three distinct hypostases, their names express the relation *(schesis)* which they have among themselves and not the substance.

It was Athanasius who saw the value of *homoousion* in describing the relations of Father, Son and Holy Spirit as well as its usefulness in alluding to the consubstantiality of the Trinity as a whole. God is three in one and one in three. *Ousia* obviously refers to the godhead as such, but not merely declaring that it is, but what it is in terms of its proper reality. It is unthinkable that there should be two such gods, so that the word implies God's oneness and uniqueness. 'One' in this usage has to be released from quantitative restrictions. There is no 'two'. The use of 'three' has to be qualified also. The Fathers use *hypostasis* to designate Father, Son and Holy Spirit, but here again discourage the urge to count. While the term does not lose its denotation of subsistent being it implies too unequivocal distinctness. The *ousia-hypostasis* terminology, which the Cappadocians elaborated with such finesse to speak of the Trinity without endangering its ineffable character, was complemented by terms like *hyparxis, gennesis, tropos tēs hyparxeōs, tou pōs einai logos* to refer to *hypostasis*, while *ousia* and *physis* have a counterpart in *logos physeōs*. The pair *logos-tropos* would find a significant role in the theological vocabulary of Maximus. It may be well at this juncture to recall that there is an ineffable richness and resonance to these words, something of which Gregory reminds us at the end of the fifth *Oration*. It is he too who declares that a person is the possessor of a nature, so that in this mystery 'the Three' possess 'the One'. Gregory admits us to the way in which he thinks when he says *Theos, Theos mou, kai Theos trissē monas* 'God, my God, and God, triple unity'.[22]

21 See *Grégoire de Nazianze, Discours 27–31*, with introduction etc. by P. Gallay assisted by M. Jourjon, Sources Chrétiennes, No. 250 (Paris, 1978). I have used this for texts from Gregory as well as commentary by the translators. 22 PG 37, 1248A.

It is to Athanasius too that we are indebted for the notion that would eventually be designated by *perichōrēsis*, the expression of an insight into the co-indwelling of the persons in the Trinity, evocative of the circulation of infinite life and hinting at how the possession of the divine nature by one person does not deprive the others of total possession of the same nature. In his concern to maintain the balance between 'one and three', Basil of Caesarea introduced the notion of *gnōrismata oikeia – idiōmata*, the distinguishing properties of the hypostases, so that if a person is a nature with distinct properties, in God it is valid to discern one nature and three basic distinguishing properties. For Gregory of Nazianzus, the mystery of the Trinity is that of God who is unengendered, who engenders his Word and from whom proceeds the Spirit. He insists that this engendering and procession is eternal and does not imply any notion of sequence or subordination. Because these properties do not pertain to the substance of the godhead as such, but to the persons, Gregory is on the way to a theology of divine hypostases, which, in being distinct from one another, reveal themselves to be hypostases at the heart of the identity of the divine substance. Nor do the names of the persons refer to operation; they are the names of relations *(scheseis)*. To call God the Father is not to say what he is, but to say what he is in relation to his Son.

It is well known that the Church was first engaged in clarifying and establishing the relationship between the Father and the Son in the Trinity and that *homoousios* emerged in that context. Without having to elaborate his thinking, we can pertinently quote Gregory of Nazianzus' extension of the principle to the Holy Spirit: 'And we, now, we have seen and we preach: from the light of the Father we lay hold of the light that is the Son in the light of the Holy Spirit – a brief and simple theology of the Trinity'.[23] Gregory of Nyssa makes a distinction between *koinotēs* and *koinōnia*, between 'community' and 'communion', the former referring to substance, the latter to persons. In the following passage he uses this distinction in his treatment of Trinitarian co-inherence:

> There is apprehended among these three a certain ineffable and inconceivable communion *(koinōnia)* and at the same time distinction *(diakrisis)*, with neither the difference between their persons *(hypostaseōn)* disintegrating the continuity of their nature, nor this community of substance *(kata tēn ousian koinōtētos)* confounding the individual character of their distinguishing notes... We devise a strange and paradoxical sort of united separation and separated union.[24]

In the teaching of Maximus, the relations that constitute the persons in the Trinity are replicated in the missions and so in his flesh he manifests the Father and the

23 PG 36, 136C. 24 *Ad Petrum* 4. 83–91. See L. Turcescu, 'The concept of divine persons in Gregory of Nyssa's *To His Brother Peter, on the Difference between Ousia and Hypostasis*' in *The Greek Orthodox Theological Review* 42 (1997) 63–82.

Spirit. 'The hypostasis of the Son, in other words, is communion with the Father and the Spirit'; [25] this is a further and perhaps even unexpected insight into what *koinōnia* implies in the inner life of God and gives us insight into the acuity of Maximus' grasp of what is at stake in alluding to the Trinity, of the need to respect the mystery and of keeping in mind that theology *ceteris paribus* can be largely a matter of watching one's language. While we recall that he admitted that it is beyond human ability to grasp 'the simultaneous manifestation in God of his principle of being and of the mode of his hypostatic existence' *(logos – tropos)*,[26] a glance at a few texts will show that he had a rare gift for keeping in focus this 'paradoxical sort of united separation and separated union'. For instance in *1 Ambigua*, he is set on showing that we cannot think of the life in the Trinity in terms of expansion and contraction nor of division issuing in composition:

> The Monad is truly the Monad. It is not a beginning, afterwards taking the form of a contraction of its expansion, as if it tended naturally to move towards a plurality, but rather the enhypostasized being of the consubstantial Triad. The Triad is truly the Triad. It is not, as if by accomplishment of numerical diversity, a composition of monads presupposing division, but rather the monosubstantial *(enousios)* existence of the tri-hypostasised Monad.[27]

Even a critic of this translation would admit that here there is a play on words between *enhypostatos ontotēs hooousiou Triados* and *enousios hyparxis trishypostatou monados*[28] and not merely an exercise in mental gymnastics in the spirit of Perez de Ayala's Belarmino. Every syllable is calculated to ensure the equilibrium of Trinitarian language. The Monad is being but it exists as hypostases and this eternally; the Triad is constituted by threefold hypostases but as the realisation of the existence of a substantial Monad, and this also in an eternal now. To do full justice to this statement would require the deployment of all the terms that were forged with such reverend precision by the Fathers. Here we shall content ourselves with quoting the author's conclusion in the context of the passage quoted. Whatever movement takes place, takes place in us, not in God. Referring to the knowledge we acquire of the Trinity he says: 'For first we are illuminated with the reason for its being, then we are enlightened about the mode in which it subsists, for we always understand that something is before we understand how it is.'[29] It seems to be effortless for Maximus to toss off the most exact formulae when required, an indication that in some way he had the wholeness of his vision as context for everything that he had to say. For instance, in the *Mystagōgia* when it

25 A. Nicholls, *Byzantine Gospel* (Edinburgh, 1993), 67. The author gives a masterful synthesis of P. Piret, *Le Christ et la trinité selon Maxime le Confesseur* (Paris, 1983). 26 See n.15 above. 27 *1 Ambig.* PG 91, 1036B. 28 A. Louth, *Maximus the Confessor* (London & New York, 1996) 214, n. 5. 29 *1 Ambig.* PG 91, 1036C.

is called for he can open up a horizon in his liturgical meditations that show us clearly how integrated his Christian insight is and the enfolding character of his Trinitarian doctrine:

> God is One: one essence, three hypostases; One alone; as a substance of Three Hypostases, a consubstantial Trinity of Persons; only One in Trinity, and a Trinity in Unity; not one unit plus another, nor one beside another, nor one through or in another, or one out of another, but the same Unity itself, in relation to, and for Itself; identical with itself, both a Unity and a Trinity, unconfused, holding to Its unity without confusion yet preserving its distinctions undivided and inseparable; a Unity with reference to what we call His Essence, that is to say His principle of being *(tou einai logos)* not through a synthesis, contraction or confusion of any kind; but still a Trinity in reference to the expression of His manner of existing or subsistence *(tou pōs hyparchein kai huphestanai logos)* not however by division or alienation or separation of any kind. For the Persons cause no division in the Only One, nor is their Unity present, or considered to be present in them, in an incidental or merely relative way; neither are the Persons formed into a compound Unit, nor do they make it up by a process of contraction; the same Unity is identical with Itself, but in a variety of ways. The Holy Trinity of hypostases or Persons is an unconfused Unity in essence and when considered simply in relation to Itself *(logos)*; in Its hypostases and the manner *(tropos)* of its existence the Holy Unity is a Trinity.[30]

We find the same theological preoccupations here as we have noted in the passage from the *Ambigua*, and again it would demand recourse to the full panoply of Cappadocian terminology to tease out its implications. Maximus inserts it in the *Mystagōgia* as a culmination to initiation into the mysteries of God through the liturgy, so that he would have us think of his language as that through which faith attained to reality rather than as an intricate Byzantine conundrum calculated to engage the mind alone. He elaborates some of the implications of the *trissē monas* by excluding quantity, contiguity, causality and emanation as ways of accounting for the distinctness of the hypostases, while synthesis, contraction and confusion are eliminated as ways of accounting for the *monas*. Familiar ways of thinking have to be relinquished and perhaps no word is pushed to 'critical mass' more than *esti*. In *Letter 15*, we are confronted by the stark declaration that *homoousia esti heterohypostasia*.[31] Nicholls glosses this helpfully when he writes: 'the divine *homoousion*, as being common to the hypostases in their communion, is the direct and immediate expression of those Persons in their otherness'.[32]

30 *Myst.* PG 91, 699D–701A. The translation is taken, with some modifications, from J. Stead, *The Church, the liturgy and the soul of man* (Still River, MA, 1982), 99–100. 31 *Ep.* 15, PG 91 549B. 32 A. Nicholls, op. cit., 80.

In *Opuscula Theologica et Polemica* 13, Maximus provides us with a synthesis of errors that had occurred in the course of reflection on the role of *ousia* and *hypostasis* in both the theology of the Trinity and of Christ.[33] *Homoousia* and *heterohypostasia* are at the core of his Trinitarian orthodoxy. Maximus contributes *tautotēs* and *heterotēs* to the articulation of the doctrine of the Trinity, but they also serve him in Christology and in showing a continuity and coherence between the two subjects of theological reflection. In *Opuscula Theologica et Polemica* 10, Maximus notes that the Latins make do with one verb to speak of the provenance of the Son and of the Spirit, whereas the Greeks use *ekporeusis* and *proienai*, the former to denote origination, the latter to include trinitarian ordering.[34] He is in agreement with Cyril of Alexandria who holds that 'the Spirit proceeds from the substance of the Son'[35] but he thinks too that this requires the nuance of *dia*, a subtlety not covered in the Latin usage. We shall now look more closely at one work of Maximus, his *Pater Noster*, keeping in mind his remarkable power to keep in mind Trinitarian issues and their virtual presence in everything that he has to say about this mystery.

THE PATER NOSTER

In this work, Maximus proposes to try cautiously to enter five mysteries of revelation by commenting on the seven petitions of the 'Our Father'. The first of these mysteries is 'theology', the inner life of God, and for him it corresponds to the first two petitions of the dominical prayer. He chooses to provide a threefold exegesis of the language of the prayer, firstly by treating it from a Christological point of view, then from a Christological and ascetical point of view combined, and lastly from an ascetical point of view. Here we shall look at the three synoptically. In the first treatment of the first two petitions from a Christological point of view we find that:

> The Word made flesh teaches theology in that he reveals the Father and the Holy Spirit. For the whole of the Father and the whole of the Holy Spirit were substantially and perfectly in the whole of the Son, even made flesh, although they themselves were not made flesh. The Father delighted in, and the Spirit co-operated with, the Son who himself effected his incarnation. For the Word remained in possession of his intelligence and of his life; he was comprehended by no one at all in substance except by the Father alone and by the Spirit, but he was united hypostatically with the flesh because of his love for man.[36]

We are not surprised to find that the Logos teaches 'theology'; Maximus is here concerned with the mystery of the Trinity in so far as it is communicated to many

33 PG 91, 145A–149D. 34 *Op. theol et pol.* PG 91, 136AB. 35 PG 75, 588A; 593CD. 36 *Or. Dom.* PG 90, 876CD.

through Christ. The mystery is first presented as *theologia*, so that the mystery is thought of in an anthropological context, in so far as it is communicated to mankind. So we do not find an abstract treatment of the mystery but sufficient elaboration to enable us to identify Christ as One of the Three in One, who puts on humanity by hypostatic union. It is the very being and life of the incarnate Word that is presented to us as revelatory of the mystery of the Trinity because he remains *ennous* and *zōn* in his incarnation, with the Father and the Spirit approving and co-operating respectively, even if it is the person of the Word who effects the incarnation as the one who takes flesh. The inseparability of the persons ensures that they are manifested in the incarnation (*sarkōsis*) of the Logos, that the economic Trinity is brought to our attention because it enters our life through Christ. The distinctness of the persons is emphasized by the use of their hypostatic names, while their *perichōrēsis* is equally stressed in the epithets applied to the Logos: *ennous* and *zōn*, where *nous* is a way of designating the Father and *zōē* the Spirit in so far as they comprehend or even penetrate (*chōroumenos*) the Logos by being said to be in him and in some way in his being alive. Note too that they are in him entirely (*ousiōdōs*), substantially, and that he is comprehended by them *kat' ousian*. It will be enough to refer back to the citation of Maximus' *homoousia esti heterohypostasia*[37] to have an intimation of what is implied here.

Unity is a preoccupation evident in all Maximus' thought, so that it is in order to suggest that here he is adumbrating in the being of God the principle of unity; the divine *ousia* will in some way find its counterpart in the *physis* shared by human beings and which has to be restored to its proper place and function in life. The revelation of the Father and the Spirit in the Logos incarnate is significant for man because he becomes a 'son' and shares in divine life; man participating in the Logos will be analogously *ennous* and *zōn*. Finally, *philanthropia* is thrown into relief here. It is given as the ultimate reason for the hypostatic union on which depends the whole possibility of the manifestation of the Trinity implied in *deiknus*, a showing to enable us to realize the implications of the mystery into which we have been drawn by the love of God.

In the central part of his commentary, that which combines Christology and anthropology, we find that Maximus identifies the 'Name' of the prayer with the Son and the 'Kingdom' with the Holy Spirit. His anthropological concerns are expressed in the terms *logos* and *praotēs* reason and meekness. The former term associated with its Platonic desire and irascibility is used with considerable virtuosity and is raised to the level of Logos so that human integration can be seen in function of hallowing the Logos. Meekness is the disposition for the reception of the Spirit and is allied to *agapē* in Maximus' thought, so that this wise passivity can be easily interpreted as openness to the coming of the Kingdom through the twofold pouring into the heart of man. These gifts are the basis of freedom and ultimately the emergence of a genuine person. It is obvious too that the Maximian

37 See n. 31 above.

couple *logos-tropos* is hovering in the background.

We are told that the Lord initiates men 'into the mode of existence' of God, that he is Father, Son and Holy Spirit. This initiation is the basis of 'theology', so that knowledge of the incarnate Logos is an introduction to the inner life of God. Insistence on the 'mode of existence' is a reminder that in God the one essence is identified hypostatically with the Trinity of persons. Because of its inaccessible transcendence human beings require the *mystagōgia* provided by the incarnate Logos. The God who is in some way apparent to his creatures through the radiations of his creative energy is revealed as a Father with a 'name' and a King with a 'kingdom'. The God of revelation is characterized by the irreducibility of the persons to the substance in the Godhead; in him is found a mysterious identity of unity and trinity. To recite the 'Our Father' is to invoke, venerate and adore the Trinity, to enter the triune life, 'to honour the Trinity as creative cause of our being' a being that is destined to move through well-being to ever-well-being, being 'one' even as they are one.

Maximus here confines himself to speaking of the Trinity in the way formulated after Nicea. He insists that the Son and the Spirit are co-eternal with the Father, that there is no question of subordination. He invokes the category of 'relationship' to account for the simultaneity of the processions and the circumincession within God. The implication is that the personal order cannot be deduced from the essential order in God, that the movement of divine life is not subject to the limitations of the created order, that man has to bow before the apophatic irreducibility of the persons to the essence in the Trinity. It is this irreducibility that allows the reconciliation of the incarnation of the Logos with the inviolability of the divine, so that God can be said to 'become' without our tampering with the total, simultaneous and perfect possession of life that characterizes God and the freedom of one person to become man without the others having to do the same. Maximus elaborates the deficiencies of the 'Hellenic' and 'semitic' views in commenting on 'neither Jew nor Greek'.[38] They seem to be code words for the followers of Arius and Sabellius. He criticises the Greeks' failure to appreciate the unity of God and their succumbing to the luxury of polytheism, with its attendant idolisation of the powers of nature. To the 'Jews' he attributes an arid monotheism which fails to make room for the richness of an inner personal life in God; he welcomes the rite of circumcision as evidence of an outlook that would fit more comfortably the followers of Marcion or Manes. These observations have the sharp edge of polemicism and seem to be conditioned by contemporary concerns and style.

Here, too, he excludes ways of thinking about the Trinity that would spring from the attitudes which were noted above *a propos* of the passage quoted from the *Mystagōgia* and offend either the *trissē* or the *monas*. Polytheism is not introduced by fragmentation nor is atheism by confusion. Having rejected these positions, he says that they are not to be found in Christ, 'but only the conception of true religion, a firm of law of mystical theology',[39] a way of referring to the mystery of the Trinity. He winds up his criticism with this pregnant statement:

> That would mean deprived of Logos and of Spirit or qualified by Logos and Spirit, but then God would not be not worshipped as Nous, Logos and Spirit. It teaches us, who have been introduced to a recognition of the truth by the vocation of grace through faith, to know the one nature and power of the godhead, that is to say one God, contemplated in Father, Son and Holy Spirit. That means the unique uncaused substantially subsistent Nous who is the generator of the Logos, who subsists substantially without cause, who is the source of the only eternal Life that subsists in a substantial manner as the Holy Spirit, a Trinity in Unity and a Unity in Trinity.[40]

Here Maximus distinguishes the persons of the Trinity as *Nous, Logos* and *Pneuma / Zōē*, where zōē is in some way a 'fulfilment' of *logos-tropos* and so earns its way into Trinitarian analogy. It is well known that Maximus was punctilious about language and literary structure, so that it will serve our purpose to examine this passage with some care.[41] Firstly, the use of *Nous* to express the hypostatic distinction of the Father and of *Zōē* to perform a comparable function for the Holy Spirit enables us to establish that when the author said that the incarnate Logos continued to be *ennous* and *zōn*, he was affirming the continued *perichōrēsis* of the Father and the Spirit in the Son, even when the incarnation had taken place. They were present by virtue of their personal characteristics and the circumincession that their common identity with the one divine nature warrants. It is this that underlies the fact that the Father is present as *eudokōn* and the Spirit as *synergoun* 'in the whole Son entirely even made flesh'. The context of this second exegesis of the first petitions of the 'Our Father' requires taking note of the impossibility of identifying the subject of Christology without recognising his eternal relationships in the Trinity. It is these relationships that validate the Economy as a revelation of the inner life of God and make it a declaration of *philanthropia*.

Secondly, the analogy of the structure of the soul works in two directions for Maximus. He can try to penetrate something of the inner life of God by arranging the data of revelation in terms of the dynamism of the human spirit and in turn he can then speak of the participation of human beings in the life of God by finding a trinitarian mode in human spiritual life. In this view, man in his maturity is so identified with God that he perceives his *nous, logos* and *pneuma/zōē* as a way of doing 'theology' and moreover that their source, energy, and process

38 *Or. Dom.* PG 90, 893AB.

39 Ibid. 892B. 40 Ibid. 892C. See Origen, *Comm. in Joannem.*, 1,38 (42). 41 See N. Madden, 'An example of the structural methodology of Maximus the Confessor' in F. Heinzer & C. Schönborn (eds), *Maximus Confessor* (Fribourg, 1982), 147ff.

are in the last analysis more attributable to God than to man himself. The Fathers, not least Gregory of Nazianzus to whom Maximus was so indebted, favoured this analogy as a way of thinking about and describing the Trinity. They saw in it a threefold expression of one living reality and *ceteris paribus* a way of expressing their theological insights without presumption. *Nous* means the basic openess of spirit to reality, *logos* the expression of this in understanding and *pneuma* allied to *gnōmē* a function of approval and love. These implied life in triple expression rather than faculties. The Father, designated as *Nous*, is the generator of the Logos and the source of Life (*Zōē*), a careful formulation to ensure the expression of the difference in modes of procession.

We have seen that the Father and the Spirit are in the Son *ousiōdōs*, substantially; He is held by them *kat' ousian*. This refers to the substance and nature of the godhead, so that the coinherence and mutual indwelling of the three persons, while it is in the hypostatic realm, is required by their equally possessing the same divine being. It can be said that it is their nature to be united by the very constitution of relationships, 'l'union d'ousie est différence de l'hypostasie'.[42] Their circumincession is not in any way a relinquishing of their personal characteristics, but because they are identical with the same divine nature, they are intimately bound to each other personally, giving and receiving a nature with which they are identical and doing so in perfect freedom, something guaranteed by the irreducibility of the persons to the nature in God. When Maximus speaks of *ennous* in this context, he is referring to that personal coinherence and for the purpose of insisting that the Three are bound up in creation and redemption, albeit according to their personal traits, which enables the Son to assume human nature without involving the other persons in the way that he is involved. We might say that they act in concert to produce the incarnation, and the Son does so besides as the term of this Trinitarian action, that the humanity exists in him because he subsists in the humanity.

Introspection yields *nous* as the source of *logos*, the most significant analogy for the Word who was in the beginning with the Father and whose procession is complemented by *pneuma/zōē*, a function that rounds off the vitality of spirit and was favoured by the Fathers as a way of referring to the Spirit who is subsistent sigh of love between the Father and the Son. In this commentary on the hallowing of the Name and the coming of the Kingdom, the ideas of *logos* and *praotēs* are fundamental. The Name-Logos is hallowed when *logos* finds its true level in man's life, a state of *apatheia*. *Praotēs* is linked with the Kingdom-Spirit and his coming into man's life so that human freedom is stabilized by being moored to the sovereign freedom of God. *Praotēs* is virtually identical with *agapē* in Maximus' thought and so has affinity with the Spirit. The reign of *agapē* in human life has profound significance for Maximus as it is the grace of filiation and so brings about a participation in the Son's relation to the Father, which is synonymous with his being

42 P. Piret, *Le Christ et la Trinité selon Maxime le Confesseur* (Paris, 1983), 133. 43 See J.M.

Son and releases man into a fullness of life-*zōē*.[43] This is the work of the Spirit. It is easy to conclude that *theōsis* is from the Father in the Son and by the Spirit. Variations on the conjunctions give other angles on this mystery but need not detain us here. However it must be said that the ripening of this life produces a person in the true sense, so that as Maximus sees it, human *tropos hyparxeōs* or *tropos tou pōs einai* is the masterpiece of the Spirit's work, a condition that brings man within the mystery of the divine life and makes him a 'sharer in the divine nature'.

The *logos* that emanates from the *logos physeōs*, the faculty of being logical in Maximus' sense, has its source in a principle (*logos*) of nature, that is ultimately derived from the *Logos* in whom the *logoi* of all the rationals are to be found. We glorify the *Logos* when our lives are resplendent with the impress of their source, when our conduct shows that we are God's children 'by what we think or do'. It is the holiness of our being that honours the 'Name' since he is the source of that holiness. We testify to him by being like him. We have already intimated that there is another dimension to this, that we are related to the *Logos* who is *ennous* and *zōn* by being caught into his personal relation to his Father, able to say *Abba*, not by mimicry but out of an ontological transformation that makes us children in name and in truth, a condition identical with being a person in this view of things. It would be in order to say that we are *logoi* in the *Logos*

When Maximus treats of the Spirit's intervention in human life, he says that 'in those mortified' by the influence of *logos* 'the Power of the Kingdom comes'.[44] The sequence is not temporal, but rather logical; the power of the Kingdom cannot come where nature is not restored to its integral harmony by *apatheia*. The turmoil of a life dominated by passion is inconsistent with the reception of the Holy Spirit and his gifts. We become temples of the Spirit by the *logos* and *tropos* of meekness, *praotēs*. There is a dimension to man's being that is not derived from *logos*, nor can it be reduced to it. It is something sovereign and independent, a mode of being. Meekness has its *logos*, but it has another side to it, something that is not restricted to the field of the logical. He takes two images from Scripture to develop his insight into this twofold aspect of meekness; the 'earth' and 'rest'. For him the 'earth' means the 'middle position of the universe' and so it symbolizes stability and immutability that come through meekness, a stable habit and power. The now impassible man is impervious to inclination, not swaying from side to side, but holding to the mean of virtue in meekness. The anchorage of this stability is the divine freedom as we saw above. Just as man lacks a *ratio sui*, so in this philosophy he will be forever dependent on another freedom to be free, but that freedom is indefectible and limitlessly benevolent so that there will be no disappearance into a black hole of one's own devising. Maximus does not subscribe to Origen's optimism in this context, but neither does he take definitive judgement on himself.

The synergic character of that freedom is underlined by the other image taken

Garrigues, *Maxime le Confesseur*, passim. The subtitle of the book is *La charité avenir divin de l'homme*. 44 *Or. Dom.* PG 90, 885B.

from Scripture, that of 'rest'. He has already spoken of the immobility *(akinēsia)* that marks sense desire (*epithumia*) when *logos* informs it. But movement is at the very basis of his cosmology, linking as it does the primal *genesis* with the final *stasis*.[45] Here he gives us insight into the kind of movement that he visualizes in the hypostatic evolution of man: it is the play of personal freedom, which is made possible by the interaction of the human and divine freedoms in synergy and which excludes the impulsiveness of *philautia* taking its rise in personal will, just as waywardness of passion is stabilized by *logos*. The mention of will can be accepted as an opportunity to recall that the third member of the psychological triad used as an analogy for the Spirit, *pneuma-zōē* is associated with *gnōmē* by Maximus so that we have to keep in mind that freedom through *proairesis* is always to hand when he speaks about the Spirit.

The primacy of the personal in this work is in no way a declaration in favour of the irrational, the alogical, much less the illogical; it is an act of faith in the primacy of the intervention of the divine freedom in human life, here attributed in a distinctive way to the action of the Holy Spirit. The idea of man must come to life in the freedom of the person interlocking with the freedom of the Holy Spirit. 'Rest' is the power *(kratos)* of the Kingdom-Spirit, producing in the worthy a mastery (*despoteia*) that is freed from all servitude *(douleia)*. *Anapausis*, in the ascetical usage of the Fathers, indicates spiritual perfection, the result of the practice of virtue and is marked by refreshing repose in prayer. Here we have 'rest' as the paradoxical possibility of human action because of the interaction of the divine and human freedoms. Paradoxically again, it gives rise to *despoteia*, a term that denotes ownership, and here obviously self-possession *(autexousia)*. A man can only give himself to God when he has himself to give. Mastery is acquired by submission to the mastery of the Spirit and this gives rise to freedom from all servitude, not alone from that of passion, but from the caprice of self-will as well as from the malign influence of higher powers.

We have suggested above that Maximus finds a trinitarian mode in human spiritual life, and we have suggested how *logos* and *gnōmē*, the latter associated with *pneuma-zōē*, function in this view of divinisation. It will be in order now to turn our attention to *nous*. *Nous* is often translated as 'mind' or 'intellect'. It occurs eleven times in the *Pater Noster*.[46] A comparative study of its uses shows that it is that part of man which must be kept free for God, so that its capacity must not be marred by irregular concern with what is not God. It is that by which man receives God and the measure of his receiving power is the measure of his *nous*. It is that through which he is primarily moved towards God. It is *nous* that ultimately draws on the energies of the soul in its stretching out to and yearning for God; it is where man becomes ecstatic and cleaves to the superessential Logos

45 See P. Sherwood, *The earlier Ambigua of St Maximus the Confessor* (Rome, 1955), 92–102.
46 *Or. Dom.* PG 90, 876A; 885D; 888D; 892C bis; 893D; 896C; 896D; 897C; 901C.

through simple and indivisible contemplation, as Maximus would say. Finally, it is what likens man to the angels, emphasising the aspect of his being that is ordered to the conscious glorification of God. All of this takes *nous* beyond the philosophical connotations of 'mind' and 'intellect', even understood as man's passive power of conceiving reality intentionally. It describes a depth in man that only God can discover and explore. This gives *nous* a certain primacy in the constitution of man and enables us to see how Maximus, while he does not organize his thought in this area, thinks of it as the source of man's *logos* and *gnōmē* in their divinised activity. In that we have an outline of the life of man as image of God.

The mystery of divine life in us can never be natural and personal in the way it is in the Trinity, so that *nous, logos,* and *gnōmē* can never be hypostatic traits in the strict sense, but if we think of them as a threefold activity by which we participate in the life of God who is not merely nature but persons, then because it is through *nous* that we are basically open to the divine invasion of our beings, *nous* assumes in the dynamics of the life of grace a role that is analogous to the role of the Father in the Trinity; *logos* will liken us to the Son and *gnōmē-zōē* to the Spirit who is understood to be not merely alive in the Trinity but 'life' hypostasized, binding the Father and the Son. *Nous* then may be seen as the locus of the emergence of person in nature, where nature is innovated in person so that it is where *agapē* encounters *logos* or where *logos* is enlivened in a personal way. This would give it affinity with the 'ground of the soul' or the 'apex of the soul' or the 'substance of the soul' of later formulations as well as with the *kardia* of Scripture. If we keep in mind that this is a way of describing activities and experience rather than an attempt to provide a faculty physiognomy of the soul, then if men can be said to be *logoi* in the Logos they are characterized primarily by the exercise of logos, by being logical in the theological sense. Man, in this view, is related to the Logos in a twofold way, because of his *logos physeōs* and his *tropos hyparxeōs*, the latter the achievement of the Spirit in him through *agapē* transforming his *gnōmē*.[47] If the Father is mirrored in him as *nous*, source of *logos* and *gnōmē* then man as *logos* will be in his turn and in a properly qualified sense *ennous* and *zōn*.

In the final retrospective summary of what Maximus has to say about, 'theology', again not separated from adoptive sonship and the trinitarian character of Christian life, having reminded us that: 'He constitutes us co-worshippers with the angels in fulfilment of the Father's will, manifesting in a well imitated way, by the conduct of our lives, celestial satisfaction', he then goes on to say:

> and from there again he is a leader upon the ascent of divine realities to the Father of lights (cf. Jas 1:17) and makes us sharers of the divine nature (cf. 2 Pet 1:4) by participation in the Spirit through grace; through this we

47 See A. Riou, *Le monde et l'Eglise selon Maxime le Confesseur* (Paris, 1973), 73–121; M.J. Garrigues, op. cit., 100–7; 185–199.

