PREACHING THE GOSPEL TO THE HELLENES:
THE LIFE AND WORKS OF GREGORY THE WONDERWORKER

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SUMMARY

Gregory Thaumaturgus (‘Wonderworker’) is one of the most charismatic figures in the history of Early Christianity. For centuries he has been considered the pupil of Origen who later became the bishop of Neocaesarea and evangelised Pontus. His evangelical activity was considered to be supported by his works and by the large number of miracles which eminent figures such Basil of Caesarea and Gregory of Nyssa and many other hagiographies attributed to him. In the last forty years, however, scholars have radically called into question the foundations of his biographical and literary profiles to the extent that the figure of Gregory seems to be groundless to many. This dissertation has a twofold structure, for it aims to verify the degree of reliability of Gregory’s traditional identity on the basis of the reconsideration of the ancient sources concerning him and of the main works handed down under his name. The first part of this study deals with three issues related to the biographical problem: a short outline of the cultural context of Neocaesarea will introduce the scrutiny of the ancient accounts on Gregory, which will be followed by a section concerning chronological problems. The second part includes four chapters focusing on the In Origenem Oratio Panegyrica (CPG 1763), Metaphrasis in Ecclesiasten (CPG 1766), Ad Theopompum de passibili et impassibili in Deo (CPG 1767), Confessio fidei (CPG 1764) and Ad Gelianum. It is argued that Gregory’s traditional figure is substantially reliably attested because the ancient biographical accounts are to a large extent trustworthy and because the main works ascribed to him are indeed authentic and corroborate Gregory’s engagement in confronting and evangelising pagans.
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INTRODUCTION

Gregory of Neocaesarea, better known as Thaumaturgus (‘Wonderworker’), is one of the most charismatic and enigmatic figures in the history of Early Christianity. For centuries Gregory has been considered the author of the famous In Origenem Oratio Panegyrica (=Pan. Or.) and the revered third-century bishop who evangelised Pontus, and whose prodigious deeds were collected by Basil of Caesarea, Gregory of Nyssa, Rufinus and a large number of oriental hagiographies. This identification was considered authoritatively corroborated by Eusebius’ Historia ecclesiastica, which provides the earliest external testimony on Gregory, by Jerome’s De viris illustribus, where the Pan. Or. is explicitly mentioned, and by Socrates of Constantinople’s Historia ecclesiastica, where it is said that the Pan. Or. was edited in Pamphilus’ Apologia pro Origen. Indeed, all of them reported some pieces of biographical information contained in the Pan. Or. and referred to the episcopal activity of Gregory.

However, all the elements that constitute the foundations of Gregory’s biographical and literary profiles have been strongly called into question by scholars in the last forty years to the extent that Manlio Simonetti has recently written that ‘the whole issue should be still considered sub iudice’.

The state of uncertainty surrounding the figure of Gregory of Neocaesarea is such that two basic questions confront the researcher: is Gregory’s traditional figure historically reliable? Can the principal writings of his corpus be ascribed to the same person? Another essential question is closely bound up with these: to what extent do these writings confirm that Gregory of Neocaesarea was a pupil of Origen?

The aim of this research is to understand the degree of reliability of the traditional identity of Gregory of Neocaesarea on the basis of the study of the main ancient accounts concerning him and of a selection of the main works attributed to him. Both the biographical and the literary facets of the issue are linked to the reliability of the attribution to Gregory of the Pan. Or., but need to be treated and introduced separately.

The first part of this thesis will cover three aspects of the biographical issue. A short overview of the geographical and cultural context of Neocaesarea will precede the study of the most significant ancient accounts about Gregory, while a final section will be dedicated to some problems of chronology.

The second part will include four chapters focusing on the Pan. Or., Metaphrasis in Ecclesiasten, Ad Theopompum, Confessio fidei and Ad Gelianum, which we consider attributable to Gregory (in addition to the Epistula Canonica), though we have important reservations about the Confessio. Since these texts have been transmitted in a scattered way, and in the light of the scholarly achievements and hesitations, we have presented them so that each chapter is intended to—or, perhaps better, aspires to—stand on its own.

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The following pages are meant to furnish an introduction to the two parts of this research. A third paragraph is attached to them in order to clarify the different reasons why we will not take into account other authentic and inauthentic works of Gregory’s corpus.

I. The traditional biography and its critics

According to the traditional reconstruction of the above-mentioned ancient sources, Gregory was born to a wealthy noble pagan family of Neocaesarea of Pontus in about 213, bearing the name of Theodorus, which he later changed at his baptism. Gregory studied rhetoric and learned the first elements of Latin and of Roman law in his homeland, together with his brother Athenodorus. When their sister needed an escort to Caesarea in Palestine to join her husband, who was a legal expert for the Roman governor of Palestine, the young brothers took this opportunity to study law at the famous school of Beirut. But when they arrived at Caesarea, they met Origen, who convinced them to pursue the study of philosophy under his personal care and also converted them to Christianity. The brothers spent five years with him studying dialectic, physics, ethics and theology. Then Gregory went back to his homeland to start his career as a lawyer. On leaving Origen, he declaimed in public the Pan. Or., which is the main source of information about the first part of Gregory’s life.

Shortly afterwards, Origen wrote a letter to him (Epistula ad Gregorium) in which he exhorted Gregory to apply his education in profane sciences to the elucidation of Scripture and to extract from them what was useful as an introduction to the Christian faith. According to Eusebius, Gregory and his brother Athenodorus became bishops of the Churches of Pontus when they were ‘still young’ (Hist. Eccl. VI,30). Gregory of Nyssa’s Vita Gregorii Thaumaturgi adds that, once in his homeland, Gregory of Neocaesarea dedicated himself to the ascetic life, and that, before being appointed as bishop of Neocaesarea by Phaidimos of Amaseia, he was even revealed the words of a creed (Confessio fidei), consisting of four articles on the Father, Son, Holy Spirit and Trinity, by St. John the Evangelist and Mary the mother of the Lord. Gregory of Nyssa quotes it declaring that it was used as a baptismal formula (mystagogia) in the church of Neocaesarea and that the manuscript by Gregory of Neocaesarea’s own hand was still preserved there in his time. According to the Nyssen’s narrative, what allowed Gregory to achieve a great reputation and to convert a large number of pagans to the Christian faith were his words and the miracles he performed. During his episcopacy Gregory had

also to face the persecution of Decius, which reached Neocaesarea in 250 and forced him to flee. When the persecution stopped, Gregory came back to the city, collected the dead bodies of the Christians and instituted the Feast of the Martyrs. His work of evangelisation and his authority spread across Neocaesarea as attested by his consecration of the bishop of Comana (Alexander, known as “the charcoal burner”), narrated in the *Vita*, by a letter that he addressed to an unknown bishop of Pontus to counsel him about the problems which had arisen within his Christian community after the invasions of Goths and Boradi in the late 250s (*Epistula Canonica*), and by his participation in the first synod of the Council of Antioch against Paul of Samosata (Eus. *Hist. Eccl.* VII,28,1) in the early 260s.

Gregory’s death has been dated to either before 269, because his name is missing from the synodal letter which sanctioned the condemnation of Paul of Samosata (Eus. *Hist. Eccl.* VII,30,2), or under the reign of Aurelian (270-275), as indicated by the *Suda Lexicon* (Γ 452).

This reconstruction of Gregory’s biographical profile was rejected as historically unfounded in 1977 by Pierre Nautin, who argued that Eusebius had mistakenly identified three different persons and that both the manuscript tradition of the *Pan. Or.* and all the other ancient testimonies about Gregory were not reliable, because they adopted Eusebius’ mistake. His objection consisted of a complex analysis of Eusebius’ account aimed at distinguishing between his written sources and his editorial processing of data.

The core of his hypothesis was based on a few lines from Eusebius’ account, where we read: ‘many came to him [Origen] … among these as especially distinguished we know to have been … Theodore, who was the selfsame person as that renowned bishop in our day, Gregory and his brother Athenodore’. From these lines Nautin extracted two important conjectures, firstly that Theodore was the name of the author Eusebius read in the manuscript of the *Pan. Or.* at his disposal, and secondly that Eusebius had truly met Gregory and Athenodore, the bishops of Pontus, when he was a

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3 P. Nautin, *Origène. Sa vie et son œuvre*, Paris 1977 (CAnt 1), 81-85, 184 (summary). J.A. Fabricius, *Bibliothecae Graecae, sive notitia Scriptorum veterum Graecorum*, Lib. V, Hamburgi 1712, 247 (n. a), believed that Nicephorus Callistus (*Hist. Eccl.* V,20, PG 145, 1108C) wrongly asserted a distinction between Theodore and Gregory; actually, in the passage at issue Nicephorus lists another Theodore, who was a priest in Palestine, together with Athenodore and his brother Theodore-Gregory Thaumaturgus among Origen’s pupils. This Palestinian Theodore is unknown from other sources and might be the result of Nicephorus’ hurried reading of Eusebius’ *Hist. Eccl.* VI,30, on which he plainly depends (cf. PG 145, 1108C–1109A). W. Cave, *Apostolici or the History of the Lives, Acts, Death, and Martyrdoms of those who were contemporary with, or immediately succeeded the Apostles…* London 1682, 270 and J.L. Boye, *Dissertatio Historica de S. Gregorio Taumaturgo Episc. Neocaesariensi*, Jenae 1709, 20-21, attributed another distinction between Theodore and Gregory to Erasmus. However, I was not able to find it in the book of Erasmus they refer to, at least not in the edition I had access to: Origenis Adamantii … *Opera, quae quiden extant omnia, per Des. Erasmum Roterodamum … ap. Basileam* 1536 (*Vitae Origenis Adamantii epitome*).

4 ‘We met (ἐγνωμεν)’, according to Nautin’s translation. The English translation here provided is by J.E.L. Oulton (see below, Ch. 1, §II,4).
child. Nautin consequently argued that Eusebius had made two mistakes: first, when he identified the Theodore of the *Pan. Or.* with the addressee of Origen’s letter, being misled in this conclusion by some similarities between the two works and between two different characters⁵; and second, when Eusebius identified the Gregory of Origen’s letter as the bishop he had met in his childhood, only because of their homonymy.

Nautin opposed two arguments against the first alleged identification made by Eusebius: the “fact” that the two figures had different names; the difficulties that the historians had in placing the *Ep. Gr.* before or after the *Pan. Or.* Nautin defined these difficulties as follows: 1) the *Ep. Gr.* cannot be placed before the *Pan. Or.* because it is addressed to someone who has already begun to study philosophy, while the *Pan. Or.* itself attests that Theodore did not know philosophy before meeting Origen; 2) the *Ep. Gr.* cannot have been delivered after the *Pan. Or.* because: A) ‘Origen writes to someone who is studying law and philosophy’ whereas the end of the *Pan. Or.* attests that Theodore would have embarked on a public career; B) Origen recommends that Gregory use philosophy to the advantage of Christianity, and this appears unnecessary for a pupil who had spent several years with his master. As to the assumed identification between the Gregory of the *Ep. Gr.* with the bishop of Neocaesarea because of their homonymy, Nautin argued that the name Gregory was common⁶ and that the addressee of Origen’s letter was another Palestinian pupil of Origen who studied in Alexandria.

As a further result of these assumed assimilations, according to Nautin, Eusebius wrongly supposed the participation of Gregory, as well as of Athenodore, in the Council of Antioch (*Hist. Eccl.* VII,28,1), because he had found the name Theodore among the signatories of the synodal letter (*Hist. Eccl.* VII,30,2) and had identified him with the author of the *Pan. Or.* Nautin objected that Gregory, the bishop of Neocaesarea, could not have signed such a document with his pagan name⁷.

Therefore, in Nautin’s view, there were three different persons behind the Gregory whom Eusebius had written about: Theodore, the real author of the *Pan. Or.*; Gregory, the famous bishop of Neocaesarea; and another pupil of Origen named Gregory, to whom Origen’s letter was addressed. Nautin concluded that the only reliable information on Gregory of Neocaesarea is that he was a bishop at a time when Eusebius could have met him. Furthermore, the identification between Theodore and Gregory of Neocaesarea had had a clear apologetic purpose, since the *Pan. Or.* was published in the

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⁵ Both the presumed pupils of Origen studied law. Moreover, “Theodore” declares that he studied at the school of Origen the same disciplines the latter urged “Gregory” to use for the interpretation of the Holy Scripture: cf. *Ep. Gr.*, I, with *Pan. Or.* V, §58-62 (law studies), VIII, §113 (geometry and astronomy).

⁶ This argument is manifestly wrong, as demonstrated by H. Crouzel, *Faut-il voir trois personnages en Grégoire le Thaumaturge?*, Gr. LX (1979), 306-307. Our Gregory is the first one in history.

⁷ As Nautin explains even better his position in *Grégoire dit le Thaumaturge*, DHGE 22 (1988), 40, Eusebius found the name of Theodore in the synodal letter, then ‘il l’a assimilé avec le Théodore du Discours, précédemment assimilé avec le Grégoire de la lettre, lui-même assimilé avec l’évêque Grégoire de Néocésarée, et il déclare en conséquence que Grégoire de Néocésarée et son frère Athénodore ont pris part à ce concile’.
Apologia pro Origene in order to ‘montrer l’admiration et la reconnaissance qu’il [Origen] avait inspirées à un grand saint’

Two years later Henri Crouzel strongly contested almost all of Nautin’s hypotheses. Crouzel noted that the confusion supposed by Nautin, if there had been any, dated back to Pamphilus’ composition of the Apologia pro Origene, which chronologically precedes that of Eusebius’ Hist. Eccl. Nevertheless, Crouzel admitted that Theodore was the name of the author of the Pan. Or. found by Eusebius and conjectured that Theodore was baptised after his departure from Caesarea but before Origen sent him the Ep. Gr. Moreover, he traced in Gregory of Nyssa’s Vita the idea of Thaumaturgus’ late baptism and tended to interpret some passages from it as if they proved that the Nyssen had read both the Pan. Or. and Origen’s Ep. Gr. as referring to the Thaumaturgus. In his last contribution on the issue Nautin replied to his opponent only by discrediting completely the reliability of the information provided by Gregory of Nyssa’s Vita, which he had earlier ignored, because it would depend on the report of Eusebius. Finally, Nautin affirmed that the only certain information about Gregory was that he was bishop of Pontus, because it sprang from Eusebius’ memory and could not depend on the reading of Theodore’s Pan. Or.

The issue was pondered over again by Manlio Simonetti. Although he approved of several of Crouzel’s replies to Nautin’s conjectures, in his opinion Crouzel failed to solve the problem of the two names and to defend the compatibility between the Pan. Or. and the Ep. Gr. Simonetti regarded as inadequate Crouzel’s attempt to clarify Origen’s aim to exhort Gregory to study the Scriptures in the Ep. Gr. by postulating that Origen taught Christian theology only at the end of his studies in Caesarea. He also showed that Crouzel’s conjecture that Theodore was baptised just before he received Origen’s letter is ‘only an escamotage’, for the author of the Pan. Or. is palpably Christian. In his contributions Simonetti has always showed a certain caution in completely adhering to Nautin’s hypothesis, even if he has progressively given more credit to it. At the beginning, he prudently admitted that Eusebius might have other reliable sources of information for identifying the Theodore of the Pan. Or. with the bishop of Pontus; after over ten years, he arrived at a hypothesis—without subscribing to it definitively nonetheless—that the discipleship of Gregory Thaumaturgus under Origen’s guidance was invented by Eusebius, probably even with the approval of his

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8 Nautin, Origène, 146.
9 Crouzel, Faut-il voir trois personnages, 287-319.
10 Nautin, Grégoire dit le Thaumaturge, 39-42.
12 Cf. Crouzel, Faut-il voir trois personnages, 308-309 and Simonetti, Una nuova ipotesi, 293.
master Pamphilus, in order to reinforce ‘the Origenian front’. The development of Simonetti’s position has gone hand in hand with his gradual conviction that the works attributed ‘with minor improbability’ to Gregory present Asiatic theological features rather than Alexandrian—namely a Monarchian theological tendency in contrast to Origen’s—as we will see later on.

Most scholars have considered the traditional view as reliable, even if not all of them openly stated their views on the different problems in question. Richard Klein, who edited the introduction to the last German translation of the Pan. Or. and provided a careful status quaestionis of the debate, has defended all the arguments of Crouzel from Simonetti’s remarks. Since many weaknesses of the traditional figure cannot be adequately solved, Klein argued that there is no necessity to presuppose the existence of three different characters.

Michael Slusser, who translated into English the main pieces of Gregory’s corpus, acknowledged Crouzel’s replies as adequate and for this reason he did not enter into this debate. However, unlike Crouzel and Klein, he denied that the Ep. Gr. was delivered to our Gregory. Subsequently, in a more recent article that supplies us also with a concise overview of the scholarship until 2009, Slusser pointed out serious weaknesses in Nautin’s reasoning and concluded that Nautin’s reconstruction is based on a series of conjectures that ‘loses power to convince with each successive undocumented inference to which Nautin requires the reader to assent’.

Although Crouzel’s arguments have convinced the majority of scholars that Gregory’s traditional figure is reliable, Nautin’s criticisms and Simonetti’s hesitant position have led other scholars to consider the authorship of the Pan. Or. and, consequently, Gregory’s identity as open questions. The scholarly disagreement is particularly evident when looking at the Proceedings of the conference held on Gregory in 2002 in Italy, where most contributors shared a prudent approach to the traditional

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16 Guyot – Klein (eds.), Gregor der Wundertäter, Oratio prophonetica, 47-63.
19 Il giusto che fiorisce come palma. Gregorio il Taumaturgo fra storia e agiografia. Atti del Convegno di Staletti (CZ) 9-10 Novembre 2002, a cura di B. Clausi e V. Milazzo, Roma 2007 (SEAug, 104), whose index of pre-1500 names lists ‘Teodoro/Gregorio’. The volume La biografia di Origene fra storia e agiografia. Atti del VI Convegno di Studi del Gruppo Italiano di Ricerca su Origene e la Tradizione
identity of Gregory, while few others accepted it systematically. However, despite the general tendency to suspend judgement, it is worth noting that the discrediting of Eusebius and, above all, Pamphilus, was not warmly received\(^\text{20}\).

Among the scholars who rejected the reliability of Gregory’s traditional identity in recent times, we have to mention in particular Marco Rizzi and Gilles Dorival for they have articulated further original hypotheses.

Rizzi has translated into Italian and written various contributions on the Pan. Or. proposing different innovative interpretations of it\(^\text{21}\). In the article edited in the Proceedings of the Italian conference, Rizzi has tried to detect the place of origin of Theodore starting from considering some internal elements of the Or. Pan. In his opinion, Theodore was originally from Antioch or Laodicea and his brother-in-law might have been Caius Furius Sabinus Aquila Timesiteus, who had been procurator for Palestine at the time of Theodore’s arrival in Caesarea. Rizzi’s hypotheses will be discussed at two different points of our enquiry.

At first, Dorival has suggested, though with hesitation, that the data at our disposal can be interpreted in a way that goes even beyond Nautin’s hypotheses, although he disapproved of the idea that the recipient of Origen’s Ep. Gr. was a Palestinian young man who had been studying in Alexandria\(^\text{22}\). Taking into consideration some inconsistencies between the Pan. Or. and Hist. Eccl. VI,30, Dorival seemed to be convinced that Eusebius was not referring to the Pan. Or. and proposed distinguishing an alleged anonymous author of the Or. Pan. from the Theodore named by Eusebius, Gregory Thaumaturgus and the Gregory of Origen’s Ep. Gr. However, he showed, immediately afterwards, a position closer to Nautin’s, attributing the Pan. Or. 

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\(^{20}\) C. Mazzuco, La componente autobiografica nel Discorso di Ringraziamento, in Clausi – Milazzo (eds.), Il giusto che fiorisce come palma, 103; G. Sfameni Gasparro, Origene «Uomo divino» nell’«Encomio» del discepolo di Cesarea, in ibidem, 142-144. Their position is approved also by E. Prinzivalli, Presentazione, in ibidem, 8.


\(^{22}\) G. Dorival, Est-il légitime d’éclairer le Discours de Remerciement par la Lettre à Grégoire et réciproquement? Ou la tentation de Pasolini, in Monaci Castagno (ed.), La biografia di Origene fra storia e agiografia, 9-26.
to Theodore and presenting as a fact Nautin’s hypothesis on Origen’s *Ep. Gr.*, also by admitting that its addressee was Palestinian\textsuperscript{23}.

The variety of theories put forward by scholars, the fact that they have at times changed their minds on not insignificant points of the matter and the scant attention they have drawn to the intricate links between ancient authors make indispensable a reconsideration of the ancient testimonies concerning Gregory’s biographical identity. The first part of this thesis is dedicated to this issue.

II. The writings attributed to Gregory

The re-examination of the ancient testimonies concerned with Gregory’s biographical profile is important also because of the role played by the ascription of the *Pan. Or.*, attested by ancient authors and challenged by Nautin, in the discussion of the rest of Gregory’s *corpus*. Indeed, as a general trend, scholars have confirmed or denied the authorship of other texts attributed to Gregory on the basis of their consistency with Origen’s teachings, which the *Pan. Or.* and the *Confessio fidei* were considered clear evidence of. Since this discussion concerns a rather limited number of writings among those handed down under Gregory’s name\textsuperscript{24}, a short overview of the transmission of the Gregorian *corpus* will help us in understanding the foundations of this debate and our own point of departure.

Despite the explicit attributions of a few works to Gregory by ancient authors, each of them had a separate history of transmission. Jerome’s *Vir. Ill.* 65 is the chief, however exiguous, ancient source of information about Gregory’s literary output. It openly ascribes to him, in addition to the *Pan. Or.* (CPG 1763), the *Metaphrasis in Ecclesiasten* (CPG 1766) and other letters, though without providing their titles. Apart from Jerome’s list and the ascription of the *Confessio fidei* (CPG 1764) by Gregory of Nyssa\textsuperscript{25}, which we have referred to beforehand, we know that a ‘dialogue with Gelian’ (διάλεξις πρὸς Γελιανὸν; thereafter *Ad Gelianum*) was attributed to Gregory of Neocaesarea from Basil’s *Ep.* 210, where a fragment of it is quoted\textsuperscript{26}, and that the *Epistula canonica* (CPG 1765) was recognised as a canonical source in the Council of Constantinople in *Trullo*, the so-called *Quinisextum*, in 691/2. Moreover, although it usually passes unnoticed, the *Ad Theopompum* (CPG 1767), which was found in a Syriac manuscript in the nineteenth century, appears to have been already known to Methodius of Olympus (d. 311), even if he does not explicitly mention it as a work by Gregory\textsuperscript{27}.

\textsuperscript{24} Cf. CPG 1763-67, 1772-94, which is a partial list nonetheless.
\textsuperscript{25} Rufinus mentions the *Metaphrasis* and translates into Latin the *Confessio fidei* in his *additamentum* to Eusebius, *Hist. Eccl.* VII,28,2 (955-956 GCS 9/2).
\textsuperscript{26} Cf. Facundus of Hermiane, *Defensio Trium Capitulorum*, X.6,1-3.
\textsuperscript{27} See ch. 4, §IV.
In short, ancient authors knew of a limited number of writings by our Gregory, and, at least since the sixth century, they were well aware of the fact that the followers of Apollinaris of Laodicea had tried to spread their ideas by attributing to Gregory Thaumaturgus the *Kata meros pistis* and perhaps other works as well.

At any rate, there is no evidence of manuscript collections of Gregory’s writings in antiquity and this, among other factors, might have facilitated their separate textual transmission. The *Pan. Or.* was published by Pamphilus and Eusebius as a part of the *Apologia pro Origene*, while the thirteenth century archetype of its manuscript tradition presents it before Origen’s *Contra Celsum*. The *Epistula canonica* was proclaimed canonical in the Council that issued the *corpus canonum* that became common to all the oriental Churches, and, for this reason its transmission is mainly tied to collections of canons. The *Confessio fidei* was handed down by those manuscripts preserving the *Vita Gregorii Thaumaturgi* of Gregory of Nyssa, in addition to other manuscripts collecting symbols of faith. The *Ad Theopompum* came to light thanks to the discovery of a sixth-century Syriac manuscript. All these texts have been critically edited except the *Metaphrasis in Ecclesiasten*, which was ascribed to Gregory of Nazianzus as early as the seventh century. Despite the fact that this wrong attribution was acknowledged and disapproved already at that time and repeatedly later on, most manuscripts have kept this work under the name of Gregory of Nazianzus. The large number of Greek manuscripts and the existence of oriental versions preserving the *Metaphrasis* appear to be the rationale that has prevented the preparation of its scholarly edition.

When Gerardus Vossius published the *editio princeps* of Gregory of Neocaesarea’s *Opera Omnia* in 1604, he included also other texts in addition to those already mentioned (except, obviously, for the *Ad Theopompum*). There were three *In Annuicationem sanctissimae Dei genitricis virginis Mariae sermones* (CPG 1775, 1776, 4519), one *In sancta Theophania sermo* (CPG 7385), the treatise *De anima, per capita Disputatio, ad Tatianum* (CPG 1773/7717), and two expositions of faith, the *De fide capitula duodecim* (CPG 1772) and the *Kata meros pistis* (CPG 3645). The edition of all these texts under Gregory of Neocaesarea’s name excited the alert remarks of Cardinal Roberto Bellarmino nine years later. In his famous *De scriptoribus*...

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28 That has not affected Gregory’s reputation as a saint but has surely led to the common opinion that he was more a ‘man of action’ than a ‘writer’. Cf., for instance, J. Quasten, *Patrology*, II, Utrecht 1953, 124.
30 Cf. Slusser (ed.), *St. Gregory Thaumaturgus, Life and Works*, 6, where he underlines that ‘a partial exception’ is made by the case of the transmission of the *Metaphrasis, Ad Philagrium and Significatio in Ezechielem* under the name of Gregory of Nazianzus (cf. *ibidem*, 32, n.139).
31 See Koetschau’s edition mentioned at n.2.
32 See Ch. 1, §III.
ecclesiasticis, Bellarmino called into question the authenticity of the sermones and the Ad Tatianum because there were no ancient attestations that corroborated it, and argued against the authorship of the two expositions of faith. Bellarmino observed that the anathematismi of the De fide capitula duodecim ‘oppose the mistakes of Nestorius and Euthyches’ and that the Kata meros pistis opposes Arians. Bellarminus’ heading was subsequently published as a warning for the reader in a subsequent edition of the Opera Omnia by Vossius in 1622.

Vossius’ Opera Omnia were edited again within the Bibliotheca veterum patrum by Andrea Galland, who added an important notitia historico-letteraria. A better knowledge of sixth-century sources such as the Historia Ecclesiastica of Evagrius Scholasticus and the Adversus fraudes Apollinistarum of “Leontius” allowed Galland, following the research of Michel Lequien (the editor of the works of Johannes Damascenus), to identify Apollinaris of Laodicea as the author of the Kata meros pistis. The notitia by Galland also presented Lequien’s view that the De fide capitula duodecim was an Apollinarist work, but contemporary scholars, also in the light of its quotations of Monophysite authors, will agree with Bellarmino at least in postponing its composition. Galland also recorded the attributions of the In Anunciationem sermones by previous scholars to authors such as John Chrysostom and Proclus of Constantinople, and confirmed the general view that the Ad Tatianum was a medieval work.

When Abbot Migne published the Opera Omnia of Gregory in 1857, he edited the notitia of Galland, an erudite study on the figure of Gregory by the seventeenth century scholar Leone Allacci (Allatius) and the same works included in Vossius’ edition, replacing the edition of some of them. Migne also added other texts under the

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37 This identification was already stated in the sixteenth century by Petrus Canisius, cf. L.E. du Pin, Nouvelle Bibliothèque des Auteurs Ecclésiastiques, contenant l’Histoire de leur vie, le catalogue, la critique, et la chronologie de leurs ouvrages, Le sommaire de ce qu’ils contiennent …. T. 1, pt. 1, Paris 1698, 344. The text has been critically edited under the name of Apollinaris in H. Lietzmann, Apollinaris von Laodicea und seine Schule, Tübingen 1904, 167-185.
list of *spuria*, that is: the Latin translation by Angelo Mai of a fragment of the *De Trinitate sermo* lost in Greek but handed down in an Arabic manuscript (CPG 1787)\(^{41}\); the Latin translation of a fragment from a *catena* on the Gospel of Matthew edited by Galland in another tome of his *Bibliotheca* (CPG 1794, 6)\(^{42}\); the edition of the *Sermo in omnes sanctos* by Giovanni Aloisio Mingarelli (CPG 1777)\(^{43}\).

The pieces added to the Gregorian corpus significantly increased during the second half of the nineteenth century. Paul de Lagarde published for the first time in 1858 the Syriac versions of the *Ad Theopompum de passibili et impassibili in Deo* (CPG 1767), unknown in Greek, and of the *Sermo ad Philagrium de consubstantiali* (CPG 1774/3222)\(^{44}\). Moreover he edited the Syriac version of the *De fide capitula duodecim*, the *Kata meros pistis*, and a few other fragments\(^{45}\). In 1883 there appeared the third and fourth volumes of the *Analecta Sacra* by Card. Jean Baptiste Pitra. In the third volume Pitra edited some Greek scholia from *catenae* on Job and Jeremiah (CPG 1794, 4 and 5\(^{46}\)), which he considered reliable and attesting Gregory’s homiletical activity\(^{47}\). In the fourth volume Paul Martin not only edited (again) and translated into Latin all the texts of de Lagarde’s collection but also: the Syriac versions of the *Confessio fidei*, the first homily *In Annunciationem* (CPG 1775), and the Armenian versions of eight homilies and sermons, mostly of Marian content, five of which are unknown in Greek\(^{48}\).

The *Clavis Patrum Graecorum* lists among the spurious works attributed to Gregory only a few other homilies, fragments and scholia, some of which are unpublished\(^{49}\); other unpublished fragments have been listed by Konstantin Fouska\(^{50}\), while Michael Slusser has more recently placed among Gregory’s spurious works a

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\(^{42}\) *Bibliotheca veterum patrum antiquorumque scriptorum ecclesiasticorum …* Andreae Gallandii, t. XIV, Venetis 1781, 119.

\(^{43}\) J.A. Mingarelli, *De quodam S. Patris nostri Gregorii Thaumaturgi Sermone in Omnes Martyres …*, Bononiae 1770.

\(^{44}\) P. Lagardii *Analecta Syriaca*, Lipsiae-Londinii 1858.

\(^{45}\) Among these there is a fragment from the treatise ‘to Gaianus’ (Lagarde, *Analecta Syriaca*, 31) which actually is an extract from the *Ad Tatianum*, and five fragments from a treatise *De resurrectione* \((ibidem, 64-65)\), on which see, *infra*, n.53.


\(^{47}\) Thus already Fabricius, *Bibliotheca Graeca*, 254. Cf. also N. Lardner, *The credibility of Gospel history*, part II, *… Containing the History of the Christian Writers from the year CCXXXIII to CCL*, London 1758 (II ed.), 552-553, who also gives English translations of parts of these scholia.


\(^{50}\) Κ.Μ. Φουσκα, Γρηγόριος ὁ Νεοκαισαρείας ἐπίσκοπος ὁ Θαυματουργός, (Ca- 211/3-270/5), Ἀθῆναι: 1969, 142-145.
glossary on Ezekiel (Significatio in Ezechielem), even if no manuscript ascribes it to our Gregory\textsuperscript{51}.

Among all this material, a limited number of texts has been considered worthy of being examined in order to determine Gregory’s literary output\textsuperscript{52}. Indeed, leaving prudently aside the chaotic mass of fragments\textsuperscript{53} and homilies\textsuperscript{54}, the tendency of eminent scholars such as Bardenhewer, Harnack and Puech was to admit to the discussion the Pan. Or., Metaphrasis, Epistula canonica, Confessio fidei and the fragment from the Ad

\textsuperscript{51} Slusser (ed.), St. Gregory Thaumaturgus, Life and Works, 35-36. Since this text contains Origenian exegetical material and it has been handed down ‘nearly always together with two other works’ erroneously attributed to Gregory of Nazianzus (cf. Id., The “To Philagrius on Consubstantiality” of Gregory Thaumaturgus, StPatr XIX [1989], 233-234), that is the Metaphrasis in Ecclesiasten and the Ad Philagrius (Slusser attributes the latter to Gregory of Neocaesarea), Slusser argues that Gregory of Neocaesarea ‘might be’ its author.

\textsuperscript{52} Language barriers have prevented me from taking advantage of the research on Gregory by N.I. Sagarda, Святый ГРИГОРИЙ ЧУДОТВОРЕЦЪ, епископ Неокесарийский. Его жизнь, творения и богословие, Petrograd 1916 (‘Saint Gregory Thaumaturgus, bishop of Neocaesarea. His life, works and theology’).

\textsuperscript{53} V. Ryssel, Gregorius Thaumaturgus. Sein Leben und seine Schriften. Nebst Uebersetzung zweier bisher unbekannter Schriften Gregors aus dem Syrischen, Leipzig 1880, 43-58, has provided almost a complete collection of what he lists as ‘dogmatical’ and ‘exegetical’ fragments. Among these, the most significant are the Homilia de Trinitate (PG 10, 1123-1126; CPG 1787), the fragments De resurrectione already collected by Lagarde (Analecta Syriaca, 64-65; see also Pitra, Analecta Sacra, 120-122, 376-377), six fragments from Antonius Melissa’s sentences, and some catena fragments on Matthew (=PG 10, 1189B-C) and Jeremiah (see, above, n.46). Ryssel does not comment upon most of the material collected, but he has identified the origin of the first four fragments of the five supposedly drawn from the De resurrectione in Pamphilus’ Apologia pro Origene and has explained the attribution on the basis of the fact that Gregory’s Pan. Or. was edited in it. J.M. Janssens, La liturgie d’Hippolyte, Documents et études, Roma 1970 (OCA 155), 250, has showed that these are extracts from a passage from the first (lost) book of Origen’s commentary on the Epistle to Galatians, which was reproduced in Pamphilus’ Apology (see ibidem, n.18 for parallels). But this does not imply, as Janssens assumed, that they have been composed by Gregory of Neocaesarea. Ryssel failed to recognise that the first fragment (52) extracted from Antonius Melissa’s sentences is drawn from Pan. Or. §149. On CPG 1787 (Homilia de Trinitate) see below Ch. 5, n.18. The other fragments ascribed to Gregory may have preserved something authentic, but suspension of judgement is preferable until we possess a complete edition of them.

\textsuperscript{54} The problems surrounding the homiletical corpus are happily condensed by H. Crouzel, Saint Grégoire le Thaumaturge, DSp 6 (1967), 1018, as follows: ‘aucune [homily] n’a vraiment trouvé grâce devant la critique’. Here suffice to add that those homilies listed by the CPG (1775-1777, 1784) are dated to between the fourth and sixth centuries. The most informative studies on several of these spurious materials are those by M. Jugie, Les homélies mariales attribuées à Saint Grégoire le Thaumaturge, AB 43 (1925), 86-95; C. Martin, Note sur deux homélies attribuées à saint Grégoire le Thaumaturge, RHE 14 (1928), 364-373; F.J. Leroy, Une homélie mariale de Proclus de Constantinople et le Pseudo-Grégoire le Taumaturge, Byz. 33 (1963), 357-384; R. Caro, La homiletica mariana griega en el siglo V, II, Dayton (OH) 1972 (MLS 4); J.A. de Aldama, Repertorium Pseudochrysostomicum, Paris 1965 (PIRHT 10). The attempts to defend the authenticity of some of the Greek and Armenian homilies by Janssens, La liturgie d’Hippolyte, 219-241, and of another Armenian homily by F.C. Conybeare, Homily concerning the Holy Mother of God, Exp. 3 (1896), 161-173, have not convinced other scholars. Cf., respectively, CPG 1775 (nota) and Jugie, Les homélies mariales, 92-94. Indeed, Janssens’ study, edited for the first time in 1959, does not take into account most of the research still in the 1970 edition of his work.
Gelianum—namely, those works explicitly ascribed to Gregory by orthodox authors—as well as the Ad Theopompum, the Ad Philagrium and the Ad Tatianum.

Confronting this situation, scholars have taken the theological position held in the Pan. Or., which corroborates the theory that Gregory was a follower of Origen, as a key point for discussing the reliability of the other works. This fact has been already pointed out by Simonetti, whose status quaestionis we very briefly and selectively take into account here. Obviously this approach was privileged inasmuch as the writings allowed it, namely excluding the Metaphrasis, regarded by most scholars as a mere paraphrase of Ecclesiastes in classical Greek, the Ad Tatianum, a scholastic philosophical treatise concerning the soul, and the Epistula canonica.

Indeed, that the Confessio fidei is authentic was soundly argued by Carl Paul Caspari in a learned study that had put a halt for almost a century to the longlasting doubts on its trustworthiness; Caspari showed that the first two articles on the Father and the Son express typically Origenian ideas, while the last two on the Holy Spirit and the Trinity do not conflict with Origen’s theology or with the subsequent development of the Logos theology. Henri Crouzel has argued that Basil made a mistake in considering the Ad Gelianum (Ep. 210,5) authentic, because the expression contained in it that Father and Son are ‘two in thought (ἐπινοίᾳ) but one in subsistence (ὑποστάσις)’ openly conflicts with Origen’s view. Luise Abramowski has rejected the attribution of the Ad Theopompum, which concerns the passibility and impassibility of God, because, unlike the Pan. Or., it lacks any distinction between Father and Son and any mention of the Logos. Simonetti has held different positions in discussing the authorship of the Ad Philagrium, which clearly shows a Monarchian view in contrast to Origen’s, for it argues that the Trinitarian distinction within the divine nature is only nominal. At first, he considered this theological tendency as attesting the authorship of Gregory of Neocaesarea, because it is in agreement with the Monarchian definition given by the Ad Gelianum; thus, Simonetti hypothesised that the different perspective held by Gregory in the Confessio fidei was the result of the revision of his Trinitarian thought after

55 Harnack, Geschichte der altchristlichen Litteratur bis Eusebius, Th. II, Bd. II, 98-102, considered all these writings authentic; Bardenhewer, Geschichte der altkirchlichen Literatur, Bd. II, 320-332, listed as dubious the Ad Philagrium and the Ad Tatianum; Puech, Histoire de la littérature grecque chrétienne, II, 495-509, followed Bardenhewer’s classification but added the Ad Theopompum among the dubia, even though he did not find any reservation to put forward about its authorship. Cf. also, Crouzel (ed.), Gregoire le Thaumaturge, Remerciement, 27-32; Id. Grégoire le Thaumaturge, 1015-1018; Id. – H. Brakmann, Gregor I (Gregor der Wundertäter), RAC 12 (1983), 787-791.
56 Simonetti, Una nuova ipotesi, 277-283.
57 C.P. Caspari, Alte und neue Quellen zur Geschichte des Taufsymbols der Glaubensregel, Christiania 1879, 25-64.
59 L. Abramowski, Die Schrift Gregors des Lehrers ‘Ad Theopompum’ und Philoxenus von Mabbug, ZKG 89 (1978), 273-290. Abramowski had already rejected the authorship of the Confessio two years before (see below).
having participated in the Council of Antioch against Paul of Samosata. Subsequently, the contrast between the theological positions expressed by the *Ad Philagrium* and the *Confessio fidei* led Simonetti to ascribe the former to an unknown third-century author, though leaving open the attribution to Gregory of Neocaesarea.

The dependence of Gregory’s theology on Origen’s has therefore had a particular importance in the debate concerning the authorship of the works attributed to him. However, this approach was strongly questioned in the second half of the 1970s by Nautin’s rejection of the traditional attribution of the *Pan. Or.* and by a study of the *Confessio* by Luise Abramowski. The German scholar argued that Gregory of Nyssa had fabricated this creed mostly on the basis of external arguments, which Caspari had not fully illuminated, such as Basil’s silence about the existence of the *Confessio fidei* and Gregory of Nazianzus’ quotation of it as a work written ‘a short time before’ (*Orationes* 31.28 and 40.42). She also noted that the *Confessio* presents the Trinity in a way that contrasts with the subordinationism of Origen.

The rebuttal of the *Confessio* by Luise Abramowski has been subsequently accredited more recently, though to different degrees, by Simonetti and Slusser. The latter endorsed the hypothesis of a forgery by the hand of Gregory of Nyssa in its entirety, while the former has accepted the consequences of this hypothesis only as far as the articles on the Holy Spirit and Trinity are concerned, because the doctrinal issues faced in them have their natural place during the Pneumatomachian phase of the Arian dispute. However, Simonetti remained undecided about endorsing the idea of a complete forgery by Gregory of Nyssa or a partial readaptation of an original creed.

Simonetti has indeed thought over these problems for a long time. In 1988, having acknowledged the relevance of the doubts of Nautin and Abramowski on the authenticity of the *Pan. Or.* and of the *Confessio*, Simonetti confronted the main pieces of the Gregorian corpus, considering them equal from the point of view of their trustworthiness. Thus, he could emphasise the Monarchian features that are common in the *Ad Gelianum*, *Ad Theopompon* and *Ad Philagrium*, and explain their dogmatic inaccuracies as depending on the fact that Gregory addressed these works to pagans. On these grounds Simonetti had also highlighted the fact that there is no irreconcilable contradiction between the Logos theology as it is expressed by the *Pan. Or.* and by the first two articles of the *Confessio* and the Monarchian theological tendency that characterises the other texts. In this way, the traditional view, which sees Gregory as a pupil of Origen and a great evangelist, appeared to be preserved in the light of the apologetic purposes of his “Monarchian works”.

Fourteen years afterwards, Simonetti has become more and more persuaded that the traditional figure of Gregory as a pupil of Origen is unreliable and that the works

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64 Simonetti, *Gregorio il Taumaturgo e Origene*, 19-30.
attributed to Gregory ‘with minor improbability’ are evidence of his being a representative of the Asiatic tradition rather than the Alexandrian one. Accordingly, the Italian scholar formulated two hypotheses to explain the contrasting theological positions detected in the Gregorian corpus: 1) Gregory, being a pupil of Origen, interpreted ‘in senso unitivo’ the Trinitarian doctrine as it is attested by the Pan. Or. (§36-37); he embraced the Monarchian doctrine after the hardening of the contrast between the followers of Origen and the Monarchians that had followed the penetration of Origenian ideas in Cappadocia; 2) Gregory never was a pupil of Origen, as Eusebius would wrongly attest, and reacted to the spread of Origenism in Cappadocia and Pontus by assuming a hostile Monarchian position. Simonetti found the second hypothesis more convincing than the other also because, according to him, the Metaphrasis does not have anything in common with Origen’s exegesis.

Slusser, for his part, although he found convincing Abramowski’s refusal of the authenticity of the Confessio, has held in general a less sceptical attitude towards the corpus of Gregory. Slusser has defined his own position as ‘maximalistic’ for he has preferred ‘to take into account all the works that are attributed to him by external attestation, provided they appear to be contemporary with him’, instead of making him conform ‘to modern scholarly presuppositions […] “by cutting him down to size” a priori as it were’. Thus Slusser maintained the ascription of the Pan. Or., Ad Philagrium, Ad Theopompum and Ad Gelianum (in addition to Metaphrasis and Epistula Canonica). Slusser agreed with Simonetti about the fact that Gregory’s writings have more in common with the Asiatic tradition rather than the Alexandrinian, but, unlike Simonetti, he had no difficulty in admitting that Gregory ‘did theology in a way that contrasted with his master’. What Slusser found in need of being explained was the fact that Gregory’s genuine works ‘show little dogmatic development that would strain the credulity of a non-Christian who was slightly acquainted with Christian belief’, and put forward three hypotheses: 1) ‘Gregory’s own Christianity was rudimentary’ and is evidence of a transplantation of a religious faith from a rich cultural setting (Caesarea) to a ‘theological backwater’ (Neocaesarea); 2) the works preserved are addressed to outsiders and, therefore, do not represent ‘Gregory’s preaching within Christian circles’; 3) the works preserved, except for the Epistula Canonica, show ‘Gregory’s enthusiasm for Christianity as a student under Origen … rather than the developed vision of his later years as a bishop’. Although Slusser found all three hypotheses defendable, he also thought that ‘the sophistication of Gregory’s arguments in To Theopompus and To Philagrius’ contradicts the third one. Thus he drew attention to the ethical teachings of Gregory, which are better attested by his other genuine works.

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65 In this sense Gregory would have endorsed the opposite position held by Dionysius of Alexandria.
66 Slusser, Saint Gregory Thaumaturgus, 577.
67 Slusser, Saint Gregory Thaumaturgus, 582-583; Id. (ed.), St. Gregory Thaumaturgus, Life and Works, 10.
68 M. Slusser, The Main Ethical Emphases in the Writings of Gregory Thaumaturgus, StPatr XXXI (1997), 357-362.
We have excluded from our investigation not only the number of fragments and homilies, for further studies are needed to ascertain what might be authentic among them\textsuperscript{69}, but also the authentic *Epistula canonica*, and the spurious *Ad Philagrium* and *Ad Tatianum*. Indeed, as we will see shortly, these latter writings do not contribute to answering our core research questions.

After having studied those genuine writings that we consider of primary importance for understanding Gregory’s intellectual profile, we will provide our own understanding of the issue. At the same time, our disagreement with both Simonetti and Slusser concerning the authorship of the *Ad Philagrium* partially anticipates our stance with regard to the opinion that Gregory’s best attested works testify to his being more or less a Monarchianist.

### III. Delimitation of the research

Let us then consider the obviously different reasons why this research will not deal with the *Epistula Canonica*, the *Ad Philagrium* and the *Ad Tatianum*.

The *Epistula Canonica*, whose authorship was never questioned by anybody, was edited several times\textsuperscript{70} and has been recently the subject of an enlightening study by Angelo di Berardino\textsuperscript{71}. The current shape of the letter is not original, because it is divided into canons according to the typical form of canonical epistles collected in the Byzantine *corpus canonum*\textsuperscript{72}; the last canon was in all likelihood added subsequently for it introduces a distinction of four classes of penitents that first appears in the fourth century. Gregory provides in the letter the biblical references, drawn from both Old and New Testaments, for a bishop, likely from Trebizond, to deal with the practical problems arising after the invasion by Goths and Boradi that occurred in all likelihood in 258. The cases contemplated impurity of food, violence against women, appropriation of goods of fugitives, collaboration with barbarians, possible reward for

\textsuperscript{69} Cf. above nn. 53, 54.


\textsuperscript{72} Usually the text is divided into eleven canons, but there are codices dividing the first canon into two or three parts, so that they number twelve or thirteen canons.
those who denounced culprits (but, in line with Roman law, the latter should not request any reward for their charge). The punishments laid down in the Epistula were not inflicted outside the Christian community and were aimed at directing its spiritual life, but they are somehow evidence of how the Christian Church confronted the temporary absence of political authorities in a period of barbarian invasion. Gregory’s juridical education is reflected by the importance given to the phases of the trial, but he does not appeal to Roman law to resolve any case, not even those concerning private property. Rather, Bishop Gregory bases his considerations on the authority derived from the Bible. The punishment of the culprits is seen as necessary for the rest of the community not to fall under divine punishment, and the bishop plays a fundamental role in avoiding this, for he is responsible for making inquiries into the cases, punishing those who are guilty by excluding them partially or totally from the liturgy, and readmitting into it those who showed sincere repentance.

The Epistula Canonica attests Gregory of Neocaesarea’s familiarity with the Scriptures and his episcopal activity even in a way that we find corroborated by the Vita of Gregory of Nyssa. However, we did not find it essential to illustrate what Gregory’s profile as a thinker or exegete was, for the Epistula does not seem to display any philosophical or theological concern. Gregory’s use of the Bible and his considerations with regard to the moral decay provoked by the barbarians’ invasion serve entirely the need to give suitable solutions to very practical issues concerning the discipline of the Church.

The Ad Philagrium de consubstantiali does not deal with the homousion of Nicea, as the later Syriac title implies, but with the issues of the simplicity and the multiplicity of the divine nature. Its Greek version was handed down under the names of Gregory of Nyssa (Ep. 26, To Evagrius) and Gregory of Nazianzus (Ep. 243, To Evagrius), but none of the recent editors of their letters has published it among their works. Scholars have argued in favour of different attributions, but, regardless of this issue, the Ad Philagrium provides at least one indisputable internal reason why it cannot have been written during the third century, that is to say the presence of anti-Eunomian elements. This fact was pointed out by Refoulé and never accounted for nor challenged by

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73 Gregory of Nyssa mentions, although in a hagiographical context, one episode where Gregory of Neocaesarea was requested to arbitrate in the case of two brothers quarrelling over the ownership of a lake (see Vita, §49-55 according to Slusser’s subdivision of the text).
74 ‘…in what way might the Father and Son and Holy Spirit have a nature (which one might properly call substance rather than nature)—would it be simple, or compound? For if simple, how does it allow of the number “three” of those just named?’ (PG 46, 1001A; transl. Slusser, 174).
76 A very detailed study of the text is that by F. Refoulé, La date de la lettre à Evagre (P.G. 46, 1101-1108), RSR 49 (1961), 520-548, which also provides an exhaustive coverage of modern and contemporary opinions. See also Simonetti’s articles mentioned above (nn. 60, 61) and Slusser, The “To Philagrius on Consubstantiality”, 230-235.
77 To my knowledge, Refoulé’s view has been endorsed also by J.T. Lienhard, Contra Marcellum. Marcellus of Ancyra and Fourth-Century Theology, Washington, D.C. 1999, 25.
Simonetti and Slusser, who have kept maintaining the ascription to our Gregory on different grounds.

The author refers to his adversaries as some who think ‘that the substance undergoes a passion of division corresponding to the application of the names’ (τὴν οὐσίαν ὁμοῦ τῇ τῶν ὄνομάτων ἐπηγορίᾳ πάθος διαίρεσις ὑπομένειν δοξάζοντες, PG 46, 1004A) and ‘is divided right along with the epithets’ (Τινὲς δὲ ταῖς προσηγορίαις ὁμοῦ καὶ τὴν οὐσίαν παχυμερῶς συνδιαιρεῖσθαι δοξάζοντες, 1004C). The author objects that ‘the attribution of names will not damage the undivided unity of the Greatest. Objects of intelligence, though they bear countless names [...] are yet beyond all designation, since nothing is a proper name of intelligibles and incorporeals’ (τὴν γὰρ ἀμερῆ τοῦ Κρείττονος ἔσοναι οὐ καταβάλλει τῶν ὄνομάτων ἢ Θέσεις. Τὰ γὰρ νοητά, καὶ μυρωνύμα μὲν [...] προσηγορίας δὲ πάσης ἑκτὸς· ἐπειδὴ κύριον ὄνομα τῶν νοητῶν ταῦτα καὶ ἀσωμάτων οὐδέν, 1004B). The idea that different prosopogoria indicate different ousía is explicitly stated by Eunomius, and perhaps by his master Aetius before him79. Refoulé had already detected one passage that demonstrates this correspondence and that is worth mentioning in extenso here80.

Eun. Ap. 12 (46,17-48,10 Vaggonere): ὅτι δὲ καὶ εἷς οὗς (μονογενῆς γὰρ), ἐνὴ μὲν τάς τῶν ἄγιων φωνᾶς παραθεμένους δι’ ὅν ὕς καὶ γέννημα καὶ ποίημα καταγέλλουσι (ταῖς τῶν ὄνομάτων διαφοραῖς καὶ τήν τῆς οὐσίας παραλλαγήν ἐμφανίζωσι) ἀπηλλάχθαι φοντίδων καὶ πραγμάτων... οὕς ἐτερον μὲν τήν οὐσίαν νοοῦτες, έτερον δὲ τι παρ’ αὐτήν τὸ σημαίνομεν, ἄλλ’ αὐτήν εἶναι τήν ὑπόστασιν ὴ σημαίνει τούνομα, ἐπαληθευόμενης τῇ οὐσία τῆς προσηγορίας.

As for showing that the Son too is one, being only-begotten, we could rid ourselves of all care and trouble in that regard simply by quoting the words of the saints in which they proclaim the Son to be both ‘offspring’ and ‘thing made’, since by distinguishing the names they show the difference in essence as well ... We do not understand his essence to be one thing and the meaning of the word which designates it to be something else. Rather, we take it that his substance is the very

78 Transl. Slusser, 175-176.
79 Bas. Spir. II.4 (260,4-18 Pruche): Φιλονεικοῦσι γὰρ ἀνυμολοί Πατρῆς καὶ Ποιῶ καὶ ἀγίου Πνεύματος ἐπιδεικνύονται τὴν προφοράν, ὡς ἐκ τούτῳ βαδίσαν ἔξωτες καὶ τῆς προς τὴν φύσιν παραλλαγῆς τὴν ἀπόδειξιν. Ἔστι γὰρ ταύτης παλαιός σόρῳς, ὡς Ἅγιας τοῦ προστάτου τῆς ἁγίασμας τούτης ἐμφανίζωσι, ὡς ἐγερθῇ ποῦ τῶν ἐκτυπῶν ἑπιστολῶν, λέγων· τὰ ἀνύμωμα κατὰ τὴν φύσιν, ἀνυμολος προφέρεσθαι· καὶ ἀνάπαλν· τὰ ἀνύμωμα προφέρεσθαι, ἀνύμωμα εἶναι κατὰ τὴν φύσιν. Καὶ εἰς καταλύσαν τοῦ λόγου τῶν ἐπιστολῶν ἐπεσπάσαστα λέγοντα· Εἰς Θεοῦ καὶ Πατρὸς, εὖ οὖ τὰ πάντα· καὶ εἰς Κύριος Ἰησοῦς Χριστὸς, δι’ οὐ τὰ πάντα. Ὡς οὖν ἔχουσιν αἱ φωναὶ πρὸς ἔλληξιν, οὕτως ἔχουσιν, φησι, καὶ αἱ δι’ αὐτῶν σημαίνομαι, φησι· αὐτῶν δὲ τῷ εὖ οὖ τὸ δι’ οὖ ἀνύμωμος ἡμνίκα καὶ τῷ Πατρὸς ὑπάνοιας. For the theory of names of Aetius and Eunomius see M. DelCignano, Basil of Caesarea’s Anti-Eunomian Theory of Names. Christian Theology and Late-Antique Philosophy in the Fourth Century Trinitarian Controversy, Leiden-Boston 2010 (SVigChr 103), 25-48.
80 F. Refoulé, La date de la lettre à Evagre (P.G. 46, 1101-1108), RSR 49 (1961), 529.
same as that which is signified by his name, granted that the designation applies properly to the essence (transl. Vaggione, 47-49).

To this passage others can be added, in particular the following one:


These people, if they really did have any concern for the truth, ought rather to have acknowledged that since the names are different, the essences are different as well ... we ourselves have shown throughout the preceding arguments that the designations in fact indicate the very essences (transl. Vaggione, 57).

Even if these passages appear decisive in rejecting the attribution of the Ad Philagrium to Gregory of Neocaesarea, it cannot be ruled out that its author was criticising the theory of names endorsed by the Cappadocians by means of ascribing to it consequences, such as tritheism, which they did not intend to imply. At any rate, the doctrines concerning denomination tackled by him cannot be dated to before the middle of the fourth century.

The Disputatio de anima ad Tatianum (CPG 1773, 7717; see also 7707 [36]) is a short work of Scholastic stamp whose core consists of seven chapters concerning the soul and that contains philosophical doctrines which are to be dated to a post-Plotinian phase of history of philosophy. Greek manuscripts have handed it down anonymously or under the names of Gregory of Neocaesarea or Maximus Confessor, while Syriac, Arabic and Persian manuscripts ascribe it to Aristotle or Avicenna. In an article published a few years ago, we provided a history of the reception of its Greek and Oriental recensions by modern and contemporary scholars and proposed amendments of Jules Lebreton’s hypotheses that the treatise depends on Nemesius of Emesa’s De

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83 According to Basil names indicate the distinctive properties (idiotêtes) or characteristics (idiômata) of the individual, ‘for the designations of Peter and Paul and of all people in general are different, but there is a single substance for all of them’ (Bas. Eun. II,4; St. Basil of Caesarea, Against Eunomius, Transl. by M. DelCogliano – A. Radde-Gallwitz, Washington, D.C. 2011 [FaCh 122], 134). For further information on Basil’s theory see DelCogliano’s book mentioned above (n. 79).
**natura hominis** and preserves an original fragment by Gregory of Neocaesarea\(^{85}\). The analysis of the philosophical contents of those parallel passages that Lebreton took as evidence of the dependence on Nemesius’ work led us to argue that the author of the *Ad Tatianum* and Nemesius had as a common source the lost *Symmikta Zetemata* of Porphyry, which was a Neoplatonic introductory work focussing on issues of the soul\(^{86}\). We have substantiated this hypothesis by means of parallels and cross-references to passages drawn from extant works of Porphyry and Alexander of Aphrodisias, as well as from Priscianus Lydus and Nemesius, who made use of Porphyry’s *Symmikta Zetemata*, and from Gregory of Nyssa, who plausibly read it\(^{87}\). In conclusion, we have ruled out the possibility that the *Ad Tatianum* could have been written by Gregory of Neocaesarea on the grounds that he could not assimilate specific elements of Neoplatonic philosophy in a period of time contemporary to Plotinus and Porphyry\(^{88}\).

\(^{87}\) Our argumentations have been endorsed by H. Hugonnard-Roche, *La question de l’âme dans la tradition philosophique syriaque (VT-IXe siècle)*, «*Studia graeco-arabica*» 4 (2014), 17-52.
\(^{88}\) This point might be challenged if Numenius of Apamea’s treatise ‘on the indestructibility of the soul’, which we know only thanks to a quotation from its second book by Origen (*CC V*, 57; fr. 39 Des Places), contained those doctrines read by Nemesius (and ps.-Gregory) in Porphyry’s *Symmikta Zetemata*. Indeed, a few philosophical elements that we find in the *Ad Tatianum* and in Nemesius’ *De natura hominis* (compare PG 10, 1141B4-6 and *DNH III*, 39,16-40,10 ed. M. Morani, Leipzig 1987 [BSGRT]) are ascribed by Nemesius to Ammonius, ‘master of Plotinus and Numenius the Pythagorean’. There are two elements that seem to rule out the idea that Gregory had Numenius as his source: 1) the passages ascribed to Ammonius and Numenius by Nemesius (cf. also *DNH II*, 17,16-19,6) were drawn as such from the *Symmikta Zetemata*, but the argumentations contained there are in all likelihood the outcome of Porphyry’s elaboration (cf. Celia, *II Λόγος κεφαλαιώδης*, 186); 2) none of Numenius’ fragments preserving his doctrine of the soul bears any resemblance to the *Ad Tatianum* (cf. Numénius, *Fragments*. Texte établi et traduit par É. Des Places, Paris 1973).
PART I. THE BIOGRAPHICAL PROFILE

CHAPTER 1. A RE-EXAMINATION OF THE ANCIENT SOURCES

In this chapter we will examine the ancient testimonies which are traditionally related to the figure of Gregory of Neocaesarea. We will study this dossier according to a diachronic perspective, beginning with the autobiographical pages of the Pan. Or., dated to the first half of the third century, and finishing with Socrates of Constantinople’s Historia Ecclesiastica of the first half of the fifth century. There will be also brief references to information provided by later authors, the value of which is, however, only derivative and documental. As we have seen, Eusebius’ account has been at the core of the interest of the scholars who have debated about Gregory’s identity, while less attention has been paid to the other testimonies because they seemed to stem directly from the Hist. Eccl. However, the links between this work and late authors are more complex than what had been supposed.

Before starting to deal with these texts, it is worth providing some information about Gregory’s homeland and city of origin.

I.1 Gregory’s homeland

Basil of Caesarea, Gregory of Nyssa, Jerome, Rufinus and Socrates attest that Gregory was from Neocaesarea in Pontus.

As described by the Geographia of Strabo, who was from Amasea in Pontus, Cappadocia was divided into two satrapies by the Persians when Alexander the Great conquered it in the fourth century. Alexander changed the satrapies into kingdoms, but the divisions remained between Cappadocia ‘near Taurus’ and Pontus (or ‘Cappadocia Pontica’), that he also defined as Euxenios. The reign of Pontus was ruled by the dynasty of Mithridates between about 302 and 63 BC. That year Mithridates VI Eupator was defeated by a Roman army headed by Pompey. As a result, the Roman province of Pontus et Bithynia was created. Pompey gave a strong impetus to urbanisation with the foundation of new cities, and this activity continued during the Pax Augustea thanks especially to Augustus, Vespasian and Hadrian; new cities were founded and older ones were renamed. Cabeira, the ancient name of Neocaesarea, which had already been the

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1 Strabo, Geog., XII,1,14; VII,3,6.
location of one of Mithridates’ palaces and of a great temple dedicated to Men Pandracus, was renamed Diospolis by Pompey and became one of the eleven Pontic cities that had control over the provincial territory. Diospolis was named Sebaste and made metropolis at the centre of her kingdom by the queen Pythodorida of Tralles. She ascended the throne after the death of her husband Polemon, who had been a Roman Client king since 38/40 BC. In 64 AD, when the administrative district of Pontus Polemoniacus was created, Neocaesarea remained its first metropolis.

Pontus Polemoniacus (called Mediterraneus in the second century) had then been joined to the province of Galatia and Cappadocia under Vespasian, had remained under the administrative command of Cappadocia when Trajan divided it from Galatia and went with the new province of Pontus under Severus Alexander. Neocaesarea was a neocoramic city two times, under Trajan and Alexander Severus, and this denotes that the city had a temple dedicated to the emperor’s cult. Neocaesarea, therefore, had a privileged bond with the emperor, to whom it showed its active loyalty.

While the peak of the urbanisation activity in Asia Minor was reached in the second century, it was during the third century that the emperors encouraged the foundation of sporting, musical and theatrical competitions (agones). These competitions advanced connections between cities and rural communities and facilitated the influence of sophists and teachers to penetrate into provincial life. This context was certainly favoured by Caracalla’s decision to grant Roman citizenship to all the free inhabitants of the Roman world in 212. The hundreds of funerary inscriptions found far from cities indicate not only that ‘a knowledge of Greek did not remain confined to the elite in a few urban centres’, but also show ‘an ostentatious use of Latin in order to demonstrate proudly the status of civis Romanus or at least a marriage to one.

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10 B. Burrell, *Neokoroi. Greek Cities and Roman Emperors*, Leiden 2004 (Cincinnati classical studies; n.s. 9), 205-209.
The strong links with the Hellenic culture and the progressive Romanisation of Pontus encouraged young people from that region and neighborhood to go abroad to study rhetoric and law. However, it was also possible to study in one’s own homeland as is attested by a second-century headstone inscription of a rhetor found in Neocaesarea. Also Justinian’s Digest confirms this fact. It preserves a significant passage by Herennius Modestinus which attests the activity of sophists, doctors and teachers in Neocaesarea. The witness of Modestinus, who was pupil of Ulpianus, the legal consultant and master of Maximinus Thrax, is of utmost importance since it dates back to the first half of the third century and is contemporary with Gregory. With good reason, therefore, Neocaesarea has been defined ‘a city in full bloom in the third century’.

It is easy to see how Pontus was a rich soil for the propagation of the Second Sophistic movement during the first three centuries AD. Although “Second Sophistic” was first used by Philostratus to define the rhetorical style of the Sophists of his time, marked by a strong revival of the Attic dialect, this movement was not only a literary and intellectual phenomenon; it also went hand in hand with the increasing influence of the Sophists, that is orators who might be at the same time grammarians, philosophers, lawyers, doctors and musicians. By travelling the cities of the empire and by teaching rhetoric and other matters, the Sophists represented the Greek paideia in the Roman world and assured a certain ideological cohesiveness throughout Eastern Roman provinces. Since their oratorical competences were focused on eulogistic

14 Marek, Pontus et Bithynia, 130-132.
15 Digesta, XVII,1,6,9 (391 Mommsen): ‘It is necessary to be clear as to the following, that it is the man who is responsible for teaching or healing in his native city who gains this exemption from liturgies [aleitourgēsia]. For if a man who is from Comana acts as a sophist, doctor, or teacher in Neocaesarea, he does not benefit from aleitourgēsia among the Comanans’ (transl. by Millar, Empire and City, Augustus to Julian: Obligations, Excuses and Status, in Id. Rome, the Greek World, and the East, vol. 2, 340 [= JRS 73 (1983), 76–96]).
16 A. di Berardino, Ponto, NDPAC III, 4223.
18 A careful reading of the Second Sophistic movement within the history of the Roman empire is given by G. W. Bowersock, Greek Sophists in the Roman Empire, Oxford 1969. As to the close links between Sophists and power see V.A. Sirago, La seconda sofistica come espressione culturale della classe dirigente del II sec., ANRW II,33,1 (1989), 36-78.
19 See Bowersock, Greek Sophists in the Roman Empire, 11-14.
20 Marek, Hellenisation and Romanisation in Pontos-Bithynia, 44: ‘Hellenisation in the East enforced as well as safeguarded the unity of the Empire far more effectively than the legions, the law and the cult of the Emperors. In northern Anatolia as well as in the whole of Asia Minor, Syria, Palestine and Egypt, to be “Hellenic” in terms of literacy, language and education became a condition for access to the society of
speeches, the Sophists were also often hired by people as mediators in legal disputes or as ambassadors to Roman emperors and aristocrats. The Sophists enjoyed therefore privileged links with the power centres guaranteeing communications between Roman and local authorities. They often practised evergetism as well, financing the maintenance or the building of temples and public edifices, organising religious festivities and various ceremonies, and this contributed effectively to the wealth of their cities.

All these aspects allow us to understand how rhetoric became the core of the Greek *paideia*. It was required from anyone who aspired to enter public life under Roman rule. The knowledge of a refined Greek became the benchmark of a high social identity all over the Roman world, and the local notables, even though of different ethnic origins, saw in the study of Greek rhetoric a privileged means of showing their social prestige. This was the cultural environment where Gregory’s mother arrived at the decision that her young son should study studied rhetoric, ‘like children who were not ignobly born and nurtured’.

Neocaesarea provided Gregory with the possibility of not only studying Latin and Roman law and meeting philosophers, but also of planning to go back there in order to practise a legal career, frequenting ‘marketplaces and tribunals’. In all likelihood, after Alexander Severus’ foundation of the new province of Pontus, Neocaesarea opened up new possibilities for learned members of high social classes such as Gregory. His brother-in-law’s position in Syria Palestine shows how much the Roman bureaucratic apparatus could offer in terms of career to a jurist of value.

I.2. Gregory from Cappadocia?

One is very surprised by the recent attempt by Marco Rizzi to convince us that the author of the *Pan. Or.* cannot be Cappadocian, whereas ancient authors are unanimous in attesting that he was from Pontus. The point of departure of Rizzi’s speculations is the doubt cast on the authorship of the *Pan. Or.* That leads the Italian scholar to try to solve this problem by an investigation of those passages of the *Pan. Or.* that would supply us with useful information about the origin of its author. In this manner, the identity of the alleged unknown author of the *Pan. Or.* would be substantiated by data independently of Eusebius or of the manuscript tradition of the *Pan. Or.*, which had been discredited by Nautin.
The cultural environment of Cappadocia at that time was different from that of Pontus. Although there have been few archeological surveys in the central and eastern Anatolian region, current scholarship deems it striking that epigraphical material is missing. The only Cappadocia cities of importance had been Caesarea, Tyana and Hanisa, and ‘there is hardly any trace of a significant local aristocracy, the sine qua non of developed urban life in other parts of Asia Minor or the eastern Roman empire’. From this point of view Cappadocia was an exception in the urbanized landscape of Asia Minor, for it ‘was not covered by a network of city territories like its neighbours to the north and west’ and the Roman government was limited to the communities close to the main roads. It is clear then, by taking Cappadocia as a point of departure, Rizzi had an easier target to highlight the distance between Gregory’s cultural background and his alleged Cappadocian homeland.

Rizzi’s arguments regarding the geographical and sociocultural elements contained in Pan. Or. led him to conclude that Laodicea or, more probably, Antioch was Gregory’s original city. It is enough here to take into consideration his main arguments to show their weakness.

After having explained how he was introduced to Roman law, Gregory wrote:

> For when, with my consent or not, I became a student of these laws, the bonds were already fast about me, the city of Beirut, which was both the motive and the pretext on the way here, the most Roman city not too far away from where I was, and has a reputation as a school of these laws.

Rizzi calls attention to the syntagm τῶν ἐνταῦθας and rightly contests Crouzel who interpreted it as if Beirut was not far from Caesarea (‘cette cité, qui n’est pas bien loin d’ici’). Considering that there were several cities where it was possible to study law

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26 Mitchell, *Anatolia*, I, 98. The meagre contribution of archaeology is the reason why Raymond van Dam’s study on the influence of Roman Rule and Greek Culture in Cappadocia (the subtitle of his book *Kingdom of Snow*, Philadelphia 2002) is lacking substantial remarks on second and third centuries context.

27 Rizzi’s interpretation of the reference to the tongue of the Greeks (εἰ τι καὶ μικρὸν εἰπεῖν τῇ Ἑλληνίδᾳ ἐνθέλεσιμι. φωνῇ, §7) as a trace of some ethnic origins that should lead us to rule out Cappadocia because there the dialects were marginal is completely inconsistent (*Ancora sulla paternità dell’Encomio di Origene*, 76). I pass over other minor points of this kind.

28 It is worth remembering that Rizzi speaks only of “the author” of Pan. Or.

29 Gr. Thaum. *Pan. Or.* §62.62-67: Ἐπεὶ γὰρ ἐξεπαιδευόμεν ἐκὼν καὶ ἄκων τοὺς νόμους τούθε, δεσμοὶ μὲν ποὺς ἧδη καταβέβλητο, καὶ αὐτίκα καὶ ἀφορμή τῆς ἐπὶ τάδε ὁδὸν ἢ τῶν Βηθριτίων πόλεις ἢ δὲ οὐ μικρὰν ἀπέγουσα τὸν ἐνταύθα πόλις Ἐλλήνων καὶ τῶν νόμων τούτων εἶναι πιστευθεῖσα παλαιοτέρον. As the reader can see, my translation is indebted both to Metcalfe and Slusser.

30 Crouzel (ed.), *Gregoire le Thaumaturge, Remerciement*, 121. Equally Metcalfe, 55: ‘a city, which is not far distant from these parts’.
and that his family could afford to send Gregory to study in Rome\textsuperscript{31}, Rizzi wonders why Gregory affirmed that the travel to Beirut was ‘highly probable’ chiefly on the grounds of its vicinity and of Gregory’s interest in the study of law. According to Rizzi, if we read the syntagm τὸν ἐνταὐθὰ πόλις ἩΡωμαῖκωτέρα πως, ναξὶ …). Rizzi is right in noting that it is ἄπεχουσα which takes τὸν ἐνταὐθὰ, but at the same time it seems that he makes an unnecessary difficulty splitting τὸν ἐνταὐθὰ from πόλις ἩΡωμαῖκωτέρα\textsuperscript{33}. Slusser’s translation quoted above offers the right meaning of Gregory’s words: Beirut was ‘the most Roman city not too far away from where I was’, that is the most Roman city among those near to his homeland. Obviously Beirut was nearer and easier to reach than Rome both in the case of Cappadocia or Pontus, and Laodicea or Antioch. Furthermore, as it is noted by Rizzi as well, Beirut was not Gregory’s first choice\textsuperscript{34}, and he refers to Rome, not mentioning other places, so it would be quite normal to infer that Gregory meant Rome as his first choice instead of Beirut. Since we have no evidence to suppose other possibilities of studying law at the same level as was possible in Rome or Beirut, why would a rich descendant of a notable family have aimed for a secondary destination?

Rizzi then calls attention to another passage where Gregory refers to the great distance between him and Origen before they met in Caesarea:

In short, although we were unknown to each other, unrelated, foreigners, and separated by a great distance, however many nations, mountains, and rivers lay between us, with truly divine and wise foresight he [the holy angel] contrived this meeting as my salvation by leading us to the same spot (transl. Slusser, 98).

Rizzi rules out the possibility that Gregory was from Cappadocia not only because his brother-in-law would hardly have wished his wife to take a journey so long and dangerous, but also considering that Gregory does not refer to having crossed the sea\textsuperscript{35}. In other words, since Gregory knew that Origen came from Alexandria and that crossing the sea would have been the best solution to arrive to Caesarea from Cappadocia, he should have mentioned the sea. If we accept this argument, we should exclude the proposal which supposes Antioch or Laodicea to have been Gregory’s...

\textsuperscript{31} Gr. Thaum. Pan. Or. §64: ‘But so far there was nothing about our legal studies which made my coming here and becoming involved with this man inevitable, as one could also go off to the city of the Romans’ (transl. Slusser, 101).

\textsuperscript{32} Rizzi, Ancora sulla paternità dell’Encomio di Origene, 77-79.

\textsuperscript{33} As far I understood, his translation would be as follows: ‘la città di Berito: si trattava della città, poco distante da là, più romana che ci fosse’.

\textsuperscript{34} Pan. Or. §67: ‘So when we were thinking of moving I don’t know where, but of moving somewhere other than this, suddenly there came a soldier …’ (transl. Slusser, 101).

\textsuperscript{35} Rizzi, Ancora sulla paternità dell’Encomio di Origene, 79-80.
original city as well: in all cases the sea was between Gregory and Origen. Moreover, by taking literally Gregory’s words, would it be possible to say how many countries Gregory went through and which mountains he crossed by taking the Roman road from the Coele-Syrian coast to Caesarea? Also considering that Gregory left from Antioch, he would have only traversed the present Mt. Aqraa (Casius)36, while the picture is completely different if we accept that Gregory departed from the other side of Taurus37. Finally, we know that Gregory’s brother-in-law called on his wife ‘suddenly’ (ἐξαίφνης), but not precisely when, and this is significant if we take into consideration that between November and April sea travel was suspended38.

It seems, therefore, that Rizzi’s conjectures are not supported by any solid geographical evidence and cannot be substantiated.

II. Introduction to ancient sources

The most ancient notice about Gregory at our disposal is contained in the sixth book of the Hist. Eccl., which Eusebius almost entirely consecrated to Origen’s life and that is dated – in its present form – to about 324-32639. Before the composition of the Hist. Eccl. Eusebius had already been engaged in writing the Apologia pro Origene and, shortly after, the Vita Pamphilii40. Both works, though almost entirely lost, attest plainly the pre-eminence of the figure of Pamphilus and the significant influence he exercised on Eusebius and Jerome.

36 See Barrington Atlas of the Greek and Roman World, ed. by R.J.A. Talbert, Princeton and Oxford 2000, pl. 67 (Antiochia), 68 (Syria), 69 (Damascus-Caesarea).
37 For a general idea of the Roman roads of Cappadocia see W. M. Ramsay, The Historical Geography of Asia Minor, London 1890 (Royal Geographical Society, Suppl. Papers IV), pl. 1; D.H. French, Roman Roads & Milestones of Asia Minor, Vol. 3 Milestones, Fasc. 3.3 Cappadocia, British Institute at Ankara 2012 (Electronic Monograph, 3), 20-21. The travellers had to pass through the Taurus southwards of Podandus (Cilician Gates) or Melitene. See also Talbert (ed.), Barrington Atlas of the Greek and Roman World, pl. 87 (Pontus), 64 (Cappadocia), 66 (Taurus).
39 The differences between the families of manuscripts which handed down this writing have been interpreted by the scholars as evidence that there were several editions of the work. For an overview of the scholarship on the number of the books, the composition of the separated editions and their date see R. M. Grant, Eusebius as Church historian, Oxford 1980, 10-21; A. Louth, The date of Eusebius’ Historia Ecclesiastica, JThS n.s. 41 (1990), 111-123; R.W. Burgess, The Dates and Editions of Eusebius’ Chronic Canones and Historia Ecclesiastica, JThS n.s. 48 (1997), 471-504. More recent researches appear very careful in supposing different “editions” and tend to consider the Hist. Eccl. a work in progress, see Eusèbe de Césarée, Histoire Ecclésiastique, Commentaire, T. I, Études d’introduction. Sous la direction de S. Morlet – L. Perrone, Paris 2012, part. M. Cassin, M. Debïé, M.-Y. Perrin, La question des éditions de l’Histoire ecclésiastique et le livre X, 185-206.
As for the *Apologia* we are better informed about its significance for Eusebius. It consisted of six books, five of which were composed by Pamphilus and one was added by Eusebius after Pamphilus’ death. Only the first book, concerning doctrinal points, is extant in the Latin translation by Rufinus, while the rest are known mainly through the summary provided by Photius and some notes by Eusebius, Jerome and Socrates of Constantinople. When Eusebius introduced the sixth book of the *Hist. Eccl.*, he stated that ‘the narrative concerning him [Origen] would require also a work of its own’ and that he was ‘abridging most things’. Taking the work of Robert M. Grant as a point of departure, most scholars agree in considering that in writing the sixth book of the *Hist. Eccl.* Eusebius extensively used the *Apologia* as a source, to which he also refers several times.

The case of the *Vita Pamphili* is more complicated. In order to ascertain its importance for the work of Eusebius and Jerome we have to provide a short account of Pamphilus’ life and activity.

Pamphilus was born into a noble family in about 250 in Beirut and received a good education in Greek *paideia* and philosophy. Then he studied the Holy Scripture.

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in Alexandria with Pierius, called the ‘new Origen’, and subsequently moved to Caesarea. There he was ordained priest, was imprisoned in 307 and martyred by decapitation three years later, under the reign of Maximinus Daia. It was during this detention that he composed the *Apologia pro Origene* with the help of Eusebius. Pamphilus’ most important activity was to run the library founded by Origen, which was at the same time a *scriptorium* “ante litteram” and school. There are no testimonies about the fate of the library between Origen’s and Pamphilus’ times. During this span of time at least one bishop was the pupil of Origen, Theotecnus, but this did not favour the school of Caesarea since Pamphilus had to open a new one. Although there was no continuous succession of masters after Origen and the new “school” was actually a circle of friends gathered around a master, thanks to Pamphilus’ teaching of theology and Scripture, Caesarea became again a centre of studies.

What should interest us more here is that Pamphilus enlarged and organised the library, with the help of Eusebius as well, buying and copying biblical texts and many works by Origen and other ecclesiastical authors. Eusebius says also that in his *Vita Pamphili* he quoted ‘the lists of the library that he [Pamphilus] had brought together of

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45 Thus says Photius, *Bibl.*, 118, speaking of the *Apologia* by Pamphilus and Eusebius. The latter omits this notice when he mentions Pierius in *Hist. Eccl.* VII,32,26, however immediately after having mentioned Pamphilus.

46 Hier. *Vit. Ill.* 76.

47 See *Hist. Eccl.* VI,23,1-2, where Eusebius says that Ambrosius provided Origen with tachygraphers, copyists and calligraphers in order to help him in composing his commentaries to the Sacred Texts. The *Suda* and George Cedrenus’ *Historiarum Compendium* hold a passage from a letter of Origen in which he declares that he sacrifices his time for nutrition and sleep to the correction of the copies. See its edition by P. Nautin, *Lettres et écrivains chrétiens des II et III siècles*, Paris 1961 (Patr. II), 250-251.

48 For this reason scholars have supposed a more or less relevant dispersion of the books of the library. See the brief overview and the balanced opinion of Carriker, *The library of Eusebius*, 10-12 (see 1-36 for the well documented history of the library of Caesarea). M. Simonetti, *Eusebio e Origene. Per una storia dell’originismo*, Aug. 26 (1986), 327, notes also that Origen’s *Hexapla* did leave no traces in the meantime.


51 See the fundamental remarks on the features of Pamphilus’ “school” and teachings by Morlet, *Eusèbe de Césarée à l’«école» de Pamphile*, who rightly underlines the lack of clear evidence that Pamphilus taught philosophy, and finds in that the main difference with Origen’s school.

the works of Origen and of other ecclesiastical writers. This passage remains ambiguous in respect of the authorship of the lists, but Jerome’s letter 34 To Marcella seems to clarify this point. Jerome, who knew that the indices librorum were contained in the third book of the Vita Pamphilii, wrote that Pamphilus travelled toto orbe with the desire ‘to equal Demetrius Phalereus and Pisistratus in his zeal for a sacred library’ in search of books, maxime those of Origen, and eventually ‘left behind for us an index of these discoveries’. Jerome’s passage concerns only the index of Origen’s writings, preserved by letter 33, but it seems clear from the evidence that the person in charge of the catalogue of the Caesarean library was Pamphilus. Moreover, we have to take into account that Jerome spoke of the library of Caesarea as ‘collected by Origen and Pamphilus’ and attested (quoting from the Vita Pamphilii) that it was Pamphilus who read ‘very zealously and perpetually dwelled in meditation on the treatises of the ancient writers’.

Rudolf Blum has shown that Pamphilus’ lists were composed after the model of Callimachus of Cyrene’s Pinakes, which were the result of the cataloguing of the Alexandrian library entrusted to him by the emperor Ptolemy II Philadelphus (III cent. B.C.). Callimachus’ work was not a mere librarian’s catalogue, for the fragments in

53 Eus. Hist. Eccl. VI,32,3: τι δέ οἱ τῶν λόγων τάνδρος ἐπὶ τοῦ παρόντος τὸν ἀκριβὴ κατάλογον ποιεῖτο, ιδίας δεδομένα σχολής ὧν καὶ αναγράφαμεν ἐπὶ τῆς τοῦ Παμφιλίου βίου τοῦ καθ’ ἡμᾶς ἵππου μέτρους ἀναγραφῆ, ἐν ἣ τὴν περὶ τὰ θεῖα σπουδή τοῦ Παμφιλίου ὁπόσα τις γεγένη, παριστάντες, τῆς συνκλητίσεως αὐτῶ τῶν τε Ὀριγένους καὶ τῶν ἄλλων ἑκκλησιαστικῶν συγγραφέων βιβλιοθήκης τῶν πινακῶν παρεθέσιν, ἐξ ὧν δὲ φύλον, πάρεστιν ενεπελάστατα τῶν Ὀριγένους πόνων τὰ εἰς ἡμᾶς ἐκθέντα διαγγέλων. ‘Why should one draw up the exact catalogue of the man’s works here and now, seeing that such would require a special study? And we did record it in our account of the life of Pamphilus, that holy martyr of our day, in which, in showing the extent of Pamphilus’ zeal for divine things, I quoted as evidence the lists in the library that he had brought together of the works of Origen and of other ecclesiastical writers; and from these anyone who pleases can gather the fullest knowledge of the works of Origen that have reached us…’ (trans. Oulton, 85-87).


57 I agree with the reading of J.A. Aho, Using References in the Work of Eusebius of Caesarea (ca. 260-339) to Understand the Collection of the Library of Caesarea, Ph.D. diss. - University of Texas 2002, 95-96: ‘It seems most likely that the catalog was developed already by Pamphilus and then recopied and appended to the end of Life of Pamphilus as an act of honor (“in showing the extent of [his] zeal for divine things”), rather than that Eusebius developed it anew at the time of the writing’.