> are given the status of sons of God, all of us having within us the entire author himself of this grace, the Son of the Father by nature, without any limitation and in a pure way. From him, and in him, we have and shall have being, movement and life (Acts 17:28).[48]

The first thing to note is that it is Christ who is the author of our salvation and divinization and with whom we are identified to the extent that he is 'within us'. The reference to the 'Father of lights' recalls James 1:17, from whom the good things come. In this section of his commentary, the author has reversed the treatment of the 'mysteries' beginning with the petitions to be delivered from the Evil One and not to be led into temptation. The 'ascent' will culminate with initiation into the inner life of the Trinity. Anthropology here again takes on a trinitarian character. We attain to the Sourceless Source in God, from whom proceeds every uncreated and created gift. It is by participation in the grace of the Spirit that we become *koinōnoi* of the divine nature, that is personal participants in that nature through synergy with the Spirit, with whose freedom we interlock in becoming persons through his anointing of our being with his *agapē*. It is as persons that we are sons, and it is the Son who compasses this through the action of the Spirit. Since the Father expresses himself perfectly in the Son, there is no question of his bestowing his gifts on us without the Son being involved.

As we are aware, the nuances of this are still a matter of debate. While the Father is personally the source, it is the Son who is here described as *autourgos*. He is credited with the sharing of sonship with us because of his redemptive incarnation. In fact, we are said to be identified with him to the extent of always bearing him about (*perikōmizontes*) and in a way that is said to be *dicha perigraphēs kai achrantos*, qualifications that exclude the spirit's being cramped by the flesh. This is further strengthened by attributing to Christ our being, movement, and life – something claimed for God by Paul in the *agora*. Maximus again elaborates the mode of our relation to Christ: 'from whom, by whom and in whom' we have these fundamental prerogatives, thus sealing in a definitive way his affirmation of the indissolubility of Christology and anthropology. The 'bearing him about' would seem to be a gloss on Paul's 'I live, now not I, Christ lives in me' (Gal 2:20), a matter of belief for all Christians, of experience as well for mystics. The epithets that qualify this claim are meant to disarm 'somatic' or 'psychic' objections. The mode of presence is not bound in any way by nor defined by the limitations of the created order, even if it implies the presence of Christ in his humanity to the faithful.

Achrantos is applied by the Fathers to the mode of Christ's generation as Son and his birth as son, so that here we are being reminded that his presence in us in no way resembles the presence of flesh to flesh , much less the presence of sinful flesh to sinful flesh. The *tropos* of Christ's presence is apophatic. In the light of

48 *Or. Dom.* PG 90, 905CD.

what we have seen of the triad *nous, logos* and *zōē* we may suggest that here *to einai, kineisthai* and *zēn* refers to *einai, eu einai* and *aei einai*. We are in the image of God, growing in his likeness entirely in dependence on Christ, *ex hou kai di' hou kai en hō*. The *einai* of the formula in question here can be thought to correspond to the *einai* of the more familiar *einai, eu einai* and *aei einai*.[49] *Kinēsis* from the triad *genesis, kinēsis* and *stasis*, which is the ontological terminology that becomes ethical in *einai, eu einai* and *aei einai*, turns up as *kineisthai*, and is obviously meant to be understood as *eu einai*. The third member of the *zēn* cannot be derived from either of these other sets but we have already encountered *zōē* both in the language applied to the persons of the Trinity and, by implication, in man where we find *nous, logos* and *gnōmē*. *Gnōmē* or personal will is most obviously related to the Holy Spirit through freedom and ultimately *agapē* which would give us an anthropological triad of *nous, logos* and *zōē (gnōmē)*. The Pauline triad, transposed here, would then be a way of saying what Maximus says in so many different ways, that Christ is the source of man's being, his growth in well-being, and its definitive state of ever-well-being, the fullness of life which the Holy Spirit, poured into man, pours into him as *agapē*, and which stabilizes him in God the Father because of his being identified with the eternal Son. The most significant aspect of all this in regard to the passage of the *Pater Noster* under consideration is that the being, movement, and life, which characterize the beneficiaries of the Word made flesh are derived immediately from him. The text is emphatically Christocentric, but it avoids the charge of Christomonism because of the adroit inclusion of the Father and the Holy Spirit.

There can be no doubt that Maximus would make his own the admission of Gregory of Nazianzus at the end of his fifth theological oration (understanding 'illumination' to refer to that given in baptism):

> Finally I have thought that it is better to let go the images and shadows which are deceitful and remote from the truth and sticking to thought that is more in conformity with the faith, to hold on to a small number of words, to take as my guide the Spirit, to preserve until the end the illumination which I received from him who is like a 'true companion' and accompanies me while I make my way through this life and to persuade others, in so far as I can, to adore the Father, the Son and the Holy Spirit, one only divinity and one only power, because 'to him all glory, honour, power for ever and ever'. Amen.[50]

49 See e.g. *1 Ambig.* PG 91, 1217A; ibid.,1217D; ibid., 1084B. 50 PG 36, 172A.

The political implications of faith in a triune God: Erik Peterson revisited

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Panta rhei. Whatever may have been the original context for this primordial utterance, this metaphysical claim has enormous *political* implications, which few of us might deny in the abstract, though we tend to assume that the opposite is the case in fact. Society, the life we share in 'common' (the ethical-political term first coined by Heraclitus) is in constant flux. Our century has seen empires rise and fall, though at their height they seemed to everyone to be there forever. Though we who live in the so-called modern advanced societies prize above all the possibility that, at the next election everything, will change, experience teaches us that our hopes are too often dashed. That possibility of change is one of the major strengths of democracy, though it is based on the assumption the democratic system itself will not undergo any essential change. We also assume that, because of its 'evident' superiority, this way of life in common will continue forever. In a word, eternity is a perennial, political temptation.

It is easy to forget that democracy, as we know it, arose as a result of unique historical developments, which Eric Voegelin has outlined,[1] specifically those cultural developments that to a large extent define Western European culture: the Greek experience and Western Christianity. Further, democracy depends on resources that it cannot produce itself, central among them being moral values and principles, spiritual resources to overcome adversity, as well as the primacy of conscience rooted in recognition of Transcendence – and a belief in a justice that goes beyond the letter of the law. Modern democracy, in other words, has metaphysical roots and depends on metaphysical well-springs. Ancient and modern empires also arise from metaphysical roots, though of an entirely different nature. By metaphysical here I mean theological in the most general sense possible. History also teaches that the politics can mould theology as much as theology can mould politics.

Erik Peterson begins his well-know study on monotheism as a political problem[2] by recalling the thesis of Werner Jaeger,[3] according to which, Aristotle brings his theological presentation of Book XII of the *Metaphysics* to a powerful climax

1 Eric Voegelin, *The new science of politics: an introduction* (Chicago & London, 1952). 2 'Der Monotheismus als politisches Problem' in Erik Peterson, *Theologicshe Traktate* (Munich, 1951), 45–147. 3 *Aristotle* (Berlin, 1923), 23, cited in Peterson, 45.

with a quotation, not from the aesthetic sphere, but from the political sphere: 'Beings do not wish to be badly ruled; a plurality of rulers is not good, one must be Lord' (*Iliad*, II 204f.). In the closely related Book XIV, Aristotle opposes the metaphysical pluralism of Speusippus, who posited several, otherwise disconnected principles. More broadly speaking, in opposition to the platonic dualism of principles we find what Jaeger calls the 'rigorous monarchism' of the Aristotelian teaching of a self-thinking Spirit, which, as the highest Principle exists independently vis-à-vis the world. The term *monarchia* as such is not found in Aristotle, but the meaning is there, indeed in its dual sense according to which, in the divine Monarchy, the one force (eine Gewalt, *mia archê*) of the ultimate One Principle coincides with the 'being powerful' of the One ultimate bearer of this power (Gewalt, *archôn*).

According to Jaeger, evidence for the full flowering of Aristotle's reflections on theology are to be found around the beginning of the Christian era, as in the Pseudo-Aristotelian work *De mundo* and in Philo. According to *De mundo*, God has at his disposal a power in heaven (*hidrymenē dynamis*) that is the cause of everything's preservation (*sympasin aitia sōtērias*). It would be unbecoming to think of God in Stoic fashion as a power pervading the universe keeping everything going. God's rule is more like that of the Persian Great King, who lives invisible in his palace and is surrounded by a huge court. Just as we do not expect Xerxes himself to do everything, neither do we expect the same of God. 'God lives, rather, in the highest sphere, while his power (*dynamis*) pervades the whole cosmos, sets the sun and moon in motion, moves the heavens and thus also becomes the cause of the preservation of everything on earth.'[4]

This unknown author is using Aristotelian ideas taken from the tradition. But the original material has been inserted into a new context, namely the debate on the Stoic idea of God – and with this new context comes a significant change of emphasis. In Book XII of Aristotles' *Metaphysics*, God was the transcendent end (*telos*) of all movement, and was, only as such, King or Monarch. According to Jaeger, 'The tactical movement of warriors in the army, who carry out the plan of the invisible general, is the fitting allegory that, by way of exception, Aristotle coined for this world-view. In *De mundo*, by way of contrast, God is the puppeteer (*neyrospastēs*), who by pulling on one single thread brings forth the whole variety of movement in the world.'[5] It is no longer a question as to whether there are one or more powers, but rather what share does God have in the powers which are at work in the cosmos. 'The author wishes to say: God is the presupposition for the fact that "power" (his uses Stoic terminology, *dynamis*, means however the Aristotelian *kinēsis*) becomes effective in the cosmos, but for this reason is not himself a "power" (*dynamis*). "Le roi règne, mais il ne gouverne pas" ... What is visible is only the power (Macht, *dynamis*), that is effective in the world, but the force (Gewalt) behind it is invisible.'[6]

4 Peterson, op. cit., 51. 5 Ibid., 52 (following Jaeger, op. cit., 415). 6 Ibid., 52–3.

Peterson comments: 'These differences ... are not only instructive because they are expressions of a different time and a different political situation, but rather because they demonstrate at the same time that the final formulation of the unity of a metaphysical world-view always has an influence on, and is preconditioned by, an option for one of the possibilities of political unity.'[7] Equally clear is the fact that the distinction made in relation to God between power (Macht, *potestas*, *dynamis*) and force (Gewalt, *archê*) is a metaphysical-political problem. If God is the necessary presupposition for the existence of *potestas* (*dynamis*), then the One God becomes the bearer of *auctoritas*, and so monotheism becomes the principle of political authority.[8]

Neither Aristotle nor the anonymous author of *De mundo* uses the term *monarchia* in this context. It is first found in Philo, without the epithet divine, to describe the One God of Judaism (*de spec. leg.* I 12). The great Jewish philosopher in Alexandria began to interpret Jewish monotheism in philosophical terms as the one God who establishes order in the cosmos. Because he is the One God, he is not simply God of Israel. The one Jewish people ruled by the One God serve Him representatively for mankind, as mankind's priests and prophets. Not only for the whole of humanity does the High Priest of the Jews make a sacrifice of thanksgiving, but for the entire cosmos. The political-theological implications of this transformation of Jewish monotheism into a cosmic *monarchia* are thus hinted at.

What is remarkable is that the term *monarchia* only occurs at the beginning of the section (*de spec. leg.* I 12) as a kind of label. God is the 'King of Kings' (*basileus basileōn*), in other words he is to be compared with the Persian Great King.[9] Compared to him, the astral gods (*theoi*) occupy the status of subordinate rulers (*tēn huparchōn taxin*). 'One must keep a firm hold on the honour due to the "oldest cause of all things" ... and not give honour to "the servants and porters instead of the King".'[10] Peterson shows how Philo, though he uses peripatetic material, modifies it in order to bring it in line with Jewish theology (such as his understanding of God as creator), even when he does not always do so successfully. Philo is not primarily interested in the peripatetic question about the unity or plurality of metaphysical principles, or of the relationship between the power (*dymanis*) and force (*archē*), as was the case of the anonymous *De mundo* text. Due to the concrete situation of the Judaism of his day, he is mainly concerned with the theological-political problem. His image of the divine monarchy, in the first place, fulfils a pedagogical function: to find a way of explaining the relevance of Jewish monotheism to proselytes. This faith has political implications. The divine monarchy rules out any acceptance of a divine *polyarchia, oligarchia*, or *ochlokratia*. Peterson shows how, in *De fuga et inv.*, Philo's Jewish faith in God, logically forbids him,

7 Ibid., 53. 8 Cf, e.g., the *Quaestiones* of the Ps. Augustine, references given, ibid. 9 In footnote 29 (p. 110), Peterson comments that it is not always easy to discern in the tradition whether *megas basileus* means Great King, as title, or greater king; Philo uses *megas basileus* of God in various texts such as *Vita Moses* 166. 10 Peterson, op. cit., 56.

a passionate defender of democratic ideals, to speak about a metaphysical or divine democracy. At one stage Philo develops ideas similar to Plato's *Timaeus* where Plato speaks of the demiurge creating order out of disorder. But Philo transforms the technical act of the platonic demiurge into a political act, understood in terms of what Augustus achieved when he created order out of political disorder.

Peterson's detailed analysis of the philosophical and theological background to this development in Philo's thought must be left aside, except to reaffirm the central point, namely that the term and concept of the '(divine) monarchy' were probably coined in the earlier Jewish Alexandrian tradition, where it was in the final analysis a political-theological term. It was meant to demonstrate the religious superiority of the Jewish people and justify its mission to paganism. After Philo, the use of the term 'the divine monarchy' is found at first in the Apologists, and used for the same reasons as Philo. Unsurprisingly, we find it first in Justin Martyr's *Dialogue with the Jew, Tryphon*, I 3. Eventually it became standard material to be covered in the instruction of catechumens (cf. Cyril of Jerusalem) to attack polytheism, the worship of many rulers rather than the one ruler of all. It soon gave rise to the first Trinitarian controversies, as we heard in Brian Daley's paper. Peterson stresses throughout the political significance of the image of the divine monarchy in all these controversies.

This political significance was not lost on the pagans, as we know from Celsus. The great pagan opponent was 'willing to let Christianity live on condition that the Christians abandon their political and religious isolation and subordinate themselves to the common religion of Rome. His chief anxiety springs from the fact that (Christians) create a schism in the State weakening the Empire by division'.[11] Origen's reply to Celsus began a development that found its final, greatly changed, form in Eusebius of Caesarea, the first Christian historian. Peterson outlines the complex development that eventually found its most complete expression in the writings of Eusebius of Caesarea. Time does not permit us to treat it in detail But to indicate however inadequately the import of this development, let me turn to another scholar (Eric Voegelin) who took up Peterson's thesis and incorporated it into his attempt to rediscover the nature of politics. His own approach, it seems to me, can help us appreciate anew the existential significance of Peterson's thesis.

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First a short word about Eric Voegelin's pioneering work entitled 'The New Science of Politics'. In it he tries to overcome the standard approach to political science, namely as a history of political *thought*, i.e. a history of ideas generally understood as developing in some more or less linear form, often as a long slow progress from primitive to modern. Voegelin is interested not in ideas but in *theo-*

11 Johannes Quasten, *Patrology: the ante-Nicene literature after Ireanaeus* (Utrecht-Antwerp; Westminster, MA, 1953), ii, 52.

ria in the classic sense, insight into reality that changes reality. Since I fear that the same tendency to treat ancient thinkers as museum pieces to be codified and arranged in various learned categories can result in reducing philosophical, and even theological truths to mere ideas, I think that Voegein offers a fresh approach to appreciating the significance of Peterson's thesis. At one significant point, as we will see, he uses Peterson most effectively.

Voegelin takes as his staring point the central political phenomenon of representation. Society emerges when a ruler emerges to represent it. Such an historical process brings the body politic into existence. He further distinguishes between elemental and existential representation. Elemental means any existing form of government. This government is existential to the extent that it is effective. The danger to all societies is that a political crisis can make the government ineffective, and so leave a vacuum to be filled by a new leader or movement with the claim to be the true representative of the aspirations of that society. If accepted by a sufficient majority as being such, the new leader or movement can become the existential representation, usually in opposition to the elemental government. But there is a further dimension to the phenomenon of representation. Societies can, in fact have, frequently made claims to represent something else. It is this aspect of Voegelin's thought that is of relevance here.

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Society interprets itself according to the elaborate symbolism of reality that gives meaning to its existence and human existence as a whole. History shows that, in ancient and modern times, society itself often becomes the representative of something beyond itself, of a transcendent reality. All the early empires, Near Eastern as well as Far Eastern, understood themselves as representatives of a transcendent order, of the order of the cosmos; and some of them even understood this order as the 'truth'. The Empire represents the cosmic order and rulership becomes the task of securing the order of society in harmony with cosmic order, while 'the ruler himself represents the society, because on earth he represents the transcendent power which maintains order.'[12] All who attack this order, whether they come from within society or without, are not only enemies of the state but representative of the Lie since they oppose the divine order of truth embodied in the State. Voegelin illustrates this by referring to texts from the Persian Empire of Darius I, the Mongol Empire of Kuyuk Khan; he also reminds us that cosmological representation not only survived in the imperial symbols of the Western Middle Ages but also in modern Communist movements where the truth of cosmic order is replaced by the truth of a historically immanent order and make the same absolute demands as the Mongol Khan: they express the universality of their

12 Voegelin, *The new science of politics*, 54.

truth by their universal claim to empire, and so a divine right to destroy their opponents. Modern Islamic Fundamentalism makes strikingly similar claims. In sum: 'Political societies as representatives of truth, thus, actually occur in history.'[13]

Voegelin refers to the discovery of the anthropological truth that is apt to challenge the truth of the cosmological empires as itself an historical event of major dimensions.[14] The anthropological truth is essentially about the nature of the human being as in some sense transcending society. Its discovery occurred between 800 BC and 300 BC – what Jaspers called the 'axis time of human history, as distinguished from the epoch of Christ, that supposedly is relevant for Christians only'[15] – and did so in various civilizations not connected with each other; the Prophets in Israel, Zoroaster probably in ancient Chorasmia,[16] the authors of the Upanishads and the Buddha in India, Confucius in China. Only in the West, due to peculiar historical circumstances, did it lead to philosophy in the Greek sense and in particular to a *theoria* of politics.

Plato said that 'a polis is man written large'. The dynamic core of the new theory retains its vital relevance down to our day. 'The wedge of this principle', Voegelin insists, 'must be permanently driven into the ideas that society represents nothing but cosmic truth, today quite as much as in the time of Plato. A political society in existence must be an ordered cosmion, but not at the price of man.'[17] This, then, is what he calls *the anthropological principle*. It is essentially in conflict with *the cosmological principle* just outlined. What does it entail?

There are two aspects to the anthropological principle. It is, first of all, a general principle for the interpretation of society, and, secondly, it is an instrument of social critique. In the first instance it means that 'in its order every society reflects the type of men of whom it is composed',[18] in other words the order of society reflects the human type of its member, whether cosmological, sophist or anthropological. Secondly, to have arrived at this insight was only possible 'due to the discovery of a true order of the human psyche (soul) and to the desire of expressing the true order in the social environment of the discoverer.'[19] What are the implications of this statement?

> Now, truth is never discovered in empty space; the discovery is a differentiating act in a tightly packed environment of opinion; and, if the discovery concerns the truth of human existence, it will shock the environment in its strongest convictions on a broader front. As soon as the discoverer begins to communicate, to invite acceptance, to persuade, he will inevitably run into a resistance that may prove fatal, as in the case of Socrates.[20]

13 Ibid., 59. 14 Ibid., 60. 15 Ibid. 16 An area comprising what is now Persian Khorasan, Western Afghanistan and the Turkmen Republic of what was the USSR: see R.C. Zaehner (ed.), *The Hutchinson encyclopedia of living faiths*, 4th ed. (London 1988), 200. 17 Voegelin, op. cit., 61. 18 Ibid., 61–2. 19 Ibid., 62. 20 Ibid.

The discovery of what Voegelin calls 'the truth of man', the truth about human existence as open to the transcendence of God, is immediately experienced as being in opposition to the truth represented by society. This insight is far more important than the attempt Plato made to think through an alternative form of society which would do justice to this new truth. Historians of political thought give us adequate summaries of his main suggestions which, it is claimed, have been influential in the history of Western civilization (such as the claim that Plato is the intellectual source of all totalitarianism). These are usually contrasted with Aristotle's concept of the state. Apart from the questionability of such hypotheses, the main point, not fully appreciated by such writers, is that the Greeks could even *imagine* an alternative society. The status quo of a particular society is no longer simply taken for granted, still less given an ultimate meaning as though guaranteed by divine approval, the approval of the gods mediated by the ruler. The sphere of the divine and the human have been distinguished; they are no longer mixed up. The gods have been de-divinized, and with them the State, thanks to the discovery of the transcendence of God. Man is the measure of society because God is the measure of his soul (Plato). By stripping the state of its divine status, the single human person (this term is much later) emerges from the collective state. Further, order in society is now seen as due to the order in the soul of man. Order in the state is no longer due to observing a particular civic *cultus*.

This development was only possible, Voegelin maintains, due the entire complex of experiences which mark Greek history and political life, central to which is not only the experience of the mystic philosophers but the genius of Greek tragedy which opened up the road for the philosophical search for the truth. Tragic action is 'the action of the mature man faced by decision'.[21] who had to find solutions for situations without the help of precedent or divine oracles, indeed often in opposition to what was seen as divinely approved by the gods, society and tradition. In searching for a practical solution, the tragedians plumbed the depths of the psyche (human soul). Greek tragedy found the source of disorder in society in the demonic passions once symbolized by mythological gods (pride, avarice, weakness, vanity) – and discovered the source of order: virtue in the heart due to one's adherence to the unseen measure, the unmoved mover, the transcendence of God.[22]

Voegelin then introduces his third principle of order, the soteriological principle of Christianity. This principle extends the anthropological principle of order

21 E.Voegelin, *The world of the polis (Order and history, volume two)* (Baton Rouge and London, 1986), 254. 22 Concluding his treatment of Aeschylus, perhaps the greatest writer of tragedy, Voegelin, ibid., p. 264, comments: 'The revelation of God to man in history comes where God wills. If Aeschylus was no Moses for his people, he nevertheless discovered for it the psyche as the source of meaningful order for the polis in history. If he did not bring the law from Sinai, he laid the foundations for a philosophy of history. For Plato's philosophy of history derived from Aeschylean tragedy ...'

in society, thanks to they way Christianity expanded the Platonic-Aristotelian complex of experiences at one decisive point. This can be illustrated by focusing on the Aristotelian conception of *philia politikē*, political friendship. This, for Aristotle, is the substance of political society. It consists of spiritual agreement between men, in so far as they live in agreement with the most divine part in themselves, the *nous*, our capacity for truth. In their common search for truth in society, men are at one with each other. Loving their own capacity for truth above all, they are united in true friendship. In this context, Aristotle articulated his thesis 'that friendship was impossible between God and man because of their radical inequality.'[23]

Voeglin shows how the impossibility of of *philia* (friendship) between God and man is a characteristic for the whole spectrum of anthropological truth. Behind the anthropological truth lies the experiences of 'the mystic philosophers', namely the assent of the soul (and by the soul) toward a divinity who rests in immovable transcendence. But the soul does not meet an answering movement from the beyond, though Plato seems to have had a inkling of such a possibility. This answering movement from the beyond is precisely what constitutes Christian truth.

> The experience of mutuality in the relation with God, of the *amicitia* (friendship) in the Thomistic sense, of the grace which imposes a supernatural form on the nature of man, is the specific difference of Christian truth.[24] The revelation of this grace in history, through the incarnation of the Logos in Christ, intelligibly fulfilled the adventitious movement of the spirit in the mystic philosophers. The critical authority over the older truth of society which the soul had gained through its opening and its orientation toward the unseen measure was now confirmed through the revelation of the measure itself. In this sense, then it may be said the fact of revelation is its content.[25]

This soteriological truth must of necessity have an impact on the world of politics. It was, after all, the anthropological truth made universal, and thus destined to come into conflict with any State that makes divine claims or sees itself as representing transcendent truth. The first such confrontation was with the Roman Empire into which Christianity emerged from the womb of Judaism. To appreciate this conflict, it is necessary to take a brief look at the emergence, first of the existential, and then of the transcendental representation in 'Rome'.

The enormous struggle over some five to six centuries for the monopoly of existential representation in the Roman Empire is well known. Powerful parties emerged in Rome as she spread her authority over the entire Mediterranean basin and beyond. Originally a city-state governed by a senate, as soon as her armies

23 Ibid. 24 Voegelin refers here to St Thomas Aquinas, *Contras Gentiles*, iii, 91. 25 Voegelin, op. cit., 77–8.

began to subdue the surrounding peoples and she began to dominate the world, strong factions began to emerge headed by wealthy *'principes'* who had the allegiance of lesser 'barons'. These parties within the senate engaged in various battles for power until at last one emerged supreme as the emperor Augustus (*monarchia* = one ruler) around the time of Christ. The inner cohesion of this vast empire composed of the most diverse peoples, cultures and cults was achieved by various means. The most important means included the incorporation all these cults and gods into the cult of Rome; then making the Emperor himself a god, and finally trying to find a single High God whose representative was seen to be the Emperor while tolerating all the other gods as subordinate deities. This whole movement could be described as a gradual move from polytheism to monotheism. Roman power and success was attributed to the service of all the gods, but especially the High God as represented by the Emperor. It was a typical cosmological order, compact, all-embracing and self-sufficient. Essential to it was the identification of success as the approval of the gods.[26]

The emergence of Christianity was immediately recognized as a subversive element in the compact world view of the Roman Empire. The early history of the Church is marked by persecutions and martyrdom. One of the main charges against the early Christians was atheism: they denied the existence of the gods. And since the gods, together with the High God represented by the Emperor, provided the inner bond and justification for the empire and the diverse nations contained within it, then a rejection of the gods amounted to an attack on the very fabric of the empire, a political revolution.[27] The Christians were, from the Pagan point of view, persecuted for a good reason; there was a revolutionary substance in Christianity that made it incompatible with paganism. 'What made Christianity so dangerous was its uncompromising, radical de-divinization of the world.'[28]

26 According to Voegelin, the influence on the Roman Empire of the revolution of thought in Athens was slight. Through the medium of the Stoic philosophers, Cicero, e.g., was able to perceive something of its significance but ultimately he opted for the Roman cosmological order. The search for a suitable *Summus Deus* in the third century AD led to the adoption by the Emperor Aurelian (AD 270–75), of a sufficiently nondescript sun god, the *Sol Invictus* (=the unconquered sun), as the highest God of the Empire and himself as his descendant and representative. Spiritually the cult was close enough to Christianity for conversion to be a relatively simply process. After the final great persecution of Diocletian, which failed to wipe out Christianity, the empire gave Christians the freedom to worship 'their' God in AD 311–13 and the way was paved for the recognition of the Christian God as the Highest God of the Empire and eventually Christianity as the official religion. 27 See e.g. the Letter of Pliny the Younger to the Emperor Trajan, ca. AD 112: 'All who denied that they were or had been Christian I considered should be discharged, because they called upon the gods at my dictation and did reverence, with incense and wine, to your image which I had ordered to be brought forward for this purpose, together with the statues of the deities; and especially because they cursed Christ, a thing which, it is said, genuine Christians cannot be induced to do' (*Documents of the Christian Church*, selected and edited by Henry Bettenson, Oxford, 1956), 4. 28 Voegelin, op. cit. (as in note 1), 100.

The Constantinian era in the fourth Century is a perennial source of dispute for historians and theologians alike. It is often condemned as an unholy alliance between Church and State, the beginning of the end of true Christianity. But the reality is more complex. As mentioned already, there was a movement towards monotheism of a kind in the Roman Empire in the third century. When it was obvious that Christianity could not be eradicated even by persecution and that the old pagan religions were losing their credibility, it seemed reasonable then to turn to Christianity to help bolster the political theology of the empire.

In this it was supported by a growing Christian tendency of interpreting the one God of Christianity in the direction of a metaphysical monotheism as it had emerged in the speculations of the Greek mystic philosophers. As we saw, this tendency began in Alexandria within Judaism, namely in the writing of Philo, the great Egyptian-Jewish philosopher. He wanted to make Judaism attractive as the one-God cult of the Roman Empire. The Jewish God is the one who establishes order in the cosmos. The Jewish people serve Him representatively for mankind. This thought was taken over by some Christian thinkers and reached his fullest expression in the writings of Eusebius of Caesarea, the first Christian historian.

According to Heinrich Kraft,[29] the process of moving from the Roman High God to the Christian one seems to have been an effortless one for Constantine, a non-baptized, 'literary Christian' but practising pagan from early youth. Contemporary coinage and other inscriptions demonstrate that he was seen (and probably saw himself) as the earthly representative of the High God, originally depicted as Apollo and later as the Sign of the Christian High God, the ambiguous *Chi* that could be taken to be the Sun or the Cross. His own *Religionspolitik* was evidently inspired by his self-understanding as the earthly representative of the transcendent order. He found in Eusebius of Caesarea an eloquent exponent of his self-understanding.

Eusebius, like others before him, was fascinated by the coincidence of the establishment of the *pax Romana* under Augustus and the appearance of Christ. Like the earlier apologists, he saw it originally as providential, since it enabled the apostles to travel all over the known world without difficulty and so found the Church. But later he interpreted the peace established by the first emperor as being itself of theological – or more accurately, eschatological significance. It was part of the fulfilment of the prophecies concerning the peace of the Lord. By establishing the one rule, Eusebius argued, Augustus abolished the many rulers who were caught up in continuous warfare. This was seen as linked causally with the appearance of the Logos at the same time in history. 'Augustus dissolved the pluralistic polyarchy; with his monarchy peace descended on the earth, thus fulfilling the scriptural predictions of Mic 4:4 and Ps 71:7. In brief, the eschatological prophecies concerning the peace of the Lord were politicized by Eusebius when

29 Heinrich Kraft, *Einführung in die Patrologie* (Darmstadt, 1991), 138–44.

he applied them to a *pax Romana* which coincided historically with the manifestation of the Logos.'[30]

Finally Eusebius saw Constantine as bringing the work of Augustus to its fulfilment, uniting in himself both the empire and the Church (which Church had previously been caught up in a type of internal warfare due to doctrinal disputes). In one of his eulogies on Constantine, Eusebius praises him because in his empire Constantine 'had imitated the divine monarchy: the one *basileus* (king) represents the one God, the one King in Heaven, the One Nomos (law) and Logos (truth).' Voegelin adds: 'It is a return, indeed, to the imperial representation of cosmic truth.'[31]

'Such harmony', Voegelin comments, 'of course, could not last; it had to break as soon as somewhat more sensitive Christians would get hold of the problem'[32] This happened in the course of the Arian disputes. The monotheism of the Christian Faith was totally other than the monotheism of either Judaism or the Greek mystic philosophers. The mystery of the Trinity, three in one, could not be used to bolster the political theology of the empire. Those who supported the Arians, who said that the Logos was not equal to the Father, included the emperor and the court theologians, who naturally opted for a parallel monarchy in heaven and on earth, with the Emperor as the representative of the one God. Thanks to the opposition of Athanasius and his small but articulate band of supporters, these speculations came to an end with the triumph of a newly created language to express the Trinitarian mystery.