58 Hier. Vir. III. 113.


60R. Blum, Callimachus, The Alexandrian Library and the Origins of Bibliography, transl. by H. H. Welling, Madison (WI) 1991 (I German ed.: Frankfurt am Main 1977); for the hypothesis of the reliance
our possession show that they not only recorded names and titles. Callimachus’ *Pinakes* discussed biographical data and issues of authenticity of the works; thus we have to speak of biobibliography rather than of mere bibliography. The *Pinakes* became the general model for all subsequent catalogues of books, those by biographers included. According to Blum, it was precisely in Alexandria that Pamphilus acquired Callimachus’ system of listing which he subsequently used for the cataloguing of the library of Caesarea. Thus, Eusebius and Jerome not only took advantage of Pamphilus’ work as a source of information but were also influenced by the Alexandrian librarian methodology preserved by him. From this perspective, it is not an accident that Hermippus *peripateticus* (of Smyrna), one of Callimachus’ pupils and the writer of biographies of Greek philosophers and wise men, is cited by Jerome as one of the ideal composers for his *Vir. III. (praef).*

Nautin has been, as far as I know, the first scholar to support the opinion that the catalogue of the Caesarean library was extensively used by Eusebius and Jerome.

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62 On the basis of the twenty-five fragments from the *Pinakes* (see previous note), Blum (*Kallimachos. The Alexandrian Library …*, 150-181; *Die Literaturverzeichnung im Altertum und Mittelalter*, 19-28) has identified the following general principles used by Callimachus in composing them: 1) division of Greek authors into classes and – if necessary – into sub-classes; 2) alphabetical order internal to the different divisions; 3) biographical data, whenever possible; 4) list of the titles of an author’s works, divided into categories; 5) citations of the opening words of each work; 6) number of lines of each work.

63 On the influence of the *pinakes* on the late scholarly literature see Blum, *Kallimachos. The Alexandrian Library …*, 182-225.

64 About thirty years before Blum, Otto Regenbogen commented in *Hist. Eccl.* VI,3,2,3 in this way: ‘Die übliche Verbindung von Biographie und Verzeichnis ist damit in die christliche Literaturform übergegangen, wie auch die Anwendung des alexandrinischen Katalogprinzips auf die christliche Bibliothek von Caesarea belegt’, see *Hvz*, PRE 40 (1950), 1435 (1408-1482). Cit. by Blum, *Die Literaturverzeichnung im Altertum und Mittelalter*, 90, where he criticizes Schwartz (*Eusebios*, 1396) for rewarding Eusebius, instead of Pamphilus, for being the first Christian author to have used the Alexandrian methodology of librarian classification.

65 Recently Meike Willing has given credit to Blum because the existence of the *pinakes* of the library explains how Eusebius provided information in the *Hist. Eccl.* which could not have come to him in *Eusebius von Cäsarea als Häreseograph*, Berlin-New York 2008 (PTS 63), 10-11, passim. See also Aho, *Using References in the Work of Eusebius of Caesarea*, 96.

66 Nautin, *Lettres et écrivains chrétiens*, 233-244, 256; *Origène*, 227-241. It seems not completely certain that Nautin is right in supposing that Eusebius reworked Origen’s list, since it mentions the letters that he would have discovered and collected in volumes after Pamphilus’ death and that would have been the concrete cause for the composition of the sixth book of the *Apoloogia pro Origene* (*Eus. Hist. Eccl.* VI,36,3-4). The sole basis for this speculation is the contradiction between the statement of Photius (*Bibl.*
Nautin thought also that Jerome’s *Epist.* 33, though it omits several Origen’s works, is the translation of the entry on Origen stemming from the third book of the *Vita Pamphili*\(^67\). Nonetheless, the divergences between Jerome’s and Eusebius’ accounts on Gregory did not lead him to think that Jerome depended on the *Vita Pamphili* as well.

I endorse this hypothesis. In my opinion the common view that all ancient information derives from *Hist. Eccl.* VI,30 is not correct. In the following pages I will show that Jerome used the catalogue of the library of Caesarea contained in the *Vita Pamphili* and that Socrates of Constantinople could read another lost account on Gregory contained in the *Apologia pro Origene*.

II.1. *In Origenem oratio panegyrica*

The author of the *Pan. Or.* never reveals his name and his native country. Eusebius, Jerome and the extant manuscript tradition, which starts from the thirteenth century, ascribe this work to the first Gregory of the Christian history, the bishop of Pontus\(^68\). As shown by Nautin\(^69\), the title handed down by the manuscript tradition is manifestly apocryphal and independent by the pen of the author of the work: `<Τοῦ ἀγίου Γρηγορίου τοῦ θαυματουργοῦ εἰς Ὄριγενην προσφωνητικός, ὅν εἶπεν ἐν Καισαρείᾳ Παλαιστίνης, μετὰ τὴν παρ’ αὐτῷ πολυετὴ ἀσκησιν, μέλλων ἀπαλλάττεσθαι ἐπὶ τὴν πατρίδα` (‘Saint Gregory the Wonderworker’s address to Origen, which he delivered in Caesarea of Palestine, after many years of study with him, when he was about to depart to his fatherland’); indeed, the author could not give himself the titles “saint” and “thaumaturgus”. The first cannot be attributed even to

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\(^{67}\) A partial list of Philo’s works from the library of Caesarea is extant in a page of a famous eleventh century manuscript (Cod. Vindobonensis Theol. Gr. 29, fol. 146\(^v\)), but it contains only titles. See Philonis Alexandrini *Opera quae supersunt*, vol. I, ed. L. Cohn, Berolini 1896, XXXVI-XXXVII.

\(^{68}\) The critical edition of this text is that by Henri Crouzel (SC 148), who edited in turn the Greek text established by Paul Koetschau (SQS IX). For further information on the manuscript tradition, see Ch. 2, n.1. For the English translation of the quoted passages I extensively made use of that by Slusser (ed.), *St. Gregory Thaumaturgus, Life and works*, 91-126, but I took into account also the translations of Metcalfe, Crouzel, Marotta, Guyot, Rizzi, and Merino Rodríguez (see bibliography).

\(^{69}\) Nautin, *Origène*, 82-84.
Pamphilus or Eusebius because it occurs from the first half of IVth century\textsuperscript{70}. The latter appears for the first time in the first half of the fifth century with Timotheus Aelurus\textsuperscript{71}.

The narrator very often uses the subject in the plural form. This was traditionally interpreted as a proof of the fact that Gregory spoke in his brother Athenodore’s name too, in agreement with what was reported by Eusebius and Jerome. Admittedly, there are no passages in which this view is demonstrable in a conclusive way, notwithstanding Crouzel’s attempt to prove the opposite\textsuperscript{72}. The variation of singular and plural form of the first person of the verbs is merely rhetorical. Nevertheless, this does not prove even that Athenodore was not in Caesarea at that time.

The description of Gregory’s life occupies the most part of the fifth section of the \textit{Pan. Or.}\textsuperscript{73}. Gregory tells that he was born to a wealthy pagan family and that he lost his father at the age of fourteen. This episode is presented as related to the first time when Gregory encountered the ‘holy Logos’, but he does not reveal how he encountered it and remembers only that it happened ‘more under compulsion than of my own accord’. Furthermore, Gregory considers providential that the age of his first contact with the ‘holy’ (ἱερός) and ‘divine’ (θεῖος) ‘Word’ (λόγος) coincided with the maturity of his ‘human reason’ (ἀνθρώπινος λόγος), for thus all his precedent errors could be ascribed to youth and lack of reason.

From birth our parents gave us our first upbringing, including the misguided customs of my native land. That we were about to be freed of them I don’t think anyone anticipated, nor was it my hope, since I was a little child not yet able to reason, under a superstitious father. Then came loss of my father and orphanhood, which may even itself have been what started me on the road to knowing the truth. For at that point for the first time I was turned over to the saving and true Word; I forget how, more under compulsion than of my own accord. For what power of judgment did I have, when I was fourteen? But from that point on this holy Word immediately began to dwell with me; at the very point when the reason common to all comes to maturity, then first did it come to dwell with me. As I reckon it now, even though I did not do so then, I consider it no small sign of the holy and wonderful providence in my regard that this encounter was thus proportioned to my years so that everything that preceded that age, all the works of error, had been transmitted to childishness and ignorance (ἀλογίᾳ). That way, the holy Word was not transmitted in vain to a soul not yet reasonable, but to one which had become reasonable already … So both the human and the divine reason began in me at the

\textsuperscript{70} Cf. Crouzel, \textit{Faut-il voir trois personnages}, 291-292.

\textsuperscript{71} M. van Esbroeck, \textit{The Credo of Gregory the Wonderworker and its influence through Three Centuries}, StPatr XIX (1989), 257-258.

\textsuperscript{72} Having checked all the occurrences of the first personal and possessive pronouns I am convinced that the traditional opinion on this point deserves without further hesitation to be rejected. The examples proposed by Crouzel, \textit{Faut-il voir trois personnages}, 296-297, to demonstrate the validity of his position are not persuasive.

\textsuperscript{73} The best treatment of the autobiographical elements of the \textit{Pan. Or.} is that by Mazzucco, \textit{La componente autobiografica}, 100-138.
same time, the latter coming to my aid by that power which I cannot describe but which is proper to it, the former receiving its aid … (transl. Slusser, 99).

The passage does not help clarify either whether Gregory knew the Christian religion or whether he was baptised when he was fourteen. On the contrary we can note how the biographical aspect tends to disappear in order to make room for the theme of the intellectual maturation⁷⁵. That seems confirmed by the fact that the common tradition that fourteen years was the age of reason⁷⁶, by the amphibolosity of the word λόγος and by Gregory’s admission that the Logos arose in him ‘immediately’ together with the reason. The overlapping of implicit links between the holy Logos and the human reason can be enlightened by Origen, who develops the same reasoning as Gregory in several passages from the De Principiis and the Commentary on John⁷⁷. In each case Jn 15:22 – ‘If I had not come and spoken to them, they would not have sin; but now they have no excuse for their sin’ – plays a chief role because, according to Origen’s interpretation, the Logos is referring to the attainment of human reason. In this manner Origen admits both that each man participates in the Logos as a rational being⁷⁸.

⁷⁴ Pan. Or. V, §48-53.1-22: ‘Ανατροφεῖ γὰρ αὐτὸς ἔφη, οὔτε γενέσεως ής σὴν ὑπὸ γονεῦσα, καὶ πάτρια ἑδότη τὰ πεπλανημένα ἐν ὑμῖν ἐλευθερώθησαν: οὔτε ἄλλου ὑμῖν προσεδόκησαν, οὔτε οἷον ἐλπὶς τῆς ἤγη, παιδίω μὲν ὑμῖν καὶ ἄλγω, ὑπὸ πατρὶ δὲ δεινοδίκησαν. Εἶτα πατρὸς ἀποβολὴ καὶ ὀρφανία, ἢ δὲ μου τάχυ καὶ ἄρρητη τῆς τοῦ ἀληθοῦς ἐπιγνώσεως ἦν. Τότε γὰρ πρῶτον ἐπὶ τὸν σωτήριον καὶ ἀληθὴς μετετῆθην λόγον, ὡς οἶδ’ ὡς, κατηγογιασμένος μάλλον ἂν εἶρεν. Τίς γὰρ ἐμὸν κρίεις ἢν, ὑπὸ τεσσαρακονδεκαετετελεῖτε; Πλὴν ἐξ ἐκείνων πως ἐπιτάχθησαν μὲν μοι οἱ ἔρημος ὁ δὲ λόγος ἤρετα εὖθες, οἷα δὴ ἠρετοὶ πληρομένων τοῦ κοινοῦ πάντων ἀνθρώπων λόγῳ, ἐπεδημεῖ δ’ ὅμως τότε πρῶτον. ’Ο δὲ καὶ οὐ μεικρόν, εἰ καὶ μὴ πάλαι, νῦν γὰρ ἀναλογιζόμενοι ἐγὼ σύμβολον τίθημι τῆς ἔρημος καὶ θυμαστῆς περὶ ἐμὲ προνοίας, τὴν συνθρημμαίναν ταύτην οὕτως τοὺς ἐτείς διυρθημένην· ἵνα τὰ μὲν πάντα τάμητα τὴν ἐμὴν, ὅσα πλάνας ἡν ἐγὼ, νεκτάρια ταῖς ἀλογίας παραδεδομένα γ., μὴ μάτην δὲ ἐς ἔρημος παραθύρων λόγου ψυχή οὐδέποτε λογικὴ, λογικὴ δὲ ἐκ γενομένη … ἄλλῳ ὅμως οὐ τὸ ἀνθρώπων καὶ οὐ θεοῦ ἠρετᾶται ἐς ἐμὸν λόγος…

⁷⁵ Puech, Histoire de la littérature grecque chrétienne, II, 490, explains Gregory’s constraint supposing his mother’s intervention; Nautin, Origène, 186, supposes the intervention of his brother-in-law. I agree with Crouzel, Faut-il voir trois personnages, 294-295 (and Marotta (ed.) Gregorio il Taumaturgo, Discorso a Origene, 8-9, 59), who speaks of “illumination intérieure” putting the event in the narrative of the providential process that finally led Gregory to meet Origen. In partial agreement with Crouzel is Rizzi (ed.), Gregorio il Taumaturgo (?), Encomio di Origene, 127-128 (who explains the compulsion remembering that Gregory’s mother decided his studies [Pan. Or. V, §56]).

⁷⁶ Cf. the authors mentioned by J. Festugière, La révélation d’Hermès Trismégiste, III. Les doctrines de l’âme, Paris 1953, 13 n.1, 100, n.2; 198, n.1.

⁷⁷ Or. Prin 1,3,6; Clo 1,267-275, II,105-111. Origen writes also in CC IV.15 that ‘the reason, which originates from the Logos of God, does not allow the rational being to be regarded as entirely alienated from God’ (transl. Chadwick, 201).

⁷⁸ This is a very typical idea of Origen. Here it is enough to quote only one interesting passage from the CRmV VIII.2 (648 Hammond Bammel): Debemus etiam hoc scire, quod aliud est possibilitatem esse in aliquo, aliud efficaciam vel efficientiam, quod Graeci δύναμιν et ενέργειαν vocant. Verbi causa: parvulus nuper natus possibilitate rationabilis homo est; potest enim esse rationabilis, si doleverit. Et possibilitate etiam faber et gubernator et grammaticus dicitur; possibile enim est, ut horum aliquid sit. Efficacia vero vel efficentia, hoc est re ipsa atque effectu, nihil horum est, dum est parvulus; sed si coeperit vel rationis iam capax esse vel aliquid fabrilis artis aut cuiuslibet alterius efficere, tunc iam
and that men are guilty of sin only when they reach the age of reason. By contrast, we note that the main difference between Origen’s and Gregory’s considerations is the latter’s tendency to make the development of human reason and the connection to the Logos overlap.

In my opinion, Gregory is reinterpreting his past on the basis of his later conversion, which was at the same time philosophical and religious, in the light of Origen’s teachings. Suffice it to mention a passage from one of the Caesarean homilies on Luke, where Origen declares:

You catechumens—who gathered you into the Church? What goad compelled you to leave your houses and come together in this assembly? We did not go to you from house to house. The Almighty Father put this zeal into your hearts by his invisible power. He knows you are worthy. He wills you to come to faith, reluctant and doubtful as you are, especially at the beginning of your religious faith.

Finally, it is worth mentioning that Clementina Mazzucco, after having judiciously shown that the Pan. Or. is a ‘story of formation and conversion’, underlined that the conversion is presented as a ‘period of life which is not necessarily permanent, even though it produces positive effects’ in life, and detected in this the ‘major divergence’ of the Pan. Or. ‘with respect to other narrative patterns of conversion’.

That is noteworthy because this view on conversion exactly mirrors Origen’s view on baptism, according to which the moral conversion, a central theme of the Pan. Or., is a fundamental prerequisite in order for the baptismal rite to be effective. In summary, I believe that Gregory’s words show that he went through the catechumenate at a later stage, but not that he was baptised at the age of fourteen.

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79 Or. FrPs 118,128 (394-396 Harl – Dorival, SC 189): Ἡ ἄνθρωπινή ψυχὴ συμπληρώσασα τὸν λόγον, πάντως ἐν κακίᾳ γίνεται. Ἀδύνατον γὰρ ἄμα τὸ συμπληρωθῆναι τὸν νόμον τὸν φυσικὸν ἐν ἄνθρωποις μὴ ύποστῆναι τὴν ἁμαρτίαν. Ἐπάνω οὖν γένηται ἡ κακία καὶ στρεβλωθῆ ἡ ψυχή, δεῖται κατορθώσεως.

80 Or. HLc VII,7. Transl. extracted from Origen, Homilies on Luke. Transl. by J.T. Lienhard, Washington, DC 1996 (FaCh 94), 31. These homilies were preached in Caesarea, see ibidem, xxiv.

81 Mazzucco, La componente autobiografica nel Discorso di Ringraziamento, 118-134.

To satisfy his mother’s wishes, Gregory, like other children of good social rank, began to study rhetoric, and his teacher considered him able to become a rhetor within a short time. Gregory studied Latin with another teacher who also taught him the elements of Roman law. According to Gregory’s narrative, ‘the divine pedagogue and true guardian’ gave this teacher the idea to encourage Gregory to study Roman law. Gregory, who did not initially intend to have a career as an orator, was convinced to continue the legal studies, which were, according to his teacher, ‘the best passport … whether I wanted to be a rhetor who contended in the law courts, or some other kind’ (μέγιστον […] ἐφόδιον […] εἰτε τις ἐν ἧν τοῖς δικαστηρίοις ἁγωνιουμένων, εἰτε καὶ ἄλλοις τις εἶναι θελήσαμι). As a matter of fact, at the beginning of his discourse Gregory excuses himself for the poor quality of his speech because he had not practised rhetoric for eight years.

… for eight years I have not spoken or written a discourse great or small myself, nor have heard any one else writing or speaking in private, or presenting panegyrics or disputations in public, except these admirable men who have embraced the true philosophy (transl. Metcalfe, slightly altered, 42).

This passage is apparently in contradiction to what we read in the Hist. Eccl. (and in the Vir. Ill.), which tells that Gregory was at Origen’s school for five years. The majority of scholars follow Koetschau in considering the eight years as the result of the sum of the three years spent by Gregory in the study of Latin language and Roman law and the five years spent at the school of Origen. Another hypothesis was presented by Dräseke, who had supposed that the number five (Ε’) was a faulty copy of eight (H’) occurring in the manuscript tradition of the Hist. Eccl. Nautin rejected both

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83 For the teaching of the rhetoric see the classic work of H.-I. Marrou, Histoire de l’éducation dans l’antiquité, Paris 1948, 268-282.
84 Pan. Or. V, §56.
87 Pan. Or. V, §60,57-59; transl. Slusser, 100-101. It is interesting to note that ἔφόδιον, which appears only one time in the Septuaginta (Dt 15:14), occurs in Philo’s Her. 272-274, where it defines the baggage the Hebrews brought from Egypt (Gn 15:14) and which Philo identifies with the παιδεία. With a similar sense it occurs in Tabula Cebetis, 32, as pointed out by M. Alexandre, La culture profane chez Philon, in Philon d’Alexandrie. Lyon 11-15 septembre 1966, Paris 1967 (Colloques nationaux du Centre National de la Recherche Scientifique), 126.
88 Pan. Or. I, §3,10-16: … ὀκταετῆς μοι χρόνος ὁδός ἔδη, ἐξ οὗ ὁδός ἠτύχει εἰπόων> τις γὰρ ἀμβής λογίων τεκνὰ μέγεν ἢ μικρὸν ἤδον τυγχάνει, ὁδόν ἄλλου ἴκονος τοῦ ἑδών γράφων ἢ λέξεων, ἢ καὶ δημώσει πανηγυρικῶς λόγους καὶ ἁγωνιστικῶς παρευγόμενος, ὅτι μὴ τῶν θυσμασίων τούτων ἀνθρώπων, τῶν τὴν καλὴν φιλοσοφίαν ἀστασαμένων.
89 Koetschau (ed.), Des Gregorios Thaumaturgos Dankrede an Origenes, XI-XII, where he also mentions that this view goes back to Casaubon and Bengal. Cf. also Harnack, Geschichte der altchristlichen Literatur bis Eusebius, Th. II, Bd. II, 94.
90 Several scholars follow Nautin in attributing this explanation to Ryssel, Gregorius Thaumaturgus, 12. I was not able to find any trace of this argument in all Ryssel’s studies I have read. The right reference is J.
hypotheses because the author of the *Pan. Or.* says that he did not hear any orator ‘except these admirable men who have embraced the good philosophy’, and these words indicate that the seven years\(^91\) precisely concern the length of the stay at Origen’s school. Therefore, Nautin concluded, Eusebius must have not remembered the right number he read in the *Or. Pan.*\(^92\). In my opinion, Nautin’s reading is not self-evident, although it is legitimated by the correlative structure of the Greek phrase (ὄκταετής μοι χρόνος οὔτος ἡδη, ἐξ οὗ οὔτε ..., οὔτε ...). However, the second correlate proposition introduces an exception (ὅτι μη ... ‘except ...’), which is difficult to be read specifically as referring to the last time Gregory heard private or public discourses. Metcalfe rightly commented on Gregory’s phrasing as follows: ‘even making every allowance for the eccentricities of Gregory’s style, it is surely a somewhat forced interpretation to carry the force of ὄκταετής over a page or so of very confused Greek’\(^93\). This entire sentence was interpreted as referring only to Gregory’s abandonment of rhetoric also by Rizzi, who, therefore, does not undertake to solve the difference between this passage and the account of Eusebius\(^94\). Hence, I do agree with Koetschau’s explanation, because it does not force the text of the *Pan. Or.* and gives a plausible explanation of its internal data (studies of Latin and law before his arrival at Origen’s school) and of the external testimony (*Hist. Eccl.*, *Vir. Ill.*)\(^95\).

Gregory had the rare opportunity of choosing Rome or Beirut as the city where he could continue his studies of Roman law\(^96\). But he was not obliged to make a choice, and also this happened providentially. He only consented to accompany his sister to join her husband in Caesarea and to take this opportunity to reach Beirut, where he planned to attend an excellent law school\(^97\). Indeed, Gregory’s brother-in-law, who had not long before begun work as a legal consultant (νομικός) to the Roman governor of

Dräseke, *Der Brief des Origenes an Gregorios von Neocäsarea*, JPTH 7 (1881), 105, where the German scholar links this copy fault to the textual tradition problem of the date of Origen’s arrival in Caesarea. Metcalfe (ed.), *Gregory Thaumaturgus*, *Address to Origen*, 35, endorses Dräseke’s suggestion: ‘It is not possible that Gregory means by ὄκταετής simply that he was eight years with Origen, and that Eusebius’ πέντε is due to writing Ε’ for Η’?’.

\(^91\) Nautin explains that we have to count eight according to the manner of that time, that is calculating the year a quo and the year ad quem, cf. *Origène*, 380, n.54. Cf. also H. Leclercq, *Gregory of Neocaesarea*, CE VII, New York 1910, 15.

\(^92\) Numerals are also the simplest thing to be corrupted in the transmission of texts. Cf. Simonetti, *Una nuova ipotesi*, 295, and Rizzi (ed.), *Gregorio il Taumaturgo (?)*, *Encomio di Origene*, 83.

\(^93\) Metcalfe (ed.), *Gregory Thaumaturgus*, *Address to Origen*, 35.

\(^94\) Cf. Rizzi (ed.), *Gregorio il Taumaturgo (?)*, *Encomio di Origene*, 83, with n.6: ‘essi [the numbers] indicano solo il periodo in cui l’autore non ha esercitato la retorica (e quindi non necessariamente da quando è alla scuola di Origene)’.

\(^95\) Cf. also Harnack, *Geschichte der altchristlichen Litteratur*, Th. II, Bd. II, 94.

\(^96\) *Pan. Or.* V, §62 (Beirut), §64 (Rome).

\(^97\) On the school of Beirut see the classical study of P. Collinet, *Histoire de l’école de droit de Beyrouth*, Paris 1925, who deems the *Pan. Or.* to be the first testimony on that school (see 16-20, 26-28); more recently, L. Jones Hall, *Roman Berytus. Beirut in Late Antiquity*, London-New York 2004, 192-217. However, it seems that we should speak of several ‘law schools’, because the *Expositio totius mundi et gentium* (c. 25) attests the existence of *auditoria legum* extant at Beirut in the mid-fourth century. Cf. Millar, *Rome, the Greek World, and the East*, vol. 2, 460.
Pompey had expressed his desire that Gregory accompany his sister to Caesarea. To this end he sent a soldier with all the authorisations and passes, including documents for the official public transport, in order to allow Gregory and his sister to make a secure journey.

The governor of Palestine at the time suddenly summoned my brother-in-law, my sister’s husband, alone – to his dismay, since it separated him from his wife – and took him away to be his assistant and share in the labors of ruling the people, for he was a legal expert, and still is for that matter. When he got there, he did not wait long before sending for his wife, since he had been separated from her painfully and unwillingly, and he brought us along with her. So when we were thinking of moving I don’t know where, but of moving somewhere other than this, suddenly there came a soldier with orders to escort and give our sister safe passage to join her husband, and also to bring us along with her as travelling companions. We would give joy both to our brother-in-law and especially our sister, that she should not make the journey without dignity or with excessive worry, as well as to our friends and relatives who congratulated us and pointed out the not inconsiderable bonus we might come to Berytus, there to set about the study of law (transl. Slusser, 101-102).

Gregory considered the soldier as an instrument of the ‘divine angel’ (θεος ἅγγελος). According to his narrative, it was the angel who secured his journey as far as Caesarea and ‘set aside everything else and Berytus as well, which we believed it was our main impulse’. This line does not provide any definite statement that Gregory

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98 On Rizzi’s hypothesis to identify Gregory’s brother-in-law with Timesitheus see below, §III.
100 Pan. Or. V, §65-68,76-95: Κριστηνη τον άνδρα άμελες ἐμής ὁ τότε άρχων τῶν Παλαιστίνων, τουτόν παραλαβών εξαίφνης άκοντα μόνον, κεχωρισμένον τῆς άρρωστοῖς, ἴχθυς ἐντάξει, συνεπιβοήθησοντα καὶ κοινωνήσοντα τῶν τοῦ έθνους άρχοντος πῶς νομίκης γάρ τις ή, καὶ ἔστην ἴσως ἐτί- ὁς δέ ἐκλῦει ἡμᾶς κάροι ἐκέλλει μόν οὐκ εἰς μικρὸν μετάπεμπτον ἀπολύεσθαι τήν γυναῖκα, ἔπαχθευς κάτως καὶ έκεις κεχωρισμένος, καὶ ήμας δέ ἡμᾶς αὐτής κοινωνοικωμένους.‘Εξαίφνης γονὸν οὐκ οἶδ’ ὅπως ἀποδημεῖν μέν, ἀλλ’ ἐτέρωθη τοι μᾶλλον ἀποδημεῖν ἢπερ ἐντάξει διανοομένοις ἡμῖν ἐπέστη στρατιώτης φέρων ἐντολήν, παραπέμπειν μέν καὶ διασώκειν τήν σκόλους ἡμᾶς καταλαμβάνουσαν τόν άνδρα, ἀγειν δέ καὶ ήμας συνοδοπόρους ἀμίν άτη; χεριομένους μέν καὶ τῷ κρήστῃ, καὶ μάλιστα τῇ ἁμήλῃ, ὅπως μή οὐκ εὐσχήμων τῇ ὑπερήφανῳ πρὸς τὴν ὁδολαζάνη, οὐκέτας αὐτοῖς καὶ τοῖς συγγενεῖς τμῆσθαι, καὶ οὐ μικρὸν τι ἔτερον τῶν προφέρων διαπραξάμενος, εἷ ἐπὶ τήν Βηρυτίου ἐκλῦειν πάλιν, ἔκει τῷ τῶν νόμων μάθημα ἐκπονήσαντες.
101 Pan. Or. V, §72,114.
102 Pan. Or. V, §71,105-110: Ταχυρροφοί οὖν ὅ στρατιώτης, θεας δε τίς των οἰκογενεψάμενος καὶ ποιμήν ἀγαθός καὶ φιλόξενος, ὡς δέ παντὸς τοῦ βίου τούτοις ὅσπερ μικρὰς ὀδορρυπίας διασκέδασμος, παρακεκυρίως τά τέ ἀλλα καὶ τήν Βηρυτίν, ἡς μάλιστα νέων ἐντύχα ὁμήρημεν, ἐντύχα ψωφός κατεστάτο- According to Crouzel (123-124), Marotta (63) and Guyot (142) τά τέ ἀλλα μεν “other cities”, but I prefer a more literal translation which, anyway, agrees with the general interpretation of Metcalfe (57), Slusser (102) and Rizzi (135), who use these words as referring to “other considerations”. The first solution gives to this passage a sense which would mean that Gregory “moved on” Beyrut, but this is not evident (moreover, the subject of the phrase is the angel).
actually remained in Beirut. What is certain is that he met Origen in Caesarea, where the Christian master had arrived not long before in 233 or 234\textsuperscript{103}.

Other matters transferred this holy man from the city of Alexandria in Egypt, where he had his former home, and moved him to this region, too, as if to meet us. I do not explain these things either, and gladly refrain from trying (transl. Slusser, 101)\textsuperscript{104}.

Gregory prefers to be silent about the reasons for Origen’s move to Caesarea. On the other hand there seems to be no obvious reason for him to say anything about it\textsuperscript{105}. Origen ‘took us in hand from the first day’, but initially Gregory felt as if he were in a trap ‘wanting to leave him for Berytus or for home’\textsuperscript{106}. The Christian master succeeded in his attempt to distract Gregory from his intention to study law and convinced him to pursue the philosophical life, without the practice of which – as Origen taught – it is not possible for anyone to be truly pious (ἔσπερείν)\textsuperscript{107}. Origen’s speeches and friendship (φιλία) made a great impression on Gregory who gradually fell because ‘all of them limited their philosophi\textsuperscript{108}. In this manner Gregory was persuaded, as he narrates, ‘to neglect all the affairs or studies for which we seemed destined, including even my precious law, and my native land and friends, those back home and those we were to visit’\textsuperscript{109}.

Before coming to Caesarea, Gregory had already met a few philosophers\textsuperscript{110}, who had almost led him to ignore philosophy\textsuperscript{111}. Indeed no-one deserved his consideration because ‘all of them limited their philosophising to words’ (τὸ ομ. μέχρι ζημάτων τὸ πρόκειται στήσασθαι), while Origen was ‘the first and the sole’ (πρῶτος καὶ μόνος) who persuaded him ‘by his own moral behaviour’ (τοῖς ἥθεσι τοῖς ἰδίοις κύτου) to pursue the studies of Greek philosophy and to exercise its principles\textsuperscript{112}. Under Origen’s guidance Gregory practised philosophy and studied dialectics, physics, geometry, astronomy, ethics, philosophy and theology\textsuperscript{113}. Gregory defines Origen’s school as ‘the

\textsuperscript{103} See, infra, §III.

\textsuperscript{104} Pan. Or. V, §63,67-73: Τὸν δ’ ἱερὸν τούτον ἄθροι ἐκ τῆς Ἀλεξάνδρεως πόλεως, ἐνθα τὴν ἐστίνα ἔχων ἐτυχε πρῶτον, καὶ κύτου ἔκινε καὶ μετανίκη ἐπὶ τὸ τοῦ χωρίου, ὅστε ἀπαντήσοντα ἤμιν, ἔτερα πράγματα. ὃν ἔγωγε καὶ τάτα καὶ ἱερογλυφοῦσατο ὡστε οἶδα καὶ ἐκόν παρῆσο.

\textsuperscript{105} For further information on this issue see, infra, §III.

\textsuperscript{106} Pan. Or. VI, §73; transl. Slusser, 102.

\textsuperscript{107} Pan. Or. VI, §79.

\textsuperscript{108} Pan. Or. VI, §81-84.

\textsuperscript{109} Pan. Or. VI, §84,71-75: ἀπαντῶν τῶν δοκεόντων ἡμῖν προσήκειν πραγμάτων ἢ μαθημάτων, τῶν τε ἀλλων καὶ κύτου τῶν καλῶν μου νόμων, ἱμελεῖν ἐπειθόμην πατρίδας τε καὶ οἰκείων, τῶν τε παρόντων ἐνταύθα καὶ οἷς ἀπεδημήσαμεν. Transl. Slusser, 104.

\textsuperscript{110} Pan. Or. XI, §134,7-6: ὡστε ἰερογλυφοῦν ἤμιν ἐνέτυχον τὸ πρῶτόν, ὦλος δὲ τοῖς Ἰβραίοις ἐπαγγελλομένοις...

\textsuperscript{111} Pan. Or. X, §127-128; XI, §134.

\textsuperscript{112} Pan. Or. XI, §133-135.

\textsuperscript{113} Pan. Or. VIII, §110-115.
truly paradise of delight\textsuperscript{114}, but, finally, he chose to go back to what he had left behind, ‘to the land I came from, my earthly here below, and my father’s house’\textsuperscript{115}.

For all the dismal things will await us, tumult and agitation in place of peace, and in place of a quiet and well-ordered life a chaotic one, and in place of this freedom a harsh bondage to marketplaces, tribunals, crowds, and pretentiousness. No longer shall we have any time to devote to divine things, nor shall we tell the words of God; we shall “recite the deeds of human beings (which a prophetic man deemed simple affliction) and in our case even those of wicked human beings (transl. Slusser, 124)\textsuperscript{116}.

The words of Gregory are clear. He will go back to his native country to be a lawyer\textsuperscript{117} and, in fact, he himself expressly declares that he still minded to pursue law studies\textsuperscript{118}. After all, recent archeological and epigraphical discoveries\textsuperscript{119} show that Caesarea was latinophone, as pointed out recently by Rizzi\textsuperscript{120}, and, therefore, that city must have provided possibilities to study law as well. Gregory’s submissive attitude towards the episodes of his life disappears at the end of his narrative. Indeed he was not obliged to go away: ‘And if I go away not against my will, like a captive, but willingly, expelled by no enemy but by myself, when I might have remained, perhaps when I go

\textsuperscript{114} Pan. Or. XVI, §184. The biblical reference is to Septuaginta’s version of Gn 3:23.

\textsuperscript{115} Pan. Or. XVI, §189.

\textsuperscript{116} Pan. Or. XVI, §192-193.48-56: Διαδέχεται γὰρ ἡμᾶς σκυθρωστὰ πάντα, θόρυβος καὶ τάρχος ἐξ εἰρήνης, καὶ ἐξ ἡσύχου καὶ εὐτάκτου βίου ἄτακτος, ἐκ δὲ ἐπευθείας ταύτης δουλεία χαλεπή, ἄγορα καὶ δίκαιο καὶ ἤγορο καὶ χληθα, καὶ σιγὸλ μὲν ἡμῖν οὐκέτι πρὸς τὰ κρεῖττον οὐδ’ ἤγοιν, οὐδὲ λόγοι τὰ θεία λαλῆσομεν, λαλῆσομεν δὲ τὰ ἔργα τῶν ἄνθρωπων (τοῦτο δὴ καὶ ἀπλοῦς ἄρα τις εἶναι γενόμεσται ἄνδρες προφήτης), ἠμεὶς δὲ καὶ συνηρών ἄνθρωπον. For the reference to the prophet see the Septuaginta’s version of Ps 17: 4.

\textsuperscript{117} J. Modrzejewski, Grégoire le Thaumaturge et le droit roman. À propos d’une édition récente, RHDF 49 (1971), 316, comments: ‘C’est toute la différence entre la jurisprudence et la rhétorique judiciaire qui apparaît dans ce récit … Les iuris consulti abandonnent les plaidoiries à des rhéteurs qui se contentent de quelques connaissances juridiques élémentaires’.

\textsuperscript{118} Pan. Or. I, §7.


\textsuperscript{120} M. Rizzi, Intervento, in Monaci Castagno (ed.), La biografia di Origene fra storia e agiografia, 31-32.
hence I shall not travel in safety...’121. Finally, Gregory leaves his master thanking him for the ‘good instructions’ received and asking him to pray for his pupil122.

II.2. Epistula ad Gregorium

The Ep. Gr. constitutes the thirteenth chapter of the Philocalia, the compilation of selected passages of Origen’s works traditionally attributed to Gregory of Nazianzus and Basil of Caesarea123. This writing has an important role within the Philocalia for, as shown in the title given by its compilers124, it deals with the function of philosophy for the interpretation of the Scriptures. It has a particular importance for it provides one of the first Christian statements of the conception of philosophy as ancilla theologiae125.

As we will see in detail below, scholars have long discussed whether the Ep. Gr. precedes the Pan. Or. or follows it. A most recent tendency of the scholarship is to deny for different reasons that the addressee of the Ep. Gr. was the author of the Pan. Or. without attempting a diverse reading of our text though but often presupposing that the addressee of the letter was a student.

The difficulty to understand the Ep. Gr. is mainly due to the usual approach to read it looking for a direct link to the Pan. Or. However there are several reasons why this approach should be used with extreme caution.

There are two external elements that should make one suppose that we cannot ascertain what kind of doubts or questions Origen was to answer in the Ep. Gr. First, Jerome, who copied the list of Origen’s works from Pamphilus’ catalogue126, attests that in the library of Caesarea there were ‘two books of letters to him [Origen] by Firmilianus, Gregorius and others’127. It is then plausible that the Ep. Gr. marked only a

121 Pan. Or. XVI, §198: Εἴ δὲ καὶ ἄπων οὐκ ἄκων μόνον, ὥσπερ σχμάλωτος, ἄλλα καὶ ἄκων ἄπεμα, οὐχ ὡς ἄλλον τυ, ὥσπερ ἔσπερ έκπεμεμημένος, ἐξον μένειν, τάχα καὶ ἄπων ἐντεῦθεν οὐκ ἀσφαλῶς πορεύσομαι... Transl. Metcalfe, 87.
122 Pan. Or. XVII, §201-207.
124 See Harl (ed.), Philocalie, 1-20, 400.
125 On this, see n.155.
126 Nautin, Origène, 227.
127 Hier. Epist. 33 (Ad Paulam): Firmi<λ>ani et Gregorii et diuersorum ad eum epistularum libri II; epistulae sinodorum super causa Origenis in libro IIº. Epistularum eius ad diuersos libri VIII. Aliarum epistularum libri II; epistula pro apologia operum suorum in libro IIº. This text is established by Nautin
phase of the correspondence between Origen and his pupil, which we cannot reconstruct because the rest of it is lost. Second, the *Ep. Gr.* derives from the *Philologia*, which in itself is a selection of passages, and may have been cut off. This may appear the case with the last lines, which do not contain farewells but, oddly enough, end with a phrase of subordinationist flavour.

Origen immediately shows his esteem toward his pupil, ‘excellent lord and very venerable son Gregory’ (κυρίε μου σπουδαίοτατε καὶ εἰδεσιμώτατε ὑε Γρηγόριε). The term κυρίος was indeed employed to address high-ranking persons and became more and more characteristic, as well as the adjective εἰδεσιμώτατος, to refer to bishops, even if mostly from the fourth century onwards. Origen himself seems to have been very careful in using κυρίος if we examine what remains of his epistolary activity. Also Julius Africanus, when he addresses Origen, uses κυρίος and υἱός. In Africanus’ case υἱός does mean that Origen was younger than Africanus, while κυρίος can be interpreted as a title of respect as well as referring to Origen’s priesthood. In the opening salutation of his *Letter to Africanus*, Origen calls his


129 Or. *Ep. Gr.* IV: ‘Whether what I have dared seems good or not, God knows and his Christ and the One who shares the spirit of God and the spirit of Christ. Would that you may share it, and always increase your participation, so that you may say not only, *We have become sharers of Christ* (Heb 3:14), but also “We have become sharers of God” ’ (transl. Slusser, 192).

130 That is confirmed by the use of the term υἱός and by the last lines of the *Ep. Gr.* where Origen declares his ‘paternal love’. The term υἱός rarely occurs in second- or third-century papyrus but was often used to refer to pupils, and not only to relatives. See W.V. Martitz, υἱός, TDNT VIII, 334-340 (part. 337); L. Dinneen, *Titles of address in Christian Greek epistolography* to 527 A.D., Washington D.C. 1929, 75.


132 The evidence of the usage of κυρίος (as well as υἱός) during the pre-Constantine period is mostly limited to papyrus and parchment documents from Egypt. The term κυρίος was generally used for lawful owners among first- and second-century writers. We have evidence that it was used by a son addressing his father, but also by a father addressing his son as ‘my lord and son’. Its usage gradually changed and it became employed to address to high-ranking persons, officials included, although it began to be replaced in every context by despotes even before Constantine. See W. Foerster, κυρίος, TDNT III, 1039-1058 (part. 1045-46) and M. Frenschkowski, *Kyrions*, RAC XXII, 754–794 (part. 763-765).

133 Dinneen, *Titles of address in Christian Greek epistolography*, 54: εἰδεσιμώτατος, which was then a title of esteem for bishops and laymen of high standing, occurs in the *Ep. Gr.* for first time in Christian literature.

134 Dinneen, *Titles of address in Christian Greek epistolography*, 66, who states also that the term was not used only for ecclesiastics.

135 Julius Africanus, *Ep. Or.* 1,1-2 (515 Lange, SC 302): Χαίρε κυρίε μου καὶ υἱός καὶ πάντα τιμώτατε Ὑργίνειες, παρὰ Ἀφρικανοῦ. At the end of the letter he asks Origen to salute ‘all his masters’ (Τοὺς κυρίος μου πάντας προσκαγάσεσα, 10,47, 520 Lange).


137 Scholars tend to follow Reichardt (*Die Briefe des Sextus Julius Africanus an Aristides und Origenes*, Leipzig 1909 [TU Reihe 3, B. 4, Hft. 3, B. 34, Hft. 3], 65) in dating the letter of Julius Africanus to about
addressed to Origen, Nautin’s translation of which is typical of Paul’s letters and was applied to any Christian until the end of the third century. But Origen avoids χάρισμα in referring to Africanus, even if the latter was a man of high rank and was held in high esteem by him. Origen uses this title when speaking of his benefactor Ambrosius, calling him ‘lord and holy brother’\(^\text{140}\). Ambrosius was a man of high rank, like Africanus, but, unlike the latter, he was also a deacon, if we can give credit to Jerome\(^\text{141}\). It may seem that Origen used χάρισμα to refer to ecclesiastics, but the evidence to support that he used this term only when addressing ecclesiastics is too scarce to believe that this was the case of Gregory. The least we can say about Gregory is that he was a Christian layman of high ranking very valued in Origen’s eyes.

As it appears in the following passage of the *Ep. Gr.* Origen was writing to a talented Christian man uncertain about his future as layman\(^\text{142}\):

As you know, the natural skills of intelligence, when they go with *askesis*, can produce a work\(^\text{143}\) which leads, so far as possible, if I may use the expression, to the end of that which one wishes to practice. Thus your natural skills can make you a perfect Roman law expert and a Greek philosopher of one of those schools deemed in high repute. But I wished that you employed all the power of your skill finally for Christianity; in practice for this I hoped that you drew from the philosophy of the Greeks all that can be used as encyclical instructions or preparatory studies to Christianity\(^\text{144}\), and from geometry and astronomy all that will be useful for the interpretation of the Holy Scriptures. Thus, what the children of the philosophers say about geometry and music, grammar, rhetoric, and astronomy, as handmaids to philosophy, we may say about philosophy itself in relation to Christianity\(^\text{145}\).
The first phrase of the passage, which is unexpectedly convoluted, has a general meaning. Origen says that if intelligence and askesis go hand in hand, they can reach their goal. In the second phrase, going from the general claim to Gregory’s case, Origen praises his skills and assures him that they ‘can make’ him a perfect legal expert or a philosopher; but Origen’s expression does not have any temporal connotation. Therefore, there is no need to see here that Gregory was a student. On the contrary Origen appears to have considered him a full-formed intellectual.

That Gregory was not a novice appears clear since the beginning, for Origen uses a technical terminology, for instance speaking of good natural skills (ψυχικά) and exercise/practice (ἐξουσίας) and alluding to the ‘final cause’ (τέλος). We can only guess the genuine meaning, which is unexpectedly convoluted, has a general meaning. Origen says that if intelligence and askesis go hand in hand, they can reach their goal. In the second phrase, going from the general claim to Gregory’s case, Origen praises his skills and assures him that they ‘can make’ him a perfect legal expert or a philosopher; but Origen’s expression does not have any temporal connotation. Therefore, there is no need to see here that Gregory was a student. On the contrary Origen appears to have considered him a full-formed intellectual.

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That Gregory was not a novice appears clear since the beginning, for Origen uses a technical terminology, for instance speaking of good natural skills (ψυχικά) and exercise/practice (ἐξουσίας) and alluding to the ‘final cause’ (τέλος). We can
perhaps find significant that Origen, in contrast to the typical Middle Platonic pattern which he had certainly in mind\(^{153}\), does not mention *didaskalia* or *mathesis* in his theoretical discourse on natural skills and *askesis*\(^{154}\).

Whatever Gregory’s practical goal was, Origen writes to declare his desire for his pupil to invest ‘finalistically’ (τελικῶς) his talent on behalf of the Christian faith. Origen’s expectation was that Gregory, ‘in practice’ (προθεμελιωθέως), used Greek philosophy, geometry and astronomy to serve the Christian cause and Christian biblical exegesis. It is clear, then, that Origen is not exhorting his pupil to study philosophy and the other disciplines, as has been often written, evidently paying more attention to the accounts of Eusebius and Jerome. It is unlikely that Origen would have hoped that Gregory achieved such a demanding goal, if he had been a student, however talented. Origen’s words would be perplexing if one does not assume that Gregory was already well prepared to fulfil his master’s expectation. Origen’s general tone is rather serious and thoughtful instead, and the rest of the letter confirms this impression.

Origen asserts then that the project of establishing encyclical studies and Greek philosophy as subordinate and introductive to Christianity is signified by *Ex. 11*, 2-3 and 12, 35-36 —where it is said that the Israelites stripped the Egyptians of gold, silver and clothes—in conjunction with *Ex. 25*-26—where the fabrication of the objects necessary for the worship of God is described. According to Origen it was with the precious materials stolen from the Egyptians that the Israelites made the objects for their worship.

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\(^{153}\) Other scholars (also Nautin, *Origène* 158, n.6) have already pointed out the similarity between Origen’s passage and *Didasc.* I,152 (2,23-27 Whittaker; see also XXX,183 [60,17-19 Whittaker]) where Alcinoos relates the εὐφυεία to the progressive attainment of virtue: ‘natural qualities’, that is for example the capacity to learn, good memory and liberality of mind, ‘if they are combined with correct education and suitable nurturing, render one perfect in respect of virtue’ (Ἀόρω δὲ αἱ εὐφυείαι παιδείας μὲν ὅρθος καὶ τροφῆς τῆς προσκυμοσύνης τυγχάναι τέλεον ἀπορρίκνουσιν πρὸς ἄρετθ... Alcinoos, *Enseignement des doctrines de Platon*. Introdt., texte établi et comm. par J. Whittaker et trad. par P. Louis, Paris 1990, 2; transl.: Alcinoos, *The Handbook of Platonism*, Transl. with introd. and comm. by J. Dillon, Oxford 1993, 3; for further remarks see Whittaker’s and Dillon’s comments *ad loc.*, and J. Whittaker, *Platonic Philosophy in the Early Centuries of the Empire*, ANRW II,36,1 [1987], 106). According to Philo of Alexandria, *Abr.* 52-54, God has given the virtues of *didaskalia*, *physis* and *askesis* – symbolized by the Patriarchs – to the human race ‘in order to produce the perfection of life’. Philo specifies: ‘for neither is it possible for instruction to be made perfect without natural endowments and practice, nor is nature able to arrive at the goal without instruction and practice, nor is practice unless it be founded on natural gifts and sound instruction’ (οὕτω γὰρ διδασκαλίαν ἔνει φύσεως ἢ ἀσκήσεως τελειωθῆναι δυνατὸν οὕτω φύσις ἐπὶ πέρας ἐστὶν ἐκδίδακτη διότι τοῦ μαθῆτη καὶ ἀσκηθήσατο ὡτε ἀσκήσης, εἰ μὴ προθεμελιωθήσεται φύσει τε καὶ διδασκαλία; transl. from *The Works of Philo Judaeus*, transl. by C.D. Yonge, vol. II, London 1894, 407). In Clement of Alexandria, *Str.* I,5,31,5, nature, learning (*mathesis*) and exercise are the foundations of gnosis. For further occurrences of these three factors in Clement and Philo see S. Lilla, *Clement of Alexandria. A study in Christian Platonism and Gnosticism*, Oxford 1971, 66-69 and Philon, *De congressu eruditionis gratia*, Intr., trad. et notes par M. Alexandre, Paris 1967, 128-129 (n. 3).

\(^{154}\) Thus also Alcin. *Didasc.* VI,159 (13,31ff. Whittaker), speaks to the perfect rhetor (τέλεος ἐρτωρος) as the one who ‘picks the right opportunity for using the particular argument’, having already ‘acquired an accurate perception of the faculties of the soul and the differences between men, and the types of the discourse which are fitted to this or that soul’ and of ‘which sort of person can be persuaded by what arguments and of what sort those are, such an individual...’ ( transl. Dillon, 12).
cult. Origen’s expectations clearly show that he was persuaded of Gregory’s intelligence, all the more so that Origen stresses the risk of heresy in devoting himself to profane sciences (‘to dwell among the Egyptians’) after having been brought up ‘on the law of God and the Israelite service to him’, that is after having been baptised.

Origen thus takes the example of the schism provoked by Hadad the Edomite (identified with Jeroboam). After his descent to Egypt, “Hadad” went back to the land of Israel and recognised in the golden calf the god that let the Israelites leave Egypt. According to Origen, “Hadad” represents those who, by studying the Greek doctrines, can easily engender ‘heretical ideas’ (σύριστικά νοήματα), when they go back to the Holy land, that is the Christian theology. But the Hebrews were able to create the sacred objects for divine worship from the Egyptians’ spoils thanks to God’s wisdom. For this reason, Origen urges his pupil to devote himself to the reading and the studying of the Holy Scriptures with much attention (προσοχή) ‘so that we may not say or think anything too hasty about them’, with faith and with prayer to seek the meaning of...

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155 That the materials used for the construction of the tabernacle stood for the encyclical studies was already affirmed by Philo, Somn. I,205-207 (cf. also Her. 272-274). The idea of the subordination of philosophy to wisdom is the core of Philo’s interpretation of Abraham’s relation with Hagar and Sarah in Congr. 79-80; in Congr. 11 we find the same list of encyclical studies provided by Origen in Ep. Gr. On the importance and function of the encyclical studies in Philo’s thought see Alexandre (ed.), Philon, De congressu eruditionis gratia, 27-82 (34-35 for a table of the different lists of encyclical studies found in Philo’s works). Origen might have had in his mind also Clement of Alexandria, Str. I,5,28-32, which, in its turn, relies on Philo. For a study of the relation between Clement and Philo on this theme see A. van den Hoek, Clement of Alexandria and his use of Philo in the Stromateis: an early Christian reshaping of a Jewish model, Leiden 1988 (SVigChr 3), 23-47. For Origen’s attitude, both preparatory and apologetic, toward philosophy Crouzel, Origène et la philosophie, 139-165 is still useful. For a recent study on the interpretations of the plunder of the Egyptians see J. Stevens Allen, The Despoliation of Egypt in Pre-Rabbinc, Rabbinc and Patrisc Traditions, Leiden-Boston 2008 (SVigChr 92), in part. 92-117 (Philo), and 210-233 (Origen).

156 Ep. Gr. III,51-54: αὐνιυσσωμενη, ὅτι τισὶ πρὸς κακῷ γίνεται τὸ παροικήσα τοῖς Αἰγυπτίως, τοῦτοι τοῖς τῶν νόμων καλόημα, μετὰ τὸ ἐντραφην τῷ νόμῳ τοῦ θεοῦ καὶ τῇ Ἰσραηλιτικῇ ἐς κύτων θερικέα. Cf. Philo, Congr. 20: ‘Now the first characteristics of the intermediate instruction are represented by two symbols, the race and the name. As to race, the handmaiden is an Egyptian, and her name is Hagar; and this name, being interpreted, means “emigration” (παροίκησης)’ (transl. Yonge).

157 In HEx VIII,4 Origen says that to go back to worldly affairs after having been baptised is a demonic temptation.


161 Or. Ep. Gr. IV,81-83: πολλῆς γὰρ προσοχῆς ἄναγγελοντος τὰ θεῖα δεδομέθα. ἦν μὴ προτετάσσερον ἐπιμέλεια τινὰ ή νοήμωμεν περὶ συνών.

162 Or. Ep. Gr. IV,89-91: ‘Do not stop at knocking and seeking, for the most necessary element is prayer to understand the divine things’ (…ἀναγκαιοτάτη γάρ καὶ ἡ περὶ τοῦ νοεῖν τὰ θεῖα εὐχή) (transl. Slusser 192; he intends τὰ θεῖα as divine words).
the Divine Scriptures hidden from the many’ (τὸν κεκρυμμένον τοῖς πολλοῖς νοῶν τῶν θείων γραμμάτων)\textsuperscript{163}.

It is evident that Origen has esteem for Gregory and does not consider him “simple-minded”, and even judged it necessary to declare his ‘paternal love’ (πατρική ἀγάπη) for justifying his knowledge in philosophical matters to build up a Christian paideia and to interpret the Scriptures. It is clear then why Origen speaks to him with much respect and a certain gravity.

The letter ends with Origen’s wish that Gregory’s search will lead him to participation (μετοχή) not only with Christ, but also with God.

Despite the caution needed to compare the contents of the Ep. Gr. with those of the Pan. Or., it turns out that the personal profiles of the addressee of the former and of the author of the latter match smoothly. Both are high ranking persons and have studied at length.

II.3. Problems of interpretation

Following the opinion of Tillemont, the majority of the scholars both in modern and contemporary times agree that the Ep. Gr. should be placed after the Pan. Or.\textsuperscript{165}. The attempts to date the Ep. Gr. are more recent and rare: Ryssel dated it to 240\textsuperscript{166}, while for instance Koetschau, Crouzel and Quasten thought it should be positioned in the period between 238 and 243, when Origen was in Nicomedia\textsuperscript{167}.

The attempts of the scholars to place the Ep. Gr. before the Pan. Or. have been weak and rather unsuccessful. Johannes Dräseke thought that Gregory was in Alexandria in Egypt during the persecution of Maximinus (235-237) when Origen sent him the Ep. Gr. from Caesarea of Cappadocia\textsuperscript{168}. Consequently, Dräseke interpreted the Ep. Gr. as Origen’s attempt to warn Gregory to study philosophy in Alexandria, as the Gnostics did. The main arguments in support of Dräseke were: the superfluous appearance of Origen’s advice to study philosophy as ancillary but to have the Scriptures as his primary discipline, undertaken with prayer to God, if the Ep. Gr. was written after the Pan. Or.; the literal interpretation of the descent to Egypt of “Hadad” as referring to Gregory, who would have abandoned Palestine and moved to Egypt. As far as I know, only W. Metcalfe has fully accepted this interpretation\textsuperscript{169}. Dräseke, however, came round to changing his mind radically twenty years later agreeing with the

\textsuperscript{163} Or. Ep. Gr. IV, 88-89.
\textsuperscript{164} Or. Ep. Gr. IV, 94-95. Origen uses two times the verb τολμάω.
\textsuperscript{165} Mémoires pour servir à l’Histoire Ecclésiastique des six premiers siècles, t. IV, Paris 1696, 324-325.
\textsuperscript{166} Ryssel, Gregorius Thaumaturgos, 13.
\textsuperscript{167} Nautin, Origène, 438, dates Origen’s period in Nicomedia as being from 248 onwards.
\textsuperscript{168} Dräseke, Der Brief des Origenes, 115-124. On the historical objections to this hypothesis see §III.
\textsuperscript{169} Metcalfe (ed.), Gregory Thaumaturgus, Address to Origen, 36-40.
interpretation of Koetschau, after the latter had criticised him\textsuperscript{170}. Some of Dräseke’s arguments have been proposed again by Nautin, and we will go back to them shortly.

Another scholar who placed the composition of the \textit{Ep. Gr.} before the \textit{Pan. Or.} was Ferdinand Cavallera\textsuperscript{171}. According to him, Origen wrote the \textit{Ep. Gr.} in order to convince Gregory, who was hesitating, to study with him (cf. \textit{Pan. Or.} VI). Cavallera did not suppose that Gregory was in Egypt, but accepted that both were in Caesarea in Palestine. As has been clearly demonstrated by Crouzel, this view is unfeasible, not only because it is unlikely that Origen sent an epistle to a pupil living in the same city, but also because the \textit{Ep. Gr.} assumes that Gregory had had a philosophical education which, according to \textit{Pan. Or.} XI, 133-135, Gregory cultivated only after having met Origen\textsuperscript{172}.

The common view is to interpret the \textit{Ep. Gr.} as the reply of Origen to Gregory’s hesitation regarding his future as a lawyer. Koetschau held this perspective and rightly rejected Dräseke’s literal interpretation of the allegories of the \textit{Ep. Gr.}\textsuperscript{173} by conveniently quoting Origen who wrote that ‘to dwell among the Egyptians’ means among ‘the disciplines of the world’\textsuperscript{174}. Koetschau, therefore, considered the biblical reference to ‘Hadad’ as a sort of reproach on the part of Origen towards a pupil who had too much devotion to pagan philosophy.

The first objection against the identification of the author of the \textit{Pan. Or.} and the addressee of Origen’s \textit{Ep. Gr.} goes back to 1975. Eric Junod noted that, as the \textit{kephalaion} of the \textit{Philocalia} introducing the \textit{Ep. Gr.} did not say anything concerning its addressee, the Gregory of the \textit{Ep. Gr.} could not be the bishop of Neocaesarea\textsuperscript{175}. Indeed, Gregory of Nazianzus and especially Basil of Caesarea were supposed to know him and to mention that he was from Neocaesarea. Although Junod added that this sole argument was not conclusive, Michael Slusser and Marco Rizzi considered it – to different degrees – solid enough to have the traditional identification rejected\textsuperscript{176}. In my opinion this doubt is hardly persuasive because the addition could appear even superfluous to the Cappadocians, granted that they were the true authors of the

\begin{itemize}
\item \textsuperscript{170} Cf., \textit{infra}, n.430.
\item \textsuperscript{171} F. Cavallera, \textit{Origène éducateur}, BLE 44 (1943), 61-75 (prec. 65).
\item \textsuperscript{172} Crouzel (ed.), \textit{Gregoire le Thaumaturge, Remerciement}, 86. I accept only partially the second argument and agree with Rizzi in supposing a certain knowledge of philosophy by Gregory also before he met Origen. Cf. n.206.
\item \textsuperscript{173} Koetschau (ed.), \textit{Des Gregorios Thaumaturgos Dankrede an Origenes}, XV-XVII. According to the German scholar, Origen disliked also his excessive celebration in the \textit{Oratio} (esp. ch. 15) as privileged \textit{ermeneus} of God’s word.
\item \textsuperscript{174} Cf. n.156 above.
\item \textsuperscript{176} Slusser (ed.), \textit{St. Gregory Thaumaturgus, Life and Works}, 36-37, where, nonetheless, the scholar observes that ‘in many details it \textit{[Letter]} corroborates the picture given by the \textit{Address} of what study with Origen was like’. Rizzi (ed.), \textit{Gregorio il Taumaturgo (?), Encomio di Origene}, 84, notes also that the \textit{Ep. Gr.} seems to be addressed to someone who must begin his studies.
\end{itemize}
Philocalia. Indeed, the authorship of the Philocalia was called into doubt by Marguerite Harl with arguments strengthened by Junod both before and after the article which Slusser and Rizzi refer to\textsuperscript{177}. As explained by Harl\textsuperscript{178}, this attribution depends on the interpretation of two documents prefacing the work, Gregory of Nazianzus' Ep. 115 and an anonymous prologue. In the Ep. 115, which was addressed to Theodore, bishop of Tyana, we read that Gregory sent Theodore a codex of the Philocalia as a souvenir (ὑπόμνημα) from Gregory himself and Basil. It does not say that the Philocalia was composed by Gregory and Basil. This attribution is explicitly sustained by the unknown author of the prologue who is interpreting Gregory of Nazianzus' epistle. Since he warns the reader against the danger of Origenistic deviations, Harl has placed the composition of the prologue in the sixth century, after the condemnation of Origen's teachings under Justinian. Even if the majority of the scholars prefer to keep the traditional attribution, as far as I know, Harl’s and Junod’s remarks did not receive any sound reaction. I think that we should be rather cautious of relying on the silence of the compilers of the Philocalia as a method of judging the identity of the addressee of Origen’s Ep. Gr.

The main stance against the traditional identification of the addressee of the letter is that of Nautin\textsuperscript{179}. For him, Origen would have written the letter with the purpose of inviting Gregory to make good use of the philosophical studies he was doing and to avoid intellectual temptations to say something wrong about the Scriptures. Then, in order to distinguish two persons, Nautin highlighted the contradictory proposals made by scholars in placing the Ep. Gr. before or after the Pan. Or., and substantially proposed some of Dräseke’s arguments. Nautin thought that the Gregory of the Ep. Gr. was a young citizen of Caesarea of Palestine who lived in Alexandria to study law and philosophy. For him, Alexandria was the best city in which to undertake higher studies in both disciplines, while Caesarea could not offer him the facilities for studying law and philosophy. This is what Nautin deduced from the reference to ‘Hadad’ and from the many occurrences of ‘Egypt’ and ‘Egyptians’. Against the common idea of placing the Ep. Gr. after the Pan. Or., as we have already mentioned in the introduction, Nautin stressed two arguments: Origen is addressing someone who is studying the law and philosophy, and this is in disagreement with the end of the Pan. Or., where its author declares that he was going to undertake a public career; Origen recommended to

\textsuperscript{177} At a first stage Junod thought that Gregory of Nazianzus was the true author of this work, whereas Basil would have had a marginal role, see id., Remarques sur la composition de la “Philocalie” d’Origène par Basile de Césarée et Grégoire de Nazianze, RHPhR 52 (1972), 149-156. Afterwards Junod provisionally held the traditional attribution to Gregory of Nazianzus and Basil of Caesarea (Philocalie 21-27, Paris 1976, 11-12) and took it for granted thirty years later (see the rev. ed. SC 226, Paris 2006). But in the meantime he deemed that Gregory of Nazianzus’ letter was introduced in the Philocalia only in order to give credence to a text that could provoke suspicions in an anti-Origenistic age, see id., Basile de Césarée et Grégoire de Nazianze sont-ils les compilateurs de la Philocalie d’Origène? Réexamen de la Lettre 115 de Grégoire, in Mémorial Dom Jean Grébomont (1920-1986), Roma 1988 (SEAug 27), 349-360.

\textsuperscript{178} Harl (ed.), Philocalie 1-20, 19-27.

\textsuperscript{179} Nautin, Origène, 84-85, 155-157.
Gregory that he use philosophy to the advantage of Christianity, and this could even be considered rather superfluous for a pupil who had spent seven years with his master.

Nautin’s hypothesis is mostly based on the literal interpretation of the biblical references made by Origen. In my opinion it adapts badly to Origen’s thought and is a manifest forcing of the general sense of the *Ep. Gr.*; the remarks previously made by Koetschau on Dräseke’s stance are still valid against it. As pointed out also by Dorival initially, nothing in the *Ep. Gr.* allows us to establish Gregory’s origin and residence at the time he received the letter from Origen.

The other contraindications are artificial and of little significance. Indeed, even assuming that the Gregory of the *Ep. Gr.* were studying, we have no reason to see a contradiction to the end of the *Pan. Or.*. Indeed, we cannot exclude the possibility that he might have changed his mind about his career in order to continue his studies and to become a ‘perfect’ legal expert or philosopher.

However, as we have seen, Origen’s discourse is merely theoretical and presupposes that Gregory was already an expert and valued man of high ranking, and not just a student. To this end, it is worthy to note that all the scholars who agree, or tend to, with Nautin’s views have held a different position with regard to this point. Nautin thought that Gregory was studying, while all the others follow Marguerite Harl, who thought that Gregory had not started his higher studies yet. Both objections would go against the traditional order between the two works, because the author of the *Pan. Or.* had already accomplished higher studies with Origen and had continued to study Roman law. But that Gregory was about to undertake higher level studies, after those elementary studies of grammar, appears a more untenable view than that of Nautin. One has difficulty in imagining how a learned scholar like Origen would wish that an inexpert pupil of his might be able to extract anything that might be useful for Christianity and biblical exegesis from disciplines he had not studied yet.

As for the second contradiction pointed out by Nautin, Gregory’s decision to abandon the sacred sciences to begin another life in his homeland appears to be a good explanation of the reason why Origen reminded his pupil of his expectations and hope.

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180 See also Crouzel, *Faut-il voir trois personnages*, 301-303.
181 Dorival, *Est-il légitime d’éclairer le Discours de remerciement par la Lettre à Grégoire et réciproquement?*, 13, 18-19, where the French scholar shows a caution, which he then abandoned to give credence to Nautin’s interpretation in *Origène*. DPA 4, 815-816. As for the unfounded conjecture that it was necessary to leave Caesarea to study both Roman law and philosophy see the bibliographical references mentioned in this chapter, above, at n.119, and in Ch. 2, n.57.
182 M. Harl (ed.), *Philocalie* 1-20, 401: ‘Origène conseille à son élève, qui va poursuivre des études supérieures, de “prendre” dans la philosophie grecque ce qui sera “utile” pour l’interprétation des Écritures sacrées’; Simonetti, *Una nuova ipotesi*, 294, and Id., *Gregorio il Taumaturgo e Origene*, 25; Rizzi (ed.), *Gregorio il Taumaturgo (?)*, *Encomio di Origene*, 84; Dorival, *Est-il légitime d’éclairer le Discours de Remerciement par la Lettre à Grégoire et réciproquement?*, seems to agree with Harl at p. 15, and with Nautin at p. 18.
Therefore, there are no sound reasons either to rule out the possibility that the addressee of the Ep. Gr. is the same author of the Pan. Or. on the basis of their contents, or to be surprised by Origen’s recommendations to him.

Further narrative elements connecting the two writings may be highlighted, even though they are not in my opinion conclusive.

At the end of his speech in Caesarea, in passages full of biblical references, Gregory declares that he is going back to his homeland to face the tumult of, and the slavery to, ‘marketplaces and tribunals, crowds and insolence’\(^\text{185}\). He compares his departure to Adam’s fall and adds ‘again, I see myself as disobeying, daring to transgress the words of God, when I should remain in them and with them’\(^\text{186}\). He sees his situation as worse than that of the prodigal son because he had not taken what is necessary from Origen, his father\(^\text{187}\), ‘leaving behind what we admire and love with you and around you, and receiving worse in exchange’\(^\text{188}\). Like the Israelites deported to Babylonia, Gregory will no longer have ‘any time to devote to better things, nor shall we tell the divine words’\(^\text{189}\). Then Gregory tells that Origen had left in him – like seeds (σπέρματα) – good instructions for life, and declares his hope to ripen them:

> perhaps we shall return to you again, bearing the fruits and the sheaves produced (φέροντες) by the seeds – not perfect (τελείας μὲν οὐχ) (how could they be?), but such as we can produce (οίμας δὲ δυνατὸν ἡμῖν) from the affairs of city life, weakened by some sterile or malevolent force, but not entirely without value for us, if God approves (transl. Slusser, 125-126)\(^\text{190}\).

Although the Ep. Gr. might describe only a phase of the correspondence of the dialogue between Gregory and Origen\(^\text{191}\), it seems to give somehow an answer to the existential problems depicted in the last sections of the Pan. Or. Origen is perfectly

\(^{185}\) Pan. Or. XVI, §192.

\(^{186}\) Pan. Or. XVI, §185 (fall of Adam); §187,15-17: ἡ καὶ κύθης ἀπειθεῖτέ μοι δοκῶ, ᾑπερβάζεινεν τολμῶν τῶς λόγων του θεοῦ, μένειν δέον ἐν κύτῳ καὶ πρὸς κύτῳς. Slusser translates differently, omitting what appears to be a clear reference to Jn 15:7, as signalled by other scholars. Concerning §187, see the useful textual remarks of E. Marotta, A proposito di due passi dell’«Orazione panegirica» di Gregorio il Taumaturgo (16, 187; 18, 203 Koetschau), VetChr 13 (1976), 80-86 (esp. 81-84).

\(^{187}\) See Pan. Or. XVI, §189-90.

\(^{188}\) Pan. Or. XVI, §191 (transl. Slusser, 124).

\(^{189}\) Pan. Or. XVI, §190-197. Lk 15:11-32; Ps 136.

\(^{190}\) Pan. Or. XVII, §201-202: ἔστεν ἡμῖν καὶ σπέρματα, ἢ τε ἐγνωτας ἡμᾶς ἀνέδειξας καὶ ὅσα παρὰ σοῦ εἰλήφαμεν, τὰς καλὰς ὑποθήκας· σὺν οίς ἐπιμεν, κλάσαντες μὲν ἀς πορευόμενοι, φέροντες δὲ σὺν κύτῳς ὡς τὰ σπέρματα ταῦτα … ἵσως δὲ ὑποστρέφομεν πρὸς σὲ πάλαιν, φέροντες ἐκ τῶν σπερμάτων καὶ τῶς καρποὺς καὶ τὰς δραχμίδας, τελείας μὲν οὐχ (πῶς γὰρ ἄν;) οίκα δὲ δυνατὸν ἡμῖν ἀπὸ τῶν ἐν πολλεῖς πράξεως, διερθαρμένας μὲν τῇ δυνάμει ἢ ἀκάρπῳ καὶ κακοκάρπῳ τινί, μὴ καὶ προσδικαρθησμενή δὲ παρ’ ἡμῖν, εἰ ὁ θεὸς ἑπιμενοῖ.

\(^{191}\) Also for this reason I find Dorival’s criticisms of little significance: ‘il n’est pas vrai que le Discours et la Lettre soient si ressemblants du point de vue du contenu: le sujet traité n’est pas le même, les exemples tirés de la Bible sont différents, la longueur même des deux textes les oppose, même si la Lettre n’est probablement pas donnée dans son intégralité’ (Est-il légitime d’éclairer le Discours de Remerciement par la Lettre à Grégoire et réciproquement?, 19).
aware that Gregory can excel whatever he decides to do, and for this reason he asks him to dedicate his intelligence to the Christian cause rather than to profane interests. By referring to the episode of “Hadad”, Origen admonishes his pupil that if he went back to him—that is to the ‘land of Israel’, to the familiarity with the divine things—bearing the imperfect fruits of his profane affairs, without having carefully studied and prayed, these fruits would be nothing more than a careless speaking about the Scriptures and, at worst, heresies. But Origen asks him not only to pray but to have as his goal the study of the Scriptures in order to set a Christian paideia and an orthodox theology.

In conclusion, if Eusebius, or Pamphilus were led to identify the author of the Pan. Or. with the addressee of the Ep. Gr.—even though there is no trace of the Ep. Gr. in Hist. Eccl. VI,30, as we will see shortly—we do not see on what basis it can be said they were confused, made a mistake or committed a fraud.

II.4. Eusebius of Caesarea

Eusebius provides the information about Gregory after having said that Gordian succeeded Maximinus and that Fabianus became bishop of Rome (236-250AD). Eusebius knew only Gordian III, thus we are between 238 and 245 AD. Gregory of Neocaesarea must have been very well known, considering how Eusebius defines him with a term, διυξόντος (‘famous’), that appears only two times in the Hist. Eccl. to describe persons, one of which is Ignatius of Antioch.

Now while Origen was plying his accustomed tasks at Caesarea, many came to him, not only of the natives, but also numbers of foreign pupils who had left their own countries. Among these as especially distinguished we know to have been Theodore, who was the sameperson as that renowned bishop in our day, Gregory, and his brother Athenodore. Both of them were strongly enamoured of Greek and Roman studies, but Origen instilled in them a passion for philosophy and urged them to exchange their former love for the study of divine truth. Five whole years they continued with him, and made such progress in divine things that while still young both of them were deemed worthy of the episcopate in the churches of Pontus (Hist. Eccl. VI,30; transl. Oulton, II, 83).

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192 Pan. Or. §196-197.
194 Hist. Eccl. III,36,2,3. In VI,2,13 the term occurs again for the heretic Paul of Antioch, unknown to us, who lived in the same house of the rich Alexandrian matron who gave accommodation to Origen.
195 Eus. Hist. Eccl. VI,30: Τὸ δὲ Ὡριζέτει ἐπὶ τῆς Καισαρείας τὰ συνήθη πράττοντα πολλοὶ προσήχαν ὦ μόνον τῶν ἐπιγρώμων, ἀλλὰ καὶ τῆς ἀλλοδαπῆς μυρίων φωτεινής τὰς πατρίδας ἀπολύτων—ὅν ἐπισήμως μᾶλλον ἐγνωμὸν Θεόδωρον, ὡς ἴνα τούτῳ ὁ καθ’ ἴμας ἐπισκόπων διαβάσως Γρηγόριος, τὸν τε τούτου ἄδελφον Ἀθηνόδωρον, ός ἄμφι τὰ Ἑλληνῶν καὶ τὰ Ὑπαμασταὶ δεινῶς ἐπιμηκόντας, φιλοσοφὶς αὐτοῖς ἐνεικέ ἑρωτα, τῆς προτέρας σπουδῆς τὴν θείαν ἄσκησιν ἀντικαταλλάξασθαι προστρέψατο—πέντε δὲ ὀλοίς ἔτεσιν αὐτῶ
Eusebius provides a report of the course of Gregory’s studies that is in complete agreement with the *Pan. Or.* He knows that Gregory was interested in profane studies (Greek and Roman studies) but not, at the very beginning, in philosophy and the search of God (θεία ἀσκησίς).

This description attracted the attention of Nautin, and then Dorival, with regard to its relationship with the *Ep. Gr.* and the *Pan. Or.* Nautin has argued that Eusebius’ depiction of Gregory’s interests was influenced both by the *Pan. Or.* and the *Ep. Gr.* However his arguments are unreasonably complicated. For example, Nautin thought that the relationship between Eusebius’ passage and the *Pan. Or.* was proved by the ‘love (ἔρως) of the philosophy’ that links to the ‘lovers (ἐραστάς) of the philosophy praised by Origen in the discourse he gave in order to convince Theodore, who wanted to leave him, to stay at his school’. Another element in favour of this relationship would be the reference to the number of years spent at Origen’s school, which, as we have seen, according to Nautin, Eusebius would not have remembered. The strong enthusiasm of Gregory and Athenodore for the ‘Greek and Roman studies’ and the idea of the change of their interest in ‘the study of divine truth’ at the hand of Origen would rely on Eusebius’ reading of the beginning of the *Ep. Gr.*, where Origen says:

> your natural skills can make you a perfect Roman lawyer and a Greek philosopher of one of those schools deemed in high repute. But I wished that you employed all the power of your skill finally for Christianity.

It is sufficient to compare Eusebius’ passage with *Pan. Or.* VI, §§78, 83 and 84, appropriately mentioned by Oulton in his translation, to understand how Nautin’s attempt to demonstrate that Eusebius used both the *Pan. Or.* and the *Ep. Gr.* is artificial. There is no clear trace of the *Ep. Gr.* in Eusebius’ account. In particular one notes that Nautin does not pay attention to Eusebius’ phrase ‘Origen instilled into them a passion for philosophy’ which, on the one hand, this may lead us to exclude the idea that Eusebius knew the *Ep. Gr.*, for it seems to have been addressed to someone who had already studied philosophy, or, according to Nautin, to someone who was studying it. Since Eusebius does not quote either the *Ep. Gr.* or the *Pan. Or.*, it is a *petitio principii* to

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196 *Pan. Or.* VI, §73-84.
197 *Pan. Or.* VI, §75.
198 Nautin translates ‘pour connaître Dieu’ (*Origène*, 81).
199 See also *Pan. Or.* XI, §133-135.
presuppose them in order to hypothesise that Eusebius made a mistake\textsuperscript{200}. On the other hand, it is hard not to admit that Eusebius knew the Pan. Or. and the Ep. Gr.; Eusebius was the first editor of the Pan. Or.; the list of Origen’s works handed down by Jerome’s Letter to Paula gives the record of the existence of ‘two books of letters to him [Origen] by Firmilianus, Gregorius and others’\textsuperscript{201}, so we can easily suppose that the Ep. Gr. was included in this collection and that Eusebius could have had access also to other sources of information about Gregory which have not been preserved for us (not necessarily to be restricted to Gregory’s letters to Origen).

Although Eusebius may have exaggerated the depiction of Gregory’s interests of study, he does not speak openly of the passion Gregory and Athenodorus had for philosophy. That said, Dorival’s hypothesis that the Pan. Or. was written by an anonymous author can be discarded. Following mainly Nautin’s conjectures, Dorival suggested presupposing that the author of the Pan. Or. was not identifiable with the Theodore of Hist. Eccl. VI,30, the Gregory of Origen’s Ep. Gr. or Gregory of Neocaesarea\textsuperscript{202}. According to Dorival, this may be deduced from two main inconsistencies between the Pan. Or. and Eusebius’ account: 1) Pan. Or. §3 means that its author stayed eight years with Origen and not five; 2) Eusebius reports the passion of Gregory and Athenodorus for philosophy and law before they arrived in Caesarea, while the author of the Pan. Or. would not have had any other pagan education but the law, which he studied only at the insistence of his teacher (§59). The first point, as we have seen, is weak: the difference of years between the Pan. Or. and the Hist. Eccl. is not a strong argument since the Greek text of the Pan. Or. at issue is not clear\textsuperscript{203} and Eusebius might have had another source. The second point is founded on an oversight: if Eusebius meant to say that Gregory and Athenodore had a passion for philosophy and law by writing that they ‘were strongly enamoured of Greek and Roman studies’, why does he stress that it was Origen who instilled ‘into them a passion for philosophy’?\textsuperscript{204}

That Gregory had carried out ‘Greek and Roman studies’ appears at the very beginning of the Pan. Or., where Gregory mentions his studies of rhetoric (§2-3) and Roman law (7). This of course does not imply that Gregory was not interested at all in philosophy before he arrived at Caesarea, for he says he had already met some philosophers (§134)\textsuperscript{205}.

What we find only in the account of Eusebius is the mention of the two names, the presence of Athenodore at Origen’s school, the number of years that Gregory and Athenodore spent studying in Caesarea and their Pontic origin and bishopric see.

\textsuperscript{200} G. Sfameni Gasparro speaks of petitio principii with regard to the Pan. Or. in Origene «Uomo divino» nell’«Encomio», 143.
\textsuperscript{201} See n.127 above.
\textsuperscript{202} Dorival, Est-il légitime d’éclairer le Discours de Remerciement par la Lettre à Grégoire et réciproquement?, 16-17, 20.
\textsuperscript{203} See above §II,1.
\textsuperscript{204} That here ‘philosophy’ does not mean the Christian one (typical meaning in Eusebius) is evident from the context.
\textsuperscript{205} Cf. Rizzi, Intervento, 29.
With regard to this last point Eusebius reveals partially his sources. In the seventh book of the *Hist. Eccl.* Eusebius reports that ‘Gregory and his brother Athenodore were ruling the churches of Pontus, pupils of Origen’ when Gallienus was Augustus, between 260/261 and 268, and that they took part in the first session of the Council of Antioch against Paul of Samosata, which the critics date to 264. This explains why Eusebius, born in about 263, says that Gregory was his contemporary, but cannot explain why Eusebius relates that Gregory and Athenodore became bishops when they were young. Since the *Pan. Or.* was delivered when its author was about twenty-five years old, in both the cases it was delivered in 238/9 or in 245 (Nautin), the Acts of the Council of Antioch could not lead Eusebius to conclude that Gregory became bishop ‘while still young’. Also in this case we must admit that Eusebius had had another source of information.

Eusebius quotes the enclosed synodal letter in different passages and gives a description of the facts of the Council of Antioch that implies that he knew its proceedings. Paul of Samosata was bishop of Antioch between 259 and 269. The bishops of the neighbourhood convened at least two synods to denounce his doctrine during this decade. Eusebius records as the most distinguished of them ‘the brothers Gregory and Athenodore, pastors of the communities in Pontus’, and lists other...
followers of Origen such as Firmilian of Caesarea in Cappadocia and Theotecnus of Caesarea in Palestine. Dionysius of Alexandria did not attend the council because of his age but sent a letter expressing his opinion on Paul’s doctrine; Dionysius died in 264 or 265, shortly after the first synod against Paul. Eusebius reports that it was only thanks to the intervention of the priest Malchion, a ‘learned man’ and ‘head of the school of rhetoric’ in Antioch, that the heresy of Paul was definitively unmasked, during another Council dated between 268 and 269. Then the synod elected Bishop Domnus, but, nonetheless, Paul held control of his see, counting on the support of his followers until the intervention of Aurelian, who had Paul driven out of the city in 272. On the occasion of this last synod the bishops wrote a letter addressed primarily to Dionysius of Rome and Maximus of Alexandria, quoted partially by Eusebius. Among the other subscribers we do not find either Gregory and Athenodore or Firmilian, while, for instance, we read again the name of Theotecnus of Caesarea and, among others, that of an unknown Theodore.

Other passages of the letter attest that Firmilian took part in the synods two times and condemned the heresy of Paul, who tried also to deceive his opponents pretending a change of attitude. Finally Firmilian died when he was about to arrive to Antioch to take his stand against Paul. On the contrary, the passages from this letter quoted by Eusebius do not mention any Gregory.

Nautin is the first scholar who has denied the participation of Gregory and Athenodore in the Council of Antioch. It is worth remembering that Nautin’s view is founded on the assumptions that Eusebius met the bishops Gregory and Athenodorus in

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person, that he did not have other sources besides the Pan. Or., the Ep. Gr. and the final synodal letter of the Council of Antioch, and that he read the Pan. Or. under the sole name of Theodore. Though we are able to verify Nautin’s interpretation of the Pan. Or., the Ep. Gr. and in part also Eusebius’ description of the Council, in the cases of the original name of the author of the Pan. Or. and of the meeting between Eusebius and Gregory (and Athenod), we are dealing with speculations.

The foundation of these conjectures is Nautin’s original reading of the following lines: ‘many came to him [Origen] … among whom we met (ἔγνωμεν)… Theodore, who was the Gregory famous among the bishops of our day’. From this passage Nautin deduced two facts: these words ‘montrent que c’est bien sous le nom de Grégoire qu’Eusèbe a connu l’évêque du Pont’; considering that the title preserved in the manuscript tradition of the Pan. Or. is late and that, according to Nautin, Eusebius knew only this and the Ep. Gr., “Theodore” must have been the name that Eusebius read in his copy of this work. The first conjecture is unfounded; the latter cannot be substantiated.

Nautin maintained that Eusebius met personally Bishops Gregory and Athenod during a ceremony on the basis of the presence of ἔγνωμεν. The Hist. Eccl. provides two other occurrences of this verb with this precise meaning in connection with Pamphilus and Dorotheus. These cases do not encounter similar chronological difficulties. Omitting the well-known case of Pamphilus, Eusebius met Dorotheus when Cyril was bishop of Antioch, that is between 280 and 302. This is not the case with Gregory. In the best case, that is if the Suda is to be believed, according to which ‘[Gregory] died under under Aurelian’ (270-275), it may be assumed that Eusebius, born in about 263, had the opportunity of meeting Gregory and Athenod when he was a child. Whether this chronological reference is reliable or not, it is hard to imagine why Gregory and Athenod did not attend an important event such as the Council of Antioch (d. 269), whereas they could go from Pontus to Caesarea (?), where Eusebius could meet them. Moreover, if Eusebius met personally the famous bishop of Neocaesarea, it remains incomprehensible why Eusebius did not mention him among the greatest bishops of his age in Hist. Eccl. VII,32.

The idea that Gregory and Athenodorus did not take part in the Council of Antioch (Hist. Eccl. VII,28,1) is founded only on Nautin’s certainty that Eusebius

223 Nautin, Origène, 83.
224 Notice that in this phase of his reconstruction of the mental process that would have led Eusebius to assimilate different persons, Nautin did not attach any importance to the synodal letter against Paul of Samosata where a certain Theodore is mentioned (Hist. Eccl. VII,30,2).
226 Suda Γ 452 (543,5-6 Adler): ἐπέλευσαν ἐπὶ Αὔγουστον. Also the Menologium Graecum, which is a little later, reports the same (ad diem 17 Nov.). One might wonder whether this late information on the Suda depended on the assimilation between Gregory of Neocaesarea with the “Theodore” who was the recipient of the letter of condemnation of Paul quoted in Hist. Eccl. VII,30,2, which Eusebius positions after the accession of Aurelian (Hist. Eccl. VII,28,4). I tend to consider the appearance of Gregory at the first synod of the Council of Antioch the last historical information at our disposal and to date Gregory’s death after 264. This hypothesis has already been considered by Bardy (SC 41, 214).
227 Cf. Lane Fox, Pagans and Christians, 517.
identified the Theodore author of the Pan. Or. and the unknown Theodore who took part in the final synod that condemned of Paul of Samosata (Hist. Eccl. VII,30,2)\textsuperscript{228}. Since Gregory of Neocaesarea would have signed such a document with his name as a bishop, Nautin concludes that both Gregory and Athenodorus were absent from the Council of Antioch\textsuperscript{229}. Nautin, it seems, simply misconstrues Eusebius’ narrative of the facts of the Council and attributes to him a gross misunderstanding with no founded reason. We can stress the weakness of Nautin’s argumentation also by bearing in mind two other elements. First, Nautin did not take into account the evident fact that there were different synods in Antioch, so Crouzel rightly noted that it is impossible to explain ‘comment la présence de ce Thédore au dernier concile a amené Eusèbe à conclure que Grégoire et Athénodore se trouvaient dans le premier’\textsuperscript{230}. Secondly, Eusebius might have been informed about the participation of Gregory and Athenodorus in the first synod of Antioch not only from now lost written documents, but also by Theotecnus of Caesarea, who actively took part in that Council\textsuperscript{231}. Theotecnus was a contemporary of Eusebius and was succeeded as bishop by Agapius, who, in his turn, was succeeded by Eusebius to the see of Caesarea\textsuperscript{232}. Therefore, Eusebius’ report of Gregory’s participation in the Council of Antioch endures the conjectures of Nautin.

Finally, what cannot be explained by the texts at our disposal and by what Eusebius might likely have known about the Council of Antioch is 1) the two names of Gregory, 2) the presence of Athenodorus at Origen’s school, 3) the number of years of study, 4) their episcopal consecration when they were ‘still young’. All of these elements lead us to suppose that Eusebius knew other sources. Were they written, oral, or both? That is impossible to determine, but I do not see any good reason to discredit Eusebius and Pamphilus supposing an apologetic aim in the depiction they provided of Gregory Thaumaturgus\textsuperscript{233}. First, the bishop of Neocaesarea was personally known to at

\textsuperscript{228} G. Bardy, Paul de Samosate, 299, wrote that Nicetas Choniates identified the Theodore mentioned in Hist. Eccl. VII,30,2 with Gregory of Neocaesarea, but the passage at issue (PG 139, 1314A) does not demonstrate this view. Nicetas seems to have remembered the name of Theodore on the basis of Hist. Eccl. VI,30 instead. Moreover, Nicetas does not distinguish between the phases of the Council when he lists the participants, just like the other authors mentioned by Bardy (Germanus of Constantinople, Maximus Confessor, John Zonaras, Matthaeus Blasteres). L.-S. Le Nain de Tillemont, Mémoires pour servir à l’histoire ecclésiastique des six premiers siècles, t. IV, Paris 1696, 336, and Ryssel, Gregorius Thaumaturgus, 17-18, are the only historians who looked at this identification with a certain assent, while R. Ceillier, Histoire générale des auteurs sacrés et ecclésiastiques, t. III, Paris 1732, 311 and of M.J. Routh, Reliquiae Sacrae: sive, auctorum fere jam perditorum secundi tertiique saeculi fragmenta, quae supersunt … vol. II, Oxonii 1814, 500 remain hesitant.

\textsuperscript{229} For Nautin’s reconstruction of the mental process of Eusebius see Introd. n.7.

\textsuperscript{230} Crouzel, Faut-il voir trois personnages, 310, n.70. However, Nautin continued in maintaining his position in Grégoire le Thaumaturge, 40.

\textsuperscript{231} Eus. Hist. Eccl. VII,28,1; 30,2.

\textsuperscript{232} Eus. Hist. Eccl. VII,14; 32,24. Theotecnus was bishop of Caesarea from the beginning of the 260s (Theoctistus died in about 258; Domnus was bishop for ‘a short time’) onwards, but when Agapius took his place cannot be established (according to the Martyrs of Palestine, the latter died at least two years after the beginning of the great persecution, that is after 305).

\textsuperscript{233} Nautin, Origène, 146; Simonetti, Gregorio il Taumaturgo e Origene, 29-30. In the preceding pages (134-144) Nautin argued that one of Pamphilus’ reasons to compose the Apologia pro Origene was the
least one bishop of Caesarea, contemporary with Eusebius and Pamphilus (Theotecenus). Second, if we admit an apologetic aim in the “invention” by Eusebius and Pamphilus, it remains unintelligible why *Hist. Eccl.* VI,30 does not make explicit references to Gregory’s prodigious powers.\textsuperscript{234}

II.5. The Cappadocian tradition

With Basil of Caesarea and Gregory of Nyssa we see the birth of the figure of Gregory of Neocaesarea as a saint, wonderworker and evangelist of Pontus. However, as we have seen, Gregory received the epithet “Thaumaturgus” by Timotheus Aelurus in the fifth century.\textsuperscript{235} To Basil of Caesarea’s *De Spiritu Sancto* we owe the first description of the Thaumaturgus’ prodigious stories, which were destined to spread all over the Christian world thanks in particular to Gregory of Nyssa’s *Vita Gregorii Thaumaturgi* and other “lives” in Latin\textsuperscript{236}, Syriac\textsuperscript{237}, Coptic\textsuperscript{238}, Armenian\textsuperscript{239}, Georgian\textsuperscript{240} and Slavonic\textsuperscript{241}, produced between fifth and eighteenth century.\textsuperscript{242}

presence of an anti-Origenistic group in the community of Caesarea of Palestine, which included an unknown bishop who succeeded Agapius. This view has not been endorsed by other scholars, such as Amacker – Junod (eds.), Pamphile et Eusèbe de Césarée, *Apologie pour Origène*, 81-85, and Williams, *Damnosa haereditas*, 160-164.

\textsuperscript{234} Nautin himself thinks that Eusebius considered Gregory as the bishop famous for his miracles. See *Origène*, 82.

\textsuperscript{235} See above, n.71.


\textsuperscript{237} In Syriac we have several fragments and manuscripts (often with many blanks) which preserve different versions of Gregory of Nyssa’s *Vita*, see M. van Esbroeck, *Les versions syriaques du Panégyriques de Grégoire le Thaumaturge*, ARAM 5 (1993), 537-553; Id., *The Syriac Versions of the Panegyric of Gregory of Nyssa on Gregory the Wonderworker and of the Life of the same*, «Journal of Eastern Christian Studies» 56, no. 1-4 (2004), 1-13. Among these mss. the most studied is the British Library Add. 14648, which has been translated into German by V. Ryssel, *Eine syrische Lebensgeschichte des Gregorius Thaumaturgus. Nach cod. Mus. Brit. Syr. Add. 14648 aus dem syrischen übersetzt*, ThSZ 11 (1894), 228-254, and edited in *Acta Martyrum et Sanctorum* eddit P. Bedjan. T. VI, Parisii 1896, 83-106. P. Koechschau, *Zur Lebensgeschichte Gregors des Wunderhätters*, ZWTh 41 (1898), 211-250, has shown that Ryssel’s hypothesis that there was an original Greek life from which the Syriac
The study of the relations between these documents has been conducted by several scholars, but unfortunately only in a partial way. It has been rightly noted that, considering the great variety of languages of these writings, such a work would need an équipe of scholars. At present even a summary of the issues discussed in the scholarly debate may lead us far from our focus. Indeed, even though the existence of another Greek “life” previous to that of Gregory of Nyssa and of oral traditions which these

translation derived and which was used by Gregory of Nyssa himself was not demonstrated; according to Koetschau, the Syriac version is derivative from and amplifies the legendary tone of Gregory of Nyssa’s Vita, which collected mainly oral traditions. H. Hilgenfeld, Die Vita Gregor’s des Wunderthäters und die syrischen Acta Martyrum et Sanctorum, ZWTh 41 (1898), 452-456, gave credit to Koetschau and showed that some stories were attributed also to Jacob of Nisibis and Ephrem the Syrian. Even more free is the Syriac version of the manuscript Berlin Sachau 321 according to van Esbroeck’s studies, which have been re-examined by I. Ramelli, Gregorio il Taumaturgo nelle versioni siriane della sua biografia, in Clausi – Milazzo (eds.), Il giusto che fiorisce come palma, 240-260 (this article reveals imprecision in many respects). There is also a Karshuni version dated to the eighteenth century, which was studied by van Esbroeck many years before his passing, see P. Devos, Le manteau partagé. Un thème hagiographique en trois de ses variantes, AnBoll 93 (1975), 161-162, n.4.


242 These centuries are respectively those of van Esbroeck’s dating of the Georgian passio and that of the Karshuni version. The cultus of the Thaumaturgus continued to give birth to a hagiographical literary output until the beginning of the nineteenth century. See the excellent study of W. Telfer, The cultus of St. Gregory Thaumaturgus, HThR 29/4 (1936), 225-344 and Bidotti, Scenari mediterranei. Il culto di san Gregorio Taumaturgo dall’Oriente all’Occidente.

243 Ryssel, Eine syrische Lebensgeschichte des Gregorius Thaumaturgus, 240. It is wrong what is reported by van Esbroeck, The Credo of Gregory the Wonderworker, 257: ‘V. Ryssel developed the idea that the Syriac Life was the source used by Gregory of Nyssa’ (contra see Ryssel, 237). Van Esbroeck founded the hypothesis of a lost source used also by Gregory of Nyssa mainly on the basis of a miracle (that of the
“lives” depended on were to be assumed, these writings do not add any historical fact to Gregory of Nyssa’s Vita. On the contrary, they contain anachronisms and tend to amplify the prodigious feature of the miracles narrated by Gregory of Nyssa.

Our interest is not to discuss the credibility of these miracles, but rather to detect plausible biographical data in Gregory of Nyssa’s work. For this reason, we will substantially ignore Rufinus’ additional description in his translation of Eusebius’ Hist. Eccl. and in the next chapter we will provide only a summary of the facts regarding Thaumaturgus’ life as told by Gregory of Nyssa without paying attention to marvels and other passages of little importance. Gregory of Nyssa tells the story of a learned intellectual who abandoned Greek philosophy in favour of embracing evangelical simplicity; he was an ascetic who became bishop and was able to convert pagan masses through his words and especially through his miracles. Although Basil and Rufinus tell stories without any significant chronological order, it remains important to pay attention, even if briefly, to their testimonies because they allow us to introduce the issue of Gregory of Nyssa’s sources.

The links of the Cappadocians with Pontus have to be traced back to their paternal grandparents, who were born at most during the last years of Thaumaturgus’ life. They had lived in Neocaesarea, where their son Basil (the Elder) exercised the profession of rhetor. Basil of Caesarea and Gregory of Nyssa were born probably in Neocaesarea and Basil had also received there his first education from his father. Basil had then refused to work as a teacher as his father did at Neocaesarea, and he went back to practise asceticism at Annesi, between Amaseia and Neocaesarea. There Basil’s family owned an estate, and his sister and mother (Macrina the younger and Emmelia) took up the ascetic life. The figure of Thaumaturgus was of the outmost importance

dragon of Comana) reported by both the Latin biography and the Georgian passio; see Le martyre géorgien de Grégoire le Thaumaturge et sa date, 133-134, 170.

244 Koetschau, Zur Lebensgeschichte Gregors des Wunderthäters, 238-248, thinks that this is the case for the sources of Gregory of Nyssa’s Vita, the Syriac ms. in London, Rufinus and Basil. Fouska, Γρηγόριος ὁ Νεοκαισαρείας ἐπίσκοπος ὁ Θαυματουργός, 56-59, includes also the lives in Armenian and Latin. 245 It is sufficient to read Fouska, Γρηγόριος ὁ Νεοκαισαρείας ἐπίσκοπος ὁ Θαυματουργός, 60-61, where it is provided a useful comparative table of the episodes recounted by Gregory of Nyssa, by the lives in Latin, Armenian (Venetiis 1874), Syriac (British Library Add. 14648), and by Basil, Rufinus, Georgius Monachus, Menologium Graecum and Nicephorus Callistus. Fouska’s pages 29-61, although needing to be updated, remain the most ample review of Thaumaturgus’ biographies. Another useful table is provided by Mitchell, The life and lives of Gregory Thaumaturgus, 118-119.

246 A well-known example is the episode of Gregory of Nazianzus consecrating the Thaumaturgus as bishop of Neocaesarea, recorded by the Syriac manuscripts British Library Add. 14648, Leningrad N.S.4 and the Georgian passio. Cf. van Esbroeck, The Credo of Gregory the Wonderworker, 257-258. 247 Rufinus’ supplement on Gregory Thaumaturgus is published by Mommsen in GCS 9/2, 953-956. 248 For a study of this material see the contributions of Fouska, Van Dam and Mitchell.

249 R. van Dam, Hagiography and History: the Life of Gregory Thaumaturgus, CIA 1/2 (1982), 283.

for the family of the Cappadocians because, as Basil recounted, their grandmother Macrina had taught him ‘the words of the blessed Gregory which, having been preserved until her time by uninterrupted tradition, she also guarded’ and which Basil considered the foundations of his orthodoxy.

Basil mentions Gregory of Neocaesarea again in other letters, as well as in the De Spiritu Sancto, all writings dating to between 371 and 376, when Basil was already a bishop. However, since these documents provide very little information about Thaumaturgus’ life and since they concern more the issues of the authenticity of the Dialogue with Gelian and of the Confessio fidei, we will postpone examining them. At this point it might be sufficient to say that Basil seems to have known very little about Gregory of Neocesarea’s life as a layman and that we can assume he only knew the Dialogue as the work of Gregory.

What we learn from Basil is indeed focused on the portrayal of Gregory of Neocaesarea as a model of sanctity and orthodoxy. In the letters Basil calls Gregory ‘great’, ‘blessed’ and ‘most admirable’ and considers him ‘patron’ and founder of the Church of Neocaesarea. Basil’s greatest consideration for Thaumaturgus is proved by a passage from the De Spiritu Sancto:

Where shall we rank Gregory the Great (τὸν μεγαλούχον) and his words? Shall we not number with the apostles and prophets a man who walked in the same Spirit? He never strayed from the footsteps of the saints for a day in his life; he strictly fulfilled the duties of the Gospel without wavering. I say this: we sin against the truth if we do not number that soul in the household of God, since he shines as a radiant beacon in the Church of God. He cooperated with the Spirit and was given fearful power over demons; he received such grace for preaching “the obedience of faith among all the nations”, that although when he arrived in Pontus he found only seventeen Christians, he soon brought all the people, whether in town or country, to the knowledge of God. By Christ’s mighty Name he even commanded rivers to

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251 Bas. Ep. 204,6 (for further information see §II,1). It is rather perfunctory to deduce from this passage that Macrina (270-340?) was a direct pupil of Gregory, as most scholars do. Cf. also Ep. 210,1,13-20 and Ep. 223,3.

252 See below Ch. 5, §II,1, and 2.

253 M. Naldini, Paideia origeniana nella «Oratio ad adolescentes» di Basilio Magno, VetChr 13 (1976), 297-318, has tried to demonstrate that Basil was inspired by the Pan. Or. in composing the Oratio ad adolescentes, but, I think, in vain: the parallels discussed are not convincing and the affinity between Origenian and Basilian conceptions of profane culture does not need the mediation of the Pan. Or. to be understood. Likewise unconvincing are the argumentations of H. Dehnhard, Das Problem der Abhängigkeit des Basilius von Plotin. Quellenuntersuchungen zu seinen Schriften De Spiritu Sancto, Berlin 1964 (PTS 3), 89-90.

254 Bas. Ep. 207,4,1; 210,3,3.

255 Bas. Ep. 204,6,4-5.

256 Bas. Ep. 207,4,8.

257 Bas. Ep. 28,2,44-45.

258 Bas. Ep. 28,1,42-43; 204,2,4-5.
change their courses and once when some brothers were quarrelling over a lake, each wishing to possess it for his own, he caused it to dry up. His predictions of future things were no less than those of the other prophets. To describe all his miracles in detail would take too long; by the working of the Spirit he was filled with a superabundance of grace, which manifested itself in such powerful signs and wonders that he was called a second Moses even by the enemies of the Church. A light seemed to shine in everything he accomplished through grace, whether by word or deed, reminding everyone of the invisible heavenly power which accompanied him. To this very day he is a source of great wonder to his countrymen, and his memory has not grown old with time, remaining as fresh in the churches as the green of spring.  

Every feature of this description as well as the wonder episodes mentioned by Basil were elaborated again in Gregory of Nyssa’s Vita. However, Gregory of Nyssa himself, insofar as he told many other stories, recalled Basil’s claim that the description of all the Thaumaturgus’ miracles ‘would take too long’. It seems hardly questionable that the family bonds with Neocaesarea and its famous bishop may explain the origin of the miracles gathered and told by Basil and Gregory of Nyssa. Nevertheless, their collection of stories might have been influenced by two other factors. First, the Neocaesarean environment seems to have favoured an excessive enthusiasm for wonders, if we can give credit to Basil, who charged Atarbius, the contemporary bishop of Neocaesarea, with ignorance and with spreading ‘pseudo-prophetical visions’. Second, the assumption that there was at least another hagiography circulating at that time is confirmed by the fact that Gregory of Nyssa reproached ‘the artificial conceit of the writers’ (logographoi) with misreporting the extraordinary deeds of a Saint, for they do not need amplifications. As A. de Nicola has shown, Gregory of Nyssa by


260 See also Van Dam, Hagiography and History, 284 (however, there is not a trace of any reference to the creed of Gregory in this passage of Spir.). For Moses’ figure in the Cappadocians and for the differences of the comparison of the Thaumaturgus to Moses by Basil and Gregory of Nyssa see A. Sterk, On Basil, Moses and the Model Bishop: The Cappadocian Legacy of Leadership, ChH 67/2 1998, 227-253 (esp. 235-239).

261 Gr. Nyss. V. Gr. Thaum., 44,11-14 Heil: ἄλλα τὸ μὲν πᾶσιν ἐφεξῆς τοῖς παρ’ ἐκείνου θαύμασαν ἐπεξείνανα μακρὰς ἐν εἰς συγγραφῆς καὶ λόγων τὴν παροῦσαν σχολὴν ὑπερβαίνοντος, ἔνως δὲ ἡ δοξὴ ἐπὶ τῶν περὶ αὐτοῦ λεγομένων ἐπιμνησθεὶς ἐν τούτων περίγραψεν τὸν λόγον. ‘To go through in order all the marvels worked by him would require a long book and a discourse exceeding the time we have now, but since I have been reminded of one or two more things told about him I shall close the discourse with these’ (transl. Sluiter, 75). Cf. also the last lines of the Vita.

262 Ep. 211 (d. 376). For further information see, below, §II.1.


264 Gr. Nyss. V. Gr. Thaum., 23,10-11 Heil: Σιγάτω πρὸς τάξα πάσα τεχνικὴ τῶν λογογράφων περίνοια τὰς ἑπαυξήσεις τῶν θαυμάτων δίκτυ τινος ὧν οἰκουμένη ἐπὶ τὸ μεῖξον ἐξαίρεσα. ‘Faced
saying so was rejecting some Sophistic patterns, in particular that of the *amplificatio*, for he aimed to write a truthful *historia* of Thaumaturgus’ miracles. But this also implies that Gregory of Nyssa intended to highlight, by contrast, his moderation in reporting Gregory of Neocaesarea’s miracles with respect to other writings. Therefore, the hypotheses of an *Urtext* and of oral traditions are historically plausible and compatible with each other.

Rufinus’ words of introduction to his *additamentum* to *Hist. Ecc.* VII, 28 show that oral traditions could last and spread for a long time: ‘I consider very worthy for posterity to attach to this narration the deeds of such a great man, which are celebrated under the sky of East and North in the discourses of all and which I do not know why have been omitted’.

Ryssel and Koetschau considered Rufinus’ stories as independent from Gregory of Nyssa, while Telfer thought that they ‘even in their differences from corresponding stories in Nyssen, are not so independent as to make it improbable that their ultimate source is Nyssen’s text’. After a long commentary on Rufinus’ stories, Benedetto Clausi gives credit to Telfer and, at the same time, observes that Rufinus’ miracles remain independent from those of the Nyssen not only because of their different narratives and contents, but also for the strictly hagiographical function that Rufinus confers on them. It is also usually admitted that Rufinus’ translation of the *Confessio fidei* relied directly on Gregory of Nyssa’s *Vita*. In reality, not even this appears totally convincing because Rufinus, who strengthened Gregory of Neocaesarea’s fame with the title of “martyr” (which is absent as such in the *Vita*) and has always shown a particular attention for wonder stories, omitted to point out that

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266 Cf. Van Dam, *Becoming Christian: The Conversion of Roman Cappadocia*, 205 (but Rufinus did not write to have found the *Confessio fidei* in the *Metaphrasis*).

267 Rufinus’ addition to Eus. *Hist. Eccl.*, 953,3-6 Mommsen: Verum quoniam beati Gregorii historiae textus adultit mentionem, dignissimum puto tanti viri gesta, quae sub orientali et septentrionis axe cunctorum sermone celebrantur, omissa nescio quo casu huic narrationi ad memoriam posteritatis inserere.

268 Cf. above n.238.


270 Clausi, *L’altro Gregorio*, 195-208. I assume also two other observations from this fine study: Rufinus extracted the reference to the *Metaphrasis* from Jerome’s *Vir. III*; Rufinus takes for granted the knowledge of Eusebius’ *Hist. Eccl.* and that explains the lack of reference to the *Pan. Or.* I add that Rufinus might have read the *Pan. Or.*, cf. below n.388.

271 From this perspective Rufinus’ supplement is exactly consistent with his interpretation of miracles as signs of the “economy of salvation” being played out in the history of the Church.
Thaumaturgus received the *Confessio* by revelation from the Mother of the Lord and St. John the Evangelist.

II.6. Gregory of Nyssa

Gregory of Nyssa delivered the *De Vita Gregorii Thaumaturgi* likely in 380. The narrative is focused on the portrayal of the exceptional character of the Saint, whose actions are occasionally explained in connection with the biblical figures of Abraham, Moses, Joseph, Solomon, Joshua, Samuel, Elijah and Elisha, and St. Peter. Although the title handed down by the manuscript tradition recalls the biographical genre, mainly for his remarkable extension, the *Vita* is substantially a panegyric, for it is mostly dedicated to the praise and to the exhortation of imitation of the “life of virtue” of Gregory of Neocaesarea. L. Méridier has shown that the *Vita* is one of the discourses of Gregory of Nyssa that more closely followed Menander’s rules of composition of *enkomia*. After all, Gregory was esteemed as a rhetor even by Libanius. Other scholars have noted that the *Vita* is closer to the biographical genre, which is shown by the presence of precise biographical data. According to J. Bernardi, the scholars have proposed three different years for the date of this work. Mitchell, *The Life and “Lives” of Gregory Thaumaturgus*, 115, dates it to 17 November 379, that is the traditional feast of the saint. But 'Epist 19, however, which describes in detail his activities in the second half of 379 (stay in Ibara, in Sebastce) mentions no visit to Neocaesarea’, as noted by P. Maraval, *Chronology of Works*, in *The Brill Dictionary of Gregory of Nyssa*. Edited by L.F. Mateo-Seco and G. Maspero. Translated by S. Cherney, Leiden-Boston 2010 (SVigChr 99), 164. Abramowski, *Das Bekenntnis*, 162, believes after Theodosius put Gregory of Nyssa’s name among the guardians of orthodoxy in July 381 (cf. *Codex Theodosianus* XVI,1,3 [116–119 Mommsen, SC 497]), conferring great authority on his ecclesiastical politics. But Gregory of Nyssa was entrusted to resolve the issue concerning the communion with the followers of Marcellus of Ancyra already in the council of Antioch of 379 (cf. Gr. Nyss. *Ep*. 5,2). The date of the *Vita* has to be put at 380, the year in which Gregory of Nyssa made many journeys, as rightly argued by J. Bernardi, *La prédication des Pères Cappadociens*, Paris 1968, 308. Van Dam, *Hagiography and History*, 277, and A.M. Silvas (ed.), Gregory of Nyssa: *The Letters*. Introd., Transl. and Comm. Leiden-Boston 2007 (SVigChr 83), 45. See also G. Pasquali, *Le lettere di Gregorio di Nissa*, SIFC n.s. 3 (1923), 89-90, who dates the *Ep*. 5 before the Council of Constantinople, which condemned Marcellus (cf. canons 1 and 7), because it took discretionary power away from the bishops.


and M. Van Uytfanghe, it appears to be a festival oration reshaped as biography; A. De Nicola, after having noted that almost half of the Vita consists of reflections and comments, considers it a "commented life". Furthermore, the impression that this work was expanded for its publication is implied by the dimension of the current text and appears particularly evident in the last section of the work.

Gregory of Nyssa probably delivered his discourse in Neocaesarea as may be gathered from the first lines of the work ('For Gregory furnishes you with the occasion for gathering together, and me with that of speaking'). That seems confirmed also by two elements: by the fact that Gregory of Nyssa was appointed as visiting bishop of Pontus and Armenia at the Council of Antioch of 379 in order to reconcile Neo-Nicenes and Old-Nicenes; by Gregory’s frequent references to the Holy Spirit, which recall Basil’s clash with the bishop and the priests of Neocaesarea a few years before. One of the most important episodes of that clash was the attribution to Thaumaturgus of an expression contained in the Ad Gelianum that contrasted with Basil’s recent stance on Trinitarian theology. That might explain why Gregory of Nyssa did not refer to Thaumaturgus’ literary activity in any way except for the symbol of faith he is said to have left to the Church of Neocaesarea.

Gregory of Nyssa starts the Vita by introducing the ‘grace of the Holy Spirit’ (ἡ τοῦ Πνεύματος χάρις) as the power (δύναμις) required ‘for achieving virtue in deed and for describing what is good worthily in a speech’ (ἔργῳ τε κατορθῶσαι τὴν ἀξιότητα, καὶ λόγῳ κατ’ ἐξίσῳ τὰ καλὰ διηγήσασθαι). It was actually ‘with the power of the Spirit’ that Gregory ‘the Great’ (ὁ Μέγας) accomplished a brilliant life.

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276 Bernardi, La prédication des Pères Cappadociens, 309; M. Van Uytfanghe, La biographie classique et l'hagiographie chrétienne antique tardive. «Hagiographica» 12 (2005), 223-248.
278 Telfer, The Cultus of Gregory Thaumaturgus, 229; Bernardi, La prédication des Pères Cappadociens, 309; Simonetti, Una nuova ipotesi, 293, n.63: the other panegyrics of Gregory of Nyssa are less than the half of the Vita long.
280 Transl. Slusser, 41. Thus think Bernardi, La prédication des Pères Cappadociens, 309, and, more cautiously, Van Dam, Hagiography and history, 277. Telfer, The cultus of Gregory Thaumaturgus, 229, tends to exclude Neocaesarea without good reason.
282 See Ch. 5, §II.1.
283 According to Simonetti, Origene dalla Cappadocia ai Cappàdoci, 18-19 (n. 12), the absence of references to Thaumaturgus’ works in the Vita has to be considered ‘intentional and not due to ignorance’.
284 Gr. Nyss. V. Gr. Thaum. 3,11.
285 Gr. Nyss. V. Gr. Thaum. 3,4-5; transl. Slusser, 41.
286 Gr. Nyss. V. Gr. Thaum. 3,2.
For this reason Gregory of Nyssa praises the assistance of the Spirit who made worthy his speech.\textsuperscript{287}

Gregory of Nyssa explains that he will not pay attention to the rules of the pagan literary \textit{topoi}, but he in fact contradicts himself and dedicates some pages of homage to his listeners, to the excellent region near the ‘Friendly sea’ (ὁ πόλισσα Εὐξεινός),\textsuperscript{288} and especially to the city of the ‘great Gregory’, which was ‘decked with monuments’, ‘the most outstanding place in their whole region … which a famous emperor, one of the first of the Romans, Caesar by name, for love and affection for the whole district, permitted to be called after himself’\textsuperscript{289}.

The great virtue of Gregory Thaumaturgus was evident suddenly when he lost his parents at the age when in most people ‘the faculty to discriminate the good fails’ (ἡ διάνοια τῆς τοῦ καλοῦ κρίσεως ἀκατάλλακτης).\textsuperscript{290} He stayed away from the errors and amusements of youth and showed that ‘he was from the first complete in the possessions of the virtues, consistently choosing what was best for his age’ (εὐθὺς ὥσις τῆς τῶν ἀρετῶν κτήσεως ἦν τὸ πρόσφορον ἂν ἄν παροῦσῃ αὐτῷ ἡ λυκία καθεξῆς προαρχούμενος)\textsuperscript{291} so much so, that after he had experienced the incoherence of Greek doctrines, ‘he so perfected his life that he brought no stain of sin to the baptismal cleansing’ (οὔτω κατώρθου τοῦ βίου ὡς μηδένα υπόπτων ἐξ ἀμαρτίας ἐπὶ τὸ λουτρόν εἰσενέγκασθαι).\textsuperscript{292}

The Logos drove Gregory to attain the wisdom in the same way as Abraham. The latter deemed the knowledge of the cosmological sciences, that is the Chaldean philosophy of which he was expert, as inferior to the ‘contemplation of the good’ (ἀγαθοθεορία), just as the patriarch, Gregory ‘was guided to the understanding of Christianity’ (ἀνθρωποτομία πρὸς τὴν Χριστιανισμοῦ κατανόησιν) and to the abandonment of the pagan beliefs of his ancestors, through the knowledge of the worldly philosophy, which he mastered.\textsuperscript{293} Gregory of Nyssa dedicates more space to this topic, describing how Gregory Thaumaturgus embraced the doctrine of faith that was described with simple words and surpasses knowledge, pointing to the

\begin{itemize}
\item Gr. Nyss. V. Gr. Thaum. 3.12-16: Ἐπεὶ οὖν ὁ λαμπρὸς ἐκείνος καὶ περίβλητος βίος τῇ δυνάμει κατορθωμένος τοῦ Πνεύματος, εὐχής ἔργων ἄτις τοσαύτην ἐλθεῖν ἐπὶ τὸν λόγον βοηθεῖν, ὅταν γένοιτο παρὰ τὸν βίον ἐκεῖνον, ἣς μὴ κατόπιν εὐρεθήναι τῆς ἀξίας τῶν κατορθωμάκων τῶν ἐπαινον...
\item Gr. Nyss. v. Gr. Thaum. 7.4-9: μόνος γὰρ ἐξ ἀπάσης γῆς ταύτης καὶ θαλάσσης οὕτως ὁ πόλιος Εὐξεινὸς ὄνομαξεται εἰτε τὴν πρός τοὺς ἐπιδημοῦντας τῶν ξένων φαλλοφροσύνην καθεξῆς ἀυτοῖς τοῦ ὄνοματος εἶτε ὅταν τοιοῦτο ὁ χώρος ἐστιν ἡ μηδόν τοῖς ἐγχώροις τε καὶ ἀυτόγροισιν ἀλλὰ καὶ τοῖς ἀπανταγχόνθεις εἰς αὐτῶν φοιτάσι τάς πρός τὸ ξίναι παρασκευὲς ἀρφόνως χαρίζεσθαι.
\item Gr. Nyss. V. Gr. Thaum. 7.13-18: … οὐδὲν δὲ ἦτον τῷ κοινῷ κρίσις τοῦ ἔθνους αὐτῷ τῆς χρυσῆς πάσης τῆς περιουσίας τῶν ἄλλων καὶ τοῦ μεγάλου Γρηγορίου πόλις ἔστιν, ἦν βασιλεὺς τῆς ἐπίσημος τῶν τὴν ἄρχον τοῖς ὅμοιοις καὶ τοῖς τῷ χρήματι ἄρωσε καὶ πόθῳ τῆς ἁμαρτίας ἐπὶ τῷ ἐτείον ὄνοματι καλεῖσθαι τὴν πόλιν ἔξεσσεν; transl. Slusser, 45.
\item Gr. Nyss. V. Gr. Thaum. 8.11-12.
\item Gr. Nyss. V. Gr. Thaum. 9.1-2; transl. Slusser, 46.
\item Gr. Nyss. V. Gr. Thaum. 10.10-13; transl. Slusser, 47.
\item Gr. Nyss. V. Gr. Thaum. 9.3-21. Quoted \textit{in extenso} below.
\end{itemize}
inconsistencies of the Greek philosophers, who used to consolidate their sectarian position only with the subtlety of speech and artificial reasoning.  

The biblical allusion to Moses is supported by the facts that Gregory, like Moses, ‘was schooled in all the wisdom of the Egyptians’ and that he actually studied philosophy in Alexandria. During his stay there, Gregory demonstrated his sanctity, although he was young, accomplishing a miracle. As Gregory of Nyssa had beforehand said that Gregory Thaumaturgus converted to Christianism after having assimilated the Greek doctrines, this miracle seems to have happened before his conversion. We may note in this passage a certain discrepancy in the narrative. In this case, unlike those following concerning Joseph and Moses, the biblical allusion and its interpretation precedes the “biographical” element (studies in Alexandria and the miracle). Maybe Gregory of Nyssa tried to reconcile unsuccessfully two traditions: that of a miracle accomplished when Gregory was very young and that of Gregory’s intellectual maturation towards his own conversion. Unfortunately, Gregory of Nyssa did not speak of the moment when Gregory was baptised.

After he had concluded his ‘whole education of worldly philosophy’ (πᾶσα παιδεία τῆς ἐξω σοφίας), Gregory met Firmilian, the future bishop of Caesarea. They easily became friends as both had the desire to focus on God, and, thus, went together to the master of Christian philosophy Origen. Gregory dedicated an unspecified number of years to studying divine things with Origen, then went back to his homeland. There he rejected the opportunities to assume important posts offered to him by cities and top public personalities and fled from any contact with public affairs so as to be able to dedicate himself to the ascetic life and to penetrate the divine mysteries.

Gregory of Nyssa reports then that Phaidimos, bishop of Amaseia, a city not far from Neocaesarea, after having heard of the sanctity of Thaumaturgus, tried to get hold of him in order to appoint him priest and leader of the church. Gregory escaped fearing that the ordination might prevent him from pursuing the philosophical life. Thus Phaidimos, ‘who had by the will of God the power of foreknowledge from the Holy Spirit’ (ὠ θεόθιν ἐκ ἀγίου πνεύματος προγνωστική τις δύναμις ἦν), decided to

294 Gr. Nyss. V. Gr. Thaum. 9,21–10,7. Quoted in extenso below.
295 Gr. Nyss. V. Gr. Thaum. 10,7-9; Acts 7:22.
296 Gr. Nyss. V. Gr. Thaum. 10,14.
297 I refer to the exorcism of the prostitute obtained by Gregory’s prayer. Cf. V. Gr. Thaum. 10,14–11,23.
298 Gr. Nyss. V. Gr. Thaum. 13,4-16.
299 Gr. Nyss. V. Gr. Thaum. 13,16–15,5. In this passage Gregory of Nyssa writes: ‘And when he had spent with the teacher [Origen] a period of time approriate to the studies, although many tried to detain him abroad and they all asked him to stay with them, he … went back up again to his homeland … it will not seem entirely insignificant for his reputation that he took no notice of a public appeal from so great a city’, which in Gregory of Nyssa’s narrative seems to be Alexandria. Gregory ‘sought the quiet life in his native land as a kind of haven’ but when he arrived in his homeland ‘the whole people looked to the man, and everyone was expecting him to teach his learning to the public in their common assemblies, where he might acquire a good repute among them as a sort of fruit of his great labors’ (transl. Slusser, 50-51). Here Gregory of Nyssa shows the political influence that Gregory of Neocaesarea was expected to exert as a cultured man, as the Sophists of the recent past continued to do in the Roman world.
consecrate Gregory despite his bodily absence. Neocaesarea at that time had only seventeen Christians.

Before the beginning of his priestly activity, Gregory asked God and obtained the confirmation of his preaching with a revelation of a μυσταγωγία, which turned out to be a creed, by John the evangelist and Mary the mother of the Lord. Gregory of Nyssa adds that the manuscript where Gregory Thaumaturgus put into writing the words of this revelation was still extant at his time in Neocaesarea and that anybody could go there and see that the Christians of Neocaesarea were baptised with Thaumaturgus’ creed.

According to Gregory of Nyssa, the first episodes of Gregory’s missionary activity concentrated on fighting pagan worship. He is said to have been able to master the pagan demons and to convert their priests by divine powers and wonders. In this manner Gregory soon obtained the attention of the crowds and of the citizens of Neocaesarea, who tried to offer him shelter, but he accepted the hospitality only from a wealthy man named Musonius. Gregory evangelised the crowds ‘with the power of the Spirit’ (τῇ δυνάμει τοῦ πνεῦματος), teaching and healing, and ‘with the collaboration of the Spirit (τῇ συνεργίᾳ τοῦ πνεῦματος) he at once constituted for himself so great a people that they wanted to build a temple’. Gregory of Nyssa adds that that temple was the only building in Neocaesarea which remained completely undamaged after a very severe earthquake which was recorded by other sources as well.

Gregory’s reputation rose to the extent that the inhabitants of a neighbouring town, Comana, asked him to found and organize their church through the election of a bishop (ἀρχιερεύς). Gregory Thaumaturgus chose a charcoal-burner named Alexander against all the expectations of the notables of Comana, who had despised his humility. Alexander had chosen, like Gregory, a philosophical life, and, just consecrated, he showed himself to be very wise, silencing those who judged him by appearance.

During Gregory’s period of activity there was a violent anti-Christian persecution: ‘anger and envy entered the man in charge of the Roman empire at that time’ (θυμὸς...
καὶ φθόνος εἰσέρχεται τῶν τηγικωτά τῆς τῶν Ῥωμαίων ἀρχῆς ἐπιστατοῦντα 309) who sent out a harsh Roman edict (πρόσταγμα) that threatened to punish the governors of the provinces ‘if they would not mutilate with manifold tortures those who worship the name of Christ, and lead them by fear and the coercion of tortures back to their ancestral worship of demons’ 310. The roughness of the persecutions and the weak resistance of many Christians persuaded Gregory Thaumaturgus to take flight to the desert and to advise the others to do the same 311. Gregory of Nyssa, maybe to justify Thaumaturgus’ decision, explained it as follows: ‘The especial goal of the ruler was this, that by capturing him like a general they might shatter the whole battle line of the faith, and for this reason his enemies were trying very hard to take him into custody’ 312. As a matter of fact, Gregory of Nyssa is exaggerating the directives of the Roman edict because we have no historical evidence of such an imperial threat of punishment against the local governors 313. Gregory of Nyssa does not state the name of the emperor, but scholars unanimously identify him as Decius, whose persecution dates to 249/251 314.

Once the anti-Christian persecutions had stopped, Gregory abandoned the retreat and, after having visited the city and the near countryside, instituted festivals in honour of the martyrs of the faith 315. Before he died, Gregory ordered his friends not to make any special plans for his burial. Gregory of Nyssa remembers that he left only seventeen pagans in Neocaesarea 316.

‘What condemns the work as an accurate record of third-mid-century Neocaesarea most decisively is not what it says but what it omits’ 317. Thus S. Mitchell introduced his complaint that a reduction of the pagan community to the number of seventeen persons is contradicted by the bronze coins found in Neocaesarea and in the vicinity, attesting pagan cults and festivals in the second half of the third century. Similarly we should underline that Gregory of Nyssa does not say anything about the

310 Gr. Nyss. V. Gr. Thaum. 45,8-10: εἰ μὴ παντοίοις αἰκισμοῖς τὸ ὄνομα τοῦ Χριστοῦ προσκυνοῦντες διαλοβήσαυτο καὶ προσαγάγαυτεν πάλιν αὐτοὺς φρόζω τε καὶ τῇ τῶν αἰκισμῶν ἁνάγκῃ τῇ πατρίᾳ τῶν δαιμόνων λατρείᾳ. Transl. Slusser, 76.
311 Gr. Nyss. V. Gr. Thaum. 47,2-14.
312 Gr. Nyss. V. Gr. Thaum. 47,11-14; Transl. Slusser, 78. As remembered by Slusser, also Dionysius of Alexandria and Cyprian of Cartage ran from Decius’ persecution as Gregory did.
314 Cf. Leone (ed.), Gregorio di Nissa, Vita di Gregorio Taumaturgo, 18; Van Dam, Hagiography and History, 273; Monaci Castagno, L’agiografia cristiana antica, 165.
316 Gr. Nyss. V. Gr. Thaum. 53,19–54,15. Thaumaturgus’ request to be buried anywhere but ‘the place reserved to him’ has been interpreted as proof that the Neocaesareans did not know where his grave was, see Telfer, The cultus of Gregory Thaumaturgus, 232-237. Woods (Gregory Thaumaturgus and the earthquake of 344) has argued that Thaumaturgus ‘lay buried somewhere within the church that he had built’ on the basis of a peculiar analysis and reconstruction of the passages from several chronicles attesting the existence of the church building of Neocaesarea.
invasions of the Goths and Boradi in the 250s, an episode that is unlikely to have been forgotten in Pontus.

Despite the fact that the Vita is considered very untrustworthy from a historical point of view, several scholars have tried to identify a truthful nucleus in it, proposing also different classifications of the stories\textsuperscript{318}. Limiting himself only to the non-fictional facts narrated, Koetschau, for example, retained the following ones: Gregory’s meeting with Firmilian and their studies with Origen, Gregory’s return to his homeland, his consecration by Phaidimos of Amaseia, the existence of the church and the consecration of Alexander of Comana\textsuperscript{319}. Crouzel added to Koetschau’s list the flight of Thaumaturgus during Decius’ persecution and the institution of martyr celebrations\textsuperscript{320}. As is evident, only a few episodes have been accepted as being reliable, all of them concerning the part of Thaumaturgus’ life subsequent to his departure from Caesarea.

Neither Koetschau nor Crouzel found traces of the Pan. Or. in Gregory of Nyssa’s Vita. Later, in response to Nautin’s hypothesis, Crouzel partially changed his mind and recognised some similarities ‘mêlées à bien des discordances’ between Gregory of Nyssa’s Vita, the Pan. Or. and Origen’s Ep. Gr., which showed that the Nyssen identified the bishop of Neocaesarea with the author of the Pan. Or. and the addressee of the Ep. Gr.\textsuperscript{321}.

Crouzel started noting that the Pan. Or. and the Vita agree with regard to Gregory’s being born into a pagan wealthy family, but he also saw that they disagree on his being an orphan: indeed, the Pan. Or. speaks only of his father’s death (and records the support of Gregory’s mother for his studies). The other main points concern a passage we have already met but it is useful to read extensively:

The Logos drove the patriarch Abraham, who was learned in Chaldean philosophy, and understood the harmonious and orderly disposition and moment of the stars, to use the knowledge about these things as foundation for the contemplation of the transcendental good (ὑποβάθρον χρήσασθαι τῇ περὶ ταύτα γνώσει πρὸς τὴν τού ὑπερκειμένου ἀγαθὸν θεωρίαν) … Thus, he drove him to acquire what he sought by advancing via worldly wisdom and becoming more lofty through that, so as somehow thereby to approach what is imperceptible. In just the same way also this Great One, when he had assiduously acquainted himself with the worldly philosophy, through the things by which Hellenism convinces most people, by

\textsuperscript{318} Telfer, \textit{The cultus of Gregory Thaumaturgus}, 230, recognised two classes in Gregory of Nyssa’s original material, church-traditions and folk-traditions; Van Dam, \textit{Hagiography and History}, 282-285, distinguished direct sayings, traditions ‘constructed around memorials still visible in the later fourth century’ and episodes deriving from ‘traditions of specific families or churches’. Fouska, \textsc{Γρηγόριος ὁ Νεοκαισαρείας ἐπίσκοπος ὁ Θαυματουργός}, 38-45, proposed a separation between historical events, episodes that can be considered as such for they are not in contradiction with the others, and others that can plausibly be considered true. However, he tends with little critical sense to consider episodes as credible that are not credible at all. Interesting comments on Nyssen’s Vita can be found in Lardner, \textit{The credibility of Gospel history}, part II, 486-505.

\textsuperscript{319} Koetschau (ed.), \textit{Des Gregorios Thaumaturgos Dankrede ad Origenes}, VI-VIII.


\textsuperscript{321} Crouzel, \textit{Faut il voir trois personnages en Grégoire le Thaumaturge?}, 312-319.
these same things he was led to the understanding of Christianity, and forsaking the mistaken religious observance of his ancestors he began to seek the truth about reality, since he had learned … the incoherence of Greek doctrines. For after he saw Greek and barbarian philosophy alike divided into different conceptions in their opinions of the divine, and the leading exponents of the positions not converging toward one another but competing to consolidate each position separately by subtlety of speech, he left them to refute each other as if in a civil war. He for his part embraced the solid doctrine of faith, which has its foundation in no fancy logical footwork or artificial reasonings but rather was announced in simplicity of expression with equal respect for all… (transl. Slusser, 46-47, slightly altered)

Looking at this passage Crouzel calls attention to the following correspondences: 1) the transition of Greek studies to Christianity, which is one of the main themes of the description of Origen’s teaching in the Pan. Or. and of Origen’s Ep. Gr.; 2) the topic of the inconsistencies among philosophical schools, which is in agreement with its broader treatment in Pan. Or., §153-168; 3) the opposition of evangelical simplicity to philosophical subtleties (cf. Pan. Or. §170-183).

However, none of these points is convincing. What links the Vita to the Pan. Or. and the Ep. Gr. is so generic that it can stem from other readings and ideas of Gregory of Nyssa. The third point is extremely vague: the chapters mentioned by Crouzel refer to the simplicity of ‘divine saying’ in a very cursory way (§174) and develop a more complex discourse. The second point is surely true, but the theme at issue is also a famous argument from Origen’s Contra Celsum (I,9-11), in respect of which Gregory of Neocaesarea’s text is closer than that of Gregory of Nyssa, who tends to trivialise the topic. Also the first point is typically Alexandrian.

Similar remarks have to be made to explain the only parallelism between the Pan. Or. and Gregory of Nyssa’s Vita detected by Crouzel. Gregory of Neocaesarea wrote that ‘as an unshakable base for everything else whatever, he [Origen] laid down geometry as a kind of sure foundation (ὑποβάθρον); then he drew us up to the heights through astronomy, as if, by a kind of sky-high ladder of the two sciences, he were making heaven accessible for us’ 323. According to Gregory of Nyssa, Abraham used ‘the knowledge about these things [positions, movements and order of stars] as foundation (ὑποβάθρον) for the contemplation of the transcendent good’. The term ὑποβάθρον is not very frequent among ancient authors 324, but it occurs in Alcinoos’ Didaskalikos, where it confirms Gregory of Nyssa’s passage which says that astronomical knowledge

322 Gr. Nyss., V. Gr. Thaum. 9,3–10,7.
324 Cf. Whittaker – Louis (eds.), Alcinoos, Enseignement des doctrines de Platon, 17, n.125. The passages mentioned by Whittaker are of little use for us.
is the foundation ‘for the search of the creator of all things’.\textsuperscript{325} The entire passage from the \textit{Vita} alluding to Abraham is closer to Alcinous than the \textit{Pan. Or.}, which presents geometry and astronomy as ladder for accessing ‘the heaven’ only. Moreover, in line with Alcinous and Gregory of Nyssa, there is one of the rare occurrences of ύποβάθρον in a passage from Clement of Alexandria’s \textit{Stromata} that confirms the common Alexandrian view of philosophy as \textit{ancilla theologiae}.\textsuperscript{326} Therefore, though ύποβάθρον occurs in the \textit{Vita}, it does not seem necessary to suppose that Gregory of Nyssa had the \textit{Pan. Or.} in mind.

Crouzel has also identified in the passage of the \textit{Vita}, attesting that Thaumaturgus became a Christian after having studied Greek doctrines\textsuperscript{327} a confirmation that he was baptised late, and in the episode of Thaumaturgus’ ascetic retreat (before being consecrated as bishop) the realisation of Thaumaturgus’ desire to live peacefully\textsuperscript{328}. These hypotheses are not in disagreement with the \textit{Pan. Or.} and may be retained as plausible.

In conclusion to his contribution, Crouzel acknowledged the vagueness of these links between the \textit{Vita}, the \textit{Pan. Or.} and the \textit{Ep. Gr.}, but also rightly argued that if they are not evidence that Gregory of Nyssa read the \textit{Pan. Or.} and the \textit{Ep. Gr.}, they are nonetheless striking evidence of the traditional identity of Gregory of Neocaesarea. In the first case Gregory of Nyssa would have considered Thaumaturgus as the author of the \textit{Pan. Or.} and the addressee of the \textit{Ep. Gr.}. In this second case the traditions gathered by Gregory of Nyssa would be independent of the \textit{Pan. Or.} and the \textit{Ep. Gr.} and, therefore, not be relevant to the alleged wrong identification made by Eusebius of the author of the first and the addressee of the latter.

On the basis of Crouzel’s analysis, Nautin, who had initially ignored later traditions on Thaumaturgus, was inclined to see in what was reported by Gregory of Nyssa a vague suggestion of the \textit{Pan. Or.} and the \textit{Ep. Gr.}, and concluded that they

\textsuperscript{325} Alcinous, \textit{Didasc. VII,161} (17,26-33 Whittaker): χρήσιμον δὲ ὡσπερ τι τέταρτον μάθημα καὶ ἡ ἀστρονομία, καθ’ ὑπὸ ἐν τῷ ὑώρφων θεασόμεθα ἄσπρων τε φοράς καὶ ὑώρφων καὶ τὸν δημιουργὸν νυκτός καὶ ἡμέρας μηνών τε καὶ ἕνεκων· ἐξ ὧν κατὰ τινα οἰκεῖαν ὁδόν καὶ τὸν ἀπάντην δημιουργὸν ζητήσομεν, μετεώρως ἀπὸ τοῦτον τῶν μαθημάτων ὡσπερ τινὸς ὑποβάθρον καὶ στοιχεῖον. ‘Useful also is a fourth subject of study, astronomy, by means of which we will study in the heavens the motions of the stars and the heaven, and the creator of night and day, the months and the years. From these studies, by a proper route, we will proceed to the search for the creator of all things, transferring ourselves upwards from these subjects of study as from a foundation or from elements’ (transl. Dillon, 14).

\textsuperscript{326} Clement of Alexandria, \textit{Str. VI,8,67} (465,18-21 Stählin, GCS 52): Ἡθὲ δὲ καὶ καθολικὸν λόγῳ πάντα <τα> ἀναγκαία καὶ λυσιτελὴ τῷ βίῳ θεόθεν ἤρειν εἰς ἡμᾶς λέγοντες ὡς ἐν ἡμάρτομεν, τὴν δὲ φιλοσοφίαν καὶ μάθησιν Ἠλληνικά, οἷον διαθηκὴν ὡσπερ κύτταρος, δεδομένης, ὑποβάθρου ὡς σπεσία τῆς κατὰ Χριστὸν φιλοσοφίας . . . ‘Actually, in general terms, we would not err in saying that all things necessary and profitable for life came to us from God, and that philosophy was especially given to the Greeks as a testament peculiar to them, being as base for Christian philosophy’.

\textsuperscript{327} Gr. Nyss., \textit{V. Gr. Thaum.} 10,10-13.

\textsuperscript{328} Gr. Thaum. \textit{Pan. Or. XVI} §92-93.
depend on Eusebius’ error. In other words, he accepted the first solution, which Crouzel also took for granted in a later article.

However, it is the second case which is true. The similarities noted by Crouzel are not persuasive, because they are based on a passage in which Gregory of Nyssa appears to have embroidered the few biographical data on Thaumaturgus at his disposal with his personal ideas. On the contrary, the few precise data on the first part of Thaumaturgus’ life preserved by the Nyssen are strikingly in contradiction to the Pan. Or.: according to Gregory of Nyssa, Gregory Thaumaturgus was orphaned of both his parents before he began his studies in Alexandria, decided together with Firmilian of Caesarea to meet Origen, and went back to his homeland to look for a calm place to live a philosophical life. Furthermore Gregory of Nyssa does not refer to any of Thaumaturgus’ works but the Confessio, keeps silent about his rhetorical education, ignores his planned journey to Beirut and pays no particular attention to the studies he accomplished with Origen. The absence of references to the studies of rhetoric has also a particular significance if, as it seems, the Vita was edited before its publication and if it is true that Thaumaturgus’ episcopal career reflects the model and the experience of the Cappadocian Fathers, especially that of Basil. The few concrete points in common between the Vita and the Pan. Or. that remain are Thaumaturgus’ wealthy family and the fact that he was a disciple of Origen.

As for the relations between the Vita and Eusebius’ Hist. Eccl. the situation is very similar. Their biographical profiles disagree except for Gregory’s studies with Origen and his successful episcopacy. Gregory of Nyssa ignores also Thaumaturgus’ participation in the council of Antioch though he cites Firmilian of Caesarea (who, according to Eusebius, participated in that Council too), and says that they went together to Origen’s school. In this case there is a significant anachronism because Gregory of Nyssa reports that Thaumaturgus ‘met a certain Firmilian’ who manifested

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329 Nautin, Grégoire dit le Thaumaturge, 40.
330 H. Crouzel, La cristologia in Gregorio Taumaturgo, Gr. 61 (1980), 747.
331 They are scattered over seven pages (from 7 to 13) out of more than fifty of Heil’s edition.
332 I consider completely out of question the possibility that Gregory of Nyssa could interpret literally Ep. Gr. the same way Nautin did, as suggested by Crouzel, Faut-il voir trois personnages, 316.
333 One may object that it was not opportune to dedicate space to Origen if the church of Neocaesarea was led by Old Nicenes, but we have also to take into consideration that Gregory of Nyssa cites Origen’s name only one other time in his works, in the later prologue of Hom. In Cant. (13,3 Langerbeck, GNO VI).
334 See, for example, Bernardi, La prédication des Pères Cappadociens, 311, and A. Monaci Castagno, L’agiografia cristiana antica. Testi, contesti, pubblico, Brescia 2010 (Letteratura Cristiano Antica, n.s. 23), 166-167.
335 Eus. Hist. Eccl. VII,28,1. Gregory of Nyssa never did quote Eusebius, and though he appears to know that the synod was against Paul of Samosata in the Anthirrheticus adversus Apollinarium (142-143 Müller, GNO III,1), this work is surely subsequent to the Vita (Maraval, Chronology of Works, in Mateo-Seco – Maspero (eds.), The Brill Dictionary of Gregory of Nyssa, 155), so we cannot infer from this fact any deduction about his knowledge of Thaumaturgus’ two names or any participation in the condemnation of Paul.
his morality when he ‘became the ornament of the Church of Caesarea’\textsuperscript{336}, namely before Firmilian was consecrated bishop. That is impossible because Firmilian became bishop in about 230 and Gregory went to Caesarea surely after that date. The reason why Gregory of Nyssa mentioned Firmilian might have been the political will to reinforce the episcopal link between Caesarea of Cappadocia and Neocaesarea after the clash between Basil and Atarbius (see Ch. 5, §II,1). However, the fact that Gregory and Firmilian met at Origen’s school is historically admissible since Eusebius related that the latter went to Caesarea of Palestine, probably during those years\textsuperscript{337}. In summary, although the issue is particularly complex\textsuperscript{338} because the \textit{Vita} seems to describe a character somehow identifiable as the one who composed the \textit{Pan. Or.} and was described by Eusebius’ \textit{Hist. Eccl.}\textsuperscript{339}, there is no evidence that Gregory of Nyssa used these writings as sources\textsuperscript{340}. Since the biographical elements preserved by the \textit{Vita} substantially differ from those we find in the \textit{Pan. Or.} and Eusebius’ \textit{Hist. Eccl.}, Gregory of Nyssa’s testimony appears independent of them. Nonetheless, it remains conceivable that Gregory of Nyssa may have kept truthful biographical data about the bishop of Neocaesarea. He records that Gregory of Neocaesarea’s family was wealthy, that he was a pupil of Origen and a cultured Christian with a promising public career ahead\textsuperscript{341}. Moreover, he correctly recalls the time of the persecution under Decius. It follows that the customary approach that cautiously extracts from Gregory of Nyssa’s \textit{Vita} only the biographical elements concerning Thaumaturgus’ life starting from his return to Neocaesarea, is the only one plausible.

\textbf{II.7. Jerome}

Jerome’s \textit{De viris illustribus}, dated to 393\textsuperscript{342}, supplies the first Latin account of Gregory Thaumaturgus. His work was translated into Greek between the seventh and the ninth centuries\textsuperscript{343}, and this version was amply used by the compiler of the \textit{Suda Lexicon} for the relative account on Gregory\textsuperscript{344}.

\textsuperscript{336} Gr. Nyss. \textit{V. Gr. Thaum}. 13.4-7: ‘Ἐπειδὴ πᾶσαν παίδευσιν τῆς ἐξω σοφίας ἐπιδραμὼν ἐνέτυχε Φιρμιλιανῷ τινι τῶν εὐπατρίδων Καππαδόκη ὀμοιοτρόπῳ κατὰ τὸ θῆκος, ὡς ἐδείξεν ἐκεῖνος τῷ μετὰ ταῦτα βίῳ κόσμῳ τῆς ἐκκλησίας τῶν Κασαρίδων γενόμενος…


\textsuperscript{338} That is particularly evident in the case of M. Simonetti who has changed his mind several times. First he maintained with caution that the Nyssen was independent of the \textit{Pan. Or.} and Eusebius (\textit{Origene dalla Cappadocia ai Cappàdoci}, 15); then, he deemed plausible that the Nyssen confused data deriving from the \textit{Pan. Or.} and oral traditions (\textit{Gregorio il Taumaturgo e Origene}, 21), and, finally, data from Eusebius and oral traditions (\textit{Gregorio il Taumaturgo}, NDPAC II, 2475).

\textsuperscript{339} Cf. Sfameni Gasparro, \textit{Origene «Uomo divino» nell’«Encomio»}, 146-147.

\textsuperscript{340} Cf. Monaci Castagno, \textit{L’agiografia cristiana antica}, 163.

\textsuperscript{341} See the description of the welcome Gregory received on his arrival in Neocaesarea (cf. n. 300 above).

\textsuperscript{342} P. Nautin, \textit{La date du “De Viris illustribus” de Jérôme, de la mort de Cyrille de Jérusalem et de celle de Grégoire de Nazianze}, RHE 56 (1961), 33-35.

\textsuperscript{343} These dates were proposed respectively by Gebhardt in Hieronymus \textit{Liber de viris illustribus}, Gennadius \textit{Liber de viris illustribus}, hrsg. von E.C. Richardson, \textit{Der sogennante Sophronius}, hrsg. von O.
Theodore, later called Gregory, bishop of Neocaesarea in Pontus, while still adolescent went with his brother Athenodorus from Cappadocia to Beirut and then from there to Caesarea in Palestine in order to study Greek and Latin letters. When Origen saw their excellent disposition, he exhorted them to study philosophy, into which he gradually introduced the Christian faith, and made them also his followers. Instructed by him in this way for five years, they were sent back to their mother. One of them, Theodore, on his departure, wrote a panegyric of thanks to Origen, which he recited before a large assembly, Origen himself being present, and which survives down to the present day. He also wrote a paraphrase of Ecclesiastes, brief but very useful. And other epistles of his are widely known, but especially the signs and miracles which, by that time as bishop, he performed with great glory of the churches (Vir. Ill. 65).445

Jerome mentions ‘Theodore, later called Gregory, a man gifted with apostolic signs and virtues’ again in the Epist. 70 (to Magnus), dated to 397-398, listing him among the Christian authors who ‘filled their works with the doctrines and sentences of the philosophers insomuch as you do not know what you have to admire first, either the profane learning or the Scriptural science’. The list of Greek authors in this letter de facto reproduces the order and information of the Vir. Ill.446. The prologue of the Vir. Ill. Jerome declares that Eusebius’ Hist. Eccl. ‘has been of the greatest assistance’ in his work447. Sychowski, Huemer and Bernoulli have

344 Fabricius, Bibliothecae Graecae, V, 247; Richardson – von Gebhardt (eds.), Hieronymus Liber de viris illustribus …, 41-42.
348 Hier. Vir. III., prol.: Ego quid aucturus, qui nullum praeivium sequens, pessimum, ut dicitur, magistrum memetipsum habeo? Quamquam Eusebius Pamphili in decem ecclesiasticae Historiae libris, maximo nobis adjumento fuerit, et singularum, de quibus scripturi sumus, volumina aetates auctorum suorum saepetestentur.
allowed us to appreciate in depth the meaning of this statement\textsuperscript{349}, confirming largely the well-known statement by Harnack: ‘Hieron. benutzte die Kirchengeschichte des Eusebius, wie dieser die Bibliothek von Cäsarea\textsuperscript{350}. Their studies have showed that the first seventy-eight chapters of the \textit{Vir. Ill.} concerning the first three centuries of Christianity are heavily based on the \textit{Hist. Eccl.} and that Jerome had often copied and sometimes misunderstood his source. Courcelle highlighted some cases which seem to demonstrate that Jerome had a direct knowledge of what he reported, but, in the end, the result of his study corroborates the idea that Jerome had known very little about the authors and the texts he quoted\textsuperscript{351}. Unfortunately, Courcelle did not treat the case of Gregory, but concerning the Greek authors between Origen and Eusebius he admits that ‘Jérôme ne les connaît que par Eusèbe’ or ‘à travers un intermédiaire’\textsuperscript{352}. In order to explain the literary information about authors before Eusebius, Nautin supposed that Jerome had depended on the lost \textit{Vita Pamphili} which contained the catalogue of the library of Caesarea composed by Pamphilus, but he did not think that this was the source of Jerome’s information about Gregory\textsuperscript{353}. This, however, seems to be the case.

A further analysis of Gregory’s account in the \textit{Vir. Ill.} substantially confirms this tendency to minimise Jerome’s direct knowledge of the ancient Christian authors. Going back to his text, it seems that the information about the two names, the presence of Athenodorus, the meeting with Origen in Caesarea, the attendance at his school for five years and the reference to their interest in ‘Greek and Latin letters’ are based on Eusebius’ \textit{Hist. Eccl.} VI,30. Jerome seems to draw only two pieces of information directly from the \textit{Pan. Or.}—the mention of Beirut and Gregory’s mother—, and one from another source—the reference to Neocaesarea\textsuperscript{354}. Carl Albrecht Bernoulli interpreted these latter data as evidence of Jerome’s scanty knowledge of the \textit{Or. Pan.}\textsuperscript{355}. According to Stanislaus von Sychowski Jerome had had a direct access to the \textit{Pan. Or.} but made a mistake in stating that Gregory actually went to Beirut\textsuperscript{356}. Nautin believed that the mention of Neocaesarea was included in the header of the \textit{Or. Pan.} by Eusebius before he presented this work as a

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\textsuperscript{350} Harnack, \textit{Geschichte der altchristlichen Literatur bis Eusebius, Theil I: Die Überlieferung und der Bestand der altchristlichen Literatur bis Eusebius}, bearbeitet unter Mitwirkung von Erwin Preuschen, Leipzig 1893, L (n.1).

\textsuperscript{351} Courcelle, \textit{Les Lettres Grecques en Occident}, 78-115.

\textsuperscript{352} Courcelle, \textit{Les Lettres Grecques en Occident}, 103, 112; \textit{ibidem}: ‘Jérôme n’a rien lu de toute la littérature grecque chrétienne antérieure à Origène, sauf quelques oeuvres de Clément de Rome et de Clément d’Alexandrie; il tient ce qu’il en sait d’auteurs intermédiaires’.

\textsuperscript{353} Nautin, \textit{Lettres et écrivains chrétiens}, 256, 263-264.

\textsuperscript{354} See Clausi, \textit{L’altro Gregorio}, 191.

\textsuperscript{355} Bernoulli, \textit{Der Schriftstellerkatalog des Hieronymus}, 276-278.

\textsuperscript{356} Sychowski, \textit{Hieronymus als Litterarhistoriker}, 158-159.
part of the *Apologia pro Origene* ("Gregory bishop of Neocaesarea"), as Socrates of Constantinople attests; Jerome would have read the entire *Apologia pro Origene* before 385\(^{357}\) and remembered the episcopal see of Gregory when he composed the *Vir. Ill.*\(^{358}\). However, Jerome himself declared that he only read the *Apologia* after Rufinus’ translation of its first book under the sole name of Pamphilus, in about 398\(^{359}\).

None of Jerome’s assumed sources lists the works of Gregory and speaks about the *signa at miracula quae iam episcopus … perpetravit*. In the case of Gregory’s works, it was admitted that Jerome wrote independently of Eusebius because he quoted the *Metaphrasis* in his *Commentarius in Ecclesiasten*\(^{360}\) and, perhaps, knew of the *Epistula Canonica*, which was one of the most important ancient Christian documents concerning penance\(^{361}\). Bernoulli was probably right in writing with regard to Jerome’s quotation from the *Metaphrasis* that ‘Allein dieses Citat ist ganz isoliert und beweist an sich noch keine wirkliche Bekanntschaft’\(^{362}\). The passage in question, which we find corrupted in the *Patrologia* and which is also missing from several Greek manuscripts unknown to its editor, is preserved by the so-called *Catena Trium Patrum*\(^{363}\).

As regards the miracles, as pointed out by Clausi, there are serious doubts that Jerome knew Gregory of Nyssa’s *Vita*, because he never quotes it among his works nor the singular information it contained\(^{364}\). Therefore, Jerome would have acknowledged these allusions to the activity of Gregory as a saint in Basil’s *De Spirito Sancto*\(^{365}\). However, the reference to miracles is generic inasmuch as we can believe that Jerome derived this information from oral traditions when he lived in the East\(^{366}\). After all, Jerome personally met Gregory of Nyssa, who read to Gregory of Nazianzus and Jerome his *Contra Eunomium* about a decade before the composition of the *Vir. Ill.*\(^{367}\); Gregory of Nazianzus, who surely had heard about Gregory of Neocaesarea at least from the other Cappadocians, was his teacher in Constantinople\(^{368}\). Jerome’s personal

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\(^{357}\) Nautin, *Lettres et écrivains chrétiens*, 259-260, argues this way: Eusebius affirms that the condemnation of Origen was a matter mentioned in the second book of the *Apologia pro Origene* (Hist. Eccl. VI.123,4) and Jerome mentioned the councils of Alexandria and Rome in Epist. 33.5 (d. 385). Since Eusebius did not mention these councils in the Hist. Eccl., Jerome might have read of them in the *Apologia*.

\(^{358}\) Nautin, *Lettres et écrivains chrétiens*, 263. For details see below in this paragraph.

\(^{359}\) This statement, which confirms the common suspicion that Jerome’s habit of citing texts he had never read was one of his editorial practices in the composition of the *Vir. Ill.*, has no reason to be considered insincere, although expressed in a very polemical context.

\(^{360}\) When Jerome wrote the *Commentarius* in 388/9, he was in Bethlehem, cf. F. Cavallera, *Saint Jérôme. Sa vie et son œuvre*, T. I, Louvain-Paris 1922 (SSL 1), 134-137; Kelly, *Jerome*, 110.


\(^{362}\) Bernoulli, *Der Schriftstellerkatalog des Hieronymus*, 279.

\(^{363}\) See Ch. 3, n.12.


\(^{366}\) Bernoulli, *ibidem*.


\(^{368}\) Hier. *Epist.* 50,1; 52,8; *Vir. Ill.* 117; Adv. Ruf. 1,13; 1,30; Adv. Iovin. 1,13.
relationships may explain how he knew Gregory’s *miracula* and episcopal see, if this were necessary.

It is uncertain that Jerome intended to say that Gregory was originally from Cappadocia, as a province distinguished from Pontus, when he mentions it (‘Theodorus … de Cappadocia Berytum … transiit’). As we have seen, Pontus was closely related to the province of Cappadocia between the first and the second centuries AD and became a province itself at the time of Alexander Severus. For this reason, the presence of both Neocaesarea and Cappadocia in Jerome’s text may be explained by a common association of Pontus with Cappadocia and by a scant knowledge of geographical borders. Moreover, at Jerome’s time the region of Cappadocia had already been created a province, albeit separated from Pontus Polemoniacus, in the *diocesis Pontica* by Diocletian, who introduced the administrative reforms of the twelve dioceses in about 294. If Jerome had been the original author of this notice on Gregory, he probably would have spoken of the diocese of Pontus, as Socrates did. Such inaccuracy may be more justifiable if Jerome’s source was, as I believe, Pamphilus, who lived during the implementation of Diocletian’s reforms.

Scholars have thus explained the divergences between the *Vir. Ill.* and Eusebius’ *Hist. Eccl.* by admitting to different degrees that Jerome had read the *Pan. Or.* and had a certain knowledge of other works. The differences between the *Vir. Ill.* and the *Hist. Eccl.*—namely the references to Beirut and to Gregory’s mother—are too minor to support the idea that Jerome had read the *Pan. Or.* It is more probable, instead, that Jerome had as his main source of information the catalogue of the library of Caesarea published by Eusebius in the third book of his lost *Vita Pamphiili*. That is shown also by the fact that Gregory’s entry clearly presents the double structure with biographical and bibliographical information that characterised the Alexandrian listing method introduced by Callimachus’ *Pinakes* and adopted by Pamphilus. As is suggested also by the fact that he left in Greek the title of the *Pan. Or.* and of the *Metaphrasis*, Jerome seems to have essentially translated the *pinax* dedicated to Gregory of Neocaesarea by Pamphilus. Nonetheless, it is impossible to establish with certainty whether the references to the *Metaphrasis* and to the letters were included in the *pinax*, since Jerome had already quoted a passage from the *Metaphrasis* under the name of the ‘saint bishop of Pontus’ in his *Commentarius in Ecclesiasten* and was aware of the existence of Gregory’s letters to Origen (*Epist. 33*), among which there were probably

369 See Ch. 1, §I.1.
371 See next paragraph.
373 See above §II.
374 It follows that πανηγυρικὸς εὐχερεστίας has a good chance to have been the original title of *Pan. Or.* On this issue see Crouzel (ed.), Gregory le Thaumaturge, *Remerciement*, 38-39.
also some of the ‘widely known’ letters mentioned in *Vir. Ill.* 65. But, it is very likely that Jerome accessed the library of Caesarea in order to compose the catalogue of Origen’s writings and his learned *Commentarius*, so then it seems fairly plausible that Gregory’s *pinax* contained these items as well. Finally, it remains probable that the *pinax* also mentioned Gregory as a miracle worker, for, even if Eusebius omits to refer to that, he took it for granted that Gregory was well-known to his readers.\(^{376}\)

If Gregory’s entry in the *Vir. Ill.* did substantially stem from the catalogue of the library of Caesarea, it may lead us to assume the hypothesis of Nautin that Theodore was the name found in the manuscript conserved there, and the theory of Dorival that Eusebius seemed to mean “Gregory” as the name Theodore received as bishop. Indeed Jerome introduces his entry on Gregory with the name of Theodore, adding that he was ‘later’ called Gregory (*Theodorus, qui postea Gregorius appellatus est, Neocaesareae Ponti episcopus*...) and that it was Theodore who wrote the *Pan. Or.* (*... e quibus Theodorus proficiscens, πανηγυρικὴν εὐχαριστίας scripsit Origeni*). Even if these views, as we have seen, have no solid grounds, the impression that the manuscript of the *Pan. Or.* at Pamphilus’ disposal only contained the name of Theodore would seem to be reinforced. I frankly do not see why we should exclude the possibility that the manuscript preserved both names. But since Nautin and Simonetti have suspected both Eusebius and Pamphilus of apologetic aims, it is particularly important then to take into account the fact that Jerome never dared to call into doubt the identity of Gregory of Neocaesarea not even to defend himself from the accusation of Rufinus, during their dispute over Origen’s theories.\(^{377}\)

As is well known, Jerome had been an open admirer of Origen before 393. He changed his mind during the years 393-397 because of the anti-Origenistic reaction instigated by Epiphanius of Salamis against John of Jerusalem. This situation marked the deterioration of the relationship between Jerome and Rufinus, for it led Jerome to support Epiphanius and Rufinus to defend John. They made peace only provisionally in 397.

In that year Rufinus arrived in Rome and began his translator activity with the Latin version of the *Apologia pro Origene* by the ‘saint martyr’ Pamphilus\(^{378}\), to which

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\(^{376}\) Cf. n.235.


\(^{378}\) Ruf. *Prologus in Apologeticum Pamphili Martyris pro Origene*. Rufinus answered the request of a certain Macarius who wanted to know Origen’s point of view about astrological fatalism (Ruf. *Apol. adv. Hier.* I, 11). Considering that this text was difficult to obtain for Macarius’ interests, Rufinus’ translation served more as a defence of Origen in the Roman environment that had been recently aroused by Jerome’s *Contra Iohannem Hierosolymitanum* (see Ruf. *Prologus in Apologeticum*). For the edition of
he added a prologue and the *De adulteratione librorum Origenis*. The following year he translated Origen’s *De Principiis* (d. 398). These publications were destined to revive the clash with Jerome. Not only did Rufinus defend the orthodoxy of John of Jerusalem379, but he also introduced the theory of the interpolation of Origen’s works380 and, even more riskily, referred to Jerome’s principles of translation of Origen’s works in order to justify his own omissions and changes381. By this and especially by recalling that Jerome had been one of his admirers, Rufinus tried to rehabilitate Origen’s image. That clearly put Jerome in a bad light; he replied with a literal translation of the *De principiis* and with a series of letters to his friends against Origen and Rufinus, in which he tried to convince the Latin readers that Origen was a heretic and that his own position was irreprehensible. It is not in our interests to describe that clash in detail. What interests us is to follow the debate on the authorship of the *Apologia pro Origene*382.

Jerome read Rufinus’ translation of the *Apologia pro Origene* in 398/399, in Palestine, and shortly after wrote the *Epist.* 84. In 401 Rufinus answered with his own *Apologia*. Having been informed of Rufinus’ work, Jerome composed the first two books of his *Apologia*, to which he added another book in 402 when he could finally read Rufinus’ apology.

In the first book of his *Apologia* Rufinus defended himself from the accusation of heresy and also counterattacking. In particular Rufinus quoted many passages from Jerome’s *Commentary on Ephesians* showing that Jerome shared the doctrines of Origen he himself later considered heretical. At the end of this book, after having demonstrated that Jerome shared Origen’s theory of the “restoration of everything”, Rufinus had been able to show that Jerome’s accusations actually turned against him. Moreover, he deplored the fact that Jerome’s condemnation of Origen put him in contradiction to a number of illustrious Fathers of the Church who were in agreement with or were influenced by Origen: Clement of Rome, Clement of Alexandria, Gregory of Neocaesarea (*Gregorius ille Ponticus, vir apostolicarum virtutum*383), Gregory of Nazianzus and Didymus384.

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379 Ruf. *Prologus in Apologeticum.*
380 Ruf. *De adulteratione and Praefationes in libros Origenis Periarchon, praef. in librum I.*
381 Ruf. *Praefationes in libros Origenis Periarchon, praef. in librum I.*
382 It is worth remembering that scholars do not give great credence to the claims of Jerome and Rufinus during this dispute with regard to the composition of the *Apologia pro Origene*. The touchstone is Photius’ account (*Bibl.* cod. 118) that reported that the first five books were Pamphilus’ work and the sixth one was added by Eusebius. As has been well stated by Junod (Amacker – Junod [eds.], *Pamphile et Eusèbe de Césarée, Apologie pour Origène*, 23), both Rufinus and Jerome told a part of the truth: the former avoided saying that Eusebius too had participated in the work; the latter refused to admit that the *Apologia* was primarily a work by Pamphilus.
383 Rufinus gives a similar definition in his translation of Eusebius’ *Hist. Eccl.* See n.388, below.
Rufinus’ reference to these Fathers might seem generic to us but hardly to Jerome. Although Rufinus never mentioned the contents of the rest of the *Apologia pro Origene*385, only two authors from this list of Fathers could be mentioned in it, Clement of Alexandria and Gregory of Neocaesarea. That the *Apologia* included information about Gregory is confirmed also by Socrates386. Then Rufinus’ reference to Gregory must have been particularly caustic to Jerome387. Indeed, the *Pan. Or.* was the most valued piece of the *Apologia*, as it was attributed to the pupil of Origen who enjoyed widespread apostolic reputation as a learned evangelist, saint and wonder-worker. From the very beginning of the debate Jerome must have considered Gregory as an exceptional authority in favour of Origen’s defence.

Indeed, even in *Epist. 84*, Jerome stated that Rufinus translated the first of the six books of Eusebius’ *Apologia* (=*Apologeticus*) and that this work collected further testimonies in favour of Origen in its remaining books. Furthermore Jerome specified that Rufinus’ translation coincided with the first one thousand lines of the *Apologia*388. This shows that Jerome had read the copy of the *Apologia* placed at the library of Caesarea as early as 399 (date of the *Epist. 84*), even if he explicitly declared that only in 402389. Jerome ventured also to say that the ‘style and taste’ of the *Apologeticus* could

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385 Junod has noted that it is impossible to establish whether Rufinus knew the first book of Pamphilus’ *Apologia* as one of its parts, cf. Amacker – Junod (eds.), Pamphile et Eusébe de Césarée, *Apologie pour Origène*, 21.

386 See next paragraph.

387 Rufinus might have read the *Pan. Or.* because, even if his account on Gregory is clearly based on Eusebius’, he retained an element (Gregory [and Athenodore] ‘when still adolescent, had withdrawn from listening to the rhetor’), which is related only by the *Pan. Or.*: *Ipse autem cum apud Caesaream moraretur, innumer ad eum non solum regionis ipsius viri, sed et e provinciis procul positis concurrebant et derelicta patria ac parentibus sequabant eum viam dei docentem. in quibus fuit et vir famosissimus Theodorus ipse, qui non longe a nostra memoria nobilissimus in episcopis apud Pontum Gregorius nominatur, fide et virtutibus atque scientia per omnia apostolicus, sed et eius frater Athenodorus, quos Origenes adulescentulos de auditorio rhetoris retractos studia communiorum litterarum in divinam suam philosophiam commutare quique apud eum per quinquennii tempus verbo dei operam dantes in tantum profectum divinae eruditionis atque scientiae pervenerunt tantumque vitae merito et morum cultu enituerunt, ut ab scholis eius immatura adhuc aetate ad episcopatus Ponti provinciae sacerdotium ute rque raperetur* (585 Mommsen).


lead him to think that it was a composition by Pamphilus. In any case, according to Jerome, Rufinus had committed a grave fraud for Pamphilus wrote nothing and because Rufinus attributed the work of a heretic, the “Arian” Eusebius, to a famous martyr like Pamphilus. At the same time, Jerome argued that if Pamphilus were the author of the *Apologeticus*, his martyrdom was necessary to purify ‘his sole sin by the effusion of his blood’. The objective of Jerome, whose arguments are various and deliberately confusing, was simply to reject the authorship of Pamphilus’ work, even if this implied the use of assertions of bad taste.

Jerome must have been also aware of the fact that he was contradicting what he wrote in the *Vir. III.* by denying Pamphilus’ participation in the composition of the *Apologeticus*. He justified this mistake putting the blame on Rufinus in another important passage from the second book of his *Apologeticus adversus Rufinum*. Jerome explains that the first time he saw the *Apologeticus* was in Rufinus’ codex, which attributed it to Pamphilus. Since he did not read it, Jerome thought that Pamphilus and Eusebius wrote two different works and this explained his past mistake. Only the discussion aroused after Rufinus’ translation had then led Jerome to check these writings. Thus he discovered that what Rufinus had edited under Pamphilus’ name ‘both in Greek and in Latin’ was the first book of Eusebius’ *Apologia*. Finally, Jerome charged Rufinus with having changed some original passages both in Greek and Latin.

None of these accusations are credible. If we give credit to Jerome saying that he first looked at the *Apologeticus* in its sole Greek version from a codex of Rufinus before the Origenian controversy, there would not have been any reason for Rufinus to falsify its attribution. Therefore it must have been authentic. Not even the accusations in

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390 Hier. Epist. 84,11 (137,22-25 Labourt III): *Date quodlibet aliud opus Pamphili; nusquam reperietis, hoc unum est; unde igitur sciam quod Pamphili sit? uidelicet stilus et saliuva docere me poterit.


392 Hier. Epist. 84,11 (138,17-18 Labourt III).


394 Hier. Adv. Ruf. II,23 (165,6–166,33 Lardet): *Nunc tantum tuis adsertionibus obuiasse sufficiat, et hoc prudentem breueri instruxisse lectorem me istum librum, qui sub nomine Pamphili ferebatur, uidisse primum scriptum in codice tuo et, quia non erat mihi curae quid pro haeretico diceretur, sic semper habuisse quasi diuersum esset opus Pamphili et Eusebii: postea uero, quaestione commota, scriptis eorum respondere voluisse et ob hanc causam legisse quid pro Origene unusquisque sentiret, perspicueque deprehendisse quod primus liber sex voluminum illius Eusebii ipse esset qui unus sub nomine Pamphili a te editus est tam graece quam latinae, immutatis duxerat sensibus de Filio et Spiritu Sancto qui apertam blasphemiam praeferebant. Unde etiam ante annos ferme decem, cum Dexter amicus meus, qui praefecturae praedictae praebet episcopum et regis et regis nostrae religionis ei indicemSEXUarem, inter ceteros tractatores posuit et hunc librum a Pamphilo editum, ita putans esse ut a te et tuis discipulis fuerat divulgatum. Sed cum ipse dicit Eusebius Pamphilum nihil scripsisse, exceptis breueris epistulis ad amicos, et primus liber sex voluminum illius eadem et idem uerbis continet quae sub nomine Pamphili a te dicta sunt, perspicat esse ut idcirco librum hunc disseminare uolsisse ut sub persona martyris haeresim introduceres. Cunque et de hoc ipso libro quem Pamphili simulata multa perutereris, et aliter in graeco, aliter in latino sint, fraudem tuam errori meo imputare non debes. Other passages concerning this issue (I,8-10; II,15 and III,12) do not present any significant addition to this argumentation.

respect of textual alterations would seem completely plausible on the part of Jerome, since he never provided any evidence of that, although he truly knew the *Apologia*, as demonstrated by a quotation from the sixth book.