> The language of the divine monarchy did not disappear, but it acquired a new meaning. Gregory of Nazianzus for instance, declared the Christians to be believers in the divine monarchy, but, he continued, they do not believe in the monarchy of a single person in the godhead, for such a godhead would be a source of discord; Christians believed in a triunity – and this triunity of God has no analogue in creation. The one person of the imperial monarch could not represent the triune divinity.[33]

In other words the divinization of the state in the person of the ruler could not be maintained. At the height the controversy, Athanasius wrote an account of the history of the Arian heresy and the resulting persecution of the orthodox[34] where

30 Voeglin, op. cit., 104. 31 Ibid. The quotation is from Eusebius, *Laus Constantini* I 10; cf. Peterson, op. cit., p. 78. For a comprehensive study of Eusebius' understanding of the Christian emperor, see Raffaele Farina, SDB, *L'impero e l'imperatore cristiano in Eusebio di Casearea. La prima teologia politica del cristianesimo* (Zürich, 1966). 32 Ibid., 104. 33 Ibid., 105; cf. Peterson, op. cit., 96ff. The quotation is from *Laus Constantini* III 3 5–6 (Heikel, 201,5 – 202, 18). 34 *Historia Arianorum ad nonachos* (PL 25, cols 595–795; for a more recent, critical edition see *Athanasius Werke*, edited by H.G. Opitz (Berlin-Leipzig, 1945), vol. ii, 169–230). One of the scholars who greatly influenced recent attitudes to Athanasius, Eduard Schwartz, attacked this work with such vehemence that it has been practically ignored up to the present. For a detailed analysis

he rejects the claims of the emperor to unlimited power (like King Creon in Antigone, the Emperor Constantius II, the son of Constantine, had claimed: 'my will is law') thus claiming divine status: Athanasius says in effect: you are simply a man and your laws cannot cancel the law of God.[35]

The other brilliant idea of Eusebius (seeing the *pax Constantiana* as the fulfilment of the prophecies) fell to pieces with the re-emergence of wars and so the disintegration of society and, indeed, of the Roman Empire. St Augustine is more realistic: such wars, even religious wars, will continue and even increase, 'one side fighting for truth, the other side for falsehood. Such earthly peace, even though it is to be hoped for, is not identical with the peace of Christ.'[36]

This is the end of political theology in orthodox Christianity. When it re-emerged, in the twelfth century, it was (paradoxically) in connection with speculations involving the Trinity. This time the Trinity was used to interpret history in the speculations of Joachim of Fiore, the mystic monk from Calabria. For Joachim, history consists of three hypostasized epochs, that of the Father (the OT – the time of the laity), the Son (the NT – the time of the clergy) and the Holy Spirit (about to break in – the time of the monks or spiritual men) who will usher in a new age devoid of all institutions, a fraternally of autonomous men inspired from within by the Spirit. According to Voegelin, modernity has its roots in these speculations, which over the centuries became secularized. Modernity here is understood as a kind of 're-divinisation' of the State leading to the cosmological orders marked by modern ideologies, such as Marxism. But that is another story, one moreover that is out of place here.

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Peterson's thesis about the political implications of monotheism and their effective abolition by orthodox Trinitarian theology, which Voegelin took up and inserted into the broad sweep of Western history, has been effectively ignored by modern theologians, who appear to treat theological speculations more or less in the abstract, or, more correctly, abstracted from their political context: I have argued elsewhere[37] that the so-called Arian crisis of the second quarter of the fourth century was not so much concerned with the actual doctrine of Nicaea as with the new understanding of the Church that emerged with Constantine's public embrace of Christianity. The emperors who sympathized with the Arians – Constantine and Constantius II – did so from a very traditional understanding of the Emperor as the *Summus Pontificus*, God's representative on earth. They were primarily concerned with a unity based on compromise – a naturally political tac-

of the text, and an attempt to rescue the reputation of the script and its author, see Vincent Twomey *Apostolikos Thronos: the primacy of Rome as reflected in the church history of Eusebius and the historico-apologetic writings of Saint Athanasius the Great* (Münster, 1980), 456–552. 35 See Twomey, ibid., 499. 36 Voegelin, op. cit., 106. 37 See footnote 34.

tic – and so had no time for quibbling about a theological term or, much less, an iota. Further, as the representative of the divine monarch on earth, the Christian emperor became the source of all ecclesiastical authority. Thus, for example, the traditional, regional synodal authority became in effect an imperial court, though traditional procedures were in many ways retained. This was the persistent claim of Athanasius in his decade-long attempt to regain his see, having been deposed at the infamous Synod of Tyre (335), which he consistently claimed was nothing but an imperial court. Modern scholars generally fail to recognize this distinction.

Though Constantine saw the usefulness of the Church's synodal structure for his own purposes, it could be argued that the Bishop of Rome saw through his real intent from the very outset, already during the Donatist schism, when Miltiades, the Bishop of Rome refused to operate like an imperial court, as the Emperor Constantine has commanded him, but instead called a Roman synod in the traditional form to judge the issues. When Rome rejected the claims of the Donatists, they appealed again to Constantine, who in turn called another synod at Arles. The Bishop of Rome refused to attend and sent two delegates – the beginning of a practice that has lasted down to this day with regard to similar synods or councils – thus reserving the final decision to himself.

It is not surprising that Athanasius and the other Eastern prelates, who had in the second decade after Nicaea, been ousted by the pro-Arian party finally appealed to the Bishop of Rome for redress. As far as I can see, this marks the beginning of the clarification of the apostolic nature of the Church (and also the theological significance of the Petrine succession at Rome). The threat of being submerged by the newly established Imperial Church could only be counteracted by reaffirming the apostolic nature of the bishops' authority, which in turn was confirmed by communion with the Bishop of Rome, the successor St Peter par excellence. A significant milestone in this development was the Synod of Sardica.[38]

Athanasius protested from the beginning that his opponents – in particular Eusebius of Caesarea and Eusebius of Nicomendia – were ultimately motivated by a rejection of the doctrine of Nicaea, in particular the *homoousios*. This again has been seen as part of the ruthless Athanasian propaganda, and so not taken seriously. But it is entirely consistent with his rejection of the imperial Church based on one earthly monarch representing on earth the one divine monarch in heaven – which, *in practice*, undermined the teaching of Nicaea that the Logos was consubstantial with the Father.

38 See Hamilton Hess, *The early development of canon law and the Council of Sardica* (Oxford, 2002). See also Twomey, op. cit., 453–62.

The Trinity in early Irish Christian writings

Thomas Canon Finan

INTRODUCTION

Given the context of this conference and the theme of this essay, the topic will inevitably have a theological dimension and indeed a philosophical one, philosophy being the long-standing complement to theology. But it is not my purpose to treat either discipline at a high level of conceptual abstraction. My purpose is more concrete, although at a high level of *spirituality*, including its frequent high levels of spiritual *experience*. As the title indicates, the spirituality I will deal with is early Irish, although its after-effects continued down through many centuries we cannot call early, centuries of turbulent history, of a fragmented civilization, and of a Catholic faith often hunted down but never hunted out. That spirituality has come into vogue again in recent times, under the label of 'Celtic Spirituality'.[1] There is indeed a Celtic dimension to early Irish spirituality, even if, as a relatively late-converted territory, the Irish owed much to older Christian Europe. But the 'Celtic' label, like the proverbial charity, can cover a lot. And, to my limited knowledge, some of that lot is rather soft at the centre. Or should one say soft at the *bottom*, in its *foundation*, in its ultimate transcendent spiritual *ground*, or *principium* (the Greek non-temporal *archē*), with which Genesis and the Gospel of John begin. It is that supreme non-temporal *ground*, *principium*, *archē*, that entails the philosophical and theological dimension. And nowhere has that dimension been more entailed than in the 'Augustinian/ Anselmian faith seeking understanding' of the Trinity, *three* persons in *one* God. As indicated, I am not getting into the dialectics of that 'search for understanding'. But we must keep it in mind to understand the importance of the Trinity in early Irish writing, and that not only as the Ground of spirituality but also as the Ground, Creator and all-encompassing sustainer of all that exists.

I have indirectly introduced a metaphysical dimension into a theological context. It added to the cosmic significance of the Trinity when, once upon a time, I read the reverse: the introduction of the theological Trinity as the best solution to an age-old metaphysical problem. It was in a history of Greek philosophy, the author of which had the rare common sense to *explain* why abstract metaphysi-

1 See James P. Mackey (ed.), *An introduction to Celtic Christianity* (Edinburgh, 1989); see also my chapter there on 'Hiberno-Latin Christian Literature' (64–120). See also Peter O'Dwyer, O. Carm, *Towards a history of Irish spirituality* (Dublin, 1995).

cal problems arise at all. One such problem (or is it two?) he explained, was the ancient Greek, but also perennial, problem known as that of 'the One and the Many'. The metaphysical search is for the absolute *One* entity that grounds all the others. But once that is found (or thought to be), another problem emerges. As was first *metaphysically* proved by Parmenides in the fifth century BC, that absolute One (being, *einai, esse* in this case), has to be 'one' in the strict metaphysical sense of simple, *simplex*, without parts. In light of that absolute unchanging 'oneness', the corollary problem arises, how absolute unchanging oneness can generate the multiplicity of all the other existing entities.

Our author goes through all the ancient and modern attempts to solve it – attempts too many to go through here. But in his analysis they all fail. He comes therefore to an interesting conclusion:

> Monism ... is a necessary idea in philosophy. The Absolute must be one. But an utterly abstract monism is impossible. If the Absolute is simply One, wholly excluding all process and multiplicity, out of such an abstraction the process and multiplicity of the world cannot issue. The Absolute is not simply one, or simply many. It must be a many-in-one, as correctly set forth in the Christian doctrine of the Trinity.[2]

It was not until the ninth-century Scotus Eriugena that any early Irish Christian writer so metaphysically systematized the theology of the revealed Trinity, its primacy as the absolute transcendent Being, and its immanent cosmic range as the Source of the being (*esse*) of all contingent created beings. But all the *elements* of Eriugena's systematics were already in his Irish predecessors. The difference was in their mode. They set those elements in the context of a vital spirituality, in which the abstract 'essentials' of 'systematics' are given life in an 'existential', and often 'experiential' faith. And the three persons of the Trinity remarkably recur as the vitalising ground and beating heart of it.[3]

As far as I know, this emphasis on the Trinity is distinctive of this 'Celtic' spirituality. Distinctive too is the 'totalizing' dimension given to the Trinity in that other Irish impulsion, to the metaphysical dimension without its systematics, to an understanding of the universe as a whole. The triune God is not only the transcendent Creator of it; He is its transcendent 'Lord of the Universe', or 'Lord of

2 W.T. Stace, *A critical history of Greek philosophy* (London, 1920; many reprints, down to the 1969 from which I quote), 70–1. For a magisterial exposition of the implications of the Trinity for metaphysical, cosmic, historical and societal ordering, see Charles Norris Cochrane, *Christianity and classical culture: a study of thought from Augustus to Augustine* (New York, Oxford, 1940; rev. ed. 1944; Galaxy Book repr. 1957); see especially Part 3. 3 'Thugtaí an-deabhóid don Tríonóid (there was great devotion to the Trinity)', says Seán de Fréine on p. 39 of *Croí Cine, An Clóchomhar Tta* (Dublin 1990), an Irish language spiritual anthology that contains many trinitarian items.

the Elements' – recurring themes in Old and Middle Irish poetry[4] – even Eriugena uses its Latin equivalent in one of his poems.[5] But this transcendent Creator Lord is also immanent in his own creation. And this gives its cosmic dimension to early Irish 'spirituality' – spirituality being a term that, on its own, can have different levels of meaning, some high, some low. Hence the two aspects of that cosmic dimension which pervades early Irish Christian writing, especially its Gaelic poetry, but also some in Latin. The first aspect is its universalizing vision, which enables the greater poet to escape from immanence and his own subjectivity, and relate the concrete particular to its universal context – or ultimate source, as we will mention presently. The second aspect is also a vision, but at a deeper level that enriches the first. In the Christian context, the 'spiritual man' (in the Pauline sense, 1 Cor 2:10ff, or at least in the inspired poetic sense!), can see the universal not just through or beyond the concrete particular but *within* it. For he knows the transcendent Creator as also immanent in his creation.[6] This immanent presence gives the created not only the beauty that reflects its Creator, but also the stamp of the Creator's triune Being in Creation's structured image of it.[7]

This fusion of the spiritual and the material worlds produces an early Irish poetry, some in Latin but most in Gaelic, of a rare lyricism, in response to a rare pre-Franciscan transparency of the visible world to the invisible, both beyond it and immanent in it. By 'poetry' here I refer not just to pure *nature* poetry. I include the spiritual poetry that is also involved with the beauty of nature[8]. I include also, but only rather economically, writings that are not poetry in the strict technical sense of form, but are infused with an intensity of feeling that we may call 'prose poetry' in liturgy, offices, litanies, prayers, even rhyming collects.[9]

The transparency of nature to invisible *super*-nature was probably natural to early Irish Christians, in view of the fact that it was a characteristic of pre-Christian Celtic civilisation. From its myths, legends, sagas, lands of eternal youth, and above

4 Cf. the opening of an Old Irish tenth-century poem; 'O God, Lord of Creation, I invoke thee', no. 15 in Gerard Murphy, *Early Irish lyrics* (Oxford, 1956). 5 Poem no. 2 v. 9 in Michael W. Herren (ed.), *Johannis Scotti Eriugenae Carmina* (Dublin, 1956; volume 7 of the *Scriptores Latini Hiberniae* series, hereafter referred to as SLH). In his poems too, Eriugena maintains the trinitarian and cosmic totalizing range of his theologico-metaphysical opus, the *De Divisione Naturae* (On the Division of Nature). 6 Cf. St John of the Cross in his commentary on the 'silent music' of stanza 15 of his *Spiritual Canticle*; 'In that knowledge of the divine light the soul becomes aware of Wisdom's wonderful harmony ... in the variety of his creatures and works. Each of these is endowed with a certain likeness of God and in its own way gives voice to the Creator's immanence in his creation': *The collected works of St John of the Cross*, translated by Kieran Kavanagh, OCD (Washington DC, 1979), 472. 7 See e.g. Augustine, *City of God*, 11, 24–5. 8 See e.g. the haiku-like ninth-century quatrain (no. 4 in Murphy, op. cit.): 'Let us adore the Lord/ Maker of wondrous works/ great bright heaven with its angels/ the white-waved sea on earth.' Cf. Patrick Kavanagh's poems: *Ploughman*; *To a Blackbird*; *Beech Tree*; *A View of God and the Devil*; *The One*. 9 See the seventh-century *Antiphonary of Bangor*, ed. F.E. Warren (London: 1893, Part 1; 1893, Part 2).

all, the genre of otherworld journeys and voyages, we know that the other world was not far away, just beyond the veil, to adopt Yeats' phrase. Irish Christian writers took over the genre of the otherworld journey and adapted it to the specifically Christian totalizing vision of otherworld reality, the three-storey world of hell, purgatory and heaven.[10] There was of course a long Judaeo-Christian tradition of that genre, which culminated in Dante's *Divine Comedy* and its all-encompassing fusion of poetry, philosophy, theology and mysticism, with the vision of the Trinity at its summit – as in the best of the Irish versions, long before Dante. In fact the Irish versions made an important contribution to the development of that genre. They developed its structure in the stages of the descent to the underworld and the ascent to the supreme vision of the Trinity. Since some of the Irish versions were in Latin,[11] and known in Europe, Dante could well have known them. And certainly there are striking parallels between them.

IRISH TEXTS

St Patrick

From that introductory overview we turn to specific Irish texts that represent the primacy of the Trinity and its all-encompassing range. I will take them mostly in chronological order, and that enables us to start with one of the most succinct and powerful statements of them all, St Patrick's own credal profession in chapter 4 of his *Confessio*:[12]

> There is no other God, nor ever was nor ever will be, than God the Father unbegotten, without beginning (*principium*), source of every *principium*, encompassing all that exists ...; and His son Jesus Christ whom we declare to have been always with the Father ..., begotten by the Father ... before every *principium* ... And He has abundantly poured out upon us the Holy Spirit ... who makes obedient believers sons of God and joint heirs with Christ. That is the God we confess and adore, one God in the Holy name of the Trinity.

10 See Jonathan M. Wooding (ed.), *The otherworld voyage in early Irish literature* (Dublin, 2000). 11 E.g. the twelfth-century *Visio Tnugdali* (The Vision of Tundal), narrated and written by an Irish monk of the *Schottenkloster* of St James, Regensburg, Germany to the Abbess of a convent in Regensburg, edited by A. Wagner in his *Visio Tnugdali Lateinisch und Altdeutsch* (Erlangen, 1882). 12 Editions: Newport J.D. White, *Libri Sancti Patricii; The Latin writings of St Patrick*, with introduction, translation and notes (Dublin, 1905); Ludwig Bieler, *Libri Epistolarum Sancti Patricii Episcopi*, 2 vols. with introduction, text and commentary, (Dublin, 1952); Daniel Conneely, *St Patrick's Letters: a study of their theological dimension*, edited and presented by Patrick Bastable and others: including the present writer (Maynooth, 1993).

That Trinitarian profession is the overture to the theme that Patrick develops in depth throughout the *Confessio*. In a cyclical summary, he restates it at the end of the *Confessio*. Its final sentence shows a sure sense of an ending: 'This is my confession before I die.' It refers back, of course, to the whole of the *Confessio*, but it is more immediately preceded (in c. 60) by a final Trinitarian profession – in response to heathen worshippers of the sun: 'But we adore and believe in the true Sun, Christ, who [unlike the material sun] will never perish ... but will abide for ever, reigning with God the omnipotent Father and with the Holy Spirit, prior to all worlds and ages now and for ever and ever.'

Between that opening and ending Patrick recounts the individual roles of the Persons of the Trinity, especially of the Holy Spirit, in profound spiritual experiences. Chapter 20 includes all three Persons in an account of an occasion when 'Satan mightily tested me'. He 'fell upon me like a huge rock', paralysing Patrick's limbs. He could not understand what made him 'call out to Helios' [Greek sun-god] in his distress, at the same moment as he saw a radiant sun rising in the heavens. Its radiance shone down on him and cast off at once all the weight that oppressed him. 'I believe that Christ the Lord came to my aid, and it was his Spirit who was already calling out for me.' He recalls Christ's own promise; 'In that day ... it is not you who speak but the Spirit of your Father speaking in you' (Mt 10:20).

In chapter 33, Patrick refers back to chapters 1–3 on his captivity in Ireland. In chapter 3, he announces a fundamental reason for writing his *Confessio*: he cannot keep silent about the favours and graces that God gave him during that captivity. The Lord opened the heart of his ignorance and unbelief (*incredulitatis meae*),[13] enabling him to turn with his whole heart 'to the Lord my God' (c. 2). He sought and found Him. And that, he believes, he owes to 'God's indwelling Spirit, who has worked in me down to this day' (c. 33).

In chapter 24, Patrick narrates a Pauline experience (2 Cor 12:2ff). One night he heard words spoken that came from the indwelling second Person of the Trinity. What they meant or whence they came he did not know: 'God knows, whether they were spoken within me or outside me', until a final voice said; 'He who gives his life for you is the one who is speaking within you' (cf. Mt 10:20, Jn 3:16).

In the following chapter (25), he relates another Pauline experience, with a possible echo of Augustine's *Confessions*. He saw [or heard] someone praying within him:

> I was, as it were, within my body, and I heard (him) above me, that is, above the inner man,[14] and there he was praying with intense and fervent

13 See chap. 1; *Deum verum ignorabam* (I did not know the true God). 14 On 'above the inner man' cf. Augustine's emphasis in *Conf.* VII 10, 16; Patrick could have known Augustine's *Confessiones* – there are many parallels. See e.g. his *Conf.* VIII 12, 29 on the mysterious voice he heard in the garden during the final crisis of his conversion.

> groanings. While this was happening, I was stricken with awe and stunned into a stupor, and I wondered who it could be that was praying within me. But at the end of the prayer He spoke in terms which gave me to ... understand that He was the Holy Spirit.

At that point, Patrick awoke and at once recalled the words of St Paul (Rom 8:26): 'We know not how to pray as we should, but the Spirit himself prays our petitions for us, with groanings so inexpressible that they cannot be put into words.'

He has already told us in chapter 23 that it was in a night vision and a voice, (some years after his escape from Ireland and his later return to Britain), that he heard the 'voice of the Irish'. They were calling him from the region 'beside the Wood of Foclut, close to the western sea', to return and walk among them again. That was an evangelizing call that revealed his destiny. The 'apostle of Ireland' accepted Christ's call to the first apostles: Go now therefore and teach all peoples, baptising them in the name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit (c. 40; Mt 28:19).

St Patrick's Breastplate

In light of the strong, intense, forceful and spiritual personality that emerges from the *Confessio* and his *Breastplate* hymn (see note 16), we can understand why Patrick – the 'apostle of Ireland' – impressed his memory and influence on later generations. Not all of that memory will pass with historians, but that doesn't necessarily eliminate all truth behind the memory, and especially behind Patrick's lasting influence. As even Aristotle admits,[15] the wonderful is attractive, so every teller of a story adds something of his own! The best example of that, as both a memory and a trinitarian, spiritual, and cosmic hymn is *St Patrick's Breastplate*.[16] It is named after him because attributed to him, but we know it cannot be his, because it is composed in Old Irish of a certain date too late to be Patrick's – even supposing that he was ever familiar with the language at all. Yet the language of the hymn is indeed old, and consequently early. That is confirmed by a note in the Life of Patrick by Tírechán about AD 700. The note says that he must be given a fourfold honour in every Irish monastery. The fourth of these is always to chant his Gaelic 'canticle' (*canticum ejus Scotticum semper canere)*, taken to be the *Breastplate*.[17]

It is a splendid hymn, not only in its trinitarian and cosmic range, but also in the lapidary style of the language. As a highly inflected language, Old Irish was

15 *Poetics*, XXIV, 8 16 Text and translation in the eleventh-century Irish *Liber Hymnorum*, edited by J.H. Bernard and R. Atkinson (London, 1898), vol. 1; text and introduction; vol. 2; translations and notes; see N.D. O'Donoghue, 'St Patrick's Breastplate', in Mackey, op. cit., 45–63. Patrick often echoes St Paul, in whom the metaphor of the 'breastplate', or 'armour' recurs: Eph 6:14 and 1 Thess 5:8; Rom 13:12, Eph 6:11 and 13. 17 In *The Patrician texts of the Book of Armagh* (SLH, vol. 10), edited, with an introduction, translation and commentary, by Ludwig Bieler, with a contribution by Fergus Kelly (Dublin, 1979), 166 and 167.

capable of a very artistic economy of words, resulting in a concentrated density of expression and meaning that is hard for any modern 'analytic' language to achieve, or to transmit its effect in translation – only Latin can approach its lapidarity. And as an invocation for strength and protection against evil, the 'breastplate' (Latin *lorica*, Gaelic *lúireach*), has a long later history as a very 'Celtic' genre in both Irish and Latin, less grand in scale but still trinitarian and artistic.[18]

Here then are some translated samples from 'Patrick's' *Breastplate*. It opens with the Trinity:

> I arise today (in)
> Vast might, invocation of the Trinity –
> Belief in a Threeness,
> Confession of Oneness,
> Meeting in the Creator ... etc.

This trinitarian opening motif returns in the cyclical conclusion. In between there are 'stanzas' invoking Christ specifically. Here is the opening of the one that is too long and rich, and hopefully well enough known, to need quotation *in extenso*:

> Christ for my protection today ...;
> Christ with me, Christ before me,
> Christ behind me, Christ in me, etc.

The 'stanza' that must be quoted in full is the one that adds the grandeur and beauty of the cosmos to the hymn's trinitarian dimension:

> I arise today (in)
> Might of heavens,
> Brightness of sun,
> Whiteness of snow,
> Splendour of fire,
> speed of light,
> swiftness of wind,
> depth of sea,
> stability of earth,
> firmness of rock.

A note on this hymn in Volume 2 of the *Liber Hymnorum*, p. 210, gives a glimpse of its long remembrance in tradition. The author of the note quotes from an article written by a Celtic scholar in 1839, who says that portions of this hymn were still in use among the people, and repeated at bedtime 'as a protection against evil'. The author of the note comments; 'We do not know if that is still true ...' He was writing in 1897. What was known in the Jubilee year 2000, we don't know either.

18 On the Irish contribution to the artistic development of rhyme and assonance in continental Latin poetry, see F.J.E. Raby, *A history of Christian Latin poetry*, 2nd ed. (Oxford, 1953), 135ff and 181–2.

Secundinus (Gaelic *Sechnall*)

In addition to St Patrick's trinitarian emphasis and intense spirituality, I have also mentioned his long lasting influence. That influence was expressed very early (in his own lifetime?) in a long hymn of praise by Secundinus. Secundinus is said to have been Patrick's nephew and a companion in his work. If that is true, Secundinus' Latin hymn is the earliest in Ireland. And as far as I know, apart from the Acts of the Apostles, and Patrick's own *Confessio*, the hymn is a unique personal hymn in praise of a founder of Christianity in virgin territory.

The hymn is abecedarian, in ninety-two lines of twenty-three quatrains in trochaic metre. It exalts the virtues, labours, achievements, spirituality and orthodox doctrine of Patrick, for all of which he will be given his future heavenly reward. His perfect life makes him an equal of the Apostles – an apostolate that Patrick also got in a call from God himself. 'For his immense labour he will ... reign with the Apostles as a saint over Israel' (lines 91–92).

Those two last lines are preceded by a quatrain on Patrick's spirituality and missionary zeal – all based on the Holy Trinity:

> Hymns he chants, with the Apocalypse and the Psalms of God,
> And expounds them to build up the People of God,
> Whose law he believes in the holy name of the Trinity,
> Teaching it as one Substance in three Persons.[19]

Colmcille

From Patrick's later but greater and better known *Breastplate*, we turn back to an earlier Latin poem that also opens and cyclically closes with the Trinity, framing its universal range in even more detail than does the *Breastplate*. The poem is the *Altus Prosator* (The High Creator),[20] composed by Colmcille (a.k.a. Columba) of Iona (ca. 521–97). Its title is taken from its opening words. Those words begin what we might call an epyllion of all creation, from its origin to its end, and of all its history in between, from the fall of the angels and mankind, through salvation history and man's redemption by the incarnate Christ, culminating in the loss or gain of the final human destiny intended by mankind's Creator, the beatific vision of the triune God, to be lost or won on the *dies irae* of the Last Judgement.

> The High Creator, the Ancient of Days and unbegotten,
> was without origin or ground of his beginning:
> He is and will be through infinite generations after generation.
> With Him his only-begotten Son and the Holy Spirit
> are co-eternal in the everlasting glory of Godhead.
> [In that] it is not three Gods but the One God we profess,
> preserving our faith in the three most glorious Persons.

19 Text in *The Oxford book of medieval Latin verse*, by F.J.E. Raby (Oxford, 1959). 20 Text, translation and notes in the *Liber Hymnorum*.

The second stanza sets down a list of God's primordial creations – the ranks of the angels, archangels, principalities and powers ... And this He did in order that the goodness and majesty of the Trinity be not slack in all the gifts of its largesse ...

The body of the poem expands into the creation of the universe, the fall of the rebellious angels, the creation, the fall and the redemption of man. The fallen angels descend into hell. The same descent is an option open to the freedom of fallen man, even though redeemed by the incarnate second Person of the Trinity. This final human option for hell or heaven leads into a sequence of several stanzas that evoke the terrors of the Last Judgement, when 'we shall stand trembling before the tribunal of the Lord', in a *Dies Irae* that surpasses even the fear and trembling of the better known medieval one.

Conversely, those judged to have chosen the better part ascend to the glorious court of the Trinity:

> With chants of hymns constantly ringing,
> with numberless angels rejoicing in sacred dances,
> with the four living creatures of the multiple eyes (Apoc 4:6),
> and the four-and-twenty blessed elders (ibid 4:4)
> laying their crowns at the feet of the Lamb of God (ibid 4:9, 5:6)
> the Trinity is praised in three-fold turns eternal.[21]

The old Irish preface to the poem in the *Liber Hymnorum* tells an ironic story of how Colmcille came to write another trinitarian poem included there. In return for a gift from Pope Gregory the Great, Colmcille sent him a copy of the *Altus Prosator*. The Pope was not impressed, commenting that it gave more praise to the created than to the Creator! So Colmcille composed another hymn, the *In te Christe*. It builds up to the glory of the Trinity via the glories of Christ as God – 'You are God for ever and ever in glory'. The cosmic dimension is there too, in God as *formator omnium*, in Christ as *creator omnium*. Finally –

> This glory is glory to the most high unbegotten God the Father and honour to the supreme only-begotten Son;
> and to the noble Spirit, holy, perfect and solicitous,
> let there be a perpetual *Amen* for ever and ever.

21 The *Altus Prosator* must have been well known on the continent – Rabanus Maurus (780–856) borrowed from it. According to Raby (op. cit., 181), although one admirer regarded Rabanus as a poet second to none of his time, he borrowed freely from classical and Christian predecessors. 'The most conspicuous example of such plagiarism is the long rhythmical poem on the Catholic faith, which incorporates, with appropriate adaptations, the *Altus Prosator* of Columba.'