This survey on Jerome’s position regarding the authorship of the *Apologia pro Origene* shows that Jerome’s sole interest was to deny that an eminent martyr and intellectual such as Pamphilus could have ever have defended Origen. We have seen that Jerome, who read the *Apologia* at the very beginning of the dispute, was able to deny its attribution to Pamphilus contradicting himself also after he had read its original text. Nevertheless, Jerome neither dared to distrust the authorship of the *Pan. Or.* nor tried to reply to Rufinus’ reference to Gregory of Neocaesarea. Being in the middle of his dispute with Rufinus, Jerome would have certainly tried to refute the traditional attribution of the *Pan. Or.* had he had a chance. Jerome might have done so in order to underplay the trustworthiness of the attribution of the *Apologia* to Pamphilus. But Jerome did not. This is surely an argument *ex silentio*, though, it appears significant if we consider that Jerome’s entry on Gregory Thaumaturgus depended on the catalogue of the library of Caesarea, where it was reported that ‘Theodore, on his departure, wrote a *panegyric of thanks* to Origen, which he recited before a large assembly, Origen himself being present, and which survives down to the present day’ and that Theodore was called Gregory only *postea*. Jerome had read a copy of Eusebius’ and Pamphilus’ *Apologia* in Palestine, in all likelihood in the library of Caesarea, in 399. Whatever the name or the names that manuscript of the *Pan. Or.* contained, and notwithstanding what he wrote in *Vir. Ill.* 65, Jerome did not use this as a pretext to call into question the claim that Gregory of Neocaesarea was the author of the *Pan. Or.* as attested by the *Apologia pro Origene*.

II.8. Socrates of Constantinople

Socrates of Constantinople composed his *Historia Ecclesiastica* in 439-440. His purpose was to continue the work of Eusebius of Caesarea treating the period between Constantine and Theodosius II, as Rufinus did. He is known also as scholasticus, but this attribution is late and several contemporary scholars interpret it in the sense that Socrates attended schools and was educated in Greek *paideia* and this was not a

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396 Rufinus denounced the weakness of Jerome’s accusation without textual evidence in *Apol. adv. Hier.* II,34 (196 Simonetti): … *ea quidem quae reprehendis, non profer* …


reference to being a jurist. He judged positively the profane culture and this aspect is linked to his well-known admiration for Origen.

This appreciation played certainly an important role when Socrates introduced in a sort of excursus the figures of Origen’s famous followers such as Didymus of Alexandria, Basil of Caesarea and Gregory of Nazianzus in Hist. Eccl. IV,25-26: here we apparently observe that the praise of these great figures goes hand in hand with the appreciation of their level of education and their opposition to the Arians. Indeed, in the previous sections Socrates had recalled the persecutions of the pro-Nicene factions in Egypt by the Arian emperor Valens (Hist. Eccl. IV,22-24). Such a threat involved especially the monastic communities, which Socrates depicts devoting much space to the prominent intellectual personality of Evagrius of Pontus. Describing Evagrius’ friendships, using direct citations from his works, Socrates introduced the figures of Didymus, Basil, Gregory of Nazianzus and, eventually, Gregory of Nyssa, though his presence is rather secondary. Immediately after Gregory of Nyssa, Socrates introduces Gregory Thaumaturgus to clarify the doubts about their identity deriving from their homonymy. It is clear that Socrates was using the opportunity to show the greatness of the Origenist tradition through the portrayal of its illustrious exponent. In this sense, the account on Gregory is comparable to those of the other “Origenists”, mainly insofar as it sets out to describe the various steps of Gregory’s study career.

But since a few are confused from the homonymy, it is needed to know that Gregory of Pontus is another person, who was native of Neocaesarea in Pontus, of greater antiquity than those; indeed he was a disciple of Origen. This Gregory’s fame was great at Athens, at Beirut, throughout the entire diocese of Pontus and I might say in the whole world. When he withdrew from the schools of Athens, he studied law in Beirut; after having heard that Origen interpreted the Holy Scriptures at Caesarea, he quickly went there. After having listened to his elevated investigation of the Holy Scriptures, bidding farewell to the Roman laws he became inseparable from Origen; thereafter, when he acquired from him the true

399 For instance see P. Maraval, Socrate et la culture grecque, in L’historiographie de l’Église des premiers siècles, sous la direction de B. Pouderon et Y.-M. Duval. Préf. de M. Quesnel, Paris 2001 (ThH 114), 281-282. For a brief and learned overview on scholarship on this issue see Nuffelen, op. cit., 8-10.


401 This observation is even more apt when these chapters are compared with those of Rufinus’ Historia Ecclesiastica. Socrates, apart from introducing Evagrius Ponticus and Gregory Thaumaturgus, provides more concise and well-documented accounts on the figures he deals with, although he follows the general framework of Rufinus’ narrative: cf. Rufinus, Hist. Eccl. XI,4 (threat of the Egyptian monks), 7 (Didymus), 9 (Cappadocian Fathers).
philosophy, he was recalled by his parents and returned to his homeland. There, while still a layman, he performed many miracles, healing the sick and casting out devils by letters, and drawing to himself the pagans by his discourses and especially by his acts. Pamphilus Martyr reminds him in the books which he wrote about Origen, in which there is also a Gregory’s farewell oration to Origen. There were then, to summarize, three Gregories: the ancient – this latter, disciple of Origen, the Nazianzen and the brother of Basil … (Hist. eccl. IV, 27, 262, 24 – 263, 14 Hansen).

Even at first glance Socrates seems to mix freely various data from written texts and oral traditions.

 Günther Christian Hansen has included Eusebius’ passage on Gregory in the apparatus fontium of his edition of Socrates’ Historia. This is plausible, even if there are some omissions of information, which Socrates could have considered minor or too

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402 Lit.: ‘he returned to the homeland of his parents who recalled [him].’
403 Here Hansen’s critical text (see the following note) adds ‘and Eusebius who bears his name’ (<ca Eusèbèos o touōtou epánwōmous>). I agree with Ambacker et Junod who tend not to consider this reading as original for it comes from the Armenian, Syriac and Latin translations of Socrates’ Historia. They think that ‘la mention du seul Pamphile … pourrait indiquer que Socrate le considère comme l’auteur principal de l’Apologie ou qu’il cherche à mettre en évidence la réputation de Grégoire auquel un “martyr” a rendu hommage en le citant’. See Ambacker – Junod (eds.), Apologie pour Origène, II, 57. For this reason I replaced ποιεῖς (l. 11) with ποιεῖ in Hansen’s text (cf. his apparatus).
404 ‘Ἐπειδὴ δὲ τινες ἐκ τῆς ὁμολογίας πλανώνται [καὶ ἐκ τῶν ἐπιγραφημένων Γρηγορίου βιβλίων], δεῖ εἰδῆναι ὅτι ἦλθος ἐστὶν ὁ Ποιμνικὸς Γρηγόριος, ὅπως ἐκ τῆς ἐν Πάντω Ναουσισαραίας ὁμολογούσας ἀρχικότερος τοῦτων ἄστιν μαθητής γὰρ Ὄριγγένους ἐγένετο. Περὶ τούτου τοῦ Γρηγορίου πολὺς ὁ λόγος ἐν τῇ Ἀθήναις καὶ Βηρυτο καὶ ὅλῃ τῇ Πολιτίκῃ διοικήσει, ὡς δὲ εἶπεν καὶ πάση τῇ ὁλοκλήρῳ. Οὕτως γὰρ ὡς τοῦ Ἀθήνης παραστάσεως ἀναγράφεσας ἐν τῇ Βηρυτίᾳ νόμως ἐμάκριναν, πυθόμενος (τε) ἐν τῇ Κασιπρείᾳ τὰ ἱερὰ γραμμάτια ἐξομενεῖν Ὄριγγένην, δρόμακι ἐπὶ τῇ Κασιπρείᾳ παραχθέτει. Ἀκονομάζεται τῇ μεγαλοφωνίᾳ θεωρίας τῶν ἱερῶν γραμμάτων, πολλὰ χαίρειν εἰπόν τοῖς Ἔρωμακοις νόμως ἀγρίστοι ἢ ὅ τιον λοιπόν, καὶ ὧν τοῦτο παραδειγματικὴν τὴν ἐλήθη φιλοσοφικὴν [καὶ] μετὰ ταῦτα ἐπὶ τὴν παράδοκτο τῶν γνώσεων καλεσάντων ἀναγράφει. Κακεὶ πρῶτον μὲν λατικὸς ὅν πολλὰ σημεῖα ἐποίησεν παυσάνιτας θεραπεύτων καὶ δίκαιον τε ἐπιστολὰς φυγάδων καὶ τοὺς Ἐλληνίζωσαν τοῖς τοῖς λόγοις καὶ πλέον τοῖς γινομένοις ὡς τοῦτο προσαγομένος. Μένεινται δὲ αὐτὸν καὶ Πάμφυλος ὁ μάρτων <καὶ Εὐσέβειος ὁ τοῦτον ἐπώνυμονος> ἐν τοῖς πρί. Ὄριγγένους πονηθέσεν αὐτῷ βιβλίαν, ἐν ὑπὲρ καὶ συντακτικοῖς λόγοις Γρηγορίου εἰς Ὅριγγένην παράκειται. Γεγονόν τούτων ὡς ἐν κεραλαίῳ εἰπέν, <τρεῖς> Γρηγόριο. ἐ το άχοις ὀνόματι καὶ μαθητής Ὄριγγένης, καὶ ὧ Ῥωμαῖος καὶ ὀ ἀδελφὸς Ἡροδώνου ... Hansen, confirming the suggestion of Conybeare, has expunged from the first lines the allusion to the confusion of the different Gregories because of the titles of their works; he follows the omission by the Armenian and Latin translations, which were based on fifth- or sixth-century Greek manuscripts, while the most ancient testimonies of the Greek tradition date back to the tenth and eleventh centuries. See G.C. Hansen (ed.) Socrates Kirchengeschichte, Berlin 1995 (GCS, N.F. 1), IX-XXXIII, and F.C. Conybeare, A collation of the History of Socrates Scholasticus, Books IV-VII, with the old Armenian version and with the Latin version of Epiphanius Scholasticus as preserved in the Historia Tripartita of Cassiodorus, JP 34 (1915), 53. Socrates’ account was translated into Latin in the sixth century at the request of Cassiodorus, see Cassiodori-Epiphani, Historia Ecclesiastica Tripartita, rec. W. Jacob, ed. Curavit R. Hanslik, Vindobonae 1952 (CSEL 71), VIII(8) (480, with apparatus). It has also been the source for Nicephorus Callistus Xanthopoulos’ Historia Ecclesiastica, XI, 19, see PG 146,627-629.
disturbing in an entry introduced by an issue of homonymy, such as the two names, Athenodorus and the years spent in Caesarea. At the same time we have to underline the fact that Gregory’s law studies in Beirut are not mentioned by Eusebius nor Rufinus, but only by Jerome and somehow obscurely by the Pan. Or.

Rufinus’ translation and continuation of Eusebius’ Historia was one of the main sources of Socrates’ work. Rufinus had composed and added the tenth and eleventh books which treated the period between Nicea (325) and the death of Theodosius (395), and Socrates had used them in composing the first two books of his Historia. Socrates declares it at the beginning of the second book, adding that he collected information not only from Rufinus but also from different written and oral sources when he composed from his third book through to his seventh book. This hint could suggest that Socrates knew and used the rest of Rufinus’ translation, as this would explain also how Socrates was aware of Gregory’s miracles, given that Rufinus mentioned some of them in his supplement to the seventh book (VII,28,2). However, as we shall see, Socrates’ dependence on Rufinus is far from being convincing.

Socrates does not show any tangible dependence on the writings of the Cappadocians in which Gregory Thaumaturgus was mentioned. He did not quote any of Basil of Caesarea’s works, not even the De Spiritu Sancto that may have had a great significance in Socrates’ description of the anti-Arian role played by the most famous follower of Origen. As for Gregory of Nyssa, William Telfer has shown that his Vita guaranteed the spread of the Confessio and of Gregory of Neocaesarea’s figure as a Wonder-worker in the Constantinopolitan environment since the time that Gregory of Nazianzus had preached there in 380s. Telfer noted three elements that recall Gregory of Nyssa’s narrative in Socrates’ account: the references to miracles made by Gregory Thaumaturgus before his ministry; his peculiar skill in “casting out” demons by letters, and his activity of evangelisation of the Ἐλληνίζοντες ‘by his discourses and especially by his acts’. But these similarities led Telfer to conclude that Socrates’ references to the miracles of the saint are hardly to be reconciled with his ever having seen the text. At the same time they could conceivably be the result of a second hand acquaintance with the gist of it. Telfer’s reconstruction and hypothesis are unimpeachable. We might add to his inventory only Gregory’s decision to go to Caesarea in an attempt to be taught by the master Origen, which recalls the episode of


408 P. van Nuffelen, Two fragments from the Apology for Origen in the Church History of Socrates Scholasticus, JThS 56 (2005), 112-113, has reputedly admitted Socrates’ reliance on Gregory of Nyssa’s Vita on the basis of this similarity. However, Gregory of Nyssa explains the episode of the letter attributing to Gregory Thaumaturgus the power to make the demon “come back” (not be “cast out”), as does Rufinus (cf. Gr. Nys., V. Gr. Thaum. 22,5, with Rufinus in GCS 9, 955,11-12 Mommsen). It has to be noted also that Socrates wrote δὲ ἐπιστολῶν, not διὰ γραμμάτων.

409 Telfer, The Cultus of St. Gregory Thaumaturgus, 239.
the meeting with Firmilian of Caesarea. Maybe Severus of Antioch’s memory that Gregory of Nyssa’s Vita was read at the beginning of sixth century in many churches, Constantinople included, was applicable also for the beginning of the fifth. That would be confirmed by Rufinus’ claim that Gregory Thaumaturgus’ deeds ‘are celebrated under the sky of East and North in the discourses of all’. Whatever the truth may be, Socrates’ entry on Gregory does not provide any evidence that he actually knew Gregory of Nyssa’s work and attests that Socrates reported oral traditions.

Actually Socrates also reported later independent oral traditions, as shown by the case of Gregory’s fame in Athens. The remark that Gregory Thaumaturgus attended ‘the schools of Athens’ does likely depend on these traditions as well. Tillemont commented on this issue as follows: ‘pour le voyage d’Athenes, nous ne trouvons point qu’aucun autre en ait parlé avant cet historien, souvent assez mal instruit’. This harsh judgment seems right, at least to a certain degree. Socrates probably combined the information of Gregory Thaumaturgus’ studies with those accomplished there by Basil and Gregory of Nazianzus mentioned in the previous sections. In other words, Socrates did not have many sources at his disposal to untangle the problems of identity of the different “Gregory”. Thus, he probably related a tradition that was already the outcome of the confusion between the figures of Gregory of Nazianzus and Gregory of Neoceaarea. In any case, Athens implies another point of divergence between Socrates and Gregory of Nyssa, for the latter mentions Alexandria. We may note also that Gregory of Nyssa reported that the Thaumaturgus lost his parents in his youth, while Socrates reports that they called him back to his homeland after the studies at Origen’s school.

The issue of the studies which Gregory Thaumaturgus actually completed is very relevant to our appraisal of Socrates. He reports that Gregory studied law in Beirut, and this precise statement, as we have already pointed out, cannot stem from Eusebius or Rufinus. The only source in our possession which contains this remark is Jerome’s Vir. Ill., while the Pan. Or. is rather equivocal concerning this point. Since we have no

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410 Severus of Antioch, Letter to Stephen, transl. by P. Allen – C.T.R. Hayward, Severus of Antioch, London-New York 2004, 143: ‘the eulogizing sermon which was preached about Gregory the Wonderworker was read out in many churches, and in the royal city itself, and, in the same manner also, the sermon about Basil the Great’.


412 One possible trace in this sense would have been the old reading of our text, corrected by Hansen (cf. n.405 above), which could induce us to think that Socrates was aware of the confusion arising from the title of Vita by Gregory of Nyssa. On the contrary, the short Armenian adaptation of Socrates’ Historia relies on another Armenian version of the Vita. Cf. The Armenian adaptation of the Ecclesiastical History of Socrates Scholasticus. [Commonly known as “The Shorter Socrates”]. Transl. of the Armenian Text and Comm. by R. W. Thomson, Leuven-Paris-Sterling (VA) 2001 (Hebrew University Armenian Studies, 3), 132-133.

413 Le Nain de Tillemont, Mémoires pour servir à l’histoire ecclésiastique, t. IV, 669. Thus also Telfer, The Cultus of St. Gregory Thaumaturgus, 238-239.

414 On the basis of the Pan. Or. we cannot rule out either the possibility that Gregory stopped at Beirut, or that he was interested in Greek sciences before he met Origen. Cf. above n.102 (above) and Pan. Or. X.
evidence that Socrates knew Jerome’s *Vir. Ill.*, we must doubt whether Socrates did read the *Pan. Or.* Although Socrates quoted its title and should have had a particular interest in it, we do not have any evidence that he read it. Indeed, even though the report of Gregory’s study of law in Beirut might stem from the narrative of the *Pan. Or.*, it would be the only one, while several important elements of Socrates’ account manifestly disagree with it. If Socrates had actually read the *Pan. Or.*, he in all likelihood would not have said that Gregory Thaumaturgus studied in Athens and was recalled by his parents. It is true that these points have different weight. Undoubtedly we may admit both that Socrates did not notice the death of Gregory’s father and that the last pages of the *Pan. Or.* might induce him to think that Gregory was recalled home by his “parents”. However, it remains hardly acceptable that Socrates preferred an oral tradition on Gregory’s stay in Athens or informed us about Gregory’s decision to go to Origen (‘after having listened that Origen interpreted the Holy Scriptures at Caesarea, he quickly went there’), if he had not had a knowledge of the *Pan. Or.* which was not restricted to its title or to a superficial reading of it.

Furthermore, the idea that Socrates had not read the *Pan. Or.* is confirmed by the omission of a better depiction of the studies which Gregory did under Origen’s guidance. As we have hinted, when Socrates writes about the other “Origenists” before Gregory Thaumaturgus, he highlights some similarities concerning their intellectual education. Didymus had studied grammar, rhetoric, dialectics, arithmetic, music and ‘the other sciences of the philosophers’, and had a deep knowledge of the Old and New Testament415. In the same way, Basil of Caesarea and Gregory of Nazianzus were cultivated experts of Greek and biblical culture416 and had studied in Athens with the famous Sophists Himerius and Proheresius, and in Antioch with the rhetor and philosopher Libanius417, before choosing the solitary life and, then, embarking on an ecclesiastical career leading to the episcopate. All of them were famous for their purity of life and for their defence of the Nicene orthodoxy against the Arians, even though none of them performed miracles like Gregory Thaumaturgus. Having said that, why did Socrates say so little of Gregory’s studies? Considering the fact that Socrates

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415 Socrates, *Hist. Eccl.* IV.25 (259,9-15 Hansen): ... γραμματικός τε γάρ τούς κανόνας ἕβδωκα κατόρθου καὶ ῥητορικός πάλιν θάττον μετελάμβανεν. Ἐξέλθων δὲ ἐπὶ τὰ φιλόσοφα θαυμαστῶς πως καὶ τὴν διαλεκτικὴν ἐξέμαθεν καὶ ἄριστη ἡτοιμασίαν τε καὶ μουσικὴν καὶ τάλλα τῶν φιλόσοφων μοιθέματα ἐν φυσικὴν κατέθετο, ὡς προθύμως κυτήν ἀποτάτην πρὸς τοὺς τάκτας δι᾽ ἀφθαρσίην κατορθώσαντας. Οὐ μὴν ἁλλὰ καὶ τὰ θεῖα λόγια παλαιὰς καὶ καινίς Διαθήκης οὕτως ἁκριβῶς ἐγνώκει, ὡστε πολλὰ μὲν ἐκδοθῆται βιβλία ...

416 Cf. Gregory of Nazianzus, *Or.* 43,23, where Gregory testifies that in fourth-century Athens Basil was able to study rhetoric, grammar, philosophy, astronomy, geometry, arithmetic and medicine.

417 Socrates, *Hist. Eccl.* IV.26 (260,16-26 Hansen): Ἀμφότερος γάρ ἦσαν ἀλλήλοις ἐξαιρετικὰ κατὰ τὴν ὀρθὴν πολιτείαν καὶ κατὰ τὰς παιδεύσεις, τὴν τε Ἑλληνικὴν φημὴν καὶ τὴν τῶν ἱερῶν γραμματῶν. Νέος γάρ ὁ θύρεος οὕτω ἐν ταῖς Ἄθηναις (γενόμενος) τῶν τότε ἀκμασάντων σοφιστῶν Ἰμερίου καὶ Προαρείσιον ἄκροτατον γενόμενος καὶ μετὰ τάκτα ἐν τῇ Ἀντιοχείᾳ τῆς Συρίας Λιβανίῳ συμμετέχοντας ἄκρως τὴν ῥητορικὴν ἐξεποίησαν ... Ἀφάνειον οὖν φιλοσόφων λόγων παρὰ τὴν την κατατέθη ἐν τῇ Ἀντιοχείᾳ πράγματι τὰ φιλόσοφα ...
depicted in detail what the other “Origenists” had studied and the importance of Gregory’s testimony of Origen’s approach to education, the lack of any reference to the subjects which Gregory studied at Origen’s school is another point that leads us to conclude that Socrates had not read the Pan. Or.

A similar suspicion leads to the conclusion that Socrates did not take account of either Rufinus’ supplement or Gregory of Nyssa’s Vita. Indeed, Gregory Thaumaturgus’ Confessio fidei would have been a good chance to prove that the Origenism could not be in any manner the root of the Arian heresy. Both a better depiction of Gregory’s studies and a reference to the Confessio fidei would have been perfectly fitting within the narrative of Socrates.

The sole other possible textual source of Socrates was the Apologia pro Origene. Its explicit mention is the most important aspect of Socrates’ report, even though it has not been seriously taken into account by scholars. When Socrates writes that Pamphilus ‘reminds him in the books which he wrote about Origen, in which there is also a Gregory’s farewell oration to Origen’, he attests that the Apologia contained some references to Gregory Thaumaturgus and not only his Pan. Or.

Therefore we can assert in all likelihood that Socrates’ account stems from oral traditions somehow linked to those known to Gregory of Nyssa and Basil and from what Pamphilus reported about Gregory in one of the books of the Apologia pro Origene. This text should have provided a little more extensive information on Gregory than that of Eusebius’ Hist. Eccl., mentioning Gregory’s studies in Beirut and the call back home by his parents or, more probably, by his mother.

418 Socrates must have known at least Rufinus’ translation of the Confessio including the last section of it, which is particularly significant for its opposition to Arius and cannot be considered authentic. Cf. ch. 5, §1, n.33 with regard to Grillmeier’s old understanding of this work.

419 The fact that Socrates did not know the Confessio does not imply anything other than that he did not have a text at his disposal, and not that it could not be known in Constantinople, as it actually was. See Telfer, The cultus of St. Gregory Thaumaturgus, 237, where is mentioned the case of the monks who contrasted Nestorius’ doctrine and referred to the authority of Gregory of Neocaesarea in the matter of Trinitarian theology.

420 See, for instance, the notes by Crouzel (ed.), Gregoire le Thaumaturge, Remerciement, 34; Rizzi (ed.), Gregorio il Taumaturgo (?). Encomio di Origene, 93; Mazzucco, La componente autobiografica nel Discorso di Ringraziamento, 103. More careful are É. Junod, L’Apologie pour Origène de Pamphile et Eusèbe et les développements sur Origène dans le livre VI de l’Histoire Ecclésiastique, 185; Slusser, Saint Gregory Thaumaturgus, 257; Simonetti, Gregorio il Taumaturgo e Origene, 30 (n.19).


422 Socrates writes that Gregory (lit.) ‘returned to the homeland of his parents who recalled [him]’ (ἐπὶ τὴν πατρίδα τῶν γονέων καλεσάντων ἀνεχώρησε). But it is possible that Socrates found μητέρα instead of πατέρα in the Apologia, and, since he did not read the Pan. Or., considered μητέρα as an oversight for πατέρα and decided to adjust the text according to its easiest meaning. We observe the same process in Gregory’s entry in the Suda. Its compiler inserted πατέρα in place of μητέρα, which he read in the Greek translation of Jerome’s De viris illustribus.
III: Elements of chronology

There are several notes that supply us with points of reference which could help us in our attempt to determine the chronology of the first part of Gregory’s life: a certain proximity between the arrival of Origen in Caesarea from Alexandria and that of Gregory from his native country (Pan. Or. V, §63); Gregory’s reference to a period of eight years in which Gregory did not practise rhetoric (Pan. Or. I, §3); Eusebius’ mention of five years spent by Gregory and Athenodore at Origen’s school (Hist. Eccl. VI,30) under the reign of Gordian III (Hist. Eccl. VI,29,1).

The critics have cast doubt on these facts. Our intention is to provide an overview of how scholars have treated the data. This description will allow us to verify the soundness of each position and the priority of a point of reference with respect to the others.

We find two main solutions to the chronology of these years of Gregory’s life. The opinion that 231 was the year in which Gregory began his studies with Origen dates back to Louis-Sébastiene Le Nain de Tillemont at the end of the seventeenth century, and has been shared subsequently by Remi Ceillier, Gottfried Lumpe, Franz Michael Permaneder, Viktor Ryssel, Johannes Dräseke and more recently by Konstantin Fouska. According to them Gregory studied in Caesarea between 231 and 234.

Le Nain de Tillemont, Mémoires pour servir à l’histoire ecclésiastique, t. IV, 323-324, 668-669. Tillemont’s solution provoked two impassioned dissertations by Jean Liron, Les aménités de la critique, ou Dissertations et remarques nouvelles, sur divers points de l’Antiquité Ecclésiastique & Profane, Paris 1717, 175-200. The main point of Liron’s criticisms of Tillemont was the issue of the interruption of Gregory of Neocaesarea’s studies and the three-year period spent in Alexandria. In the first dissertation (175-191) Liron showed that Gregory of Nyssa’s was not a trustworthy testimony and argued that Gregory studied Roman law in Beirut, as Jerome and Socrates, who – according to Liron – had read Pamphilus’ Apologia, reported this information. In the second one (192-200), he partly changed his mind: since Eusebius did not mention any interruption of Gregory’s studies, Liron admitted that Gregory had indeed studied Roman law in Neocaesarea for three years and dated the five years of Gregory’s studies under Origen to between 238 and 243.


P. Gottfridi Lumperi Historia Theologico-critica de vita, scriptis atque doctrina Sanctorum Patrum aliorumque scriptorum ecclesiasticorum trium primorum saeculorum ex virorum doctissimorum litteraris monumentis collecta, pars XIII, Augustae Vindelicorum 1799 (1 ed. 1783-89), 254-255, 262-263.


Ryssel, Gregorius Thaumaturgus, 12-19.

Dräseke, Der Brief des Origenes, 105-107. In this article Dräseke maintained that Origen had sent Ep. Gr. from Caesarea of Cappadocia to Alexandria of Egypt where Gregory was studying philosophy. Dräseke subsequently approved Koetschau’s dating and tried to demonstrate that the addressee of the pseudo-Gregorian treatise Ad Tatianum was in reality a certain Gaianus who, according to the Suda Lexicon, taught eloquence under Maximinus and Gordianus in Beirut, where he would have known Gregory during his study of Roman law there and of philosophy with Origen in Caesarea. See J. Dräseke, Zu Gregorios’ von Neocäsarea Schrift über die Seele, ZWTh 44 (1901), 92-96. Cf. Celia, II Λόγος κεφαλαιώδης, 169-170.

Fouska, Γρηγόριος ὁ Νεοκαισαρείας ἐπίσκοπος ὁ Θαυματουργός, 77-78, 82. The author shows a certain taste for erudition but unfortunately he combines it with too uncritical an approach. He tends to
and 235, after which period he fled to Alexandria to avoid the persecution of Maximinus Thrax, returned in Palestine in 237 or 238 and delivered his speech to Origen in 238 or 239\(^{430}\). Lumper and Fouska, though agreeing with regard to the rest, admitted that the Pan. Or. had been delivered in 235.

This solution was founded on the date of Origen’s move to Caesarea reported by Eusebius (231)\(^ {431}\), and on the attempt to harmonize the information of Gregory’s stay in Alexandria, reported by Gregory of Nyssa’s Vita, with the years of the anti-Christian persecution under the reign of Maximinus Thrax. This last fact appeared to be confirmed by Palladius. In his Historia Lausiaca he reported that Origen stayed two years in Caesarea of Cappadocia in the house of the virgin Juliana ‘when he fled from the rising of the Greeks’ and declared that he had found a very old book ‘written in verses’ which reported some words of Origen who wrote that he himself had found that book ‘at the house of the virgin Juliana at Caesarea when I was hiding there’\(^ {432}\).

Palladius’ information, in turn, may confirm two pieces of information in Eusebius’ Hist. Eccl.: the report that Firmilian once invited Origen to Cappadocia\(^ {433}\); the entry stating that Origen mentioned or dealt with the persecution of Maximinus in several works and declared that he had read different books which Origen had received from Juliana\(^ {434}\). In 1894 Paul Koetschau reversed this reconstruction arguing that it has been Palladius who must have misinterpreted these passages from the Hist. Eccl., and noted that the silence of Eusebius and Gregory Thaumaturgus confirmed that Palladius was

make all the ancient data agree without questioning their reliability and to speculate extensively about the chronology.

\(^{430}\) Also Johannes Albertus Fabricius and Andrea Galland were in agreement with the dates for the beginning of Gregory’s study in Caesarea and for the year of composition of Pan. Or., but they did not give any explanation of the previous years. Cf. Fabricius, Bibliotheca Graeca, V, 247.

\(^{431}\) Eus. Hist. Eccl. VI,26: ‘… now it was in tenth year of the above-mentioned reign [Alexander Severus] that Origen removed from Alexandria to Caesarea … And not long afterwards Demetrius, the bishop of the church of the Alexandrians, died, having continued in the ministry for forty-three entire years …’ (transl. Oulton, 79).

wrong. A few years later, Henri Leclercq, who still accepted 231 as the date of the start of Gregory’s study with Origen and counted seven years of studies in Palestine, denied that Gregory had interrupted his studies because of Maximinus’ persecutions and doubted Gregory’s journey to Alexandria.

Actually, this chronological reconstruction is unsatisfactory, first of all, because of the untrustworthiness of the comment by Palladius. Other difficulties can be found which complicate the dating of Origen’s move to Caesarea and Gregory’s studies in Alexandria. For the moment, we should postpone the treatment of the first issue and ignore what is reported by Gregory of Nyssa. Indeed, his Vita does not provide any useful clues regarding the chronology of the first period of the life of Gregory of Neocaesarea, and, on the contrary contradicts the Pan. Or. in significant cases.

The main reason why Palladius’ information should not be considered reliable is the fact that Eusebius did not expressly speak of Origen’s flight to Cappadocia for such a extended period of time. Indeed, as we have seen, Eusebius not only knew that Origen mentioned the persecution of Maximinus, but also had read several books which Juliana had given to Origen, probably the same writing quoted by Palladius.

In any case, not only is Eusebius’ information about the persecution of Maximinus in itself hardly reliable, but it is also not consistent with the accounts of Firmilian of Caesarea of Cappadocia and Origen himself. In Hist. Eccl. VI,28 Eusebius wrote:

> When Alexander the Emperor of the Romans had brought his principate to an end after thirteen years, he was succeeded by Maximin Caesar. He, through ill-will towards the house of Alexander, since it consisted for the most part of believers, raised a persecution ordering the leaders of the Church alone to be put to death, as being responsible for the teaching of the Gospel (διωγμὸν ἐγέρας, τοὺς τῶν ἐκκλησίων ἄρχοντας μόνοις ὡς αἰτίους τῆς κατὰ τὸ εὐσεβεῖον διδασκαλίας ἄνωτερον προστάτευτοι). Then also Origen composed his work On Martyrdom, dedicating the treatise to Ambrose and Protocetus, a presbyter of

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435 Koetschau (ed.), Des Gregorios Thaumaturgos Dankrede an Origenes, XII-XIII: ‘Der Irrtum des auch sonst ganz unzuverlässigen Palladios ist wohl aus Missverständnis oder Verdrehung der Worte des Eusebios (h. e. VI 27 und 28) und aus Kombination dieser Stelle mit einer früheren (h. e. VI 17) zu erklären’.

436 Leclercq, Gregory of Neocaesarea, 15.

437 Other sound criticism of Palladius’ information comes from the analysis of the texts at issue by Nautin, Origène, 219-224, who confirmed Koetschau’s hypothesis of Palladius’ misinterpreting Eusebius’ Hist. Eccl. According to Nautin, Palladius invented the episode of Origen in order to make reliable the story he had just narrated: Athanasius fled the Arians taking refuge in the house of a beautiful virgin in Alexandria who for six years cared for all Athanasius’ needs and provided him with books. Nautin noted that Palladius omitted the reference to the books of Symmachus (who rejected the Gospel of Matthew) and other translations of the Scripture and added that Juliana was a virgin, as the woman who took in Athanasius. The narrative of Palladius must be considered of edificatory character and without historical value according to G.W. Clarke, Some Victims of the Persecution of Maximinus Thrax, Hist. 15,4 (1966), 449-450.

438 See, supra, nn.435-436. H. Crouzel, Origène, Paris 1985, 36-37, seems to be sure that it was the same text, but Eusebius referred to ‘books’ and not to a sole book.
the community at Caesarea; for in the persecution no ordinary distress had befallen them both, in which distress it is recorded that these men were distinguished for the confession they made during the period (ἐν ἣ καὶ διαπέραξαν κατέχεις λόγος ἐν ὁμολογίᾳ τοῖς ἀνδραῖς), not more than three years, that the reign of Maximin lasted. Origen has noted this particular time for the persecution, in the twenty-second of his *Exposition of the Gospel according to John*, and in various letters (transl. Oulton, 79-81).

Firmilian attested that all the Christians of Cappadocia and Pontus were persecuted by Serenianus, the governor of that region, but that it was possible to run away because ‘that persecution was not over the whole world but local’439. As for Origen’s works, we should note the following: Eusebius’ reference to the XXII book of the *Commentary to the Gospel of John* is not verifiable because it is lost (like the other letters mentioned by Eusebius); we would seek in vain a precise statement of “physical elimination” in the *Exhortatio ad martyrium* which Origen wrote in 235440 addressing it to his disciple Ambrosius and to a priest of Caesarea named Protocetus441. Neither Ambrosius nor Protocetus are said to have been killed442. As noted by Nautin, the *Exhortatio ad Martyrium* did not mention even the imprisonment of Ambrosius and Protocetus and ‘quand Origène fera l’éloge de son mécène dans sa lettre à Fabien, il ne lui décêrnera pas le titre de “confesseur” comme il l’aurait sûrement fait si Ambroise avait été emprisonné pour la foi’443. Furthermore, there are no Roman sources about an anti-Christian persecution under Maximinus444: Herodian reported only that Maximinus began a systematic removal from influential positions of the friends of his predecessor Alexander Severus. That seems to be the only reliable information which we find in

439 Firmilianus, *Ep. LXXV*.10, edited in *S. Thasci Caecili Cypriani Opera Omnia*, recensvit et commentario critico instruxit G. Hartel, Vindobonae 1868 (CSEL 3,1): … terrae etiam motus plurimi et frequentes extiterunt, ut et per Cappadociam et per Pontum multa subbruèrent, quaedam etiam ciuitates in profundum recepta dirupti soli hiatus deuorarentur, ut ex hoc persecutio quoque gravis aduersum nos nominis fieret, quae post longam retro aeratis pacem repente oborta de inopinato et insueto malo ad turbandum populum nostrum terribilior effecta est. Serenianus tunc fuit in nostra prouincia praeses, acerbus et dirus persecutor. in hac autem perturbatione constituitis fidelibus et luc atque illuc persecutionis metu fugientibus et patrias suas relinquentibus (erat enim transeundi facultas eo quod persecutio illa non per totum mundum sed localis fuisse).…

440 The date is given by K.J. Neumann, *Die Römische Staat und die allgemeine Kirche bis auf Diocletian*, I, Leipzig 1890, 228. In *Exhort. ad Mart.* 41,5-7, Origen referred to Germany as a possible place of execution, and we know that Maximinus began a military campaign in that region at the beginning of his reign.

441 Nautin, *Origène*, 78. Here Nautin also expressed the hypotheses that Ambrosius was living in Alexandria under Maximinus and that Protocetus was a priest from Alexandria.

442 See the keen analysis of the verb ἀναιρεῖσθαι in the passages of Eusebius and Origen at issue by G.W. Clarke, *Some Victims of the Persecution of Maximinus Thrax*, 447-448. It is worth noting that Origen dedicated to Ambrosius the CC, written in 248.

443 Nautin, *ibidem*.

44In addition to Origen, Eusebius and Firmilian, we know that Pontianus and Hyppolitus, who were candidates for the episcopal Roman see, were exiled by Maximinus. See *Le Liber pontificioles*. Texte, introd. et comm. par l’abbé L. Duchesne, vol. I, Paris 1886 (BEFAR 2 sér. 3), 145 (§19). We are here dealing with deportations in this case too.
Eusebius\textsuperscript{445}. For these reasons most historians reject the hypothesis that there was a general \textit{prostagma} against the clergy, as seems possible to deduce from Eusebius’ words, and admit that there was at most a local persecution\textsuperscript{446}.

We come to the conclusion that not only is the silence of Eusebius a strong argument against the reliability of Palladius\textsuperscript{447}, but also that Eusebius’ information about the persecution under Maximinus is untrustworthy or not well-founded. Given all these difficulties we are surprised that Τῠν ἐπισκάστωσεν τῶν Ἐλλήνων, which Palladius spoke about, could still be considered as proof of the persecution under the reign of Maximinus and subsequently the cause of Origen’s flight to Caesarea of Cappadocia\textsuperscript{448}. On the contrary, the evidence seem clear in attesting that the anti-Christian persecution in Palestine was less aggressive than in Cappadocia. So, it may be more than reasonable to wonder why Origen should have fled to Cappadocia which was one of the few places for which it seems legitimate to speak of persecution under Maximinus. If this had indeed happened, Eusebius would have, no doubt, seized the opportunity to praise Origen’s bravery. At the same time, we may be surprised by the fact that Eusebius did not praise Origen’s stay in Caesarea during the persecution. In brief, there is no reliable evidence to lead us to suppose that Origen moved to Cappadocia under Maximinus and that he was subjected to particular threats. Finally, if we had, as I believe, good reason

\begin{footnotesize}
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\item \textsuperscript{445} Herodian, \textit{History of the Roman Empire}, VII.1.1-4. According to Ronald Heine this means that Origen was a possible suspect in Maximinus’ eyes because of Julia Mamea’s esteem for him. Cf. Origen, \textit{Commentary on the Gospel of John}, books 13-32. Transl. by R. Heine, Washington 1993 (FaCh 89), 5-13 (esp. 6). Here Heine sustains positions quite different from mine. He has continued to deem Palladius’ account historical, see Id., \textit{The Alexandrians} in \textit{The Cambridge History of Early Christian Literature}. Edited by F. Young, L. Ayres, A. Louth, Cambridge 2008, 122.
\item \textsuperscript{447} Cf. Crouzel (ed.), Gregoire le Thaumaturge, \textit{Remerciement}, 20-21 and Id., \textit{Origène}, Paris 1985, 37; the same argument is used also by Nautin, who usually is extremely doubtful concerning Eusebius’ reliability, in \textit{Origène}, 221. However, Crouzel sees in the ‘rising of the Greeks’ mentioned by Palladius the troubles in Alexandria after Caracalla’s visit in 215, referred to by Eusebius in \textit{Hist. Eccl.} VI.19,16. Palladius might have confused the two Caesareas. See Id. \textit{Origène s’est-il retiré en Cappadoce pendant la persécution de Maximin le Thace?}, BLE 64 (1963), 195-203. The position adopted by Crouzel drew on and developed again the thesis of P. Hartmann, \textit{Origène et la théologie du martyre}, ETHL 34 (1958), 776-779, who denied that Origen arrived in Caesarea in Cappadocia during the persecution, supposed Palladius’ confusion between Caesarea of Palestine and that of Cappadocia, and referred the words of Palladius to the violence ordered by Caracalla in Alexandria.
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to place Gregory’s studies with Origen under Maximinus, the picture of a Palestine which was hardly dangerous at all for Christians could be confirmed by the fact that Gregory, towards the end of the Pan. Or.:\textsuperscript{449} lamented that he was leaving the peace and tranquillity of the years passed at Origen’s school.

Paul Koetschau suggested an alternative solution for the chronology of Gregory’s stay in Caesarea\textsuperscript{450}. He noted that the manuscript tradition of Eusebius’ passage speaking of Origen’s move to Caesarea was not certain and could not be used for dating\textsuperscript{451}. Indeed although the majority of the manuscripts reported the tenth year of Alexander Severus (231) for dating Origen’s move to Caesarea, another important manuscript and Nicephorus Callistus’ Historia Ecclesiastica recorded the twelfth year (233), while Eusebius’ Chronicon and its Armenian and Latin translations by Jerome reported different dates. Thus Koetschau based his calculation on other chronological elements. He interpreted the eight years mentioned by Gregory as the result of the sum of the three years spent in the study of Roman law and the five years passed at Origen’s school\textsuperscript{452}. Then he detected a parallel between the Pan. Or. II,18 and Origen’s Clo XXXII,8, and assumed that this book had been composed during the years 236-238. Accepting the departure of Gregory and Athenodorus in 238, because Eusebius placed this event under Gordian III\textsuperscript{453}, Koetschau put the date of the beginning of Gregory’s studies as 233. Nonetheless, Koetschau acknowledged that the right reading for Eusebius’ passage reporting the date of Origen’s move from Alexandria to Caesarea was the ‘tenth’ – instead of the ‘twelfth’ – year of Alexander (231). This fact can be confirmed by another chronological reference given by Eusebius, namely the death of Demetrius which happened shortly after Origen went away from Alexandria. According to Koetschau’s argumentation, Eusebius put Demetrius’ death in 231/2 because he dated the beginning of his episcopacy in 188/189\textsuperscript{454} and knew he was a bishop for forty-three years\textsuperscript{455}. This date would not be discordant with 233 as the year of the beginning of Gregory’s stay in Caesarea, which is the result of the subtraction of the five years of studies mentioned by Eusebius from 238, namely the date of the first year of the reign of Gordianus III. On the basis of this hypothesis and of the reconstruction of the biographical elements recounted by Gregory in the Pan. Or., Koetschau proposed 227

\textsuperscript{449} Pan. Or., XVI, §192-193.

\textsuperscript{450} Koetschau (ed.), Des Gregorios Thaumaturgos Dankrede an Origenes, X-XV.

\textsuperscript{451} See n.432. Another analysis of this data (with different conclusions) was that by Dräseke, Der Brief des Origenes, 104-105.

\textsuperscript{452} Actually Koetschau remembered that this opinion was that by Isaac Casaubon in his notae to Hoeschel’s editio princeps of Origen’s CC; and followed by Johan Albrecht Bengel: Origenis Contra Celsum Libri VIII et Gregorii Neocaesar. Thaumaturgi Panegyricus in Origenem a D. Hoeschelio … Graece & Latine nunc primum editi … Augustae Vindelicorum 1605, 506 (and 498); Gregorii Thaumaturgi Panegyricus ad Origenem. Graece et latine … opera Io. Alberti Bengelii, Stutgardiae 1722, 135.

\textsuperscript{453} Eus. Hist. Eccl. VI,29,1.


and 230 as the years of the beginning of the studies respectively of rhetoric and law, and about the 213 as the date of birth.

The proposal by Koetschau that we should consider the years 233-238 as the period which Gregory spent in Caesarea, and 238 as the date of the Pan. Or., has been accepted\(^{456}\) by the majority of scholars starting from Gustav Krüger\(^{457}\); without claiming to be exhaustive we add then Otto Bardenhewer\(^{458}\), Joseph Tixeront\(^{559}\), P. Godet\(^{460}\), Johannes Quasten\(^{461}\), Henri Crouzet\(^{462}\), Richard Klein\(^{463}\) and Michael Slusser\(^{464}\).

However, the arguments put forward by Koetschau to establish the date as 238 are both rather unsoundly based: the fact that Eusebius recorded his information about Gregory when Origen was in Caesarea under the reign of Gordianus III, and the allusion which Gregory made in the Pan. Or. to the thirty-second book of Origens’ Commentary to the Gospel of John\(^{465}\).

This latter remark refers to the expression ‘to introduce ourselves with unwashed feet – as it is said – to ears in which the Divine Word himself … resides\(^{466}\) and an exegetical passage of the Commentary, where Origen explains that the evangelical foot-washing is ‘symbolic of the bases of your souls being purified, that they may be beautiful, since you are to preach the good things, and to approach the souls of men with your feet clean’\(^{467}\). Nautin has called into doubt this parallelism interpreting the words of Gregory as a mere proverbial expression because of the expression ‘as it is said’\(^{468}\). Slusser has identified three places where this phrase appears in Lucian of

\(^{456}\) As far as I know, the date 233 for the beginning of Gregory’s study in Caesarea was proposed for the first time by Casimiri Oudini, Commentarius de Scriptoribus Ecclesiae Antiquis … tribus voluminibus, t. I, Lipsiae 1722, 290.

\(^{457}\) G. Krüger, Geschichte der altchristlichen Literatur in den ersten drei Jahrhunderten, Freiburg i. B. und Leipzig 1895 (Grundriss der Theologischen Wissenschaften, 2 R., 3 B.), 140.

\(^{458}\) Bardenhewer, Geschichte der altkirchlichen Literatur, Bd. II, 316-317.

\(^{459}\) J. Tixeront, Précis de Patrologie, Paris 1923\(^{1}\), 135.

\(^{460}\) P. Godet, Grégoire de Néocésarée, DThC VI (1920), 1844-1845.

\(^{461}\) J. Quasten, Patrology, II, Utrecht 1953, 123.

\(^{462}\) Crouzet, Grégoire le Thaumaturge, 1014; Id. (ed.), Grigorie le Thaumaturge, Remerciement, 17 (n.4), and Origène, 19.

\(^{463}\) Guyot – Klein (eds.), Gregor der Wundertäter, Oratio propheticus, 14-15.

\(^{464}\) Slusser, Gregor der Wundertäter, TRE 14 (1985), 188.

\(^{465}\) This work was never completed by Origen, who was kept busy by it both in Alexandria, where he composed the first five books (cf. Clo VI,1-12), and in Caesarea. Only some of the books (1, 2 – perhaps incomplete, 6, 10, 13, 19 – incomplete, 20, 28 and 32) and many fragments are extant. Cf. Heine (ed.), Commentary on the Gospel according to John, books 1-10, Washington 1989 (FaCh 80), 4-10.

\(^{466}\) Gr. Thaum. Pan. Or. II, §18,63-64: ἐπεμπαίκειν τολμήσαντες ἀνίππτος τοῦ ποιεῖ (τοῦτο δὴ τὸ τοῦ λόγου) ἰκανός …


\(^{468}\) Nautin, Origène, 380, n.51.
Samosata\textsuperscript{469}, which, according to Marco Rizzi, might lead us to assume that the relationship of the \textit{Pan. Or.} with Origen’s writings plays only a secondary role in respect to what would be a literary \textit{topos} in the Second Sophistic movement\textsuperscript{470}. On the contrary, Joseph Trigg has noticed two other passages in which Origen mentions the cleanness of the feet as a precondition for receiving God in \textit{FrLam} 23 and \textit{HIos} VI,3, which date back respectively to the Alexandrian period and the last years of Origen’s life\textsuperscript{471}. I do not think that it is necessary to believe that the influences on Gregory of the Second Sophistic movement and Origen’s teaching contradict each other\textsuperscript{472}, but the cogency of the parallelism proposed by Koetschau is not strong. The allusion to Origen does not necessarily imply that Gregory had read his text and at most may attest that Gregory treasured one of Origen’s daily discussions on the Scriptures in a period close to the composition of the \textit{Commentary}\textsuperscript{473}. Furthermore we have to consider that Koetschau is unjustifiably too confident in dating the composition of the books 6-22 of Origen’s \textit{Commentary} to 233-236\textsuperscript{474}, and that of the books 23-32 to 236-238, so that 238 would have been the exact date of the \textit{Pan. Or.} Furthermore, there are no particular data about the composition of the \textit{Commentary} which allow us to establish an exact date, and, on the contrary, scholars currently tend to agree with Nautin in dating all the books starting from the twenty-second one after 238 and within 248\textsuperscript{475}.

Similarly weak is the opinion that ‘die Trennung der beiden Brüder von Origenes’ has to be dated to 238 inasmuch as Eusebius recorded the information about Gregory during the reign of Gordianus III\textsuperscript{476}. Eusebius in fact made no mention of a ‘separation’. Thence, it remains plausible to interpret his words in the sense that Gregory passed more than one or two years at the school of Origen during the reign of Gordianus III. As

\textsuperscript{469} Slusser (ed.), St. Gregory Thaumaturgus, \textit{Life and Works}, 94. The references are: Lucian, \textit{Demonax} 4; \textit{Rhetorum praeceptor} 14; \textit{Pseudologista} 4.

\textsuperscript{470} Rizzi (ed.), Gregorio il Taumaturgo (?), \textit{Encomio di Origene}, 25, 113-114. Rizzi has located another occurrence of this phrase in Dio Chrysostom, \textit{Or. XIII}, 43. I believe he is wrong in thinking that the interest of this metaphor in the \textit{Pan. Or.} concerns the entrance and not the cleansing of the feet in the ears of Origen, for Gregory shows his impudence exactly because his words are unclean, too human for Origen’s divine ears (\textit{Pan. Or.} II, §14-18).


\textsuperscript{472} On this I endorse the balanced opinion of G. Sfamari Gasparro, \textit{Origene «Uomo divino» nell’«Encomio»}, 152 (n.53), who detects here an intentional weaving of references to the Greek rhetorical tradition and to Origen’s Christian teaching.

\textsuperscript{473} In the preface to the \textit{Apologia pro Origene}, 9, the ‘almost daily’ homiletical activity of Origen is adduced as evidence of his zeal for ‘the word of God and the doctrine’ (according to Junod, \textit{L’Apologie pour Origène de Pamphile et Eusèbe}, 187, Pamphilus ostensibly is the author of this preface). See also Nautin’s reconstruction of Origen’s preaching in Origène, \textit{Homélies sur Jérémie}. Trad. par P. Husson and P. Nautin, Édit., introd. et notes par P. Nautin, T. I, \textit{Homélies I-XI}, Paris 1976 (SC 232), 100-112.

\textsuperscript{474} Koetschau limits himself to referring to \textit{Hist. Eccl.} VI,28, where Eusebius told only that the XXII book dealt with the persecution under Maximinus.

\textsuperscript{475} Nautin, \textit{Origène}, 79-80, 377-380.

\textsuperscript{476} Koetschau (ed.), \textit{Des Gregorios Thaumaturgos Dankrede an Origenes}, XI.
is evident, there is no strong evidence to accept 238 and Koetschau’s proposal is clearly approximate.

Following a comparison between the main solutions proposed by scholars, we may state that there has been a general consensus about two opinions: in taking the first or second year of Gordianus III as the date of the Pan. Or., and in refusing to interpret literally the eight years mentioned by Gregory. The right number of the years spent in Caesarea were reported by Eusebius. The three years of difference were considered by the scholars who accepted as historical the information of Palladius and Gregory of Nyssa as a period of interruption of Gregory’s studies in Palestine during the persecution of Maximinus Thrax. Other scholars, following Koetschau, based their interpretation of these years of gap on the internal data of the Pan. Or., deeming them as being spent by Gregory in studying Roman law in Neocaesarea. We have already discussed why the second solution is preferable.

The two major hypotheses regarding chronology also accepted 231 for dating Origen’s move to Caesarea, but Koetschau held 233 as valid for dating the meeting between Origen and Gregory on the basis of other passages of Eusebius. In this manner Koetschau’s explication established that Gregory would have met Origen two years after the Alexandrian master arrived in Caesarea, attaching little importance to the closeness of the arrivals of Gregory and Origen attested by the Pan. Or.

Adolf von Harnack, commenting on the proposal of Koetschau, also pointed out that the passage ‘Other matters transferred this holy man from the city of Alexandria in Egypt, where he had his former home, and moved him to this region, too, as if to meet us’ does not necessarily lead us to deduce a close proximity between the arrivals of Gregory and Origen in Caesarea. Origen’s move to Caesarea was a ‘cause célèbre’ which could not be obscured by a pair of missing years. Harnack accepted both Koetschau’s solution to the difference of years of Gregory’s study and the historicity of Palladius’ information. After having noted that Gregory kept silent about the persecution of Maximinus, Harnack concluded that Gregory had studied with Origen for five years between 236 (end of persecution) and 240/242, because in these years Origen would have begun his journeys to Nicomedia and Athens.

Harnack’s hypothesis does not seem sound not only because, as we have seen, we lack reliable evidence of anti-Christian persecutions in Palestine under Maximinus, but also because of his vague and decontextualised interpretation of Gregory’s words concerning the proximity of his arrival in Caesarea and that of Origen. The impression deriving from the reading of the fifth chapter of the Pan. Or. is quite different. It tells that ‘other things’ (ἕτερα πράγματα) made Origen move to Caesarea while Gregory

477 Eus. Hist. Eccl. VI,29,1 (Gordianus III); VI,30 (years of study).
479 Harnack, Geschichte der altchristlichen Litteratur bis Eusebius, Th. II, Bd. II, 93-94.
480 Particularly Pan. Or. V, §48-64.
was studying Latin and law in his homeland and was planning to go to Beirut to study law. This whole narrative evidently implies a certain closeness between the events told, also because Gregory alludes to the reasons of Origen’s move and not to the move to Caesarea itself as it was an immediate consequence of Origen’s departure from Alexandria. It is certainly plausible to admit of a certain gap between the arrival of Origen and that of Gregory, but three or more years are certainly too many.

Other strong allusions to the contents of the twentieth book of Origen’s *Commentary of John* have been pointed out by Ronald E. Heine in the seventieth chapter of *Pan. Or.*. Even though these precise allusions imply that Origen composed this book before Gregory left Caesarea, Heine thinks it less likely that Gregory became acquainted with Origen’s ideas through written texts than during lectures. Since Heine supports Koetschau in considering the allusion to the thirty-second book of the *Commentary* as convincing, he follows Harnack’s hypothesis of dating in order to date the books 20-32 of Origen’s *Commentary* to 241 or 242. Indeed he has placed Gregory’s stay in Caesarea between 238 and 243, because 243 or 244 is, for him, the date of Origen’s second visit to Athens; in this way, Heine explained the silence of Gregory about the persecution of Maximinus and an alleged separation from Origen during his studies. This solution actually avoids all the difficulties encountered until now, and is in contrast to the fact that Gregory arrived in Caesarea not long after Origen.

We have seen that it is evidently very difficult to try to use *Hist. Eccl.* VI,29 and 30 in order to establish dating. However, in my opinion, the argument of the closeness of the arrivals of Origen and Gregory in Caesarea remains enduring. At this point we have no further option open to us but to see whether it is possible to rely on the

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481 R.E. Heine, *Three Allusions to Book 20 of Origen’s Commentary on John in Gregory Thaumaturgus’ Panegyric to Origen*, StPat XXVI (1993), 261-266. *Pan. Or.* XVII, §200 alludes to *Clo* XX, §318,320 (374,25–375,4 Preuschen): Gregory defines him as the ‘Guardian and Physician of all who are half-dead and have been robbed’ and ‘sleepless Guard of all men’, and Origen says that Jesus is ‘the Samaritan who healed the man who was half-dead and had fallen among thieves’ and ‘Guard of human souls’ of whom it is said ‘Behold, he who guards Israel shall neither slumber nor sleep’ [Transl. by Heine (ed.), *Commentary on the Gospel of John, books 13-32*, 358]. *Pan. Or.* XVII, §200-202 alludes to *Clo* XX,18-21 and 38: when Gregory refers to the seeds ‘which you [Origen] have shown us to possess’, with which he hopes to return again to Origen bearing from them ‘fruits and little sheaves’ (alluding several times to LXX Ps 125), he seems to recall two passages where Origen reasons about the seeds of the ancestors which each soul bears when it is born, one of these passages refers to Ps 125:5-6 (‘Those who sow in tears shall reap in joy. When they went, they went and wept, bearing their seeds, but when they come, they shall come joyfully, bearing their sheaves’).


483 Jean Liron had proposed the same dating on different grounds. Cf. n.424 above.


485 Heine (ed.), *Commentary on the Gospel of John, books 13-32*, 16.

486 Heine (ed.), *Commentary on the Gospel of John, books 13-32*, 17-19, where he refers to the same opinion by Lawlor and Oulton, in another edition of their translation of Eusebius’ *Historia Ecclesiastica (The Ecclesiastical History and The Martyrs of Palestine*, SPCK 1928, II, 221-224), which, unfortunately, I was not able to consult.
chronology of Origen’s life proposed by Eusebius in the sixth book of the Hist. Eccl. Nautin’s study on Origen remains the most important contribution in this direction.

We will go back to the date of Origen’s move to Palestine, taking into account also the other journeys made there. Indeed the episode of his departure from Alexandria is closely linked to his consecration by the bishops of Palestine. Of course, we do not pretend to solve the complex problems which even the experts on Origen were not able to reconstruct convincingly enough to achieve a solid consensus. Our purpose is to have a general overview of the recent discussion about the chronology of these years of Origen’s life and see whether we can rely on that in order to have a more reliable chronology of Gregory’s life.

According to Eusebius Origen’s first stay in Palestine was provoked by a war in Alexandria. It is usually taken as a reference to the massacre ordered by Caracalla in 215, because of the hostile welcome reserved for him by the citizens of Alexandria. Origen went to Caesarea, where the bishops Theoctistus of Caesarea and Alexander of Jerusalem received him heartily and asked him to preach in the church, despite the fact that Origen was still a layman. This was at least one of the reasons why Demetrius, bishop of Alexandria, later accused the bishops of Palestine, who wrote a letter quoted partially by Eusebius. Moreover, Eusebius located the intervention of Demetrius, who insistently called back Origen in Egypt by letter, to the time when Origen stayed in Palestine.

Nautin has supposed that the ‘war’ mentioned by Eusebius is nothing more than the conflict between Origen and Demetrius and placed the date of this first journey to Palestine at 230. But Nautin could not support his opinion with historical data and this

486 Norelli, Origene (vita e opere), in Monaci Castagno (ed.), Origene. Dizionario, 293-302. The Italian scholar provides an excellent commentary on the life of Origen. He accepts Nautin’s critical approach to the extant sources but his criticism does not spare even Nautin. Other important critical remarks are provided in E. Norelli, Il VI Libro dell’Historia ecclesiastica. Appunti di storia della redazione: il caso dell’infanzia e dell’adolescenza di Origene, in Monaci Castagno (ed.), La biografia di Origene tra storia e agiografia, 147-174 (see also the following Intervento by C. Zamagni in ibidem, 175-181).

487 Eus. Hist. Eccl. VI,19,16. According to L. Perrone, it is likely that Origen visited Palestine for the first time when he was summoned by the Roman governor of Arabia (Hist. Eccl. VI,19,15), because the simplest road from Alexandria to Arabia passes through the territory of Palestine. Eusebius dates this journey to shortly before the “war” in Alexandria, that is still under the reign of Caracalla (211-217). See L. Perrone, Origene e la terra santa, in Andrei (ed.), Caesarea Maritima e la scuola origeniana, 142-144. Perrone rightly disapproves of Nautin’s attempt (Origène, 366) to date this journey to the time of Alexander Severus (222-235). Nautin indeed explained the interest of the governor of Arabia in the celebrity as being due to ‘la diffusion de traités comme les Stromates et le De resurrectione qui abordaient d’une manière neuve les problèmes faisant difficulté pour les païens’, and the Stromates were composed at the time of Alexander (Hist. Eccl. VI,24,3). Perrone points out that ‘la notorietà dell’Alessandrino, oltre alla sua percepibile Reisefreudigkeit – si era recato in viaggio a Roma poco tempo prima, sotto papa Zefirino (198/199-217) – poteva essere assicurata anche da un insegnamento orale di successo’.

488 Cassius Dio, Historia Romana, 77,22; Herodian, History of the Roman Empire, IV,8,6–9,8.

means that his arguments are mere speculations, which were recently contested by Lorenzo Perrone with decisive arguments. In short, there is no strong reason to discredit Eusebius’ information and reference to the war in Alexandria which the historians have mainly interpreted as the punishment ordered by Caracalla, nor, therefore, to postpone the date of Origen’s first journey to Palestine to the reign of Alexander Severus.

Subsequently, Eusebius recounts that Origen went to Antioch by invitation of the empress, Julia Mamaea. Origen remained there for some time, after which he went back to Alexandria. This period of time is determined by the years of the reign of Alexander Severus (222-235).

Thus we arrive at the core of the unpleasant events not mentioned by Gregory in his speech. Eusebius placed the ordination of Origen during the pontificate of Pontianus in Rome (230-235). Origen was urgently summoned to Greece because of ‘Ecclesiastical affairs’, and passing through Palestine he was created priest in Caesarea by the bishops Theoctistus and Alexander. This led Demetrius to begin to injure Origen’s reputation holding his juvenile castration against him. Photius adds that because of the irregular consecration, two councils, one of them guided directly by Demetrius, deposed Origen from his office at the Didaskaleion, expelled him from Alexandria and deprived him of priesthood. However, Hanson has demonstrated that Photius’ account of the banishment cannot be reliable because it was legally impossible and it is not mentioned either by Eusebius or Jerome. Jerome, on the other hand, is more precise about Origen’s condemnation stating that Rome, that is Pope Pontianus, ratified the judgment of Demetrius.

But in another well-known passage Eusebius gives two other chronological references placing Origen’s definitive move to Caesarea in the tenth year of the reign of Alexander Severus, that is in 231, and adding that Demetrius died shortly after. These

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490 Nautin, Origène, 366-367, where, besides, the French scholar erroneously dates Caracalla’s visit to 221, whereas he reigned between 211 and 217. See also, ibidem, 425-427. J.W. Trigg, Origen. The Bible and Philosophy in the Third-century Church, Atlanta 1983, 130, agrees with the date of 230.

491 Cf. Perrone, Origene e la terra santa, 143-144. Perrone’s main points are: the term πόλεμος in the lexicon of Hist. Eccl. means always a political conflict; it is incomprehensible why Eusebius would have omitted to explain this episode, which he could adduce as proof of the hostility of Demetrius; Eusebius says that Origen was young (νεώς), and this is more suitable to a thirty-year-old rather than to a forty-year-old. For other remarks see ibidem, 145-146.


493 Eus. Hist. Eccl. VI,23,3-4. According to Photius, Bibl. cod. 118 (92b, 34 Henry), Origen would have been consecrated only by “Theotecnus” in agreement with Alexander. Photius confused Theoctistus with Theoctenus, who was bishop of Caesarea during the second half of the third century.

494 Eus. Hist. Eccl. VI,8,4-5; Hier. Vir. Ill., 54. Eusebius has previously related (VI,8,3) that Demetrius at first praised Origen for his action.

495 Phot. Bibl. cod. 118.

496 R.P.C. Hanson, Was Origen banished from Alexandria?, StPatr XVII,2 (1982), 904-906.

497 Hier. Epist. 33,4 (253-259, Hilberg, CSEL 54).

references would define the second term of the period of time which begins with the consecration of Origen and finishes with his final move to Caesarea.

According to Nautin’s opinion, the data provided by Eusebius are not clear enough: he would have put the death of Demetrius in 232 because he dated the beginning of Demetrius’ episcopacy to 189 and knew he was bishop for forty-three years. But the Chronographia of Julius Africanus, which was Eusebius’ source, placed the beginning of Demetrius’ episcopacy at the time of the 242° Olympiad, between 189 and 192, so that it is possible to date his death to 233. Nautin then established the years of the episcopacy of Pontianus between 230 and 235, extracting the precise dates from two lists of popes. As Pontianus confirmed Origen’s condemnation by Demetrius, these events must be placed between Pontianus’ election (230) and Demetrius’ death (232 or 233). But Nautin has shown also that the date of the meeting between Origen and Julia Mamaea may be placed during the winter of 231-232 or that of 232-233. At that time Julia Mamaea was in Antioch, from where Alexander was organising the campaign against the Sassanids. In order to harmonise all these data, Nautin proposed this reconstruction: Origen met Julia Mamaea at the end of 231 (before the war with the Persians) and returned to Alexandria in the springtime of 232; shortly afterwards, during his journey to Greece, Origen was created priest in Caesarea; in the meantime Demetrius came to know of Origen’s ordination and reacted by writing to Pontian; after a couple of months Demetrius received approval from Pontian and informed Alexander of Jerusalem; Alexander decided to send an emissary to Athens in order to ask Origen for accounts of the accusations by Demetrius, but, as the months passed and navigation was suspended in the autumn, the emissary could only take a ship to Greece in the springtime of 233; Origen received the Palestinian emissary and wrote a letter of defence in which he mentioned Heraclas as priest.

This chronology is solid and confirms Eusebius’ information putting the date of Origen’s departure from Alexandria in 232. Regarding the date of the arrival in

499 Nautin, Origène, 65-70. For a very useful and clear summary of Nautin’s view (with critical remarks too) see Norelli, Origene (vita e opere), 295-296.
500 Eus. Hist. Eccl. V,22; Chronicon. The beginning of the reign of Commodus is dated now with certainty to 180, so the tenth year of Commodus reported in this passage of the Hist. Eccl. is 189.
501 Eus. Hist. Eccl. VI,26; Chronicon.
502 Enrico Norelli, Origene (vita e opere), 295, points out that 234 should be excluded, ‘because his [Demetrius] successor Eracla ruled for sixteen years and he had been already replaced by Dyonisius in 249’.
503 In his Epist. 33 Jerome listed the epistulae sinodorum super causa Origenis in libro II, that is from the Apologia pro Origene. Cf. Nautin, Origène, 229, n.21, where the French scholar provides other interesting readings from the manuscripts.
504 Nautin, Origène, 68-69.
505 Nautin, Origène, 69-70.
507 T.D. Barnes, Constantine and Eusebius, Cambridge (MA)-London 1981, 328, contests Nautin’s reconstruction stating that ‘the imperial court left Rome during the course of 231 … and may not have reached Syria before the spring of 232’ and that ‘the interview may be assigned to the winter of 232-233’.
Caesarea, Nautin put it only between 234 and 235: ‘Origène ne resta pas à Athènes. Il regagna Césarée … Par sagesse ou par nécessité, il s’y résigna provisoirement en 234’\textsuperscript{508}. However, Nautin did not appear sure about postponing the arrival in Caesarea for over a year because he contradicted himself\textsuperscript{509}.

On the other hand, Nautin’s attempt to place the period of Theodore’s studies with Origen between 238 and 245 is merely conjectural and is not supported, so it seems, by any sound argumentation. The reason for his opinion seems to be related to his interpretation of the \textit{Pan. Or.}\textsuperscript{510}. He is persuaded that when Theodore arrived in Caesarea, his Christian brother-in-law forced him to become a disciple of Origen. He argues that only after Maximinus’ persecution was it possible for a Christian legal consultant to protect his family this way, to be able to provide his wife with all the necessities for her travel from abroad and to decide the future of his young brother-in-law. The basis of Nautin’s interpretation is one passage from the \textit{Pan. Or.} where Theodore declares his first reaction to Origen’s teaching\textsuperscript{511}. Nautin further stresses that Theodore never abandoned the desire to follow a public career and interprets the absence of words of gratitude by Theodore towards his brother-in-law as a sort of reaction induced by his oppressive control over him. In his \textit{Pan. Or.} he ‘ne pouvait faire autre chose que de dire qu’il avait été conquis par … un précepteur que le jeune homme n’avait pas choisi’\textsuperscript{512}. Thus, Theodore fled from Origen and his “protector” shortly after Philip the Arab established a new government for Palestine (244-249). Nonetheless, Nautin admits that Theodore composed \textit{Pan. Or.} as a thanksgiving gesture for Origen.

I find it hard to give credit to Nautin’s twisted speculation on Gregory’s silence about the period he spent in Caesarea from his arrival to that of Origen. He indeed does distort the sense of the narrative of Theodore who wrote that it was Origen, none other, who persuaded him ‘to neglect all the affairs or studies for which we seemed destined, including even my precious law, and my native land and friends, those back home and

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508 Nautin, \textit{Origène}, 431. So also Mitchell, \textit{The life and lives of Gregory Thaumaturgus}, 104. Trigg, who usually follows Nautin’s reconstruction of these years, was not convinced by this date cf. \textit{Origen. The Bible and philosophy}, 147, 166-167 (for the narrative of the years 230-234 see, \textit{ibidem}, 130-146); Id., \textit{Origen}, London 1998, 36. In this latter book he admitted ‘The question of attribution [of \textit{Pan. Or.}] like that of dating, remains open’ (249, n.6); see also Id., \textit{Reflections of Origen’s Understanding of Divine and Human Pedagogy in the Address Ascribed to Gregory Thaumaturgus}, \textit{«Journal of Early Christian Studies»} 9 (2001), 27 (n.2).

509 Nautin, \textit{Origène}, 372: ‘…Origène savait qu’il serait bien accueilli en Palestine. Il ne dut pas tarder à y revenir’.


511 \textit{Pan. Or.} VI, §73.

those we were to visit’. Crouzel’s replies to Nautin’s interpretation of the Pan. Or. are in my opinion conclusive. Moreover, we have to remember that, as is pointed out also by Norelli, by placing the stay of Theodore between 238 and 245, Nautin entirely forgets to make sense of the fact that Theodore met Origen shortly after his arrival to Caesarea, and this event could not have happened in 238 or later.

Therefore we have no obstacles to assuming that Origen arrived in Caesarea between 233 and 234, and that these were the years of the meeting with Gregory. Nautin’s contribution regarding the departure of Origen from Alexandria in part confirms the date of the beginning of Gregory’s studies in Caesarea established by Koetschau by different and less secure arguments.

All that being said, we have to consider Marco Rizzi’s proposal to identify Gregory’s brother-in-law with Caius Furius Sabinus Aquila Timesitheus, who completed his equestrian career as prefectus praetorio in about 241, after having become father-in-law of Gordian III. This identification is based on the idea that Timesitheus had been procurator of the province of Syria Palestine with the special assignment as exactor reliquorum annonae sacrae expeditionis, according to Rizzi, ‘in about 232’.

Rizzi thinks, moreover, that this fact confirms the traditional dating of the Pan. Or. to 238. Indeed, Gregory’s brother-in-law was ‘suddenly’ (ἐξαίφνης) called by the governor of the province of Syria-Palestine in order to help him in the management of the province as a ‘legal expert’ (νομικὸς γάρ), as he surely was at the time when Gregory delivered the Pan. Or.. The sudden call by the governor would be explained by the task of collecting these reliqua annonae (“supplements” of the tax for food supply), which were necessary to support the military campaign (sacra expeditio) of Alexander Severus against Ardashir I in 232.

513 Pan. Or. VI, §84,71-75; transl. Slusser, 104. See also Trigg, God’s Marvelous Oikonomia, 31.
514 Crouzel, Faut-il voir trois personnages, 292-295.
515 Norelli, Origene, 296-297. On a similar line, if indeed the Pan. Or. was composed in 245, Crouzel and Klein wonder about the meaning of Gregory’s allusion to an event which occurred in 232. See Crouzel, Faut-il voir trois personnages, 299-300, and Guyot – Klein (eds.), Gregor der Wundertäter, Oratio prosphonetica, 50. Both Norelli and Klein accept the date 233 for the meeting of Gregory and Origen.
516 Our sources on Timesitheus are three inscriptions which can be read in H.-G. Pflaum, Les carrières procuratorienes équestres sous le Haut-Empire romain, T. II, Paris 1960 (BAH 57), 811-821. Rizzi follows Pflaum’s dating of Timesitheus’ career.
517 Rizzi, Ancora sulla paternità dell’Encomio di Origene, 82-85.
518 This fact well explains why Gregory’s sister decided to move to Palestine: at this stage, her husband probably knew that he might have to stay in Caesarea for a long time. But Rizzi thinks that in the phrase νομικὸς γάρ τις ἤν, καὶ ἐπειν ἵσως ἔτει (‘for he was legal expert, and still is for that matter’), the adverbial sequence ἵσως ἔτει would be flowery if ἵσως meant “perhaps” instead of “equally”, as understood by Crouzel and, among others, Slusser. This argument is not evident at all, but Rizzi, opting for “perhaps”, would deduce from this phrase that Gregory did not know what was the fate of his brother-in-law after his presumed procuratorship in Palestine. Still sound is the explanation of this passage by Crouzel (ed.), Gregoire le Thaumaturge, Remerciement, 18 (n. 1).
A remarkable study on Timesitheus by Tommaso Gnoli makes implausible this identification\textsuperscript{519}. As we have already seen, Alexander Severus’ stay in the East must be dated to the winter of 231-232. During these months the emperor looked for a diplomatic solution with Ardashir I, but also prepared the ground for war in the springtime. Timesitheus’ assignment as \textit{exactor reliquorum annonae} must, of course, be placed in the context of these military preparations, but not in 232. Indeed, since the harvest in Palestine took place at most in June, Timesitheus, surely, could have had no time to collect these special ‘supplements of the annona’ (\textit{reliqua annonae})\textsuperscript{520}. Therefore, Timesitheus must have assumed his office as \textit{exactor} in Palestine before 232; according to Gnoli’s solid reconstruction, this happened between 222 and 230.

Moreover, becoming procurator in Syria-Palestine, Timesitheus had been, among other things, procurator in the Arabian province, where he was also substitute (\textit{praeses}) for the \textit{legatus Augusti pro praetore} two times in 218 and 222, and, later, responsible (\textit{procurator}) for the collection of the \textit{vicesima hereditatium} tax and administrator of the funds for theatres in Rome\textsuperscript{521}. Timesitheus’ profile hardly fits in with the definition of ‘legal expert’, and, as \textit{procurator} with several tasks as a tax officer, Timesitheus must have been rather well-known to the audience when Gregory was delivering publicly the \textit{Pan. Or.}\textsuperscript{522}.

All these remarks lead us to reject Rizzi’s hypothesis. If this were right, the arrival of Origen and Gregory in Caesarea between 233 and 234 would remain in disagreement with the sudden call of Gregory’s brother-in-law by the Roman governor of Syria-Palestine at least before June 231. Eventually, even if it is difficult to understand what the precise task of Gregory’s brother-in-law in sharing the governorship of Palestine’s ‘labors of ruling the people’ was, these words seem to attest that he was an \textit{adsessor}\textsuperscript{523}, namely a technical adviser knowledgeable about law who usually helped officials endowed with jurisdiction, as judges and governors of provinces\textsuperscript{524}. This explains sufficiently how he was able to provide his wife with all the necessities for her journey

\textsuperscript{519} T. Gnoli, \textit{C. Furius Sabinus Aquila Timesitheus}, «Mediteraneo Antico» III/1 (2000), 261-308, (part. 274-280, which the reader has to refer to for details and critical comments).

\textsuperscript{520} These ‘supplements of the annona’ can be properly understood by taking in consideration the fact that the province of Syria-Palestine was far from the provinces where the troops that had clashed with Ardashir’s army were settled. As Herodian (\textit{Hist. VI},5,1-2) attests that these regions were Coele Syria, Phoenician Syria and Cappadocia, Gnoli (\textit{Timesitheus}, 278), explains that they did not deserve supplements of taxation.

\textsuperscript{521} See Gnoli, \textit{Timesitheus}, 270-274.

\textsuperscript{522} Rizzi, \textit{Ancora sulla paternità dell’Encomio di Origene}, 83-84. Here Rizzi tries to anticipate similar inconsistencies saying that we cannot expect precision of terminology in the \textit{Pan. Or.} because it is a rhetorical text, rather than a juridical one.


\textsuperscript{524} This figure of counsellor, charged with administrative duties as well, became indispensable for the technical development of the Roman law that required a specialised expertise. See O. Behrends, \textit{Der assessor zur Zeit der klassischen Rechtswissenschaft}, ZRG 86 (1969), 192-226.
from Pontus\textsuperscript{525}. However, it remains probable that Gregory’s brother-in-law really collaborated with Timesitheus given that the latter held financial tasks in Pontus, where he was \textit{procurator patrimonii et rationis privatae}\textsuperscript{526}.


\textsuperscript{526} Gnoli, \textit{Timesitheus}, 280.
CONCLUSIONS TO PART I

Our enquiry leads us to two main conclusions. First, it is not possible to explain the ancient accounts about Gregory simply on the basis of their direct dependence on Eusebius’ *Hist. Eccl.* Second, there are no significant internal contradictions among the *Or. Pan.*, the *Ep. Gr.* and *Hist. Eccl.* VI,30 to cause us to deny the reliability of the traditional figure of Gregory of Neocaesarea.

We have identified two other works containing information about Gregory which preceded *Hist. Eccl.* VI,30, that is the catalogue of the library of Caearea which Pamphilus composed years before Eusebius published it in the *Vita Pamphili* (309-11) and Pamphilus’ account on Gregory included in one of the lost books of the *Apologia pro Origen* (308-10). Both lost passages were used by Jerome and Socrates. In his account in *Vir. Ill.* 65 Jerome translated, probably slightly reshaping it, the *pinax* dedicated to Gregory found in Pamphilus’ catalogue. Socrates mixed Pamphilus’ account on Gregory contained in the *Apologia* with late oral traditions. Neither Jerome nor Socrates read the *Pan. Or.* but both reported at least one detail unrelated to Eusebius’ *Hist. Eccl.* VI,30 but linked to the *Pan. Or.*, the reference to Beirut. It can be hypothesised that these lost accounts by Pamphilus contained, besides the reference to Beirut, also those to Neocaesarea, to Gregory’s mother and to his miracles.\(^{527}\)

Thence, it was Pamphilus who provided the first written information about Gregory of Neocaesarea, on which Eusebius, Jerome, Rufinus and Socrates depended to different degrees. Gregory of Nyssa’s *Vita* does not contain any significant feature that proves its reliance on any previous written source known to us, and for this reason it strongly confirms the traditional figure of the miraculous bishop of Neocaesarea as a pupil of Origen. The result is that, although Crouzel’s defence of the traditional figure of Gregory is not effective in all its points, another of his remarks against Nautin’s hypothesis has proven to be sound: ‘la confusion, si confusion il y a, est antérieure à ce livre [*Hist. Eccl.*], puisque déjà l’*Apologie pour Origène*, œuvre du maître d’Eusèbe, Pamphile, aidé par Eusèbe lui-même, reproduisait le *Remerciement* sous le nom de Grégoire le Thaumaturge.\(^{528}\)

But these are not the only reasons to approve the tendency of those scholars who have not warmly received the discrediting of Eusebius and Pamphilus.\(^{529}\) We have shown, indeed, that there are no clear traces of the *Ep. Gr.* in *Hist. Eccl.* VI,30—as well as in none of the other testimonies on Gregory of Neocaesarea—and that the author of the *Pan. Or.* and the addressee of the *Ep. Gr.* can still be identified on the basis of the

\(^{527}\) Cf. Jerome: ‘the signs and miracles which, by that time as bishop, he performed with great glory of the churches’, with Socrates: ‘he performed many miracles […] drawing to himself the pagans by his discourses and especially by his acts’.

\(^{528}\) Crouzel, *Faut-il voir trois personnages*, 288.

internal contents of these works. Furthermore, there are several elements in *Hist. Eccl.* VI,30 which cannot be satisfactorily explained either on the basis of the texts at our disposal or by the often undocumented hypotheses of Nautin, such as Gregory’s two names, the presence of Athenodorus in Caesarea, the number of years at Origen’s school and the episcopal consecration of the two brothers when they were young.

One of the main flaws in Nautin’s approach is that he has completely ignored the fact that Pamphilus was in contact with the circle of the disciples and followers of Origen where Gregory was certainly well known and his works read. This is proved by the case of Theotecnus of Caesarea who was contemporary with Pamphilus and Eusebius and met Gregory during at least one of the synods of the Council of Antioch, and probably at Origen’s school. Nautin has carefully avoided considering this fact and has strictly read *Hist. Eccl.* VI,30 under the influence of the prejudice that Eusebius’ statements should be considered unreliable unless we are able to verify them through the sources used by Eusebius himself. As a matter of fact not all the sources used by Eusebius can be detected, and this implies, at least in respect of their information about Gregory, that he and Pamphilus had other sources impossible for us to establish.

In the light of these considerations the suspicion that Pamphilus and Eusebius presented the famous bishop of Neocaesarea as a pupil of Origen for apologetic purposes does not seem justified, all the more so if we consider that *Hist. Eccl.* VI,30 lacks the amplifications which we would expect from Eusebius while dealing with a man gifted with prodigious powers.

The fragility of this objection is manifest when considering that the authorship of the *Pan. Or.* was never called into doubt during the different phases of the Origenist controversy. Above all it is striking that Jerome, who had intensely and mistakenly disputed with Rufinus that Pamphilus was not the author of the *Apologia pro Origene*, never questioned the attribution of the *Or. Pan.*, not even after Rufinus declared that by condemning Origen Jerome was in contradiction to men of the likes of Gregory Thaumaturgus.

This fact is significant also for dealing with the issue of the two names. Indeed, Jerome, who certainly saw in the *Pan. Or.* the most authoritative support for Origen in the *Apologia* which could not be attributed to the pens of Pamphilus and Eusebius, did not challenge its attribution even when he found in Pamphilus’ catalogue that it was ‘Theodore’ who wrote the *Pan. Or.* The reason for Jerome’s silence probably rests on

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530 As for the attendance at the law school in Beirut, *Pan. Or.* does not attest that Gregory studied there. It is not clear whether Gregory stopped there, and we cannot establish whether this ambiguity caused Pamphilus to believe that Gregory really studied in Beirut. Moreover, we cannot exclude either the possibility that Gregory spent some time in Beirut during the years in Caesarea, or that Pamphilus knew that from his reliance on other written or oral sources.


532 On the contrary, Simonetti, *Gregorio il Taumaturgo e Origene*, 30, saw a confirmation of Eusebius’ bias just in this lack of emphasis: Eusebius would have purposely introduced the identification of Theodore and Gregory as current information of little importance.

533 Nautin himself thought that Eusebius considered Gregory as the bishop famous for his miracles. See *Origène* 82. We tend to think that the traditions on Gregory’s miracles were known already to Pamphilus.
the great esteem that he had for Pamphilus as a knowledgeable reader of ‘the treatises of the ancient writers’, or on his certainty that Theodore was the same Gregory of Neocaesarea. After all, nothing excludes the possibility that both names were commemorated in the title, as a tribute to Theodore’s conversion to Christianity by the hand of Origen.

In conclusion, along with the contemporaries of Eusebius and Jerome, we do not find any decisive reasons either to doubt the attribution of the *Pan. Or.* to Gregory Thaumaturgus, or assign apologetic aims to it.

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534 Jerome spoke of the library of Caesarea as ‘collected by Origen and Pamphilus’ (Hier. *Vir. Ill.* 113) and attested (quoting from the *Vita Pamphili*) that it was Pamphilus who read ‘very zealously and perpetually dwelled upon in meditation the treatises of the ancient writers’ (Hier. *Adv. Ruf.* 1,9: *Veterum autem tractatus scriptorum legebat studiosissime et in eorum meditatione iugiter versabatur*). Cf. also *Ep.* 34,1 [for the comparison of Pamphilus with Demetrius Phalereus and Pisistratus; n.18].
PART II. THE LITERARY PROFILE

CHAPTER 2. IN ORIGENEM ORATIO PANEGYRICA

I. Introduction

Because it gives a first-hand description of Origen’s activity in Caesarea, the Pan. Or. has enjoyed much attention from those scholars who have investigated it to discern the figure and teaching of the Alexandrian master. Since Henri Crouzel has given an introductory study which has remained an essential research tool for exploring previous research, it is superfluous to provide here a reconstruction of the scholarship preceding his edition. However, it is important to highlight the fact that, inasmuch as its description of Origen’s teaching bears resemblance to the *cursus studiorum* of the contemporary philosophical schools and its Christian character appears incomplete, the

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1 As already noted above (Ch. 1, n.68), Crouzel reproduces the text established by Koetschau and has limited his critical work to mentioning in the critical apparatus some suggestions of correction by modern and contemporary scholars, which he himself at times took into consideration in his translation. Koetschau (ed.), *Des Gregorios Thaumaturgos Dankrede an Origenes*, XXXI-XXXIV, had listed six manuscripts and established that the entire tradition derives from the *Vaticanus gr. 386*. Previous scholars (Vossius, Delarue) had access to another three manuscripts now lost. See Crouzel (ed.), Gregoire le Thaumaturge, *Remerciement*, 34-35. The IRHT database (Pinakes, Paris) currently numbers ten manuscripts. The four manuscripts discovered later on are listed by Slusser (ed.), St. Gregory Thaumaturgus, *Life and works*, 17 (n.70), with further bibliographical references. On the convenience of a revision of the critical edition see Rizzi (ed.), *Gregorio il Taumaturgo (?), Encomio di Origene*, 92 (n.36), 109 (n.17). For a quick account of the previous editions see Crouzel (ed.), *Gregoire le Thaumaturge, Remerciement*, 35-37.

2 According to the structure of the Pan. Or. Gregory studied dialectic/logic (§93-108), physics (§109-114), ethics (§115-149) and theology (§150-181). The four disciplines are found in Chrysippus’s order of studies (SVF II,42), with the differences that ethics precedes physics and that theology is considered the final topic of physics. Origen follows Chrysippus’s order in the prologue to his commentary to the *Song of Songs* (75-76, GCS 33), and, with descending order, in *FrLam XIV* (241, GCS 6). But in both cases logic is considered separately, although Origen says in the prologue that for its importance it must be mingled with the other disciplines, and theology is defined *inspectiva* or *mystikos*. The same order of the Pan. Or. (except for theology) is ascribed to Zeno, Chrysippus and others by Diogenes Laertius (Vit. Phil. 7,40) and is found in the Platonic tradition as early as in Xenocrates (ap. Sext. Emp. Adv. Math. 7,16) and later in Alcinous’s *Didaskalikos* logic (chs. 4-6), physics (chs. 7-26) and ethics (chs. 27-34); still, in the *Didaskalikos* physics concerns both the physical world and the first principles. Scholars have commented upon some of these and other divergences and similarities and have detected varied influences on Origen from previous scholastic patterns. It is usually admitted, following the studies of Pierre Hadot, that by placing theology at the end of the *curriculum* Origen followed Middle- or Neo-Platonists, but this is soundly objected to by Rizzi. See: A. Vaccari, *Il primo abbozzo di università cristiana*, in Id. *Scritti di erudizione e di filologia*, Vol. 1. *Filologia biblica e patristica*, Roma 1952, 86-89 (=CivCatt 3 [1917], 421-433); P. Hadot, *Les divisions des parties de la philosophie dans l’Antiquité*, MH 36 (1979), 201-223; Id. *Théologie, exégèse, révélation, écriture, dans la philosophie grecque*, in M. Tardieu (ed.), *Les Regles de l’interprétation*, Paris 1987, 13-34; Dorival, *Origène et ses disciples*, 169-172; M. Rizzi, *La scuola di
Pan. Or. has been taken as confirmation of the old approach, launched by Harnack, i.e. to regard Origen ‘more as a Greek philosopher than a Christian theologian’.

Indeed, the greater part of the debate over the Pan. Or. has concerned the fact that it does not provide clear evidence of Gregory’s being acquainted with the most peculiar Christian doctrines, such as, for instance, the Incarnation. What Gregory reveals about his faith appears in a philosophical form and in line with the philosophical views of his time, to the extent that some scholars have argued that the idea of Christianity itself appears to be more or less misrepresented. Gregory must not have entirely penetrated Christian doctrines, as argued by Koetschau, or must not have grasped Origen’s greatness, as maintained by W. Völker. In order to balance Völker’s view, Crouzel, who considered Gregory’s Christianity ‘gravement incomplet’ nonetheless, argued that the circumstances of his speech, determined by the presence of a learned pagan audience before him, may have led Gregory to speak ‘en termes helléniques pour en être compris et lui rendre le christianisme acceptable’. This explanation, which Crouzel himself found unsatisfactory, was reinforced by his impression, derived from the reading of Origen’s Ep. Gr., that Gregory left the school of Caesarea before he completed the school programme, that is without completing the studies of biblical exegesis. At this stage, indeed, Crouzel maintained that the school of Caesarea was a sort of religious novitiate where both philosophical and theological subjects were taught more scholastico.

Almost simultaneously with Crouzel’s edition of the Pan. Or., A. Knauber published an important article where he argued that the aim of the school of Caesarea was missionary, namely, it was designed to introduce young pagan students like

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Origene tra le scuole di Cesarea e del mondo tardoantico, in Andrei (ed.), Caesarea Maritima e la scuola origeniana, 105-119. On Origen’s prologue see Ch. 3, §I. According to Vacare, the difference between the orders of disciplines given by Origen and Gregory is due to a discordance between theory and practice, but Gregory’s description can hardly be taken as a witness of an exact order of studies (see below in this chapter).

3 Thus, for instance, H. Koch, Pronoia und Paideusis: Studien über Origenes und sein Verhältnis zum Platonismus (AKG(W), 22), Berlin-Leipzig 1932, 303-304, who also thought that the Pan. Or. attests that Origen’s teaching of philosophy in Caesarea became more important than in Alexandria (166). The quotation is from an article by R.J. Daly, Origen’s studies and Pierre Nautin’s Origène, TS 38 (1978), 510, which readers may refer to for a quick overview of the progress of the scholarship on Origen up to Nautin.

4 Another account of this debate is provided by R. Klein in Guyot – Klein (eds.), Gregor der Wundertäter, Oratio prophonetica, 30-44.

5 Koetschau (ed.), Des Gregorios Thaumaturgos Dankrede an Origenes, IX-X.


7 Crouzel (ed.), Gregoire le Thaumaturge, Remerciement, 88.

8 Crouzel (ed.), Gregoire le Thaumaturge, Remerciement, 91.

9 A. Knauber, Das Anliegen der Schule des Origenes zu Cäsarea, MThZ 19 (1968), 182-203. Knauber was aware of the views that Crouzel expressed in the 1969 edition of the Pan. Or. because the introduction to this latter book drew on a previous contribution: Le ‘Remerciement à Origène’ de saint Grégoire le Thaumaturge. Son contenu doctrinal, ScEc 16 (1964), 59-91 [and also on Grégoire le Thaumaturge, DS 6 (1967), 1014-1020, not mentioned by Knauber].
Gregory to the Christian Weltanschauung, though without necessarily catechising or baptising them\textsuperscript{10}. Knauber drew these conclusions mostly by examining Gregory’s vocabulary, which documents his predilection for philosophical terms and concepts over Christian and biblical ones, and by downplaying Gregory’s familiarity with the Scriptures. For instance, Gregory uses words such as ‘knowledge’ (γνῶσις) and ‘eucharist’ (εὐχαριστία), and verbs such as ‘to baptise’ (βαπτίζειν) and ‘to believe’ (πιστεύειν) with no peculiar Christian intention, while avoiding typical Christian words such as ‘Christ’ (χριστός), ‘church’ (ἐκκλησία), ‘faith’ (πίστις) and ‘charity’ (ἀγάπη); he consistently prefers terms and concepts which sounded more pagan such as λόγος, ‘guardian’ (κηδεμών), ‘the first intellect’ (ὁ πρῶτος νοῦς) to define the Son, and such as ‘Cause’ (αἴτιος), ‘Sovereign’ (ἡγεμόν), ‘king’ (βασιλεύς) of all to speak of the Father. According to Knauber, Gregory gave an exact and reliable description of the school of Caesarea and the fact that the Pan. Or. was a public speech confirmed this assumption. In this manner, he ascribed Gregory’s tendency to opt for a philosophical vocabulary and mindset to the missionary aim of Origen’s teaching and not to Gregory’s misunderstanding of it. Nevertheless, Knauber did not fail to acknowledge that Origen’s teaching in Caesarea as it is attested by the Pan. Or. does not mirror his biblical teaching.

The idea that the school of Caesarea aimed at bringing young pagans closer to Christianity was soon endorsed by Crouzel, who, nevertheless, amended other details of Knauber’s analysis, such as the views that mostly pagans attended Origen’s classes and that Gregory remained pagan even at the time when he received Origen’s Ep. Gr.\textsuperscript{11} Crouzel showed that, although Gregory made much use of Greek philosophical terminology even in articulating his theological statements, what we read in the Pan. Or. reveals his substantial agreement with Origen’s teaching. Indeed, it contains the doctrine of the Logos, many allusions to the doctrine of the epinoiai and a clear statement of the equality between the Father and the Son. However, what Crouzel found striking is the absence of the emphasis on the name of Jesus and on the Incarnation that was so typical of his master’s writings. As a result, for Crouzel, the school of Caesarea provided a ‘Christianized version of Middle-Platonism’, that is an ‘introduction to Christianity’ for pagans and an ‘initiation to philosophy’ for Christians\textsuperscript{12}. Crouzel later on changed his mind on the issue of whether Gregory was baptised at the time when he delivered the Pan. Or. in order to rebut Nautin’s hypotheses\textsuperscript{13}, but there is now a large consensus among scholars that Gregory was already Christian, even admitting that the

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\textsuperscript{10} For Knauber, Das Anliegen der Schule des Origenes zu Cäsarea, 198-199, Gregory was still a pagan at the time when he received Origen’s Ep. Gr.


\textsuperscript{12} Crouzel, Cultura e fede nella scuola di Cesarea di Origene, 209.

\textsuperscript{13} As we have seen in Ch. 1, in order to explain the issue of the two names Crouzel hypothesised that Theodore assumed the name ‘Gregory’ at his baptism after delivering the Pan. Or. but before receiving Origen’s letter.
Pan. Or. does not provide clear evidence of his baptism\textsuperscript{14}. Further studies have also established important points that rectify other basic components of Knauber’s analysis: if Gregory’s conversion had been philosophical and not religious\textsuperscript{15}, Gregory had no reason to stress the break with the pagan customs of his family\textsuperscript{16}; the absence of distinctively Christian vocabulary and concepts is not rare in works by Christians addressing pagans\textsuperscript{17}; Gregory’s quotations and allusions to Bible are more numerous and significant than Knauber thought\textsuperscript{18}.

Although there are no sound reasons to doubt that the author of the Pan. Or. was Christian, the predominance of pagan elements has remained an important subject of discussion, especially inasmuch as Gregory portrays Origen as a philosopher following the Socratic model and as head of a school of philosophy. Indeed, this fact appears to hold back the now common scholarly view that Origen was above all a biblical scholar who made use of the Greek philosophical heritage as preparation for Christian doctrines\textsuperscript{19}, and not a philosopher.

This difficulty was neutralized by Nautin’s claim that the curriculum studiorum depicted in the Pan. Or. in truth was applied only to its author, as if Origen were a private teacher of ‘Theodore’\textsuperscript{20}. In other words, for Nautin, this description is faithful but cannot be taken as evidence of any scholastic activity of Origen in Caesarea, if ever a school existed there in reality, and even less of his teaching in the school of

\textsuperscript{14} On this point see in particular Klein – Guyot (eds.), Gregor der Wundertäter, Oratio prosphonetica, 61; Slusser (ed.), St. Gregory Thaumaturgus, Life and Works, 2; Mazzucco, La componente autobiografica nel Discorso di Ringraziamento, 128-130. Trigg, God’s Marvelous Oikonomia, 33, and Rizzi (ed.), Gregorio il Taumaturgo (?), Encomio di Origene, 188 (n.12), detect allusions to baptism, respectively, in the ‘divine power’ of §80 and in the spiritual kinship between Gregory and the other disciples of Origen (§189). See also: Marotta (ed.), Gregorio il Taumaturgo, Discorso a Origene, 41; Simonetti, Una nuova ipotesi, 293; A.C. Jacobsen, Conversion to Christian Philosophy—the case of Origen’s School in Caesarea, ZAC 16 (2012), 145-156.

\textsuperscript{15} That Gregory’s narrative implied a religious conversion was never questioned by experts of autobiographical writings. See the informative and balanced account by Mazzucco, La componente autobiografica nel Discorso di Ringraziamento, 118-134, who provides also a careful survey of the conversion elements contained in the Pan. Or.


\textsuperscript{17} Trigg, God’s Marvelous Oikonomia, 33; Rizzi (ed.), Gregorio il Taumaturgo (?), Encomio di Origene, 89; Mazzucco, La componente autobiografica, 130. Gregory’s case is compared to those of Theophilus of Antioch, Athenagoras, Justin, Tatian and Commodianus. The attempt made by L. Pernot, La Rhétorique de l’éloge dans le monde gréco-romain, t. II, Les valeurs, Paris 1993 (CEA 138), 787-788 to consider the Pan. Or. a typically Christian form of confessio on the basis of the occurrences of ὁμολογία and ὁμολογεῖντοι does not appear convincing to Mazzucco (ibidem, 131-133).

\textsuperscript{18} E. Marotta, I riflessi biblici nell’orazione ad Origene di Gregorio il Taumaturgo, VetChr 10 (1973), 59–77; Trigg, God’s Marvelous Oikonomia, 27-52.

\textsuperscript{19} This perspective is very clearly stated in the Ep. Gr., but it forms the entire literary output of Origen, as has been shown in the first place by Crouzel, Origène et la philosophie.

\textsuperscript{20} Nautin, Origène, 187. We have already shown the reasons why we disagree with this hypothesis (see Ch. 1, §III).
Alexandria, as Eusebius did in *Hist. Eccl.* VI,18\textsuperscript{21}. Regardless of the issues surrounding the links between Origen’s schools in Alexandria and in Caesarea, which are too complex to be studied here, Nautin’s assumption that Gregory was the only pupil of Origen in Caesarea does not stand up to the objective scrutiny of the data provided by the *Pan. Or.* First, Gregory refers to other pupils during his speech, for he speaks of ‘true sons’ who remained, unlike him, at Origen’s ‘house’ (§189)\textsuperscript{22}, and, at the same time, he defines himself as an ἀκροατής of Origen (§60, 185)\textsuperscript{23}. Second, as Leonardo Lugaresi has pointed out, ‘if the experience of formation described in the *Pan. Or.* concerned only its author, the public nature of the oration would be unjustified’\textsuperscript{24}. In all likelihood, the number of Origen’s pupils was limited, but Gregory was certainly not the only one\textsuperscript{25}.

Despite that, Nautin did not fail, nor did Crouzel before him, to perceive in Gregory’s discourse, and especially in the account of his studies, indications of the fact that among his audience there were members of the ‘milieu mondain’ of Caesarea\textsuperscript{26}. That the occasion of the speech must have played a significant role in Gregory’s narrative has rightly become a key point for other scholars to understand its ambiguous vocabulary and its aims. Thus, Joseph W. Trigg has detected a ‘deliberate strategy’ in Gregory’s veiling of ‘specifically Christian ideas’\textsuperscript{27}; Adele Monaci-Castagno has spoken of a ‘polyvalent communicative code’, ‘a sort of philosophical and religious

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\begin{enumerate}
\item Cf. n.48 below.
\item The term means ‘hearer’ or ‘pupil’ and derives from the pagan vocabulary; see Dorival, *Origène et ses disciples*, 166-167. According to a typical division in philosophical schools (see *ibidem*, 176), the true pupils are defined as ζηλωταί, while ἀκροαταί define only occasional hearers. But this distinction is not at stake in Gregory’s narrative, for he describes his position at Origen’s school as that of a real pupil living within a community and not outside of it. Also Origen is said to be the ἀκροατής of God (§175).
\item L. Lugaresi, *Studenti cristiani e scuola pagana. Didaskaloi, logoi e philia nel discorso di ringraziamento a Origene e nell’orazione funebre per Basilio di Gregorio Nazianzeno*, CrSt 25 (2004), 795 (n.46).
\item This seems to be a reasonable middle road between the isolated case of “Theodore” and the ‘numberless’ (μωρέοι) pupils mentioned by Eusebius (*Hist. Eccl.* VI,30). Cf. also Dorival, *Origène et ses disciples*, 163; Id. *Est-il légitime d’éclairer le Discours de Remerciement par la Lettre à Grégoire et réciproquement?*, 23; A. Le Boulluec, *Bibliothèque et enseignement à Césarée de Palestine*, A. Le Boulluec, *Bibliothèque et enseignement à Césarée de Palestine*, in H. Hugonnard-Roche (ed.), *L’enseignement supérieur dans les mondes antiques et médiévaux. Aspects institutionnels, juridiques et pédagogiques*. Colloque international de l’Institut des traditions textuelles, Actes du Colloque des 6-7-8 octobre 2005, Paris 2008 (Textes et traditions, 16), 245-246. At times Origen denounced his complete failure in convincing young people to study the *divinae litterae* (*HEz* XIII,3; *HEx* XII,2), but the homiletical context might have influenced the register of his statements.
\item Nautin, *Origène*, 186.
\item Trigg, *God’s Marvelous Oikonomia*, 52
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koiné, which conditioned Gregory’s portrayal of Origen; Marco Rizzi has argued that Gregory’s depiction of Origen’s teaching aimed at providing an ‘apology of Christianity as true philosophy’ compatible with the values of the Second Sophistic movement and with the Empire.

Although not every scholar has acknowledged the importance of this element, there is no doubt that the contextual aspect of the speech must have conditioned the manner opted for by Gregory of speaking of his master. I follow, thereby, the direction of those studies that have highlighted this component, as will become clear in the next paragraph. However, no scholar has given an effective answer to the question of how it is possible that Origen taught mainly logic, physics, geometry, astronomy and ethics, leaving only to the end the study of the Scriptures. As a matter of fact the approach that emphasises the context of the work lays the foundations for questioning two points that are related to this standard understanding of Gregory’s description of his studies: first, that there was a school programme that envisaged ‘a strictly prescribed course of study’; and, second, that the study of Bible and of theology was left to the end of the programme. I will argue against these assumptions in the summary of the work, where particular attention will be drawn to a selected number of passages that are of primary importance for understanding these and other issues concerning Gregory’s intellectual profile.

II. Genre, audience, strategy

The Pan. Or. is the earliest Christian epideictic discourse extant. Gregory refers to his own speech as an ‘address of thanksgiving’ (χαριστήριος λόγος: §31, 40) or as an ‘encomium’ (§11, 130). Jerome speaks of a ‘panegyric of thanks’ (πανηγυρικὸς εὐχαριστίας), and Socrates of a ‘farewell speech’ (συντακτικὸς λόγος). Most

29 Rizzi (ed.), Gregorio il Taumaturgo (?), Encomio di Origene, 35.
30 For instance, this facet does not play any role in the analysis of Jacobsen, Conversion to Christian Philosophy, 145-156.
31 This is the efficacious statement of W. Löhr, Christianity as Philosophy: Problems and Perspectives of an Ancient Intellectual Project, VigChr 64 (2010), 164.
32 As for the many elements I will neglect in the following pages, further information can be gathered from the bibliographical references in the footnotes.
33 If our hypothesis that Jerome directly drew on Pamphilus’ catalogue is correct—and the Greek titles in Jerome’s account confirm this idea—the title of the Caesarean copy of the Pan. Or. was ‘panegyric of thanks’. In this case Socrates might have found in the Apologia pro Origene a description of the Pan. Or. akin to the one we read in Vir. Ill. 65 (‘Theodore, on his departure, wrote a πανηγυρικὸν εὐχαριστίας to Origen, which he recited before a large assembly, Origen himself being present…’) and might have shortened it with the title ‘farewell speech’. I doubt that the catalogue and the Apologia contained different titles.
manuscripts entitle the work as \( \text{λόγος προσφωνητικός} \) (‘public address’), and one of them, the one known to Vossius, adds \( \text{καί πανηγυρικός} \). Vossius’ title became the most endorsed by the subsequent editors of the work.

All the features conveyed by these titles, that is to say praise, thanks and farewell are easily detectable in the Pan. Or. and have driven scholars to hold different opinions about the precise definition of its literary genre, its structure and its main focal point. However, as August Brinkmann pointed out more than one century ago, the Pan. Or. recalls the type of ‘farewell speech’ described by Menander Rhetor in his On Epideictic Speeches, which is the only Second Sophistic movement document extant concerning this type of speech. This link has been confirmed in a more recent and expert study by Louis Pernot, who acknowledged that praise and thanks are the most essential facets of the Pan. Or. Pernot also noted that there are some divergences from Menander’s directives, though he concluded that ‘par les circonstances qui l’on fait naître, par sa conception d’ensemble et par ses principaux thèmes, cette œuvre s’inscrit dans la tradition épistique du suntaktikos logos’.

The style of the work is verbose, affected and obscure to the extent that some scholars have taken Gregory’s opening apologies (§1-30), which are typical in a prooemium and usually imply a captatio benevolentiae, as justified and sincere, while others have expressed very severe judgments on Gregory’s rhetorical skills. Nonetheless, the common judgment on the literary outcome of Gregory’s work is overall positive. For Eugenio Marotta, to whom we owe the most detailed studies of Gregory’s style, ‘the prose of the Thaumaturgus […] is artistic’ and, however rhetorically elaborated, should be interpreted as a demonstration of his genuine feelings for Origen. It is also strongly influenced by the Scriptures, from which Gregory

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34 It usually means ‘address to the governor’.
35 See Koetschau (ed.), Des Gregorios Thaumaturgos Dankrede an Origenes, 1; Crouzel (ed.), Gregoire le Thaumaturge, Remerciement, 38-39; Marotta (ed.) Gregory il Taumaturgo, Discorso a Origene, 20. Koetschau (XXVII) deemed it likely that panegyrikos was arbitrarily added by Vossius, but I do not see on which basis, since the manuscript used by Vossius was lost (cf. ibidem, XXXII).
36 For a detailed account and a balanced evaluation of these positions see Mazzucco, La componente autobiografica nel Discorso di Ringraziamento, 104-106.
38 Pernot, La Rhétorique de l’éloge dans le monde gréco-romain, t. II, 781-789. Pernot explains: ‘si la comparaison avec Ménandros s’impose, c’est simplement parce que son traité est le seul document dont nous disposions sur les discours d’adieu de la Second Sophistique. Mais, à défaut de relation directe, la parenté d’esprit est évidente’ (783). See also Le Boulluec, Bibliothèque et enseignement à Césarée de Palestine, 240.
39 Thus according to Casaubon, Koetschau and Pernot. For an overview of scholarly opinions see Crouzel (ed.), Gregoire le Thaumaturge, Remerciement, 42-45. See also Gouy – Klein (eds.), Gregor der Wundertäter, Oratio prospohonatica, 63-66.
41 E. Marotta, I neologismi nell’orazione ad Origene di Gregorio il Taumaturgo, VetChr 8 (1971), 241-256, followed by Klein in Guyot – Klein (eds.), Gregor der Wundertäte, Oratio prospohonatica, 66-72. For
gained images, terms and concepts that he absorbed and remoulded with spontaneity to express his feelings and his praise of the Logos and of his master. At any rate, regardless of how Gregory’s style may be regarded, his knowledge of the rules for the composition of an epideictic discourse, as well as other stylistic aspects of the Pan. Or., bear witness to the fact that he had a solid training in rhetoric.

On this basis, as well as on the grounds of a detailed investigation of the literary features of the text, Marco Rizzi has convincingly argued that the Pan. Or. should be read within the cultural and political background of the Second Sophistic movement, whose most typical literary expression consisted of epideictic speeches. Along this line, the work, as we read it, should be taken as a calculated attempt by his author, as a representative of the new élites of the Roman provinces, to exhibit his political loyalty to Rome and especially to show the compatibility of Christianity with the Hellenic philosophical way of life and, therefore, with Roman rule. The clearest evidence of these collaborationist and apologetic aims is given by the reference to Roman laws as Ελληνικά καταπληκτικά in a passage that attests a great approval for Roman legislation and power as well as for Greek language and culture, and also by the description of Origen’s teaching, which is consistent with the philosophical manuals of the Imperial age and with the standards of the Greek paideia.

From this display of rhetorical abilities and of conventional patterns of communication we infer that before Gregory there was an audience that included people who could recognise and understand them. In other words, this audience must not have consisted only of Origen’s pupils (the ‘true sons’ of §189) or of those Christians who

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42 Marotta, I riflessi biblici nell’orazione ad Origene, 76.
43 On this see in particular the studies of Pernot and Marotta already mentioned.
44 Rizzi, Il significato politico, 55-67; Rizzi (ed.), Gregorio il Taumaturgo (?), Encomio di Origene, 13-37, together with the copious illuminating notes of his edition.
45 Rizzi has subsequently hypothesised that the author of the Pan. Or. hailed from a Christian family (Ancora sulla paternità dell’Encomio di Origene, 81-85), but this proceeds from his agreement with the deceptive arguments of Nautin concerning the relationships between the author of the Pan. Or. and his brother-in-law, and from his hypothesis that this latter was Caius Furius Sabinus Aquila Timesitheus. It is a mere conjecture that Gregory’s mother was a Christian which Rizzi makes, commenting upon §48, where it is expressly stated that Gregory’s father was a pagan, while silence surrounds his mother. This argument e silentio can be easily upturned: if Gregory’s mother was a Christian, why did he keep quiet about her (in a section of the work that Rizzi, what is more, deems addressed to a Christian audience)?
46 Gr. Thaum. Pan. Or. I, §7: <Οδυμή> δέ ἄλλα καί γε τόν νόην έτερόν τι μάθημα δεινός ἐπιλαμβάνει, καί τό στόμα συνδεῖ <την γ'><κώ>τταν, εί τι καί μικρόν εἰπεν τῇ 'Ελλήνων έθελκόμαι φωνῇ, οἱ θεωμαστοί ἡμῶν <νόμος>, οἷς νῦν τὰ πάντα τῶν ὑπὸ τὴν 'Ρωμαίων ἀρχὴν ἀνθρώπων κατευθύνουσιν πράγματα, <οὕτε> συγκεῖμενοι οὕτε καὶ ἐκμενδενόμενοι ἀταλαμπρος· ὄντες μὲν αὐτοὶ σοφοὶ τε <καί ἄρχων>βετε καὶ ποικίλοι καὶ θεωμαστοί, καὶ συνελάντα εἰπεν 'Ελληνικότατος· ἐκκραθεθέντες <δέ καί> παραδόθεντες τῇ 'Ρωμαίων φωνῇ, καταπληκτικὰ μὲν καί ἀλαζόν καὶ συσχηματιζομένη <πάση> τῇ ἐξουσίᾳ τῇ βασιλικῇ, φορτικῇ δὲ ὅμως ἐμοί. See also §84 (καλὸν νόμοι).
47 It is worth remembering that the apologetic style to present Christianity as capable of competing with contemporary philosophies was the main core of Origen’s reply to Celsus as well.
associated with Origen in Caesarea to whom Gregory refers explicitly as ‘admirable men who have embraced the good philosophy’ (§3)\(^48\).

This point appears to be somehow called into question by a less convincing hypothesis put forward by Rizzi according to which two editorial layers can be identified in the *Pan. Or*. The first actually pronounced draft, addressed to a mainly Christian audience, would have followed the traditional division of rhetorical discourses into four parts: *exordium* (§21-34), hymnic section (§35-39), *narratio* (§40-72), *probatio* (§133-183) and *epilogus* (§184-207)\(^49\). Then, the author would have redoubled the *exordium* (§1-20) and the *probatio* (§73-132) for a written circulation of his work aiming mainly at a pagan public. As a result, the political perspective introduced by the references to Roman laws and to Origen’s teaching mentioned above were not original, but were the outcome of a resolution that the author of the *Pan. Or.* made after he delivered his speech. In fact, although ‘a significant reworking of the text originally pronounced’\(^50\) seems plausible, at least as long as its length is concerned\(^51\) and in consideration of the many repetitions of concepts throughout the work\(^52\), the structural partition of the text proposed by Rizzi has already been the object of decisive criticisms, which we have no need to review in detail here\(^53\). Suffice it to mention one of the most sensitive weaknesses of Rizzi’s hypothesis, namely the assumed opposition between the “original *probatio*” (§133-183), which described Origen as a Christian master and was addressed to a Christian audience, and the “duplicated *probatio*” (§73-132), which was meant to depict Origen according to the traditional features of a pagan philosopher. This contrast is crucially challenged by the presence in the “added *probatio*” of the important biblical digression on the relationship between Jonathan and David (§85-92), which

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\(^{48}\) For Nautin the ‘admirable men’ were ‘familiers d’Origène’, ‘qui s’étaient attachés à lui par idéal, par partager sa vie, s’édifier à son contact et éventuellement le servir’ (*Origène*, 188). A. Monaci Castagno, *Maestro*, in Ead. (ed.), *Origene, Dizionario*, 248, identifies them as the ‘true sons’ of §189 and, on the basis of the context of §3, thinks that they assisted Origen in his teaching activities. According to Rizzi (ed.), Gregorio il Taumaturgo (?), *Encomio di Origene*, 106 (n.7), the ‘admirable men’ are probably Christians in general. I follow Le Boulluec, *Bibliothèque et enseignement à Césarée de Palestine*, 242-243, in distinguishing between the ‘admirable men’ and the ‘true sons’.

\(^{49}\) Rizzi (ed.), Gregorio il Taumaturgo (?), *Encomio di Origene*, 95, where §34 and 205-207 are missing, because, I think, of an oversight. At any rate, Rizzi does not provide always a consistent partition of the text throughout his contributions. Compare, for instance, *ibidem*, 95 and 10. Cf. Mazzucco, *La componente autobiografica nel Discorso di Ringraziamento*, 106 (nn.19, 21).

\(^{50}\) Rizzi (ed.), Gregorio il Taumaturgo (?), *Encomio di Origene*, 16-17.

\(^{51}\) The *Pan. Or.* is much longer than Menander prescribed in *Division of epideictic speeches*, II [XV] 434, 5-9 (200 Russell – Wilson), where he suggests writing ‘up to 200-300 lines’. The *Pan. Or.* numbers over one thousand one hundred lines in Crouzel’s edition. Le Boulluec, *Bibliothèque et enseignement à Césarée de Palestine*, 242, has rightly observed that ‘même si l’on admet avec Marco Rizzi que le Remerciement a été augmenté par son auteur après la cérémonie, il outrepasse certainement dans sa forme originelle le cadre courant’.

\(^{52}\) See Rizzi’s numerous and acute comments in his edition.

Gregory introduces to describe his relationship with Origen. There is another analogous argument which goes against this alleged divergence between the two parts of the discourse and derives from the section §93-99, for it contains a clear, though covert, reference to Origen’s catechetical activity. This element, which has passed completely unnoticed in previous scholarship, will have be dealt with more extensively later on.

Consequently, the literary and apologetic features of the work, suitably illuminated by Rizzi, have to be taken as originally intended for a mixed audience. Indeed, all this fits in perfectly with the historical context of Caesarea, where Christians were a minority. A young foreign notable like Gregory, who was born to pagan parents, had studied rhetoric and was personally linked to clerks of the Roman administration of the province, must have been perfectly aware that his speech in favour of a renowned Christian master like Origen had to follow certain rules. Those conventional rules dictated by the rhetoric and the political ideology of his time allowed that his speech be worthy of public attention in the Roman capital of Judea. Moreover, since the presence of philosophers as well as of rhetoricians in Caesarea is proved by epigraphical remains, it seems well founded to conclude that Gregory’s plea to philosophers (§127-132, see also §158-169) attests to a living rivalry, however modulated according to rhetorical standards, with the learned pagans who were present during the speech and not only with those who could read it. It was above all before such an audience that Gregory presented Origen as an authentic philosopher and a learned teacher who expected his students to be engaged in extensive reading of philosophical writings. This element elucidates another aspect of Gregory’s speech. His endeavour to bring to light the excellence of Origen’s schooling over other educational paths assumes the features of a protreptic discourse, aiming ultimately at the conversion of pagan listeners.

Indeed, the context within which the Pan. Or. was delivered reinforces Trigg’s interpretation of Gregory’s avoidance of peculiar Christian ideas. By doing so Gregory

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54 Moreover, Rizzi’s partition of the text tends to reinforce a consequence which he himself would rule out (Encomio a Origene, 95). If, indeed, the main references to explicit political themes and most of the precise references to the typical procedures of the epideictic rhetoric (Rizzi mentions §2, 3, 11, 56, 107, 130, 131) were added at a later time, the Pan. Or. would turn out to display mostly the features of a ‘discorso tra pochi intimi, nel chiuso di una conventicola semisegreta e catacombale’.

55 This was a common situation in the entire Roman province, see N. Belayche, Iudaea-Palaestina. The pagan Cults in Roman Palestine (Second to Fourth Century), Tübingen 2001 (Religion der römischen Provinzen, I). On the multicultural context of Caesarea Maritima cf. Ch. 1, n.119.

56 The highest clerks of the Roman province could hardly ignore the fact that Origen was summoned by Julia Mamaea in 231/2 (Eus. Hist. Eccl. VI,21,3).


58 Therefore, the section §127-132 appears to be more than just a digressio, that is a piece working as a dramatic entrance and inserted to link two parts of a discourse, as argued by Rizzi (ed.), Gregorio il Taumaturgo (?), Encomio di Origene, 29, who finds in it a link between two assumed probationes.

59 On this aspect see C.-I. Mihai, Elementi protrettici e biografici nell’Encomio di Origene attribuito a Gregorio il Taumaturgo, «Classica et Christiana» 8/1 (2013), 215-227 (esp. 226), who offers a preliminary study of several protreptic themes of the Pan. Or. documenting their parallels to pagan authors.
was following ‘a deliberate strategy’ that characterised Origen’s role as a Christian teacher and ‘steward of God’s mysteries’, and which is clearly stated in a famous passage from Origen’s homilies on Jeremiah.

Whenever we address words to pagans in order to lead them to the faith, if we see that they have been prejudiced against Christianity and despise the name and hate to hear it, just because it is the teaching of Christians, we act as if we were presenting a useful teaching that is not Christian, but when the teaching has been established according to the best of our ability, and we deem it possible to acquire the listener to our party, since he has not just been listening indifferently to what has been said to him, then we confess that our praiseworthy teaching is Christian doctrine (transl. Trigg, 51).

I find both perceptive and correct Trigg’s understanding that Gregory is “economising” like his master when he veils ‘specifically Christian ideas from those who do not already know about them. This approach supplies us with a key point for recognising the double register of meanings, Christian and pagan as well, that is possible to detect throughout the Pan. or. Gregory’s artificial style was driven by the intention to accommodate the contents of his speech to the needs and capabilities of a mixed audience. Indeed, it illustrates not only his being a bearer of different cultural influences, but also his ability to create complex superimpositions of references or allusions to both pagan and Christian ideas. We have already come across two cases which show this intentional procedure when dealing with Gregory’s first encounter with the Logos at the age of fourteen (§50) and with the image of the ‘unwashed feet’ (§18), where concepts deriving from Origen’s Christian instruction are woven together with ideas derived from Greek rhetoric and philosophy. In the next summary we will encounter other important cases where this modus operandi is at stake and which challenge some common assumptions in contemporary scholarship.

60 Or. Hier XX,5 (272-274, SC 238): ἐνίστει λόγους <τοῖς> ἀπὸ τῶν ἔθνων προσάγομεν βουλήμενοι αὐτῶς προσαγαγεῖν τῇ πίστει, καὶ ἔνθεμεν ὑπὲρ διαβεβλημένηι εἰς πρὸς Χριστιανισμὸν καὶ βδελύσαυσαι τὸ ὄνομα καὶ μισοῦσα τὸ ἄκουσαι, ἀπὸ αὐτὸς ὁ λόγος Χριστιανῶν ἔστιν, ὃς προσποιομεθα Χριστιανῶν λέγειν λόγον ὕφελιμον. ἢ τον ἄνοιξας κατασκευασθῇ κατὰ δύναμιν ὑπ’ ἑμῶν, καὶ δοκῶμεν πέρειν τὸν ἄκροστήν οὐχ ὡς ἐτυγχώ νόμον ἄκουοντα, τότε ὁμολογοῦμεν ὅτι αὐτὸς ὁ ἐπακεντός λόγος Χριστιανῶν λόγος ἢ.
61 Trigg, God’s Marvelous Oikonomia, 52.
62 That reflects the strategy endorsed by Origen in his homilies, as it is happily summarised by E. Prinzivalli, Origen, in L. Gerson (ed.), The Cambridge History of Philosophy in Late Antiquity, Vol. 1, Cambridge-New York 2010, 285: ‘In those of his homilies that have been preserved, indeed, he develops a strategy of communication at different levels, by means of which he manages to offer each listener the level of understanding of which he is capable, thus allowing whoever is attentive and well prepared to grasp a deeper message with each step, via subtle allusions scattered in the texture of the homily’.
63 Cf. Ch 1, §§II, I and III, respectively.
III. Summary

Following the structure of the *Pan. Or.* as Pernot has defined it, it can be divided up as follows:\n\n\na) Exordium (§1-30).

Gregory starts his speech by declaring the reasons why he should remain silent. He has abandoned the practice of rhetorical speeches for several years while he was busy, in the meantime, with the study of Roman law and of Latin. Above all, what would prevent Gregory from speaking is the prominence of Origen’s personality, that is the subject of the speech itself, as well as ‘greater matters’, including giving thanks to God (εἰς τὸ θεῖον εὐχαριστία, §13). Origen has indeed the appearance of a man, who, thanks to his struggle to assimilate to God (§13), is in truth almost ready ‘for the reascent to the divine world’ (πρὸς τὸ θεῖον, §8; transl. Slusser, 95). The greatness of Origen makes Gregory unworthy of speaking, but also gives him the chance to dismiss rhetorical topics, such as the praise of family origin and physical appearance (§11).

However, the risk of being ungrateful towards Origen and God leads Gregory to begin his ‘discourse of thanksgiving’ (§31).

b) Thanksgiving (§31-183):

b.1) to God (§31-39)

This dense section contains the clearest theological statements in the entire *Pan. Or.* These use a vocabulary having both philosophical and biblical features and theological ideas in line with the teachings of Origen\(^{65}\). Their main focus remains the Logos, for He is presented as the privileged mediator of every thanksgiving, hymn and praise (εὐχαριστία, αἴνη, ὤμος, §31; εὐφημία, §35) to God, who is ‘Sovereign and Cause of all things’ (πάντων ἡγεμόν καὶ ἄρτιος, §32) and ‘king and guardian of all things, incessant fountain of all good things’ (πάντων βασιλεὺς καὶ κηδεμόν, διαρκὴς πηγὴ πάντων ἄγαθῶν, §35). Indeed, the only ‘path of piety’ is the ‘complete

\(^{64}\) A more detailed description is provided by Guyot – Klein (eds.), *Gregor der Wundertäter, Oratio prosphonetica*, 16-44.

\(^{65}\) On this see the commentary by Crouzel, *La cristologia in Gregorio Taumaturgo*, 747-750, which draws on Crouzel (ed.), *Gregoire le Thaumaturge, Remerciement*, 47-50. However, Slusser (ed.), St. Gregory Thaumaturgus, *Life and works*, 8, is right in noting that the reconstruction of Gregory’s theology provided by Crouzel in his edition of the *Pan. Or.* relies too much on the *Confessio fidei* and on Origen’s theological views, even when there is no evidence of them in Gregory’s works.
remembrance through Him [the Logos] of the Cause of all things. The idea of Christ as the mediator of the prayers of men is central in Origen.

Gregory avoids mentioning ‘Christ’ and ‘Son’ and makes prominent use of Logos, who ‘heals our weaknesses’, is ‘Ruler’ and Saviour of our souls, His first-begotten Logos, the Demiurge and Pilot of all things’ (§35). Gregory certainly does so because this preference, as well as the use of other terms of Platonic origin, makes his statements more palatable to pagan listeners. Nonetheless, not only had the Platonic terms ‘Demiurge’ and ‘Pilot’ already been applied to Christ by Heb 11:10 and earlier Christian theologians such as Athenagoras, Theophilus of Antioch and Origen himself, but also the influence of the I Clem. on Gregory appears to be evident. The Christian context of what Gregory says could hardly be mistaken by anyone. That appears even more clearly in the following paragraph, where the Logos is said to be ‘the truth, and both the wisdom and the power of the Father of the universe Himself, and is also with and in Him and united to Him completely’ (‘Οτι αὐτός ἐλήθη εἰς τούς πατρὸς τῶν ὅλων και σοφία καὶ δύναμις, πρὸς δὲ καὶ ἐν κυτῷ ὄν καὶ πρὸς κυτὸν ἀπεγένεσθαι ἄνωθεν, §36; transl. Slusser, 97), a sentence that mixes references to the Gospel of John and to 1 Cor. Moreover, the attributes ascribed to the Logos (truth, wisdom, power) prove Gregory’s familiarity with Origen’s theory of the epinoiai of Christ. Also the final statement of the section, where the Logos is said to be ‘most perfect and living and the animate Logos of the first Intellect itself’ (...)τελειότατος ὄν καὶ ἱσίων, καὶ κυτός τοῦ πρῶτου οὐ δόλος ἐλπίσως ὃν, §39), recalls Origen’s theological views. Here we

66 Gr. Thaum. Pan. Or. §38: ...μέχρι ὅδιν εὑσεβείας ταύτην εἶναι ὑμολογήσαντες, τὴν δὲ κυτὸς πάσαν μνήμην τοῦ ὅλων κυτίου.
67 Crouzel (ed.), Gregoire le Thaumaturge, Remerciement, 47-48; Crouzel, La cristologia in Gregorio Taumaturgo, 748.
68 See Slusser (ed.), St. Gregory Thaumaturgus, Life and works, 96 (n.10).
69 Or. ClO I,111: Δημιουργός δὲ ὁ Χριστὸς ὁς ἁγιά, καθ' ὅ σοφία ἐστί, τῷ σοφίᾳ εἶναι καλομένῳ ἁγιά.
70 Moratta, I riflessi biblici nell’orazione ad Origene, 72, where he refers to 1 Clem. 61,3 (...καὶ προστάτου τῶν ψυχῶν ἡμῶν Ἰησοῦ Χριστοῦ) and 36,1 (...το σωτήριον ἡμῶν Ἰησοῦ Χριστοῦ, τῶν ἁγιερείων τῶν προσφορῶν ἡμῶν, τοῦ προστάτην καὶ βοηθὸν τῆς ἁγιείας ἡμῶν).
71 The quotation seems also an allusion to Col 1:15-18.
72 Moratta (ed.), Gregorio il Taumaturgo, Discorso a Origene, 56 (partially followed by Rizzi (ed.), Gregorio il Taumaturgo (?), Encomio di Origene, 121), mentions: Jn 14:6 (truth); I Cor 1:24 (wisdom and power), together with Jb 12:13; Jn 1:1; 10:38; 14:11; 1Jn 4:15.
74 E.g.: Or. CC VI,17 (the Logos is ‘living, wisdom and truth of the Father’); CC II,9; III,81 (‘animate and living Logos’); ClO I,244 (‘animate and living’ is the ‘Wisdom of God which precedes all creation’); ClO XXII,127 (444,2-3 Preuschen, GCS 10): ... ὁ λόγος δὲ, καὶ ἐπαξιάπληκτος ὁ κύριος, ὁ πάσα ἐμψυχος καὶ ἄση ἁγιά; HLv XVI,7 (506,19-23 Baehrens, GCS 29): Verumtamen velim require, quid est anima Dei. Nunquidnam putabimus quia Deus habeat animam sicut homo? Absurdum est hoc sentire de Deo. Ego autem aud.cuz quia anima Dei Christus est. Sicut enim >Verbum< Dei est Christus et >sapientia Dei et virtus Dei, ita et anima Dei est.
have to stress that the attributes ζῶν and ἔμψυχος applied to the Logos mark his distinction from the Father75, even though Gregory strongly underlines the unity between the two:

‘the Father of the universe, who made him one with himself, and by means of him all but selfdescribes himself, would both honor and be honored, in a way, with a power entirely equal to his own; this it fell to his onlybegotten (1 Jn 4:9) to possess, first and only out of all that exists, the God-Word who is in him’ (transl. Slusser, 97).76

In truth this passage has been treated by Crouzel as if the expression ‘by means of him all but selfdescribes himself’ implied some sort of subordinationism on the part of Gregory, and therefore as evidence of ‘Origen’s hesitations’ over this point, at least inasmuch as it contradicts the statements of complete equality between the Father and the Son77. However, it appears unnatural to suppose this issue in this context. As convincingly argued by Rizzi, it seems that Gregory is trying to hold together both the concept of equality and that of the uncircumscribable nature of God, though without having the proper theological equipment to completely comprehend the Trinitarian problem78.

b.2) to the guardian angel (§40-72).

Then Gregory directs his thanks ‘to him who, out of all the unseen, godlike ones who watch over human beings, was appointed by some great decree to govern and nurture me and be my guardian from childhood, the holy angel of God “who feeds me from my youth” (Gn 48:15)’ (§40-41)79. Gregory owes to him also his unexpected meeting with Origen. Gregory and Origen were from different countries and far from one another, but the angel ‘with truly divine and wise foresight (...) contrived this meeting as my salvation by leading us to the same spot’ (§46). Gregory then tells about his father being a pagan, his studies, his sister, his projects in Beirut, his meeting with Origen in Caesarea and the change of plan (§48-72)80. The angel was watching over him when he inspired the teacher of Latin to invite Gregory to study Roman law (§59), and was behind the actions of the Roman soldier who escorted Gregory and his sister to Caesarea. The hidden causes of Gregory’s plan to go to Beirut were in reality ‘our

75 The Logos is ζῶν also according to the first article of the Confessio fidei (see Ch. 5, §III).
76 Gr. Thaum. Pan. Or. §37: ὅτενα αὐτὸς ὁ τῶν ὄλων πατήρ ἐν πρὸς αὐτὸν ποιησάμενος, δι’ αὐτοῦ μονονοῦμν αὐτὸς αὐτὸν ἐκπερίων, τῇ ἵσῃ πάντῃ δυνάμει τῇ αὐτῷ τρόπον τινὰ τιμών και τιμώτω ὑπὲρ πρώτος καὶ μόνος ἐχειν ἐλαχεν ἐκ πάντων τῶν ὄντων ὁ μονογενῆς αὐτοῦ, ὃ ἐν αὐτῷ θεός λόγος.
77 Crouzel (ed.), Gregoire le Thaumaturge, Remerciement, 50.
78 Rizzi (ed.), Gregorio il Taumaturgo (?), Encomio di Origene, 122-123 (n.9).
79 Transl. Slusser, 97-98. Trigg, God’s Marvelous Oikonomia, 33, rightly emphasises the fact that Gregory made use of a peculiar Christian term like άγγελος instead of the pagan δαίμων, which would have been unusual for a third-century Christian author.
80 Numerous comments about these paragraphs can be found in Ch. 1, passim.
fellowship with this man’ (Origen) and ‘the true things we could learn through him about what belongs to reason’ (§70-72).\(^{81}\)

Gregory sees the episodes of his biographical sketch in retrospect as the accomplishment of a providential plan to which the Logos and the guardian angel contributed actively. It is indeed in this section that terms such as οἰκονομία, πρόνοια, κηδεμών and their cognates appear consistently.\(^{82}\)

b.3) to Origen (§73-183).

After the guardian angel entrusted Gregory to Origen (§72), the discourse focuses on the Alexandrian master and his teaching, and on the bond between the two in the first place (§73-92).\(^{83}\) Gregory describes the first day with Origen as if for the first time ‘the true sun began to rise on me’, even though he initially tried to resist him like a wild animal (§73).\(^{84}\)

The paragraphs §74-80 give a rather loose description of the protreptic discourses that Origen addressed to Gregory to convince him to embrace the philosophical life.\(^{85}\) The reason seems to be clear. Gregory intends to highlight Origen’s philosophical approach as being grounded on a few unequivocal philosophical tenets. Origen praised ‘philosophy and those who love philosophy’ and affirmed that only those ‘who know themselves for who they really are’ and the genuine good things to pursue, and the truly bad things to avoid, can live as rational beings. On the contrary, ‘he despised ignorance and all the ignorant’.\(^{86}\) Gregory then adds comments upon the latter statement as follows: the ignorant are ‘blind of intellect’ (τυφλώττοντες τὸν νόον) and unwilling to learn what good or evil is; they ‘err like irrational beings’ (ἄλογοι), run after bodily comforts and the esteem of the multitude; and they follow those professions that can provide for them, such as the military, judicial and legal careers (§76-77).\(^{87}\) Gregory’s description is reminiscent of Plato’s Alcibiades Major. Like Alcibiades, Gregory irrationally pursued a public career without paying attention to his soul and being able to distinguish between good and evil, until he met a real master who made him realise the importance of self-knowledge.\(^{88}\) Educated listeners, Christian and pagans, must have recognised this similitude as well as the fact that Origen’s teaching was ordered along the lines of the philosophical curriculum of the contemporary Platonic schools, for it

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\(^{81}\) Transl. Slusser, 102.

\(^{82}\) See the accurate account by Mazzucco, La componente autobiografica nel Discorso di Ringraziamento, 109-111.

\(^{83}\) For the importance of the recurring occurrences of the verb συνδέσσθαι (‘to bind’) in the narrative of the section §73-92, see Mazzucco, La componente autobiografica nel Discorso di Ringraziamento, 111-112.

\(^{84}\) Transl. Slusser, 102.

\(^{85}\) Notice προτρέπων φιλοσοφεῖν in §78.

\(^{86}\) Transl. Slusser, 103.

\(^{87}\) Transl. Metcalfe, 58.

\(^{88}\) The presence of this Platonic theme had been detected already by A. Brinkmann, Gregors des Thaumaturgen Panegyricus auf Origenes, RMP 56 (1901), 57. Cf. also Trigg, God’s Marvelous Oikonomia, 44 and Monaci-Castagno, Origene direttore d’anime, 81.
started with the reading of the *Alcibiades Major* and was grounded on its basic instruction: self-knowledge precedes any philosophical training. But these are not the only Platonic elements that can be found in these pages.

In his discourses Origen argued that ‘no true piety toward the Ruler of the universe [...] was possible to anyone who did not lead a philosophic life’ (§79), and Gregory says that, in reaction to this, he felt as if he were ‘pierced by a dart by his discourse [...] for he combined a kind of winsome grace with persuasiveness and compelling force’(§78), or as if he were ‘under a spell’, for ‘some divine power’ was supporting Origen’s *logoi* (§80). Following Brinkmann’s insights, Sfameni Gasparro has taken this description of Origen’s ability to persuade through discourses as clearly evoking the Socratic enchantment described in *Men*. 79e-80b.

Another aspect of Origen’s instruction evoked in Gregory’s soul the spark of his love for the ‘holy (ἱερός) and most desirable (ἐρασιμωτάτος) Logos’ and for ‘this man his friend and spokesperson (προήγορος) (§83), that is Origen’s friendship, his benevolent and kind attitude to ‘save’ (σώζειν) him and help him to participate in the good things of the philosophic life and even more in those with which God has endowed him more than most, or perhaps even anyone in our time: namely, the saving Word (σωτήριος λόγος), the Teacher of true piety (διδάσκαλος ἐὐσεβείς), although he visit many, he conquers all that he encounters (for nothing can withstand him, since he is and will always be the king of all) (πάντων βασιλέως), yet he is hidden, and not easily (or even with difficulty) known to the multitude, so that if asked about him they could say anything clear (§82; transl. Slusser, 104).

As we have seen above, Gregory defined the ‘king of all’ as the Father in §35. Rizzi has explained the fact that Gregory applies the same attribution to the Son in §82.

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89 As is well known, the reading order of Plato’s dialogues that put the *Alcibiades Major* as the first of the list was followed both by Middle-Platonists and Neo-Platonists. Here it is worth mentioning Albinus’s *Prologue*, V (II cent. AD) and Iamblichus (245-330 ca.), respectively in *Der Platoniker Albinos und sein sogenannter Prologos*, Prolegomena, Überlieferungsgeschichte, kritische Edition und Übersetzung von B. Reis, Wiesbaden 1999, V,149,31-37, and ap. L.G. Westerink, Anonymus Prolegomena to Platonic Philosophy. Introduction, Text, translation and Indices, Amsterdam 1962, 26,18. In his *Commentary on Alcibiades* Proclus wrote as follows: ‘And indeed it seems to me that it is for this reason that the divine Iamblichus allotted it the first place among the ten dialogues in which he conceives the whole philosophy of Plato to be contained, their entire subsequent development being anticipated as it were in seminal form in this dialogue’. Transl. drawn from Iamblichus Chalcidensis In Platonis Dialogos commentatorum fragmenta. Edited with transl. and commentary by J.M. Dillon, Leiden 1973 (PhAnt XXIII), 73.

90 Ὄλως γὰρ οDİ, εὐσεβεῖν εἰς τὸν τῶν ὄλων διεπόταν ... αὐ τῶιν οὐδὲ εὐσεβεῖν ὄλως δυσκολεῖν εἴναι, ἐφασακεν, ὅρθῳς λέγων, ὦ, φιλοσοφήσαιτί. Transl. Slusser, 103.

91 Transl. Slusser, 103.

92 Sfameni Gasparro, Origene «Uomo divino» nell’«Encomio», 159. The theme of the dart has been considered as a reference to *Smp.* 219b by Brinkmann, Gregors des Thaumaturgen Panegyricus auf Origenes, 57, followed by most editors.

93 For the importance of this theme in the portrayal of Origen as a spiritual master see Lugaresi, Studenti cristiani e scuola pagana, 797-803.
as if it were added to the original draft of the text. It may have been also that this "incongruity" was due to Gregory’s attempt to merge two themes: first, Origen’s privileged proximity to the real Logos, which made his teaching unique; second, the unknowable nature of God, which Gregory states by evincing a concept expressed by Plato in a famous passage of the *Timaeus*.

Thus, Gregory was persuaded to neglect the studies and the affairs he seemed destined to be engaged in; he realised that only one thing had become dear to him, ‘philosophy and its guide, this divine man’ (θείος ἄνθρωπος; §84). Subsequently, Gregory describes the strong bond established between his soul and Origen by taking the example, which he read later on in the Scriptures (§85), of the bond between the souls of Jonathan and David (1 Sm 18:1; §85-92). Gregory dwells upon it at length to stress that it was Origen who forged this bond, for the superior is independent while the inferior remains in need of the superior and unable to escape from the bonds. In consideration of the significant presence of Platonic elements which feature the description of Origen’s ability to catch the attention of Gregory through discourses and a certain ‘divine power’, it seems clear that Gregory’s intention was to recall and, at the same time, to remould the Socratic model of relationship between master and pupil as it is exemplified especially in Alcibiades’s encomium of Socrates (*Smp*. 213e-222c). Gregory does so by replacing Platonic *eros* with Origen’s friendship and benevolent attitude towards him.

Scholars often take the section §93-98 as attesting a phase of preparation for the philosophical studies, more precisely for dialectic (§98-108), as if a sort of ascetical purification was required in order to access the subsequent levels of Origen’s philosophical teaching. In fact, there is no such a progression between the two parts, because Gregory speaks of dialectic (§109) in a Platonic sense both in §93-98 and in §98-108.

In these pages Origen is depicted as a master making use of the maieutic method of Socrates in order to evoke the good features hidden in the soul of his pupils. By questions and answers Origen both rectified and purified the thought and the soul of Gregory in order to make him able to examine correctly discourses and argumentations. The entire process of Origen’s teaching was founded on the idea that intellectual education and spiritual progression go hand in hand, and Gregory shows how dialectic functioned as a purgative means in this framework. By this means Gregory was

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94 Rizzi (ed.), Gregorio il Taumaturgo (?), *Encomio di Origene*, 140-141 (n.19).


prepared to reject brilliant but false opinions and to embrace holy and truthful words, though not expressed according to rhetorical taste.

But this section does not attest only to the Socratic flavour of Origen’s teaching. The impression that the ‘words of truth’ Gregory refers to are the Holy Scriptures is strongly reinforced by the fact that Gregory’s portrayal of this preliminary stage of Origen’s teaching implies that it was catechetical. Origen is not said to master the τέχνη τῆς μετέξεως of Th. 150B but the γεωργική τέχνη, which, even if it recalls other passages from Plato’s dialogues, mirrors the catechetical activity of the Christian masters according to Origen’s own view. Since this fact has passed, as far as I know, totally unnoticed in previous scholarship, it is worth quoting extensively the passages at issue.

…having thus caught us from the start and completely encompassed us, when he had accomplished the main thing and it seemed that we would stay, from that point on he behaved like a good farmer (ἄγαθὸς γεωργός) who has ground that is untilled or had never been good soil, but salty and parched, rocky and sandy—or maybe not entirely barren and unproductive but even quite fertile, though unwatered and uncultivated, overgrown with thorns and scrub and hard to till (Mt 13:3-9; Mc 4:3-8; Lc 8:4-8; §93)97. Alternatively, he did as a gardener does with a plant—a wild one which does not bear cultivated fruit but which is not entirely valueless if someone versed in horticulture brings a cultivated shoot and grafted it in (ὥστε τις γυναικικῆς ἑκερίβων καὶ πατῶν ἥμερων ἕφερον μέν, οὐ μὴν πάντη ἄρχοντον, εἴ τις τέχνη τῇ γεωργικῇ φέρεις ἔλυστον ἡμερον ἐμψυκτω, ἣν γάρ ἐν τῷ ὅμιλῳ ἔθηκε) or as a gardener does with a plant—a wild one which does not bear cultivated fruit but which is not entirely valueless if someone versed in horticulture brings a cultivated shoot and grafted it in (ὃς ἢ τις φυτουργὸς ἄνηρ φυτον, ἵτοι ἄγριον καὶ κράτει ἡμέρων ἁρχον μέν, οὐ μὴν πάντη ἄρχοντον, εἴ τις τέχνη τῇ γεωργικῇ φέρεις ἔλυστον ἡμερον ἐμψυκτω). After he had begun to think that there was something in us which was not useless, unprofitable, and hopeless, (§95) he hoed, dug, watered, did everything he could, applied every skill and solicitude he had, and succeeded in domesticating us. When our unruly soul kept sending up and yielding ‘thorns and thistles’ (Gn 3:18) and every kind of wild weeds and plants, as overgrown as it was disorderly and reckless, he cut everything off and got rid of it by proofs and by confrontation (πᾶν ἔννοια καὶ ἐξιέρων τοῖς ἐλέγχοις καὶ τῷ κυλύειν, §96). On occasion he would trip us in speech, challenging us in thoroughly Socratic

97 I find the allusion to the Gospel frankly indisputable. Rizzi (ed.), Gregorio il Taumaturgo (?), Encomio di Origene, 146 (n.38), questions it.
fashion, every time he saw us fighting the reins like unbroken horses, veering off the road and running aimlessly every which way, until by persuasion and coercion, as by the bit which was the word from our own mouth, he made us stand quietly before him (ἡσυχίας πύνω καταστάσατο, §97). At first it was hard for us and not without grief, as he was introducing us novices, who had never practiced following and argument, to his own reasoning, and purifying us at the same time (ἐκκαθαρών ἀμως). When he had brought us to a proper frame of mind and prepare us well to accept the words of truth (εὖ παρεσκευάσατο εἰς παράδοχην τῶν τῆς ἀληθείας λόγων, §98), only then, as into soft, well-tilled soil, ready to push forth what would come from the seeds, he began to plant lavishly. He did the sowing of the seeds at the right time, and all the rest of the cultivation at its right time, appropriately accomplishing each task and with reason’s own means (§99).

Everything obtuse or duplicitous about the soul, whether it was born that way or had coarsened through overindulgence of the body, he lanced and reduced by the refined arguments and rhetorical devices (λόγοις καὶ τρόποις) used for ailments of the mind… (§100) (transl. Slusser, 106-107).

Commenting on the first paragraphs of this quotation Knauber affirmed that ‘Die Lehrtätigkeit mit der Arbeit des Gärtners und des Bauern zu vergleichen, war ein beliebter Gemeinplatz der zeitgenössischen Popularphilosophie - besonders der stoisierenden Richtungen – geworden’98. In fact, Gregory is endorsing neither a typically Stoic idea99, nor he is portraying a ‘bucolic scene’ while describing Origen as a farmer100. There is little doubt that the image of the farmer101, as well as that of the ‘unbroken horses’, were commonplace in literature on education102. Yet, this section reflects quite clearly Gregory’s acquaintance with Plato’s works. In the Phaedrus, the image of ὁ νοῦς ἔχων γεωργός, who plants his seeds in fitting ground following the rules of the γεωργική τέχνη (276b1-7), mirrors the one who ‘employs the dialectic method and plants and sows in a fitting soul discourses of science […] which are not fruitless, but yield seed from which there spring up in other minds other discourses capable of continuing the process for ever, and which make their possessor happy’ (276e7-277a5)103. The contrast between what is ‘wild’ (ἄγριον) and what is ‘tame’ (ἡμερον) is reminiscent of R. 589a-b, where Plato explains that justice implies that the ‘inner man’ masters the many-headed beast within him ‘like a farmer who feeds and tames the cultivated plants but prevents the growth of the wild’ (ὡσπερ γεωργός, τὰ μὲν ἡμερὰ τρέφων καὶ τιθασών, τὰ δὲ ἄγρια ἀποκολύων φύεσθαι). Thus also,

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98 Knauber, Das Anliegen der Schule des Origenes zu Cäsarea, 193, where he refers to a previous article of his which I could not access.
99 The only case I was able to find in von Harnim’s collection is SVF I,236 (where no teacher is mentioned though).
100 Rizzi (ed.), Gregorio il Taumaturgo (?), Encomio di Origene, 147 (n. 41).
101 Lucian, Anacharsis, 20-21 (33-34, LCL 162) and Ps. Plutarch, The education of Children, 2B-C (9, LCL 197).
102 Ps. Plutarch, The education of Children, 2F.
103 Transl. Fowler (LCL 36), slightly altered, 569-571. For another link between the ἄγαθος γεωργός and education see, for instance, Euthphr. 2d2.
the ideas that the confutation of wrong ideas implies the purification of the soul and its subsequent submission to the master and that these things are basic for someone to make progress in the philosophical life, are found, for instance, in *Sph.* 230b4-e4. Here Plato explains that the best method of teaching (διδασκαλία) in discourses is by confutation: ‘those who purge the soul believe that the soul can receive no benefit from any teachings offered to it until someone by confutation (ἔλεγχος) reduces him who is questioned to an attitude of modesty, by removing the opinions that obstruct the teachings, and thus purges him and makes him think that he knows only what he knows, and no more’"104. Plato concludes that the person who does not go through the purification by confutation (ἀνέλεγχος) remains impure, uneducated and shameful (ἀκαθαρτός, ἀπαίδευτος τε καὶ πίσχρός)105.

Gregory is clearly making use of Plato’s ideas, and perhaps also Philo’s treatises *De agricultura* may have had some influence on his reasoning106. Yet, the most important aspects of Gregory’s passage are illuminated by the fact that Origen made use of the image of the farmer and of the seed to mirror, respectively, the teacher-exegete and the Holy Scriptures and doctrines. We find this metaphor used very clearly in two homilies and in the *Commentary on the Gospel of John*107.

Origen gives the following exegesis of Jer 4:3 (‘Break up fallow ground and sow not among thorns’):

This word is especially directed to those who teach, lest they entrust what is said to the pupils too soon before they have prepared the fallow ground in their souls. For whenever they put the hand to the plow, they make the ground fallow in their souls, according to the beautiful and the good earth of those who hear. Then when they sow, the sowers do not sow among thorns. But if prior to the plow and prior to the

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104 Transl. Fowler (LCL 123), 315.
105 Dorival, *Origène et ses disciples*. 169 shows that also aspiring Pythagoreans and Neoplatonists were required to go through the preparatory purification of the soul before philosophical studies. See also Nautin, *Origène*, 189.
106 The consonances between Gregory’s passage and Philo’s work are indeed numerous. Both mention the basic idea that agriculture allegorically means the cure of the soul and the planting of the encyclical studies. See, e.g., *Agr.* 18, where Philo mentions reading and writing, commentary of the poets, geometry, rhetoric as introductive to ethical virtues. Philo’s *De Plantatione* (ΠΕΡΙ ΦΥΤΟΥΡΓΙΑΣ ΝΕΩ) dedicates less space to agricultural metaphors than one would expect and I did not find significant elements of comparison.
107 In *Clo* VI,28,144, dealing with Mt 3:10 and Lk 3:9, Origen writes: ‘If we should inquire more carefully into matters concerning fruits, we will find that it is impossible for a tree, which is beginning to be cultivated now, to bear good fruit (καρποὺς καλοὺς) first even if it should bear. The husbandman (γεωργὸς) is pleased for it to bear fruit proper to the beginning of cultivation at first. Later in the course, by means of the prunings proper to the agricultural art (διὰ τῶν πρεπῶν γεωργικῆς καθαρσίας), after he has received mediocre fruits he will, at length, also receive good fruits. The Law too testifies to our interpretation when it says that he who plants must permit what is planted to produce unclean fruit for three years, its fruits not being eaten’. Origen then quotes Lv 19:23-24, and concludes that the tree which ‘is cut down and cast into the fire’ is the tree which ‘does not produce fruit as praise to the Lord once the three year period is past and it has entered the fourth year’ (§145; transl. Heine, 209-210). Cf. Saxer, *Les rites de l’initiation chrétienne*, 155-156.
making of fallow ground in the heart of those who hear, someone takes the holy seeds, the word concerning the Father, concerning the Son and Holy Spirit, the word concerning the Resurrection, the word concerning the punishment, the word concerning the final rest, concerning the Law, the Prophets and in general each of the Scriptures, and sows them, he disobeys the first commandment which states first: *Break up their fallow ground; second: and do not sow among thorns*108.

Let us read now the beginning of Origen’s homilies on Exodus:

I think each word of divine Scripture is like a seed whose nature is to multiply diffusely, reborn into an ear of corn or whatever its species be, when it has been cast into the earth. Its increase is proportionate to the diligent labor of the skillful farmer or the fertility of the earth. So, therefore, it is brought to pass that, by diligent cultivation, a little ‘mustard seed’, for example, ‘which is least of all, may be made greater than all herbs and become a tree so that the birds of heaven come and dwell in its branches’. So it is also with this word which now has been read to us from the divine books. Although when first approached it seems small and insignificant, if it find a skillful and diligent farmer, as it begins to be cultivated and handled with spiritual skill, it grows into a tree and puts forth branches and foliage. ‘The debaters and orators of this world’ can come to it. Like ‘birds of heaven’ on light wings pursuing lofty and difficult thoughts with a pompous array of words alone, and captives to arguments, they wish ‘to dwell in those branches’ in which there is no eloquent language but a rule for living. What then shall we do about these things which have been read to us? If the Lord deign to grant me the discipline of spiritual agriculture, if he grant the skill of cultivating a field, one word from these which have been read could be scattered far and wide to such an extent that-if your capacity to listen would permit-scarcely would a day suffice for us to treat it109.

In my opinion, there is little doubt that Gregory had Origen’s idea of γεωργός as teacher of catechumens in mind. That must have been clear to at least a part of his Christian audience, surely to Origen and his followers: the different stages of the teaching, represented by the works of the farmer, mirror the rhythm of the progress of the catechumens.

Moreover, when Gregory mentions the ‘words of truth’ (§98) he was prepared to accept from Origen, he is not referring only to the ‘Schulprogramm’110, but he is also making veiled allusions to Christian doctrines and to the Bible. Indeed, before Gregory learned how to investigate opinions and words according to the dialectic method, corrupt and false opinions ‘entered our ears as true under the guise of elegant words’(§103)…

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110 Knauber, *Das Anliegen der Schule des Origenes zu Cäsarea*, 193, n.62.
Conversely, other sound and trustworthy things, since they are not couched in plausible language, seemed against reason and most unbelievable; at first sight they were rejected as false and ridiculed undeservedly, but later, to those who worked them out and understood exactly what they meant, what previously had been deemed worthless and disreputable were understood to be the truest things of all and simply irresistible (transl. Slusser, 108).

As has been already pointed out by commentators, this passage concerns one of the most common pagan allegations about the language of the Bible which Origen himself opposed in numerous places.

That the section on dialectics contains a veiled allusion to Origen’s catechumenal activity is confirmed by other two facts: first, Gregory refers (§95) to the Platonic method of ‘questions and answers’ (Ep. VII, 344b), which Origen found corroborated in the Old and New Testaments, considered essential to biblical exegesis (CC VI,7) and to his style of proselitism (CC VI,10); second, Gregory seems to refer to the exegetical practice when he writes that Origen taught us to investigate not just the externals which strike one immediately […] but also the inner realities […] Thus the part of our soul which judges concerning words and arguments was trained in reasonable fashion, not according to the judgments of elegant rhetors as to whether something is Greek or barbaric in its expression, for that is an insignificant thing to learn…’ (§105-107; transl. Slusser, 108).

Last but not least, the farmer and his endeavour remind us of the parable of the Sower (Mt 13:3-9; etc.) and its explanation (Mt 13:18-23; etc.) in a way that confirms our interpretation of §93-108. The similarity between the two reveals indeed that Origen’s activity as an educator was intended to prepare Gregory to understand the profound meaning of the Scriptures. The seed sown by the Sower is indeed the word of God (Lc 8:11).

The section §93-108 powerfully highlights Gregory’s ability to mingle references to Plato’s works and to Origen’s teachings and, at the same time, attest his assimilation of the Scriptures. The dialectic method taught by Origen implied both a theoretical and

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111 Gr. Thaum. Pan. Or. VII, §104,73-80: πάλιν τε αὖ ἔτερα σεμνὰ μὲν καὶ οὐκ ἀλαζονεύωμενα μὲν, ἢ οὐκ ἡξιοπίστους τὰς φωνάς κείμενα παράδοξα καὶ πάντων ἀπιστότατα δοκοῦντα, κατόθεν τε ἀποδοκιμασθέντα ὡς σφυδρῇ καὶ ὑβρισθέντα ἀναξίως, εἰθ’ ὦστερον ἐξίχνισασι καὶ κατανόησασιν ἀκριβῶς πάντων ἀληθεύσεως καὶ ἀμαχία ἀμεγάλως εἶναι κατενοηθή, τὰ τέως ἀποδόθητα καὶ ἄδοξα χαρακτήθηντα…


113 ‘There are some people to whom we preach only an exhortation to believe, since they are incapable of anything more; but with others we do all we can to approach them with rational arguments “by questions and answers”’ (transl. Chadwick, 324).

114 Cf. Marotta, I riflessi biblici nell’orazione ad Origene, 66-68.
a practical use, for it aimed at the spiritual progress of his pupils, as in Plato. However, this section provides enough elements to deduce that Gregory was covertly saying that Origen’s teaching of dialectic also aimed at the proper understanding of the Scriptures, and the allusions to the parable of the Sower played exactly the role of reminding the hearer of the hidden meanings of the Scriptures. Consequently, the common idea that the *Pan. Or.* is evidence that the study of the Scriptures at the school of Caesarea occurred only at the end of the *curriculum studiorum* does not appear to be well founded. This is not surprising at all if we consider the biblical focus of Origen’s activity and works in general, but it sheds much light on Gregory’s ability to convey multiple meanings by making a strategic use of metaphors. In this perspective, it seems fair to say that Gregory was able to speak in parables.

Gregory then says that Origen rectified the irrational wonder (θαυμα) of the inferior part of his soul before the ‘all-wise construction of the universe’ waking it up with ‘physics disciplines’ (φυσικά μαθήματα, §110) or ‘physiology’ (φυσιολογία, §112). By his arguments concerning ‘the sacred economy (ἱερὰ οἰκονομία) of the universe and its faultless constitution’[^115], which he studied or discovered by himself, Origen showed the rational design where each part of the universe finds its place, and replaced the irrational wonder with a rational one (§111). He also ‘taught or recalled to memory’ the holy disciplines of geometry and astronomy, which make heaven accessible (§113-114).

Most scholars take this section (§109-114) as attesting the progressio of Origen’s *curriculum studiorum*. However, Gregory says too little for us to draw from it certain evidence of a concrete plan of studies. What Gregory says very clearly is that the teaching of these disciplines contributed to the ‘waking up’ of his soul, that is, in other words, that Origen’s instruction was psychagogic[^116]. Even if Gregory’s narrative is undoubtedly focused on his spiritual awakening, his cursory treatment of geometry and astronomy, as well as the fact that he never goes back to them in the course of the work, is striking. The impression that Gregory is providing what an educated hearer would like to know about the school of Caesarea, and not an accurate account of Origen’s teaching, is confirmed by the improvised manner with which he introduces the topic: ‘What need to mention the sacred studies, Geometry dear to all and irrefragable, and Astronomy whose path is on high?‘(§113)[^117]. Gregory certainly studied these disciplines, but it seems questionable that they were taught by Origen separately from the study of the Bible. Indeed, we have come, and will come, across traces in the *Pan. Or.* that seem to attest that the opposite is true. Gregory’s description in this section, as well as the progressive structure of his studies on which his whole narrative is based, appear to be a calculated stratagem aimed at calling the attention of his listeners to the

resemblance between Origen’s teaching and the *curricula* of the contemporary philosophical schools.

Gregory ascribes much more importance, in line with the ‘whole race of philosophers’, to ‘the divine virtues regarding how to act’ (ἦθος), which are like the ‘good fruits’ to be reaped from ‘the varied orchard of all the other branches of learning’ (§115). The image of the fruits clearly evokes the metaphor of the productive field that was used to describe the branches of philosophy by Stoics, Philo and Origen.118 According to this metaphor, logic corresponds to the surrounding wall, physics to land or trees, ethics to the fruits.

It is ethics, Gregory says, that generates ‘the condition of calm and balance of the impulses of our soul’ (ἡ ἀτάραχος καὶ εὐστάθης τῶν ὀρμῶν τῆς ψυχῆς κατάστασις, §115). By this means Origen tried to make his pupils ‘free from pain and unaffected by any evils, well-ordered and well-balanced, and truly God-like and happy’ (ἀλάτης μὲν καὶ ἀπαθεῖς ἀπάντων κακῶν, εὐστάθης δὲ καὶ εὐσταθεῖς καὶ θεοειδεῖς ἢμελλὲν ἡμᾶς ὄντως καὶ μακαρίους καταστήσωσθαι, §116).119 With his discourses and deeds together Origen brought Gregory’s impulses under control and introduced him to ‘the vision and consideration of the impulses and passions of the soul’, which are necessary for the recovery of its harmony and order (§118). Indeed, by ‘contemplating itself as in a mirror’, the soul is made capable of seeing, on the one hand, its irrational part, where ‘the principles and the roots of evil’ are and passions are engendered, and, on the other hand, its rational part, ‘under whose control it remains self-determined, free from harm and disorder’ (§119). This process, above all, makes the soul capable of fighting the inclination to ‘pleasures and desires or griefs and fears’ and the divine virtues of prudence, temperance, justice and fortitude come to be in the soul (§122). Slusser has pointed out Gregory’s subscription to the Stoic definition of prudence in these pages, but the same can be said about the definition of temperance.120 Perhaps, it is worth noting how these are put in a Platonic frame, not because, as is well known, the cardinal virtues derive from Plato, but because Gregory’s discourse is presented as related to the first phase of philosophic research, that is self-knowledge.121

Gregory subsequently dedicates much space to underlining the point that Origen’s deeds made his discourses compelling and effective and his teaching superior to that of all philosophers, above all the Stoics (‘the most recent ones’). Gregory himself found them capable of demonstrating with sound arguments that ‘virtue is identical for God

118 See SVF II,38 (Sextus Empiricus), 39 (Philo), 40 (Origen, who speaks of vineyard).
119 Transl. Metcalfe, 67.
120 Transl. Slusser, 110.
121 According to §123 ‘Prudence is knowledge about good and evil or about what to do and what not to do’, which is close to Chrysippus’s definition *ap. Stobaeus* (SVF III,262). See the same place for the temperance, which Gregory defines as ‘understanding of what to choose and what not to choose’ (§124). See Slusser, 111 (n.55), from which the previous translations are drawn from.
122 Cf. Plato, *Afc.* 1, 130d-133d, where we find the themes of the self-vision of the soul, of the mirror, and of the soul of someone else as tools for self-knowledge occur.
and human beings\footnote{Cf. SVF III, 245-254, where both Origen (CC IV, 29; VI, 48) and Clement of Alexandria are listed, the former endorsing this doctrine, the latter rejecting it.}, but unable to teach the virtues by their actions (§123-126). Thus, he makes use of this argument to point to the responsibility of contemporary philosophers for the fact that ‘the very name of philosophy is brought into utter contempt by everyone’, which, in turn, forced Gregory to ignore philosophy and philosophers until he met Origen (§128-135). Even though Gregory tries to explain that his words concerning philosophers are to be put into perspective and do not represent an argument for his praise of Origen, because this would make it less credible, he establishes an insurmountable divergence between Origen and ‘the philosophers outside’ (οἱ ἐξω ψιλόσοφοι, §129), by which Gregory in all likelihood means pagan philosophers\footnote{Only Slusser seems to give this meaning to this expression (112: ‘wordly philosophers’), while most translators interpret it in a general sense: Metcalfe translates into ‘philosophers outside his school’ (70); Crouzel into ‘philosophes du dehors’ (149); Marotta into ‘altri filosofi’ (74); Rizzi into ‘altri filosofi fuori di qui’(159); Merino Rodriguez into ‘el resto de los filósofos’ (Gregorio Taumaturgo, Elogio del maestro cristiano. Discurso de agradecimiento a Orígenes. Intr., trad. y notas de M. M. R., Madrid 1990 [Biblioteca de Patrística, 10], 136). That Gregory meant pagan philosophers seems to be implied by the variation of attributes between §127 (λοιποί) and §129 (ἐξω).}

In the section §133-149 Gregory recapitulates and deepens what he has already said beforehand with regard to virtues and Origen’s moral teaching. Gregory starts by repeating that it was Origen that convinced him ‘to pursue the philosophy of the Greeks’ and ‘to assimilate moral doctrine (ὁ περὶ ἡθον λόγος) by his own moral behaviour’(§133)\footnote{Transl. Slusser, 113.}, because he never spoke without ‘striving to put his words into action’; in other words, he presented himself almost as a ‘paradigm of the sage’ (§135). He wished that his pupils could master not only the discourses concerning the impulses, but the impulses themselves (§137).

Origen urged them to practise justice (δικαιοπραγεῖν) ‘through the proper action of the soul’ (δικαιοπραγία), that is ‘to do what was really our responsibility’ and to ‘allot what is fit and to each one his own’ (§139), by leaving Gregory ‘away from the manifold business (πολυπραγμοσύνη, §138) of living’ and from the meddling with others’ affairs (ἀλλοτριοπραγεῖν, §140)\footnote{I have drawn these translations both from Metcalfe, 72 and Slusser, 114. On the multiple Platonic, Aristotelian and Stoic influences on Gregory’s terminology and definition of justice, and on their Christian precedents see the comments ad locum by Metcalfe, Crouzel, Slusser and Rizzi. Despite the Aristotelian and Stoic (cf. SVF III, 297) use of δικαιοπραγεῖν, the passage preserves mostly Platonic views (after all, Gregory speaks of ‘the ancient philosophers’, §139). For instance see R. 444b for the couple πολυπραγμοσύνη and ἀλλοτριοπραγμοσύνη. For the definition of justice see especially R. 434c. Cfr. also Porph. Sent. 40, 75-78 Lambez: † καὶ οὕτω πάλιν ἐν δικαιοπραγίᾳ ὅρθως εἰρήκει τι δίκαιων, ἐν δὲ ἀποκαθήσει τοῦ κατ’ ἀξίαν ἑκάστω τῶν συζώντων εἰκόνα κείσθαι καὶ εἰδωλον τῆς ἠληθινῆς δικαιοσύνης.}. But what is proper (ἡδον) to the soul is ‘to take care of itself’ and ‘to turn inward to itself’ (§140). Along this line of thought, Gregory introduces, remoulding it, prudence, whose function is to realise the injunction ascribed to ‘the most inspired of demons’ (Apollo), that is ‘know thyself’, which is the
best achievement of philosophy’ (§141-142)\textsuperscript{127}. Origen himself preached that \textit{pars maxima sapientiae} consists in self-knowledge in one of his homilies\textsuperscript{128}.

Gregory adds a description of how self-knowledge prepares the \textit{apotheosis} of the soul that immediately evokes Plato’s \textit{Alcibiades Major} (133e-133c): ‘when the very soul practices to see itself as in a mirror and mirrors the divine intellect in itself, if it becomes worthy of such communion, it initiates a secret path to this deification’ (§142)\textsuperscript{129}. Then he gives two definitions of temperance and fortitude which again remind us in part of Plato’s\textsuperscript{130}. ‘Temperance is a kind of prudence kept intact’ (\textit{Cra. 411e}); fortitude is ‘the saviour and guardian of principles’ (\textit{R. 429c}).