Columbanus

From Colmcille of blessed memory in Donegal, Iona, and evangelizer of northern Britain, we come to another great Colm, the Columbanus of Bangor, Brittany, Auxeuil in France and Bobbio in Italy (543-615).[22] In him we reach a new level of doctrinal elaboration, but still in a profoundly spiritual context, expressed in a Latin that is clear, insistent, and with an intensity of feeling partly driven by his natural temperament, but also by a spirituality of which the ultimate goal is the contemplative, mystical level. The richest expression of both the doctrine and the consequent spirituality is in the sequence of thirteen sermons (*Instructiones*) delivered to religious in Milan. That location gives another reason for the emphasis on the Trinity and on its cosmic as well as spiritual range – for Arianism was still abroad in the Lombard region of northern Italy. 'Who shall examine the secret depths of God? Who shall dare to treat of the eternal ground and source (*principium*) of the universe?'[23]. The way to it is via the 'Fountain of Life', that is, via the incarnate second Person of the Trinity, Jesus Christ, the same 'Who with the Father and the Holy Spirit is one unto ages and ages'.[24]

Columbanus declares his programme from the start, with the principle that 'our doctrine should commence from that point whence all that is arises and what has not been begins'.[25] What that point is can be best expressed in his own words:

> Let every man therefore who wants to be saved believe first in God, the first and the last, one and three, one in substance, three in *substantia*; one in *potentia*, three in *persona*; one in nature, three in name; one in Godhead, who is Father and Son and Holy Spirit, one God, wholly invisible, inconceivable, inexpressible, in whom Being always is (*in quo est semper esse*), since God the Trinity is eternal ...[26]

But that supreme transcendence is complemented by God's immanent omnipresence in the world He has created. Therefore God is everywhere, wholly boundless, yet everywhere near at hand ... 'I am', he says, 'a God at hand and not a God far away.'[27] Therefore it is not from afar that we have to seek Him: 'He resides in us like soul in body, if only we be sound members of Him ... He fills all things and encompasses all things ... enters all and transcends all ...[28]

> Therefore the great Trinity is to be piously believed and not impiously questioned; for the one God, the Trinity, is an ocean that cannot be crossed over or searched out. High is the heaven, broad the earth, deep the sea and long the ages; but higher and broader and deeper and longer is our knowledge of Him ... who created all that world from nothing (*Serm* I, 4).

22 Works edited, with translation, by G.S.M. Walker, *Sancti Colombani Opera* (SLH, vol. 2), (Dublin, 1957; repr. 1970); I use the translation with occasional modifications. 23 *Serm.* I, 3. 24 *Serm.* XIII, 3; cf. Jn 14:6: 'I am the way and the truth and the life, nobody comes to the Father except through me.' 25 *Serm.* I, 1. 26 Serm. I 2; in a note to this passage Walker says that its language recalls the *Quicumque Vult* (the Athanasian Creed), and consequently suggesting an allusion to the Arian heresy. That Creed recurs in early Irish liturgy – text and translation in the *Liber Hymnorum*. 27 *Serm.* I, 3; Jer 23:2. 28 *Serm.* I, 3.

As we have already indicated, that 'knowledge' based on doctrine and faith is but the beginning of a 'way' towards the higher and (in Cardinal Newman's term) more 'real', and ultimately mystical, knowledge attained only in the ascent of the soul. So, in *Serm* VIII, 1, Columbanus reminds his hearers that 'now, you see, we must speak of the end of the way; for as we have already said that human life is a roadway ... it is for travellers to hasten to their homeland ...' We have already anticipated what that roadway is, the incarnate second Person of the Trinity. Hence the prayer in the concluding sermon:

> O our Jesus, inspire our hearts, we beg thee, with that breath of thy Spirit ... 'Show me Him whom my soul has loved' ... Blessed is the soul which is wounded by love ... And with this healing wound may our God and Lord Jesus Christ ... deign to wound the inner parts of our soul ...[ie.] He who with the Father and the Son is one for ever and ever.[29]

Tírechán

From that rarefied atmosphere, we come down to the more breathable air, but equally high Trinitarian content, of the most beautiful story ever told about St Patrick. It is the story told by Tírechán in part II, chapter 26 of the Life we have mentioned earlier, written about 700, although the story may be taken from an earlier written version – for reasons we will come to. In fact, that Life is not really such in the conventional sense. It is more a collection of Patrician memorabilia he has gathered from tradition. So once again, not all of it would pass the historian. Nevertheless there are points that might be made in favour of some of its contents.

Tírechán was a native of Mayo, that western area of Ireland where it is now mostly agreed that Patrick spent his captivity, and from where he tells us himself (*Conf.* 23), that he mysteriously heard a call to return, 'the voice of the Irish ... of the people who lived beside the Wood of Foclut, which is close to the western sea (*prope mare occidentale*)'. Tírechán would then be close to at least some local traditions. In chapters II, 42–5, he gives an account of a mission by Patrick to the same region. The episode in chapter II, 26 is located further east but still well west of the Shannon. Whatever we make of the historicity of the episode, one thinks of the monk's answer to Etienne Gilson's question whether the correspondence of Abelard and Heloise was really theirs: It is too beautiful not to be authentic!

29 Serm. XIII, 3 at the end [Shades of St John of the Cross!]

The beauty of Tírechán's episode is enhanced both by its style and its setting. The Latin is so superior to Tírechán's normal style that some have argued that he is using an earlier version, more literary than anything he could himself produce,[30] in which case the episode would be earlier than Tírechán's. The beauty of the setting[31] emerges at once in the happenstance that culminates in a conversion from anthropomorphic pagan gods to the true transcendent but omnipresent God who is both One and Three. With his holy assembly of bishops, Patrick came to the Hill of Cruachain before sunrise and sat beside the well called Clébach on the hill's eastern slopes. Who should turn up at the same well but the two daughters of the High King of Ireland, 'as women are wont to do in the morning to wash'.[32] Surprised at meeting so strange a company the maidens put them a series of questions as ancient as Homer in similar sudden meetings. Who are these people? Whence do they come? From this world or the other? Or do they come from fairyland?! Patrick gives us a characteristically bluff answer: 'It would be better for you to profess our true God than to question us about our race!' The two maidens follow with a series of naive anthropomorphic questions about this God: Who is He? Where does He live? Does He have sons and daughters? And are the daughters 'dear and beautiful in the eyes of the men of the earth?!'

'Filled with the Holy Spirit', Patrick rises to the comprehensive answer. 'Our God is the God of all men, the God of heaven and earth, of the sea and the rivers, God of the sun and the moon and the stars ... [As] God above heaven and in heaven and under heaven He has his dwelling in heaven and earth and sea ...; He breathes in all things, gives life to all things, surpasses all things, sustains all things ...' On the question of whether He has sons and daughters, Patrick makes one ironic concession!

> He [does] have a Son, co-eternal with Him [and] con-similar to Him; the Son is not younger than the Father, nor is the Father older than the Son, and the Holy Spirit breathes in them; neither is there any separateness between the Father and the Son and the Holy Spirit.

To that faith the maidens confess and receive baptism into it. The whole episode amounts to a 'story-theology' well *avant la lettre* – with due allowance of course for the parabolic pedagogy of the incarnate second Person of the Trinity.

It would be a pity to omit the coda, with its combination of grandeur and the perennial human pathos of death and the tomb. As Scripture reminds us (Exod. 33:20), nobody can see God here below and live. The maidens had wished to see this 'true God' already before their credal profession and baptism. Shortly afterwards they died – to enable them to see that God. When the ritual days of mourning were over, the friends of the King's maiden daughters 'buried them beside the well of Clébach and made a round fosse after the manner of the [Irish] *ferta*.[33] And the *ferta* was made over to Patrick, with the bones of the holy virgins, and to his heirs after him for ever ...'

30 See James Carney, *The problem of St Patrick* (Dublin, 1961), 127ff; Bieler does not fully agree with Carney. Bieler's own commentary on the same episode in the edition cited. 31 Cf. the analogous idyllic setting of Plato's *Phaedrus*, 227a, 229ab, 230bc. 32 Cf. Homer's *Odyssey*, 7, 15ff – on Odysseus and Nausicaa.

Scotus Eriugena

From that enchanting pastoral story of Tírechán's, we climb to the rarer air of John Scotus Eriugena (ca. 810–77) in his *De Divisione Naturae* (On the Division of Nature).[34] It is a systematized *summa* of our diverse preceding universalizing material, from the cosmos to its trinitarian Creator, at all levels from scriptural exegesis via philosophy and theology to the supreme mystical vision. The range of the Latin word *natura* in the title of the work is clearer in the Greek title, *Periphyseōn*, 'about natures', in the more comprehensive and cosmic plural. Eriugena makes its meaning plain in the opening statement of his project: to 'ever more carefully investigate the fact that the first and fundamental division of all things that can either be grasped by the mind, or lie beyond its grasp, is into those that are (*sunt*), and those that are not.' The generic term that comes to his mind for them all is the Greek *physis* and its Latin equivalent *natura*. The resultant work has been described as the greatest theologico-philosophical achievement from Augustine down to Thomas Aquinas. It amounts to a cosmological 'epic' of egress and regress – influenced by Greek Christian Platonists[35] – in which all creation issues from its Creator and returns to Him at the end.

How the Trinity comes into that all-encompassing epic process we need not explain again. Neither is this the occasion to get too involved in the abstract dialectics that systematize both the theology and the way of the ascent to the peaks of spirituality. One illustrative sample will suffice – under the focal term of *cause*, the quest for the ultimate Cause (*ratio*) of all things, the Cause of *all* causes.

> The theologians have correctly deduced from the things that are (*sunt*), that this Cause is (*esse*), and is wise (*sapientem*) ... and from the stable motion and moving and the mobile stability of all things, that that Cause has life (*vivere*). In this way they have also discovered the great truth that the Cause of all things is a threefold substance (*ter subsistentem*) ... Therefore the Cause and creative Nature of all things is (*est*), is wise (*sapit*) and lives (*vivit*). And

33 'But we call it *relic*, that is, the remains of the maidens – *residuae puellarum*' (ibid.); *ferta* might possibly mean a grave mound or barrow, as in pre-historic burial practice – see e.g. Homer's *Iliad*, 24, 797–801. 34 Editions: Migne, *Patrologia Latina*, vol. 122; four of the five books in the SLH series, with translation; between 1996 and 1999; Books 1–3 edited by E.A. Jeauneau in six tomes, vols. 161–3 in the *Corpus Christianorum; Continuatio Mediaevalis* (Brepols). Where available, I use the SLH translation, with occasional modification. 35 In translations and commentaries he made them available in the Latin West.

from this those who search out the truth that by its Being (*essentia*) is understood the Father, by its wisdom (*sapientia*) the Son, by its life (*vitam*) the Holy Spirit.'[36]

And he goes on to assert that 'even this [truth] was discovered only through the combined light of the spirit's intuitive understanding and the reason's investigation (*spiritualis intelligentiae rationabilisque investigationis*)'.[37] For the triune God 'is not unity or trinity of such a kind as can be conceived by any human intellect, however pure'.[38]

I leave the dialectics there, and turn to Eriugena's scriptural approach in Book 2, where he finds the Trinity in the opening words of Genesis, at the start of a hexaemeron that continues to the end of Book 4. From the words of Genesis 1:1–2 we are to 'understand that the most high and unique Cause of all things, I mean the Holy Trinity, is openly revealed by these words: "In the beginning (*in principio*) God made heaven and earth", that is to say, the Father under the name God, and his Word under the name of Beginning (*principium*), and the Holy Spirit a little later where the Scripture says; "The Spirit of God hovered (*superferebatur*) over (the waters)"; for holy Scripture did not here mean any other spirit ...'[39]

That argument might look like mere *symbolica verba*, but Augustine had already used it in his *Confessions* (VII 5, 6ff). And in both cases the argument starts from a 'beginning' (*principium*), interpreted not as merely temporal but as the metaphysical and theological uncreated Ground of all being. As explained earlier, that is the deeper meaning of the Greek term *archē*, used by Greek philosophers in analogous contexts, translated into Latin as *principium*. It is the term used in the Greek (LXX) translation of Genesis (1:1), and echoed in John's Gospel (1:1) – where John begins the trinitarian dimension: 'Thus you have ... the ... Cause of (all) causes openly and distinctly declared in those pages from the word of God.'[40]

But this triune transcendent Cause of causes is also immanent and omnipresent in his creation. He is above all things, within all things, and 'encompasses all things because all things are within Him, and outside Him there is nothing'.[41]

That immanence 'within all things' (*intra omnia*) has a particular relevance for *human* nature, created by God with the significantly plural phrase: 'in our own image, in the likeness of ourselves' (Gen 1:26). In *Conf.* XIII 11, 12, St Augustine interprets this plural 'ourselves' as trinitarian – and yet one. Human beings should 'meditate on three things to be found in themselves ... The three things of which I speak are existence, knowledge, will (*esse, nosse, velle*). For I *am* and I *know* and I *will*.' These three are distinct, and yet there is in them only one 'inseparable life, one life, one mind, one essence'. Eriugena takes over Augustine's analogies from these trinitarian writings, 'where he searches by a wonderful investigation (*mirabili indagatione*) into the Trinity's image in human nature.'[42]

36 SLH 1, 66–69; PL 455c. 37 SLH 1, 68–69; PL 456b. 38 SLH 1, 68–69; PL 456a. 39 SLH 2, 68–69; PL 555cd. 40 SLH 2, 68–71; PL 555d–556a. 41 SLH 2, 144–145; PL 590b. 42 *De*

Well might Eriugena turn to that 'wonderful investigation' – by the thinker who thinks from the human heart, 'restless till it rests in God';[43] the thinker who sounds the 'great deep' (*grande profundum*)[44] that man is, and the 'abyss of the human psyche' (*abyssus humanae conscientiae*).[45] It was by entry into his own 'interior depths (*intima mea*)' that Augustine had his first mystical experience, in which he saw the transcendent Light that is the Light of all lights. But he is careful to add that he owed this vision not to his own human effort alone, but to the guiding light and help of God Himself. 'You called from afar: "Yes! I am who am." And I heard as one hears in the heart.'[46] On *Plotinian* influence see *Conf.* VII 9, 13 ff.

This effort, and its resulting experience, represents already an intense drive towards a supreme spiritual goal. Augustine's prayer in the *Soliloquia* (II 1,1), is to 'know myself, to know thee' (*noverim me, noverim te*).[47] And to 'know thee' is to ascend to the contemplative knowledge of the Trinity here below, through a glass darkly, but finally in the glory of the beatific vision. The stages of that ascent Augustine outlines in the *De doctrina Christiana* (II 7, 9–10), and in the ultimate vision evoked in the prayer that concludes his *De Trinitate* (XV 28, 51). It is a prayer of thanks and praise to 'the Lord, the God who is One and unique, the God who is the Trinity', on attaining Whom our higher knowledge will put an end to all the multiple words we utter on earth without ever arriving at the Reality they try to express (ibid.).[48]

That arrival is a return, Eriugena's 'regress', to the source of our being and of our nature. And both Augustine and Eriugena find the polar pull to that return integrated into human nature itself. It is the *point de départ* of Augustine's *Confessions*, and of his way of ascent to ultimate truth. 'Thou hast made us oriented towards Thyself, and our hearts are restless until they rest in Thee' (*Conf.* I 1, 1). Eriugena expresses the same principle in Book 5, the book of the ultimate regress. Human nature 'strives after nothing other than its supreme good, to which it is drawn as by a primary polar principle (*principio*)', the magnet of human attraction towards it as towards a teleological fulfilment. 'For every rational created nature, which is understood to exist specifically in the human being, even in his sins ... is ever seeking his God, from whom he has his being, and for whose contemplation he was created'.[49]

Trinitate, Books VIII, ff; Eriugena, SLH 2, 174–175; PL 603ab. 43 *Conf.* I 1, 1. 44 *Conf.* IV 14, 22. 45 *Conf.* X 2, 2; cf. a modern Latin version of Psalm 63:7; *Profunditas est homo, et cor ejus abyssus*. 46 *Conf.* VII 10,16. 47 Cf. John Henry Newman on resting 'in the thought of two and two only absolute and luminously self-evident beings, myself and my Creator ...' in *Apologia pro Vita Sua*, William Oddie's edition, Everyman's Library, London, 1993), 89. 48 Cf. Plotinus, *Enneads*, 1, Third Tractate, Section 3, on the level of knowledge that leaves all reasoning dialectic behind. 49 PL 919a. Eriugena is building here on three governing concepts that start in Plato and are continued in Aristotle, Cicero, Plotinus, Augustine and Boethius. They are: *supreme happiness* (*eudaimonia, beatitudo*), which is attained through the *supreme good* (*megiston agathon, summum bonum*); both of which concepts depend on *supreme wisdom* (*sophia,*

But even such a God-oriented human nature cannot by itself attain the supreme spiritual level of knowing Him. For that spiritual ascent *human* nature needs the descent of the *supernatural* graces from the Trinity itself. And here, in both Augustine and Eriugena, the Holy Spirit comes into particular prominence. The extrinsic operations of the Trinity are of course common to all.[50] But each of the three Persons has a particular individual role in the shared trinitarian operation. For Eriugena, in that dispensation, 'it is the Holy Spirit ... who perfects all things (*perficit omnia*)'[51]. To illustrate that in the spiritual life he quotes St Paul at length, on the charisms in 1 Cor 12: '"To one is given the speaking of wisdom, to another the knowledge according to the same Spirit ... All these are operated by one and the same Spirit, Who dispenses to each as he decides what is appropriate to each"'[52]. 'It is in your gift (the Holy Spirit) that we rest (*requiescimus*)' says Augustine, 'it is there that we enjoy (*fruimur*) you.'[53] 'And this', says Eriugena, 'is that spiritual way that stretches out into the infinite' – this after first quoting Psalm 105:4: Look for the Lord and get strength from his power.[54]

It is in his Homily on the Prologue to St John's Gospel that Eriugena, using his own wings on the 'eagle' himself, flies highest into the trinitarian infinite. John is the spiritual eagle who overflies not merely the world of the senses but, on the wings of the deepest interior theology, transcends even the vision of all philosophical theorizing, seeing, as he does, 'beyond all that is and is not, seeing with the inner eye of the clearest and highest contemplation'.[55] By virtue of unutterable wisdom (*ineffabili sapientiae virtute*), he gained ingress to the realities that transcend all others, that is, 'into the mysteries (*secreta*) of the one Essence in three Subsistents (*substantiis*), and of the three Subsistents in one Essence'.[56] But that he could not have done without the light of the Trinity itself – 'without having been made fit and worthy to participate in incomprehensible truth'. And that fitness means being to some degree '*in Deum transmutatus*'. He 'could not otherwise ascend to God *nisi prius fieret Deus*.'[57]

As I said earlier, Eriugena was a Christian Platonist. One recalls then Plato's *Theaetetus* (176ab): 'Therefore we ought to strive to escape from the earth to the world where Divinity dwells. And to make this escape is to grow into likeness to God, in the measure that that is possible (*homoiōsis theoi kata to dunaton*); and to become like God is to become righteous, holy and wise.'

Otherworld journeys

In the introduction I mentioned the genre of three-storey otherworld visionary journeys among early Irish Christian writings. It is of course a primordial genre, from Homer[58] down to Plato[59] and Virgil[60] in the Greco-Roman world, and from

sapientia). 50 Augustine *Conf.* XIII 9, 10; Eriugena, SLH 2, pp. 84–85; PL 562c. 51 SLH 2, pp. 66–7; PL 554a. 52 Conf. 13, 9.10. 53 *Conf.* 13, 9, 10. 54 PL 919d. 55 PL 283b. 56 PL 285d. 57 PL 286a. 58 *Odyssey*, XI. 59 The myth of Er in *Republic* X 614ff. 60 *Aeneid*, VI 236ff. 61 Translation in C.S. Boswell, *An Irish precursor of Dante* (London, 1908); cf. John D. Seymour, *Irish visions of the other world* (London, 1930). See also Eileen Gardiner (ed.), *Visions of hell and heaven before Dante* (New York, 1989). 62 Paragraph 1. 63 Par. 2. 64 Par. 7. 65 Par. 8.

Judaic writing down through the Christian world, where it culminated in Dante's *Divina Commedia*. I need not repeat the distinctive features of the Irish Christian genre: the felt closeness of the other world in the pre-Christian Celtic imagination, the consequent easy Christian adaptation of the pre-Christian sagas of otherworld journeys and their Celtic coloration in details, the more architectonic Irish Christian version of a genre that hitherto lacked an ordered structure. It is this structural contribution in particular that enabled some scholars to describe the Irish versions as forerunners of Dante – there are in fact some striking parallels in the details.

There is one particular Irish example that could have been known to Dante, since it was written in Latin on the continent in 1149, and well known there. It is the *Vision of Tundal* (*Visio Tnugdali*) we mentioned earlier. It is also the most architectonically structured of the Irish versions. But since, like Dante's *Commedia*, they all culminate in the Trinity that is our concern here, I choose a single sample – for its specific details and its poetic prose – from an earlier work in Old Irish. It is the *Fís Adamnáin* (the Vision of Adamnán),[61] so called because attributed to Adamnán of Iona (ca. 625–ca. 704). It cannot however be his, but its author may be earlier than the manuscripts of the tenth or eleventh centuries.

Its Irish coloration and cosmic dimension emerges in its opening sentence: 'Noble and wonderful is the Lord of the Elements'[62], later named 'Lord of Creation'[63], the two terms that recur in early Gaelic religious poetry. We come to that Lord as Trinity through a highly artistic evocation of 'the splendour that is in the region of the Heavenly Host around the Lord's own throne ...'[64]:

> Over the Glorious One that sits upon the Royal throne is a great arch, like unto a wrought helmet or a regal diadem. And the eye that should behold it would forthwith melt away. Three circles are round about it, separating it from the (Heavenly) Host, and by no explanation may the nature of them (the circles) be known. Six thousand thousands ... surround the fiery throne, which burns on for ever without end or term.[65]

Since we have mentioned Dante's *Commedia* we may appropriately quote him on the trinitarian circles in the culminating vision of the *Paradiso*, XXXIII, 115ff:

> In the deep and radiant Being/ of the transcendent light three circles appeared to me/ of three colours and one dimension;/ and one from the other like rainbow from rainbow/ appeared reflected, while the third appeared as fire that from the one and the other breathed equally ...

> [For human reason it is] like the geometer who sets all his effort/ to squaring the circle, but no measure finds,/ for all his calculation no formula he finds.

This is a peak on which we well might rest, but here below what goes up must come down. I have highlighted the richer, loftier and more elaborated trinitarian texts. Yet beneath that level lies another rich seam that I have mostly left unmined, but which should not be forgotten. At the simplest level[66] devotion to the Trinity remained characteristic of Irish spirituality in Gaelic poems and prayers down through the centuries. That simpler devotional material is naturally less developed and often fragmentary, but in its very simplicity it is rich in the artistic beauty and deep spirituality of the 'poor in spirit' who are moved more by the heart than by the head. Good examples of that nether simpler seam, and its long survival, recur in the Gaelic dictated and published *Life* of Peig Sayers in the early twentieth century. She was born in Co. Kerry, but married into the Great Blasket Gaelic-speaking island. Her son's preface opens with the phrase: 'praised be the King of Creation'.

To conclude with a sample of that more nether seam, I turn not to a short or fragmentary instance, but to a much longer and more expansive outcrop in a prominent early Irish genre, the litany. Despite its length, the litany is simple in its repetitive mode, and can be devotional and deeply spiritual in private prayer or communal liturgy. Among the Irish examples is a tenth-century Irish-language *Litany of the Trinity*.[67] In a long and ordered sequence, it invokes each of the three Persons individually, each invoked in terms of the long list of rubrics that address their individual attributes and roles. Its length will prevent us doing justice to it here – we can only sample its intense devotional spirituality and the grandeur of its range.

I have already explained the connection of devotion and spirituality with the litany as a genre. But the specific grandeur of range in this particular litany is that its trinitarian spirituality combines with, and transfuses, the same cosmic, totalis-

66 See e.g. the Gaelic prayer before sleep in Douglas Hyde, *The religious songs of Connacht* (Shannon, Co. Clare, Ireland, 1972), 368–9: 'I lay me down with thee, O Jesus/ … /O Father who created me,/O Son who redeemed me,/O Holy Spirit who sanctified me,/ be you Three with me.' Cf. ibid., 396–7 (*Three Folds in My Garment*). 67 Irish text and translation in *Irish litanies*, edited by the Revd Charles Plummer (London, 1925), 79–85. It is attributed to one Mugrón, a late tenth-century *comharb* (successor) of Colmcille in Iona. See also the intense spirituality of the long series of invocations of the Trinity for forgiveness that opens the *Old Irish Litany of Confession* (ibid.), pp 3–5. It too includes the totalizing cosmic dimension: 'O World above all worlds,/ O Power above all powers/ … O cause above all causes …' Two much later Trinitarian poems in English by Irish writers: *A Prayer to the Trinity* by Richard Stanihurst (1545–1618), and *Feast of the Most Holy Trinity* by Aubrey de Vere (1814–1902). They are respectively in pp 56 and 113–14 of Patrick Murray (ed.), *The deer's cry: a treasury of religious verse* (Dublin, 1986).

ing range of the Trinity that we have emphasized from the start. The litany opens with an invocation of the Father:

> Have mercy on us, O God the Father Almighty:
> O God of Hosts,
> O high God,
> O Lord of the World,
> O ineffable God,
> O Creator of the elements …

The same antiphon opens the invocation of 'Jesus Christ, Son of the Living God'. He is the 'beginning of all things', the 'completion of the world', the 'Word of God', the 'Life of all things', the 'Intelligence of the mystical world'.

After the same opening antiphon the Holy Spirit is invoked. He is the 'highest of all spirits', the 'Finger of God', the 'Septiform Spirit', the 'Spirit by whom is ordered every lofty thing', the 'Holy Spirit that rules all created things, visible and invisible'.

The conclusion invokes all three persons together:

> Have mercy upon me, O Father, O Son, O Holy Spirit. Have mercy upon me, O God, from whom and through whom is the rule of all created things for Thee, O God.
> To Thee be glory and honour for ever and ever.

That last prayer concludes with *Amen. Ainsi soit-il* here too – at least until the author, or *quicunque vult*, resumes.

ADDENDUM

In this paper I have emphasized the prominence of the universal range of the Trinity in Irish early Christian writing – up to my last page. I should not then omit a late mention of a possible source of influence on that Irish tradition, a source reference I owe to a scripture scholar in Maynooth, the Reverend Dr Séamus O'Connell. He gave it to me after I had completed the paper, in answer to a casual question I asked him about that Irish tradition. He told me that the Irish tradition was influenced by the same theme in earlier *apocryphal* works from abroad, including the influence of early contacts with sources in the Holy Land and Syria. To provide me with some samples he gave me a volume edited by Máire Herbert and Martin McNamara MSC: *Irish Biblical Apocrypha: Selected Texts in Translation* (Edinburgh, 1989).

At this late stage, I must confine myself to quoting one good sample from the first paragraph of 'The Evernew Tongue' (pp. 109–18 of the edition cited).

> *In principio fecit Deus caelum et terram, et reliqua.* The High-King of the world, stronger than any King, higher than any power ..., the only Son of God the Father – he it was who gave this account of the formation and creation of the world to the many peoples on earth, because it was not known to anyone except God ... For this reason, then, ... this account came from heaven to open the mind and intellect of all, so that souls might find the way of life and salvation.'

They had no knowledge 'of who made' the world. The Trinity is completed in paragraph 11 – on the role of the Holy Spirit in the creation.

In paragraphs 23 and following, an account is given of each day in the six days of creation. One very Irish theme pervades it, but much more developed. That theme is the wondrous beauty of the endless variety and complexity of design in all the elements and living creatures in that 'nature' that the triune God has created.

A view from Cologne: the fate of Patristic Trinitarianism in modern Catholic theology

Aidan Nichols OP

We are familiar with the notion that, in sacred studies in the Catholic context (but by no means exclusively there), the present century has been characterized by a series of movements of *ressourcement – recursus ad fontes*, 'going back to the sources' – of which the most important were the biblical, liturgical and patristic revivals. It has been noted, sometimes acerbically, that the movement of patristic *ressourcement* owes something to the difficulties encountered by its elder sister, the biblical renewal in the course of the Modernist crisis. If one feared one would fall foul of Church authority by practicing the higher criticism after the manner of the universities of Berlin or Jena, one might well prefer as an alternative to edit a fifth century chronicle of the pious practices of monks. (That was the origin, for instance, of Dom Cuthbert Butler's presentation of Palladius' *Lausiac History*.) But, that apart, historians of theology have been content to map the massive fact of this and other returns to the sources without too much enquiry into their causes. The 'massive fact' was chiefly of interest to them as a way of explaining the passing of neo-Scholastic hegemony in Catholic church-culture at the time of the Second Vatican Council. The massiveness in question also obscured from view the very real presence of the Fathers, not least as Trinitarian thinkers, in the theology of the nineteenth century, whether in the Roman or other schools. And since I am keen not to perpetuate the illusion that, before the movements of *ressourcement*, theology wandered in a barren landscape 'ethnically cleansed' of all traces of the Fathers' blessed race, I would like to launch an account of the fate of patristic Trinitarianism in modern Catholic dogmatics from the pad of the late nineteenth century. What I want to show is how things could be done then, and what questions, hesitations or re-evaluations vis-à-vis the role of patristic theses in speculative theology have emerged since. The writer I shall take as my *point de repère* is a rewarding one: Matthias Joseph Scheeben, now an unjustly neglected figure in the English-speaking world.[1]

Writing as an historically well-informed Scholastic divine at the seminary of Cologne, Scheeben gives forty-three pages out of one hundred and sixty of his tractate on the Holy Trinity in the *Handbuch der katholishen Dogmatik* to a consideration of the patristic treatment of the subject, prior to entering upon his own

1 But see my 'Homage to Scheeben', in A. Nichols OP, *Scribe of the Kingdom: essays on theology and culture* (London, 1994), 205–13.

distinctive understanding of what he calls 'the genetic development of the Trinity from out of the fruitfulness of the divine life'.[2] A brisk canter through the ante-Nicene Fathers and writers produces the following conclusion. Although the content of authentic Trinitarian understanding was 'to hand' in the consciousness of believers, and *a fortiori* of Catholic Fathers and teachers (that can be known from the prolegomena to dogmatics in the theology of revelation and its transmission, thus licensing a benign interpretation of the historical data), neither the fundamental truths of Trinitarian believing nor their further implications came to expression so sharply and aptly as would later be the case. The weaknesses were these. The Father's character as Source and Principle was so strongly stressed as to make it appear as if he alone were God *simpliciter*. Son and Spirit being divine only by virtue of communion, *Gemeinschaft*, with the Father and in less perfect fashion. In an effort to avoid ditheism, a full affirmation of the identity in substance of the Father and a divine Other was not forthcoming; instead people spoke of a substantial relationship, merely, or even of a simple communion in the Father's power or authority, action, love or unity. Next, in an effort to extricate the Father from any subordination to blind or coercive necessity, the generation of the Son was described as voluntary – though Scheeben allows that this term *can* bear a proper meaning in that context, hence its survival among orthodox writers *after* Nicaea.[3] A related difficulty is that, misled by Proverbs 8:22 where Wisdom cries, 'The Lord created me at the beginning of his work', the Son's generation can appear as ordered to the world's creation, perhaps in the mitigated form of the concept of a twofold generation, in eternity and in time. The final weakness of ante-Nicene Trinitarianism for Scheeben is that it tends to locate the *distinctivum* of the Father, what will later be called his hypostatic particularity, in an inappropriate place – namely, his invisibility as Sender of Son and Spirit who alone appear visibly, under sensuous forms and symbols.

In seeking to show how the doctrinal tradition was so consolidated as to make available a sound dogmatic grasp of the mystery for further exploration by a speculative dogmatician such as Scheeben aims to be, the Cologne theologian is extremely even-handed in the laurels he awards to East and West. His account of how these lacunae in pre-Nicene writing were successfully filled divides up into eighteen pages on the Greek Fathers (mostly Athanasius and Basil) and sixteen on the Latin – though here the need to deal with the *Filioque* issue produces references in passing to Maximus and Damascene. Still, this parity of pages should not deceive us. Not for nothing does Scheeben's exposition of the Greek-speaking writers come first, for these are the principal architects of that two-story dogmatic building, Nicaea and Constantinople. Scheeben considers that this preferential

2 M.J. Scheeben, *Handbuch der katholischen Dogmatik* I (Freiburg, 1874; 1933), 795–838 on the Fathers; 839–906 on Scheeben's own *intellectus fidei*. 3 For the case of Gregory Nazianzen, see A. Nichols OP, *Byzantine Gospel: Maximus the Confessor in modern scholarship* (Edinburgh, 1993), 72–3.

option, in the order of exposition, for the East does not in any way prevent – indeed he thinks, it licenses – the giving of primacy to the unity of the divine substance. What Athanasius witnessed to was precisely the communication of the entire substance of the Begetter to the Begotten so that both possess one and the same divine being. What Basil argued against the Eunomians was that, as between the divine life of Begotten and Begetter, the only difference is that it is in the first case a life that is *received*, and in the second case, not. The unity of essence of Father, Son and Spirit, remarks Scheeben, with acknowledgement to Athanasius, again, and to Nazianzen, is the 'unity of a substantial and indivisible continuity (*Zusammenhang*), of coherence and inseparability'.[4] If such unity is compared by these Fathers with the immanent inherence of qualities, powers and activities in created spirits, that is not to be taken, they insist, as though the Persons proceeding are accidents of the Father's substance, for they are that very substance itself. The Persons' perfect reciprocal *Ineinandersein*, 'in-one-another-ness', is not just spiritual co-presence, such as different beings might enjoy with each other, for it is included in the very concept of their total *homoousia*, and so is the condition and ground, not the consequence, of their personal acting.

All of that explains how the Greek Fathers can call the Trinity the 'Monad' or the 'Henad', and say of the divine Essence that it is one not just in the arithmetic sense which would imply some kind of counting within a possible series but in the more significant sense that no second or third positing of the divine nature is possible. Here Scheeben co-opts Athanasius and the Cappadocians into supporting the option of Latin theology since the High Middle Ages to teat the unity of the Three first. As the American Dominican William Hill has put it in what is perhaps from the Catholic side the most distinguished English-language work on Trinitarian theology in the last two decades:

> The justification for this order [oneness, then thereness] rather than the reverse is simply that God's identity can only be approached by way of analogy with what prevails in the world of creatures. There, the concept of unity enjoys a logical priority over multiplicity; it is possible to grasp things in their plurality only on the basis of first being aware of the unity of each of those entities that go to make up that unity.

But as Hill cautions:

> This is not, of course, an order within God but solely an order of intelligibility for a mind that thinks rationally; thus, the theologian who proceeds this way must constantly bear in mind that the God who is One in being *is* three Persons.[5]

4 Scheeben, *Handbuch* (above, n. 2), 805. 5 W.J. Hill OP, *The three personed God: the Trinity*

That is a re-assurance as to the propriety of the lay-out of the Latin treatises on God the Triune which not all Catholic dogmaticians, by the mid-twentieth century, would find wholly satisfying: the name of the Innsbrück Jesuit, Karl Rahner, whose small but influential essay on Trinitarian theology I shall be mentioning later,[6] comes at once to mind. Scheeben's own defence of a prioritizing of the single divine *ousia* is not however, like Hill's, epistemological, a matter of how human minds work, but, if the pun may be allowed, is more substantive. His most telling point is that every manner of distinguishing the divine Three would fall away if the unity of Essence were not first grasped as so complete that the distinction of Persons arises precisely as *a difference in their possession of It*, the condition of which is the origin of One through relationship with the Others. For Scheeben, the *monarchia* in the Holy Trinity lies in the Son and Spirit being 'out of' the Father with whom they have the selfsame Essence. Both halves of this formula, the 'personalist' and the 'essentialist', are to his mind indispensable in a proper statement of the Monarchy.

Do we see at work here a spirit of integration and equilibrium in the utilization of patristic texts on the Trinity which is imperiled by a one-sided attack on 'essentialism' – usually in the name of the highly particular reading of the Cappadocian achievement associated with the Greek Orthodox theologian, much read in Catholic circles, Bishop John Zizioulas?[7] There can be such a thing as a unilateral personalism which is barely distinguishable from a vitiated voluntarism as when Zizioulas portrays the Father as freely constituting his own essence. As a recent contributor to an Eastern Orthodox theological journal has noted, unless Son and Spirit are to be reduced to a level of secondary divinity here, 'nature and essence cannot be emptied of content as much as Zizioulas would like'. Speaking of both the relations of origin and those of communion, V.F. Harrison goes on:

> The essence remains ontologically dependent on the persons, as he takes care to affirm, but it serves as a medium, so to speak, through which the persons actualize their relatedness and freely offer themselves to each other ... The common essence or nature is intrinsic to the relatedness which constitutes their existence, freedom and equality as persons.[8]

Perhaps more of Scheeben's space than in an ecumenically sensitive age we would consider altogether appropriate, is devoted to defending the view that the *Filioque*, understood, with the Council of Florence, in the sense of a *per Filium*, is the con-

as a mystery of salvation (Washington DC, 1982), 256–7. 6 K. Rahner SJ, *The Trinity* (London and New York, 1970). The German original is an essay, 'Der dreifältige Gott als transzendenter Urgrund der Heilsgeschichte', in J. Feiner and M. Löhrer (eds), *Mysterium Salutis* II/C (Einsielden, 1967). 7 J. Zizioulas, *Being as communion* (Crestwood, NY, 1985). 8 V.F. Harrison, 'Zizioulas on communion and otherness', in *St Vladimir's Theological Quarterly* 42 (1998) 273–300, here at 279–80.

viction of the Greek Fathers, before Photius, at large. Here too we anticipate somewhat another *crux* in the twentieth century Catholic reception of patristic Trinitarianism: whether, as for instance with Hans Urs von Balthasar, roundly to re-affirm – and indeed to glory in – the *Filioque* quite as much as, on the Eastern Orthodox side, a Vladimir Lossky might repudiate – and indeed excoriate – it; or, by contrast, to soften its force, as with the French 'moine apostolique', strongly supported on this point by the Holy See, Jean-Miguel Garrigues; or again to find a formulation which circumvents the whole issue (no matter what may be said or sung while in church!), as with the American Capuchin Thomas Weinandy in his study *The Father's Spirit of Sonship*.[9] The proposal of that study, that it is by the power of the Spirit that the Father generates the Son, is prolonged in a French language work, François-Xavier Durrwell's *Jésus, Fils de Dieu dans l'Espirit Saint*,[10] which draws the further inference that it is by the Spirit that the Father is Father and the Son Son – an example of the pendulum swinging so far from a supposed downplaying of pneumatology in the Western tradition as almost to leave the clock-case altogether. Scheeben, it is worth remarking, does not argue for the theological perspicuity of the *Filioque* notwithstanding the historically admitted fact that the Greek doctors by and large do not hold it (the position of, say, Balthasar or, on the Reformed side, Karl Barth). He maintains that the Greek doctors *do* hold it, for what they controverted with the Pneumatochians was the right understanding of the claim that the Holy Spirit goes out from the Son (not as do the gifts of creation and redemption, they argued, but as does One who is divine). Why, then, does the *Filioque* not appear in the Constantinopolitan Symbol? The simplest way to put forth a dogma which would defend the mystery of the Spirit's Godhead was to affirm his origin in the Father's substance. No shorter, more scriptural (compare John 15, 1 Corinthians 2) means to their end could be found than was this.

Is there then *no* perceptible difference between Eastern and Western Triadology in the patristic age as Scheeben sees it? Scheeben has already explained how, in the Greek East, speaking of the Spirit's procession *through* the Son was preferred to talk of his origin *from* Son and Father, and goes on to say that in some respects that formula is indeed objectively preferable. It is good biblical exegesis to say of the Son, as the Johannine Christ says of himself, that he is 'the Way' – by which all comes from the Father and through which all returns to him. That median role is also the Son's in the spiration of the Spirit. And in any case the Father and Son are never *parallel* principles of anything. Rather are they *zwei ineinander wirkende Prinzipien*,[11] two circumcessively operative principles, and specifically, in relation to the procession of the Spirit, the Son is but *principium de principio*, a principle from a principle, as the Father enables him to co-spirate the Spirit in giving him

9 T.G. Weinandy OFM Cap., *The Father's spirit of sonship: reconceiving the Trinity* (Edinburgh, 1992). 10 F.–X. Durrwell CSsR, *Jésus, Fils de Dieu dans l'Esprit Saint* (Paris, 1997). 11 Scheeben, *Handbuch* (above, n. 2), 819.

(the Son) in the eternal act of his generation all that is the Father's own. The *per Filium* attests the more organic quality of Eastern triadology whereby the Begetting and the Breathing appear as one progressive movement from the Father, the second moment in 'inner, essential and living continuity' with the first. (Here Scheeben anticipates Garrigues by noting how a richer Hellenic vocabulary for procession than Latin possesses can make the difference between the mediate and the ultimate origin of the Holy Spirit plain.) The Spirit goes forth from the Son only insofar as, thanks to his Sonship, the Son is and remains in the Father – that, for Scheeben, is a perfectly good 'Greek' way of expressing the Latin conviction that Father and Son constitute one principle for the being of the Spirit. In the Latin tradition, which, contrary to the characterizations of many history of doctrine textbooks, Scheeben considers to be *more* personalist on this point, the procession of the Spirit is an act expressive of the personal communion which the Only-Begotten Son enjoys with the Father by virtue of his unity and equality with him – such that (and this, says Scheeben, is already clear in Ambrose and Jerome, in other words, the dread name of St Augustine need not yet appear!) the Spirit is the bond and pledge, which rhyme nicely in German, *Band und Pfand*, of their mutual love. Nothing could be more suitable, in this context, to say of the Spirit that he proceeds *ex Patre et Filio*. We are dealing here, Scheeben believed, not with a contradiction in patristic pluralism, but a complementariness.

Does the reiterated emphasis on the Holy Spirit as *vinculum amoris*, the bond of love of Father and Son, lead to his seeming irrelevant to the Trinitarian economy in the world, and indeed to the occlusion of his being as a Person – theses strongly maintained by the United Reformed Church theologian Professor Colin Gunton of King's College, London, not without some influence on Catholic students of things Trinitarian? The French Jesuit, Bertrand de Margerie, has pointed out that, for Augustine, the goal of the relations of divine Persons with human is always so to manifest the divine to the human that the human may participate in the divine. When, in Book XV of the *De Trinitate*, Augustine in effect applies this principle to the mission of the Spirit as the Trinitarian 'bond of love', the connection with our own salvation is transparent. In the words of the African doctor:

> According to the Sacred Scriptures, the Holy Spirit is neither of the Father alone nor of the Son alone, but of both of them: and thus he instills in us the common charity by which the Father and the Son mutually love each other.[12]

The Spirit is thus the bond of inner-ecclesial communion by being the bond of communion of Christians with the Father and the Son.

12 B. de Margerie SJ, *The Christian Trinity in history* (Petersham, MA, 1982) xxi, 114–21; Augustine, *De Trinitate* 15. 17.27.

Before leaving the topic of the *Filioque*, we can observe how Scheeben, in an inverted mirror-image of what will be Lossky's position, deals with Filioquism's antithesis, the Monopatrism of the patriarch Photius. As the schism with the Chalcedonian Orthodox in the East is the most disastrous of all schisms, he says, so we must expect the heresy which catalysed it to be the worst of all heresies, for it introduces schism into God himself, destroying the 'economy' in God (here Scheeben is using the word *economia* in its Tertullianic, not its Irenaean, which is also its later, sense) by denying the 'life-filled unity and relationship' between the Spirit and the Father's Son – just as the denial of the Son's visible representative on earth (Scheeben means, of course, the Roman pope) destroys the *oikonomia* of the Church. The presiding in love of the first see (the reference is to Ignatius' Letter to the Romans) is spurned precisely because of the *Filioque* which denotes the 'most perfect and glorious Ideal and Source of loving communion, *Liebesgemeinschaft*' – the Spirit's breathing forth as reciprocal affection of Father and Son.[13]

So far we have heard little if anything of *hypostases* or 'persons', terminology whose contemporary suitability has been widely discussed in mid- and later twentieth-century Catholic dogmatics, where a revival of the language of 'modes of subsistence', itself indebted to the Cappadocians, again, has been both lauded and deplored. For Scheeben, recourse to an abstract vocabulary conceptually indicative of the ontological status of Father, Son and Holy Spirit in precisely their distinctness was forced on the Church once the conviction had found adequate articulation that the divine Three share the self-same Essence or *ousia*. Otherwise, simply to have continued to speak, with biblical concreteness, of Spirit, Son and Father would have sufficed, and sublimely sufficed at that. With considerable metaphysical refinement, Scheeben builds up for his readers the idea of hypostasis as substance that is singular rather than apportioned to some wider whole, so standing in its own right that its properties are really its own, the bearer of its nature. And when the nature in question is spiritual – *geistige* – nature, the hypostasis is not simply the bearer – *Träger* – of that nature but its *Inhaber* – intimate possessor, consciously enjoying that nature and freely making use of it in such a way as to own a dignity that is alien to animals, and much more so to things. Scheeben evidently believed it was possible to used the word 'person', in the context of rational creatures, for a subjectivity that is of a metaphysical order, without importing irrelevant considerations drawn from human psychology. The preference for the language of 'modes of subsistence', or some variant thereof shown by Karl Rahner, derives from a conviction that 'three persons' could now only mean 'three psyches', the Church having no power, alas, to determine the fluctuations of human language. That is not to say, of course, that calling Father, Son and Holy Spirit *Subsistenz-weisen* is without its difficulties. As Rahner's Canadian confrère

13 Scheeben, *Handbuch* (above, n. 2), 825.

Bernard Lonergan drily comments in his *De Deo trino*: *Non enim cum modis essendi collequi solemus* ('It is not our habit to enter into dialogue with modes of being').[14] For Scheeben, the concept of created personhood, philosophically purified, forms an entirely suitable starting-point for the analogical predication of uncreated personhood to the divine Three. Personhood is a created perfection in being which can be ascribed in a super-eminent fashion to the uncreated way of being of Father, Son and Spirit. This is how Scheeben takes the Cappadocians to have understood the divine hypostases as *tropoi tê hyparxeôs*, ways of subsisting, of the divine *ousia*. The hypostases are the divine *ousia*, in a special form – the tri-personal form – of its self belonging.

It was Scheeben's opinion that the difference between Greek East and Latin West in the matter of the origin of the Spirit betokens a wider difference here, where the relation of the hypostases one with another is seen more organically in the East, more personally – that is, involving an inter-personal exchange – in the West. For that the divine Persons are persons in the highest sense of the word does not exclude but on the contrary includes the consideration that they are essentially relative to one another, such that they possess the divine nature only insofar as each has it for another or from another. Such a patristically-inspired vision might be thought to appeal to twentieth-century men and women who, in the idiom, part philosophical, part psychological of their time, delight to speak of selfhood as found in relation – a paraphrase, that, of the title of a work by a philosopher of Presbyterian background, John MacMurray, that has influenced Anglophone Catholics writing on anthropology in the last few decades. But even when couched in such terms there are those, among them the recently deceased American lay theologian, Catherine LaCugna, for whom all talk of God's self-relatedness as Trinity, however expressed, is in evangelical bad taste.[15] For these writers, it is not simply that the economic Trinity is the immanent Trinity *and vice versa* (as Rahner's book, already mentioned, had averred), thus deliberately suppressing all talk of the divine condescension in the way the Trinitarian missions prolong the Trinitarian processions. More than this, any mention of the immanent Trinity must be eliminated as lacking congruity with the revelation of a God who is essentially *outpoured* in creation and salvation into the world. Here we have the Catholic version of the Neo-economic Trinitarianism of the Lutheran, Jürgen Moltmann, though minus the latter's Hegelian underpinning for which it is only in the economy – specifically on the Cross – that God fully becomes Trinity at all.

What is at stake here, I would say, is a failure of doxological thinking where we exult precisely in the glorious objectivity of God, his divinity, which means

14 B. Lonergan SJ, *De Deo trino* (Rome, 1964), ii, 195, cited in de Margerie, *The Christian Trinity* (above, n. 12), 215. 15 C.M. LaCugna, *God for us: the Trinity and Christian life* (New York, 1991). Note the claim on p. 15 that 'Revealed [in the economy] is the unfathomable mystery that the life and communion of the divine persons is not "intradivine".'

for Christianity, his triunity, just for its own sake. This was not a burden under which Scheeben laboured. In his account of the divine self-relating, a divine Person is the divine Essence under a determinate relation, such that to name the Persons is to name the relations – a realization for which we are indebted, says Scheeben, to Augustine's *De Trinitate* (I, 7), though we should note how sparing is the appeal to that treatise in Scheeben's account of Trinitarian doctrine: Augustine's explorations of the processions on the analogy of the production of spiritual understanding and love belong for him firmly to theological speculation, rather than dogma. In the mid- to late-twentieth-century, that subject has entered an interesting phase: on the one hand we have rather self-consciously orthodox theologians such as the Belgian Jesuit, Jean Galot, professor at the Gregorianum, preparing to dispense with the Augustinian (and Thomistic) account of the two inter-related acts of intelligence and will as too defective an analogy, for the Trinitarian processions for the Son cannot be conceived as generated without love, nor the Spirit of holiness 'reduced to love alone'.[16] On the other hand, the discovery of historical theologians that the selfsame analogy pervades the Trinitarianism of St Gregory Palamas should make pause those who would dismiss it as a superfluous Augustinian-Thomistic peculiarity, for both Catholic and Orthodox students have seen Palamas (the first negatively, the second positively) as embodying what is least typically Latin in the later Byzantine doctrine of God.[17] Still, since the *intra*-subjective comparison of the self and its spiritual acts is simply an image of the Trinity, there is no reason why theologians should not seek complementary images of a more *inter*-subjective kind, as when Bertrand de Margerie would revive Nazianzen's Trinitarian image of family inter-subjectivity in the *Fifth Theological Oration*, and Augustine's account of ecclesial inter-subjectivity – the universal Church as icon of the triune God, in not only the *De Trinitate* but also the *Tractates on John*.[18]

I cannot conclude without painting into my picture what has recently been deemed the single most striking common feature of much contemporary Catholic dogmatic writing on the Holy Trinity – namely, the way that subject is treated in close connexion with the Paschal Mystery.[19] The mystery of the Atonement not only redeems, it also reveals – and above all it reveals the triune Source of our salvation. Here the work of Hans Urs von Balthasar is especially notable, but one can also mention two Frenchmen, the Spiritan, Père Durrwell, whose name has already figured in my account, and the Benedictine, Dom Ghislain Lafont. Here again, we can take our bearings from Cologne, for Scheeben lays a foundation

16 J. Galot SJ, *L'Esprit-Saint: Personne de communion* (Saint-Maur, 1997). 17 R. Flogaus, 'Palamas and Barlaam revisited: a re-assessment of East and West in the Hesychast controversy of 14th century Byzantium', in *St Vladimir's Theological Quarterly* 42 (1998) 1–32. I am grateful to Dr Augustine Casiday of the University of Durham for drawing this article to my attention. 18 B. de Margerie, *The Christian Trinity* (above, n. 12), 274–97. 19 A. Hunt, *The Trinity and the Paschal Mystery: a development in recent Catholic theology* (Collegeville MN, 1997).

for these later theologies in his doctrine of the redemptive Sacrifice as disclosure of the Trinity. As he puts it in *Die Mysterien des Christentums*, 'The idea of Christ's sacrifice thrusts its roots deep into the abyss of the Trinity'. Just as the Incarnation is intelligible only as the prolongation of the eternal generation of the Son, and must be grasped from that viewpoint, so the Son's sacrificial surrender on Calvary was the perfect expression of the love he manifests in the spiration from the Father of the Spirit. As he writes:

> In the Godhead, the mutual love of the Son and the Father pours itself out in the production of the Holy Spirit, who issues from their common heart, in whom both surrender their heart's blood, and to whom they give themselves as the pledge of their infinite love ... Since the Holy Spirit proceeds from the love of the Father for the Son, and through the Son is to be poured out over the whole world, nothing is more appropriate than that the Son in his humanity, as the head of all creatures, should represent and effect this outpouring of the Holy Spirit in the outpouring of his blood, and that this latter outpouring should become the real sacrament of the other outpouring.[20]

Here, however, Scheeben's patristic footnotes dry up, and in cognate passages of Balthasar's *Theodramatik*, the source most relevantly cited is the twentieth-century Russian Sergei Bulgakov. The Neapolitan Dominican, Giuseppe Marco Salvati, in his survey of such Paschal Triadologies, *Teologia trinitaria della Croce*, highlights Augustine's *Sermon* 52, with its affirmation that both Father and Son were engaged on the work of the Passion, and a homily of Origen on Ezekiel which speaks of the Father's passion of love, but nowhere does he note any patristic reference to the Spirit's role on Calvary.[21] It seems rather important, given the fact that, for a Catholic theory of doctrinal development, 'early anticipation' (in Newman's words) is crucial, that texts witnessing to some fuller anticipation by the Fathers of this important extension of Trinitarian thinking should be sought. But of course to those who would see themselves as Neo-patristic theologians – and nothing more – that may be putting the proverbial cart well in front of its horse. To the present writer, and continuing the quasi-equine metaphor, it does not seem so clear that if Balaam's ass could prophesy, the post-patristic divines of the Catholic Church cannot furnish fresh insight into the deposit of faith also.

20 M.J. Scheeben, *The mysteries of Christianity* (St Louis and London, 1947), 446, 445. 21 G.M. Salvati, *Teologia trinitaria della Croce* (Turin, 1987), 98.

Ecclesia de Trinitate in the Latin Fathers: inspirational source for Congar's ecclesiology

Finbarr Clancy SJ

INTRODUCTION

The last three decades have witnessed a great flowering of interest in and writing about the Trinity. One of the interesting, and indeed hopeful, aspects of this renewed interest in Trinitarian doctrine is the fact that writers from different positions on the confessional spectrum are creatively engaging in the growing appropriation of the Trinitarian mystery. We are witnessing the renewal of theology and spirituality alike, while, in the words of a popular hymn, 'we own the mystery'. Indeed, the distinguished Methodist scholar and ecumenist, Dr Geoffrey Wainwright, entitled a review article on Trinitarian scholarship 'The Ecumenical Rediscovery of the Trinity'.[1]

A prominent theme in this process of rediscovering the Trinity has been the concern to articulate the vital links between the Trinitarian mystery and ecclesiology. With almost prophetic insight, Pope Paul VI in his first encyclical, *Ecclesiam Suam*, produced during the Second Vatican Council, helped sharpen the Council's focus on the mystery of the Church. Paul VI had written:

> We are convinced that the Church must look with penetrating eyes within itself, ponder the mystery of its own being, and draw enlightenment and inspiration from a deeper scrutiny of its own origin, nature, mission and destiny.[2]

While the Trinity is not explicitly mentioned here, it is clearly implied in Paul VI's vision. Cardinal Yves Congar, writing for an international colloquy in Rome in 1980 on Paul VI's *Ecclesiam Suam*, mentions several times the depth of Paul VI's vision, his devotion to the theme of *communio*, his intuition into the mystery of the Church, his appreciation of the centrality of Christ and his commitment to ecumenism, all features that find a deep echo in Congar himself.[3]

1 G. Wainwright, 'The ecumenical rediscovery of the Trinity', in *One in Christ* 34 (1998) 96–124. 2 Paul VI, *Ecclesiam Suam* (1964) §9, in C. Carlen, *The papal encyclicals, 1958–1981* (Ann Arbour, 1990) v, 136. 3 Y. Congar, 'Moving towards a pilgrim Church', in A. Stacpoole (ed.), *Vatican II by those who were there* (London, 1986), 129–52. In the course of this article Congar reflects many times on Paul VI's vision prior to, during and after Vatican II.

Already in the nineteenth century, writers such as the Russian Orthodox theologian Aleksej Xomjakov (1804–60) and the Roman Catholic Johann Adam Möhler (1796–1838) sought to articulate a vision of the Church from a Trinitarian perspective. What unites these two different writers is their common appeal to the Fathers as inspirational source.[4] In Möhler's brief career, we witness a dramatic shift from his early emphasis on the social and visible elements of the Church to the profoundly pneumatocentric vision of his *Die Einheit in der Kirche* (1825), a work deeply inspired by the Fathers of the first three centuries. His later work, the *Symbolik* (1832), espoused a more Christocentric vision of the Church, thought to correspond with his in-depth study of Athanasius.[5]

The writings of the contemporary Greek Orthodox theologian John Zizioulas, Metropolitan of Pergamon, have attracted much attention for their eloquent articulation of a Trinitarian based ecclesiology.[6] Zizioulas focuses on the need to link Trinitarian theology to ecclesiology, the importance of attending to the pneumatological dimension of the Church, and the need to avoid an ecclesiology solely conditioned by Christology. For Zizioulas, the Holy Spirit is the co-founder of the Church together with Christ, or, in his own preferred and helpful terminology, the Spirit *con-stitutes* the Church, while Christ *in-stitutes* it. An epicletic dimension in ecclesiology ensures that the Spirit is not relegated to the status of a consequent pneumatology, i.e. a situation where the Spirit merely animates a structure already basically conceived in Christological categories. The patrimony of the Greek Fathers, most notably Ignatius of Antioch, Irenaeus, Athanasius, and the Cappadocians, underpins Zizioulas' synthesis on the Church. His attractive vision, so deeply Trinitarian, suffers, however, from inadequate attention to the Latin tradition which has not been silent on some of the areas which he so eloquently stresses in his own writings.

Concern for the vision of the Church viewed through a Trinitarian lens is not the sole preserve of the Orthodox tradition. Rather it has come to characterize other confessional traditions also. It is noteworthy that two ecumenical agreed

4 For Xomjakov, see P.P. O'Leary, *The Triune Church:a study in the ecclesiology of A. S. Xomjakov* (Dublin, 1982), especially at 58–103. For Möhler's *Die Einheit* see P.C. Erb's translation – *Unity in the Church or the principle of Catholicism presented in the spirit of the Church Fathers of the first three centuries* (Washington DC, 1996) with its fine introductory essay at 1–71. 5 See P.J. Rosato, 'Between Christocentrism and Pneumatocentrism: an interpretation of Johann Adam Möhler's ecclesiology', in *Heythrop Journal* 19 (1978) 46–70; P. Riga, 'The ecclesiology of Johann Adam Möhler', in *Theological Studies* 22 (1961) 563–87; D.M. Doyle, 'Möhler, Schleiermacher, and the roots of communion ecclesiology', in *Theological Studies* 57 (1996) 467–80. 6 Notable studies by Zizioulas include: 'The pneumatological dimension of the Church', in *Communio* 1 (1974) 142–58; 'Implications ecclésiologiques de deux types de pneumatologie' in *Communio Sanctorum*, Mélanges J.J. von Allmen (Genève, 1982), 141–54; *Being as communion* (Crestwood, NY, 1985), especially 123–42; 'The doctrine of God the Trinity today: suggestions for an ecumenical study', in A.I.C. Heron (ed.), *The forgotten Trinity* (London, 1991), 19–32; 'The Church as communion', in *St Vladimir's Theological Quarterly* 38 (1994) 3–16.

statements of recent years make explicit reference to the inter-connectedness of the mysteries of the Trinity and the Church, ARCIC I in its *Final Report* of 1981 and the *Munich Statement* (1982) of the bilateral dialogue between the Roman Catholic and Orthodox Churches. The latter bore the evocative title 'The Mystery of the Church and of the Eucharist in the Light of the Mystery of the Holy Trinity', a title that finds a deep echo in the Patristic era.[7]

In this paper I wish to explore the theme of the *Ecclesia de Trinitate* in three Latin Fathers from the North African tradition, Tertullian, Cyprian of Carthage, and Augustine of Hippo. I shall examine some representative texts by way of seeking to ascertain what links these three Fathers saw between the Church and the Trinity, noting the contexts of the chosen texts to the extent that they shed light on the theme under study. In a later section of the paper, as an illustration of the fruitfulness of *ressourcement*, I would like to sketch briefly the inspirational value of some of these Patristic insights for the formation, enrichment and development of Yves Congar's ecclesiology. Needless to say, Congar does not limit himself to the Latin tradition, still less to its North African exponents. His vision and scholarship are too wide for that narrow optic. However, as a complement to Zizioulas' primary focus on the Greek tradition, the present study may make some modest contribution to redressing the balance. It does so in the hope that, using Congar's own phrase: 'Theology is only fully 'catholic' when, like a healthy organism it breathes deeply with both its lungs.'[8]

THE CHURCH AND THE TRINITY IN THE LATIN FATHERS

Tertullian

While Tertullian wrote no specific treatise *De ecclesia*, reflections on the Church often occur in the course of his many different works. A convert from paganism to Christianity, he worked initially as an instructor of catechumens in Carthage and as a firm defender of the Catholic faith and apostolic tradition. In his book *The Origins of Latin Christianity*, Jean Daniélou notes how the following succinct statement in Tertullian's *Apologeticum* 39.1 summarizes Christianity's self-awareness, and distinctiveness vis-à-vis paganism, in the second and third centuries: 'We are a society with a common religious feeling, unity of discipline and a common bond of hope'.[9] The concern for purity of faith, moral rigour and disci-

7 ARCIC I, *The Final Report* (London, 1982) §§5–8; *The Munich statement* (London, 1984), 1–16. See also G. Wainwright, op. cit., for further reflections on the significance of the Trinity in ecumenical dialogues. 8 This phrase was first used by Congar in a 1952 essay 'The human person and human liberty in oriental anthropology', later published in his *Dialogue between Christians* (Dublin and London, 1966), at 244. Congar further comments on the phrase in his book *Diversity and Communion* (London, 1984) at 76, 89 and 203 n. 17–18. It is a phrase widely used by Pope John Paul II, e.g. *Ut unum sint* (1995) §54. 9 J. Daniélou, *The origins of Latin*

pline, and an eschatological orientation are central features of Tertullian's ecclesiological outlook.[10]

Scholarly opinion differs as to the date of Tertullian's gradual disenchantment with the mainline Catholic Church at Carthage and his growing espousal of the New Prophecy or Montanist movement. Writers such as David Rankin and others argue that Tertullian, despite his deepening involvement with Montanism, never actually broke with the Catholic Church.[11] Whether this is true or not, a shift of emphasis occurs in his ecclesiology with the earlier Catholic emphasis on apostolicity, episcopate and more institutional elements yielding place to a growing emphasis on the Church of the Spirit in the Montanist phase.[12] Despite this shift in emphasis, some common features continue to characterize both phases of Tertullian's career.