Gregory acknowledges that he was not worthy of reaching the virtues because ‘none can be obtained by anyone unless God breathes in the power’ (§146)\textsuperscript{131} and because he did not struggle enough like those who aim at perfection. However, he admits that Origen, ‘friend and guide to the virtues’ (φίλος τῶν ἄρετῶν καὶ προνόγορος, §147), made him a lover of virtues, including wisdom, ‘his patience with us’\textsuperscript{132}, and piety, ‘the mother of virtues’ and ‘beginning and completion of all virtues’, which every man must acquire to become ‘friend and guide of God’ (φίλος καὶ προνόγορος θεῷ)\textsuperscript{133}. In fact, Gregory concludes, ‘I think that the goal of all men is nothing else than to come to God, having been made like him with a pure mind, and to remain in him’\textsuperscript{134}.

Starting from §150 Gregory speaks of Origen’s teaching of theology (περὶ θεολογίας διδασκαλία), concerning the knowledge of the cause of all things (τῶν πάντων ἀκτίων γνώσεως). Gregory’s description of this alleged final phase of Origen’s instruction is worth reading carefully.

He deemed worthy that we philosophised and read through with every energy all the writings of the ancient philosophers and singers, neither excluding nor disdaining any of them (since not yet able to discriminate) (Φιλοσοφεῖν μὲν γὰρ ἡξίου ἀναλεγομένους τῶν ἄρχων πάντα δοξα καὶ φιλοσόφων καὶ ὑμνηθένων

\textsuperscript{127} Transl. Slusser, 114.
\textsuperscript{128} Or. \textit{HEEx} III.2 (162.15-17 Baehrens, GCS 29): \textit{Quia igitur in id intelligentiae profecit, ut agnosceret semet ipsum, in quo est pars maxima sapientiae, remuneraret eum divina dignatio}.
\textsuperscript{129} Gr. Thaum. \textit{Pan. Or.} §132: κύτταρα τῆς ψυχῆς ἐσωτηρ ώσπερ ἐν κατάπτερῳ όραν μελετώσῃς καὶ τῶν θεῶν νοῦν, εἰ δὲξια γένοντο τῆς κοινωνίας τῆς ἄνθρωπος τις ἄνθρωπος σε ἀπορρητῶν τινα ταύτης ἀποθέωσαι ἔξισενεομένης.
\textsuperscript{130} Crouzel (ed.), Gregoire le Thaumaturge, \textit{Remerciement}, 155 (n. 2-3).
\textsuperscript{131} Transl. Slusser, 115.
\textsuperscript{132} The interpretation of ὑπομονῇ ἡξίῳ as a genitive subjective has driven Crouzel (ed.), Gregoire le Thaumaturge, \textit{Remerciement}, 156-157 (n.2) to follow Bengel in assuming that here Gregory is speaking of a peculiar Christian form of patience (‘patience of us Christians’). But I follow, together with Rizzi (167, n.33), the translation of Slusser (115, n.70).
\textsuperscript{133} Gregory applies this definition to Origen twice (§83, 176). That the aim of piety is to become friends with God is explicitly stated in Sextus’s \textit{Sentences} (\textit{Enchiridion Sexti} 86b) as pointed out by Slusser, 116 (n.72). For precedent and subsequent occurrences in other authors of the idea that piety is the ‘mother of all virtues’ see Nautin, \textit{Origène}, 192 (n.17).
\textsuperscript{134} Gr. Thaum. \textit{Pan. Or.} §149: Τὸ γε πάντων τέλος αὐχ ἐτερὸν τι οἴμαι, ἢ καθαρῶ τῷ νῷ ἐξομοιωθέντα προσελθεῖν τῷ θεῷ καὶ μένειν ἐν αὐτῷ.
ἐστι γράμματα πάση δυνάμει, μηδὲν ἐκποιουμένους μηδ’ ἀποδοκιμάζοντας (οὐδέποτε γὰρ οὐδὲ τὴν χρίσιν ἔχειν) except those which belong to the atheists, who, since they have abandoned common human beliefs (ἐννοιαι), say that there is no God or providence. The latter are not worth reading, lest our soul be defiled in the encounter by hearing doctrines opposed to the service of God before it has attained piety… but [he did think it worthwhile] to take up and become conversant with all the rest, neither biased in favor of one nation or philosophic doctrine, nor yet prejudiced against it, whether Hellenic or barbarian, but listening to all (§151-153; transl. Slusser, slightly altered, 116-117).

Scholars usually call attention to this passage for it attests that the extensive philosophical readings excluded the writings of atheists and deniers of divine providence (Epicureans and probably Aristotelians as well). However, these paragraphs are especially important for they confirm that Gregory’s description of his studies cannot be taken as evidence that Origen’s curriculum studiorum at Caesarea was rigidly progressive in a manner that dialectics came first, physics and ethics in the middle, and theology only at the end. The first trace of this fact is found in the incidental phrase οὐδέποτε γὰρ οὐδὲ τὴν χρίσιν ἔχει. Rizzi has noted that if the Caesarean curriculum had been rigidly organised, then Gregory should have already been able to judge different argumentations; therefore, Rizzi explained the phrase as if it were a trace of the redactional stratification he has hypothesised135. Still, the fact that the phrase was original or added later on does not change its clear implication, namely, that the study of ‘all the discourses about the divine’ (περὶ τοῦ θείου λόγοι, §150) was tackled at the very beginning of the curriculum, and not, as is usually assumed, at the end of it. The second trace is the occurrence of ὑμνῳδός. Slusser has rightly noted that it is an uncommon term for poets and that Origen uses it for the Psalmist, and has translated it into ‘singers’, as if Gregory were saying that Psalms and biblical writings were read alongside Greek poets such as Homer and Hesiod. Slusser has also recalled the use of this term in §195, where it clearly defines the authors of the Psalms136. On the contrary, Rizzi has deemed this term as referring only to pagan poets on the basis of §182, where Gregory refers to ‘every doctrine, both barbarian and Greek, both the most mystical and the most pragmatic, both divine and human…’137, which attests, in his view, that even pagan poetry was admitted at Origen’s school138. In fact Rizzi’s reference to §182 is of no help to his point exactly because Gregory says, as in §153, that he read both Greek and barbarian authors, which, considering the context, evidently means pagans and biblical authors. Slusser’s interpretation appears better founded and has to be fully endorsed not only because Origen, like Philo before him, used consistently ποιητὴς to define pagan poets and ὑμνῳδός for the Psalmist, but also because it smooths out an alleged incongruity between Origen’s teaching and its description on the part of Gregory. After all, how could it be that Origen introduced his pupils only to pagan poets

135 Rizzi (ed.), Gregorio il Taumaturgo (?), Encomio di Origene, 169 (n.45).
136 Slusser (ed.), St. Gregory Thaumaturgus, Life and Works, 116 (n.73).
137 Transl. Slusser, 122.
138 Rizzi (ed.), Gregorio il Taumaturgo (?), Encomio di Origene, 169 (n.44).
preferring them to biblical authors?\footnote{Origen’s most telling statement with regard to pagan poetry is found in \textit{Hier} XXVIII,7 (transl. J.C. Smith, \textit{FaCh} 97, 267): ‘You will understand what is called the \textit{golden cup} (Jer 28:7) in the present text if you note that the deadly words of the most evil teachings have a certain kind of arrangement of speaking, a kind of attractive eloquence, a kind of beauty of order, and if you know how each of the poets, who are thought along with their disciples as the most well-spoken men, have formed the \textit{golden cup} and injected the venom of idolatry and the venom of obscenity, the venom of those teachings which slay the soul of man, the venom with the false name of knowledge’.
}

Moreover, if we ponder Gregory’s comparison in §196 between his leaving the school of Origen and the exile of the Jews to Babylon, does not it say clearly that in Caesarea Origen and his pupils ruminated ‘day and night’ on ‘the holy laws (οἱ ἱεροὶ νόμοι) […] hymns and songs and mystical doctrines’ (ὑμνοὶ τε καὶ ὕμναι καὶ λόγοι μυστικοί)?

Gregory subsequently reflects upon the benefits of Origen’s ‘eclectic’ teaching (§154-157)\footnote{It is important to remember that the study of authors from different philosophical schools was not a specific practice of Origen’s teaching, as was pointed out by Nautin, \textit{Origène}, 193 (n.19). See also P.L. Donini, \textit{Le scuole l’anima l’impero. La filosofia antica da Antioco a Plotino}. Torino 1982, 59.\footnote{See Or. \textit{Hier} XVI,9, where he interprets Jer 16:20 (‘If a man will make gods for himself…’) as follows: ‘Not only do men make gods for themselves from statues, but you will also find men making gods for themselves from their imaginations … So, too, I believe is the case either among the Greeks who generate opinions, so to speak, of this philosophy or that, or among the heretics, the first who generate opinions’. (transl. Smith [\textit{FaCh} 97], 177). For further comments on this see Lugaresi, \textit{Studenti cristiani e scuola pagana}, 802.\footnote{Cf. Or. \textit{FrCor} XVI (88 Pieri, \textit{Opere di Origene XIV}/4), where it is declared that the entire philosophy of the Greeks and of the barbarians should be considered folly when it disagrees with Christ’s \textit{didaskalia}.}}. Its main advantage was to familiarise the pupils with a variety of philosophical positions making them able to escape the deceipts that the human word can exert on weak and dull souls. Indeed, such souls can be easily driven to accept doctrines heard for the first time and to become incapable of being persuaded to change their minds even in the light of the most sound counter-arguments. They appear to fall under the control of a ‘relentless tyrant’, an image certainly inspired by Origen\footnote{Transl. Slusser, 118-119.}\footnote{Cf. Or. \textit{FrCor} XVI (88 Pieri, \textit{Opere di Origene XIV}/4), where it is declared that the entire philosophy of the Greeks and of the barbarians should be considered folly when it disagrees with Christ’s \textit{didaskalia}.}.

Thus Gregory makes use of this criticism against the so-called philosophers and against philosophical schools themselves (§158-169). It is this shortsightedness which is the reason why there are so many disputes between philosophical schools. Once acritically persuaded about the correctness of the first philosophical doctrines heard, none of the philosophers would change his position, nor would pay attention to someone who holds a different view. This conditioning of the soul, characterised by an ‘irrational impulse (ἄλογος ὁ ῥμή) toward philosophy’ and an ‘uncritical accident’ (ἄκριτος τύχη, §163), afflicted even the ‘most erudite and most discriminating Greeks’ (§162) and especially with regard to ‘the greatest and most necessary matter of all, the knowledge of God and true piety’ (§165)\footnote{Transl. Slusser, 118-119.}. Origen wished his pupils to be acquainted with the different philosophical doctrines of the Greeks, which he was an expert in, and guided them in their study (§170-173). He, nonetheless, was very careful in gathering what was ‘true and useful’ and in ruling out what was false, especially among the doctrines of piety, and advised them ‘to pay heed to God alone and to his prophets’ (§173)\footnote{Transl. Slusser, 118-119.}. Commentators have already pointed out the resemblance between Gregory’s
criticisms and Origen’s CC I, 10, where he defends the irrational way of believing of those ‘who cannot abandon everything and pursue a study of rational argument to believe without thinking out their reasons’ by pointing to the ‘irrational impulse’ (ἀλογος φορά) which leads beginners to prefer one philosophical school over another. They, indeed, do ‘not wait to hear the arguments of all the philosophers and of the different schools, and the refutation of one and the proof of another’. An important evidence that Gregory is following Origen’s reasoning is the fact that Origen also manifests his preoccupation for those ‘who at their first encounter were alarmed at the argument about providence based on the earthly circumstances of bad and good men, have too hastily concluded that providence does not exist, and have adopted the opinion of Epicurus and Celsus.\textsuperscript{144}

Finally, Gregory mentions what must have been the most important activity of Origen’s teaching, which he had referred to before in a covert manner, that is biblical exegesis. The paragraphs 174-183 clarify very well what Origen’s being ‘friend and spokesperson of God’ (§§83, 176) meant to his pupils and to Christians in general. They also manifestly show who were the favourite targets of the school of Caesarea and of Gregory’s discourse.

Origen, the only one among his contemporaries, had a soul capable of understanding and teaching the very meaning of the enigmas contained in the divine writings. He could do so because the ‘Guide of the universe (ὁ πάντων ἀρχηγός)\textsuperscript{145}, who speaks within God’s friends the prophets, and prompts every prophecy and mystical, divine discourse, established him as his spokesperson’ (§176)\textsuperscript{146} and had admitted him to be in ‘communion with the divine Spirit’ (κοινωνία τοῦ θείου πνεύματος)\textsuperscript{147}

for it takes the same power to listen to prophets as it does to prophesy, and no one hears a prophet except the one to whom the very Spirit that prophesied has granted understanding of its words (αὐτὸ τὸ πνεῦμα τὸ προφητεύσαν τὴν σύνεσιν τῶν αὐτοῦ λόγων ἐδωρήσατο, §179). There is a saying like that right in holy Scripture, saying that only the one who shuts may open, but no one else. But the divine Word

\textsuperscript{144} Transl. Chadwick, 13. Cf. also CC IV, 65: ‘one of the greatest evils is not to know the way to worship God and of piety towards Him, even Celsus would have to admit that some of those who have read philosophy have been totally ignorant of this, as is clear from the different sects in philosophy’ (transl. Chadwick, 236).

\textsuperscript{145} The divine Logos of §180. Slusser (ed.), St. Gregory Thaumaturgus, Life and Works, 121 (n.85) remembers that ἀρχηγός always refers to Jesus in the New Testament.

\textsuperscript{146} Transl. Slusser, 121, slightly altered.

\textsuperscript{147} Cf. 2 Cor 13:13.
opens what has been closed when it clarifies the enigmas (§180). He has received this greatest gift from God and heaven’s noblest destiny, to be the interpreter of God’s words to human beings, to have insight into the things of God as if God were speaking, and to explain them to human beings as human beings hear (§181; transl., slightly altered, Slusser, 121-122).

It was his privileged communion with the Spirit that allowed Origen to persuade anyone ‘incredulous’ (ἄπιστος) learning from him, as long as ‘eager after knowledge’ (φιλομαθής), ‘to believe in and follow God’ (§178). No doctrine remained ‘hidden and inaccessible’ at Origen’s school, ‘truly a paradise for us, a copy of the great paradise of God’. There, everything was scrutinised for the enjoyment of the good things for the soul, and, ‘planting themselves or implanted in ourselves by the Cause of all things, to increase the gains of the soul like beautiful trees, rejoicing and taking our fill’ (§182-183)\(^{148}\). The return of the image of the field marks the end of the thanksgiving clarifying the aims of Origen’s ‘agricultural technique’.  

c) Lamentation (§184-199);

The lamentation is built upon a series of biblical images aimed at moving the listeners emotionally and gives a demonstration of Gregory’s ability to produce a moral exegesis out of them.

Gregory keeps the image of paradise introduced beforehand to compare his leaving the school of Origen to the fall of Adam (Gn 3; §184-189). His desertion of the blessed life near his master appears to him the outcome of his transgression of God’s words. He is indeed abandoning the care of ‘beautiful and good concerns’ to turn back to the house of his earthly father, where he will have ‘to work the soil, though it bear me thorns and thistles (Gn 3:18) in the form of the griefs and cares of which I am ashamed’ (§186-188)\(^{149}\). Gregory laments also his leaving a community of soul mates, where true sons honour Origen as their true father (§189)\(^{150}\). This image introduces the following comparison with the story of the Prodigal Son (§190-193), with the difference that Gregory departs ‘without even our entire legitimate inheritance’ (§191)\(^{151}\). He also underlines that he will no longer have ‘any time to devote to divine things, nor shall we tell the words of God; we shall “recite the deeds of human beings” (which a prophetic man deemed simple affliction) (Ps 17:4) and in our case even those of wicked human beings’ (§193). Gregory then compares his future situation to the exile of the Jews to the land of Babylon (Ps 136), where he ‘may no longer sing a sacred song’ (§194) like those ὑμνωδοὶ and θεολόγοι who refused to sing hymns to God (ὑμνεῖν) and to raise psalmody (ψάλλειν; §195). Eventually, Gregory evokes the parable of the Good

\(^{148}\) Transl. Slusser, 122, slightly altered.  
\(^{149}\) Transl. Slusser, 123.  
\(^{150}\) On the possible biblical references linked to Gregory’s ‘turning back’ see: Crouzel (ed.), Gregoire le Thaumaturge, Remerciem, 175 (n.12); Slusser (ed.), St. Gregory Thaumaturgus, Life and Works, 123 (n.101).  
\(^{151}\) Transl. Slusser, 124.
Samaritan (Lk 10:30-37) because, since he is leaving Origen’s school voluntarily, he is also afraid that he will encounter thieves and be captured and wounded, lying ‘somewhere half-dead’ (§199).

d) Consolation (§200-202);

Thus he stops his lamentation remembering that he can count on ‘the Saviour of all (ὁ σωτήρ πάντων), the Nurse and Physician (κηδεμόν καὶ ἱατρός) of the half-dead, and of all the victims of robbers, the Logos, the Sleepless Watcher of all men’ (ὁ ἄγρυπτος φύλαξ πάντων ἀνθρώπων, §200). Gregory evidently gives here a spiritual interpretation in line with Origen’s: for both the Good Samaritan is the image of Christ. Gregory adds that he can count also on the seeds ‘which you [Origen] showed us that we already had, and those we received from you, the good thoughts’ (§201). Gregory keeps using the image of the seeds, which is reminiscent of the important function of Origen as an educator, to state that they will perhaps produce good fruits in the affairs of the public life he will be involved in, even though ‘weakened by some sterile or malevolent force’ (διεφθάρμας μὲν τῇ δυνάμει, ἡ ἀκάρπῳ ἡ κακοκάρπῳ τενί, §202). But the image of the seeds deriving from the parable of the Sower must have inspired him as the spiritual interpretation of his own story. By going back in the world, he will have to face a spiritual enemy that will try to make sterile his seeds, like the devil tries to steal the word of God sown in the heart of those who have heard it (Mt 13:19; etc.).

e) Peroration (§203-207).

Gregory concludes by exhorting his master, who has already saved him by his ‘holy instructions’ (ἱερὰ ὑμηθήματα), to do it again by praying to God who had led him to his school. Gregory hopes that by Origen’s prayers God will be thanked, and he will receive from God, ‘the best pedagogue’, guide, memory of his commandments, ‘holy fear of him’, but also ‘an angelic companion as a good escort’ and another chance to meet him again.

IV. A calculated discourse of propaganda

The emphasis that contemporary scholars have laid on the literary genre and the public dimension of the Pan. Or. has convinced us that it should be read very cautiously,
if not suspiciously. Gregory has indeed spoken like an educated member of a high-ranking social group would do in front of a mixed audience in the third-century Roman capital of Judea. He has expressed his adherence to the values of the pagan community by exhibiting his rhetorical skills and his loyalty to the Empire, and by praising its laws. Above all, he has depicted Origen as a semi-divine philosopher leading a community where he taught higher studies as done in a pagan philosophical school. In general, scholars have considered this description reliable, both in the past, when Origen was regarded as a philosopher more than as a theologian, and recently, despite the incongruence between it and the prominent biblical focus of Origen’s activity. But the practice of Origen’s schooling cannot be established in the light of what is told by Gregory, at least not to the extent that we can extrapolate from it the idea that the Pan. Or. supplies us with the exact cursus studiorum of the school of Caesarea. This conclusion is not drawn only from the consideration of the occasion of Gregory’s speech, which in itself implies a propagandist purpose, but also from a less partial understanding of its contents. When indeed we grant Gregory the ability to weave together heterogeneous components in his discourse, then also his calculated use of terminological and narrative ambiguities appears clearly. And, by following this key to interpretation, we have detected in the section dedicated to dialectic two important pieces of information that are intentionally left half-veiled by Gregory: first, Origen’s portrayal as a philosopher in accordance with the Socratic model in fact covertly speaks of his catechetical activity; second, dialectic was functional for the introduction to and the study of the Scriptures and Christian doctrines. If my interpretation is correct, it sheds some more light on Gregory’s propagandistic intention in recalling the philosophical cursus studiorum and, thereby, clarifies the noteworthy dissimilarity in length between the parts of the discourse dedicated to the different disciplines. In other words, the order of studies that we can deduce from the Pan. Or. seems to have been more an ideal orientation than a practical plan of schooling—an observation that has been already made with regard to the curricular layouts typical of the philosophical schools in Late Antiquity. Origen did lead his pupils in the study of all the disciplines mentioned by Gregory, but this could hardly have occurred in the systematic way which scholars have found in the presentation of his studies, which in fact can be read also from the perspective of the awakening of his soul. Moreover, Gregory is very clear about the fact that philosophical conversion and studies were laid as the foundation for the study and the comprehension of the Scriptures. It is not plausible therefore to think that Origen in Caesarea would have spent time teaching young students with no intention of converting them. From this perspective Gregory’s experience is patent evidence of the opposite.

Indeed, Gregory openly speaks as a converted believer when, for instance, he manifests his gratitude to the divine Logos and to his providential plan for having made possible his meeting with Origen and his living within a community of ‘admirable men.

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156 Five paragraphs are dedicated to physics, including geometry and astronomy; dozens of paragraphs are dedicated to dialectic, ethics and theology.

who have embraced the good philosophy’. Gregory also shows that he was more familiar with the Bible than is usually admitted, for he quotes it abundantly and his style displays its influence. Above all, despite the fact that the propagandistic purpose of his speech has led Gregory to veil certain particularly Christian ideas and to adjust its contents to his listeners, several elements of his theology are easily recognisable and even samples of spiritual exegesis are present.

In conclusion, the Pan. Or. demonstrates the success of Origen’s intention to make Christians able to manage the cultural equipment necessary for approaching pagans.
CHAPTER 3. METAPHRASIS IN ECCLESIASTEN

I. Status quaestionis

The Metaphrasis is the first writing of Christian exegesis of Ecclesiastes which has been handed down to us in its entirety. Only fragments of exegetical works by Hippolytus, Origen and Dionysius of Alexandria precede Gregory’s work. It has, therefore, a certain importance from historical and exegetical perspectives, but it is only recently that this fact has been acknowledged by scholars, and not to the extent it seems to deserve.

The moralistic tone which pervades the entire work is ostensibly the main reason why the Metaphrasis has received relatively scant attention among scholars of patristic exegesis. This fact appears to have led some of its readers to disdain Gregory’s work in harsh words. Nonetheless, the Metaphrasis remains a serious attempt not only to restore the awkward Greek of Ecclesiastes, as it has been acknowledged, but also to remould some of its notoriously troublesome contents.

The attribution of the Metaphrasis to Gregory is well attested by several ancient authors relying on Jerome and was sanctioned later on by Haymo of Halberstadt (9th cent.), by Honorius of Autun (12th cent.) by the Benedictine abbot, Trithemius (15th cent.) and by Konrad Gesner (16th cent.). Most of the numerous manuscripts which

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2 Hier. Vir. ill. 65: Scripsit et μετάφρασαν in Ecclesiasten brevem quidem, sed valde utilem; Id., Comment. in Eccl. IV,13-16: Vir sanctus Gregorius Ponti episcopus, Origenis auditor, in Metaphrasi Ecclesiastis ita hunc locum intellexit... (289,196-98 Adriaen, CChr.SL 72); Rufinus, add. Hist. Eccl. VII,28: in Ecclesiasten nuncum metafrasim idem Gregorius magnificentissime scriptit (655,27-29 Mommens); Sophronius: έγραψε δε και έκφρασαν εκκλησίας, ἐλάχιστον μέν, πάνω δε θαυμαστών λόγων (42,5-7 Gebhardt); Suidae Lexicon Γ 452: έγραψε δε και Μετάφρασαν εις των Ἐκκλησιαστατήν, ἐλάχιστον μέν, πάνω δε θαυμαστών λόγων (543,2-3 Adler).

3 D. Haymonis Episcopi Halberstattensis de Christianarum rerum memoria libri decem, Coloniae 1531, lib. 7, cap. 8.

4 Honorius Augustodunensis, De Luminaribus Ecclesiae, I,66, PL 172,204B.

have handed down the *Metaphrasis* ascribe it to Gregory of Nazianzus, and this has somehow influenced its diffusion. Nonetheless, this fact was known and viewed with suspicion in as early as the second half of the seventh century by the compiler of the so-called *Catena Trium Patrum*, and, as we will shortly see, many manuscripts have left traces of this distrust as well.

There is no critical edition of the *Metaphrasis*, which has been handed down by more than seventy Greek manuscripts and by translations into Armenian and Georgian. Procopius of Gaza’s *Catena in Ecclesiasten* preserves passages of the *Metaphrasis* anonymously or as ascribed only to “Gregory”10, and the *Catena Trium Patrum* offers some help in understanding the only severely corrupted passage handed down in the *Patrologia Graeca*.

The first Latin translation of the *Metaphrasis* appeared from the hand of the learned Swiss reformer Johannes Oecolampadius (Heussgen) in 152012, when he was still a Catholic monk. As sometimes occurs in the sixteenth-century press, Oecolampadius did not provide any information about the manuscript he used. In any case, he held that the *Metaphrasis* belonged to the works of Gregory Thaumaturgus on the basis of Jerome’s *Vir. Ill.* and of the *Suidae Lexicon*, without mentioning the attribution to the Nazianzen. Oecolampadius praised the Thaumaturgus for his elegant and brilliant explanation of Ecclesiastes. He noted the divergencies of the *Metaphrasis* from the *vulgatae* and the Hebrew versions, but he nevertheless thought that Gregory’s view was consistent with the moral and ascetical purposes of Solomon.

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6 *Epitome Bibliothecae Conradi Gesneri, conscripta primum a Conrado Lycosthene Rubeaquensi: nunc denuo recognita & […] locupletata*, Tiguri 1555, 65. Unfortunately, I did not have the chance to consult the first edition of Gesner’s *Bibliotheca Universalis*, that goes back to 1545.

7 Anonymus *in Ecclesiasten Commentarius qui dicitur Catena Trium Patrum*, cuiusque editionem principem curavit S. Lucà, Turnhout 1983 (CChr.SG 11), xiv.

8 See the IRHT online database http://pinakes.irht.cnrs.fr/


11 We are referring to the same passage partially quoted by Jerome, that is Gr. Thaum. *EccJ. IV.*, 1000A. See Lucà (ed.), *Catena trium Patrum*, 36,144-150. As we will see below, the manuscript used by de Billy in his edition, which is reprinted in the *Patrologia Graeca*, is the Parisinus gr. 510. I have checked to no advantage the following manuscripts: Par. gr. 531, 444r; Laur. Plut. 07.07, 268v; Laur. Plut. 07.12, 348r; Laur. Plut. 05.19, 278r.

12 *In Ecclesiastem Solomonis Metaphrasis divi Gregorii Neocaesariensis episcopi, interprete Oecolampadio. Augustae Vindelicorum [excusa in officina Sigismundi Grimm medici, ac Marci Vuirus] 1520*. Oecolampadius was a monk of the Order of St. Bridget in the Altenmünster monastery near Augsburg. His competence in Hebrew was very valued by Erasmus, who availed himself of it in his *Annotations to the New Testament* and in the second edition of the New Testament.

13 *Ibidem*, [dedicatory letter]: *Auocat enim a stulticijs mundi, & inutilibus curis, hortatur ad pia opera, transmittit ad vera bona subinde futuri iudiciij memoriam inculcat.*
Oecolampadius’ Latin translation was published again in 1536\(^{14}\) and was included in important collections of theological works that had a wide circulation during the sixteenth century\(^{15}\).

The editio princeps of the Metaphrasis dates back to the editio princeps of the Opera omnia of Gregory of Nazianzus by Johannes Hervagius in 1550\(^{16}\). Hervagius used two corrupt ancient manuscripts from the library of Augsburg\(^{17}\) and provided the Greek text with the Latin translation made by Wolfgang Musculus. He also noted that some scholia Graeca in margine doubted that the author of the Metaphrasis was Gregory of Nazianzus\(^{18}\). Shortly afterwards, in his popular Bibliotheca Sancta, Sixtus of Siena denounced in a censorious tone the ‘impudence of the booksellers’ who edited under the Nazianzen’ name a work which Jerome had twice ascribed to Gregory of Neocaesarea\(^{19}\).

In 1569 the learned Benedictine abbot, Jacques de Billy published his translation of the opera omnia of Gregory of Nazianzus, which included also a Latin version of the Metaphrasis (=Oratio LIII)\(^{20}\), supplying it with a useful introduction and several scholia...

\(^{14}\) Olympiodori Doctissima In Ecclesiast. scholia ... Zenobio Acciaiolo Florentino interprete. Divi Gregorii Neocaesariensis In Evndem metaphrasis, uel ut uiniae placet, πον θεουμπτας λόγος, Ioanne Oecolampadio interprete. Aristeae De LXXII. Legis Hebraicae interpretatione libellus ... Matthia Palmerio Vicentino interprete. Basileae, apud Ioaninem Babelium 1536, 225-248.

\(^{15}\) ΜΙΚΡΟΠΡΕΣΒΥΤΙΚΟΝ. Veterum quorundam breuium Theologorum, siue Episcoporum siue Presbyterorum, aut sacri ordinis aliorum qui aut tempore Apostolorum, aut non multò post uixerunt, elenchus: Quorum hinc nomina (ut uides) sequuntur ... Basileae [Per Henrichvm Petri, 1555], 119-126; Orthodoxographa Theologiae sacrosanctae ac syncerorios fidei Doctore número LXXVI, ecclesiae columna luminaque clarissima. Authores partim Graeci, partim Latini, ob uestustatem & eruditione uenerandì, quonà quidam nulli hactenus uisi... Basileae [Per Henrichvm Petri, 1555], 377-384 (the name of the translator is missing); Monumenta S. Patrum Orthodoxographa hoc est, Theologiae sacrosanctae ac syncerorios fidei Doctores, numero circiter LXXXV, Ecclesiae columna luminaque clarissima. Authores partim Graeci, partim Latinì ... [Ioh. Iacobus Grynaeus] Basileae [ex officina Henricpetrina, 1569], T. IV, 944-952.

\(^{16}\) ΓΡΗΓΟΡΙΟΥ ΤΟΥ ΝΑΖΙΑΝΖΗΝΟΥ ΤΟΥ ΘΕΟΛΟΓΟΥ ΑΙΑΝΤΑ, τα μέχρι νῦν μέν ευρισκόμενα, ὧν σχέδει σελίς ἣ δευτέρα περιέχειν. ΤΟΥ ΆΥΤΟΥ ΒΙΟϹ, ΣΤΥΤΡΑΦΕΙϹ ΥΠΟ Σουλδα, Σωφρονίου, καὶ Γρηγορίου τοῦ πρεσβυτέρου. ἐν βασιλείᾳ, ἀναλώμας Iοάννου τοῦ ζβαγοῦ [1550], 270-277; Divi Gregori Epistolare, Episcopi Nazianzani Opera, quae quidem extant, omnia, tam soluta quam pedestri oratione conscripta, partim quidem iam olim, partim vero nunc primum etiam Εν Latinum conversa. Per Ioaninem Heruagium, Basileae 1550, 333-342.

\(^{17}\) Ibidem, Epistula nuncupatoria, passim.

\(^{18}\) Ibidem, 333.

\(^{19}\) Bibliotheca Sancta a F. Sixto Senensi, ordinis Praedicatorum, ex praecipuis catholicœ ecclesiae auctoribus collecta, & in octo libros digesta ... Venetiis 1566, 372-373. Sixtus’ entry largely depends on the Vir. II. and is supplied with the Latin translation of the passage from the Metaphrasis quoted by Jerome in the Comment. In Eccl.

\(^{20}\) Divi Gregori Nazianzeni, cognomento theologi, Opera omnia, quae quidem extant, nova translatione donata. Unà cum doctissimis Nicetiae Sertonii commentarìjs in sedecim Panegyricas orationes ... quae omnia nunc primum Latina facta sunt, Iacobi Billi Prunaei, S. Michaelis in Eremo Abbatis, diligentia et labore ... Parisiis 1569, 576-586. J.P. Niceron, Mémoires pour servir à l'histoire des hommes illustres dans la république des lettres, t. XXII, Paris 1733, 177-187, who defined de Billy as ‘un des premiers Critiques de son siècle’, says that the best edition of this work is the one reviewed by Gilbert Genebrard and Jean Chatard in 1583 (in two tomes), while the previous reprints were imperfect because de Billy kept on expanding his research but without being able to complete it before his death. I have checked the
to the Greek text, which he studied using Hervagius’ edition and the famous Parisinus gr. 510. Despite the fact that all these manuscripts presented the Metaphrasis under the name of Gregory of Nazianzus, de Billy noticed that both Eusebius (actually Rufinus) and Jerome ascribed it to Gregory of Neocaesarea. De Billy also added some severe remarks on the writing style of the work and argued that it would have been sufficient to have the Metaphrasis rejected as a pseudo-epigraph in the absence of Jerome’s quotation in the Comment. In Eccl., which is clear evidence that the real author was the Thaumaturgus. For de Billy, the ascription to the Nazianzen was due to a confusion caused by the homonymy of the two Fathers and by the negligence of booksellers and scribes.

The work of de Billy soon became a source of reference. His translation, introduction and scholia were also printed in the edition of Gregory of Nazianzus’ opera omnia in 1571 by Johannes Leunclavius (Löwenklau), and then in Gregory of Neocaesarea’s opera omnia by Gerardus Vossius in 1604. Like de Billy, Vossius maintained his ascription to the Thaumaturgus on the basis of the information provided by “Eusebius” and Jerome. The Greek text of the Metaphrasis appears in the edition of Vossius’ volume of 1622, which also offers some notes by Fronton du Duc, who proposed again de Billy’s remarks and provided readings from four other Greek manuscripts.

The ascription of the Metaphrasis to Gregory of Neocaesarea on the basis of Jerome’s Comment. In Eccl. was then accepted by Antonio Possevino, who

editions of 1570 (Coloniae Agrippinae) and 1612 (Antuerpiae) but I did not find any addition to what de Billy had written about the Metaphrasis already in 1569. For a detailed history of de Billy’s reprints see A.C. Way, S. Gregorius Nazianzenus, in P.O. Kristeller – F.E. Cran (eds.), Catalogus translationum et commentariorum: Medieval and renaissance Latin Translations and Commentaries, Washington D.C. 1971, Vol. II, 48, 54ff.

21 Ibidem, Epistula nuncupatoria. The Parisinus gr. 510 is the famous vellum illuminated manuscript given by the patriarch Photios to the Emperor Basil I. It has been studied by several scholars in the past, such as Bernard de Montfaucon in Palaeographia Graeca, sive de ortu et progressu literarum Graecarum, et De variis omnium saeculorum Scriptionis Graecae generibus… Parisiis 1708, 250-256. Now see L. Brubaker, Vision and Meaning in Ninth-Century Byzantium. Image as Exegesis in the Homilies of Gregory of Nazianzus, New York 1999 (Cambridge Studies in Palaeography and Codicology).

22 Dui Gregorii Nazianzeni, cognomento theologi, Opera omnia, 576: Connexiones sententiarm aliquanto duriores, transitusque abruptiores. Quod si quaedam verba quandoque intertexta fuissent, multo mollior esset tota contextus facies, minusque invite inter se coirent sententiæ.

23 Operum Gregorii Nazianzeni tomi tres, Aucti nunc primūm Caesari, qui frater Nazianzeni fuit, Eliae Cretensis Episcopi, Pselli, & ipsius Gregorii librorum aliquot accessione. Quorum editio … elaborata est per Ioannem Leuvenkliaum, Basileae 1571, 741-749. Löwenklau was a pupil of Melanchthon and an expert scholar of patristics, history and Roman law.

24 Vossius (ed.), Sancti Gregorii Episcopi Neocaesariensis, cognomento Thaumaturgi, Opera Omnia (Moguntiae 1604), 149-166.

25 Ibidem, 166ff.


27 Ibidem, 121-124. None of the manuscripts studied by du Duc help in restoring the only passage of the Metaphrasis (PG X, 1000A12) which de Billy rightly considered badly handed down by manuscripts. For a list of these manuscripts see Harnack, Geschichte der altchristlichen Litteratur bis Eusebius, Th. I, 430.
acknowledged the work as the first example of a paraphrase of a biblical text\textsuperscript{28}, by Card. Bellarmino in 1613\textsuperscript{29} and by Andrea Schott in 1614. The latter published the Latin version by Oecolampadius (\textit{Ioannes Monachus Brigittanus}) alongside the Latin Ecclesiastes of the \textit{Vulgata} and the Greek text of the \textit{Metaphrasis}\textsuperscript{30}. The translation does not correspond exactly to Oecolampadius’ because Schott inserted several variations, which he established on the basis of the comparison with de Billy’s translation and discussed in his \textit{Notationes}\textsuperscript{31}. Schott’s comprehension of the work is somehow spoiled by the celebratory judgments of Jerome and Rufinus, which he endorsed. He also offered a summary of the contents of the chapters of the \textit{Metaphrasis}, which he presented as being divided thematically into two parts: the first six chapters ‘contain the rebuttal of the false opinions on the highest good’; the second part teaches what is true happiness in this and the next life, that is the fear of God. The assumption that the \textit{Metaphrasis} had such thematic systematicity is imaginary and appears to be dependent on the interpretation of Ecclesiastes given by the famous converted Jew Nicholas of Lyra\textsuperscript{32}.

The \textit{Metaphrasis} is held as the work of the Thaumaturgus also by the most learned commentators on Ecclesiastes of modern times, the Jesuit Jean de Lorin and Juan de Pineda. Both referred to it in several occurrences and confirmed the traditional appreciation of Gregory’s literary output and moral focus\textsuperscript{33}.

During the 17th cent. Leone Allacci, who held several positions at the Vatican Library, found the \textit{Metaphrasis} among the works of Gregory of Nazianzus in two manuscripts (n. 479, 1446) which also noted down suspicions about its authorship\textsuperscript{34}.

\begin{footnotes}
\item[29] De scriptoribus ecclesiasticis Liber unus. Cum adiunctis indicibus undecim \& brevi Chronologia ab Orbe condito usque ad annum MDCXII. Roberto card. Bellarmino e Societate Iesu auctore. Romae 1613, 49.
\item[31] Ibidem, 465-475.
\item[32] Cf. C.D. Ginsburg, Coheleth, commonly called the Book of Ecclesiastes: Translated from the Original Hebrew, \textit{with a commentary, historical and critical}, London 1861, 109-11. Since Jerome and Gregory of Nyssa the interpretation of Ecclesiastes was mostly allegorical both among Greek and Latin exegetes. Nicholas of Lyra’s \textit{postillon} on Scriptures (XIV cent.) marked the revival of a more literal exegesis.
\item[33] Ioannis Lorini Avenionensis […] \textit{Commentarii in Ecclesiasten. Accessit expositio eiusdem in Psalmum LXVII […]} Lugduni 1606; Ioannis de Pineda […] \textit{Commentarii in Ecclesiasten […]} Antuerpiae 1620. See, for instance, de Pineda’s volume (34): \textit{quamvis Suidas brevissimam dicat, sed vocal tamen quam admirabilem. Neque immuret, ut quae eloquentia, sententiarumque ubertate abundance docerem, \& demulcrete: incredibili vero acumine \& novitate Lectoris animum pungere, \& excitare soleat}.
\item[34] Leonis Allatii \textit{Tres Grandes Dissertationes de Nicetis de Philonibus et de Theodoris … in Mai (ed.), Novae Patrum Bibliothecae. T. VI, pars II, Romae 1853, 95-115. Allacci’s study had remained unpublished until Angelo Mai inserted it in his \textit{Bibliotheca}. Allacci studied problems concerning homonymy for over thirty years. On him see D. Musti, Allacci, Leone, in \textit{Dizionario biografico degli Italiani}. Vol. 2, Roma 1960, 467-471.\end{footnotes}
Towards the end of the same century Peter Lambeck found three manuscripts ascribing the *Metaphrasis* to Gregory of Nazianzus in the Imperial Library in Vienna: Theol. Gr. 79, 80 e 84. The second one contained one scholium which casts doubt on the ascription of the work. At any rate, Lambeck stated, on the basis of de Billy and Bellarmin, that the author was Gregory of Neocaesarea.

All the 17th and 18th centuries erudites simply endorsed or proposed again, more or less accurately, the results of de Billy’s research. The rare scholars who expressed their judgement on the *Metaphrasis* unanimously highlighted Gregory’s intention to develop the moral precepts of Ecclesiastes: Du Pin wrote that the *Metaphrasis* ‘étend les pensées morales de l’Ecclesiaste’. Ceillier more accurately noted that Gregory ‘ajoute peu de choses au Texte de Solomon, se contentant de donner aux pensées de ce Prince un tour nouveau, & de les proposer d’une manière plus développée’.

In his edition of the *Pan. Or.* in 1722 J.A. Bengel pointed out a few similarities in terms of the substance and writing style between the *Metaphrasis* and the *Pan. Or.*, which, in his view, clearly confirmed the authorship of Gregory of Neocaesarea.

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37 See preceding note, especially Schram and Lumper.

38 Bengel (ed.), *Gregorii Thaumaturgi Panegyricus ad Origenem*, 173-74, 154, 188. Also Koetschau, *Des Gregorios Thaumaturgos Dankrede an Origenes*, XXIII, noted, that the language of the *Metaphrasis* reminded him of the *Pan. Or.*, yet with no references to precise passages.
Bengel praised the moral utility of the *Metaphrasis* and even detected the *modestia* as the main peculiarity of Gregory’s character.  

De Billy’s translation was reprinted again in 1767 in Galland’s *Bibliotheca*, in 1784 by Schram, in 1829 in the patristic collection of Caillau and Guillon and in 1857 in the tenth volume of Migne’s *Patrologia Graeca*.

In 1871 S. Salmond prepared his English translation of the *Metaphrasis* for the *Ante-Nicene Christian library*. In the American reprint of this collection, A.C. Coxe, commenting upon the last chapter of the work, found in Gregory’s ‘turgid metaphrase’ the marks of his incapability to understand the poetry of the Hebrew text, and of his young age.

It is also worth reading Cruttwell (1893), for whom the *Metaphrasis* ‘is not remarkable for acuteness or depth, but contains some valuable moral reflections... The sententious proverbial style of Hebrew philosophy looks oddly in Greek trappings. A bare translation, like the LXX, though strange and rude to Greek ears, is far more effective than the insipid mixture of rhetoric and Rabbinism which is all that Gregory gives us’.

A completely different consideration of the *Metaphrasis* is given by Ryssel, who praised the clarity of thought and of style expressed by Gregory’s interpretation of Ecclesiastes, which he knew both in Greek and in Hebrew, to the point that it should be considered ‘in seiner Art ein vollendetes Kunstwerk’. Not long afterwards, Bardenhewer rejected the assumption that Gregory knew the Hebrew text as ‘sicher unzutreffend’ and judged as ‘sehr subjektiv’ Ryssel’s opinion of the artistic value of the *Metaphrasis*. For his part, Bardenhewer acknowledged that Gregory had made the text of the *Septuaginta* more comprehensible, and saw in that the historical and literary value of the work.

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39 Ibïdem, 238 (quoted also by Lumper 1799, 299).
40 Gallandii *Bibliotheca veterum patrum antiquorumque scriptorum ecclesiasticorum*, t. III, 387-400.
42 *Collectio selecta SS. Ecclesiae Patrum, complectens exquisitissima opera tum dogmatica et moralia, tum apologetica et oratoria; accurantibus D.A.B. Caillau, missionum Gallicarum presbyter, nonnullisque cleri Gallicani presbyteris, una cum D.M.N.S. Guillon, in facultate theologie parisiensi eloquentiae sacrae professo, praedicatore regio ...* T. XV [Paters tertii et quarti Ecclesiae saeculi], Parisiis 1829, 61-87.
43 *S.P.N. Gregorii, cognomento Thaumaturgi, opera quae reperiri potuerunt omnia. ... Patrologia Graecae Tomus X* (Paris 1857), 987-1018.
In 1911 Hermann Bourier, who was in charge of the translation of the works of Gregory of Neocaesarea for the (second) Bibliothek der Kirchenväter, as a sort of explanation for having excluded the *Metaphrasis* from the collection, presented it as a less important work, ‘eine gedrängte freie Übersetzung des Solomonischen Predigers’ having ‘weniger allgemeines als exegetisches und textgeschichtliches Interesse’ 49.

Since handbooks and encyclopaedias of the 19th and 20th centuries take for granted both the ascription and interpretation of the work, defined just as a paraphrase of Ecclesiastes, we will not account for them, even if in some cases inaccurate exemplifications may be found 50. The only exception to this tendency was given in 1928 by A. Puech, who, even though he endorsed the view that Gregory’s aim was ‘de transposer en grec classique la traduction des Septante’, acknowledged that the style of the *Pan. Or.* is recognisable in the *Metaphrasis*, and concluded that it is ‘un exercice à la mode chez les Sophistes que de mettre en prose élégante un texte poétique’ 51. As far as I know, Nautin is the only scholar who has considered the ascription of the *Metaphrasis* as dubious, on the uncertain ground that Eusebius does not mention it, and notably giving no value to the witness of Jerome 52.

Only in the last quarter of the 20th cent. have important studies begun to shed some clear light on the literary and exegetical aspects of the *Metaphrasis*, and it is remarkable that these results are not properly reported in recent handbooks and dictionaries. Before these studies came to light, the only significant insight into Gregory’s exegesis is found in the outstanding study of Ecclesiastes by E. Podechard in 1912. He detected that the main aim of the *Metaphrasis* is ‘de nous convaincre de la vanité des choses créées, et d’élever notre âme à la contemplation des choses célestes’ and that Gregory’s exegetical strategy for achieving this was to correct the difficult original passages by considering them as the views of a younger Solomon or of fools 53.

Fouska, who considered Gregory’s style simple, lively, elegant at times and rich in metaphors, is one of the very few scholars who has tried to date the work 54. He proposed to date the *Metaphrasis* to after Decius’ persecution (250/1) and the invasion of Goths and Borads (253-4), but before Gregory’s involvement in the affair of Paul of Samosata in 260, on the unreliable grounds that the contents of practical ethics

49 Des heiligen Gregorius Thaumaturgus ausgewählte Schriften, aus dem Griechischen übersetzt von Dr. P. Hermann Bourier […] Kempten und Muenchen 1911 (BKV I, 2), VIII.


51 Puech, *Histoire de la littérature grecque chrétienne*, II, 504, where the learned scholar adds: ‘Au point de vue littéraire, Grégoire n’a pas fait en ceci quelque chose de très différent de ce qu’aimait à faire, par exemple, Dion Chrysostome, quand il résumait en prose, pour les comparer, les trois Philoctète d’Eschyle, de Sophocle et d’Euripide’.

52 Grégoire dit le Thaumaturge, 39-42.

53 E. Podechard, *L’Ecclésiaste*, Paris 1912, 26-27, where he considers some of the passages where these expedients are employed.

54 Fouska, *Γρηγόριος ὁ Νεοκαισαρείας ἐπίσκοπος ὁ Θαυματουργός*, 174-179.
contained in the work are evidence of a calm period in Gregory’s life. The ethical focus of the *Metaphrasis* led Fouska to think that this was evidence of Gregory’s episcopal activity, and Mitchell to see in it the reflection of the influence of Origen’s homilies.\(^{55}\) For his part, Jarick did not find compelling evidence to date the *Metaphrasis* during Gregory’s years as a student of Origen or as Bishop of Neocaesarea,\(^ {56}\) and Simonetti justly observed that the absence of external information makes it confusing for us to understand both the ecclesiastical context where the work was conceived and its ‘circle of readers’\(^ {57}\). However, Mitchell is probably right in underlining the fact that Gregory wrote this work during his years in Caesarea, because Jerome must have read it in a copy preserved in the Caesarean library, and this seems to confirm Slusser’s view that it was ‘an exercise during Gregory’s studies in Caesarea’\(^ {58}\).

In 1987 Françoise Vinel published a study of the first three chapters of the *Metaphrasis* with their translation into French.\(^ {59}\) According to her, the *Metaphrasis*, as a paraphrase (that is, as rhetorical *progymnasma*)\(^ {60}\), has to be interpreted as a ‘lecture préliminaire’ of a well known difficult biblical text. It remains close to the original and its objective is in line with Origen’s general exegetical aim to unveil the obscurity of the Scriptures. For Vinel, Gregory’s exegesis is mirrored by the ‘résonance philosophique’ of the terminology and by the limited presence of peculiar Christian ideas. As she wrote fifteen years afterwards, the *Metaphrasis* may appear to be just a scholastic exercise, by which Gregory translated into a more classical Greek the unusual terms of the biblical text, with the result that he partially trivialised it.\(^ {61}\)

In 1990 John Jarick dedicated an entire monograph to the *Metaphrasis*, supplying us with a verse-by-verse translation into English and a copious and enlightening commentary, which is mainly focused on comparing Gregory’s work to the Septuagint and to the original versions.\(^ {62}\) Jarick excluded the possibility that Gregory had made use of the Hebrew text and stated that Gregory did not use any version of Ecclesiastes other than the Septuagint (therefore, the *Metaphrasis* bears no evidence of the use of Origen’s Hexapla). He also acknowledged that ‘as an exercise in rephrasing the book of Ecclesiastes in proper, readily understandable Greek, Gregory’s work is something of a masterpiece’. This rephrasing is recognisable by three main processes: by the substitution of semitic forms; by linking together sequences of passages whose contents appear disjointed and contrasting them with one another (Gregory, however, sometimes

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60 For further remarks on this see below §II.
62 See n.56.
introduces ideas even ‘contrasting the concept actually expressed’); by the diversification of the repetitions.

Jarick has also provided a useful account of the ‘theological tranformations’ of Ecclesiastes which Gregory accomplished by making orthodox ‘whatever ideas seemed heterodox’. Although he admitted that Gregory was ‘following his mentor’s footsteps’, Jarick perceived a certain distance between their exegetical approaches.

More details on the links between Origen and Gregory are found in the studies by K.W. Noakes, S. Leanza and M. Slusser.

In a short paper of 1975 Noakes balanced the excessive simplifying of information provided by patrologies, which defined the Metaphrasis as a mere paraphrase. In line with Podechard’s original insight into Gregory’s exegetical methodology, Noakes showed how Gregory had eliminated ‘the ambiguities and the scepticism of the original’, transforming it into ‘a moralising tract, an exhortation to follow wisdom and not folly’. He highlighted the fact that the hedonistic passages and the view that the same end awaits the righteous and the wicked became, in Gregory’s interpretation, ideas of the young immature Solomon or of his opponents. Moreover, Noakes pointed out several elements of ethical subject-matter which illustrate the links between the Pan. Or. (mostly ch. IX-XII) and the Metaphrasis in such a way that the latter supplements the former, and which derive from the teaching of Origen himself. Gregory’s defence of traditional wisdom is accomplished by presenting the figure of the wise man according to Origen’s view of philosophical life: the wise man controls his impulses and passions, practises the virtues and follows God. However, Noakes did not detect any influence of Origen’s exegetical tools on his pupil.

The distance between Origen’s and Gregory’s exegeses of Ecclesiastes was initially confirmed by Sandro Leanza in his early studies on the history of the patristic exegesis of Ecclesiastes. Leanza pointed out that the Metaphrasis gave the first eschatological exegesis of Eccl 12:1-7, and argued that Gregory’s use of the prosopopoeia and of the hypothesis of Solomon’s autobiographical reflection to explain the troublesome passages of the biblical text was a ‘turning-point’ in the history of its exegesis. Indeed, the literary remains of Origen’s and Dionysius of Alexandria’s interpretations of Ecclesiastes show that their approach was mostly allegorical. But, later on, Leanza acknowledged that it was Origen who introduced the theory of the

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63 Jarick excludes the idea that Gregory knew other versions besides the Septuaginta; he admits, at most, that the text at his disposal provided some variant readings.
64 Jarick, Gregory Thaumaturgos’ Paraphrase, 311-316.
67 Leanza, L’Ecclesiaste nell’interpretazione dell’antico cristianesimo, 123-126.
68 S. Leanza, L’atteggiamento della più antica esegesi cristiana dinanzi all’epicureismo ed edonismo di Qohelet, Orph. 3 (1982), 81-84; Id., I condizionamenti dell’esegesi patristica. Un caso sintomatico: l’interpretazione di Qohelet, RStB 2 (1990), 41-43; at p. 41, n.69, Leanza refers to a passage by Jerome which attests that Jews thought that Solomon wrote Ecclesiastes when he was old and as an act of penitence.
prosopopoeia into the exegesis of Ecclesiastes, on the basis of a passage of the commentary of Olympiodorus reproducing Origen’s interpretation of Eccl. 2:14-15, which Leanza had already studied years before and no other scholar had paid attention to69. Leanza also observed that the success that the prosopopoeia had in later authors, such as Gregory of Nyssa and Jerome70, is better explained by acknowledging that his ‘inventor’ was Origen instead of Gregory Thaumaturgus.

What it is necessary to stress here is that, even though the Metaphrasis offers a different treatment of Eccl 2:14-15 from the passage preserved by Olympiodorus, the latter bears witness to a certain link between Origen and Gregory in the matter of exegesis. Gregory was acquainted with the prosopological method, which is well attested in Origen’s exegesis71. In other words, even if Origen’s interpretation of Ecclesiastes, which is known in a very fragmentary way, was mainly allegorical72, it has nonetheless left traces of its influence on Gregory.

In his article of 1997 Michael Slusser deepened the understanding of the internal relations and of the substantial agreement between the Metaphrasis and the Pan. Or. with regard to their ethical contents. He showed how the main purpose of Gregory’s ethical reflections is philosophical conversion and proposed to consider the Metaphrasis as a kind of protrepticus73. In confirmation of that, Slusser called attention to two passages from the prologue of the Commentary on the Canticle of Canticles, where Origen established the correspondence between the sapiential books and the ‘three branches of learning… that is the moral, the natural and the inspective’:

[Solomon] covered the science known as natural in Ecclesiastes, in this, by discussing at length the things of nature, and by distinguishing the useless and vain from the profitable and essential, he counsels us to forsake vanity and cultivate things useful and upright…

69 Leanza, L’esegesi patristica di Qohelet, in F. Bolgiani (ed.), Letture cristiane dei libri sapienziali, 239-40. Leanza, L’esegesi di Origene al libro dell’Ecclesiaste, 11-12 demonstrates Olympiodorus’ dependence on Origen by comparing PG 93, 500D-501A and a scholium of Origen preserved in one of the codices of Olympiodorus’ commentary (Cod. Vat. Gr. 1694, ff. 20r-20v).
70 Links between Gregory Thaumaturgus’ and Jerome’s use of prosopopoeia have been pointed out by K. Bardski, Va’, mangia e bevi. I piaceri della vita dell’Ecclesiaste nell’interpretazione di San Girolamo, WST 9 (1996), 17-42.
72 An updated enquiry on Origen’s exegesis of Ecclesiastes is, as far as I know, yet to be made. On the sources to be studied see Leanza, L’esegesi patristica di Qohelet, 239-40.
73 Slusser, The Main Ethical Emphases in the Writings of Gregory Thaumaturgus, 357-362; Id. (ed.), St. Gregory Thaumaturgus, 22-25. In this direction see also Noakes, Noakes, The Metaphrase on Ecclesiastes, 194.
Ecclesiastes, who teaches, as we said, that all visible and corporeal things are fleeting and brittle; and surely once the seeker after wisdom has grasped that these things are so, he is bound to spurn and despise them; renouncing the world bag and baggage, if I may put it that way, he will surely reach out for the things unseen and eternal which, with spiritual meaning verily but under certain secret metaphors of love, are taught in the Song of Songs.

Consequently, Slusser noted that Origen and Gregory made use of ‘Solomon’s alleged mastery of natural philosophy to add force to his injunction to forsake the world and pursue philosophy’, and not ‘as a basis for presenting the philosophy of nature’. Thus Slusser has shown that the purpose which informs Gregory’s exegesis of Ecclesiastes derives from Origen.

Along these lines, Marguerite Harl had already remarked that Origen’s attempt to obtain the parallelism between Solomon’s trilogy and the tripartition of philosophy in the prologue is grounded on the distorted interpretation of the term ‘vanity’. To this end, she argued, Origen featured Ecclesiastes as prominently designed to give the idea that everything in the visible world is vain.

If this exemplification of what Origen says were sufficient to describe his point of view, it would not entirely apply to Gregory’s nonetheless. The Metaphrasis indeed not only exhorts the readers to moral and philosophical conversion, but also introduces some not irrelevant thoughts over the nature of the cosmos. And even though Gregory does not provide a well-constructed view of nature, it is clear that he has put in Solomon’s mouth the secret causes which influence the physical reality. The lack of a sound reflection on the philosophy of nature is, after all, justified by the literary genre of the work, which somehow forced Gregory to stick to the text more than, for instance, a commentary might have. From this perspective, Gregory’s attempt to follow Origen’s directives is even commendable if we consider the difficult text he had to deal with, which did not give room for other perspectives on nature than that of thinking that ‘all is vanity’, that ‘there is nothing new under the sun’ and that everything repeats itself.

In the light of all these considerations we have to come to disagree with Simonetti’s demanding claim that ‘nulla nella parafrasi evidenzia l’influsso di

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74 Or. CCt, Prologus, 76,9-12 Baehrens: Secundum vero, qui naturalis appellatur, comprehendit in Ecclesiastes, in quo multa de rebus naturalibus disserens et inania ac vana ab utilibus necessarissque secerens relinquandum vanitatem monet et utilia rectaque sectanda ...; 78,4-10: et ideo post Proverbia ad Ecclesiasten venitur, qui docet, ut diximus, visibilia omnia et corporea caduca esse ac fragilia, quae utique cum ita esse reprehenderit is, qui sapientiae studet, saeculo renuntians tendet ad invisibilia et aeterna, quae spiritualibus quidem sensibis, sed adopertis amorum quibusdam figuris docentur in Cantico Canticorum. Engl. Transl. extracted from Origen, The Song of Songs: Commentary and Homilies. Transl. and annot. by R.P. Lawson, Westminster, MD-London 1957 (ACW 26), 41, 44.


76 Since we lack of an updated evaluation of the remaining sources preserving Origen’s exegesis of Ecclesiastes, reservations are required on this point.
Origene. Simonetti had reached this conclusion after having called attention to the difference between the ‘rigidly literal’ exegesis of Gregory, marked by a ‘candid and even banal moralism’, and the allegorical exegesis of Origen. He also argued that the absence of allegorical interpretation remains unjustifiable in a pupil of Origen, because, considering the liberty he took in paraphrasing the biblical text, Gregory would have had no difficulty in using it.

R. Lane Fox, on his part, commented that the absence of allegory should not be interpreted as evidence of Gregory’s disapproval of his master’s use of it, but as evidence of his lack of ‘the necessary gifts from God to practise it’, in agreement with a typical idea of Origen (Pan. Or. XV, §179-80).

In fact, as we will see shortly, the Metaphrasis presents a few cases of allegorical interpretations, a couple of which match with Origen’s.

In summary, we hold the following points as fundamental: Gregory paraphrased the Septuagint version of Ecclesiastes (Jarick); the moral ideas of the Metaphrasis are in agreement with those contained in the Pan. Or. (Noakes, Slusser); the protreptic aim of the Metaphrasis is in line with Origen’s general view of Ecclesiastes (Slusser).

Some scholars have rightly underscored a significant difference between Gregory’s and Origen’s exegetical approaches. Nevertheless, Origen himself seems to have used the prosopopoeia in his largely unknown exegesis of Ecclesiastes (Leanza), and Gregory shows himself aware of allegorical procedures.

II. The work

Ecclesiastes is a repetitive work both in its lexicon and in its themes, however contrasting. Jarick has shown in depth how Gregory studiously diversified the Greek text of Ecclesiastes, found links between verses which do not seem to have any, and modified the contents of the original. Yet, since Gregory does not provide a substantially different layout of the contents of his work, the Metaphrasis remains very fragmented like the original, and this makes it unfeasible to give a complete commented summary of it.

Nonetheless, in order to have an idea of Gregory’s exegesis of Ecclesiastes, we opted for giving a short digest of his treatment of the first three chapters. This selection is due to the fact that these chapters offer the most relevant elements for understanding Gregory’s theoretical outlook, for they give the bulk, and many samples as well, of the main ideas which Gregory develops throughout the work. We will detect these themes

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77 M. Simonetti, Origene dalla Cappadocia ai Cappàdoci, 25; Id., Gregorio il Taumaturgo e Origene, 28-29.
78 Simonetti, Origene dalla Cappadocia ai Cappàdoci, 24.
80 Lane Fox, Pagans and Christians, 524.
starting from this summary and look at their progress in the rest of the writing. This should shed some light on Gregory’s general thought perspective, which, in my opinion, bears more evidence of the influence of Origen than is usually acknowledged.

As already noted by scholars, there is not much left of the original ideas of Ecclesiastes. At the same time, the Metaphrasis as a text has no specific Christian connotation except for some recollections of passages from the New Testament. It offers no ideas of pure theology, but reflections on divine providence, final judgment and moral life. Gregory converts Ecclesiastes to a more traditional view of wisdom, which is grounded in the teaching of the two paths. The Metaphrasis contains indeed both ethical and apocalyptic elements which seem to derive from this tradition.

II.1. The title

The term μετάφρασις is synonym of paraphrasis according to the Aelius Theon (II cent. AD), who listed it among the progymnasmata (Progymn. 15)\(^{82}\), the preliminary rhetorical exercises whose practice flourished during the Second Sophistic movement\(^{83}\). However, the Metaphrasis cannot be regarded as a mere paraphrase because Gregory has often changed the literal meaning of Ecclesiastes. He also appears to have made use of other rhetorical exercises, such as prosopopoeia (Progymn. 8)\(^{84}\), synkrisis (comparison, Progymn. 10) and exergasia (amplification, Progymn. 16)\(^{85}\), which indeed well served his plan of depicting two contradictory ways of life and of exhorting his readers to embrace the philosophical life.

II.2. The author

Following the tradition, the author of Ecclesiastes is Solomon, the king of Jerusalem and ‘most wise prophet’ (προφήτης σοφότατος, 988B). He ‘wisely observed the entire earthly nature’ (σοφῶς κατανοήσας τὴν περὶ γῆν φύσιν ἄπασαν, 989C) and understood the ‘proverbs’ and the ‘natures of things’ (πραγμάτων φύσεις, 81).

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81 The teaching of the two paths has its roots in classical antiquity (Xenophon, Mem. II 1, 21-34) in the Old Testament (Dt 30:15-20; Jer 21:8; Ps 1; Prv 2:7-22; 4:18-19; 12:28), and is found in Qumrân scrolls (1QS 3,13-4,26), in the New Testament (Mt 7:13-14), in the Testaments of the Twelve Patriarchs (Asher, 1,3-9; Jud, 20,1-2), and then Ps. Barnabas, Ep. 18-20; Didache, 1-6; Hermas, Mand. VI, 1-2.

82 Aelius Théon, Progymnasmata, éd. par M. Patillon avec l’assistance pour l’Arménien de G. Bolognesi, Paris 1997 (CUFr), 107: ‘paraphrasis consists of changing the form of expression while keeping the thoughts; it is also called metaphrasis’, transl. by G.A. Kennedy in Progymnasmata. Greek Textbooks of Prose Composition and Rhetoric, Atlanta (SBL. Writings from the Greco-Roman World 10), 70.

83 See Vinel, La Metaphrasis in Ecclesiastes de Grégoire le Thaumaturge, 193-197.

84 ‘Prosopopoeia is the introduction of a person to whom words are attributed that are suitable to the speaker and have an indisputable application to the subject discussed […] under this genus of exercise fall the species of consolations and exhortation and letter writing’ (Transl. Kennedy, 47).

Solomon addresses ‘the assembly of God’ (ἐκκλησία, 988B), ‘ignorant and incorrigible’ people, and presents his meditations as the findings of his labour of looking for ‘what is pleasing to God’ (1017A). Solomon has studied the ‘mysteries of the truth’, but ‘words of wisdom’ are accessible only to the understanding of ‘a noble person’ (1017A-B).

Origen referred to Solomon with almost the exact same words used by Gregory: ‘σαπιέντισσιμος Σολωμόν οὐρανομαστὴς…’ 87 The figure of the prophet himself that we find in the Metaphrasis, as a master of morality, ascetic, connoisseur of the universe and of past and future, corresponds to Origen’s.

II.3. Summary of the first three chapters

For Gregory’s Solomon not ‘all is vanity’ (τὰ πάντα ματαίωτης, 1:2), but only human actions and pursuits are ‘empty and useless’. Everything men ‘struggle to accomplish crawling on the earth with their bodies and soul’, being ‘overcome by transitory things’ and ‘not wanting to look beyond the stars with the noble eye of the soul’ (τῶν μὲν προσκείρων ἠττημένοι, ἀνωτέρω δὲ τῶν ἄστρων τῷ γενναίῳ τῆς ψυχῆς δώματι, οὐδ’ ὀτιοῦν κατειδίων βουλόμενοι, 989A) is without ‘advantage’ 89.

The resigned contemplation of the repeating successions of human generations, of the cycles of the sun, of the courses of winds and rivers (1:4-7), is transformed by Gregory into the positive awareness that ‘the things created by God for the sake of men remain the same’ (989A-B). Neither rivers nor winds are able to ‘force the sea to overstep its boundaries’ (ὑπερβαίνειν τὰ χῶτῆς μέτρα; they do not transgress the ‘law’ (παρανομεῖν, 989B), whereas the ‘words’ and ‘deeds’ of human beings ‘have no measure’ (μέτρον) 90. Gregory takes then the uselessness of words and the insatiable activity of eyes and ears (cf. 1:8ff.) to blame men for their chatter and the purposeless curiosity of their eyes, showing here one of the peaks of his moralistic interpretation. In this manner, that the idea ‘there is nothing new under the sun’ (1:9) becomes a reason to think that no new human affair is ‘worthy to be remembered’ (μνησθῆναι ἄξιον, 989C; cf. 1:11).

According to Eccl. 1:12-17, the investigation of ‘all things that happen under heaven’ and the understanding of ‘wisdom, knowledge, proverbs and science’ (σοφία, γνῶσις, παραβολαί, ἐπιστήμη) are considered ‘vanity’ and ‘choice of spirit’ (προειρέσεις πνεύματος). Gregory copes with this devaluation of knowledge in two ways: by ascribing it to Solomon’s past thinking and by wiping away σοφία, γνῶσις,

87 Or. Prin IV, 3, 14, where these words introduce the quotation of Eccl 7:24.
89 The term ὄφελος replaces here the non-classical περισσεία (‘advantage’, ‘abundance’). Gregory has changed also other terms of the same family (περισσός, περισσεύειν, περίσσευμα). See Vinel (ed.), L’Ecclésiaste, 44-45.
90 Gr. Thaum. Eccl. 989B: Τὰ δ’ ὑπ’ ἀνθρώπων ἐπιτεχνώμενα ῥήματα τε καὶ πράγματα, μέτρων οὐκ ἔχει.
ἐπιστήμη, which are terms too significant for a pupil of Origen\textsuperscript{91}, and restricting Solomon’s understanding (συνεζύμησις) to the ‘proverbs’ and to the ‘natures of things’ (992A). Solomon, like a philosopher, has ‘examined’ and ‘wisely observed the entire earthly nature’ to discover that it is ‘most unstable’ (989C), and that ‘all things here below are full of a portentous and abominable spirit’ (989D)\textsuperscript{92}. In this manner Gregory has paraphrased Solomon’s examination of ‘all things that are done under heaven’ of Eccl 1:13, and τὰ πάντα ματαιότητι καὶ προσέρεσις πνεύματος of 1:14.

Solomon’s statement ‘I believed to have come to this [knowledge] in vain’ (την ἀλλως, 992A) becomes the explanation of his following decision to experience the earthly pleasures (2:1-3). Gregory transforms Solomon’s indulgence in experiencing pleasures into his understanding of how the soul can master the inclinations of the body by exercising self-control: he stopped laughing, moderated pleasure, fought desire with continence (992A-B). The enumeration of Solomon’s achievements and his sharing of the good things of life as king of Jerusalem ends, in the original, with the statement ‘my wisdom stayed with me’ (2:4-9). Gregory, on the contrary, inserts the idea that Solomon’s wisdom (σοφία) diminished while his ‘wicked desire’ (ὀὐκ ἀγαθή ἐπιθυμία) grew. The experience of joy and of the pleasures of eyes and heart (2:10) is transfigured into Solomon’s comprehension that by surrendering to ‘all the temptations of the eyes’ and to ‘all the unrestrained passions of the heart’, he bound his ‘choice (προσέρεσις) to all wretched luxuries’\textsuperscript{93}. The declaration that all ‘Solomon’ did and toiled to do is ‘vain and choice of spirit’ (2:11) is converted into the realisation that they were actually ‘works of an evil spirit’ (πνεύματις ὕπαθοι ποιήματα, 993A).

The reflection upon the merits of wisdom and folly (2:12-17), which denies the theoretical superiority of wisdom because the wise man dies just like the fool, is put by Gregory into Solomon’s past thinking, at the time when he became associated with fools\textsuperscript{94}. In this way Gregory can recover the appreciation of wisdom over folly and expand the contrast between the wise man and the fool along the lines of the opposition between light and darkness, and between sight and blindness. Solomon will receive ‘the rewards of foolishness’ (τὰ τῆς ἄφροσύνης ἐπίχειρησι, 993B) for having been associated with fools …

‘For what good comes of those elaborate arguments, or what profit of so many words, where the floods of nonsense gush up as from the fount of folly? But the wise and the foolish have nothing in common not in human memory, not in divine reward. All the affairs of human beings are already overtaken by their end, even as …

\textsuperscript{91} According to Jarick, Gregory Thaumaturgos’ Paraphrase, 25-26, here Gregory is avoiding repetitions of words.

\textsuperscript{92} Transl. Slusser, partially altered, 128.

\textsuperscript{93} Gr. Thaum. Eccl. 992D: Ἥπνω ν ὅρθολοι τε δελεάσαμετι, καὶ καρδίαις ἀγράτοις ὁρμαῖς ἐρείς παντεχθέν προσπιπτούσαις, ἢδονῶν ἐλπίσαν ἐμαυτῶν ἑκδιδωκός καὶ πάσισις τρυφαῖς δειλαίαις, τὴν ἐμαυτῶν ἐγκατέδηξα προσέρεσιν.

\textsuperscript{94} See Jarick, Gregory Thaumaturgos’ Paraphrase, 40-42.
they seem to be just beginning. But the wise will never share the same end as the foolish’ (Transl. Slusser, 130).95

The conservative value of Gregory’s amendment of 2:16 (the memory of both wise and foolish will fade) is particularly evident if, following an insight of Jarick, we recall Prv 10:7 (‘the memory of the righteous will be a blessing, but the name of the wicked will rot’)96. Moreover, not ‘everything will be forgotten’ (τὰ πάντα), according to LXX, but only ‘human affairs’, as Gregory has made clear since the beginning of his work. Gregory then paraphrases the following occurrence of ‘all is vanity and choice of spirit’ (2:17) as if Solomon is judging his past life:

‘Therefore I even came to hate this entire life of mine, wasted on meaningless things (ἐν τοῖς μυταίοις ἀναλωθέντα), which I passed enmeshed in the cares of this world. For to put it in a nutshell, all that I accomplished with so much grief were works sprung from irrational impulse (πάντα μοι λυπηρὸς ἐκμεμόχθηται ὁρμῆς ἀλογίστου γενόμενα ποιήματα)’ (Transl. Slusser, 131).

According to Eccl 2:18-23, human toil is μυταιότης for two reasons: because even the profits of the man who has toiled with ‘wisdom and knowledge and fortitude’ (ἐν σοφίᾳ καὶ ἐν γνώσει καὶ ἐν ἀνθρείᾳ, 2:21) are left to someone else, whether he is wise or foolish; and because the result of human toil is restless disappointment. Gregory agrees with the first motive but modifies the rest: the ‘real good’ is the ‘knowledge of wisdom and the possession of fortitude’ (… κατεφάνη τὰ τῷ ὀντὶ ἀγαθὰ προκείμενα ἀνθρῶπων, σοφίας τε γνώσεως, καὶ κτήσεως ἀνθρείας). In his view distress derives from the choice of seeking ‘bad things instead of good’, ‘wickedness instead of goodness’, ‘distress instead of quietness’ (Ὁ τοιοῦτος εἴλητο μὲν πονηρὰ ἄντι ἀγαθῶν, μετῆλθε δὲ κακίαν ἄντι χρηστότητος, καὶ μόχθον ἄνθ᾽ ἡσυχίας, 993C).

Gregory then preserves the meaning of 2:24 (‘There is no good for the man: what he will eat and drink and what he will show to his soul as good in his toil. Indeed, this, I saw, is from the hand of God’)97 and makes more explicit the providential content of 2:25 (‘For who shall eat, or who shall drink, without him?’): ‘none of what has been given us for our preservation lies outside his providence’ (οὐδὲν γὰρ τῶν πρὸς σωτηρίαν ἡμῖν δεδομένων ἔξω τῆς αὐτοῦ ὑπάρχει προνοίας, 993D; transl. Slusser 131). Accordingly, the final complaint that God arbitrarily grants ‘wisdom, knowledge and happiness’ to those who are good before Him, and worries to the sinners, who accumulate wealth for the benefit of those good before God (2:26), is transformed, in

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95 Gr. Thaum. Eccl. 993B: Τί γὰρ ἢ τῶν σοφισμάτων ἐκείνων ἄγαθον. ἢ ποιὰ δύνασις τῶν πολλῶν λόγων, ὅπου γα τὰ φυκάραις διεὰ ματα, οὕτε ἐκ πηγῆς ὄρμαται τῆς ἄφροσύνης; Σοφὸς δὲ καὶ ἄφρον κοινῶν οὐδὲν, οὐ κατὰ ἀνθρώπων μνήμην, οὐ κατὰ Θεοῦ ἀμοιβήν. Τῶν δ᾽ ἐν ἀνθρώπως πραγμάτων, ἐτὶ άρεσθήκα δικοιοντων, ἐδὲ τὸ τέλος ἐπικεφαλής ἀπάντων. Σοφὸς δὲ οὐδέποτε ἄνωντο τῶν αὐτοῦ κοινωεῖ τέλους. Cf. Pan. Or. IX, §124, where Gregory underscores the contrast between the philosophers’ skills of reasoning and their inability to teach σαφηνότητος καὶ φρόνησις.

96 Jarick, Gregory Thaumaturgos’ Paraphrase, 43, 326 (transl. LXX version of Prv).

97 Cf. Jarick, Gregory Thaumaturgos’ Paraphrase, 49-50.
Jarick’s words, into ‘Solomon’s observation that good people get good things and bad people get bad things’ and into his ‘indignation at bad people saying bad things about good people’:

‘the good man, by receiving wisdom from God, has obtained heavenly joy; but the wicked, being harassed by evils sent by God, suffering from greed, strives to accumulate many things and hurries to offend in the face of the Ruler of all things the one whom has been honoured by God, thus presenting useless gifts and making deceitful and futile the pursuits of his own wretched soul’.

The catalogue of times of 3:2-8 is for Gregory evidence of the fact that ‘this age (χρόνος οὗτος, 996A) is full of all the most contrasting things’ and not any longer of the thesis that ‘there is a right time for everything under the heaven’ (ὐπὸ τὸν οὐρανὸν, 3:1). Gregory indeed adds to the end of the catalogue that human affairs change from good to evil ones and urges human beings to ‘refrain from useless labours’ (996B).

The idea that God has given humans worries to be preoccupied with (3:10) is replaced by the activity of God’s enemy, who thus has to be held responsible for the change of human affairs into evil ones. Indeed, this ‘evil guardian of times’ (πονηρός καιροσκόπος) fights against God to destroy the ‘creation’ (πλάσμα) of God ‘from the beginning until the end’ (996B; cf. 3:11).

Gregory follows Eccl 3:12 in saying that ‘joy and doing good (εὐθυμία καὶ εὐποιεία) are the greatest goods for a human being’. However, he adds that ‘this temporary enjoyment comes solely from God, if justice (δικαιοσύνη) guides the actions’ (996B), and just disregards the references to ‘eating and drinking’ (3:13).

Gregory follows the literal meaning of Eccl 3:14 specifying that ‘what God has laid down’, which ‘there is nothing to add to or to take from’, is ‘eternal and incorruptible’ (αἰωνία καὶ ἀφθαρσία πράγματα, 996B). Eccl 3:15 is paraphrased almost in a faithful way, but Gregory adds an important reference to God’s foreknowledge, which drastically changes the original idea that things repeat themselves: ‘the things which happened had been established; and those which will happen have already occurred according to foreknowledge’ (996B, see below for the entire passage).

Gregory then transforms the sight of ‘the impious’ in ‘the place of justice’ and in ‘the place of righteous’, which are ‘under the sun’ (3:16), into Solomon’s vision of ‘a pit of punishment awaiting the impious in the lower regions’, and of ‘another place open

98 Jarick, Gregory Thaumaturgos’ Paraphrase, 52.
99 Gr. Thaum. Eccl. 993D: Ἀλλ’ ὁ μὲν ἁγαθὸς ἀνήρ, σοφίᾳ ἐκ Θεοῦ τυχόν, ἐυφροσύνης ἔτυχεν οὐρανῷ· ὁ δὲ ἀγαθὸς ἐλαχυμένος κακοίς, πλαανθρακείς νομικοί, πολλά τε ἠθροίσακε σπουδάζει, καὶ τὸν ὑπὸ Θεοῦ τετειμημένον ἑναντίον τοῦ πάντων Δεσπότου ὑνεδίκασε σπεύδει, δωρα προτεινόν ἄχρηστα, δωρεά τα ὧμοι καὶ μάται τῆς ἵνωτος ἁθλίας ψυχῆς σπουδάσματα πεποιημένος.
100 Transl. Jarick, 55.
101 Eccl 3:14: ἔγνων ὅτι πάντα, δια ἐποίησεν ὁ Θεός, αὕτα ἔσται εἰς τὸν αἰῶνα…
Oddly enough, Gregory does not propose the theme of the eschatological judgment interpreting 3:17, which indeed states that God’s judgment is inevitable both for the righteous and the wicked, and freely moulding 3:18. Thus he refers to Solomon’s past thinking the ideas that ‘God judges everything to be equal’, ‘it is the same for the just and the unjust, rational and irrational’, or that animals and human beings are alike before God, ‘differing from each other only in the articulation of the voice’ (996C). Gregory proposes the same exegetical solution for the inevitable problems raised by the following verses, whose contents remain substantially unaltered in the Metaphrasis: a common death awaits animals and human beings alike; both animals and human beings come from and return to the same dust (3:20); there is uncertainty about the place where the ψυχὴ of human beings and animals will stay after death (3:21); there is no other good for man except to enjoy himself in his works (3:22).

II.4. On nature, providence and final judgment

The first and most remarkable fact that immediately stands out reading the Metaphrasis is that the famous maxim ‘all is vanity’ completely disappears from it both in its form τὰ πάντα ματαιότης (1:2; 12:8) and with the addition ‘and choice of spirit’ (…καὶ προκάρσεις πνεύματος: 1:14; 2:11, 17)106. As we have seen, Gregory reduces the risk that God can be considered creator of something vain by narrowing the theme of the vanity of all things to human affairs, a solution which profoundly marks the moral focus of the Metaphrasis.

However, Gregory does not think that absolutely everything men do is vain, but what they do remaining attached to ‘transitory things’ and without using the ‘eye of the soul’ to look ‘beyond the stars’ (ἀνωτέρα τῶν ἀστρων, 989A), so that ‘vain’ is the life passed chasing ‘vain things’107. This image, which relies on the presence of ‘under the sun’ in Eccl 1:3, suggests that Gregory assumed a Weltanschaung, shared by Origen, which is dualistic in a Platonic sense: there is a sensible world (κάτω, 989D), and an upper one (ἀνω), which is accessible with the ‘eye of the soul’. As Plato explains, and
Origen reiterates, this intellectual eye functions in an indirectly proportional way to physical sight\(^{108}\). Likewise, Gregory thinks that Solomon enslaved his ‘choice’ (προφίλεσις, 992D) to luxury and did ‘works of evil spirit’, because he surrendered to the ‘temptations of the eyes’ and to the ‘passions of the heart’, which is something unacceptable according to ‘straight reasoning’ (δικτύω λογίσμῳ, 993A).

Thus, when dealing with Eccl 2:14 (‘the wise man’s eyes are in his head; but the fool walks in darkness’), Gregory presents the virtuous life of the wise man as the only way to have the intellectual sight functioning: ‘the person who has chosen virtue, therefore, resembles one who sees each thing clearly, even things above (Ἐοίκε τοίνυν, ὃ μὲν ἀρετῆν ἡρημένος, τρανῶς τε ἐκαστα καὶ ἁνω βλέποντι…)... but the one entangled in wickedness and all kinds of error seems like a person lost on a moonless night, he is blind…’ (993A)\(^{109}\). As Jarick has rightly observed, here ‘ἀνω […] recalls ἀνωτέρω δὲ τῶν ἄστρων’ in 989A. It is clear then that Gregory interprets both the ‘noble eye of the soul’ and ‘the wise man’s eyes’ as symbolising the intellectual faculty. This understanding is found in the Dialogue with Eraclid (XX), where Origen explains that Eccl 2:14 refers to the spiritual man, who has ἐν Χριστῷ τῷ διανοητικῷ\(^{110}\). By contrast Origen interpreted the blindness of Jn 9:39 as the state of those who contemplate evil with the eyes, called the ‘intelligence of the flesh’ (Col 2:18), which have been ‘opened by the seduction of the serpent’\(^{111}\). Moreover, we must remember that when speaking of Origen’s discourse that persuaded him to remain at his school in Caesarea, Gregory described as ἔλογοι those who are blinded in their νοῦς (Pan. Or. VI, §76,19-20) and, therefore, incapable and unwilling to know the real good.

In the same line of dualistic thinking, Gregory sees the contrast between the order of nature, for ‘the things created by God for the sake of men remain the same’ (τὰ ἄυτά, 989A-B)\(^{112}\), and human words and deeds, which ‘have no measure’ (989B). In fact, this did not prevent Gregory from putting in Solomon’s mouth the statement that nature itself (περὶ γῆν φύσεις) is ‘most unstable’ (ποικιλωτάτη, 989C), and that

all things here below are full of a portentous and abominable spirit, so that it is not possible that they can be the same again (Πνεύματος δὲ άλλοκότου καὶ μυσαροῦ τὰ κάτω ἐπάνω πλήθει, ὡσεὶ μὴ εἶναι κατὰ ἀνακτήσακεν), but neither that they completely vanish like smoke; so great is the absurdity (ἀτοπία) which overwhelms human affairs’ (989D; Transl. Slusser, partially altered, 128).

\(^{108}\) Plato, Smp. 219A. Cf. also: R. 518A-519B, 533D; Sph. 254A; Phd. 99E. Or. CC VII, 39: ‘And in proportion to the degree in which the superior eye is awake and the sight of the senses is closed, the supreme God and His Son, who is the Logos and Wisdom and the other titles, are comprehended and seen by each man’ (transl. Chadwick, 427).