David Rankin's recent monograph on Tertullian's ecclesiology devotes one chapter to a survey of the diverse range of ecclesiological images making up Tertullian's thought on the Church. He notes their scriptural background, previous Patristic usages, and some obvious appeals by Tertullian to language familiar to his pagan audience.[13] Tertullian variously refers to the Church as a ship, an ark, a camp, a school and a sect. The Church is also described as a virgin, bride, and mother, images destined to have a long usage in both Cyprian and Augustine.[14] Rankin notes Tertullian's sparing usage of the *corpus* image, though there are some significant instances which will require our attention shortly. Finally, he considers the Trinity and the Spirit as further Church-associated images which significantly overlap with each other, as they jointly do with the last mentioned image of the *corpus*.[15]

This brings us to our central question: what linkage, if any, does Tertullian envisage between the Trinity and the Church? There are a number of isolated texts which hint at a connection without, however, systematically developing the theme at any

Christianity (London, 1977), 428–31. Tertullian's *Apologeticum* 39.1 (CCSL 1. 150) states: *Corpus sumus de conscientia religionis et disciplinae unitate et spei foedere.* **10** For an overview of Tertullian's ecclesiology see R.F. Evans, *The Church in Latin patristic thought* (London, 1972), 4–35. **11** D. Rankin, *Tertullian and the Church* (Cambridge, 1995), especially at 27–51, where the author discusses Tertullian's relationship to the Catholic Church and the New Prophecy movement, respectively. **12** See C. Munier, 'L'autorité de l'Église et l'autorité de l'Esprit d'après Tertullien', in *Revue des Sciences Religieuses* 58 (1984) 77–90; R. Braun, 'Tertullien et le Montanisme: l'Église institutionelle et l'Église spirituelle', in *Rivista di Storia e Letteratura Religiosa* 21 (1985) 245–57. **13** D. Rankin, op. cit., chapter 4 at 65–90. Rankin's list of images should be complemented by those in R.F. Evans, op. cit. (n. 10 supra) and especially J. Daniélou, op. cit., 306–7, reflecting on paradise, the dove and Eve as types of the Church for Tertullian. **14** Tertullian was one of the first Fathers to apply the term mother to the Church. See J.C. Plumpe, *Mater Ecclesia: an enquiry into the concept of the Church as Mother in early Christianity* (Washington, 1943), at 45–62; K. Delahaye, *Ecclesia Mater chez les Pères des trois premiers siècles* (Paris, 1958), at 95–100; D. Rankin, op. cit., at 78–83. **15** D. Rankin, op. cit. at 71–8, on the body of Christ, the Trinity and the Church as Spirit.

great length. These texts come from the Catholic and the Montanist phases of Tertullian's career. Furthermore, they do not always admit of easy interpretation, especially in the light of Montanist influences on those texts of later provenance.

Tertullian's *De baptismo*, a work datable to AD 198–200, is the first pre-Nicene treatise devoted to one of the sacraments. It was occasioned by the 'heretical venom' of one Quintilla at Carthage who proceeded to raise rationalistic objections to baptism (*De bapt.* 1). In response, Tertullian outlines the ritual practices of baptism in Carthage, giving an accompanying theology of the sacrament, attentive to ritual details, their significance and scriptural prefigurement. There are notable parallels to Tertullian's close contemporary Hippolytus, whose *Apostolic Tradition* outlines the Roman ritual practices at a slightly later date. In *De bapt.* 6, having referred to the Trinitarian formula used in baptism, Tertullian forges a connection with the scriptural teaching on three witnesses guaranteeing the establishment of every good word (cf. Dt 19:15; Mt 18:16). Furthermore, he associates the benediction by the Trinity, accomplished at baptism, with the very presence of the Church:

> In the benediction we have the same mediators of faith as we have sureties of salvation. That number of the divine names of itself suffices for the confidence of our hope. Yet because it is under the charge of three that profession of faith and promise of salvation are in pledge, there is a necessary addition, the mention of the Church: because where there are three, the Father, the Son and the Holy Spirit, there is the Church, which is a body of three.[16]

Tertullian here associates the Church with the Trinity, describing the former as – *quae trium corpus est.* Ernest Evans suggests that Matthew 18:20 and 1 John 5:7–8 are the likely scriptural sources of inspiration for Tertullian's statement.

A little later in the same treatise (*De bapt.* 8), Tertullian, linking the Holy Spirit with the dove sent from heaven, describes the Church as a heavenly reality (*de caelis ubi ecclesia est*), and furthermore being the type of the ark itself (*est arcae figura*) to which the dove was sent. Noah's ark, a means of salvation, is an earthly copy of the true heavenly reality. This same theme of a 'heavenly Church' reappears in *De bapt.* 15. Here Tertullian is advocating the single nature of baptism, as evidenced by the gospel (cf. Mt 28:19; Jn 13:10), and Paul's words in Ephesians 4:4–6:

16 Tertullian, *De baptismo* 6.2 (CCSL 1. 282): *Nam si in tribus testibus stabat omne verbum dei, quanto magis donum? Habebimus <de> benedictione eosdem arbitros fidei quos et sponsores salutis, sufficit ad fiduciam spei nostrae etiam numerus nominum divinorum. Cum autem sub tribus et testatio fidei et sponsio salutis pigneretur necessario adicitur ecclesiae mentio, quoniam ubi tres, id est pater et filius et spiritus sanctus, ibi ecclesia quae trium corpus est.* The English translations are taken from E. Evans, *Tertullian's Homily on Baptism* (London, 1964).

> We have one baptism, and only one, on the evidence both of our Lord's gospel and of the Apostle's letter, [where he says], that there is one God and one Baptism and one Church [which is] in heaven.[17]

This last phrase introduces a gloss on the Ephesians text which itself does not refer to the heavenly nature of the Church.

In the concluding section to the *De baptismo*, we meet an interesting passage where Tertullian addresses those just emerging from the baptismal font. He urges them to stretch forth their hands in prayer in the house of the Church, their mother. They are to petition the spiritual charismatic gifts from the Father and from their Lord:

> Therefore you blessed ones, for whom the grace of God is waiting, when you come up from the most sacred washing of the new birth [cf. Tit 3:5], and when for the first time you spread out your hands with your brethren in your mother's house, ask of your Father, ask of your Lord, that special grants of grace and apportionments of spiritual gifts be yours [cf. Heb 2:4]. 'Ask', he says, 'and ye shall receive' [Mt 7:7–8]. So now, you have sought, and have found: you have knocked, and it has been opened to you.[18]

We see here a blending of three ecclesial images. The newly baptized joined for the first time the Church which is their mother's house. They join too the body of other believers. Indeed, the above quotation continued by asking the *benedicti* to 'have in mind Tertullian the sinner'. This reminds us of Tertullian's *De paenitentia* 10.5–6, where Tertullian also richly develops the theme of the sinner being supported by the prayers of the other members of the Body of Christ. Perhaps also we can see in this passage a third over-arching Trinitarian reference. It is as new born members of the Body of Christ that the baptized can persistently petition from the Father and Lord for those Spirit-associated charismatic gifts, the *distributiones charismatum*.

Killian McDonnell's interesting comments on this text (*De bapt.* 20), interpret it along the lines of the newly baptized offering prayer, most likely the *Pater noster*, which was accompanied by the visible manifestation of charismatic gifts among them.[19] He points out the uniqueness of Tertullian's text, noting that there are no

17 Tertullian, *De bapt.* 15.1 (CCSL 1. 290): *Unum omnino baptismum est nobis tam ex domini evangelio quam et apostoli litteris quoniam unus deus* [*et unum baptismum*] *et una ecclesia in caelis.* 18 Tertullian, *De bapt.* 20.5 (CCSL 1. 295): *Igitur benedicti quos gratiae dei expectat, cum de illo sanctissimo lavacro novi natalis ascenditis et primas manus apud matrem cum fratribus aperitis, petite de patre, petite de domino peculia gratiae distributiones charismaticum subiacere. 'Petite et accipietis', inquit: 'quaesistis enim et invenistis, pulsastis et apertum est nobis.'* 19 K. McDonnell, 'Communion ecclesiology and baptism in the Spirit: Tertullian and the early Church', in *Theological Studies* 49 (1988) 671–93, especially at 679–90. This article also discusses *De bapt.* 6. See also J.C. Plumpe, op. cit., at 52–5 for comment on *De bapt.* 20.5.

comparable Patristic texts on this theme of 'baptism in the Spirit'. McDonnell suggests that the subsequent condemnation, albeit initially with some reluctance, of Montanism, where charisms played a significant role, lessened support for the post-baptismal petitioning of charisms within the ceremonies of Christian initiation.

Talking of prayer by the newly baptized *apud matrem* brings us logically to Tertullian's *De oratione*, a work contemporaneous with the *De baptismo*, and like it addressed to catechumens. It represents the earliest known commentary on the Lord's Prayer. In commenting on the clause of the *Pater noster* dealing with the fatherhood of God (*De orat.* 2), Tertullian contrasts the happiness of those who recognize their Father with the reproach brought to Israel (cf. Is 1:2) concerning their forgetfulness of God as their Father. Reference to God as Father implies filial duty and power – *appellatio ista et pietatis et potestatis est.* Basing himself on John 10:30, Tertullian continues by associating the Son with our invocation of God as Father. Furthermore, he observes that the Church as mother is also included:

> Again, in the Father the Son is invoked; 'For I', he says, 'and the Father are one' [Jn 10:30]. Nor is even our mother the Church passed by, if, that is, in the Father and the Son is recognized the mother, from whom arises the name both of Father and of Son. In one general term, then, or word, we both honour God, together with his own, and are mindful of the precept and set a mark on such as have forgotten their Father.[20]

This is not an easy text to interpret. Plumpe rejects Karl Adam's earlier suggestion that the seeming replacement of the third person of the Trinity here by the *mater ecclesia* prefigures Tertullian's later Montanist conception of the Church as an *ecclesia spiritus*. He argues, against this, that the inclusion of 'mother' would have been naturally understood by catechumens. Through baptism the Church became their mother, presenting them as children to the Father. Indeed, Tertullian here merely paves the way for Cyprian and Augustine alike who both regularly associate God as Father and Church as mother in baptismal contexts. Plumpe refers also to a variant third-century reading of the Apostles' Creed, of North African provenance, which stated: *Credo in Spiritu Sancto, in sanctam matrem ecclesiam.*[21]

20 Tertullian, *De oratione* 2.5–7 (CCSL 1. 258): *Item in Pater Filius invocatur, 'Ego enim', inquit, 'et pater unum sumus'. Ne mater quidem ecclesia praeteritur, siquidem in filio et pater mater recognoscitur, de qua constat et patris et filii nomen. Uno igitur genere aut vocabulo et Deum cum suis honoramus et praecepti meminimus et oblitos patris denotamus.* The English translation is taken from ACL XI, 180. 21 J.C. Plumpe, op. cit. at 49–51. The reference to K. Adam pertains to his *Der Kirchenbegriff Tertullians* (Paderborn, 1907), at 91–3. J. Moffatt, 'Tertullian on the Lord's Prayer' in *The Expositor* 18 (1919) 24–41, at 29, refers to the similarity of *De orat.* 2 to the Gnostic trinity of Father, Son and *mater viventium*, though without identifying a source for his suggestion. The phrase *mater viventium* does occur in Tertullian's *De anima* 43, where he pioneers the image of the Church as the New Eve (cf. J.C. Plumpe, op. cit., 56–7). See also K. McDonnell, art.

We turn our attention finally to three brief texts in writings from Tertullian's Montanist phase. In the concluding section of his *De fuga in persecutione*, Tertullian advises his friend Fabius to arm himself with faith and wisdom, rather than yielding to bribes and ransom money, when faced with persecution. Those being persecuted will have the necessary Paraclete, the *deductor omnium veritatem, exhortator omnium tolerantiarum*. To Fabius' apparent question: 'But how shall we assemble together?', Tertullian replies:

> Lastly, if you cannot assemble by day, you have the night, the light of Christ luminous against the darkness. You cannot run about among them one after another. Be content with a Church of threes. It is better that you sometimes should not see your crowds, than subject yourselves [to a tribute bondage].[22]

Perhaps there is a trace here of a Trinitarian linked vision of the Church. The persecuted community, a mere 'Church of threes', gathers by the luminous light of Christ and with the strengthening power of the Paraclete. The persecuted community is also urged 'to keep pure for Christ his betrothed virgin'. Patient suffering, perfect love, and the pursuit of the *viam angustam* are incumbent on the faithful. Some characteristic emphases in Tertullian are in evidence here, such as ascetic rigorism, moral discipline, and an eschatological orientation. The holiness of Christ's bride may not be corrupted by moral weakness or flight in persecution.

In another Montanist treatise, *De exhortatione castitatis*, we witness Tertullian arguing against repeated marriages among laity and the ordained alike. Monogamy is incumbent upon both parties. Urging this upon the laity, lest they should think that it applied only to clerics, Tertullian appeals to the fact that all are priests, citing Revelation 1:6 as a proof text. Acknowledging a distinction and union between clerics and laity within the Church, he nonetheless notes that the laity itself constitutes the Church where even three are gathered:

> Accordingly where there is no joint session of the ecclesiastical order you offer, and baptize, and are priest, alone for yourself. But where three are, a Church is, albeit they be laity.[23]

cit. at 689 and D. Rankin, op. cit. at 81–3. Rankin concludes that 'only those who actually recognize the one catholic and apostolic Church of God as 'mother' can truly be said to acknowledge the fatherhood of God properly'. Rankin acknowledges Tertullian's closeness to Cyprian's later thought here. **22** Tertullian, *De fuga in persecutione* 14.1 (CCSL 2. 1155): *Postremo si colligere interdiu non potes, habes noctem, luce Christi luminosa adversus eam. Non potes discurrere per singulos, si tibi est in tribus ecclesia? Melius est turbas tuas aliquando non videas, quam addicas.* The English translation is from ACL XI, 378. **23** Tertullian, *De exhortatione castitatis* 7.3 (CCSL 2. 1025): *Ubi ecclesiastici ordinis non est concessus, et offers, et tinguis, et sacerdos es tibi solus: scilicet ubi tres, ecclesia est, licet laici* ... The English translation is from ACL XVIII, 11.

Tertullian here, in a seemingly isolated text, makes ambitious claims about the priestly powers of the non-ordained.[24] Nonetheless, as in *De fuga in persecutione* 14, he argues for an *ecclesia in tribus*, perhaps an echo of the earlier *De baptismo* 6 reference to the '*ecclesia quae trium corpus est*', where the Trinitarian reference was explicit in a baptismal context.

Tertullian's *De pudicitia* is a work deeply influenced by Montanism and its doctrine on penance contrasts sharply with his earlier treatise, *De paenitentia*, on the same subject. Notable in the *De pudicitia* is his castigation of hierarchical authority in the Church which is coupled with a strong emphasis on the Church of the Spirit. These tendencies are quite noticeable in the penultimate chapter where Tertullian reflects on the power of the keys. This power was enjoined on Peter personally in the gospel, Tertullian states, but subsequently it belongs to all those who have the Spirit. He then proceeds to associate the Church explicitly with the Spirit, but his formulation retains a link with the Trinity and the familiar phrase *ecclesia in tribus*:

> For the Church is itself, properly and principally, the Spirit himself, in whom there is a trinity of one divinity, Father, Son and Holy Spirit. He unites in one congregation that Church which the Lord says consists of three persons. And so, from this time on, any number of persons at all, joined in this faith, is recognised as the Church by Him who founded and consecrated it.[25]

Tertullian concluded here by associating the power to forgive sins with the Church of the Spirit – *non ecclesia numerus episcoporum*. The clear association here of the Church with the Spirit contrasts sharply with Tertullian's earlier statements in *De paenitentia* 10.6 – '*ecclesia vero Christus*', and in *De monogamia* 13 – '*Corpus Christi, quod est ecclesia*'. W.P. Le Saint suggests that the problematic phrase 'The Spirit in whom there is a trinity of one divinity' may be intended in the sense that God is Spirit (cf. Jn 4:24), a citation that Tertullian actually makes in an earlier line of *De pudicitia* 21.1.[26] Rankin, in the course of discussing this text, rejects the 'extravagant claims of D'Alès equating the Church with the Trinity'. Rankin suggests the alternative that Tertullian seems to envisage here the authentic Church as being 'ultimately constituted by the presence within its life of that Spirit in whom is present the Trinity, the body of the three'.[27]

24 On this point see H.M. Legrand, 'The presidency of the Eucharist according to the ancient tradition' in *Worship* 53 (1979) 413–38 at 422–24. Augustine (cf. *Ep.*111.8) did not concur with Tertullian's views here. **25** Tertullian, *De pudicitia* 21.16–17 (CCSL 2.1328): *Nam et ipsa ecclesia proprie et principaliter ipse est Spiritus, in quo est trinitas unius divinitatis, pater et filius et spiritus sanctus. Illam ecclesiam congregat quam dominus in tribus posuit. Atque ita exinde etiam numerus omnis qui in hanc fidem conspiraverint ecclesia ab auctore et consecratore censetur.* The English translation is from ACW 28, 121–22. **26** W.P. Le Saint, *Tertullian's Treatises on Penance* (Westminster, MD, 1954), 288 n. 664. **27** D. Rankin, op. cit., 75–7, making reference to A. D'Alès' *La théologie*

Summarising this brief survey of texts from Tertullian, we can note the following. Writing in a baptismal context, Tertullian twice refers to the Church as a heavenly entity, using a gloss on Ephesians 4:4-6. He envisaged an intrinsic link between the Trinity, in whose name one is baptized, and the Church, the latter being described as 'a body of three'. This association, the *ecclesia in tribus*, remains a constant in his thought, even as a Montanist. Baptized in the name of the Trinity, Christians petition *apud matrem* for the charismatic gifts *de patre, de domino*. Tertullian associates the fatherhood of God with the motherhood of the Church. In his Montanist writings, Tertullian retained the notion of 'a Church of three', whether writing against flight in persecution, urging the practice of monogamy, or reflecting on the power of the keys applied to the remission of sins. It seems that the text of Matthew 18:20 appealed greatly to Tertullian's mind. The Church was present in its integrity when two or three gathered, even laity alone, in time of persecution, empowered by the Spirit and seeking to preserve the purity of Christ's betrothed virgin bride.

Cyprian of Carthage

Jerome (*De vir. illustr.* 53) preserves for us Cyprian's reported words of reverence for his predecessor Tertullian – *Da mihi magistrum*. Though he never cites him by name, perhaps because of his growing involvement with Montanism, Tertullian remained a fertile source for many of Cyprian's best ideas. A mere survey of the titles of their respective works reveals the similarity of interests between the two Fathers. While Cyprian may have lacked the speculative acumen of Tertullian, he was not devoid of originality and creativity in his own thought.

Cyprian may be rightly regarded as the father of the discipline of ecclesiology.[28] His *De unitate ecclesiae* is the first Patristic work devoted to the Church. Concern for the Church and its unity, a unity expressed at many different levels, is surely the hallmark of Cyprian's legacy. Distancing himself from any of Tertullian's Montanist leanings, Cyprian strongly stresses the role of the episcopate as a focus for the unity of the local Church, the importance of collegiality among bishops and union with the see of Rome, since the Church was founded upon one man, Peter.[29] Cyprian appeals to the unitive significance of the eucharis-

de Tertullien (Paris, 1905), 326, who claimed that for Tertullian 'l'Église c'est la Trinité'. Rankin, op. cit., 76, argues that: 'the Church, as a body of the three, is witness to the reality of the involvement of the triune God in the world'. **28** There are many very fine studies of Cyprian's ecclesiology which differ in their approach but help complement each other in giving an overview of the richness of his thought. Useful for our present purposes are: B.C. Butler, 'St Cyprian and the Church', in *Downside Review* 71 (1952–3) 1–13, 119–34, 258–72; idem, *The idea of the Church* (Baltimore, MD, 1962), 87–104; A. Demoustier, 'Episcopat et Union à Rome selon Saint Cyprien', and 'L'Ontologie de l'Église selon Saint Cyprien', in *Recherches de Science Religieuse* 52 (1964) 337–69 and 554–88; W.S. Walker, *The churchmanship of St Cyprian* (London, 1968); J. Daniélou, op. cit., 429–64; R.F. Evans, op. cit., 36–64. **29** For Cyprian's view on

tic elements, both the bread and wine, in his letters to Caecilius and Magnus, as powerful symbols of the Christian unanimity that should characterize the Church.[30] His commentary on the Lord's Prayer further stresses the social nature of the prayer and the desire that it be the prayer of the united household of God.

R.J. Halliburton astutely notes that it was the 'peculiar genius' of Cyprian to relate the manner in which the Church might be said to be one to earlier attempts, most notably and immediately in Tertullian, to demonstrate the unity of the Trinity.[31] Demoustier likewise notes how Cyprian's passionate concern for Church unity is not limited to the episcopate and union with Rome alone, but also has a sacramental focus, in baptism and the eucharist, and its deepest ontology in the vision of the Church related to the life of the Trinity itself.[32] I would like to explore this aspect of Cyprian's ecclesiology, limiting myself to two contemporaneous texts, the *De unitate ecclesiae* and the *De dominica oratione*, while focusing on a number of related themes and images.

The *De unitate ecclesiae* was written in AD 251, its historical context being the Novatianist schism in Rome or the local schism in Carthage caused by Felicissimus and some opposing presbyters.[33] In chapter 5, Cyprian stresses the prerogative of the bishops as custodians and champions of the Church's unity. They preside in the Church, manifesting that the episcopate itself is one and undivided. In a famous phrase, Cyprian states: 'There is one episcopate, a part of which is held for the whole by each bishop.'[34] Having grappled with the issue of the one and the many vis-à-vis the episcopate, Cyprian proceeds to apply a similar principle to the Church which is itself one but also multiple in the manifestation of an abundance of local Churches. It is here that we witness Cyprian's application of the very imagery used by Tertullian to explain the Trinity, in his *Adversus Praxean* 8, to the multitude of local Churches which preserve a common source which grounds their unity. Tertullian's images of the tree spreading its branches, the sun extending its beams of light, and the many streams flowing from a single spring, are used to explain the unity which underpins the multiplicity of the local Churches. Cyprian's abiding concern is clear in the saying *unitas servatur in origine*.[35] He warns his readers of the dangers of schism. The unity of the sun beam with its source allows no division of light, a severed branch is unable to bud, and a stream only

the episcopate see Demoustier's first article and the articles by Butler (n. 28 supra). **30** Cyprian, *Ep.* 63. 13 (to Caecilius) and *Ep.*69. 5 (to Magnus) in CSEL 3/2. 711–12, 753–54. **31** R.J. Halliburton, 'Some reflections on St Cyprian's doctrine of the Church', in *Studia Patristica* 11 (1972) 192–8 at 195. **32** A. Demoustier, art. cit. **33** See C.A. Bobertz, 'The historical context of Cyprian's *De unitate*', in *Journal of Theological Studies* 41 (1990) 107–11, who favours the local schism, rather than the Novatianist schism, as the immediate context. **34** Cyprian, *De unit. eccl.* 5 (CSEL 3/1. 214): *Episcopatus unus est, cuius a singulis in solidum pars tenetur.* **35** Tertullian had earlier expressed this same notion of a unified source being behind a multiplicity in his *De praescriptione haereticorum* 20.7 (CCSL 1. 202). On this see A. Davids, 'One or none: Cyprian on the Church and tradition', in *Concilium* 8.1 (1972) 46–52 at 49.

dries up when it is cut off from its fertile spring. This he contrasts with the fecundity and vitality of the Church solicitous for the preservation of unity:

> Flooded by the light of the Lord, it spreads its rays throughout the world. Yet the light which is poured out everywhere is one, and the unity of the body is not broken. With her rich supply she extends her branches throughout the earth, wider and wider she extends her rippling streams. Yet there is one head and one source and one mother who is endlessly fertile. We are born from her womb, nourished by her milk, and animated by her spirit.[36]

Ripples of this Trinitarian vision, again linked with ecclesial unity, recur in *De unit. eccl.* 6. Section 5 concluded with the image of the Church as an endlessly fertile mother. The image is repeated in section 6, where Cyprian, like Tertullian, associates the fatherhood of God with the motherhood of the Church – '*Habere non potest Deum patrem qui ecclesiam non habet matrem*'.[37] Using the image of Noah's ark, Cyprian warns that, cut off from the Church, one risks being a stranger, an outcast or an enemy, severed from the rewards of Christ.[38] As well as being mother, the Church is also depicted as Christ's bride. She must know one home, avoid all adultery and be solicitous for her sanctity, purity, and chastity. Cyprian cites the Dominical saying about gathering with Christ rather than scattering (cf. Mt 12:30). This leads him, like Tertullian, to refer to Christ's unity with the Father (cf. Jn 10:30), which he further couples with 1 John 5:7: 'And again it is written concerning the Father and the Son and the Holy Spirit: "And these three are one"'. The unity which characterizes the Trinitarian life is the source whence ecclesial unity is ultimately derived. Cyprian concludes by affirming the divine strength of this unity (*de divina firmitate*) which is united in celestial mysteries (*sacramentis caelestibus cohaerentem*):

> Does anyone believe that this unity which comes from divine strength and is united in celestial mysteries can be split in the Church and cut off by the divorce of clashing wills? One who does not keep this unity does not keep God's law, nor faith in the Father and Son, nor life and salvation.[39]

36 Cyprian, *De unit. eccl.* 5 (CSEL 3/1. 214). The English translation is taken from E. G. Hinson, *Understandings of the Church* (Philadelphia, 1986), 69–86. Cyprian, like Tertullian, often refers to the Church as mother – cf. J.C. Plumpe, op. cit., 81–108, and K. Delahaye, op. cit., 100–8. The concluding line in *De unit. eccl.* 5, *illius fetu nascimur, illius lacte nutrimur, spiritu eius animamur*, is close in sentiment to Tertullian in *De praescr. haer.* 36.5 (CCSL 1. 217): *eam aqua signat, sancto spiritu vestit, eucharistia pascit ...* 37 Cyprian, *De unit. eccl.* 6 (CSEL 3/1. 214). The same phrase occurs in his *Ep.*74.7 (CSEL 3/2. 804). 38 Cyprian's thought here on exclusion from the benefits of Christ, if not within the Church, is similar to the classic phrase used in his *Ep.*73.21 (CSEL 3/2. 795); *Quia salus extra ecclesiam non est.* 39 Cyprian, *De unit. eccl.* 6 (CSEL 3/1. 215): *Et quisquam credit hanc unitatem de divina firmitate venientem, sacramentis caelestibus coharentem scindi in ecclesia posse et voluntatum conlidentium divortio separari? Hanc unitatem qui non tenet, non tenet Dei legem, non tenet patris et filii fidem, vitam non tenet et salutem.* 40 See M. Aubineau, 'La tunique sans couture du Christ: Exégèse patristique de Jean 19,23–24', in P. Granfield and J.A. Jungmann (eds), *Kyriakon*, Festschrift J. Quasten (Munster, Westfallen, 1970), i, 100–27. This fine study explores the different strands of interpretation of this text: fulfilment of prophecy, ecclesiolological, Christological, moral etc., as employed by a wide range of Fathers. 41 For Tertullian's references see *De res. mor.* 20.1–5 and *Adv. Iud.* 10.4, linking the text with the fulfilment of prophecy. In *Adv. Marc.* 4.42.4 he notes how Marcion had excised this text from the gospel because he had in mind the prophecy contained in Psalm 21:19. 42 Cyprian, *De unit. eccl.* 7 (CSEL 3/1. 215): *Unitatem ille portabat de superiore parte venientem id est de caelo et a patre venientem quae ab accipiente ac possidente scindi omnino non poterat, sed totum semel et solidam firmitatem inseparabiliter obtinebat. Possidere non potest indumentum Christi qui scindit et dividit ecclesiam Christi.*

As a further exhortation to ecclesial unity, and pointer to its divine and Trinitarian origin, Cyprian employs Christ's undivided tunic (cf. Jn 19:23–24) as an evocative symbol (*De unit. eccl.* 7). Cyprian is the first Father to give this biblical symbol an ecclesiological interpretation.[40] Prior to Cyprian, and even in his *Testimonia* 2.20, the text of John 19:23–24 had been used in connection with the fulfilment of the prophecy contained in Psalm 21:19. We even find examples of this particular usage in Tertullian, though he never applies it to the Church.[41] Cyprian's ecclesiological interpretation of the text was both unique and deeply influential for subsequent Fathers, both in the East and the West, not least in the case of Augustine who often appealed to this text in the anti-Donatist debate.