\(^{109}\) Transl. Slusser, slightly altered, 130.

\(^{110}\) See Leanza, L’esegesi di Origene, 35ff. Cf. Or. CCl, Prologus, 65, 15-20 Baehrens. Origen’s interpretation is found more closely in Dionysius of Alexandria, see Leanza, L’esegesi di Origene, 51.

\(^{111}\) Or. HNnM XVII, 3.

\(^{112}\) Gr. Thaum. Eccl. 989A-B: Καὶ τὰ μὲν δὲ ἀνθρώπους ὑπὸ Θεοῦ γεγονότα, μὲνεὶ τὰ αὐτὰ, οἶνον… See below for further comments.
This sequence may raise the issue of the consistency of Gregory’s thought, since he writes that what is created by God remains the same and then appears to contradict this in the space of not many lines. Even though a certain friction between the two passages remains, there is no concrete contradiction. The first statement is found in a (partial) paraphrase of Eccl 1:4: ‘A generation goes, and a generation comes, but the earth stands eternally (ἡ γῆ εἰς τὸν αἰῶνα ἔστηκε)’. Gregory obviously cannot associate ‘earth’ to ‘eternity’ but interprets the verse in the sense that there is a certain regularity, in ‘the things created by God’, that is to say in ‘this age’\(^{113}\). Along these lines he believes that there is a ‘law’ (cf. παράνομεῖν, 989B) behind natural phaenomena such as the generation and corruption of the bodies, the movement of sun and winds, the balance of the waters and the stability of the boundaries of the sea. Therefore, ‘the things created by God for the sake of men’, which ‘remain the same’, consist of what has a certain regularity in nature and do not correspond to ‘all things here below (κάτω)’. In other words, Gregory transforms the original idea that things repeat themselves into the argument that the physical universe is led by divine providence, while still holding the idea, which may be traced back to the Pauline epistles\(^{114}\), that sin prevails in the present age.

Gregory believes that if earthly things are changeable or wicked, the reason is to be found in the influence of the devil, which is the veiled meaning of προαίρεσις πνεύματος (1:14). This is surely one of most important exegetical solutions of the entire Metaphrasis and it is striking that it has never received adequate consideration by previous scholars. Gregory indeed gives an allegorical interpretation of προαίρεσις πνεύματος also in several other occurrences (2:11; 4:4, 6, 16)\(^{115}\), where it becomes an ‘evil’ (σῶλον ἀγαθός, 993A; πονερός, 997B), ‘treacherous’ (δολερός, 997C), ‘hostile’ (ἐναντίος, 1000A) spirit, associated with wicked goods, jealousy, malice, irrational thinking, or an ‘irrational impulse’ (ἀρεμία ἀληχεύσας, 993C; Eccl 2:17). In this manner the devil becomes the hidden cause both of the ‘absurdity’ of human affairs and toils, and of the fickleness of nature\(^{116}\).

An element to take into consideration is that all these occurrences of προαίρεσις πνεύματος are closely linked to the expression ὑπὸ τὸν ἦλιον. This and its equivalent ὑπὸ τὸν οὐρανόν are indeed linked and feature the two other passages, respectively Eccl 3:1 and 10:4, which Gregory clearly interprets as referring to the role played by the devil in the cosmic and human spheres, whereas they do not concern the occurrence of προαίρεσις πνεύματος. But there are further interesting elements which allow us to understand Gregory’s exegesis.

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\(^{113}\) Origen commented upon Eccl 1:4 as follows: ‘Here “eternal” points to the time period of the present age’ (CRm 6,5,9, transl. Scheck, vol. 2, 16).

\(^{114}\) Gal 1:4; cf. also Ti 2:12 and 2 Tm 4:10.

\(^{115}\) With the exception of Eccl 2:26 and 6:9. On these cases see Jarick’s comments ad loc.

\(^{116}\) In Prin 1,7,5 (218,155-160 Simonetti - Crouzel), while dealing with Rom 8:20 (vanitati creatura subiecta est,…) Origen interprets the vanity of Eccl 1:2, 14 as if it concerned the entire corporeal nature, as follows: Ego quidem arbitror non aliam esse vanitatem quam corpora; nam licet aetheriun sit corpus astrorum, tamen materiale est. Vnde et Salomon mihi uidetur uniuersam corpoream naturam uelut onerosam quodammodo et uigorem spirituum retardantem hoc modo compellare. See also CCVII, 50.
In the third chapter, after the ‘catalogue of times’ (Eccl 3:2-8), Gregory presents the instability of the things of ‘this age’, which is ‘full of all the most contrasting things’ (Χρόνος δὲ ὁ ὁμός πάντων γέμει τῶν ἐναντιωτήτων, 996A), and the change of human things from good to evil as proofs of the devil’s activity.

Certainly an evil guardian of the times has this age in his jaws, striving with a great effort to destroy the creation of God, having chosen to fight against it from the beginning until the end (Καιροσκότος δὴ τις πονηρὸς τῶν αἰῶνα τούτων περικέχειν, ἀφανίσαι ὑπερδιατεινόμενος τὸ τοῦ Θεοῦ πλάσμα, ἐξ ἀρχῆς κυτῷ μέχρι τέλους πολεμεῖν ἡρημένος, 996B; transl. Jarick, slightly altered, 65).

Jarick has aptly drawn attention to the fact that this passage appears reminiscent of 1 Pt 5:8, 2 Cor 4:4—where Paul writes that ‘the god of this age (ὁ θεὸς τοῦ αἰῶνος τούτου) has blinded the minds of the unbelievers, to keep them from seeing… Christ, who is the image (εἰκόνος) of God’—and of some elements that characterize the apocalyptic context of the final battle of Ap 12:7-12.

It is important to highlight how, dealing with the occurrences of ὧτὸ τῶν οὐρανῶν in Eccl 1:13 and 3:1 (998C; 996A), Gregory has linked the fickleness of ‘nature’ to the activity of the ‘portentous and abominable spirit’ and the ‘evil guardian of the times’ that fights against God’s creation.

The same idea is found in the paraphrasing of Eccl 10:4-5, which is worth quoting in its entirety:

‘If the spirit of the ruler rises against you, do not leave your place, for healing will put an end to great sins. There is an evil which I have seen under the sun, like an involuntary sin which proceeded from the ruler’ (ἐὰν πνεῦμα τοῦ ἐξουσιαζόντος ἀναζη ἐπὶ σέ, τόπον σου μὴ ἀφῆς, ὅτι ἵσαμα καταπαύει ἁμαρτίας μεγάλας. ἔστιν πονηρία, ἵνα εἶδον ὑπὸ τὸν ἥλιον, ὡς ἀκούσιον, ὃ ἐξῆλθεν ἀπὸ προσώπου τοῦ ἐξουσιαζόντος).

Gregory takes these verses to motivate the moral struggle of the individual to resist the devil’s attempts to make him sin.

Friend, even if a hostile spirit should come upon you, firmly resist it, knowing that God can forgive even a great multitude of sins. These are the works of the tyrant and of the father of all wickedness (Εἰ δὲ καί πνεῦμα σοὶ ποτε, ὡς φίλος, πολέμιον προσπέσοι, ἔνστηθε ἐρωμένως, γινώσκων ὡς καὶ πολλῶν ἁμαρτημάτων πλήθος Θεὸς ἱλασάθη δύναται. Τυράννου δὲ ἔργα ταῦτα,

117 Jarick translates plasma into image, probably because of the resemblance to 2 Cor 4:4. Even if plasma is applied to man in Rom 9:20, here Gregory seems to use it to refer both to the creation and to human beings.

118 See Jarick, Gregory Thaumaturgos’ Paraphrase, 65-66.

119 Cf. Or. CC VIII, 31, where natural disasters are ascribed to demons.
καὶ πατρὸς πάσης πονηρίας- 1013A) (transl. cf. Jarick, 253-254; Slusser 142-143).

For Gregory there is no doubt that the ‘spirit of the ruler’ (πνεῦμα τοῦ ἐξουσιαζόντος) ‘under the sun’ (ὑπὸ τὸν ἥλιον) is ‘the hostile spirit’ and ‘the tyrant and the father of all wickedness’120, all the more so since Origen had given this interpretation of Eccl 10:4121.

However, the universe is not under the mere dominion of the devil, on the one hand because God, who is ἐπόπτης, sends ‘evils’ to the wicked man (993D); on the other hand this is also because opposing incorporeal powers are extant in ‘this age’. So far, Gregory’s ideas on providence follow a traditional pattern. Justin, for instance, writes that God, ‘the just watcher of all things’ (τῶν πάντων ἐπόπτης δίκαιος)122 has established a law to order the physical universe for the sake of men and also that he set angels over earthly things123.

Gregory mentions three times the function of the angels, always in relation to God’s judgement, in the eighth, tenth and twelfth chapters.

In this latter case, Gregory interprets the φύλακες τῆς οἰκίας of Eccl 12:3 as the ‘powers above’ (αἱ ὑπέρτεραι δυνάμεις) and ‘the angels guarding the universe’ (οἱ κοσμοφύλακες ἄγγελοι) that ‘will be put into action’ during the ‘Great and terrible day of God’ (1016C-D). The attribute κοσμοφύλακες immediately conveys the idea of the opposition in the universe between the angelic powers that look after nature and demonic powers that fight against the creation, and reminds of Origen’s defining angels as οἰκονόμοι124. We will go back to this passage later on.

Gregory speaks of the angel of death (ὁ ἀφανισμένος τὴν ψυχὴν ἄγγελος,1008C) dealing with Eccl 8:8125 and giving an interpretation of it that is in agreement with the midrashic tradition126. As we will see shortly, this image recurs in a passage concerning the judgement (κρίσις) and the ‘punishment from above’ (ἀνωθεν κόλασις) as parts of the divine providential plan.

The last case we call particular attention to is the interpretation of Eccl 10:20:

120 Cf. Jarick, Gregory Thaumaturgos’ Paraphrase, 253-55.
121 Or. Prin III,2,1; III,2,4 (where Origen refers, among others, also to Hermas, Mand. VI,2,1, and Ps. Barnabas, Ep. 18); HNn XXVII,12, and FrEph 47 (314 Pieri), where this interpretation is supported by Eph 4:27 (‘do not give place to the devil’); CCl 2,9.
122 Just. 2 Apol. 12,6.
123 Just. 2 Apol. 5,2: ὁ θεὸς τῶν πάντων κόσμων ποιήσας καὶ τὰ ἐπίγεια ἀνθρώπως ὑποτάξας καὶ τὰ ὑφέρανα στοιχεῖα εἰς κύριαν κατοικίαν καὶ ὥραν μεταξιόδικας κοσμήσας καὶ θείον τούτοις νόμον τάξας, ἀ καὶ αὐτὰ δὲ ἀνθρώπως φαίνεται πεποιημένας, τὴν μὲν τῶν ἀνθρώπων καὶ τῶν ὑπὸ τῶν ὑφέρανων πρόνοιας ἄγγελοις, οὓς ἐπὶ τούτοις ἔταξε, περέδωκεν.
124 Or. CC VIII,31.
125 Eccl 8:8: οὐκ ἔστιν ἀνθρώπως ἐξουσιάζων ἐν πνεύματι τοῦ κωλύσαι σῦν τὸ πνεῦμα· καὶ οὐκ ἔστιν ἐξουσία ἐν ἡμέρα 转载请注明...
In your conscience, do not curse the king even, and in your bedrooms do not curse the rich, for a bird of the sky will carry your voice and one having wings will report your word (καὶ γε ἐν συνείδησιν σου βασιλέα μὴ καταράῃ, καὶ ἐν ταμείωσι κατόνων σου μὴ καταράῃ πλωμάσαι· ὦτι πετεινὸν τοῦ ὕψιστον ἄποιτε σύν τὴν φωνήν σου, καὶ ὁ ἔχων τὰς πτέρυγας ἀπαγγελεῖ λόγον σου).

The Metaphrasis reads as follows:

But it is fitting to obey the king, and the rulers or lords, and not to incur their hatred or ever to direct any offensive word at them. Be afraid that whatever it is, even though said in private, will somehow come to light. For to the rich, great, and only King, speedy and winged messengers relay everything, as they carry out their spiritual and rational service (Βασιλεῖ δὲ, καὶ ἄρχουσιν, ἢ δυνάσταις ὑπακούειν προσήκει, καὶ οὐκ ἄπεχθάνεσθαι, οὐδ' ἐλλειπήσων τι εἰς κύτως ἤμα ἀποβεβάζετε. Δέσι γὰρ, μὴ τό καὶ τὸ καταμάνας ἐλημένον, εἰς φανερόν πως ἔλθη. Τῷ γὰρ μόνῳ καὶ πλουσίῳ καὶ μεγάλῳ βασιλεῖ ἐγγέλοι ἰδεῖς καὶ ὑπόπτεροι ἄπαντα δικαιοῦσις, πνευματικὴν ὁμοῦ καὶ λογικὴν τελευτῶντες ὑπερεῖσικα, 1013C-D; transl. Slusser, 143-144, but I changed ‘all-seeing’ as a translation of ὑπόπτεροι). The bird and the winged being reporting the ‘voice’ and the ‘word’ (λόγος) to the king in the original verses of Ecclesiastes are for Gregory a clear hint at the existence of the ‘winged angels’ carrying out a ‘spiritual and rational service’ for God. A similar, although more complex, interpretation of ‘bird of the sky’ is known through the midrashic tradition\textsuperscript{127}. The concept of a ‘spiritual and rational service’ remains largely unclear, but it is doubtful that it is the mere outcome of the paraphrase of λόγος in the original. Perhaps ‘rational’ conveys the value of the duty of the angels as guardians, for they providentially look on men, and ‘spiritual’ features the quality and the effect of their office towards men\textsuperscript{128}.

The paraphrase of these verses is noteworthy also for its structure, as it sheds some light on Gregory’s ability to use different exegetical tools. It is not only almost twice as big as the original text, but also gives two interpretations of it, first literal and then allegorical. First, the ‘king’ and the ‘rich’ are paraphrased as a plurality of authorities (‘the king, and the rulers or lords’), whom men should be afraid of since what is said in secret can be revealed. Then, there is a ‘sole and rich and great King’ who has angelic beings at his disposal to watch over human deeds.

\textsuperscript{127} Kohelet Rabbah 10:20, where it is interpreted as the ‘serafino, che si riferisce a Colui, le cui parole hanno dato vita all’universo’ (‘seraphim who refers to that One whose words have given life to the universe’), according to the translation by P. Mancuso (ed.), Qohelet Rabbah. \textit{Midraš sul Libro dell’Ecclesiastes}, Firenze 2004, 359.

\textsuperscript{128} According to Or. \textit{Tract. Ps.} LXXXI (75,7-8 Morin, AMar, Vol. III, Pars II), the angels know even the most secret actions of men.
This overlapping of a literal and an allegorical interpretation of ‘king’ occurs also in the paraphrasis of Eccl 8:2-5\(^{29}\), where the original ‘order’ (ἐντολή, 8:5) of the ‘king’ (βασιλεύς, 8:4) is taken as referring to the ‘holy commandments’ and the δόγματα of ‘the only Lord and King’.

A person should certainly be careful to pay attention to the words of the king (Πάντα δὲ χρῆ ἐπιμελέως τοῖς τοῦ βασιλέως προσέχειν λόγοις) and by all means to avoid an oath, especially one made in God’s name. But although it is proper to give one’s attention to an evil word, it is also proper to guard against any blasphemy against the Lord (ἄλλα φυλάσσεσθαι ἀπαξαν τὴν εἰς τὸν Δεσπότην βλασφημίαν). For it will not be possible to bring forward any criticism or to dispute the decrees of the only Lord and King (οὐδὲ ἀντιλέγειν τοῖς τοῦ μόνου δυνάστου καὶ βασιλέως δόγμασι). It is better and more useful to keep the holy commandments (εἰρχὶ ἑντολαί) and to keep apart from the words of wicked people. A wise person knows and understands beforehand that the judgment, which will take place at the right time, will be just. (1008B; transl. Jarick, 196-203).

Thus, according to Gregory, there are two guardians in the universe, the devil, the ‘evil guardian of this age’ (996B), and God, who is ‘both the Lord and Guardian of all’ (ὁ πάντων δεσπότης τε ὁμοῦ καὶ ἑπόστης, 1017B)\(^{30}\), as well as two opposite groups of incorporeal beings, demons and angels.

This “dualism” in Gregory’s way of thinking clearly has its roots in the traditional teaching of the two paths. The clearest evidence of this link is given by a passage from the Epistle of Barnabas (XVIII,1-2):

> There are two paths of teaching and authority, the path of light and the path of darkness. And the difference between the two paths is great. For over the one are appointed light-bearing angels of God, but over the other angels of Satan. And the one is Lord from eternity past to eternity to come; but the other is the ruler over the present age of lawlessness (καὶ ὁ μὲν ἔστιν κύριος ἀπ’ αἰώνων καὶ εἰς τοὺς αἰώνας, ὁ δὲ ἄρχων καρυοῦ τοῦ ὑπὸ τῆς ἀνομίας)\(^{31}\).

The extension of God’s providence to the sublunar world is revealed, as we have seen, also by the fact that the creation does not ‘transgress the law’ of the creator and has the aim to benefit men. This last concept is repeated by Gregory when dealing with two of the so-called ‘Epicurean passages’ of Ecclesiastes which we have already encountered, 2:24-25 and 3:12-13. In the first case Gregory’s Solomon denies that the ‘perfect good’ lies in eating and drinking but says that nourishment comes from God

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\(^{29}\) Eccl 8:2-5: στόμα βασιλέως φύλαξον καὶ περὶ λόγου ὅρκου Θεοῦ μὴ σπουδάσητες, ἀπὸ προσώπου αὐτοῦ παρεῆσθε, μὴ στῆς ἐν λόγῳ πονηρῆς ὅτι πάντα ὁ ἐὰν θελήσῃ, ποιήσει, καθὼς βασιλεύς ἐξουσιάζων, καὶ τίς ἐρεῖ αὐτῷ τί ποιεῖτε; ὃ φυλάσσων ἑντολὴν οὐ γνώσεται ρῆμα πονηρόν, καὶ καρυὸν κρίσεως γνωσκέται καρδιὰ σωφροῦ.

\(^{30}\) Πάντων δεσπότης occurs also in 993D (Eccl 2:26) as a paraphrase of Θεοῦ.

and that everything necessary ‘for our σωτηρία’ derives from God’s πρόνοια (993D). In the second case, silencing the reference to eating and drinking, he specifies that the ‘temporary (πρόσσκαπρος) enjoyment’ (deriving from ‘joy and doing good’) is given by God if human actions are guided by justice and by acknowledging that there is a divine providence (996B). In other words, providence guarantees that the good man is already on earth enjoying nourishment and joy if he acts accordingly. Thus it is significant that Gregory introduces the idea of divine retribution in this time and the vision of the places awaiting the impious and the pious in the continuation of these two above-mentioned passages (993D, 996C). From this we understand that for Gregory the benefits of divine providence towards men consist not only of the laws of the universe, but also of divine judgement and punishment.\(^{132}\)

But, before considering God’s judgement in itself, there is another aspect concerning divine providence that plays an important role in the Metaphrasis, that is God’s foreknowledge. Gregory touches upon it paraphrasing 3:14-15 and 6:10.

But one can neither substract from nor add to those eternal and incorruptible things which God has firmly laid down. But those things are both fearful and wonderful for anybody. For the things which have happened had been established; and those which will happen have already occurred according to foreknowledge. But who is unjustly treated has a helper in God (Τὸν δὲ πλωτοῦ καὶ ἀφρικτῶν πραγμάτων, ὅσοι ὁ θεὸς παλιός ἐρίσεν, οὕτε τι ἀφελεῖν, οὕτε τι προσθεῖναι δυνατόν. Ὡμι τινι οὖν, ἀλλ’ ἐστιν, ἐνείναι φοβέρα το ὁμοῦ καὶ θαυμαστά: καὶ τὰ μὲν γεγομένα, ἐστικε: τὰ δὲ ἐσόμενα, ἤδε κατὰ τὸ προεγνώσθαι γεγένηται. Θεὸ δὲ κέχρηται ὁ ἀδικοῦμενος βοηθῷ, 996B).

Surely the things which now have occurred were already known, and it is clear that a man cannot oppose those things which are above him (Τὰ μὲν τοι γὰρ γεγομένια ἤδε ἐγνώσται: καὶ σαφὲς τυχάναι, ὡς τοῖς ὑπὲρ αὐτὸν ἀνθρωπώς ἀντιτάσσονται οὐχ οἶδα τε, 1004B).\(^{133}\)

The first passage remains very close to the Septuagint\(^{134}\). The original gave the idea that the preceding ‘catalogue of times’ was to be interpreted in the sense that things repeat themselves: ‘That which has happened, already is, and what is to happen, already took place, and God will seek out the one who is pursued.’ Gregory does not change substantially this verse but adds the reference to the foreknowledge. In this way he draws attention to ‘the idea of the omnipotence and omniscience of God’\(^{135}\), and limits the deterministic tone of the verse by underlining that God helps those who are persecuted. Even though the result is not entirely smooth, this passage attests the

\(^{132}\) Cf. Or. CCIV,99.

\(^{133}\) All unattributed translations are my own, but I found much help in those by Jarick and Slusser.

\(^{134}\) Eccl 3:14-15: ἐγγον ὅτι πάντα, ὅσα ἐποίησεν ὁ θεός, αὐτὰ ἐστίν αὐτοὶ τῶν αἰῶνα. ἐπ’ ἑτῶν οὐκ ἔστιν προσθεῖναι, καὶ ἄπ’ ἑτῶν οὐκ ἔστιν ἀφελεῖν, καὶ ὁ θεὸς ἐποίησεν, ἵνα φοβηθῶσιν ἀπὸ προσώπου αὐτοῦ, τὸ γεγομένον ἤδε ἐστίν, καὶ ὅσα τοῦ γίνεσθαι, ἤδε γέγονεν, καὶ ὁ θεὸς ὑπερτάσει τὸν δικαίωμενον.

\(^{135}\) Jarick, Gregory Thaumaturgos’ Paraphrase, 71.
importance that Gregory attached to foreknowledge as a divine attribute and balancing factor of any form of predetermination; in this he follows Origen’s thinking on providence.\(^{136}\)

The paraphrasis of Eccl 6:10 is less close to the original\(^ {137}\) and assumes a meaning similar to that found in the paraphrasis of 3:15 with regard to divine foreknowledge (ἔγνωσται). By ‘the things which are above the man’ Gregory seems to mean the ‘eternal (πασχά) and incorruptible things which God has firmly laid down\(^ {138}\)’, namely the general laws of providence that rule the universe, but also ‘the punishment from above’ in a future time which Gregory mentions, paraphrasing Eccl 8:4-11 and 12:5 (see below). Since Gregory insists that the wicked man is guilty for not acknowledging God’s final judgement, and since divine pragmata are said both to be ‘incorruptible’ and ‘fearful’ (996B), the adjective αἰώνιος seems to convey the ideas both of ‘eternity’ and of ‘time to come’.

At any rate, Gregory could not have meant to refer to predetermined events that would happen to a person no matter how he opposed them, as if divine foreknowledge were the cause of those events happening. This hypothesis would make completely useless any urging to conversion and freedom of choice\(^ {139}\), and would make God somehow accountable for evil.

It seems clear that Gregory’s intention is to make the reader think along the lines of Rom 9:19-20 that human beings cannot question the providence of the Creator for they cannot know the past and the future. Indeed, Gregory read in this direction the ποιήματα τοῦ Θεοῦ of Eccl 7:13 and 10:14.

Tell me, who will be able to declare the providence of God which is so great and so beneficient? Or who will be able to justly recall the things which seem to have been abandoned by God? (Τίς δὲ καὶ διυνήσεται, εἰπέ μοι, τὴν τοσαύτην καὶ οὕτω χρηστὴν τοῦ Θεοῦ πρόνοιαν ἐξειπεῖν; ἢ τίς ἀνακαλέσασθαι τὰ δοκοῦντα παρημελήσθαι ὑπὸ Θεοῦ δικαίως; 1005B).

For it is impossible for a man to know, and to learn from another man, the things which have been from the beginning and the things which are going to be. Indeed, who will be the one who reveals these things? (‘Ἀνθρώπῳ δὲ αἰδώνατον τι


\(^{137}\) Eccl 6:10: Εἴ τι ἔγένετο, ἥδη κέλευται δύναμιν αὐτοῦ, καὶ ἐγνώσθη δ ἐστιν ἀνθρωπος, καὶ οὐ διυνήσεται τοῦ κριθῆται μετὰ τοῦ ισχυροῦ ὑπὲρ αὐτῶν. ‘If anything has happened, its name has already been called; and it is known what a man is, and he will not be able to contend with that who is stronger than he’.

\(^{138}\) Cf. Jarick, Gregory Thaumaturgos’ Paraphrase, 150.

\(^{139}\) Or. HGin III,2: ‘As we profess that God is incorporeal and omnipotent and invisible, so we confess with a sure and immovable doctrine that he cares about mortal affairs and that nothing happens in heaven or earth apart from his providence. Note that we said nothing happens without his providence; not, without his will. For many things happen without his will; nothing without his providence. For providence is that by which he attends to and manages and makes provision for the things which happen. But his will is that by which he wishes something or does not wish it’. Transl. by Heine (FaCh 71), 89.
Thus also the ignorance of ποιήματα τοῦ θεοῦ in Eccl 11:5 is interpreted as ignorance of the future divine judgment and is taken as an occasion to criticise those who practise divination\textsuperscript{140}. Many people want to know beforehand what will come from heaven. Some, looking at the clouds and waiting for the wind, have held back from harvesting or winnowing, believing in nothing\textsuperscript{141} and not knowing what will come from God… (Πολλοὶ δὲ βουλοῦνται καὶ τὰ ἐκ τοῦ οὐρανοῦ ἐσόμενα προγινώσκειν, καὶ τις ἐνεῖ τε νεφέλας ἄφοράν καὶ περιμένων ἄνεμον, ἀμήκτου ἢ λυκμητοῦ ἀπέσχετο, ἐπὶ μηδεὶς πεπεισμένος, μηδὲ γινώσκων τί τῶν ἐκ θεοῦ ἐσομένων. 1016A; transl. Jarick, 280-281).

It is in dealing with Eccl 8:4-11 that Gregory explains that what awaits men is the ‘punishment’ (κόλασις. 1008B; cf. Mt 25:46)\textsuperscript{142}. Though in the previous passages, where he has said that human beings cannot know divine providence, here Gregory takes advantage of Eccl 8:5 (‘the heart of the wise knows the right time of decision’) to say that the wise man, unlike the ungodly, is able to foreknow that there will be a ‘just judgement’. But the passage at issue deserves to be read carefully for other reasons also.

A wise person knows and understands beforehand that the judgement, which will take place at the right time (προγινώσκει τὴν εἰς καιρὸν κρίσιν), will be just. All things in the life of human beings await punishment from above; but the wicked person does not seem to really understand that since a mighty providence is over him, nothing at all will be hidden in the time to come (Πάντα γὰρ τὰ ἐν τῷ βίῳ τῶν ἀνθρώπων πράγματα περιμένει τὴν ἀνωθεν κόλασιν. 1016A; transl. Jarick, 280-281). He does not know what things are in store for him, since no-one will be able to adequately report on them. No-one will be strong enough to be able to hold back the angel who takes away his soul, and no method whatsoever will be discovered to cancel in any way the time of the end.

\textsuperscript{140} Likewise, Gregory reproaches the fool when with ‘human futility’ (περιεργίᾳ) he ‘priest into’ (πολυπραγμοσύνη) ‘the future of each one after death’ (1004D). In Pan. Or. XI, §138 it is said that Origen led Gregory away ‘from the manifold business (πολυπραγμοσύνη) of living’ (transl. Metcalfe, 92). ‘Ci allontanava dalla dispersione della vita …’ according to the translation of Rizzi, who also remarks on the philosophical character of the term (163, n.10).

\textsuperscript{141} Thus, those who believe that death is an ‘eternal evil’ (ἐξήδον κακόν), also think that death ‘leads to nothing’ (εἰς τὸ μηδέν ἄγων); they indeed look for pleasures without knowing that divine ‘judgment’ (κρίσις, 1016B) will come and that ‘foolishness leads to destruction’ (ἀνοια δὲ ἄγης εἰς ἀλθέρον).

\textsuperscript{142} In the ninth chapter (1012B) Gregory writes that those men attached to earthly wealth will be captured like ‘fish and birds’ (cf. Eccl 9:12) and will receive the just punishment (ἐπιτιμία, cf. Wis 3:10). Gregory uses the same image to describe the state of mind of his reaction to Origen’s attempt to persuade him to stay at the school of Caesarea (Pan. Or. VI, §73).
(κακοῦ τῆς τελευτῆς, 1008C). Just as, when someone is captured in the middle of a battle, there is no escape to be seen on any side, so all human ungodliness is completely destroyed together (ἀσέβεια δὲ πᾶσα ἁνθρώπου συνεξάλλυται). . . . But I know that ungodly people are snatched prematurely from this life and are put out of the way, because they have given themselves over to futility (1009A). Since divine providence does not attend to everyone swiftly, because of God’s great patience with evil, and a person is not punished immediately over the committing of offences, for this reason the wicked person thinks that he should sin even more, as if he will get off scot-free (Ἐπειδὴ γὰρ οὐκ ἔφ’ ἀπάντων μετέρχεται ἢ τοῦ Θεοῦ πρόνοια οξέως διὰ τὴν πολλὴν ἁνεξίκακίαν, οὐδὲ παραστύκα τιμωρεῖται ἐπὶ ταῖς πλημμελείαις, τούτου χάριν οἶτιν δεῖν ὁ πονηρὸς ἀνήρ ἁμαρτάνειν ἐπὶ πλείον, ὡς ἁθωνὶς ἀπαλλάξου) He does not understand that even after a very long time an evildoer will not go undetected. Truly the greatest good is to reverence God. When an ungodly person falls away from that, he will not have a free rein with his own foolishness for a long time (Transl. Jarick, 200-216).

The second part of this passage conveys ideas regarding how long the life of the impious lasts on earth which Jarick has seen as contradictory143. But that fact that the impious dies prematurely does not prevent him to keep sinning for a long time. Gregory transforms the original idea that there is no quick ‘refutation of those doing evil’, in the first part of Eccl 8:11144, into the idea that this fact is evidence of God’s ‘great forbearance’ (ἁνεξίκακία). As to the second part of the verse, Gregory specifies that it is the wicked man, and not human beings in general, who keeps sinning. Obviously Gregory implies, as he said already in the second chapter, that while the sinner keeps making his mistakes, it is worthy of admiration if a person who has behaved ‘irrationally’, ‘after having recovered his senses, returned to what is right’ (993A)145.

Gregory’s paraphrase of Eccl 8:11 seems inspired by Rom 9:22 and is reminiscent of Origen’s exegesis of it.

CRm VII,18: In this it seems to be understood that while God endures and patiently bears with unbelievers and unfaithful people, he makes known to men both his patience and his power: patience, while he endures them for a long time if, perchance, they might possibly come to their senses and be converted; power, while he sometimes punishes and does not leave their crimes unavenged forever146.

143 Jarick, Gregory Thaumaturgos’ Paraphrase, 216.
144 ὅτι οὐκ ἔστιν γινομένη ἀντίρρησις ἀπὸ τῶν ποιοῦντων τὸ πονηρόν ταχὺ διὰ τοῦτο ἐπιληφθοφορή καρδία ἦσαν τοῦ ἁνθρώπου ἐν αὐτοῖς τοῦ ποιῆσαι τὸ πονηρόν .
145 Συλλογισμένος οὖν τὰ τε σοφίας ἁγάθα, καὶ τὰ ἄφροσύνης κακὰ, εἰκότως ἂν ἡ ἕκαστα ἡθυματία ἄνδρα τοιοῦτον, ὡς τις φερόμενος ἁλόγος· ἐπειτα ἐκείτω λαβόμενος, εἰς τὸ δέον ἐπιστρέψει.
146 Origen, Commentary on the Epistle to the Romans 6-10, Transl. by T.P. Scheck, Washington, DC 2002 (FaCh 104), 122.
Let us go back to the first part of the passage quoted above. What does not appear clearly is when Gregory posits the judgement, whether immediately after someone’s death, or at the time of the end, when everybody will be judged. I think that Jarick is right in arguing that it is the second that is true because Gregory speaks of the destruction of all human impiety.

This ‘time’ is described in the twelfth chapter, where Gregory speaks of the apocalyptic ‘Great and terrible day of God’ (ἡ τοῦ Θεοῦ μεγάλη ἡμέρα καὶ φοβερά, 1016C), when

the sun will no longer shine, and neither will the moon nor the other stars, but the powers above, the angels guarding the universe (αἱ ὑπέρτεραι δυνάμεις … οἱ κοσμοφύλακες ἄγγελοι), will be put into action in that storm and tumult of all things, so that powerful men will stop, and labouring women will also stop and will flee into the dark places of their houses… all impure women […] and cities and their blood-stained leaders will wait for punishment from above (ἀνωθεν κόλασις). A most bitter and bloody time (καιρός) will arise (1016D) like a blossoming almond-tree, continuous punishments will be imposed like a multitude of swarming locusts, and the unjust will be thrown out of the way like a black and contemptible caper plant. The good person will enter into his eternal home with rejoicing, but the bad people will fill all their homes with mourning… (Καὶ ὃ μὲν ἀγαθὸς ἀνήρ εἰς πλέαν ὁμοῦ τῶν ἐκατοτύχων χρίσμων πορεύεται: οἱ δὲ γε φαύλοι, πάντα τὰ κύτων ἐμπλήσουσι κοπτόμενοι…) A mighty blow will strike everything […] when the course of the times (χρόνων περιδρομή) has come to an end and the age of purification of life by water has passed (τῆς δὲ ὑδατος ζωῆς παροδεύσαντος τοῦ λουτροφοροῦ πλόνος, 1017A). But there is one salvation (σωτηρία) while men are on earth, if their souls recognized and flew up to the One by whom they were brought into being.

Leanza and Jarick have already pointed out several biblical passages of eschatological contents which Gregory may have drawn on. What is most interesting here is that the role played by New Testament texts is primary. Gregory seems to have read Eccl 12:2-3 (‘Before the sun and the light and the moon and the stars are darkened

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147 Jarick, Gregory Thaumaturgos’ Paraphrase, 208.
148 Transl., Jarick, slightly altered, 290-296.
149 Gr. Thaum. Eccl. 1017A: Μεγάλη γὰρ ἠπαντά καθεδεξία πληγή, καὶ μέχρις ὑδρίας ἐστώσης πρός τινι κρήνη, καὶ τροχῷ ὄχματος, ἐν ἀν τύχῃ καταλαλεῖθαι ἐν τῷ κολώματι παυσιμένης, χρόνον τε περιδρομῆς, καὶ τῆς δὲ ὑδατος ζωῆς παροδεύσαντος τοῦ λουτροφοροῦ πλόνος. The textual tradition of these lines is under discussion. Cf. PG X, Jarick and Slusser ad locum. It seems to me that the reading χρόνων, suggested by de Billy on the basis of a ms. Medic. and endorsed by Slusser, fits better than χρόνον.
… in the day when the guards of the house shake…’) in the light of the eschatological discourse of Mt 24:29 (and Mc 13:24-25), which indeed closely recalls the verses of Ecclesiastes.151 In particular, it is worth noticing that Gregory’s οἱ κοσμοφύλακες άγγελοι seems to be the result of the association of φύλακες τῆς οἰκίας (Eccl 12:3) and αἱ δυνάμεις τῶν οὐρανῶν (Mt 24:29). Thus also the images of the turmoil of all things and of people fleeing and hiding are reminiscent of the vision of the Sixth Seal in Ap 6:12-17152, and the association of continuous punishments with locusts suggests Ap 9:3-5. Moreover, Gregory refers quite clearly to baptism by defining this age as λοιπόν equivalent to baptisma in patristic literature153. Gregory concludes his apocalyptic interpretation by saying that the only ‘salvation’ for those on earth is to fly with their souls to the Creator.

This apocalyptic vision highlights the figure of Solomon not only as prophet, but also as connoisseur of the laws of nature. Gregory’s Solomon unveils the vision that at the end of the times, or at the time of the end, there will be turmoil in the physical universe and among its angelic guardians, punishment of the ungodly, and the separation of souls154.

Since the Metaphrasis speaks only of the final judgement, it does not convey Origen’s most original ideas regarding the plurality of aeons and judgements before the apokatastasis panton, which gave divine punishment the function of temporary pedagogical purification, aimed at the final conversion of rational beings155. Nonetheless, the Metaphrasis preserves two elements which may remind us of Origen’s eschatological views: 1) ‘nothing will remain hidden’ during the irrevocable punishment of the sinners, when ‘all human ἁσέβεια’ will be destroyed (1008C); 2) Gregory defines σιλώνιος (1016D) the ‘home’ where the good man will go after God’s judgement, but avoids doing the same when referring to the place intended for bad people.

It is extremely hazardous to draw from the second point that Gregory posited that paradise is temporary156, as if he hinted at a final complete reintegration. Gregory must have meant to say that only paradise is ‘eternal’, also because he must have found it difficult to reconcile the destruction of evil with the existence of a place of punishment.

151 Eccl 2:2-3: σκοτισθη ὁ ἡλιος καὶ τὸ φῶς καὶ ἡ σελήνη καὶ οἱ ἁστέρες… ἐν ἡμέρᾳ ἢ ἐὰν σαλευθῶσιν φύλακες τῆς οἰκίας… Mt 24:29: ὁ ἡλιος σκοτισθήσεται, καὶ ἡ σελήνη ὡς δώσει τὸ φέγγος κύτης, καὶ οἱ ἁστέρες πεσοῦνται ἀπὸ τοῦ οὐρανοῦ, καὶ αἱ δυνάμεις τῶν οὐρανῶν σαλευθήσονται…
152 Jarick, Gregory Thaumaturgos’ Paraphrase, 291.
153 See Lampe, A Greek Patristic Lexicon, s.v. Cf. Jarick, Gregory Thaumaturgos’ Paraphrase, 298 and De Billy in PG 10, 1018. The term λοιπόν equivalent to baptisma in patristic literature.
154 The conclusion of the Metaphrasis returns to this point: ‘You should also believe that everything will be judged in the future, and everyone will receive the payment he deserves for his deeds, both good and bad’ (1017C).
155 On Origen’s hesitations over the duration of hell, the Devil’s salvation and apokatastasis see H. Crouzel, L’Hadès et la Géhenne selon Origène, Gr. 59/2 (1978), 291-331; J.R. Sachs, Apocatastasis in Patristic Theology, TS 54 (1993), 620-629.
156 If this were true for paradise, hell should be considered such as well.
If so, even though the *Metaphrasis* is not evidence of Gregory’s agreement with the most peculiar ideas of his master, it also does not contradict Rufinus’ claim that Gregory was a supporter of the *apokatastasis*\(^\text{157}\).

**II.5. The protreptic aim**

Given the protreptic aim of the work\(^\text{158}\), Gregory’s understanding of Ecclesiastes follows two main directives that usually characterise exhortations to moral and philosophical conversion: there is an apotreptic moment (ἀποτρέπω, ‘turn away from’), which aims at disapproving of a wrong way of life and of thinking, and a protreptic one (προτρέπω, ‘urge on’), which focuses on the right path.

The *pars destruens* of this alternation is significantly marked by Gregory’s use of the expedient of autobiographical reflection and of *prosopopoeia*. By ascribing many of the thorny statements of Ecclesiastes to a young unwise Solomon or to fictional interlocutors, Gregory has in fact neutralised them. Let us shortly see when these exegetical tools are used (including those we have already encountered).

Gregory features Solomon’s difficult claims as his past views or deeds in the following cases:

- 989D-992A: the devaluation of knowledge in Eccl 1:17, together with Solomon’s previous claim that he was the most wise king of Jerusalem (1:16);
- 993B: the idea that in the end there is no difference between the ways of life of the fool and of the wise (Eccl 2:14);
- 996C-997A: there is no difference between the righteous and the unrighteous, the rational or the irrational before God; there is the same death for human beings and animals; they share the same pneuma and consist of the same ‘dust’ (Eccl 3:17-20); doubts on the *post mortem* destination of the souls of human beings and animals (3:21); exhortation to man to be joyful ‘in his works’ (3:22, which Gregory sees as implying a hedonistic meaning);
- 1005C-D: the choice to be wise and the subsequent failure in achieving it (Eccl 7:23-24)\(^\text{159}\);
- 1009B: there is no good for men but to eat, drink and be merry (Eccl 8:15)\(^\text{160}\);
- 1009C: those who avoid hatred and are courteous to everyone toil in vain; there is one end for pure and impure, righteous and wicked… (Eccl 9:1-3).


\(^{158}\) For this aspect, as well as for the lexical and thematical links between *Eccl.* and *Pan.Or.*, Noakes’ and Slusser’s articles remain of reference.

\(^{159}\) Jarick, *Gregory Thaumaturgos’ Paraphrase*, 184, points out that this interpretation, which posits three phases of Solomon’s life (wise, foolish and wise again), is attested in the Rabbinic literature (*Koheleth Rabbah* I:31, with regard to Eccl 1:12).

\(^{160}\) Gregory also interprets Eccl 8:16 as referring to Solomon’s past choice to devote himself to ‘human τρυφή’.
In the latter passage, after having interpreted Eccl 9:1-3 as past ideas, Gregory makes Solomon add in confirmation ‘I know now that these are fools’ arguments, errors and deceits!’\(^{161}\). With this phrase Gregory introduces the prosopological exegesis of Eccl 9:3-10.

People [the fools] say many things, such as, “A person who dies is gone forever”, and, “A live man is better off than a dead one, even if he lies in darkness, even if he lives his life like a dog, while the dead man was like a lion”. “For this much the living know very well, that they will die; but the dead do not know anything at all”. “There are no rewards for anyone, when duty has been done”. “As far as the dead are concerned, hatred and love come to an end”\(^{162}\) [...] As error goes on chanting these themes, it also offers such counsels as these: “You there! What are you accomplishing if you do not enjoy yourself, if you do not eat your fill of goodies, and top it off with wine? Do you not see that these were given by God for our unrestricted enjoyment? Put on clean clothes, anoint your head with oil, give this woman and that one the eye, and pass your empty life foolishly [...] Do whatever you fancy, for no one will trouble you for these things with so much as a twinge of conscience, nor does anyone outside the human race take any note of what takes place among us. And Hades, whatever that might be, to which we are said to depart, is devoid of wisdom or sensation” (Trans. Slusser, 141).

The first part of this quotation, with its reflections on life and death, parallels Eccl 3:18-21, which Gregory had considered as Solomon’s old views. The second part concerns one of the so-called “Epicurean passages” of Ecclesiastes (9:7-10).

Gregory uses the prosopological solution a second time when treating another of these passages, Eccl 11:7-9\(^{163}\). For Gregory only fools can exhort mankind to chase earthly pleasures, to indulge in their passions and to think that ‘death is an eternal evil leading to nothing’ (1016A), ignoring the fact that God’s judgement will come eventually.

These examples illustrate Gregory’s effort to solve the same problematic ideas occurring at different times with different tools. In order to understand the diversification of Gregory’s exegetical solutions, it is sufficient to reconsider briefly his treatment of the hedonistic passages all together, that is Eccl 2:24-25; 3:12-13; 5:17-18; 7:14; 8:15; 9:7-10; 11:7-9. The first three cases are interpreted as a moderate invitation to men to enjoy nourishment and the outcome of their works as long as their actions are guided by righteousness and ‘their possessions are not gained through robbery’ (1001C, regarding Eccl 5:18), for these are gifts by God and attest his providence. The exhortation to ‘live joyfully in the day of prosperity’ of Eccl 7:14 is silenced, while Eccl 8:15 becomes an opinion held by the unwise Solomon, and Eccl 9:7-10 and 11:7-9 are taken as representing the perspective of foolish people. It does not seem that Gregory is

\(^{161}\) Transl. Jarick, 226.

\(^{162}\) Slusser does not consider this phrase a direct claim of the fools.

\(^{163}\) See Slusser (ed.), St. Gregory Thaumaturgus, Life and Works, 144.
particularly disturbed by these passages, nor did he use the theory of the autobiographical reflection or *prosopopoeia* only to deal with them.

On the contrary, Gregory uses these exegetical tools, as well as other expedients, to treat both hedonistic and sceptical passages of Ecclesiastes, which are regularly featured as two interwoven viewpoints. In Gregory’s eyes the choice to live lightheartedly directly depends on the view that death brings everything to an end and that no judgement or reward is fixed. In the end, the primary reason why a man thinks and acts in the wrong way is an intellectual mistake, a misjudgement by the mind.

Indeed, Gregory immediately diagnoses the problem that those men who do not use the rational part of their soul (the ‘eyes of the soul’) remain bound to transient earthly things and pleasures and enslaved to passions. They act ‘irrationally’ (ἁλόγος, 993A)\(^{164}\) because their will (προσίρεσις) is enchanted to ‘the unrestrained impulses of the heart’ (καρδιὰς ἄθαταν ὀρμαί, 992D). Thus the fools will waste their vain life ‘in the most unholy desires and irrational impulses’ (ἐν τῇ ἐπιθυμίᾳ ἀννοσωτάτῃς, καὶ ἐν ὀρμαῖς ἁλόγοις, 1001C), chasing in distress vain wealth, choosing wickedness instead of goodness, whereas their desire (ἐπιθυμία) will never find satisfaction\(^{165}\). ‘But practical wisdom (φρόνησις) is not proved by the abundance of food, nor does intelligence (σύνεσις) tend to associate with wealth’ (IX, 1012A), and the fools will not realise that they are in fact stirred by an evil spirit and, in the first place, by the ‘evil guardian of this age’\(^{166}\). Wicked things such as jealousy (φθόνος, 997B), malice (πανουργία, 997C), calumny (συλλογισμός, 1005A)\(^{167}\), passion and anger (θυμός, ὀργή, 1005A), are indeed inspired by ‘the father of all wickedness’ to make us sin. This is the enemy whom the good man is called to resist by keeping to the path of righteousness.

Let us turn now to the *pars construens* of Gregory’s exhortation. Among the four cardinal virtues\(^{168}\), the one which receives special attention in the *Metaphrasis* is temperance (σωφροσύνη)\(^{169}\). Solomon, who becomes the paradigm of the temperate man who changed his path, ‘moderated the pleasure’ (ἡδονήν σωφρονεῖν, 992A) and realised that ‘the soul can master the corporeal nature’ and that ‘the continence enslaves the desire’ (ἐγκατέτειλε δουλεύεται ἐπιθυμίαν, 992B)\(^{170}\). Thus he greatly approves of a ‘moderate disposition’ (μέτριον ζήσεως, 1005A), to the extent that even a ‘righteous

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\(^{167}\) According to this passage, ‘Calumny is the greatest evil’.


\(^{170}\) The opposition between σωφροσύνη and ἐπιθυμία is reminiscent of Phdr. 237d-238c, where Plato speaks of the two principles that master and lead men. As to the ruling role of the soul in regard to the body see Phd. 79E-80A and Ti. 34C.

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person’ should avoid appearing wise in a way beyond all measure (ὑπερμέτρως, 1005B). Likewise he appreciates the restraint in speaking and a ‘balanced heart’ (εὐστάθεια καὶ εὐποιεῖα) in discourses (1000B-C).

Solomon also understood that the real good for men is found in ‘knowledge of wisdom and possession of fortitude’ (σοφίας τε καὶ κτήσεως ἀνδρείας, 993C). It is ‘goodness’ (ἀγαθότης) which supplies men with ἀνδρεία and the ‘capability to understand everything’ (1004A-B). ‘Contentment and doing the good (εὐθυμία καὶ εὐποιεῖα) are the greatest goods for a human being (τὰ μέγιστα ἀγαθά ἀνθρώπω, 996B). Gregory attaches a great importance to the ‘love to men’ (φιλανθρωπία), i.e. to charity. ‘The good man does good things both for himself and his neighbours’ (1013B), and ‘it is just to share bread and what is necessary for human life’ (1013D).

Consequently, the ‘temperate man’ (σώφρων) is not attached to vain wealth for he has chosen the path of goodness and ‘quiet’ (ἡσυχία) and, as a result, he is not ‘subject to evil thoughts’ (ἐνθυμήσεις πονηραί) 174. After all, ‘righteousness of life mostly leads a person to poverty’ (πενία, 1004C). Consequently, the ‘temperate man’ (σώφρων) is not attached to vain wealth for he has chosen the path of goodness and ‘quiet’ (ἡσυχία) and, as a result, he is not ‘subject to evil thoughts’ (ἐνθυμήσεις πονηραί, 1001C).

The good man knows that the excellence of human life is in ‘wisdom’ (σοφία, 1005B) and that ‘the greatest good is to lay hold of God and, abiding in this, not to sin at all’ (Μέγιστον δὲ ἀγαθόν ἀντιλαμβάνεσθαι Θεοῦ, καὶ ἐν τούτῳ ὄντα μηδὲν ἀμαρτάνειν; 1005C) 175. This latter expression, as Noakes and Slusser have already remarked, recalls closely a passage from the Pan. Or., where Gregory declares that the goal of moral life is ‘to come to God and remain in him, having been made like him by a clean mind’ (XII, §149).

Finally, Gregory’s Solomon does not omit to urge ‘the fear of God’, which is featured as ‘salutary’ (σωτήριος) for men 178, and only when dealing with the occurrences of this concept in Eccl 8:12-13 does he change their literal meaning as follows: ‘Truly the greatest good is to reverence God’ (ἀγαθόν γε μὴν μέγιστον, εὐλαξείσθαι Θεόν, 1009A; transl. Jarick, 214). Slusser has rightly highlighted the

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171 The lack of μέτρον is one of the main features of the actions of men attached to earthly things (989A-B).
173 Gregory interprets here Eccl 11:1 (‘Send out your bread upon the face of the water, for you will find it after many days’) as ‘an exhortation to the practice of charity’ and in line with the Targum. See Jarick, Gregory Thaumaturgos’ Paraphrase, 277.
174 Transl. Jarick, 146. Gregory devotes a certain attention to the pluses of poverty and the minuses of wealth in the second half of the fifth chapter (1001B-C).
175 Transl. Jarick, 176.
176 Noakes, The Metaphrase on Ecclesiastes, 198; Slusser, The Main Ethical Emphases, 358 (I quote this translation of the excerpt from the Pan. Or.). Both scholars refer also to a passage from the apocalyptic vision in the twelfth chapter (‘But there is one salvation while men are on earth, if their souls recognized and flew up to the One by whom they were brought into being’, 1017A).
177 See Gr. Thaum. Eccl. 1017B (dealing with Eccl 12:13) and the beginning of the twelfth chapter, where Solomon urges people to fear God even if there is no hint of it in Ecclesiastes (1016C).
presence of this theme in the Pan. Or., but here it is worth mentioning in particular Pan. Or. XIX, §205, where Origen is asked to pray God to fill Gregory with ‘holy fear of him, which will become the best pedagogue’ (τὸν θείον φόβον αὐτοῦ, παιδαγωγὸν ἄριστον ἔσομενον).

III. Final considerations

The Metaphrasis confirms the traditional figure of Gregory as a man of letters acquainted with rhetorical and philosophical studies, as well as with Rabbinic traditions. Gregory does not appear to have been a brilliant thinker, but he has to be acknowledged for having undertaken the literary and doctrinal revision of probably the most enigmatic and difficult text of the Old Testament.

Despite the fact that the Metaphrasis does not give us the idea that Gregory was a staunch admirer of Origen’s allegorism, we believe that some of its exegetical and thematic aspects bear witness to Origen’s influence. In our opinion, the literary genre of the paraphrase, freely used by Gregory, is the main cause for the scanty employment of allegorical exegesis and for the interwoven lack of concern for Christological issues. The necessity to stick to the text has certainly prevented Gregory from exposing his point of view in a more articulate manner, and this appears to offer Gregory a sort of excusatio for not having given a clearer perspective on natural and anthropological issues. At any rate, this seems not to explain entirely why Gregory never hinted at any particular Christian doctrine.

The core aspects of Gregory’s way of thinking remain perceptible. The teaching of the two paths appears to have been of fundamental importance for Gregory’s attempt to keep together his profane education and his religious beliefs while treating issues regarding the universe and human psychology. He shares with Origen the Platonic view that the cosmos is divided into a visible earthly part and an invisible intelligible part. But for Gregory, the contents of the upper world are not Plato’s pragmata (the ideas), but the poiemata of God, what God has fixed in his providence, that is to say the rules which govern the cosmos and the eschatological realities, the judgement of men according to their good or evil deeds, and the complete destruction of evil. These are the issues which every body—and not only Christians—should reflect upon, for earthly realities are transient, not because they are imperfect copies of ideas, but because this age is under the influence of the devil, which conditions the decision-making process of each man. The Metaphrasis is no doubt an exhortation to a philosophical conversion.

Who then were Gregory’s addressees? They were in all likelihood pagans. That is confirmed by the fact that Gregory’s work follows the strategy of introducing those ‘prejudiced against the Christians’ and those ‘unwilling to become Christians’ to some fundamental principles of Christian religion, as is described by Origen in CC VIII,52:

179 Slusser, The Main Ethical Emphases, 358.
For our part, because of the many and innumerable facts which have persuaded us to live the Christian life, it is our primary desire to do all in our power to make all men familiar with the whole of the doctrine of Christians. But where we find some who are prejudiced by slander against the Christians so that, under the impression that Christians are godless folk, they pay no attention to those who claim to teach about the divine word, there we do everything possible, in accordance with the principle of love to mankind, to establish the truth of the doctrine that there will be eternal punishment for the impious, and to make even those who are unwilling to become Christians accept the doctrine. So also we want to implant a conviction that those who have lived good lives will be happy, seeing that even people alien to the faith make many affirmations about the upright life which are much the same as ours; for one would find that their teachings have not entirely lost the universal notions of good and bad, righteous and unrighteous. All men who see the world and the appointed movement of the heaven in it and of the stars in the fixed sphere, and the order of the so-called planets which travel in the opposite direction to the movement of the world, and who also observe the mixture of airs which is for the advantage of animals and especially of men, and the abundance of things created for men, should beware of doing anything displeasing to the Creator of the universe and of their souls and of their mind within their souls. They should be convinced that punishment will be inflicted for their sins, and that He who deals with each individual on his merits will grant rewards corresponding to the deeds he has done successfully or performed rightly. All men should be convinced that if they live good lives they will come to a better end, but, if evil, they will be given over to evil pains and torments for their misdeeds and acts of lasciviousness and licentiousness and, moreover, for their effeminacy and cowardice, and for all their folly (transl. Chadwick, 490-491).

In conclusion, it seems that the question of whether Gregory was a student at Origen’s school in Caesarea, or a bishop carrying out his missionary activity at the time he composed the Metaphrasis, cannot be answered.
CHAPTER 4. AD THEOPOMPUM

I. Status quaestionis

The Ad Theop. has been preserved in its entirety by a single Syriac manuscript dated to before 562, the Brit. Mus. Add. 12156, with the following title: ‘Gregory the Great’s treatise to Theopompus on the passibility or impassibility of God’. Another incomplete fragment of about ten lines (8th/9th cent.), which keeps the same translation of the Add. 12156, has been recently discovered in the monastery of Deir Al-Surian in Egypt and published by Sebastian P. Brock and Lucas van Rompay. L. Abramowski, whose 1978 article is the best study on the Ad Theop., has pointed out that the original nucleus of the British ms. consisted in a corpus of writings by Timothy Aelurus, which was expanded two times, first with the addition of a collection of other letters including the Florilegium Edessenum and a list of the ‘blasphemies’ by Diodore, Theodore and Nestorius, and thereafter with writings of Cyril of Alexandria and of Epiphanius, and with Gregory’s Ad Theop.3.

The text of the Ad Theop. was published with few variances by P. de Lagarde in 1858, by J.B. Pitra, with a Latin translation with notes by J.P.P. Martin, in 1883, and by M. Pazzini, with a very literal translation into Italian, in 20114. In 1880 V. Ryssel translated the treatise into German, and supplied it with useful notes and a short study5. Ryssel also divided the text into thirty-two paragraphs, but we will refer to Martin’s division into seventeen paragraphs, since it was also used by Pazzini and Slusser.

In his review of Ryssel’s book, Johannes Dräseke identified the ‘Isocrates’ mentioned by Gregory as the inspirer of Theopompus’ ideas (ch. VI) with a certain ‘Socrates’, a follower of Marcion mentioned in Adamantius’ Dialogue on the true faith in God and in Epiphanius’ Ancoratus6. Harnack and Bardenhewer promptly rejected

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3 Abramowski, Die Schrift Gregors des Lehrers ‘Ad Theopompum’, 278-279. For the sake of convenience, from now on I will refer to its English translation by L. Wickham in Ead. Formula and Context: Studies in Early Christian Thought (CSIS 365), Aldershot 1992, n. VIII (Gregory the Teacher’s ‘Ad Theopompum’).
4 Lagardii, Analecta Syriaca, 46-64; Pitra, Analecta Sacra, IV, 103-120 (text), 363-376 (transl.); M. Pazzini, Trattato di San Gregorio Taumaturgo circa la non passibilità o passibilità di Dio. Testo siriano e traduzione italiana, LASBF 61 (2011), 381-411. When I refer to the text I provide the numbers of the chapter and lines according to Pazzini’s edition.
5 Ryssel, Gregorius Thaumaturgus, 73-99 (transl.), 118-124 (study). Ryssel provides also a study of the lexicon at 150-157.
6 J. Dräseke, Zu Victor Ryssels Gregorius Thaumaturgus, JPT 9 (1883), 634-640.
Dräseke’s identification\(^7\), which, as Crouzel pointed out later on, is a ‘conjecture inéverifiable’ since we cannot draw from it any doctrinal information about this Socrates\(^8\).

Rysssel argued that Gregory might have composed the \textit{Ad Theop.} shortly after he left Origen’s school (or at the time he was in Caesarea) since the examples of classical antiquity mentioned in ch. X would echo Origen’s teaching\(^9\). Bardenhewer, unlike Harnack, found it reasonable to consider the \textit{Ad Theop.} as a work of the first years of Gregory’s episcopacy\(^10\), and Slusser has argued that it cannot be from Gregory’s ‘early years as a Christian’ by virtue of the sophistication of his arguments\(^11\). No one has tried to date it except Fouska, who acknowledged the influence that the \textit{Contra Celsum} (d. 248) had on the \textit{Ad Theop.}, which was noticed by Rysssel, and, consequently, hypothesised that the latter was written between 248 and 250, before Decius’ persecution\(^12\).

According to Rysssel, there are different elements that show that the work is genuine. Gregory’s references to personalities of classical antiquity and his philosophical approach to the issue of the impassibility of God plainly show the influence of Origen’s teaching on him\(^13\). The \textit{Ad Theop.} can be easily dated to the third century, since it has little to do with later theologians dealing with its chief topic\(^14\). Rysssel minimises the fact that Gregory avoids stating the distinction between the Father and the Son. For him this does not imply that Gregory was a Monarchianist or a Theopaschite, but has to be explained by the speculative approach of the treatise: it regards the issue of the impassibility of the divine nature in itself and deals with it in a philosophical way. Theopompus’ position is that of a pagan who questions that God can suffer, and Gregory attributes to him the Epicurean idea of God’s inactivity, which was also opposed by Origen in the \textit{Contra Celsum}\(^15\).

In the past, only Puech deemed it imprudent ‘de se prononcer sans réserve en faveur de l’authenticité’ and listed the \textit{Ad Theop.} as a dubious work\(^16\), whereas for decades most scholars maintained Gregory’s authorship\(^17\).

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\(^9\) Dräseke (n. 6) endorsed this latter suggestion.

\(^10\) Thus also Tixeront, \textit{Précis de patrologie}, 136-137.


\(^12\) Φουσκα, \textit{Γρηγόριος ὁ Νεοκαισαρεύς}, 181.

\(^13\) Thus also Martin in Pitra, \textit{Analecta Sacra}, t. IV, XXI-XXII.

\(^14\) Rysssel mentions Athanasius, Hilary and Theodoretus.

\(^15\) Rysssel, \textit{Gregorius Thaumaturgus}, 123-124, does not refer to a precise passage but to an influential study on Origen by Redepenning.

A certain caution is found also in an article by Crouzel in 1963\textsuperscript{18}, where some of Ryssel’s ideas are enhanced. According to Crouzel, the lack of explicit biblical references and the philosophical approach of the \textit{Ad Theop.} show that it was addressed to a pagan, and indeed the theoretical problems put forward by Theopompus remind us of those faced by Origen in \textit{CC IV,14} onwards. The absence of the distinction between the Father and the Son, with the exception of the final chapter, gave Crouzel the impression that Gregory spoke as a Patripassian. At the same time, he noted that Origen’s \textit{HEz VI,6}, where it is said that ‘the Father himself is not impassible’\textsuperscript{19}, showed the ‘complete agreement’ between master and pupil. Crouzel rapidly mentioned further resemblances between the expressions and the ideas of Gregory and Origen, many of which are too general to be considered worthy of reassessment\textsuperscript{20}, and stressed the rhetorical verbosity that characterised both the \textit{Ad Theop.} and the \textit{Pan. Or.} For all these reasons Crouzel deemed likely the ascription of the \textit{Ad Theop.} to the Thaumaturgus.

Luise Abramowski rejected this attribution mainly because it shows a ‘non-Logos’ theology with no connections with that of Origen\textsuperscript{21}. In this way, she took the opposite position to Ryssel’s. She referred to the fact that the impassibility of God is treated without mentioning his human nature as the main point that marks the difference between Gregory and Origen over Trinitarian and Christological doctrines\textsuperscript{22}. According to Abramowski, these doctrinal peculiarities cannot be explained by the apologetic aim of the \textit{Ad Theop.} and should be interpreted as evidence that the author’s theological thought had Monarchian features, which may only inappropriately be defined as ‘modalistic’. Moreover, since Gregory is addressed by Theopompus as ‘teacher’ twice in the text (and once by Philoxenus)\textsuperscript{23}, Abramowski named the author of the \textit{Ad Theop.} ‘Gregory the teacher’, but without implying that this was his real name. This last hypothesis is indeed needless since Gregory is called ‘teacher’ seven times in Gregory of Nyssa’s \textit{Vita}, as Slusser has justly remarked\textsuperscript{24}. But even Abramowski’s attempt to highlight the distance between Gregory and Origen is not completely persuasive, for she has dismissed with a certain levity the closeness pointed out by Crouzel between the \textit{Ad

\textsuperscript{17} See also: Godet, \textit{Grégoire de Néocésarée ou le Thaumaturge}, 1846; Quasten, \textit{Patrology}, II, 127. For a broader list see Φουσκα, \textit{Γρηγόριος ὁ Νεοκαισαρείς}, 182.

\textsuperscript{18} Crouzel, \textit{La Passion de l’Impassible}, 269-279 (269: ‘l’attribution au Thaumaturge est fondée sur l’absence d’objections plutôt que sur des arguments positifs’).


\textsuperscript{21} Another scholar who denies the authenticity of the \textit{Ad Theop.} is A. Grillmeier, \textit{Christ in Christian Tradition}. Vol. I, \textit{From the Apostolic Age to Chalcedon (451)}, transl. by J. Bowden, Atlanta 1975 (1 ed. 1965), 233, n.55 (the ‘\textit{Ad Theopompum surely does not belong to the author of the \textit{Expositio fidei}’).\textsuperscript{1}

\textsuperscript{22} Abramowski, \textit{Gregory the Teacher’s “Ad Theopompum”}, 2-3, 12.

\textsuperscript{23} See n.41.

\textsuperscript{24} In particular see \textit{Saint Gregory the Thaumaturgus}, 578, where Slusser also stresses that Gregory is called even more frequently ‘the Great’ (as in the Syriac ms.).
The apparent Monarchianist tendency of the Ad Theop. pointed out by Abramowski has led other scholars to express their doubts about its authenticity, but they rarely provide further analyses\(^{25}\), whereas it has been justified on the basis of its literary genre by Henri Crouzel and, above all, by Manlio Simonetti\(^{26}\). As we already know, the latter, before he became more sceptical about the figure of Gregory, interpreted what he viewed as the Monarchianist tendency found in the Ad Theop., the Ad Gelianum and the Ad Philagrium as ‘not incompatible’ with the theological stance of Pan. Or. and Confessio fidei, because this served Gregory’s apologetic aims. For him, the Ad Theop., like the Ad Philagrium, attests the ‘good cultural level’ reached by the dialogue between pagans and Christians in the second half of the third century. Thence, Gregory of Neocaesarea, ‘the evangelist of Pontus’ according to tradition, may have found it useful to present a concept which was strictly monotheistic while discussing with a pagan.

Simonetti’s views are to be endorsed except for his underlining of the fact that the Ad Theop. would presuppose ‘una concezione rigidamente monarchiana’\(^{27}\) because Gregory identified Jesus with the God who is the subject of the entire treatise. As a matter of fact, Gregory never explicitly states the identification of the Father and the Son, and we wonder why one should be surprised by this fact since, as we argue, the work aims to remove the theoretical obstacles that prevented Greek cultured men from accepting the passion of God. This appears to be the most plausible reason why Gregory does not give a clear theological pronouncement.

II. Influence

In his own review to Ryssel’s book, Franz Overbeck noted that the arrangement of the Ad Theop. reminded him of Methodius\(^{28}\), but it was N. Bonwetsch who singled out some passages from the sixth chapter of the Ad Theop. relating to three passages, very


\(^{26}\) Crouzel, *Gregor der Wundertäter*, 789; Simonetti, *Una nuova ipotesi*, 291-292. Slusser has continued to ascribe the Ad Theop. to Gregory Thaumaturgus, but without discussing Abramowski’s remarks.

\(^{27}\) Simonetti, *Una nuova ipotesi*, 283.

close to one another, from Methodius’ works, which he had edited previously in 1891. One of these passages comes from the third book of the De resurrectione, which is preserved only in Slavonic but can be read in Bonwetsch’s translation into German. The other two come from the fragmentary Adversus Porphyrium, which Bonwetsch edited on the basis of the ms. Monacensis 498 (c. X), and whose authenticity has been questioned; the end of the third fragment is preserved under Methodius’ name also by the same Syriac manuscript handing down the Ad Theop., the Brit. Mus. Add. 12156.

Ad Theop. VI (387-389 Pazzini):

A) But he who by his own will and with his impassible nature submits the passions while engaging with them, we do not say about him that he became subjected to suffering even if he accepted by his own will the participation with the passions...

B) For, the impassible one became the passion of the passions, in order that in him the passions suffer, while impassibility itself manifested its impassibility in its passion.

C) Or, how is he not immortal, he who [experienced] death [but] was not taken by death? For the incomprensible coming of God to death was the death of death; and the impassibility of God was the passion of the passions [even] when he was [engaged] in the passions...

De Resurrectione III,23 (420.25–421.6 Bonwetsch):

Du hast gesandt dein uns zur Wahrheit unterweisendes Wort vom Himmel, welches, leidenslos seini, diesen viel leidenden Leib durch deinen Willen annahm, auf daß durch Leiden das Leidenslose wegen des Leidenskampfes den Leiden ein Leiden geworden Ton den Leiden befreie und durch den Tod des Todlosen ein Tod dem Tode erfunden den Tod auslösche, daß das Sterbliche in die Unsterblichkeit und das Leidentliche in die Leidenslosigkeit wegen deiner Barmherzigkeit verwandelt werde. Denn deinem Befehl hat durchaus niemand widerstanden.

C. Porphyrium III:

… the passion of the passions [having taken place] through suffering, and the death of the death through dying, he [the Logos]

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30 This manuscript preserves three of the five fragments which Bonwetsch has listed as pieces of Methodius’ C. Porph. For a Latin translation of the passages from the C. Porph. see Leo Allatius in S.P.N. Methodii Episcopi et Martyris Convivium decem virgínrum. Leo Allatius ... Graece vulgavit, Latine vertit, Notas, & Diatribam de Methodiorum scriptis adiecit. Romae 1656, 349-352. The English translation provided in ANF VI, 400 depends on Allatius’, even in its mistakes, but I have found some help in it for my own translation.

31 Bonwetsch (ed.), Methodius, XXXIX.

32C. Porph. III (506.26–507.7 Bonwetsch): … πάθος παθῶν διὰ τοῦ παθῶν καὶ θάνατος διὰ τοῦ θανατοῦ, οὐ γειρώθης ὑπὸ τοῦ θανάτου, οὐδὲ ἀληθεύῃς ὑπὸ πάθους, οὐτὲ γὰρ πάθος ἄλλως αὐτῶν ἔξεστιν οὔτε θάνατος ἑλμύρατο, ἀλλ’ ἣν ἐν τῷ πάθητι μένου ἀπάθης καὶ ἐν τῷ θνητῷ ἀθάνατος, πᾶν ὑπὸ ἄρ καὶ μέσου καὶ ἀνω κατελήφθως καὶ τῷ θνητῷ θεότητι κεράσας ἱλασάτω, ἡττήθη το θεῖος θάνατος εἰς ἱλασάσας ἀνασταυρωθείσης τῆς σαρκός.
D) For, the impassibility violently attacked the passions in the likes of a passion, so that in its passion it shall be the suffering of the passions… having not been overcome by death, nor pained by the passion. Indeed, neither did the passion entirely alter him nor death harm him, but he was in the passible remaining impassible and in the mortal remaining immortal, overpowering all that [is in] the air and [in] the middle and above, and mingling the mortal with the immortal divinity. Death was completely defeated, the flesh being crucified to bring out the incorruption.

*C. Porph.* II33:
… with power he suffered remaining impassible, and suffered bringing immortality to the mortal.

The closeness of these passages is evidence that the *Ad Theop.* was read in Greek a few decades after its composition by Methodius and, if Buchheit is right in refuting the authenticity of the fragments of the *C. Porph.* published by Bonwetsch34, by another unknown author in a period (and in a language) which we are not able to establish.

Something else can be said about the knowledge that the assumed anonymous author of the *C. Porph.* had of the *Ad Theop.* Buchheit had explained the resemblances between the passage from the *De Res.* and *C. Porph.* III by hypothesising that this latter might have depended either on Gregory or on Methodius. If we compare the second fragment of the *C. Porph.* with the second half of the ninth chapter of the *Ad Theop.* we will notice other similarities between the two writings. Immediately after the extract from *C. Porph.* II quoted above, we read:

since a body, when struck or cut by a body, is just so far struck or cut as what strikes, strikes it, or what cuts, cuts it. Indeed, the blow reflects upon what strikes in accordance to the repercussion of what is subject [to the blow], both the agent and the patient being in equal passion. If actually what is cut, by means of a small constitution, does not resist stoutly to what cuts, what cuts will not be able to cut. When, indeed, the body that is subject does not stand fast against the blow of the sword, but rather yields to it, the activity is without effect, just as in the cases of

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33 *C. Porph.* III (50,21-22, Bonwetsch): … δυνάμει καὶ ἐπαθὲν ἀπάθης μένων, καὶ ἐπαθὲν ἀθανασίαν τῷ θνητῷ πορίζωμενος.

34 V. Buchheit, *Studien zu Methodios von Olympos*, Berlin 1958 (TU 69), 120-129. Buchheit founded his refutal of the authenticity of the fragments of the *C. Porph.* on the basis of the divergences of language and style between these fragments and other original works by Methodius. Contemporary scholars have generally accepted Buchheit’s conclusion (see, for instance, H. Chadwick, *CIR* 9 (1959), 290), but Bernard Botte has pointed out that ‘la démonstration n’est guère convaincante’ because of the scarcity of evidence provided (see his review in *RThAM* 27 [1960], 364).
bodies consisting of smaller particles, like fire and air; for in such cases the impulse of more solid bodies is delivered without effect. But if stone, or iron, or wood or anything else which the men use against themselves to murder one another, is not able to damage and break fire or air, because their nature consists of smaller particles and is readily yielding, how should not rather the Wisdom remain invulnerable and impassible, not corrupted at all by anything, even though it was in conjunction with the body that was cut and nailed, remaining better and purer than any other nature after God begot it?35

The argumentation of C. Porph. II consists of two steps: first, it denies that a solid body, like a sword, can divide a body, like fire (or air), which is unable to resist a solid body since it is constituted of ‘smaller particles’; secondly, it says that the incorruptible σοφία remains impassible even being in conjunction with a solid body, since it ‘is better and purer than any other nature’. The same argumentation is provided by Gregory in Ad Theop. IX,35ff. (395 Pazzini)36, where he explains the inability of a blade to cut the fire on the basis of the different constitution of their natures, and acknowledges that the incorruptible divine nature is ‘more excellent and higher than all the bodies’, superior to all beings, natures (ما لذن،), and considerations, and remains always the same.

The dependence of the author of the C. Porph. on the Ad Theop., already suggested by Buchheit, finds confirmation in another point raised by Abramowski. She argued indeed that the Ad Theop. precedes the C. Porph. on the basis of the fact that “Methodius” speaks of the Logos while “Gregory” does not distinguish between the Father and the Son37. Even if we are dealing with a fragment, and Gregory develops three other examples concerning the physical relation between bodies to defend the impassibility of God of which we do not find any traces in what remains of the C. Porph.38, the idea of this dependence appears reasonable.

35 C. Porph. II (505,3-506,6 Bonwetsch): σῶμα μὲν γὰρ ὑπὸ σώματος τυπτόμενον ἢ τεμνόμενον τοσοῦτον τύπτεται ἢ τέμνεται, ὡσον ἂν τὸ τύπτον τύπτῃ καὶ τὸ τέμνον τέμνῃ, κατὰ ἀντιτύπησιν γὰρ τοῦ ὑποκειμένου τῷ τύπτοντι ἢ πληγῇ γίνεται, ἐν ἑνὶ πάθει τῶν ἑκατέρων ὅντων, καὶ τοῦ δράντος καὶ τοῦ δρωμένου. ἀμέλει ἂν μὴ τὸ τέμνομενον μετὰ ὀλίγης ἔξεως ἀντιτύπησι τῷ τεμνοντι, τὸ τέμνον τέμνειν οὐ δυνήσεται. τῇ γὰρ φορᾷ του ἔξοσος οὐκ ἀντιπαραμείναντος τοῦ ὑποκειμένου σώματος, ἀλλὰ συνεἰζόμενος μᾶλλον, ἀπρακτός γίνεται ἢ ἐνέργεια, οὗν καθάπερ καὶ ἐπὶ τῶν λεπτομερεστέρων σωμάτων πυρὸς ἢ ἀέρος· ἐκλύεται γὰρ ἐν τοῖς τοιούτοις ἀνένεργοις ἢ τῶν στερεωτέρων ὑπὸ σωμάτων. εἰ δὲ τὰρ ἢ ἀέρα λίθος ἢ σίδηρος ἢ ξύλον ἢ ἄλλο, ὡς οἱ ἀνθρώποι χρώμενοι καθ’ ἔξωτον ἄλληλον, τρωσαί τε καὶ διελείν οὐ δύναται παρὰ τὸ εἰκτικῆς τε σύν καὶ λεπτομερεστέρας φύσεως τυγχάνειν, πῶς οὐ μᾶλλον ἀτρικτός γε ἢ μεινεν ἢ σοφία καὶ ἀπαθής, οὐδὲν πρός οὐδενὸς κακομονημένη, κάν τεμνομένῳ σωμάτι καὶ προσηλμένῳ τῷ σώματι, βελτίως καὶ καθαρωτέρα φύσεως πᾶσης μετὰ τὸν γεννησάμενον κύθνον θεόν ὑπάρχονα. 

36 Cf. next paragraph.

37 Abramowski, Gregory the Teacher’s “Ad Theopompum”, 3, n.16; she considered authentic the ascription of the fragments of the C. Porph. to Methodius.

38 Gregory give three other examples concerning the relation between bodies to defend the impassibility of God: in the sixth chapter, between the passages C) and D) we have quoted above (389 Pazzini), Gregory refers to a diamond hit by an iron; in the ninth chapter mentions and interprets the legend of the
After Methodius and, perhaps, the anonymous author of the *C. Porph.* the treatise disappears from the Greek world to survive in the Syriac context. Lane Fox’s claim that nobody but the Syriac manuscript handing down the *Ad Theop.* attests the existence of this work is therefore groundless.

Luise Abramowski has indicated that the *Ad Theop.* was added to the ms. for it provided an authoritative confirmation of the Theopaschitism sustained by moderate Monophysites such as Philoxenus of Mabbug, who actually knew it as a work of ‘the sainted Gregory’. The German scholar has noticed that the *Ad Theop.* heavily influenced Philoxenus, and indeed chapters II-IV appear to have been written in support of his views. However, Abramowski has established that the *Ad Theop.* ‘as a whole cannot possibly be by Philoxenus, since […] it lacks any internal trinitarian differentiation in the Godhead in the same way as it lacks any internal Christological differentiation by two natures’, and that it cannot be a forgery because ‘a so naïve use of the Stoic teaching of “mixing” is unthinkable already long before the time of Philoxenus. No forger could have summoned up the ingenuousness necessary to produce a seeingly ancient document in this way’. Of particular relevance is Abramowski’s demonstration that a section of the ch. XII has undergone the insertion of three glosses, which originated from Philoxenus or someone of his circle. Eventually, as we have seen, she considered the *Ad Theop.* as a work of the third century, but not by our Gregory.

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39 A possible connection between the *Ad Theop.* and Ps. Marcellus’ *Sermo maior de fide*, pointed out by A. Grillmeier, has been dismissed by Abramowski, *Gregory the Teacher’s “Ad Theopompum”*, 4, n.18.
40 Lane Fox, *Pagans and Christians*, 522.
41 I. Guidi, *La lettera di Filossoeno ai monaci di Tell’addâ (Teleda)*, AALM 12 (1883/4), 494: ‘Life thus annihilates death, as is said by one amongst the true teachers, I refer to the sainted Gregory: the immortal annihilates death’ (transl. extracted from Abramowski, *Gregory the Teacher’s “Ad Theopompum”*, 8). Abramowski, *ibidem*, 7-9, states that the vagueness of this quotation does not allow us to establish whether Philoxenus read the *Ad Theop.* in Greek or in Syriac, but she tends to admit the second possibility and finds the text closest to Philoxenus’s quotation in ch. XII: ‘what shame could God sustain in his Passion, who in his immortality thwarted death by his death?’ (transl. Slusser, 166). Philoxenus ascribed to Gregory also the *Kata meros pistis* by Apollinaris, quoting it in his letter to the monks of Senoun. See Philoxène de Mabbug, *Lettre aux moines de Senoun*, éd. par A. de Halleux, Louvain 1963 (CSCO, Vol. 231-232, Scriptores Syri, T. 98-99), T. 98, 36 (text), T. 99, 30 (transl.),
42 Abramowski, *Gregory the Teacher’s “Ad Theopompum”*, 7-8, where she refers to the book by A. de Halleux, *Philoxène de Mabbug. Sa vie, ses écrits, sa théologie*, Lovain 1963. Indeed, there are many passages of the *Ad Theop.* which seem to have been quoted by Philoxenus and which would deserve a separate treatment. Here it should suffice to refer the reader to 340-351, 459-505 of de Halleux’s book.
43 Abramowski, *Gregory the Teacher’s “Ad Theopompum”*, 7-8.
III. Summary

The Ad Theop. takes the shape of a philosophical dialogue between Gregory and Theopompus, even if the latter disappears as interlocutor from the sixth chapter onwards, leaving Gregory to develop his monologue for more than half of the writing, to the extent that the work appears to become more and more a sermon.

Since we lack of any part of the original version of the Ad Theop., it is not possible to form any opinion about the degree of the adherence to the Greek text on the part of the Syriac translator. This makes it difficult to grasp with clarity the significance of many of Gregory’s terms, and to understand whether the copious repetitions which weigh the dialogue down and sometimes fail to make Gregory’s arguments clearer are original. Many of these argumentative repetitions are not accounted for in the following summary.

The first chapter supplies us with the description of the circumstances where the dialogue took place. Willing to have an open mind about the issue of God’s impassibility, Theopompus met and questioned Gregory, who was about to reach the place where he used to gather with his ‘friends’ and have discussions. Unsatisfied by his rushed reply, Theopompus followed Gregory as far as the meeting place and urged him to reply to his question with further explanations as a ‘teacher’ and a ‘wise man’ would do with people ‘simple’ and ‘unfamiliar with doctrine’. Gregory then recalls (ch. II) his reply to Theopompus in front of other listeners gathered around him, here called ‘the teacher’, as if they were in a philosophical circle or a school.

Gregory, who had admitted the impassibility of God, then asks Theopompus to explain how he interpreted his reply. For him, Gregory’s acknowledgment implied that it was impossible for God to suffer, even if he wished to, because ‘his nature (تضمن) would act against his will (وضع)’ (II, 7-9). Gregory denies this possibility because God’s omnipotent will and freedom (تناثر) cannot be subjected either to his nature or to the power of necessity (طاول: Gr. ananke). If God were subjected to necessity, he would suffer from a great passion (طع), while in truth he is above all.

Theopompus then clarifies his doubts (ch. III). How can the impassible and incorruptible nature of God bear human passions? To suffer from human passions would not be fitting for God, while if God cannot suffer from them, this entails that his

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44 This is the case for the frequent indistinct use of ‘essence’ and ‘nature’.
45 Cf. P. Bettio, Scuole e ambienti intellettuali nelle chiese di Siria, in C. D’Ancona (ed.), Storia della filosofia nell’Islam medievale, I, Torino 2005 (Piccola Biblioteca Einaudi, N.s., Filosofia 285), 84. Unfortunately, even if Gregory’s admission of God’s impassibility provoked a certain murmuring among his listeners, it is not clear whether they should be considered members of a philosophical circle, students or catecumens. Fouska, Γρηγόριος ὁ Νεοκαισαρείας ἐπίσκοπος ὁ Θαυματουργός, 180, thinks that Gregory is speaking to a community of believers; U.W. Knorr, Gregor der Wundertäter als Missionar, «Evangelisches Missionsmagazin» 110 (1966), 75, thinks to catecumens.
46 To define Gregory’s view, we can endorse a statement that de Halleux used for Philoxenus of Mabbug: ‘la «nature» est à la «volonté » ce que la nécessité et la contrainte sont à la liberté et à la spontanéité’ (Philoxène de Mabbug, 474).
nature is stronger than his will. Gregory replies to the first consequence in the sixth chapter, after having returned to it at ch. V, and replies to the second consequence in ch. IV.