For Cyprian, Christ's undivided tunic acts as proof of the mystery of unity (*unitatis sacramentum*) and the bond of harmony (*vinculum concordiae*) which should characterize the Church. Not only this, the scriptural text indicates that Christ's tunic was woven in one piece throughout – *de superiore parte non consutilis sed per totum textilis fuerat.* Thus, for Cyprian its unity was 'from above':

> It bore the unity which comes 'from above', that is, which comes from heaven and from the Father, which could not be split at all by taking and possessing it but kept its complete and firm strength without division. Anyone who splits and divides the Church of Christ cannot possess Christ's clothing.[42]

Cyprian continues with a clever juxtaposition of clothing metaphors. Christ's seamless tunic is contrasted with the division of Solomon's kingdom among the twelve tribes of Israel, an event prophetically prefigured when the priest Ahijah rent his cloak into twelve pieces in the presence of King Jeroboam (cf. 1 Kings 11:31–32,36). Cyprian finally appeals to the Pauline baptismal imagery of 'putting on Christ' (Gal 3:27). The very people of Christ, just like his tunic, cannot be divided:

> Undivided, joined together, connected, it proves the inseparable unity of our people, we who have put on Christ. By the mystery and sign of this garment he has declared the unity of the Church.[43]

Just as in his letters to Caecilius (*Ep.*63) and Magnus (*Ep.*69), where he had appealed to the unitive significance of the Eucharistic elements, whereby many grains of wheat and many grapes form one loaf and one chalice of wine, thus symbolising the unity of the Church, Cyprian here links baptism with ecclesial unity through his use of the phrase 'putting on Christ'. For Cyprian, both Baptism and ecclesial unity have a Trinitarian reference. As Demoustier points out, the episcopal, sacramental and Trinitarian levels interact in Cyprian's ontology of the Church.[44]

The text of *De unit. eccl.* 8 is replete with scriptural appeals to unity. Cyprian combines the Johannine theme of the one fold and one shepherd (cf. Jn 10:16) with Paul's injunctions to foster unity and avoid schism (cf. 1 Cor 1:10), 'preserving the unity of the Spirit in the bond of peace' (Eph 4:2–3). Old Testament texts such as the advice to Rahab to assemble her family in safety within one house (Josh 2:18–19) and the command to eat the Passover in one house (cf. Ex 12:46) are also advanced. Finally Cyprian cites one of his favourite texts, Psalm 67:7a: 'God, who makes us live together in unanimity in one house', introducing this text with references to the Holy Spirit who thereby points out this Church, this 'inn of unanimity' (*unanimitatis hospitium*).[45]

For Cyprian there was no salvation, no Baptism, and no presence or activity of the Holy Spirit outside the walls of the united household of God, the inn of unanimity. The symbolism of the dove is explored in *De unit. eccl.* 9, where Cyprian catalogues its peaceable nature and various behavioural characteristics. These very characteristics must be the hallmarks of Christ's sheep. Cyprian's passionate desire for unity reaches a crescendo in his statement in *De unit. eccl.* 23:

> There is one God, one Christ, one Church of Christ, one faith, and a people fastened together in solid corporate unity by the glue of concord. This unity cannot be split nor the one body divided by tearing up the structure. It cannot be broken into fragments by tearing and mangling its viscera. Whatever has been separated from the womb cannot live and breathe outside it; it loses the essence of health.[46]

43 Cyprian, *De unit. eccl.* 7 (CSEL 3/1. 216): *... individua, copulata, connexa ostendit populi nostri qui Christum induimus concordiam cohaerentem. Sacramento vestis et signo dedaravit ecdesiam unitatem.* The theme of 'putting on Christ' also occurs earlier in *De unit. eccl.* 1. 44 A. Demoustier, art. cit. 45 On Cyprian's widespread usage of Psalm 67:7a see M.A. Fahey, *Cyprian and the Bible: a study in third century exegesis* (Tübingen, 1971), 143–5. 46 Cyprian, *De unit. eccl.* 23 (CSEL 3/1. 231): *Unus Deus est et Christus unus et una ecclesia eius et fides una et plebs una in solidam corporis unitatem concordiae glutino copulata. Scindi unitas non potest nec corpus unum discidio conpaginis separari, divulsis laceratione visceribus in frustra discerpi. Quicquid a matrice discesserit seorsum vivere et spi rare non poterit, substantiam salutis amittit.* See J. Daniélou, op. cit., 453–64 for helpful analysis of Cyprian's vocabulary in connection with the theme of the *unanimitas concordiae*. 47 Cyprian, *De dom. orat.* 11 (CSEL 3/1. 274): *... scire debemus quia quando patrem Deum dicimus quasi filii Dei agere debemus, utquomodo nos nobis placemus de Deo patre, sic sibi placeat et ille de nobis. Conversemur quasi Dei templa ut Dominum in nobis constet habitare. Nec sit degener actus noster ab spiritu ...* The English translation is taken from FC 36. 125–59. 48 Cyprian, *De dom. orat.* 23 (CSEL 3/1. 284): *Pacificos enim et concordes adque unanimes esse in domo sua Deus praecipit et quales nos fecit secunda nativitate tales vult renatos perseverare, ut qui filii Dei sumus in Dei pace maneamus, et quibus spiritus unus est unus sit et animus et sensus.*

In the succeeding chapters (*De unit. eccl.* 24–25) Cyprian recalls Christ's parting gift of peace to his disciples (cf. Jn 14:27) and how the children of God should be recognized as peacemakers (cf. Mt 5:9), 'faithfully binding themselves together with the words of unanimity'. This unanimity characterized the Church at its origins (cf. Acts 1:14; 4:32).

Cyprian's commentary on the Lord 's Prayer (*De dominica oratione*) is a lengthier and more detailed work that Tertullian's, though clearly inspired by the latter. Contemporaneous with the *De unitate ecclesiae*, it shares with it Cyprian's passionate concern for ecclesial unity. There are also some interesting passages having a clear Trinitarian reference. In the early part of his commentary, Cyprian stresses the social nature of this prayer. Christ, as the *pacis doctor adque unitatis magister*, taught that prayer was to be public and common. We pray for all people because all people are one. Cyprian cites as examples the three young men in the fiery furnace (cf. Dan 3:51ff) and the *koinōnia* of the apostolic community in Acts 1:14, texts once again linked with Psalm 67:7a on the theme of God establishing concord and a united household among those who agree with one another.

Cyprian teaches that our addressing God as Father has consequences for our behaviour. We should strive to be worthy children of this Father. Our aim should be to live as temples of God 'that it may be clear that the Lord dwells in us'. Our actions must remain under the influence of the Spirit.[47] Progressing to the petition in the Lord's Prayer about forgiveness, Cyprian stresses the need for fraternal forgiveness prior to seeking forgiveness from God. This he links with the parable of the unforgiving debtor (cf. Mt 18:23–35) and the Lord's teaching about mutual forgiveness (cf. Mk 11:25) before offering prayer to the Father. He continues by stating:

> For God has ordered us to be peacemakers and of one heart and of one mind in his house, and as he made us, so reborn by a second birth he wishes to preserve us, that we who are the sons of God may remain in the peace of God, and that we who have one spirit may have one heart and mind.[48]

Cyprian's characteristic emphasis on unity is very much in evidence here with the language of Psalm 67:7a and Acts 4:32a blending with his own thought. With a

further reference to Matthew 5:23–24, on the theme of being reconciled with one's neighbour before offering one's sacrifice to God, Cyprian introduces one of his most oft-quoted Trinitarian passages:

> The greater sacrifice to God is our peace and fraternal concord and a people united in the unity of the Father, and the Son, and of the Holy Spirit.[49]

Thus, what pleases God most is that we be drawn into that Trinitarian pattern of unity which comes from above.

In *De dom. orat.* 30, Cyprian reflects on our Lord's own prayer for others, notably his prayer for Simon Peter (cf. Lk 22:31) and his priestly prayer for his disciples addressed to his Father (cf. Jn 17:20–21). Significantly, this latter prayer for his disciples expressed the wish that they be drawn into the unity that characterized Jesus' own relationship to the Father. This is the only instance where Cyprian cites John 17:20–21, a unity text par excellence.[50] It re-echoes the sentiment earlier expressed in chapter 23:

> Moreover, behold, what the desire was of him who prayed, that, just as the Father and Son are one, so too we remain in that very unity; that from this it can be understood how much he sins who shatters unity and peace, since the Lord also prayed for this, namely, that his people live, for he knew that discord does not come to the kingdom of God.[51]

Summarising this survey of two Cyprianic texts we can see that, for Cyprian, unity was an essential attribute of the *ecclesia*, whether understood at the local or universal levels. Unity had a logical priority over multiplicity. Cyprian applied Tertullian's Trinitarian imagery to the Church in order to ground the elements of multiplicity in an underlying unity which is preserved at the source. Christ's seamless tunic served as a powerful image of ecclesial unity in Cyprian's hands since it bore the unity that came 'from above', just as the Church's unity is ultimately of divine origin. Being baptized in the name of the Trinity invites us not only 'to put on Christ' but also to persevere in upholding the unity of his Church. The Holy Spirit, symbolized by the peace-loving dove, is only to be found within the Church. Its peaceable characteristics invite our imitation as members of the inn of unanimity. Like Tertullian, Cyprian appealed to the unity of Father and

49 Cyprian, *De dom. orat.* 23 (CSEL 3/1. 285): *Sacrificium Deo maius est pax nostra et fraterna concordia et de unitate Patris et Filii et Spiritus Sancti plebs adunata.* This text is cited in Vatican II as the concluding line of *Lumen gentium* 4. It has also acted as an inspirational text for many contemporary ecclesiologists. 50 See M.A. Fahey, op. cit., 400. 51 Cyprian, *De dom. orat.* 30 (CSEL 3/1. 289): *Rogantis autem desiderium videte quod fuerit, ut quomodo unum sunt pater et filius, sic et nos in ipsa unitate maneamus: ut hinc quoque possit intelligi quantum delinquat qui unitatem scindit et pacem, cum pro hoc et rogaverit Dominus volens scilicet plebem suam vivere, cum sciret ad regnum Dei discordiam non venire.*

Son as paradigm for the children of God. Cyprian, however, carries the reflection much deeper, seeing the *plebs adunata* as being simultaneously the sacrifice most pleasing to God and the fruition of Jesus' prayer for his disciples – *ut omnes unum sint.* United by the glue of concord, Christ's disciples are drawn into that unity that characterizes the Trinitarian life. They become the inn of unanimity, the united household and God's temple.

Augustine of Hippo

Much of Augustine's ecclesiology was elaborated in the course of the anti-Donatist debates which occupied the first two decades of his episcopate. Augustine relied heavily on both Cyprian and Optatus of Milevis in developing his early ecclesiology. He borrows much from Cyprian in terms of ecclesial imagery and emphases, especially concerning the unity of the Church, though he rejected Cyprian's requirement for the rebaptism of heretics rejoining the catholic fold. To Optatus he owed his knowledge of the early history of Donatism and the first attempts at a refutation of it. In refuting Parmenian the Donatist, Optatus had already developed a theology of the marks of the Church. One other formative influence on Augustine's early ecclesiology was the *Liber regularum* of Tyconius, the former Donatist. This exegetical treatise, critically evaluated in Augustine's *De doctrina christiana* 3.30.42–3.37.56, helped give Augustine's ecclesiology a strong Christological basis, and some arsenal for describing the Church as being an *ecclesia permixta* and an *ecclesia catholica.*

Tarsicius van Bavel, in the course of a review article on Augustine's ecclesiology, has sketched for us the amazing breadth of Augustine's reflections on the Church.[52] His is an ecclesiology characterized by many tensions held in delicate balance. For Augustine, the Church is both institution and Christ-event; sociological datum and Body of Christ; the *ecclesia* in time and space and the kingdom of God; the *ecclesia terrena* and the *civitas Dei*; the pilgrim Church and the Church as eschatological community; the Church symbolized by the mixture of wheat and tares, or grain and chaff, and the *ecclesia sine macula et ruga.*[53]

52 T.J. van Bavel, 'What kind of Church do you want? The breadth of Augustine's ecclesiology', in *Louvain Studies* 7 (1979) 147–71; idem, 'What kind of Church do you choose?', in *Theology Digest* 26 (1978) 30–5. Other significant studies on Augustine's ecclesiology include; G.G. Willis, *St Augustine and the Donatist Controversy* (London, 1950); J. Ratzinger, *Volk und Haus Gottes in Augustins Lehre von der Kirche* (München, 1954); S.J. Grabowski, *The Church: an introduction to the theology of St Augustine* (New York, 1957); E. Mersch, *The whole Christ*, trans. J.R. Kelly (London, 1962), part 3, chapters 2–4; É. Lamirande *L'Église céleste selon saint Augustin* (Paris, 1963); idem, *Études sur l'Ecclésiologie de saint Augustin* (Ottawa, 1969); P. Borgomeo, *L'Église de ce temps dans la prédication de saint Augustin* (Paris, 1972); R.F. Evans, *One and holy: the Church in Latin patristic thought* (London, 1972), 65–128; A. Nichols, *The theology of Joseph Ratzinger: an introductory study* (Edinburgh, 1988), 27–50; M.A. Fahey, 'Augustine's ecclesiology revisited', in J. McWilliam (ed.), *Augustine from rhetor to theologian* (Waterloo, ON, 1992), 173–81. 53 T.J. van Bavel, art. cit., 148.

Equally diverse are Augustine's reflections on the origins of the Church or its beginnings. The missionary mandate of the Church and its new-found vitality are variously associated with the events of the Ascension and Pentecost. Equally important are the associations between the Church and the mysteries of the Incarnation and the Cross. Augustine, too, saw the Church as extending back to the just of the Old Testament, the *ecclesia ab Abel justo*, who lived in the hope of the future Messiah – *tempora variata, non fides*.[54] But, as van Bavel notes, Augustine's vision is even wider still. He does not hesitate to give a Trinitarian origin and background to his ecclesiology.[55]

One of the clearest indications of a link between the Trinity and the Church occurs in Augustine's *Enchiridion*, a work dating from AD 421 and thus representing Augustine's mature thought. It is addressed to Laurentius, a Roman deacon, and takes the form of a commentary on the Apostles' Creed and the Lord's Prayer. Having reached the clause of the Creed dealing with the Holy Spirit, Augustine notes that mention of the Church logically follows, just as the intelligent creation, constituting the free Jerusalem (cf. Gal 4:26), should be subordinate in the order of speech to the creator, the supreme Trinity:

> Therefore the true order of the Creed demanded that the Church should be made subordinate to the Trinity, as the house to him who dwells in it, the temple to God who occupies it, and the city to its builder.[56]

Augustine here sees the Church in relationship to the Trinity as the creature in dependence on its creator. Through his use of the three images of the house, temple, and city he underscores the twin themes of construction and indwelling, themes which he returns to later in the same passage and elsewhere in his other works.

The *Enchiridion* was produced while Augustine was in the process of completing the *De civitate Dei*. Not surprisingly, some characteristic themes from the *De civitate Dei* also appear in this passage from *Enchiridion* 15.56. Augustine notes that by 'Church' he means the *tota ecclesia*, i.e. both the pilgrim part, wandering as a stranger on the earth while singing its song of deliverance from its former captivity, and the angelic or heavenly part which has constantly remained steadfast to God in heaven (*cohaesit Deo*), never having experienced the misery consequent upon the fall. These two parts are united in the bonds of love (*vinculo caritatis*), and shall be one in the fellowship of eternity (*consortio aeternitatis*). The heavenly part renders assistance to the pilgrim part on earth. In Augustine's view the *tota ecclesia* has been ordained for the worship of the one God. His vision here is inspired by some characteristic features from the *City of God*, the whole society of the Church being united in its common focus on God, the true good who is to be worshipped, loved and enjoyed.

Towards the end of *Enchiridion* 15.56, Augustine focuses on the image of the temple, coupling it with the body, noting that we are both temples of the Spirit (cf. 1 Cor 6:19) and members of Christ's body (1 Cor 6:15), and stressing that the Spirit is no less divine than God the Father nor inferior to Christ. Based on the evidence of Scripture, notably 1 Corinthians 3:16; Colossians 1:18 and John 2:19, Augustine sees the biblical notion of temple being linked with all three persons of the Trinity. This leads to his concluding statement:

> The temple of God, then, that is, of the supreme Trinity as a whole, is the holy Church, embracing in its full extent both heaven and earth.[57]

Commenting on this important text from the *Enchiridion*, Lamirande notes that whereas Western ecclesiology, as a whole, remains '*très axée sur la christologie*', Augustine's vision here is decidedly Trinitarian. He suggests that it was the order of propositions in the Creed which influenced Augustine's comments here. Furthermore, the consideration of the *tota ecclesia* prevented Augustine from specifically referring to Christ as redeemer here, though the drama of sin and redemption are addressed at length in other sections of the *Enchiridion*. Finally, we need to remember that Augustine's *De Trinitate* was also in the process of completion at the time of writing the *Enchiridion*.[58]

Augustine's other creedal commentaries, all of which pre-date the *Enchiridion*, are much less explicit on the relationship between the Church and the Trinity.[59] His *De fide et symbolo* 7.14, preached at the Council of Hippo in AD 393, speaks of the human heart, freed from lust and error, as being the true temple of God. In *Sermo* 215.4 (AD 410– 412) Augustine refers to the *integra ecclesia* being born in Christ of the Holy Spirit. The contemporaneous *Sermo* 214.10-11 describes the

54 See Y. Congar, 'Ecclesia ab Abel' in *Abhandlungen über Theologie und Kirche*, Festschrift für K. Adam (Düsseldorf, 1952), 79–108; M.F. Berrouard, 'La permanence à travers le temps de la foi dans le Christ selon Saint Augustin', in A. Zumkeller (ed.), *Signum Pietatis: Festgabe für C. P. Mayer* (Würzburg, 1989), 303–24. 55 T.J. van Bavel, art. cit., 150. See also D. Puškaric, 'La Chiesa e il misterio trinitario nella predicazione di S. Agostino', in *Augustinianum* 19 (1979) 487–506. 56 Augustine, *Ench.* 15.56 (CCSL 46. 79–80): *Rectus itaque confessionis ordo poscebat ut trinitati subiungeretur ecclesia, tanquam habitatori domus sua et deo templum suum et conditori civitas sua.* The English translation is from J.F. Shaw in H. Paolucci (ed.), *St Augustine: the Enchiridion on faith, hope and love* (Washington DC, 1987), 66–8. In his *En. Ps.* 131.1 (PL 37. 1717) Augustine also linked Body of Christ, temple, house and city together as images of the Church, each, however, in this instance specifically associated with the person of Christ.

57 Augustine, *Ench.* 15.56 (CCSL 46. 79–80): *Deus ergo habitat in templo suo, non solum spiritus sanctus, sed etiam pater et filius ... Templum ergo Dei, hoc est totius summae trinitatis, sancta est ecclesia, scilicet universa in caelo et in terra.* 58 É. Lamirande, 'L'Église dans l'*Enchiridion* de Saint Augustin: Quelques questions aux théologiens', in *Église et Théologie* 10 (1979) 195–206 at 203. Lamirande comments on *Ench.* 15.56 at 196–200. 59 For the precise chronology see S. Poque, *Augustin d'Hippone: Sermons pour la Pâque*, SC 116 (Paris, 1966) 59–60 at n. 3. Most are datable to *c.*410–12 AD, following the *De fide et symbolo* (393 AD) and pre-dating the *Enchiridion* (421 AD).

faithful as being temples of the Spirit, citing the classic Pauline texts (1 Cor 3:17; 6:19), and links the forgiveness of sins with the joint action of Christ and the Spirit – *per sanguinem Christi, operante Spiritu sancto*. In his *De symbolo ad catechumenos* 5.13–6.14 Augustine explains that one becomes a temple of the Spirit by baptism. In a phrase similar to *Enchiridion* 15.56, Augustine notes here that in the Creed the commendation of the Trinity is followed by the holy Church – *demonstratus est Deus et templum eius*.

Slightly earlier chronologically than the *Enchiridion* is Augustine's lengthy *Sermo* 71 devoted to the text of Matthew 12:31–32 on the unforgivable sin of blasphemy against the Holy Spirit.[60] In the second half of this sermon Augustine has many profound reflections on the role of the Holy Spirit in the life of the Church. For Augustine the Spirit's role within the Trinity found a parallel in what the Spirit seeks to accomplish in the Christian community. The Spirit, the *donum Dei*, is shared with us so that we too can be united with each other in the bond of love, but also so that we can be united with the Trinity itself. Thus, the vertical and horizontal elements are linked together:

> By that then which is the bond of communion between Father and Son, it is their special pleasure that we should have communion both among ourselves and with them, and to gather us together in one by that same gift, which one they both have, that is, by the Holy Spirit, at once God and the gift of God. For in this are we reconciled to the divinity, and take delight in it.[61]

The Matthean pericope under commentary here had earlier (cf. Mt 12:30) spoken of gathering with or scattering against Christ. In a number of instances throughout this sermon, Augustine explicitly refers to the activity of the Holy Spirit 'by whom the people of God are gathered together into one'.[62] It is the radical spirit of impenitence, refusing the gratuitous gift of God in the Spirit, which constitutes the grievous sin of blasphemy against the Spirit. This only results in disunity, the fruit of scattering rather than gathering. The gift of the Spirit at Pentecost enabled the Apostles to speak with the tongues of all nations, thus estab-

60 Augustine, *Sermo* 71 (PL 38. 444–67). See also P. Verbracken, 'Le *Sermo* LXXI de Saint Augustin sur le blasphème contre le Saint Esprit', in *Revue Bénedictine* 75 (1965) 54–108. The sermon has been variously dated to 417–20 AD. Verbracken doubts that *Ench.* 22.83, which also refers to the sin of blasphemy against the Holy Spirit, makes allusion to *Sermo* 71 as an earlier treatise on 'this difficult question'. **61** Augustine, *Sermo* 71.12.18 (PL 38. 454): *Quod ergo commune est Patri et Filio, per hoc nos voluerunt habere communionem et inter nos et secum, et per illud donum nos colligere in unum quod ambo habent, hoc est, per Spiritum santum Deum et donum Dei. In hoc enim reconciliamur divinitati, eaque delectamur.* The English translation of *Sermo* 71 is from LFr 16. 166–96. **62** *Sermo* 71.12.19 (PL 38. 455): *In Spiritu enim sancto, quo in unum Dei populus congregatur.* See also *Sermo* 71.12.18; 71.17.28; 71.21.34–35; 71.23.37.

lishing a fellowship of the sons of God and members of Christ.[63] Throughout *Sermo* 71, Augustine appeals to Ephesians 4:3 on the theme of 'endeavouring to keep the unity of the Spirit in the bond of peace'. He notes that the Spirit forgives the sins of those divided against themselves, gathering them together into unity. Having thus cleansed them from sin, the Spirit indwells in those who are united causing the *anima una et cor unum* to appear, that which characterized the Church at its origin (cf. Acts 4:32a).[64]

In *Sermo* 71, Augustine is clearly stressing a vital role for the Holy Spirit in the Church as the source of unity. What the Spirit accomplishes within the Church is similar to what the same Spirit does within the Trinity as *vinculum amoris* between the Father and the Son. His teaching here overlaps with his reflections on the Spirit elsewhere. Tractates 5–6 of his *Tractatus in Iohannem* develop the theme of the Church as *columba* in the course of commenting on the Johannine account of our Lord's own baptism.[65] Building on Cyprian's catalogue of the dove's peaceable characteristics, and appealing to the Genesis narrative about the dove and the text of the Song of Songs 6:8, Augustine used the dove symbolism in pluriform fashion. In the midst of the anti-Donatist debate, the dove served as a symbol of the Holy Spirit, as an ecclesial symbol, and as an evocative means of summoning dissident parties back to the unity associated with the dove. The plaintive cooing of the dove intimated to her members that they were on pilgrimage, longing for the peace of the fatherland, while simultaneously groaning in the midst of a multitude of sinners. Her mournful cry was also a summons to the dissidents, whether heretics or sinners, to return to the Christ's fold. Like Cyprian, Augustine limited the presence and activity of the Spirit to the *catholica*.

In some of Augustine's Pentecost day sermons, he liked to build on Paul's analogy of the human body, composed of diverse members, and the diversity of gifts associated with the presence of the Spirit (cf. 1 Cor 12:4–31). In these sermons, Augustine stresses that the Holy Spirit fulfils an analogous role in the Church, the Body of Christ, to that which the soul does in the human body: 'In fact what the soul is to the human body, the Holy Spirit is to the Body of Christ, which is the Church. The Holy Spirit does in the whole Church what the soul does in all parts of one body.'[66] Again, Augustine appeals to Ephesians 4:4, with

63 *Sermo* 71.17.28 (PL 38. 461): *Ad ipsum enim pertinet societas, qua efficimur unum corpus unici filii Dei … sic opportebat per linguas omnium gentium significari istam societatem filiorum Dei et membrorum Christi futuram in omnibus gentibus …* **64** *Sermo* 71.21.35 (PL 38. 465): *… quos colligit efficit indivisos, peccata quae adversum se divisa sunt dimittendo, eosque mundatos inhabitando; ut sit, quem admodum scriptum est in Actibus Apostolorum, 'Multitudinis credentium erat cor unum et anima una'.* **65** Augustine, *Io. ev. tr.* 5–6 (PL 35. 1414–37). These are the only two tractates where the *columba* is used as an ecclesial symbol. In *Io. ev. tr.* 6.6 (PL 35. 1428) Augustine states: *Unitas ecclesiae quae significatur in columba*, linking the image with Song of Songs 6:8. **66** Augustine, *Sermo* 267.4 (PL 38. 1231): *Quod autem est anima corporis hominis, hoc est Spiritus sanctus corpori Christi, quod est ecclesia: hoc agit Spiritus sanctus in tota ecclesia, quod agit anima in omnibus membris unius*

its teaching on one Body, one Spirit, noting that the Spirit does not vivify an amputated member. Augustine's thought here is fully in harmony with Cyprian's teaching about unity being preserved at the source. It is incumbent on all members of the Body of Christ to preserve the unity of the Spirit in the bond of peace.

Augustine fully shared Cyprian's passionate concern for the unity of the Church. We have earlier surveyed Cyprian appeal to Christ's undivided tunic as a symbol of ecclesial unity, a unity which was of divine origin. Augustine has recourse to this Cyprianic image some seventeen times, most notably in the course to the anti-Donatist debates.[67] Augustine interrupted his commentary on John's Gospel after *Tractate* 12 in order to deliver a sermon on Psalm 21, coinciding with the celebration of the Lord's Passion. In this sermon he refers to Christ's seamless tunic, prophetically referred to in Psalm 21:19. He closely follows Cyprian's ecclesiological interpretation of the Johannine image but develops the exegesis in terms of associating the undivided tunic not only with unity, but also with the theme of charity, a gift too which comes 'from above', being associated with the Spirit. Furthermore, in this particular instance, Augustine goes further than Cyprian in giving a Trinitarian association to the undivided tunic. In *Enarratio in Ps* 21.II.19, Augustine distinguishes the seamless tunic, which went to one soldier by lot, from our Lord's other garments which were divided among them. The tunic, remaining whole, stood for unity and charity; the divided clothes symbolized the sacraments, held even outside the Church's boundaries by the dissidents:

> What is this coat, but love, what no man can divide? What is this coat but unity? Upon it is the lot cast; no man divides it. The sacraments heretics have been able to divide for themselves; they have not divided love. And because they could not divide it, they withdrew: but it abides entire. It falls by lot to some. Whoever has it is safe.[68]

Just prior to this passage Augustine had expressed the Trinitarian origin of the unity and charity of the *tunica desuper texta*:

> There was there, says the evangelist, a coat woven from above. From heaven therefore, from the Father therefore, from the Holy Spirit therefore.[69]

corporis ... membrum amputatum non sequitur Spiritus. The same sentiment is expressed in *Sermo* 268. 2 (PL 38. 1232): *Quod est spiritus noster, id est anima nostra, ad membra nostra; hoc est Spiritus sanctus ad membra Christi, ad corpus Christi, quod est ecclesia.* 67 See M. Aubineau, art. cit., 121–3. 68 Augustine, *En. Ps.* 21(2). 19 (PL 36. 176): *Quae est ista tunica, nisi charitas, quam nemo potest dividere? Quae est ista tunica, nisi unitas? In ipsam sors mittitur, nemo illam dividit. Sacramenta sibi haeretici dividere potuerunt, charitatem non diviserunt. Et quia dividere non potuerunt, recesserunt; illa autem manet integra. Sorte obvenit quibusdam: qui habet hanc securus est.* 69 Augustine, *En. Ps.* 21(2). 19 (PL 36. 176): *Erat ibi tunica, dicit evangelista, desuper texta. Ergo de caelo, ergo a Patre, ergo a Spiritu sancto*. The English translation of *En. Ps.* 21(2) is from LFr 24,157.

This same association of the seamless tunic with unity and charity recurs in *Tractate* 13 where Augustine resumes his Johannine commentary, previously interrupted by the *Enarratio* on Psalm 21 and the set of ten Easter homilies on 1 John, the latter having significantly focused on the theme of love itself.[70] Commenting on the Johannine passion narrative in *Tractate* 118, Augustine returns once more to the *tunica desuper texta*. Here the four-parted raiment of Christ is associated with the Church itself, spreading outwards to the four corners of the world. By contrast with this emphasis on the universality of the Church, the seamless tunic symbolized the integral unity of the same Church: 'But the coat on which lots were cast, signifies the unity of all the parts, which is contained in the bond of charity.'[71] Augustine is very close to Cyprian here, substituting the 'bond of charity' for Cyprian's 'glue of concord'. He links his comments with three important Pauline texts on charity (1 Cor 12:31; Eph 3:19; Col 3:14), associating the *tunica desuper texta* linguistically with each of the three texts in turn. Paul speaks of the supereminent (*supereminentiorem*) way of charity as that which surpasses (*supereminet*) all knowledge and should be the Christian's outer garment, covering all (*super omnia*). Christ's seamless tunic went by lot to one man, indicating that Christ gathers all into one. Augustine observes that no one is excluded from a share in the whole. The garment was woven throughout (*per totum*) in a single piece. So, too, the Church extending itself to the four corners of the earth remains an integral whole, to which Augustine adds: 'from which whole, as the Greek language indicates, the Church derives her name as catholic'.[72]

Augustine repeatedly refers to unity and charity as hallmarks of the Church. Both attributes are also of divine origin, variously associated with Christ and the Holy Spirit. Unity and charity are also key attributes characterising the Trinity itself. In his *De Trinitate* 8.8.12 Augustine remarks: *immo vero vides Trinitatem si caritatem vides*. It is also in Book 8 of the *De Trinitate* that he uses the analogy of the

70 Augustine, *Io. ev. tr.* 13.13 (PL 35. 1499): *Sponsa es, agnosce vestem sponsi tui ... desuper texta tunica quid significat, nisi charitatem? Desuper texta tunica quid significat, nisi unitatem? Hanc tunicam attende, quam nec persecutores Christi diviserunt.* This *Tractate* is rich on the theme of Christ's costly love for the redemption of his beloved bride. In *Io. ev. tr.* 13.15 (PL 35. 1499) Augustine refers to the tunic as a *tunica charitatis*. 71 Augustine, *Io. ev. tr.* 118.4 (PL 35. 1949): *Tunica vero illa sortita, omnium partium significat unitatem, quae caritatis vinculo continentur.* English translations of the *Tractates* come from LNPF 7. 72 Augustine, *Io. ev. tr.* 118.4 (PL 35. 1949): *Si ergo charitas et supereminientiorem habet viam, et supereminet scientiae, et super omnia praecepta est; merito vestis qua significatur, desuper contexta perhibetur. Inconsutilis autem ne aliquando dissuatur; et ad unum pervenit, quia in unum omnes colligit.* See M. Aubineau, art. cit., 122–3 for helpful comment on *Tr.* 118.4, noting M. Pontet's reflections on Augustine's concept of catholicity which involved more than the mere geographical extension of the Church. It is integrally linked to the unity of the grand whole. The reference is to M. Pontet, *L'Exégèse de Saint Augustin prédicateur* (Paris, 1944), 444. See Augustine's *Contra litteras Petiliani* II. 38. 90–1 (PL 43. 292) for Augustine's earlier reflections on catholicity in the anti-Donatist debate, again making reference to the Greek meaning of 'catholic'.

lover, the beloved, and love to reflect on and illustrate the sublime Trinity in its diversity and unity (*De Trin.* 8.10.14). As noted earlier in *Sermo* 71.12.18, the Spirit of love, uniting the Father and Son in the Trinity, is shared with us that we too should be united in a community of love, both among ourselves and with the Trinity. Not surprisingly, Romans 5:5 was Augustine's favourite text in reflecting upon the Holy Spirit.[73] The love of God, the *donum Dei*, has been poured into our hearts by the Holy Spirit that has been given to us. In *De Trinitate* 6.5.7, Augustine, having outlined the Spirit's unifying role within the Trinity, notes that: 'we are commanded to imitate this unity, both in our relations with God as well as among ourselves'. Love of God and love of neighbour form a seamless whole in the gospel (cf. Mt 22:37–40).[74]

The description of the *koinōnia* of the early apostolic community in Jerusalem, being of one heart and mind (cf. Acts 4:32a), was a concept dear to Augustine. It acted as paradigm for his monastic community, Augustine inserting the scriptural text into the opening lines of his *Monastic Rule*, where it is significantly linked to Ps 67:7a, the text so dear to Cyprian. Psalm 132 was also another important scriptural text, on the theme of fraternal concord, which Augustine likewise liked to link with Acts 4:32a. His monastic community was to pattern itself on the early Church model and be a microcosm of what the Church itself should be.[75] The power of the Spirit, given at Pentecost to weave this unity among so many believers in the early Church, pointed for Augustine to the even greater unity that must characterize the Trinity itself.[76] The twin themes of unity and love, stressed alike in the *De Trinitate* and his citations of Acts 4:32a, highlight for us the inter-connectedness that he envisaged between the Trinity, the Church, the monastic community and the post-Pentecost experience of *koinōnia* in the early Church.

73 See A.M. La Bonnardière, 'Le verset Paulinien Rom V.5 dans l'oeuvre de Saint Augustin', in *Augustinus Magister* (Paris, 1954), ii, 657–65. 74 Augustine, *De Trin.* VI. 5. 7 (CCSL 50. 235): *Quod imitari per gratiam et ad deum et ad nos ipsos iubemur, 'in quibus duobus praeceptis tota lex pendet et prophetae'.* 75 Augustine, *Regula* 1.2 (PL 32. 1378): *Primum, propter quod in unum estis congregati, ut unianimes habitetis in domo et sit vobis anima una et cor unum in Deum.* See G. Lawless, *Augustine of Hippo and his monastic rule* (Oxford, 1982), 80–1. Similarly Psalm 132 with its theme of the joys of brotherly unity also expressed the monastic ideal. Augustine's *En. Ps.* 132 (PL 37. 1729–30, 1732–3, 1736) makes four cross references to Acts 4:32a. On Psalm 132 see G. Lawless, 'Psalm 132 and Augustine's Monastic Ideal', in *Angelicum* 59 (1982) 526–39 (at 527 Lawless refers to Augustine's 'essentially Trinitarian outlook'); idem., 'The monastery as model of the Church: Augustine's Commentary on Psalm 132', in *Angelicum* 60 (1983) 258–74. Hilary of Poitiers' *Tractatus in Ps CXXXII* also adopts a Trinitarian approach and furthermore links Psalm 132 with Acts 4:32a: (PLS 1. 244–5): *Hoc itaque populo dei congruit, sub uno patre fratres esse, sub uno spiritu unum esse, sub una domo unianimes incidere, sub uno corpore unius corporis membra esse. Iucundum et bonum est habitare fratres in unum.* 76 See Augustine's *Io. ev. tr.* 14.9; 18.4; 39.5 (PL 35. 1508, 1538, 1684) where he links Acts 4:32a with the Trinity, the greater love and unity of the Trinity being always stressed. For Augustine's varied usages of Acts 4:32a see M.F. Berrouard, 'La première communauté de Jérusalem comme image de l'unité de la Trinité: Une des exégèses

Finally, to conclude this brief investigation of Augustinian texts linking the Trinity with the Church, let us focus on the related themes of the Trinitarian indwelling and the joint spiritual custody which the three persons of the Trinity exercise in our regard. Both of these themes occur in the *Tractatus in Iohannem*, and I limit my comments to this source. Commenting on the Johannine text, it was natural for Augustine to address the theme of indwelling. Not only does he consider the united community as a pointer to the even greater union of the Trinity itself, but such a community is said to constitute the very place where God dwells. We have already touched on this theme in considering the *Enchiridion* text in an earlier section.

In the course of his commentary on John 6, Augustine speaks of the fruitful reception of the Eucharist being accompanied by the indwelling of Christ in the recipient.[77] The true understanding of the Eucharist as the *panis concordiae* (*Tr.*26.14) is linked with scriptural texts associated with unity (Ps 67:7a; 1 Cor 10:17). The virtuous and wicked members of the Church may receive the Eucharist but it is only the former who receive it beneficially – *usque ad Spiritus participationem* (*Tr.*27.11). Commenting on Jesus' promise of living water (cf. Jn 7:37–39) in *Tr.*32.8, Augustine stresses that one possesses the Spirit to the extent that one loves the Church – *quantum quisque amat ecclesiam Christi, tantum habet Spiritum sanctum.* Similarly, in a Tractate dealing with the *mandatum novum* of mutual love, Augustine observes that it is through the mutual solicitude of the members of the Body of Christ for each other that they merit having God among them.[78]

In *Tr.*76, Augustine arrives at an important Johannine text (Jn 14:23) where Jesus speaks of the Father coming with him to make their home in those who both love him and keep his word. His commentary expands on this to include the Holy Spirit also. He prefaces his comment by referring to an earlier text (Jn 14:17) which had already spoken of the Spirit dwelling within the believer:

> Here you see that, along with the Father and the Son, the Holy Spirit also takes up his abode in the saints; that is to say, within them, as God in his temple. The triune God, Father and Son, and Holy Spirit, come to us while we are coming to them; They come with help, we come with obedience; They come to enlighten, we to behold; They come to fill, we to contain;

augustiniennes d'Act 4,32a,' in C. Mayer (ed.), *Homo spiritalis: Festgabe für L. Verheijen* (Würzburg, 1987), 207–24. 77 Augustine, *Io. ev. tr.* 26.18 (PL 35. 1614): *Hoc est ergo manducare illam escam, et illum bibere potum, in Christo manere, et illum manentem in se habere.* See also *Io. ev. tr.* 27.1 (PL 35. 1616): *Signum quia manducavit et bibit hoc est, si manet et manetur, si habitat et inhabitatur, si haeret ut non deseratur.* 78 Augustine, *Io. ev. tr.* 65.2 (PL 35. 1809): *Sic ergo et nos invicem diligamus, ut quantum possumus, invicem ad habendum in nobis Deum cura delectionis attrahamus.* The earlier part to this homily (*Io. ev. tr.* 65.1) had eloquently sketched the *mandatum novum* as the centre of crystallization of the Church employing a rich constellation of ecclesial images such as people of God, Body of Christ, bride, and the Church of the Old Testament.

> that our vision of them may not be external, but inward; and their abiding in us may not be transitory but eternal.[79]

This lofty passage is close in sentiment to the passage from *Enchiridion* 15:56. In both texts, Augustine essentially expands the Pauline notion of the human body being a temple of the Spirit (cf. 1 Cor 3:16–17; 6:19) to that of the united ecclesial community constituting the *templum trinitatis*. A close parallel to this occurs in *Sermo* 71.20.33, where the inseparability of action of the three persons of the Trinity is associated with their inseparable indwelling in the Church.[80] Finally, in the course of his commentary on Christ's priestly prayer in John 17:20–23, Augustine describes the Father and the Son as being our place – *et locus noster ipsi sunt* – in the light of John 17:22. We, in turn, are God's place inasmuch as we are God's Temple – *et nos locus Dei sumus, quoniam templum eius sumus*.[81]

Closely linked with the notion of indwelling is Augustine's reference to the Trinity exercising a joint spiritual custody in our regard. This occurs in the context of his reflections on John 17 in *Tr.*107. Jesus prays to the Father that he might keep the disciples true to his name, just as Jesus himself had kept them true to the Father's name (Jn 17:11–12). Augustine stresses that we must not envisage a succession or relay in terms of guardianship:

> But we are not to take this in any such carnal way, as that the Father and Son keep us in turn, with an alternation in the guardianship of both in guarding us, as if one succeeded when the other departed; for we are guarded all at once by the Father, and Son and Holy Spirit, who is the one true and blessed God.[82]

79 Augustine, *Io. ev. tr.* 76.4 (PL 35. 1832): *Ecce facit in sanctis cum Patre et Filio sanctus etiam Spiritus mansionem; intus utique, tamquam Deus in templo suo, Deus Trinitas, Pater et Filius et Spiritus sanctus. Veniunt ad nos, dum venimus ad eos; veniunt subveniendo, venimus obediendo; veniunt illuminando, venimus intuendo; veniunt implendo, venimus capiendo, ut sit nobis eorum non extraria visio, sed interna; ut in nobis eorum non transitoria mansio, sed aeterna.* 80 Augustine, *Sermo* 71. 20.33 (PL 38. 463): *Neque enim habitat in quoquam Spiritus sanctus sine Patre et Filio; sicut nec Filius sine Patre et Spiritus sancto, nec sine illis Pater. Inseparabilis quippe est habitatio, quorum est inseparabilis operatio ... ideo societas unitatis ecclesiae Dei, extra quam non fit ipsa remissio peccatorum, tamquam proprium est opus Spiritus sancti, Patre sane et Filio operantibus, quia societas est quodam modo Patris et Filii ipse Spiritus sanctus.* 81 Augustine, *Io. ev. tr.* 111.3 (PL 35. 1928). Augustine is here drawing on a phrase from Psalm 75.3. The phrase *locus sanctus Domini* also occurs in his *En. Ps.* 67.7 (PL 36. 815–16) where the place of God is associated with the united household of the Church. 82 Augustine, *Io. ev. tr.* 107.6 (PL 35. 1914): *Neque hoc tam camaliter debemus accipere, velut vicissim nos servent Pater et Filius, amborum in nobis custodiendis alternante custodia, quasi succedat alius quando discesserit alius: simul enim nos custodiunt Pater et Filius et Spiritus sanctus, quia est unus verus et beatus Deus.* The same theme recurs in *Io. ev. tr.* 94.5 (PL 35. 1870) where Augustine is commenting on Christ's promise to send the Spirit upon his return to the Father. Here Christ's withdrawal *corporaliter* is simultaneously coupled with the presence of all three persons of the Trinity *spiritaliter*. Significantly Augustine appeals to Matthew 28:20 and John 14:23 as scriptural support. Thus he can state: *Sed ubi eorum quilibet unus, ibi Trinitas Deus unus.* 83 Augustine, *Io. ev. tr.* 107.6 (PL 35. 1914): ... *quando ab eis abstulit Filius praesentiam corporalem, tenuit cum Patre custodiam spiritualem* ... See also *Io. ev. tr.* 102.6 (PL 35. 1899): *Reliquit mundum corporali discessione, perrexit ad Patrem hominis adscensione, nec mundum deseruit praesentiae gubernatione.* 84 Augustine, *Regula* 1.8: *Omnes ergo unianimiter et concorditer vivite, et honorate in vobis invicem Deum cuius templa facti estis.* Cf. G. Lawless, op. cit. (n.75 supra), at 82–3. The text forms a neat *inclusio* with

A little later in this same Tractate, Augustine speaks of the ascended Lord, having withdrawn his bodily presence from his disciples, still retaining, along with the Father, a spiritual guardianship. Augustine's thought here no doubt hinges on the twin realities of his regular assertion of the inseparability of action of the three persons of the Trinity, and his firm belief in the Lord's own words in Matthew 28:20. Thus in Christ's return to the Father, he does not abandon us, but abides with his governing presence.[83]

This survey of Augustinian texts had not the intention of presenting an exhaustive treatment of the theme of the link between the Trinity and the Church. Texts were selectively chosen solely with the purpose of illustrating certain aspects of the theme. The clearest articulation of the theme occurs in *Enchiridion* 15.56, but echoes of this important text are to be found elsewhere, notably in the *Tractatus in Iohannem, Sermo* 71, and Augustine's reflections on specific scriptural texts such as Acts 4:32a, Psalms 67 and 132. Augustine's ecclesiology shares much with Cyprian in terms of imagery and points of emphasis, especially their joint concern for ecclesial unity. For both Cyprian and Augustine, the unity of the Church was linked with the Trinity. Cyprian expressed the wish that we be the *plebs adunata* drawn into the unity of the Trinity, while Augustine greatly developed the idea of the Holy Spirit, the *donum Dei*, being shared with us that we be united alike among ourselves and with the Trinity. Both Fathers appealed to Psalms 67:7a on the theme of the Church as the united household of God.

Augustine's originality lay in the stress he placed on charity in the life of the Body of Christ. Charity, like unity, was a gift of divine origin and was intimately connected with the Spirit's activity. The love and unity which characterize the Trinity itself is what we are invited and enabled to imitate, knowing that if we see love we are seeing the Trinity. Augustine presents us with a multi-faceted spiritual vision of the Church, at once both earthly and heavenly, destined for a final *consortio aeternitatis* and the worship of the Trinitarian God whose temple and place we are. His *Tr.*76.4 verges on the mystical as he describes the reciprocal relationship which ensues between the Trinity and ourselves. Perhaps the conclusion to the first chapter of Augustine's Monastic *Regula* best summarizes for us Augustine's ideal for his monks, as much as for the Church at large:

> Live then, all of you, in harmony and concord; honour God mutually in each other; you have become His temples.[84]

'RESSOURCEMENT' IN THE SERVICE OF CONGAR'S ECCLESIOLOGICAL VISION

A prominent voice in Roman Catholic ecclesiology in the twentieth century has been that of the late Yves Cardinal Congar (1904–95). His seminal writings in the period prior to Vatican II prophetically anticipated some of the Council's characteristic themes.[85] Integral to Congar's theological method was *ressourcement*, the return to the nourishing study of the sources – the scriptures, the Fathers, the Councils, the liturgy and iconography. Reflecting on the art of being a theologian, in the course of a *Concilium* colloquium at Cambridge in 1981, Congar cited a saying from St Bernard about the Church *ante et retro occulata* – she looks behind and before. Commenting on this phrase Congar observed: 'In order to open up the future I've put a lot of effort into passing into circulation certain profound principles of the past: a *retro* with a view to *ante*.'[86] Two years earlier in 1979, writing an assessment of Vatican II's achievements, Congar referred to the universal desire at the time that Vatican II be a reforming council. He cited the following definition of reform by Charles Péguy (1873–1914), the French poet and essayist:

> An appeal made by a less profound tradition to a more profound tradition, a movement back on the part of tradition and a going further in depth and a search for deeper sources.[87]

This was clearly the path which Congar himself followed in elaborating his own ecclesiology, making the accolade of his Dominican confrère J.P. Jossua singularly apt when he referred to Congar as 'a prophet of tradition'.[88]

Invited in 1935 to reflect on the findings of a recent three-year survey by the periodical *La Vie Intellectuelle* into the causes of unbelief in France, Congar concluded that the disfigured way the Church came across to contemporary people was a major factor contributing to unbelief. There was a pressing need, in Congar's diagnosis, for a more attractive vision that transcended the hitherto dominant juridical notion of the Church. This became the seed for the publication of the

Regula 1.2. **85** See A. Nichols, *Yves Congar* (London, 1989) for a good overview of Congar's main themes. Specifically on Congar's ecclesiology see: J. Famerée, 'L'ecclésiologie du Père Congar: Essai de synthèse critique', in *Revue des Sciences Philosophiques et Théologiques* 76 (1992) 377–419; idem, *L'ecclésiologie d'Yves Congar avant Vatican II: Analyse et reprise critique*, BETL 107 (Leuven, 1992); idem, 'Aux origenes de Vatican II. La démarche théologique d'Yves Congar' in *Ephemerides Theologicae Lovanienses* 71 (1995) 121–38. For a listing of specific themes and texts in Vatican II for which Congar is responsible see Y. Congar, 'Reflections on being a theologian', in *New Blackfriars* 62 (1981) 405–9 at 405, and his *Fifty years of Catholic theology* (Philadelphia, 1988) 3–21. **86** Y. Congar, 'Reflections on being a theologian' (n.85 supra) at 407. **87** Y. Congar, 'A last look at the council', in A. Stacpoole (ed.), *Vatican II by those who were there* (London, 1986), 337–58 at 343. Congar had earlier cited the same text in his *Vrai et fausse Réforme dans l'Église* (Paris, 1950) at 602. **88** See J.A. Komonchak, 'Congar, Yves Marie Joesph', in *New Catholic Encyclopaedia* 18 (1989) 104–5, citing J.P. Jossua.

Unam Sanctam series planned by *La Vie Intellectuelle* and Éditions du Cerf.[89] The stated aim of the proposed series was the renewal of ecclesiology by a return to the nourishing study of the Fathers, restoring to the commerce of ideas a number of insights from the past which had been forgotten beneath concepts of lesser moment. The patrimony of the past was to be re-mined in order to help elucidate some present-day ecclesiological concerns.

Congar had planned that the first volume in the *Unam Sanctam* series was to have been a French translation of J.A. Möhler's *Die Einheit*, a publication to coincide with the centenary of Möhler's death in 1938. By a strange twist of events, the planned Möhler volume became volume two and Congar's own first book, *Chrétiens Désunis*, became volume one.[90] This epoch-making book was the revised version of his 1936 lectures delivered during the Church Unity Octave in the Sacré Coeur Basilica, Montmartre. It was to launch Congar's career and signal the Roman Catholic Church's involvement in the ecumenical movement.

As volume one in the *Unam Sanctam* series, Congar's *Divided Christendom* admirably espoused the aims of the series in terms of *ressourcement* and the renewal of ecclesiology. Most notable for our purposes is chapter two of his famous book devoted to the topic of the unity of the Church.[91] Here we are introduced to Congar's Trinitarian vision of the mystery of the Church. The chapter is structured around the formula *Ecclesia de Trinitate, in Christo, ex homïnibus*, which neatly expresses the mystery of the Church in terms of its divine and human elements. The chapter opens with Congar's citation of Cyprian's *De unitate ecclesiae* 6, a text which we have examined earlier, where Cyprian grounded the unity of the Church in celestial mysteries, divine strength, and the three who are one. The first footnote to the chapter cited further familiar Cyprianic texts on Christ's seamless tunic (*De unit. eccl.* 7–8) and the Church as the *plebs adunata* drawn into the unity of the Father, the Son and the Holy Spirit (*De dom orat.* 23).

In *Divided Christendom*, Congar writes of the oneness of the Church being a communication and extension of the oneness of the Trinitarian God. The life of the Trinitarian God is shared with us creatures by grace. For Congar, the Church is the extension of the divine life to a multitude of creatures. By coming to share this life they come to share in the very purposes of God:

> The Church is not merely a society, men united with God, but the divine society, the life of the Godhead reaching out to humanity and taking it up into itself.[92]

89 For valuable background here see Y. Congar, 'The call and the quest, 1929–1963,' a precious early autobiographical sketch published as a Preface to his *Dialogue between Christians* (London, 1966), 1–51 at 22–8. **90** Y. Congar, *Chrétiens Désunis: Principes d'un 'oecuménisme' catholique*, Unam Sanctam 1 (Paris, 1937). The English translation by M.A. Bousfield is *Divided Christendom* (London, 1939). **91** *Divided Christendom*, 48–92. **92** Ibid., 48–9. Congar's later study, *Le Mystère du Temple* (Paris, 1958), explored the biblical background to the theme stretch-

Congar reminds us that scripture bears clear evidence to this, from the Genesis account of Creation in the image and likeness of God to the closing vision in the Book of Revelation about the holy city, the new Jerusalem, coming down out of heaven from God.

To know anything of Congar's intellectual and spiritual formation is to know how central John 17 has been in his life. Jesus' prayer to the Father, *ut omnes unum sint*, has left a deep imprint on all of Congar's writings. Under the influence of the Abbé Paul Couturier, Congar entered deeply into the spirit of this prayer, the Octave of Prayer for Christian unity, and the ecumenical movement. It was basically the full fruition of Cyprian's insight, and that of Augustine in *Sermo* 71, that we be brought into the unity that typifies the Trinity itself. This, if you like, becomes the Ariadne's thread guiding us through the labyrinth of Congar's vast literary output. Congar was always fond of the image of a seed and its germination. One can see the seminal idea of the *Ecclesia de Trinitate* present in his first book. All his subsequent writings bear witness to the continued growth of this primordial insight, one having deep roots in Patristic soil.

As *peritus* at Vatican II, Congar worked on several of the Conciliar texts and saw many of the ideas which he had championed in the pre-Conciliar era become enshrined in the teaching of the Council.[93] The opening paragraphs of *Lumen gentium* bear the clear imprint of Congar's hand with the Trinitarian overture to the fine biblical sketch of the mystery of the Church. The famous phrase from Cyprian's *De dominica oratione* 23 about the *plebs adunata* forms the closing line to *Lumen gentium* 4. The same Congarian influences are discernible in *Ad gentes* 1–4 and *Unitatis redintegratio* 2, where the Trinity is depicted as underpinning the missionary nature of the Church and serving as the supreme exemplar of unity, respectively.

Ever sensitive to the Orthodox critique of Roman Catholic ecclesiology being too 'Christomonist', Congar both defended the Catholic achievement, especially in the texts of Vatican II, and helped foster a renewed focus on the Pneumatological dimension of the Church.[94] The second edition of Congar's *The Mystery of the Church* (1960), even prior to Vatican II, included two valuable essays on the Holy Spirit in the life of the Church. Drawing inspiration from Möhler's *Die Einheit*, his own deep acquaintance with the Orthodox tradition and the Greek Fathers, in addition to Paul VI's request in 1973 for a renewed theology of the

ing from Genesis to the Book of Revelation. **93** In the course of a personal letter (17 October 1971) to R.J. Beauchesne, Congar identified specific texts of Vatican II for which he was responsible – see R.J. Beauchesne, 'Heeding the early Congar today, and two recent Roman Catholic issues: seeking hope on the road back,' in *Journal of Ecumenical Studies* 27 (1990) 535–60 at 536. See also the references in n.85 supra. **94** Y. Congar, 'Pneumatologie ou 'Christomonisme' dans la tradition Latine?', in *Ecclesia a Spiritu sancto edocta, Mélanges G. Philips*, BETL 27 (Gembloux, 1970) 41–63; idem, 'Les implications Christologique et Pneumatologique de l'Ecclésiologie de Vatican II', in his *Le Concile de Vatican II: Son Église, Peuple de Dieu et Corps du Christ*, Théologie Historique 71 (Paris, 1984) 163–76.

Holy Spirit as a necessary complement to the implementation of Vatican II, Congar's mature works have been devoted to the Holy Spirit in the life of the Church. His highly acclaimed trilogy, *I believe in the Holy Spirit*, with the complementary study *The Word and the Spirit*, are precious volumes seeking to articulate the role of the Spirit and develop the Pneumatological dimension of the Church, written with profound ecumenical sensitivity and constant reference to the Fathers.[95] These works will be a treasury for future workers where Patristic nuggets await the reader in dazzling array, including extracts from the three Fathers who formed the focus of the present study.

In the light of these later studies by Congar, his original guiding formula in *Divided Christendom*, the '*Ecclesia de Trinitate, in Christo, ex hominibus*', needs to be expanded to '*Ecclesia de Trinitate, in Christo et in Spiritu sancto, ex hominibus*', in order to give full expression to the Pneumatological aspect of the Church. The divine outreach of the Trinitarian God involves 'the two hands of God', the Son and the Spirit, to use Irenaeus' popular image, a writer much admired by Congar. Congar's mature ecclesiological synthesis brings him remarkably close to the position of John Zizioulas, the Orthodox theologian to whom I referred in the opening section, a compatibility that both authors have acknowledged.[96] Perhaps this is a hopeful sign of the truth of Congar's maxim that 'theology only truly becomes catholic when it breathes deeply and uses both its lungs'.

CONCLUSION

This study examined the links between the Trinity and the Church as envisaged in selected texts from three Fathers representing the Latin tradition, Tertullian, Cyprian and Augustine. Significantly many of the texts came from contexts linked with baptism, either explaining baptism itself, the Creed, the Lord's Prayer or specific issues raised in the scriptures. While the insights differed in emphasis among the three Fathers, there was a common awareness that the mysteries of the Trinity and the Church were inter-related. For Tertullian it seemed automatic to link the Church's motherhood with the Fatherhood of God and the Father–Son relationship. The Church itself was described as 'a body of three' by Tertullian, an

95 Y. Congar, *Je Crois en l'Esprit Saint*, 3 vols. (Paris, 1979–80), ET by D. Smith, *I believe in the Holy Spirit* (London, 1983); idem, *La Parole et le Souffle* (Paris, 1984), ET by D. Smith, *The Word and the Spirit* (London, 1986). **96** See J. Zizioulas, op. cit. (n. 6 supra), at 127 and 140, and his 'The doctrine of God the Trinity Today' (n. 6 supra), at 27–9, where Zizioulas refers favourably to Congar on the point of the Spirit as 'co-instituting' principle of the Church. Zizioulas' reference to an epicletic dimension in ecclesiology finds a clear echo in Congar also, *I believe in the Holy Spirit*, ii, 46. Congar in turn refers favourably to Zizioulas in discussing Apostolicity in relation to the Holy Spirit in *I believe in the Holy Spirit*, ii, 50–51. He refers to 'the enrichment and possible corrections that the Orthodox insight can bring to our Western thought'.

insight leading perhaps to his frequent phrase the *ecclesia in tribus*. Under Montanist influence he exaggerated the role of the Spirit, to the point of positing an opposition between the institutional Church and the Church of the Spirit.

Cyprian cleverly employed some of Tertullian's Trinitarian insights to ground the unity of the diverse local Churches whose integral unity, so dear to Cyprian, was guaranteed at the source. Going deeper than Tertullian, he further stressed the link between the unity of the Church and the Trinity, appealing to the imagery of Christ's undivided tunic, whose unity was 'from above', and indicating that the sacrifice pleasing to God was the *plebs adunata*, united by the glue of brotherly concord. Jesus himself had prayed to the Father that we be drawn into the unity that characterized his own relationship with the Father. For Cyprian the Church's unity, like Christ's tunic, is anchored in divine strength and celestial mysteries.

Augustine further developed the Cyprianic legacy and more fully orchestrated the role of the Holy Spirit in the Church. Sharing Cyprian's emphasis on ecclesial unity, Augustine strengthened it by his original emphasis on charity. The Holy Spirit is the source of both unity and charity. The love uniting the Father and Son within the Trinity itself is gratuitously shared with us, that we might establish that unity of heart and mind among ourselves, so constituting the place or temple where God is pleased to dwell. His rich spiritual vision of the Church saw it encompassing both heavenly and earthly dimensions, united presently in love and destined for a *consortio aeternitatis* involving the worship and enjoyment of God. The Church is subordinate to the Trinity, as the creature to its creator. But, created in the image and likeness of God, we are called to imitate the unity and love that characterize the Trinitarian life. This is made possible by the *donum Dei*, the Holy Spirit, who makes those of one mind to dwell together in a house, constituting the *locus sanctus Dei*. The inseparable Trinity guard us together, not in relay, and dwell together within those united in heart and soul. In his various citations of Acts 4:32a Augustine regularly added the phrase *in Deum*. The union of minds and hearts among his monks, as in the Church, had the one purpose of bringing people closer towards God.

Augustine records for us in a memorable phrase the impact of reading Cicero's *Hortensius* while a pupil at Carthage – *mutavit affectum meum* (*Conf.* 3.4.7). In September 1825, J.A. Möhler wrote a letter to his close friend Joseph Lipp, later bishop of Rottenburg, to accompany the newly completed manuscript of his *Die Einheit in der Kirche*. In the course of the letter he charted the remarkable changes that had taken place in his outlook on Christianity, Christ and the Church. He shared with Lipp the reason: 'A careful study of the Fathers has stirred up much in me.'[97] During an interview in 1975, Congar in turn reflected on the impact of reading Möhler's work, having been directed to it by this theological mentor Père M.D. Chenu:

97 See P.C. Erb's 'Introduction' to his translation of J.A. Möhler's *Unity in the Church* (n. 4 supra), at 1.

> I discovered there a source, the source I needed ... what Möhler did in the nineteenth century, this became for me an ideal inspiring me in what I wanted to carry out in the twentieth century in my own work.[98]

As with Möhler's study of the Fathers, so too with Congar's study of both Möhler and the Fathers, much was stirred up within him – *mutaverunt affectum eius*. The first two volumes of the *Unam Sanctam* series lie side by side today on library shelves, one a classic of the twentieth century by Congar, *Divided Christendom*, the other a classic of the nineteenth century by Möhler, *The Unity of the Church*. A century apart, both authors drew inspiration and vision from *ressourcement* among the Fathers, not least their vision of the interrelationship of the Trinity and the Church and their passionate concern for ecclesial unity. This fired their enthusiasm to work for a deepened sense of the Mystery of the Church. Tertullian, Cyprian and Augustine had glimpsed facets of this mystery of the *Ecclesia de Trinitate*, a theme that has been rendered so fruitful in Congar's hands, he the 'prophet of tradition' who teaches us, with St Bernard, to look back in order to look forward. Ecclesiology shall ever remain indebted to Congar for its renewal, facilitated by so many of his writings. To read his works is to experience something deep stirred up within us, what speaks to the heart as much as to the head. One can only hope that the words once heard in a Milanese garden might be heard once more – *Tolle! Lege!*

98 J. Puyo, *Congar* (Paris, 1975), at 47ff, cited by T.F. O'Meara, 'Revelation and history: Schelling, Möhler and Congar', in *Irish Theological Quarterly* 53 (1987) 17–35 at 29.