Gregory’s first answer focuses on the intrinsic difference between divine and human powers over nature. The human being consists of the ‘composition of body and soul’ (יווחנה י直辖市 ימי, IV,3), and since it is by his own constitution bound to the law (=suma: Gr. nomos) of his creator, ‘he cannot do everything that comes to his will’ (IV,6). Indeed body and soul are two different natures in mutual conflict, and therefore they prevent the human being from acting with a will free from hindrances. On the contrary, God’s will is not limited by anything because ‘his essence (יווחנה י直辖市 ימי) is not made of different substances (SUMA) that go against one another’ (IV,22-23). While the created human being is subjected to birth (נַחַד) and to corruption (נֶחָד) and does not dominate over anything, his creator is superior to everything that was and is, to law and necessity as well as to habit and sickness, and can act with invincible power. Since God’s will and essence are one, immutable and omnipotent, it is wrong to believe that ‘God does go against his will because he has given himself to passion, even if God is in his impassible nature’ (IV,13-15). The definitions of God provided by Gregory mark the philosophical tone of his reply:

‘boundless goodness and beauty […] incorruptible intelligence (יווחנה י直辖市 ימי) […] simple and uncomposite (יווחנה י直辖市 ימי) not mingled (יווחנה י直辖市 ימי) with evils because one is his essence (יווחנה י直辖市 ימי), and one is his good will which is not divided, […] has no hindrance from his nature, since […] nothing rebels against him, and his will is free and dominates over everything…’ (IV,29ff.).

For all these reasons, Gregory concludes, the omnipotent force of God cannot be subjected to any passion for his will is hindered by nothing.

47 Lit. ‘the formation of his nature and the creation of his body’ (יווחנה י直辖市 ימי, IV,5).
48 Pazzini translates these lines as follows (382): ‘Dell’uomo, la cui composizione è di anima e corpo … è facile per noi dire e considerare che non può operare nulla che vada contro la sua volontà…’, but this contradicts the rest of Gregory’s argumentation. As a matter of fact can be translated as ‘goes up to his will’ (cf. J. Payne Smith (ed.), A compendious Syriac Dictionary, founded upon the Thesaurus Syriacus of R. Payne Smith, Oxford 1903, 378), or more freely, after Slusser (154): ‘a human being … cannot do everything that comes into his head’. Later on (384), Pazzini himself follows this interpretation: ‘nell’attività per forza non si addice a loro che facciano interamente ciò sale alla volontà di ognuna di esse che facciano’.
49 The association of the contradiction between body and soul with the theme of the law seems inspired by Rom 7:23 and Gal 5:17-18.
50 This word is often used to translate hypostasis. I doubt that it is legitimate to see in this phrase a covert allusion to a Trinitarian or Christological position.
51 In this case Pazzini (382, fourth from last line) commits an oversight and translates אַשֶם as ‘nature’ instead of ‘will’.
52 It is noteworthy that Gregory denies God’s mingling with evils here, but always admits that he is ‘mingled’ (SUMA) with passions (VI,15, 45, IX,46).
In the fifth chapter Theopompus states his agreement with Gregory with regard to God’s omnipotent will, inasmuch as he is not prevented from suffering by his impassible essence (ŦܘܬƦʃܐ), but still sees that God’s suffering is against his nature being immutable. In other words, Theopompus admits that the nature of the divinity cannot be in contradiction to his will, not even if God should suffer passion. Still, he reiterates the same objection by slightly changing his focus and by questioning ‘whether God ever contemplated suffering human passions’, that is doubting his decision to suffer, ‘because his impassible nature is always as it is’ (V,9-10). This allows Gregory to develop his reply to the first problem put forward by Theopompus in ch. III.

Gregory, who connects Theopompus’ view to that of a certain Isocrates, builds his argumentation on the premiss that God’s passion would be such if indeed it were ‘useless and improper in itself’ (VI,5-6). Thus he offers a precise definition of the conditions that determine when there is passion. Someone suffers passion when the passion dominates him, being ‘outside the will of the one who suffers’.

But he who by his own will and with his impassible nature submits the passions while engaging with them, we do not say about him that he became subjected to suffering even if he accepted by his own will the participation in the passions (VI,14-16).

God has done this, in his superior goodness, for the sake of men, to ‘serve’ them and aiming to help them to heal their evil thoughts. Thus ‘in his passion he shows the impassibility’. The activity of God can be comparable to that of a physician who puts great effort into treating a sick person. By doing so, the physician makes himself a ‘servant’, since he ‘for a short time’ has submitted his power to assist a patient\(^\text{53}\), without this power having diminished or become foreign to the physician. But this submission is not “substantial” since the physician decided by his own will to struggle for the healing of the sick, and the healing gives the physician joy and glory (ŦƦŶŴũƣܬ). Thus, because of God’s superiority and mastery over the passions, ‘the impassible one became the passion of the passions, in order that in him the passions suffer, while impassibility itself manifested its impassibility in its passion’ (VI,32-33)\(^\text{54}\).

Another instance to explain how God’s impassibility was ‘passion for the passions’ is that of a diamond hit by an iron (VI,47ff.): in this case it is the iron that suffers from the blow when it hits the diamond, whereas the latter remains impassible. This example allows Gregory to strengthen the statement that God was ‘the death of death’; indeed he ‘was not taken by death’ despite experiencing it, and remained impassible despite being tested by iron and fire. After all, Gregory argues, we would have not known the impassibility of God if he had not mingled (ňƍźƆŴŶ, VI,45) or participated (ŦŴƘŴƣ, VI,54) with the passions and had not defeated them with ‘the

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\(^{53}\) ‘Servant’ is an allusion to Phil 2 (6-7), and ‘for a short time’ is typical in John’s Gospel. See Abramowski, Gregory the Teacher’s “Ad Theopompum”, 14.

\(^{54}\) Likewise Ad Theop. IX,31-34 (395 Pazzini).
power of his impassibility’ (と思いなさるもの、VI,57; VII,11). This power has shown the superiority of the impassibility on passions, for, like an athlete who has been tested, God has first competed and then won the ‘crown of victory.’ Indeed, he was ‘within the gates of death’ (VII,13ff.) and has shown that his immortality is not subjected to any power or passion, while he himself is God ‘omnipotent’, ‘this is the true lordship’, ‘this is the true authority’ (원상하산) that is not subjected’ (VII,17). Those who criticise the ‘wise (군주) coming to death’ of this God, who is himself ‘wisdom’ (군주), and the ‘excellence of the power (군주) of God by whose death the impassibility has spread over all men’, and consider it as ‘fiction’, ‘simplicity and folly’, are like those ‘in darkness’, because they did not judge that with ‘the eye of their minds’ (VIII,1-5). Indeed, a king or a prince who voluntarily enters a prison to judge a criminal will not be himself considered a criminal because by doing so he had to stand the stench of the prison. Thus, when we hear that ‘God has suffered in his coming [to death]’, we should interpret it as if God did it as a ‘spectator’, in an immortal and impassible way, for he is immortal (VIII,11ff.).

In order to clarify that the physical implications of God’s coming to death are not relevant enough to cast doubt on his impassibility, because he is ontologically superior, in the ninth chapter Gregory considers the examples of the salamander and of the cutting of fire. According to the legend of the salamander, it does not suffer from the action of the fire because of his ‘abundance of cold’. Gregory deduces: ‘if things which are opposite to one another can stand and not perish when they participate in other harmful things thanks to the power of their nature’, one cannot be astonished that the ‘essence that is superior to matter’ shows the impassibility of his nature while being in death (IX,13-16).

Gregory argues that God, according to his ‘wise design’, took ‘for a short time the form of mortal human beings’ (25-26), and came ‘without deception’ in this

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55 Abramowski, Gregory the Teacher’s “Ad Theopompum”, 15 refers to 1 Cor 9:24-26 and 2 Tm 4:7.
56 Martin, in Analecta Sacra, IV, 368, sees here a reference to Jb 38:17.
57 In Pan. Or. IV, §36,10-11, and in the second article of the Credo sophia and dunamis are qualifications of the Logos.
58 In these lines, starting from the last ones from ch. VII, we recognise allusions to Eph 1:18-21 (‘eyes of heart’, ‘ruler, authority, power, dominion’) mixed with I Cor 1:23-24 (‘foolishness/wisdom’, ‘power and wisdom of God’). On the occurrence of this theme in the Metaphrasis and in the Pan. Or. see Ch. 3, §§I,5.
59 Plinius, Hist. Nat. X,86. Also Philoxenus refers to this image, but with a different explanation and aim; see his Commentary on John, I, 1-17, translated by De Halleux, Philoxène de Mabbog, 347, n.33.
60 Cf. Dionysius of Alexandria, On nature, ap. Eus. p.e. XIV,25,3: ‘Also if there be but one and the same substance of all atoms, and the same imperishable nature, excepting as they say, their magnitudes and shapes (μιᾶς οὐσίας καὶ τῆς αὐτῆς ἀπαθείας οὐσίας καὶ τῆς αὐτῆς ἀφθάρτου φύσεως πλην τῶν μεγεθῶν, ὡς φασί, καὶ τῶν σχημάτων), how is it that some bodies are divine, and incorruptible, and eternal, or at least, as they would say, secular according to him who so named them, both visible and invisible, visible as the sun, and moon, and stars, and earth and water, and invisible as gods, and daemons, and souls?’ (transl. Gifford, 835-836).
61 Lit. ‘design full of wisdom’ (φύσεως προμηθεία). Cf. Pan. Or. IV, §46,64-65 (σοφὴ προμηθεία).
‘wicked world’ (سَكَاءُ عَظِيمٍ) with the entirety of his strength (شَجَاعَةٌ عَظِيمَةٍ), without any change of his impassible essence and nature while he was subject to passions. Indeed, by deciding to be mutilated\(^63\), God showed the immutability (بِعَدَةٍ عَظِيمَةٍ) of his divine essence and nature while it was tested in vain by corruption, passions, cut or blow (28-31). Gregory takes then the analogy of the cutting of fire, according to which fire remains the same and undivided when it is cut by a blade, ‘even though a body goes through another body’. This is due to the lightness ( indebّة عظيم) of the nature of fire and to its ability to adhere to itself on all sides while it is passed through by the iron. If then, the cut received by a tangible (وضوعي) and corruptible\(^64\) body like fire remains inscrutable and incomprehensible, all the more, Gregory concludes, we have to admit that ‘the most blessed one’, the ‘divinity’ (جَانِبُ النَّورِ), who is incorruptible\(^65\) and superior to all beings and natures \(\text{كَتَابَةُ خَالِدَةُ جَانِبًا}{\text{}}\), and considerations (ءَلَا يُتَّلِعُ النَّورُ), ‘always remains as he is also in his passions’. His impassibility is not restricted by the passions since

‘the incomprehensibility of his subtlety (كَفْرَةُ عَظِيمَةٍ) remains unsevered against the lightness ( indebّة عظيم) of the bodies that came close to cut him, because he is more excellent and higher than all the bodies […], because of the subtlety of his nature and the purity of his knowledge’.

At the beginning of the tenth chapter (X,3-16), Gregory considers another physical analogy founded on the same theoretical basis of the example of the cutting of fire. If it is true that the subtlety (كَفْرَةُ عَظِيمَةٍ) of the rays of the sun allows them to go through the glass, so that one matter (حُواْلَة; Gr. hyle) can pass through another matter, all the more we have to admit that ‘his light’ (تَكْنِيْسَة هَرُوْن), the essence (جَانِبُ النَّورِ) of God, with the strength of his subtlety (كَفْرَةُ عَظِيمَةٍ) can pass through bodies without being affected by passions\(^66\). And if it is true that, according to the ‘image’ (ءَلَا يُتَّلِعُ النَّورُ) of the rays, the light

\(^{62}\) according to Abramowski, Gregory the Teacher’s “Ad Theopompon”, 16, is an allusion to Phil 2:7, as well as |ذَائِبَا مِنْ إِبَاطَةٍ| , (‘the likeness of mortal human beings’, IX,19). ‘For a short time’ (تَكْنِيْسَة هَرُوْن) is typical in John’s Gospel.

\(^{63}\) The verb |ذَائِبَا مِنْ إِبَاطَةٍ| means literally “to cut” (IX,29), which makes sense especially in consideration of the following arguments on the cutting and blowing of fire (36ff.).

\(^{64}\) Lit. ‘subjected to corruption’ (كَفْرَةُ عَظِيمَةٍ).

\(^{65}\) Lit. ‘far from corruption’ (كَفْرَةُ عَظِيمَةٍ).

\(^{66}\) Cf. CC VII,17, where Origen contests Celsus’ objection that it would be impious for the prophets to say that ‘the great God will serve as a slave or will die’. Origen answers that they ‘prophesied that a certain “effulgence and image” (Heb 1:3) of the divine nature would come to human life together with the holy incarnate soul of Jesus, so that a doctrine might be spread abroad which would make a friend of the God of the universe anyone who received it into his own soul and cultivated it, and which would lead him on to the ultimate goodness, if he possessed in himself the power of the divine Logos who was to come to dwell in a human body. But this would happen in such a way that it was not true that his rays were enclosed in that man alone, or that it could be supposed that the light, which is the divine Logos, which causes these rays, existed nowhere else. So then, the things that were done to Jesus, in so far as they are understood to apply to the divine element in him, are pious, and not in conflict with the accepted notion of God’ (transl. Chadwick, 408).
remains the same and is undiminishing, so also God’s nature remains ‘full of blessings and incorruptible’ (ἀμώμης) and devoid of nothing.

This passage seems inspired by Origen, who, commenting Eph 4:6 (ἐὰς Ὁσὲς καὶ παντὶς πάντων, ὥ ἐπὶ πάντων, καὶ διὰ πάντων, καὶ ἐν πάσιν ἡμέρᾳ)\(^{67}\), wrote as follows:

Here is a physical analogy to a spiritual truth: we can agree that the sun is above all things on earth. But by its rays it might be said at the same time to be through all. And insofar as the power of its light penetrates everywhere, it could also be said to be in all. It is in this way, I think, that God’s majesty is denoted by the phrase above all. God’s all-sufficiency is denoted in the words through all. It also belongs to the power of God to penetrate into all, so that because of his being in all no one is entirely devoid of him\(^{68}\).

The argumentation of Gregory consists of two simple steps. First, he considers physical examples of material subtlety which prove, contrary to Aristotle\(^{69}\), that one matter can go through another matter; second, he ascribes this quality to the nature and essence of God, though without implying that it is corporeal\(^{70}\), to demonstrate its impassibility\(^{71}\).

Gregory then targets those who deny the passion of God, since they do not consider that God is ‘inscrutable’ (ἀμώμης) and not limited by anything, and more precisely those who hold the Epicurean idea of the inactive god. In a play of comparisons and turns of phrases, Gregory draws two different conceptions of God by

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\(^{67}\) Origen’s fragments of his commentary to Ephesians, which have been preserved by catena commentators, by Pamphilus’ Apology, and by Jerome’s Ep. 118 and commentaries to Paul’s epistles, are now edited in Opere di Origeni XIV/4, Esegesi Paolina. I testi frammentari, Intr., trad. e note di F. Pieri, Roma 2009.


\(^{70}\) Ad Theop. IX-X (395-397 Pazzini).

\(^{71}\) Gregory’s reasoning seems to presuppose certain passages of GC; for instance I, 6, 328a17-22, where Aristotle, after having said that a relation of action and passion between ὄντα is necessary when it comes to μίζες, writes: ‘some things—viz. those which have the same matter—reciprocate, i.e. are such as to act upon one another and to suffer action from one another; while other things, viz. agents which have not the same matter as their patients, act without themselves suffering action’ (ἢ οὐν οὐκ ἐστὶ μίζες, ἢ λεκτέον τούτο πάω ἐνδέχεται γίνεσθαι πάλιν. ἐστι δὴ, ὡς φαμεν, τῶν ὄντων τὰ μὲν ποιητικὰ τὰ δ’ ὑπὸ τοῦτων ποιητικά. τὰ μὲν οὖν ἀντιστρέφεται, ὃσων ἡ ἀυτὴ ὑλὴ ἐστὶ, καὶ ποιητικὰ ἀλλήλων καὶ παθητικὰ ὑπ’ ἀλληλῶν· τὰ δὲ ποιητές ἀπαθῆ ὄντα, ἔσων μὴ ἡ αὐτὴ ὑλή. Transl. by J. Barnes, The Complete Works of Aristotle. The revised Oxford translation, I, Princeton NJ 1991\(^{1}\) (BollS LXXI 2), 32.
qualifying who is truly ‘supreme and free’. This is the one who ‘is not tormented by the law of his nature’ (X,19), who is aware of the greatness of his divinity\(^\text{72}\) and is not shaken by death’ (20-21), who does not fear the proof of fire, iron and to bear human passions, who is the ‘helper and is changed into me’\(^\text{73}\), who is not prevented by the ‘coercion of the necessity’ (مهبدل ياباخت) to come to ‘the men who wish the divine life’ (X,36)\(^\text{74}\).

On the contrary, that one who is afraid of human passions and of the proofs of fire, iron and of the ‘wild animals’ (X,22)\(^\text{75}\), who is prevented by the ‘coercion of the necessity from carrying out good things’ (X,32)\(^\text{76}\) and has chosen to remain in ‘stillness’ (مشددة, X,38) disdaining all but his divine blessedness, should be considered even inferior to those men who sacrificed their lives for the sake of others\(^\text{77}\). In this manner they showed their superiority to passions, and, for this reason, their human passions ‘were not counted as passions’ (لا سئم المسمح مجهول, X,40-43). Thus Gregory mentions some examples of characters from classical antiquity who stood out for the excellence of their noble and heroic actions (X,43-60)\(^\text{78}\), and even refers to men who went through crucifixion (a certain Phison, X,46) and who did not fear to be ‘nailed with nails to the wood’ (XI,6)\(^\text{79}\).

In this last section Gregory offered his interpretation of Phil 2. First he argued that by will a man can accomplish actions whose nobility erases his human state of passion—that is subjected both to the laws of nature and to human passions—and allows him to become impassible. In this manner Gregory can then show that God’s incarnation is an act of goodness that attests his impassibility from his nature of

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\(^\text{72}\) Literally means ‘and [he] is not persuaded of the greatness of his divinity’.

\(^\text{73}\) Abramowski, Gregory the Teacher’s “Ad Theopompum”, 17, rightly argues that ون 법률ه مدله and مدله من دلها (X,34) are inspired by Ps 27 (the ‘helper’ being the بοηθός of Ps 27:7).

\(^\text{74}\) As we have seen in the previous chapter, the theme of the laws of nature is of primary importance for the theoretical foundations of the speculations displayed in the Metaphrasis.

\(^\text{75}\) That immediately reminds us of Christian martyrdom.

\(^\text{76}\) This phrase continues: ‘this one would be in stillness even though he was called God’ (X,32-33).

\(^\text{77}\) Cf. Dionysius Alex., On Nature, ap. Eus. p.e. XIV,27,1,1-8: ‘To work and to administer and to do good and to take care of and the like are burdensome perhaps to the idle and foolish and feeble and wicked, amongst whom Epicurus enrolled himself, when he conceived such ideas about the gods. But to the earnest and capable and intelligent and prudent, such as philosophers ought to be (and how much more the gods?), they are not only not unpleasant and arduous, but rather most delightful and of all things most agreeable; for negligence and delay in doing something useful is a reproach to them’ (transl. Gifford, 842, slightly altered); and ap. Eus. p.e. XIV,27,6,1-4: ‘Whereas therefore the masters of those works which are beneficial to life take pride in the help which they render to their fellow men, and desire praise and fame for the works in which they labour for their good, some in providing food, others as directors (of institutions), some as physicians, and some as statesmen, philosophers proudly boast of their efforts to instruct mankind’ (transl. Gifford, 843).

\(^\text{78}\) On these and the sources probably used by Gregory see Ryssel, Gregorius Thaumaturgus, 88-90; Pitra, Analecta Sacra IV, 371-372; Slusser, St. Gregory Thaumaturgus, 165-166.

\(^\text{79}\) Hallman, Divine Suffering and Change, 96-97, provides a wrong interpretation of the tenth chapter, for he thinks that only ‘God came to death by his own will’. But Gregory takes the examples from Greek antiquity just to prove that they, unlike the Epicurean god, could show their superiority to passions by doing good things by their own will. This misinterpretation weakens some of Hallman’s remarks.
blessedness: the true God is the one who acts for the sake of humanity, and not that one who remains in stillness. The shift of the argumentation to the moral aspect leads Gregory to dedicate some lines to denying that God can suffer from passions like shame, fear and vainglory (שמשל ישמעל) (XII,1-16). The latter is especially picked out because, had God been vainglorious, He would have chosen to remain in his still state of blessedness instead of coming to death to ‘free mortals from death’ (XII,13-15). God, therefore, took the passion to defeat it and to show his impassibility, and came to death to ‘mutilate death’ and to show ‘that he is life’ (XII,19-20).

Gregory introduces subsequently the image of the light that lights up the darkness. Just as in this case the rays of light remain untouched when they come into contact with darkness (and the darkness remains such without the light), the nature of God remained impassible and incorruptible when he came to death and ‘his power ((power) over all things’ (XII,20-29).

Then he mentions again the cases of the salamander that despises the flames and of the diamond struck by iron to introduce another physical speculation. The passage at issue has been studied by Luise Abramowski, who identified three glosses in it and translated it as follows:

… For sufferers are then [in truth] accounted powerful, when they have association with that which is opposed to them and (yet) remain, as they are. [And it is not fitting that the conception of mixing (месоле) in phantasia and docesis occurs, but in truth they have obtained faith in their union (месоле).] They are, though, substances, which are mutually opposed, whilst they (yet) remain without corruption and without suffering, through the powerfulness of their nature, in the mixture with other substances; like the animal the salamander, which can despise the flames, and like the diamond which, when struck by iron, [not in phantasia or docesis, as we have said], remains impassible …

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80 This expression is a clear allusion to Jn 14:6, even if it went unnoticed.
81 For his analogy of God’s nature with light, Gregory may have found inspiration in Or. Clo II,23,150.
82 Abramowski, Gregory the Teacher’s “Ad Theopompum”, 11, points out the reminiscence of 2 Cor 6:14 (‘what communion hath light with darkness?’, τίς δὲ κοινωνία φωτός πρὸς σκότους;).
83 In this passage I think Gregory has still in mind Origen’s comment on Eph 4:6 which we quoted a little earlier, and Eph 1:19-21.
84 Abramowski, Gregory the Teacher’s “Ad Theopompum”, 10.
85 According to Abramowski, Gregory the Teacher’s “Ad Theopompum”, 11, הת has to be taken as meaning “sufferers” instead of “passions”. Slusser (167) and Pazzini (403) keep this second meaning, like the previous translators (Ryssel and Martin), but I agree with Abramowski that this solution does not fit with Gregory’s argumentation. Indeed Gregory just now argued that the light shows its superior power over darkness when they come in contact with one another, and immediately afterwards mentions (again) the cases of the salamander and of the diamond.
86 Pazzini’s translation of the passage does not allow us to appreciate the lexical differences: he translates the verb דאנס into ‘mescolare’ at XII,28, 29, while before (IX,14, 16; XII,20, 21) and after (XII,37, 38) he translates the verb or the corresponding noun (משמשל) into ‘prendere parte’ and ‘partecipazione’; moreover, he translates both דאנס and משמשל into ‘commistione’.
87 Lit. ‘imagination, illusion’.
Even though Abramowski’s interventions in the text do make it difficult to read and have been dismissed by Slusser and Pazzini, they have to be endorsed. The late Christological terminology (‘mixing/blending’, ‘union’) and the persistent worry about Docetic interpretations are strong evidence of the glossator’s intervention.

Gregory is saying that the ‘sufferers’ are considered powerful if they remain as they are, with no corruption (ἠμασθησαν) and no passion (αμασθησαν), even when they are ‘associated’ (συνσυνεστηκαν) or in the ‘mixture’ (συνομοθηκαν) with different or opposite entities (συνομοθηκαν). If, hence, ‘passible material beings’ (παρασυνομοθηκαν) remain unaltered, whole and incorrupt (σωματικοί παρασυνομοθηκαν) while mixing with natures that cause corruption, all the more so we have to admit that God’s incorruptible essence (παρασυνομοθηκαν) remains impassible while it is ‘in things which cause passions’ (XII,24-42).

Gregory seems to have had an exact understanding of the Stoic idea of μεσοζυσις, because he speaks of mixture between heterogeneous entities which does not imply their corruption, but, oddly enough, takes the examples of the salamander and of the diamond, which we rather list as evidence for the Aristotelian συνθεσις or for the Stoic παράθεσις. In any case, this singularity does not condition the validity of

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88 See the comments by Abramowski, *Gregory the Teacher’s “Ad Theopompum”*, 11-12.
89 However, Gregory often uses expressions of anti-Docetic flavour in the rest of the *Ad Theop.* which are in line with orthodoxy; see Or. ClO X,6,25 (‘Likewise those who introduced the Docetic heresy, since they did not consider him who humbled himself “unto death” and became obedient unto the cross, but imagined only impassiveness and superiority to every such occurrence [τὸ ἄπαθες καὶ τὸ κρείττον παντετοῦ θανάτου], wish to deprive us, so far as it is in their power, of the most righteous man of all men’; transl. Heine, 261); Iren. *Haer.* III,16,1,9-10 (276, SC 34): ‘[Unidentified Gnostics] say that He merely suffered in outward appearance, being naturally impassible’ (αλλὰ ὤρνυται “παθασαν εις οὐσιν, παθασαν εις οὐσιν” existentem).
90 Abramowski, *ibidem*, noticed that mixture (συνθεσις, μεσοζυσις) and blending (κρειστησις) are both common in Philoxenus’ christological lexicon—blending being in conjunction with απόχρυσης (συνομοθηκαν), and that union (συνεστηκαν, ἔνωσις) attests a post-Chalcedonian concern. The expression ‘mixture without confusion’ (μεσοθηκαν) is frequently used by Philoxenus, but evidently the fact that Gregory’s passage mentions only this kind of mixing might have not appeared sufficiently clear, if not wrong, to the glossator; it appears unlikely that the passage from ‘They are’ to ‘with other substances’ is a gloss as well. On Philoxenus’ terminology see De Halleux, *Philoxène de Mab bog*, 231, 387.
91 Arist. *GC* I,10, 328a6. For him the synthesis is not a mixture because the elements juxtaposed remain unaltered (327a35-b2).
92 The classification of the Stoic modalities of mixtures relies mostly on indirect and polemic testimonies provided by the adversaries of the Stoa (cf. SVF II,463-481). However, these interpretations have been standardised in a rather consistent tradition which goes from the ancient world to late antiquity. The usual classification of the Stoic position is based on the statements of Philo of Alexandria (SVF II,472), Alexander of Aphrodisias (SVF II,473) and Stobaeus (SVF II,471): the juxtaposition (παράθεσις) implies an exterior contact between bodies, without actual mixing; the blending (κρειστησις) and the mixture (μεσοζυσις) occur between components which keep their substances and qualities; the fusion (συνθεσις) causes the loss of the properties of each component in favour of the compound of another nature. Μεσοζυσις and κρειστησις do not always appear distinct in the Stoic tradition, but in general (as, again, in SVF II,471-473), ‘mixture’ is used for the mix of dry bodies, while ‘blending’ for that of liquid bodies. Moreover, κρειστησις often replaces μεσοζυσις and acquires a broader meaning, as in the case of the total immersion (κρειστησις δι’ ἕλαιον), which had a fundamental role in the Stoic cosmology and physics since it was used to explain the presence of the pneuma in the cosmos and the union between body and soul (cf. SVF II,475 =

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Gregory’s argumentation since its rationale lies in the premiss that an ontological difference between the divine nature and everything else exists. From this perspective, the physical examples of ‘mixture’ serve to support analogically this principle.

Luise Abramowski has aptly commented as follows: ‘the teacher Gregory … treats the saving sufferings of Jesus not as a locus of christology, but as an immediate problem for the doctrine of God; he is not confronted by the problem automatically arising from dyophysitism of the union of the two natures’93. Indeed, the issue of the union is missing in the Ad Theop. as such, and this explains why the glossator has intervened to underline that a real ‘union’ was implied. Nonetheless, since Gregory is arguing for the integrity of God’s essence while it is in a corruptible nature, it is reasonable to think that these considerations mirror Gregory’s position with regard to the two natures of the incarnated God. In summary, Gregory’s argumentation presupposes that the presence of the two natures in Jesus should be considered as a sort of Aristotelian συνθεσις94 and argues that there is no alteration in his divine nature even though he has suffered in his human nature.

It is difficult to draw a sound conclusion from the comparison on this issue between Gregory and Origen, since the latter has expressed conflicting Christological tendencies95 and much more complex ideas than his pupil. Origen acknowledges that there is ‘union’ and ‘mixture’ between Jesus’ soul and his divinity96 as well as between

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93 Abramowski, Gregory the Teacher’s “Ad Theopompum””, 12, thinks differently.
94 Origen, like Gregory, shows a certain freedom in using philosophical material. In Prin II, 6, 6 he borrowed the famous Stoic example of the incandescent iron, which Chrysippus had used as evidence of the theory of ‘total compenetration’ between bodies which kept the qualities of their own substances (being fire and iron present in the same place, see SVF II,471, 473), in order to explain how the constant unity with the divine Logos guaranteed the impeccability of Jesus’ soul. But, unlike Chrysippus, Origen seems to say that the transformation of Jesus’ soul into God is implied in this union.
96 For Origen ‘the substance of the soul’ is necessary as an intermediary between God and the body (Prin II,6,3; see also Cto XXXII,25,376), and Jesus’ soul is immutable and unable to sin because of its ‘incessant unity’ with the divine Logos (Prin II,6,5). On the importance of the intermediary function of
his body and soul and his divinity\textsuperscript{97}. This leads Origen sometimes to admit that the human nature of Jesus is ‘transformed into God’\textsuperscript{98}, but not to the point where he forgets that two natures have to be recognised in him\textsuperscript{99}. Despite the distance between master and pupil, we may still recognise the influence of Origen’s ideas on Gregory, for he

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\textsuperscript{97} Or. \textit{Prin} IV,4,4 (the Son of God assumed both body and soul); \textit{CC} II,9: ‘after the incarnation the soul and body of Jesus became very closely united with the Logos of God’ (transl. Chadwick, 74); \textit{CC} III,28; \textit{Dial} 6,7; \textit{Clo} X,22-23.  
\textsuperscript{98} Or. \textit{CC} III,41: Jesus’ body and soul ‘received the greatest elevation not only by communion but by union and intermingling’ (οὐ μόνον κοινωνίᾳ ἄλλα καὶ ἐνώσει καὶ ἄνωσει) so that by sharing in His divinity he was transformed into God’ (transl. Chadwick, 156). In \textit{CC} III,42, Origen declares that there is no philosophical obstacle to saying that the matter of Jesus’ flesh has acquired qualities not ‘belonging to carnal weakness’; on the capabilities of bodily substances to change their qualities see \textit{Prin} IV,4,6. In \textit{CMt} XVI,8 (500-501 Klostermann, GCS 40), after having said that Jesus was not \textit{asynthetos} (cf. below n.101), Origen tries to balance the division between Jesus and Christ by acknowledging that ‘Jesus Christ is one and not only his soul, but also his body are one with the “First-born of all creation”’ and this unity is stronger than that of “he who is joined unto the Lord is one spirit” (1 Cor 6:17) (πλὴν σήμερον οὐ λόγῳ τὸν Ἰησοῦν ἀπὸ τοῦ Χριστοῦ, ἄλλα πολλὸ πλέον οὐδὲ ἐν εἰκας Ἰησοῦν τὸν Χριστὸν καὶ τὴν ψυχὴν κατὰ πρὸς τὸν πρωτότοκον πάσας ψυχεῶς ἀλλὰ καὶ τὸ σῶμα κατὸ, ὡς πλέον (εἰ δὲίς ὡς ἄνωσει) εἶναι ἐν ἄλον τότε, ἠπέρ ὃ κολλᾶμεν ἃ τὸ κυρίῳ ἐν πνευμά ἔστιν). See also \textit{Clo} XXXI,325-326 where Origen admits that the Son of Man became the same with the Logos after his death: ‘the high exaltation of the Son of Man which occurred when he glorified God in his own death consisted in the fact that he was no longer different from the Word, but was the same with him. For if “he who is joined to the Lord is one spirit”, so that it is no longer said that “they are two” even in the case of this man and the spirit, might we not consider “equality with God” something to be grasped was highly exalted? The Word, however, remained in his own grandeur, or was even restored to it, when he was again with God, God the Word being man’ (transl. Heine, 403). This is the only passage in Origen where the subject of the \textit{kenosis} is the soul of Jesus (=humanity), see M. Simonetti, \textit{La morte di Gesù in Origene}, in Id., \textit{Studi sulla cristologia del II e III secolo}, Roma 1993 (SEAug 44), 161-164.  
\textsuperscript{99} In \textit{Prin} II, 6, 2 Origen declares that the mystery of the God-man has to be contemplated in a way that ‘the truth of both natures may be revealed in one and the same being, so that nothing unworthy and indecent may be admitted in that divine and ineffable substance, nor yet that those events are believed to be illusions of false appearances’ (transl. F. Crombie, ANF IV). In \textit{CC} VI,47, Origen acknowledges that the \textit{ἐνωσις} between the soul of Jesus and the Son of God occurs to the extent that ‘we do not make any further distinction between them. For the sacred words of the divine scriptures also mention other things which in their own nature are two, but which are reckoned to become, and really are, one, with each other (δύο τῇ ἐκτός φύσει τηγάλεντα, εἰς ἐν ἄλλης εἶναι λειτογισμένα καὶ ὑπήρχ.) ... the relation of the soul of Jesus to the firstborn of all creation, the divine Logos, is not that of two separate beings’ (οὐχ ἡ σοφον ἡ ἂννος τοῦ Ἰησοῦν περὶ τῶν ἐκτός πάσας ψυχεῶς πρωτότοκον θεῖον λόγον; transl. Chadwick, 364-365) See also \textit{Prin} I,2,1; \textit{Clo} XXXII, 188; 192.
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keeps distinct the human and divine natures\textsuperscript{100} and tends to associate passion with the human corruptible nature\textsuperscript{101}.

In the thirteenth, fourteenth and fifteenth chapters Gregory returns to attack Theopompus’ Epicurean idea that God is inactive. God’s inactivity would be evidence of his weakness and passibility, because it would demonstrate both his impeded ability to act and his uninterested will to act for the deliverance of mankind. Only the one who persecutes the corrupting passions and the wicked thoughts within the soul of the men by teaching them how to become wise and to act rightly can be said to be impassible and most blessed (XIII,1–XIV,8). This objection assumes also an epistemic facet when Gregory argues that an inactive God would be even impossible to know and speak about since there would be no works by him to investigate. This criticism is founded on a common observation: it is on the basis of the works which a man has accomplished with art (\textit{mēn̂}σw̃w̃) that we judge him wise, intelligent and an artist (\textit{mēn̂}σw̃w̃), because only when the artist shapes the confused matter his silent thought is manifested by his works (XIV,8-13). A god who remains in stillness, ‘looks at himself’, does not care about human beings and whose goodness is hidden, cannot be considered most blessed. For Gregory, the true ‘dispenser of good things’ is he who has revealed himself as a ‘helper of human beings and helper of those who are without hope’\textsuperscript{102}, and whose visible works give testimony ‘to what is hidden’ (XIV,13ff.).

This latter counter-argument deserves to be looked at with caution because it reveals, in my opinion, that Gregory had the \textit{On nature} by Dionysius of Alexandria at his disposal\textsuperscript{103}. After having turned to those who believe that the ‘most blessed’ ‘turns in on himself and looks at himself, despises all things alike, prefers leisure for himself rather than the care of all things’ (XIV,21ff.), Gregory attacks them as follows:

\textsuperscript{100} Origen says both that Jesus is a ‘composition (\textit{mēn̂}σw̃w̃) of God and man’ (\textit{CC} I,60; cf. also I,66; II,16; \textit{Hios} 7,7) and that he is a ‘composition’ of body and soul as a human being (\textit{CC} II,9; see also \textit{CMt} XVI,8 [500 Klostermann, GCS 40] where Origen disputes that Jesus had the shape of an entirely simple unity \textit{[ENVπ120\w̃\w̃n̂σw̃w̃φ̃w̃w̃]} when he came to life).

\textsuperscript{101} In \textit{CC} VII,16 Origen underlines that it is necessary to distinguish the human nature from the divine one of Jesus and that ‘he who suffered human sorrows was a man’, confirming it with Jn 7:40. See also \textit{Clo} XXVIII,159.

\textsuperscript{102} In this case scholars have detected allusions to I Thes 4:13; Ps 27:7 and Eph 2:12. See Slusser (ed.), St. Gregory Thaumaturgus, \textit{Life and Works}, 169, n.37.

\textsuperscript{103} There are two obvious reasons why it is Gregory who quotes Dionysius and not the other way around: Gregory is the younger by about twenty years; Dionysius’ fragments are much richer in arguments. For further resemblance between Gregory and Dionysius cf., above, n.77.
Gregory is clearly using the same argument put forward by Dionysius and even preserves an implicit reference to Homer and Hesiod when he defines God as the ‘dispenser of good things’\(^{107}\).

Gregory continues saying that a God who loves himself, who is occupied only with his ‘pleasure’ (II, XV, 4), is inactive and does not provide ‘communion’ (II, XV, 16)\(^{108}\), is not only weak (II, XV, 6)\(^{109}\), but also cruel, because many men have become ‘alien to God’—or ‘have drowned’ (XV, 12)\(^{110}\)—for not having received from him any knowledge of the ‘excellence’ (XVI, 1 ff.). In order to stress that the true God, unlike the inactive one, must act in favour of those who err, Gregory mentions the case of those philosophers who did not remain quiet, but decided to help the other men.

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\(^{104}\) Dionysius Alex., *On Nature*, ap. Eus. p.e. XIV, 27, 8.1–5: τοὺς δὲ θεοὺς, περὶ δὲ ὁι μὲν ποιηταὶ παρ’ αὐτοῖς ἄδωσιν ἔσωμαι ἀλλὰ ἐσῶμεν, αὐτοὶ δὲ οἱ φιλόσοφοι μετὰ τωθεῖας εὐφημοῦσιν: Ἄθεοι πάντων ἀγαθῶν ἄθλικοι τε καὶ ἀμέτοχοι. καὶ τίνι τρόπῳ τεκμηριώθηκα ἄθεος εἶναι, μήτε παρόντας καὶ πράπτοντας τι ὥσπερ ἐναντίον εἶναι, (ὡς οἱ τῶν ἣλιων καὶ τῆς σελήνης καὶ τῶν ἀστέρων θυμάσαντες διὰ τοῦ θεοῦ ἐρασάσθαι κακληθῆκα θεοὺς) μήτε τινα ὅμορφον αὐτοῖς ἢ κατασκευήν προσένμοντες, ἐν’ ἕκ τοῦ θεοῦ, τοῦτ’ ἐστί ποιήσα, θεοποιήσανας αὐτοὺς (τοῦτον γὰρ ἐκεῖνον πρὸς ἀλλίθειαν ὅ τιν τὸ αὐτῶν ποιήσας καὶ δημοφιλές μόνος ἔστι θεὸς) μήτε διοκώσας ἢ κρίσιν ἢ χάριν αὐτῶν οὐκ ἕκαστης ἄνθρωπος ἐκτιθέμενοι, ἕνα φῶς ἢ τιμήν ὁμολόγας προσκυνήσας αὐτοῖς;

\(^{105}\) These are the only occurrences of this expression in the entire *Ad Theop.*


\(^{108}\) Cf. Dionysius of Alexandria, *On nature*, ap. Eus. p.e., XIV, 27, 9: ‘Or did Epicurus […] go out through some secret gates known only to himself, and behold the gods dwelling in the void, and deem them and their abundant luxury blessed? And did he thence become a devotee of pleasure, and an admirer of their life in the void, and so exhorted all who are to be made like unto those gods to participate in this blessing […]?’ […]καὶ τῆς πολλῆς αὐτῶν ἔμακρυσσε τρωφὴν κάκειτο κατημηρητὴν γενόμενον τῆς ἠδόνης καὶ τῆς ἐν τῶν κενῶν ἀληθείας διήτης, οὕτω πάντας ἐπί τῆς τοῦ μακαρισμοῦ τοῦτον μετονύσαν ἐξομοιωθησθομενοὺς ἐκείνοις τοῖς θεοῖς παρασκελεῖ; transl. Gifford, 844.

\(^{109}\) Cf. Epicurus, *Ratae Sententiae*, I and Ep. Her., 76.8 – 77.3 (see below for full text).

\(^{110}\) For a similar image see *Pau. Or.* XIV, §171.
and mostly ‘those who are subjected to the passions of the soul’ (XVI,15-16). In particular Gregory quotes Diogenes the Cynic’s reply to someone who suggested that he should move to Sparta, since he often praised the Lacedaemonians: ‘we also affirm that doctors go to the sick, not to the healthy’\(^{111}\). What Gregory shows here is not only his dexterity in making ‘what is Christian look familiar to a pagan’\(^{112}\), for both pagans and Christians must have immediately grasped the link between Diogenes and Jesus\(^{113}\), but also in carefully adopting Origen’s lesson in dealing with pagans that we have seen prominently displayed in the Pan. Or.\(^{114}\).

Gregory quotes (XVI,27ff.) also the eleventh letter to Democritus by the ps. Hippocrates\(^{115}\), where the latter wrote about the love of money as an illness of the soul and considered miserable the human ‘habitation’\(^{116}\) where this illness penetrates like ‘winter wind’\(^{117}\), as well as Plato’s Phaedrus (247A): ‘envy is beyond the limits\(^{118}\) of the divine being’. These examples serve to substantiate Gregory’s statements that ‘human philosophy’ concerns the healing ‘of the illnesses of the soul’, and that God, who is the ‘teacher of all philosophy’, cannot but be regarded as ‘munificent’ and ‘abundant of good things’ and in gifts to men.

Finally, Gregory identifies God with Jesus, the ‘king over all things’\(^{119}\), the ‘glorious king’. In his impassible coming, he has made the passions disappear, as light does to darkness, and has created blessed immortal ones from mortals.

IV. An attempt at philosophical apology

The treatise is built up as a reply to the doubts that the impassible God could undergo the Passion. Both Gregory and Theopompus agree on the premiss that God is impassible by nature, but Theopompus objects that, if so, 1) God’s impassible nature would prevent him from suffering, 2) there would be contradiction between his will and his nature in the Passion, 3) the Passion would be unfitting to God (ch. II, III, V).

\(^{111}\) On the attribution of this passage see Slusser, St. Gregory Thaumaturgus, 171, n.39.
\(^{112}\) Abramowski, Gregory the Teacher’s “Ad Theopompon”, 13.
\(^{113}\) Mt 9:12; Mk 2:17; Lk 5:31-32.
\(^{114}\) Or. Hler XX,5.2. See Ch. 2, n.60.
\(^{115}\) Cf. E. Nestle, rev. to Ryssel’s Gregorius Thaumaturgus, ZDMG 35 (1881), 786.
\(^{116}\) In the words \(ŴƟ ƎƉ ܘܗܝ Ʀſ ƑƀŹƢƟŴƐſ ܐ\), the translator seems to emphasise that this ‘Isocrates of Kos’ is different from the Isocrates mentioned in the beginning. This makes both occurrences of the name somewhat dubious.
\(^{117}\) Ps.-Hippocrates speaks of ‘human life’, and not of “habitation”.
\(^{119}\) S. Brock has rightly noted that ‘the Syriac implies a variant horou for chorou’; see Slusser (ed.), St. Gregory Thaumaturgus, Life and Works, 172, n.42. Abramowski’s reference to Ti. 29e is apt (13), but, even so, there is no quotation at stake.
\(^{119}\) \(ܠܐ ܠܐ ܠܐ, = ܒܫܠܝܘܬ ܡܢܛܝܘܢ Pan. Or. VI, §82 (referring to the Logos); IV, §35 (referring to the Father).
There is no need to dwell on the fact that the impassibility of God was a notion defended by most pagans independently of their philosophical affiliation. Nonetheless Gregory’s answer gradually shows he is targeting the Epicurean doctrine. As we have seen above, this fact has been indirectly acknowledged by Ryssel, when he recognised a certain connection between the Ad Theop. and Origen’s Contra Celsum. However, it was Crouzel who detected a particular connection between the Ad Theop. and CC IV, 14ff., which is very important for understanding the difference between Gregory’s and Origen’s arguments and needs to be kept in mind when reading the Ad Theop. Origen first quotes Celsus, then starts commenting, as follows:

‘... I have nothing new to say, but only ancient doctrines. God is good and beautiful and happy, and exists in the most beautiful state (ἐν τῷ καλλίστῳ καὶ ἢριστῳ). If then He comes down to men, He must undergo change, a change from good to bad, from beautiful to shameful, from happiness to misfortune, and from what is best to what is most wicked. Who would choose a change like this? It is the nature only of a mortal being to undergo change and remoulding, whereas the nature of an immortal being to remain the same without alteration. Accordingly, God could not be capable of undergoing this change’. I think that I made the necessary reply to this when I discussed what is called in the Bible God's descent to human affairs. In this respect it is not that ‘He must undergo change’, as Celsus thinks we say; nor must ‘He turn from good to bad, or from beautiful to shameful, or from happiness to misfortune, or from what is best to what is most wicked’. While remaining unchanged in essence, He comes down in His providence and care over human affairs (transl. Chadwick, 192-193).

Both Celsus’ problems and Origen’s first reply are found in the Ad Theop. as well as other objections put forward by Origen. The latter continues proclaiming that the material composition of the gods of the Epicureans and of the Stoics fails to meet the requirements of incorruptibility (ἀφθαρσία), simplicity, uncompoundedness and indivisibility. Then he denies that God’s descent implies a change from ‘what is best to what is most wicked’ for it was due to God’s love to man and to his absence of sin. If

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120 Nonetheless, that Celsus was a Platonist rather than an Epicurean is now acknowledged by the majority of the scholars. On this see P. Ressa’s overview in Origen, Contra Celso, a cura di P. Ressa, Present. di C. Moreschini, Brescia 2000 (Letteratura cristiana antica, Testi), 13-16.

121 Crouzel, La Passion de l’Impassible, 273ff.

122 Or. CC IV, 14, 3-19: Δέν γε ὃδε χαίνον ἄλλα χαίνοι δεδογμένα. Ὅ τεὸς ἑγκαθος ἐστι καὶ καλὸς καὶ εὐθάναιμος καὶ ἐν τῷ καλλίστῳ καὶ ἠριστῷ εἰ δὴ ἐς ἀνθρώπως κάτεις, μεταβολῆς αὐτῷ δὲ, μεταβολῆς δὲ ἐς ἄγαθος εἰς κακὸν καὶ ἐκ καλοῦ εἰς αἰσχρόν καὶ ἐς εὐθανασίαν εἰς κακοθανασίαν καὶ ἐκ τοῦ ἀριστοῦ εἰς τὸ πονηρότατον. Τίς ἢν ὄνομ τοιοῦτον μεταβολῆν; Καὶ μὲν ἢ τῷ θεῷ τῷ ἀνθρώπῳ καὶ μεταπλάτεσθαι φύσις, τῷ δ’ αἰθανάτῳ κατὰ τὰ αὐτὰ καὶ ὁμοίως ἔζειν. Οὐκ ἢν ὄνομ τοιοῦτον τὴν μεταβολὴν Θεοῦ δέχοτο. Διότι δὴ μοι πρὸς ταῦτα λέγεται τὰ δέντα διαγγελμένα τὴν ἐν ταῖς γραφαῖς λεγεμέναι κατάβασιν θεοῦ πρὸς τὰ ἀνθρώπινα: εἰς ἢν ὄν μεταβολῆς αὐτῷ δεῖ, ὡς Κέλσος οἴηται ἡμᾶς λέγειν. ὥστε τροπή τῆς ἐς ἄγαθον εἰς κακὸν ἢ ἐκ καλοῦ εἰς αἰσχρόν. ἢ ἐς εὐθανασίαν εἰς κακοθανασίαν ἢ ἐκ τοῦ ἀριστοῦ εἰς τὸ πονηρότατον. Μένων γὰρ τῇ ὡσία ἀτρεπτος συγκαταβαίνει τῇ προνοίᾳ καὶ τῇ οἰκονομίᾳ τοῖς ἀνθρωπίνοις πράγμασιν.
so, the change ‘to wicked’ would be implied in the case of the physician when healing the sick as well. But while a physician can be damaged by his contact with ‘unpleasant wounds’, the ‘Word remains Word in essence’ and ‘does not suffer from the things that the body and the soul suffer’ (IV,15). Origen criticises Celsus’ interpretation for it does not encompass the fact that the Logos has a mortal and an immortal nature while referring to Jesus’ transfiguration (IV,16), and finds fault in his mistaken interpretation of the Scriptures in general, which prevents him from recognising that God’s descent was exceptional and due to ‘his great love to man’ (IV,17). Then Origen provides two answers to Celsus’ objection: ‘Either God really does change, as they say, into a mortal body; and it has already been said that this is an impossibility’ (IV,18,4-6). He argues that if Celsus implies a certain ‘change of essence’, then there is no change in the soul of Jesus in entering the body as well as there is none for any other rational soul;

‘but if he means that it undergoes (πάσχει) something because it has been mixed (ἀνακεκραμένη) with the body and because of the place into which it has come, then what difficulty is there if the Word out of great love to mankind brings down a Saviour to the human race?’

then Origen quotes Phil 2:5-9 as a scriptural passage which confirms the fact that Jesus’ soul ‘descended by his own will’. Finally, after having replied to the accusation that Jesus may have lied to his followers, Origen says that the soul of Jesus descended ‘of his own free will to accept the limitations of humanity on behalf of our race’ and that Jesus has come not

‘for the sake of sick men or lunatics who have already become friends, but for those who, because their soul is diseased and their natural reasoning powers distracted, are still enemies, so that they may become friends of God. Moreover, Jesus is clearly said to have accepted everything for the sake of sinners…’

It is clear that Origen was alluding here to the well-known image from the synoptic Gospels (Mt 9:12; Mk 2:17; Lk 5:31-32).

The alert reader will immediately notice the convergences between Gregory’s and Origen’s reasoning, even though Gregory re-employs several elements of Origen’s argumentation with a different focus. Unlike Origen, Gregory does not refer explicitly to the Scriptures and does not use them as a method of proof; nonetheless, he shows a
certain rhetorical ability in covering biblical elements in his treatment and in leaving, at the same time, clear traces of them. This aspect shapes very much the tone of Ad Theop., which accordingly shows a more theoretical approach than Origen. Notice, for instance, the weight given by Gregory to the argument of God’s power and will in order to defend the idea that God’s essence remains unchanged and impassible while it is ‘mingled with passions’. Gregory argues that God’s will is not restricted by the limitations of his impassible nature, because it is not admissible to believe that God is subjected to ‘necessity’ (ch. II) and because his will and his essence are one (ch. IV).

Thus Gregory, in order to argue that God remains impassible even when he comes to Passion and that His coming to die is not unfitting to Him, uses the analogy of the physician who becomes a ‘servant’ (Phil 2:7) of the sick of his own will in order to heal them: his power indeed is not altered in itself when freely subjected to the struggle for healing (ch. VI).

Subsequently, Gregory dedicates much attention to exposing some peculiar physical phenomena concerning the diamond, the fire and the salamander, for they show impassibility in corruptible natures (chs. VI, IX); he reflects upon the physical features of the light and of the rays of the sun, for they attest that material natures may remain unaltered and powerful while in contact with opposite things (chs. X, XII). Gregory argues that, if we admit that even corruptible and material things have these properties, we should all the more so attribute them to God’s essence and nature. In the twelfth chapter Gregory explains in more detail that God remains impassible and unaltered even in his ‘mixture’ (μίξις) with natures ‘that cause corruption’, while he is ‘in things which cause passions’ (XII,24-42). Gregory does not discuss the incarnation as Origen does by referring to the mixture of the soul and body of Jesus to the Logos, but simply speaks of the mingling between God and ‘things which cause passions’, that is the human body and soul. By doing so, Gregory is not taking a particular theological or Christological stand because he sticks to the question of Theopompus (how can God suffer from human passions?). In conclusion to the treatise, before mentioning the name of Jesus, Gregory refers to the image of the physician coming to the sick, to which also Origen had alluded (CC IV,19), but in a covert quotation from Diogenes the Cynic: ‘we also affirm that doctors go to the sick, not to the healthy’.

Even though there are certainly differences between Gregory and Origen, we believe that this overview of their argumentations provides sufficient elements to believe that the reference to Phil 2 is not the ‘sole actual point of contact with Origen to be found in Gregory’, as Abramowski thought. In my opinion, Gregory has followed

126 On this issue see the excellent survey by Abramowski (Gregory the Teacher’s “Ad Theopompum”, 13-18) and Slusser’s useful footnotes to his translation. In these pages I have pointed out only the biblical allusions that have to do with the portions of texts I directly dealt with.

127 In agreement with Origen, Gregory denies that God is at one and the same time both the reason that rules over the kosmos and a body subjected to necessity and physical limitations, as the Stoic believed, because for him God was ontologically superior to everything.

128 Cf. above, n.111.

129 Abramowski, Gregory the Teacher’s “Ad Theopompum”, 14, n.52.
the trail of CC IV,14ff. and the absence of a precise pronouncement on the distinction between the Father and the Son is due to the fact that his addressee was a pagan. Gregory’s reasoning is not particularly brilliant, for its rationale is mostly the analogy, but it is very consistent for the same reason. Gregory tries to demonstrate that the impassibility is still applicable to the Christian view of God, and chooses to invalidate Theopompus’ objections from within, that is by way of dispute.

This is the reason why Gregory mentions Jesus only at the end, after having gradually introduced more and more biblical allusions: until that very moment he has mainly attempted to prepare the ground for the acceptance that God’s incarnation does not imply his substantial passibility.

These remarks are substantiated by other two facts of a certain importance for understanding the Ad Theop. First, Gregory targets other views of Epicurus which are lacking in Celsus’ texts quoted and discussed in Origen’s Contra Celsum. Second, Gregory has had as his source the On nature by Dionysius of Alexandria, which we know mainly through the fragments quoted and used by Eusebius as a refutation of Epicurus’ philosophy in the Praeparatio Evangelica.

Some typical ideas of Epicurus which are absent in the Contra Celsum but are somewhat the polemical fil rouge of the Ad Theop. are conveyed in part by the following texts:

First of all believe that god is a being imperishable and blessed, as the common notion of god is in outline, and do not assign to him anything alien to his imperishability (ἀφθαρσία) or unfitting to his blessedness (μακαριότης), but believe about him everything that can guard his blessedness together with imperishability.

And besides all these matters, we must understand this, that the principal disturbance in the souls of men arises when they believe that the same things are blessed and imperishable and at the same time have wills and actions and motives opposite to these attributes…

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130 One may note also that Origen mentions sins while Gregory speaks always of passions.
132 Epicurus, Ep. ad Men., 123,2-7 (105 Arrighetti): Πρῶτον μὲν τὸν θεὸν ζωὸν ἀφθαρσῖν καὶ μακάριον νομίζω, ὡς ἡ κοινὴ τοῦ θεοῦ νόησις ὑπεγράφῃ, μηθὲν μὲτὰ τῆς ἀφθαρσίας ἀλλότριον μὲτὰ τῆς μακαριότητος ἀναίκειον κύτῳ πρόσαπτε· πᾶν δὲ τὸ φυλάττειν κύτῳ δυνάμενον τὴν μετὰ ἀφθαρσίας μακαριότητα περὶ κύτῳ δύοξις.
133 Epicurus, Ep. ad Her., 81,1-4 (71 Arrighetti): Ἐπὶ δὲ τούτως ὅλως ἐπασχον ἐκεῖνο δὲὶ κατανοεῖν, ὅτι τάραγμα ὃ κυριότατος ταῖς ἀνθρωπίναις ψυχαῖς γίνεται ἐν τῷ τούτῳ μακάρῳ τε δοξάζειν καὶ ἀφθαρταὶ καὶ ὑπεννυτικὶς ἔχειν τούτως ἐμα υπολήσεις καὶ πράξεις καὶ κινήσεις…
The blessed and imperishable nature neither suffers nor causes trouble to another, so that it is never constrained by anger or favour. Indeed all these things are peculiar to the weak.\textsuperscript{134}

Epicurus also excluded the possibility that the phenomena concerning the heavenly bodies are due to

any being who controls and orders, or has ordered, them and at the same time enjoys complete blessedness together with imperishability – for occupations and worries and anger and benevolence are not consistent with blessedness: these are things that come from weakness and fear and need of others\textsuperscript{135}.

That Gregory was targeting these views becomes evident especially starting from ch. XIII onwards. Gregory argues that God would be truly ‘weak’, passible and even ‘cruel’, if he had no love and care for men, and in general no will to do good things and that the ‘most blessed’ does not remain ‘in stillness’ and ‘looks at himself’ occupied only by his ‘pleasure’ (chs. XIII, XVI). Gregory objects that the ‘most blessed’ proves his excellence through his acts and manifests himself to be known by men, and that this is the ‘helper of men’, the one who has come to death (ch. XIV).

This counter-argument proves, as we have argued, that Gregory had read Dionysius’ \textit{On nature}. Unfortunately, given the fragmentary transmission of Dionysius’ work, we cannot establish how much Gregory may have relied on it. However, Eusebius reports several times that he had just selected some of Dionysius’ ‘numberless other remarks’ (p. e. XIV,25,17,1), and it is plausible that Gregory knew them first hand\textsuperscript{136}. If Gregory’s dependence on Dionysius is not proven by my remarks, it can be alternatively hypothesised that both authors had a common source, probably Origen’s \textit{Stromateis}, which was written in order to demonstrate the truth of the Christian doctrines by comparing them with the philosophical ones\textsuperscript{137}; we have no anti-Epicurean extracts from this work that corroborate this conjecture, but there is little doubt that Origen targeted Epicurean views in it as he did in other works. At any rate, the \textit{Ad

\textsuperscript{134} Epicurus, \textit{Ratae Sententiae}, I (121 Arrighetti): Ὅ τοι μακάριον καὶ ἀφθαρτον οὕτε αὐτὸ πράγματα ἔχει οὕτε ἄλλω παρέχει· ὅστε οὕτε ὡργαῖς οὕτε χάρισι συνέχεται· ἐν ἁθετεῖ γάρ πάν τὸ τοιοῦτον.

\textsuperscript{135} Epicurus, \textit{Ep. Her.}, 76,8–77,3 (67-69 Arrighetti): Καὶ μὴ ἐν τοῖς μετεώροις φοράν καὶ τροπὴν καὶ ἐκλεισθῆναι καὶ ἀναστηλῆναι καὶ δύσιν καὶ τὰ σύστασις τούτοις μὴ τειττορογούντος τινος νομίζειν δεῖ γίνεσθαι καὶ διατάξειν· ἀλλ’ ἐν τῇ ἁθετεῖ γάρ φόβῳ καὶ προθετείς τῶν πλήθους τοῦτο γίνεται…

\textsuperscript{136} Eus. \textit{p.e.} XIV,25,17: ‘After speaking thus, and adding numberless other remarks to these, he next discusses the question at length by arguments drawn from the particular elements of the universe, and from the living beings of all kinds included in them, and moreover from the nature of man. And by adding yet a few of these arguments to those which have been mentioned, I shall bring the present subject to an end’ (transl. Gifford, 839). Other resemblances between the two works have been pointed out above.

\textsuperscript{137} Hier. \textit{Epist.} 70,4: \textit{Origenes decem scriptis Stromateas, christianorum et philosophorum inter se sententias comparans, et omnia nostrae religionis dogmata de Platone et Aristotele, Numenio, Cornutoque confirmans.}
Theop. appears to be a work well connected with the Alexandrian environment: one reason more for maintaining its ascription to Gregory of Neocaesarea.

As we have seen, Abramowski has interpreted the absence of the Logos theology as evidence of a different doctrinal standpoint on the part of Gregory. We believe that this view should be put into perspective and that it is impossible to have any certainty in listing Gregory as a Monarchianist or a theologian of the Logos on the basis of what we read in the Ad Theop. Indeed, Abramowski did not consider in a fair manner all the remarks put forward by Crouzel. The French scholar had rightly noted that Origen assigned the passibility not only to the human nature of the Logos, as Abramowski underlined, but also showed that this was not the only way Origen dealt with the subject by quoting brief pieces from an outstanding passage of HEz VI, 6\textsuperscript{138}, which is worth quoting here more extensively.

He descended to earth because he had mercy on the human gender, and so bore our passions before suffering on the cross and deigning to assume our flesh. If he had not suffered, he would not have come to share our human life. He suffered first and then he descended and revealed himself. Now, which was this passion he suffered for us? It is the passion of charity (caritatis est passio). For the very Father, God of the universe, who is magnanimous, full of mercy and compassionate (Ps 102:8), doesn’t he also suffer in some way? Do you ignore that, when he manages human realities, he suffers human passions? Verily the Lord, your God, assumed your manners as a man would assume his son (Dt 1:31). So God assumes our manners as the Son of God bears our passions. The Father himself is not impassible (Ipse Pater non est impassibilis). If begged, he pities and consoled, he suffers for a certain charity (patitur aliquid caritatis), and gets to [conditions] in which He cannot agree with the magnitude of his nature and, for our sake, he bears human passions (et fit in iis in quibus iuxta magnitudinem naturae suae non potest esse, et propter nos humanas sustinet passiones)\textsuperscript{139}.

\textsuperscript{138} That Origen had no unequivocal position about the impassibility of God is a well-known issue which has been frequently discussed by scholars. See H. Frohnhofen, Apatheia tou Theou. Über die Affektlösigkeit Gottes in der griechischen Antike und bei den griechischsprachigen Kirchenvätern bis zu Gregorios Thaumaturgos, Frankfurt am Main-Bern-New York-Paris 1987 (EHS.T 318), 192-212; J. Galot, Le Dieu trinitaire et la Passion du Christ, NRTh 1 (1982), 70-73; T. Kobusch, Kann Gott Leiden? Zu den philosophischen Grundlagen der Lehre von der Passibilität Gottes bei Origenes, VigChr 46 (1992), 328-333; M. Fédou, La ‘souffrance de Dieu’ selon Origène, StPatr XXVI (1993), 245-250; S.F. Eyzaguirre, ‘Passio caritatis’ according to Origen In Ezechiel Homilae VI in the light of DT 1, 31, VigChr 60 (2006), 135-147. Of particular clarity as an introduction to the issue of the passibility of God in the pre-Nicene literature up to Gregory Thaumaturgus is the general overview provided by Hallman, Divine Suffering and Change in Origen and Ad Theopompum, 85-98.

\textsuperscript{139} Transl. by Eyzaguirre, ‘Passio caritatis’ according to Origen, 139-140. Eyzaguirre shows that Origen uses Nm 23, 19 (‘God [is] not like a man’) to justify God’s impassibility, and Dt 1:31 for his passibility. Cf., in particular, Or. Hier XVIII.6.
These lines show that Origen ascribed human passions both to the Son before the incarnation and, above all, to the Father; this implies that the Passion concerns the divine nature in general, and not only the human nature of Christ. If, then, Origen could say in a homily that the Father ‘is not impassible’ in such terms, there are no compelling reasons to infer from the absence of a distinction between Father and Son in a public debate over the passibility and impassibility of God, that Gregory was a Monarchianist or even a Patripassian.

This passage confirms also that Origen and Gregory agreed that God’s love for men, his passio caritatis, shows his freedom overcoming his nature. Theo Kobusch has rightly underlined the fact that this peculiar idea of Origen lies at the core of chapters II-IV of the _Ad Theop._, an aspect totally missing in Abramowski’s study.

Indeed, it is truly striking that a pupil of Origen, speaking of the Passion, did not mention the Logos and did not deal directly with the issues concerning human and divine natures, as Origen did also in _CC IV_, but Gregory did not say anything contrary to his teacher’s opinion. Abramowski herself has explained that the theological perspective of the _Ad. Theop._ is not anti- but non- Origenist, since it simply ignores the Logos theology and is not in opposition to it. But it is hard to agree with Abramowski’s assumption that there is no ‘positive relationship with Origen’ on the basis of assumed divergences concerning theological issues which Gregory had not dealt with but from an indirect perspective, i.e. a philosophical discourse on divine impassibility. Above all, it is not true at all that Gregory does not refer to the human nature of God, for, on the contrary, the entire treatise copes with the issue of how the nature of God remains impassible while inhabiting the intrinsically passible nature of men. In other words, Abramowski does not provide sufficient arguments to convince us that the silence about the Logos should be interpreted as evidence of Gregory’s unfamiliarity with Origen’s theology, rather than of its apologetic aim.

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140 See also: _Sel. in Ezech._ c. 16,8 (PG 13, 812A); ἑκάστος τῷ ἐλεήσαι· οὐ γὰρ ἀσπαλαγχος ὁ Θεός; _HEz_ VIII,5 [Origen commenting Ex 20:5 (‘For I am the Lord your God, a jealous God’)]: ‘Behold the kindness of God! He himself assumes the weakness of human dispositions that he might teach us and make us perfect … God does and suffers all things for our sake’; _HNm._ XXIII,2,2: ‘but just as our good actions and progress in the virtues give rise to rejoicing and festivity with God and angels, so I fear that our evil manner of living brings about lamentation and sorrow, not only on earth but also in heaven. And perhaps likewise human sins strike God himself with grief’; later on (XXIII,2,6) Origen adds that where the Scripture says that God grieves or rejoices, this should be interpreted as ‘figures of speech’, for ‘the divine nature is completely estranged from all passion’. Transl. Heine (FaCh 71), 325, and _Homilies on Numbers_, translated by T.P. Scheck, edited by C.A. Hall, Downers Grove (IL) 2009 (Ancient Christian texts), 140-141.

141 God ‘co-suffers’ (συμπάσχει) according to _Sel. in Ezech._ c. 16,8 (PG 13, 812A; quoted in the previous note).

142 Elsewhere Origen speaks of _philantropia_ or _affectus amoris_, see _CMt_ X,23 and _HEz_ XIII,2. Cf. Fédou, _La ‘souffrance de Dieu’_, 247.

143 Kobusch, _Kann Gott Leiden?_, 330. Kobusch’s perspective of considering the relationship between the will and nature of God as the key to interpreting the passages where Origen ascribes impassibility or passibility to God can be found already in Galot, _Le Dieu trinitaire_, 72-73, and have also been endorsed by Eyzaguirre, ‘ _Passio caritatis_ according to Origen’, 147.

144 Abramowski, _Gregory the Teacher’s ‘Ad Theopompum’_, 4.
As a matter of fact, Gregory extensively focuses on the ‘power of God’ and even defines ‘wisdom’ and ‘power’ (I Cor 1:24), as well as ‘life’ (XII,19-20; Jn 14:6), that God ‘by whose death impassibility was spread among all men’ (Ad Theop. VIII,1-3, 391 Pazzini)\(^\text{145}\). He did not mention issues concerning the Logos as well as the relations between the soul and body of Jesus because he did not find them necessary in handling Theopompus’ questions. Gregory steadily replies to Epicurean views and, hence, may have deemed it unnecessary to deal with more theological issues such as those implied by the doctrine of the Logos. Indeed, Gregory shows an abstract approach to Theopompus’ abstract questions, and the insertion of more precise theological issues would have distracted from the theoretical approach taken throughout the Ad Theop.

That does not obscure the progressive structure of the dialogue, which first deals with the theoretical hindrances that prevent the Greeks from accepting the Passion of God and then leaves more and more space to biblical allusions. However, it is mainly from Gregory’s reasoning about physical subjects that we understand “his own metaphysics”. In summary, the analogies taken from the physical world, as well as those extracted from classical history, show that there are phenomena which attest the impassibility of material entities, and that good actions of free will may annihilate the passions and achieve impassibility. Gregory seems to argue that, if a correct philosophical approach in observing these facts allows us to appreciate that impassibility exists even in the physical and human worlds, there are no reasonable objections to ascribing this property to God when he suffered from Passion. In other words, the Passion, even if it were an act of love on the part of God, is not a substantial property of his essence, but a contingent one.

\(^{145}\) Cf. Or. Cl 1.248ff.
CHAPTER 5. TWO EXPOSITIONS OF FAITH ATTRIBUTED TO GREGORY IN THE LATE FOURTH CENTURY: CONFESSIO FIDEI AND AD GELIANUM

I. Status quaestionis

In the space of about five years, between the 370s and the 380s, two texts featured by opposing theological positions were associated with Gregory Thaumaturgus as their author and referred to either as a ‘confession of faith’ or a ‘mystagogy’. They are, respectively, the Ad Gelianum, the only extant fragment of which appears to be quoted in Basil of Caesarea’s Ep. 210 (d. 376), and the Confessio fidei, quoted entirely in Gregory of Nyssa’s Vita (380) and partially in the Orationes 31 and 40 (380) by Gregory of Nazianzus (who, however, does not mention the name of any author).

At that time, the Church of Neocaesarea was led by Bishop Atarbius whom Basil charged with being a follower of Marcellus of Ancyra and whom he tried to persuade to endorse the Neo-Nicene doctrine of the three hypostases. In truth, we do not know if Atarbius was alive when Gregory of Nyssa wrote the Vita, but if he was not, there is little doubt that his influence must have remained active for some time. The polemical context from which both the Cappadocians’ witnesses arise requires particular attention, because the discussion about the authorship of the Confessio or of the Ad Gelianum has been mostly dominated by the problem of making sense out of contradicting external testimonies.

Indeed, Basil narrates that either Atarbius or his followers had tried to approach by letter Anthimus of Tyana, who supported Basil, ‘on the ground that Gregory said in an exposition of faith that Father and Son are two in thought, but one in hypostasis’. Basil replied that this was said by Gregory ‘not dogmatically, but controversially in the dialogue with Gelian’, that this work was badly transcripted and that it contained also

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2 Marcellus played an important role during the Nicaean Council in 325 as a strong opposer of Arius. His anti-Arianism led Eusebius of Caesarea to accuse him of being a Sabellian and to his deposition in 336 by Constantine. Marcellus tried in vain to be reintegrated and went to Rome, where he moderated his most controversial theological theses and was thus rehabilitated by the Synod of Rome (340), that declared him orthodox. Nonetheless, he was repeatedly condemned by oriental synods and also Athanasius, who had become his friend in Rome, finally abandoned him, though he never satisfied Basil’s request to condemn Marcellus (on this, see J.T. Lienhard, Contra Marcellum. Marcellus of Ancyra and Fourth-Century Theology, Washington D.C. 1999, 9). For a recent introduction see C. Kannengiesser, Marcello di Ancira, NDPAC II, 3015-3017. In the past century several works have been ascribed to Marcellus, and this has led many scholars to provide new interpretations of his thought. Nonetheless, their authenticity has been contested by M. Simonetti, Su alcune opere attribuite di recente a Marcello d’Ancira, RSLR 9 (1973), 313-329 and Sulla teologia di Marcello d’Ancira, RSLR 31 (1995), 259-269, with arguments which have not been seriously challenged.
terms, such as poëma and ktisma, which Arians might have made use of as evidence of their heresies (for full text see §II,1 below).

In his turn, Gregory of Nyssa, after having mentioned how it was revealed to Gregory of Neocaesarea, introduces the text of the Confessio fidei with the following words:

And he is said to have written down that divine initiation as soon as possible, and afterwards to have used it as the basis for his preaching in the church and to have left that God-given teaching to his successors as a kind of inheritance, by which the people there are initiated to this day, thus remaining unaffected by every heretical wickedness (transl. Slusser, 54)3.

Then, after having quoted the Confessio (for full text see §III below), Gregory of Nyssa adds also that the church of Neocaesarea preserved still ‘the same inscriptions of that blessed hand’ (αὐτὰ τὰ χεράγματα τῆς μακαρίας ἐκείνης χειρός)4. Therefore, anybody could verify its existence and practice in Neocaesarea5.

Before reconstructing the polemical context on the basis of primary sources, namely several letters and the De Spiritu Sancto of Basil, we will provide a brief overview of the main arguments put forward by scholars to defend the authenticity either of the Confessio or of the Ad Gelianum, or of both, or of neither of them. The reader will find further bibliographical references in the very concise review of this debate until 1879 in the already mentioned study of Caspari6.

In the past the authenticity of the Confessio was defended mainly on the basis of the traditionalism of the Church of Neocaesarea attested by Gregory of Nyssa7. Bull, often mentioned in the disputes before Caspari, appealed also to Basil’s Ep. 204, where he reminded his readership that he had received from his grandmother Macrina the words themselves of Gregory Thaumaturgus, and to the final passage from the De Spiritu Sancto, where Basil attests the affection of the church of Neocaesarea for

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3 Gr. Nyss. V. Gr. Thaum. 17,17-23: τὸν δὲ παραχρῆμα τὴν θείαν ἐκείνην μυσταγωγήσαν γράμμασιν ἐνσήμνωσαν καὶ κατ’ ἐκείνη μετὰ ταῦτα κηρύσσειν ἐν τῇ ἐκκλησίᾳ τοῦ λόγου καὶ τοῖς ἑρεξής ὅσπερ τινὰ κλήρου τὴν θεόσθοτον ἐκείνην διδασκαλίαν καταλεῖπεν, δε’ ἄρ’ μυσταγωγεῖται μέχρι τοῦ νῦν ἀ παρ’ ἐκείνους λαὸς πάσης πίστεως κακίας διαμείνας ἀπείραστος.

4 Slusser, Saint Gregory Thaumaturgus, 55, translates χεράγματα into ‘inscriptions’, and Leone (ed.), Gregorio di Nissa, Vita di Gregorio Taumaturgo, 52 into ‘parole scritte’, but I do not see this in contradiction to the usual interpretation of this word as ‘manuscript’ (thus, for instance, Caspari, Abramowski and Simonetti).

5 Gr. Nyss. V. Gr. Thaum. 19,6-8.


7 For a very informative list of the authors who quoted, translated or considered authentic the Confessio since Gregory of Nazianzus until the Council of Firenze see Ceillier, Histoire générale des auteurs sacrés et ecclésiastiques, t. III, 315.
Gregory Thaumaturgus’ traditions⁸. As for the Ad Gelianum, most scholars gave credit to Basil and minimised the significance of its Sabellian statement because it was extracted from a polemical context.

The points raised against the authenticity of the Confessio have had a long and variegated history. At the beginning of the 18th century Whiston contested the authorship of the Confessio⁹ on the basis of the facts that it was never quoted before Gregory of Nyssa, nor by Basil, who was supposed to know it through Macrina the Elder. Thus, he argued that it was ‘calculated for the turn of Orthodoxy in the days of Basil, Rufinus and Gregory Nyssen’ and considered very likely that Gregory of Nyssa was the author of the fourth article on the Trinity, if not of the entire creed¹⁰. He also ruled out the possibility that Gregory was a Sabellian because he had taken part in the council against Paul of Samosata, while he considered Gregory an Arian on the basis of the presence of alleged Arian terminology in the Ad Gelianum.

To N. Lardner, not long after Whiston, we owe the first attempt of reconstruction of the context of the dispute between Basil and the Church of Neocaesarea based on Basil’s letters 204, 207 and 210¹¹. On these grounds he argued that probably Gregory of Neocaesarea’s writings supplied the Neocaesareans with grounds for their Sabellian ideas, because: Basil’s letters attest that he was not in communion either with Atarbius or with the previous bishop Musonius, even if he praised the latter for being an enemy of novelties in theological matters; Gregory participated in the first council against Paul of Samosata but was absent at his deposition; Basil’s interpretation of the words extracted from the Ad Gelianum is abusive. Thereby, Lardner denied the authorship of the Confessio¹². Basil’s silence about the Confessio during his disputes with the Neocaesareans convinced him that ‘either there was no written Creed at Neocaesarea, reputed Gregorie’s, or that it was not to Basil’s purpose (sic)’¹³. He also drew from the massive presence of the doctrine of Trinity in a document that supposedly preceded Nicea the conclusion that the Confessio ‘is a fiction of the fourth century, after the rise, and heats of the controversie about the Trinity (sic)’ by Basil or Gregory of Nyssa¹⁴.

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⁸ G. Bull, Defensio Fidei Niceneae, London 1703 (2nd ed.), 152, ap. J. Bingham, Origines Ecclesiasticae or the Antiquities of the Christian Church and other works, vol. III, London 1843, 345-347. Thus also Ceillier (see previous note). For these passages see §II,1 and 2.
⁹ W. Whiston, Primitive Christianity Reviv’d, vol. IV. An account of the faith of the two first centuries, London 1711, 40-44.
¹⁰ Whiston, Primitive Christianity Reviv’d, 41.
¹² Lardner, The credibility of Gospel history, part II, 536-544. He mentioned in support of his thesis also the following points: the unnecessary revelation of it by St. John and Mary, given that he was taught by Origen and consecrated by Phedimos of Amaseia; the absence of the Creed in Jerome’s list; the contradiction between the Confessio and the Ad Gelianum.
¹³ Lardner, The credibility of Gospel history, part II, 543.
This conclusion was somehow endorsed in 1775 by C.F. Rössler, who tended to think that the *Confessio* was an anti-Arian fraud because of the presence of later theological problems, which were probably inserted by Gregory of Nyssa\(^\text{15}\).

The consistency of the *Confessio* with the later Nicene orthodoxy and the silence of the Nicene Fathers and of Basil about the *Confessio* brought also C.D.A. Martini to ascribe this ‘pious fraud’ to Gregory of Nyssa\(^\text{16}\). However, unlike Lardner, Martini rejected the significance of the Monarchian statement reported by Basil because of its manifest contrast with the *Pan. Or.* and with Gregory of Neocaesarea’s participation in the Council against Paul of Samosata attested by Eusebius. On the contrary, Martini emphasised the Arian terms contained in the *Ad Gelianum* because they are in line with the subordinationism of the *Pan. Or.* Indeed, this latter work, unlike the *Confessio*, does not state the eternity of the Son.

Starting from the same documentation J.A. Dorner developed a different view\(^\text{17}\). He acknowledged the subordinationism of certain passages of the *Pan. Or.* but minimised the Arian statements which Basil alluded to on the basis of the Sabellian expression of the *Ad Gelianum*. At the same time, he placed Gregory’s endorsement for the doctrine of the equality of the Father and the Son before any other possible subordinationist and potentially Arian ideas. He supported his view also relying on few passages of the *De Trinitate* (CPG 1787), a treatise partially handed down in Arabic, of which Mai had published a translation into Latin, but which cannot be considered authentic\(^\text{18}\). In conclusion, Dorner considered authentic the first half of the *Confessio*,

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\(^{18}\) Here it may suffice to read the following lines from A. Mai, *Spicilegium Romanum*, T. III, Romae 1840: *Nomen quoque naturae significat subsistentiam veluti si dicamus hominen. Cunctae (personae) una natura sunt, una essentia, una voluntas, appellanturque Trinitas sancta, quae sunt nomina subsistentia, una natura in tribus personis, ac genus unum. Filii vero persona unita est, nempe unum ex duobus, id est divinitate simul et humanitate, quae duae unum constituant (696) … Hoc nostram de Maria virgine [Verbus] sumpset substantiam; et quatenus quidem spiritale est, Patri est indivisibiliter aequale; quatenus vero corporeum, nobis pariter aequale est inseparabiliter. Rursusque quatenus spiritale est, aequoperat sanctum Spiritum inseparabiliter et sine termino. Neque duae erant, sed unica Trinitatis sanctae natura ante Filii Verbi incarnationem; atque unica mansit natura Trinitatis etiam post Filii incarnationem. Siquid vero accessisse incrementum Trinitati credit propter assumptam a Verbo humanitatem, is a nobis alienus est… (698-699).* Mai, who suspected that this work was a fragment drawn from the *Ad Gelianum*, acknowledged that the work was Monophysite nonetheless. B.M. Weischer, *Qērellos IV 3: Traktate des Severianos von Gabala, Gregorios Thaumaturgos und Kyrillos von Alexandrien*, Wiesbaden 1980 (AthF 7), 122-128 has edited both the Arabic and Ethipic versions of the text and has considered it to be dated after the Council of Chalcedon. M. van Esbroeck, *Sur quatre traités attribués à Grégoire et leur contexte marcellien (CPG 3222, 1781 et 1787)*, in H.R. Drobner – C. Klock (eds.), *Studien zu Gregor von Nyssa und der christlichen Spätantike*, Leiden-New York-Köbenhavn-Köln 1990 (SVigChr 12), 12-15, has translated the Arabic version into French and has assumed that the work was produced in a Marcellian
while he remained suspicious about the parts on the Holy Spirit for they teach its eternity.

Along this line, Neander noted that the second half of the Confessio is ‘manifestly a later addition, inasmuch as it contains distinctions wholly unknown to the school of Origen, and which first arose out of the controversy with the Arians in the fourth century’.

In 1879 Caspari wrote his important study on the Confessio, which he published in its Greek, Syriac and Latin versions supplying them with critical notes. Gregory of Nazianzus’ knowledge of the Confessio, together with the fact that its Syriac and Latin versions included the last lines questioned by several scholars, was particularly important in Caspari’s stance also to sustain the authenticity and the integrity of the whole text. According to Caspari, there was no reason to doubt that all three Cappadocians knew the Confessio, even if Gregory of Nazianzus did quote it as a recent work without naming the Thaumaturgus and Basil kept quiet about the Confessio during his dispute with the Neocaesareans. Caspari argued that Basil had momentarily forgotten the Confessio and that Gregory of Nazianzus spoke rhetorically. He also explained the fact that the Confessio was not noticed by Athanasius or by the bishops gathered at Nicaea: indeed, although it said something important about the Holy Spirit, Gregory’s creed might have remained local and was of no help in clarifying the ousia of the Father and the homoousios. Speaking of the contents of the Confessio, Caspari showed that the first two articles on the Father and the Son are consistent with Origen’s context—together with the Ad Philagrium and the De deitate et tribus personis (CPG 1781)—, but without providing any solid argument in favour of his hypothesis. The fifth century remains the most plausible date of its composition, cf. Bardenhewer, Geschichte der altkirchlichen Literatur, Bd. II, 326; Harnack, Geschichte der altchristlichen Literatur bis Eusebius, Th. I, 432. As to the De deitate et tribus personis see K.-H. Uthemann, „Die Ἀπορα des Gregorius von Nyssa“? Ein Beitrag zur Geistmetaphysik in Byzanz mit einer Edition von CPG 1781, Byz. 63 (1993), 237-327, who has provided a critical edition of the text, handed down in three versions, and has hypothesised that it is an extract of the Ἀπορα of Gregory of Nyssa. See ibidem, 301-303 for further critical remarks on van Esbroeck’s hypothesis. In no case could the version translated by van Esbroeck, which Uthemann lists as the third one of the set, have been written by Marcellus or by one of his followers since the doctrine of the three hypostases is clearly endorsed.

20 The Greek text was edited together with Rufinus’ and an older anonymous translation already by A. Hahn, Bibliothek der Symbole und Glaubensregeln der Apostolisch-katholischen Kirche, Breslau 1842, 97-100. Caspari, Alte und neue Quellen, 8-17, added the edition of the Syriac version of the creed, which was ascribed to Gregory of Nazianzus. Another Syriac version was edited in Pitra, Analecta Sacra Spicilegio Solesmensi Parata, T. IV, 1883, 81. A third Latin version had been already published in Bibliotheca Symbolica Vetus ex monumentis quinque priorum seculorum maxime collecta… cura et studio C.G.F. Walchii, Lemgoviae 1770, 14-21. For further information on versions and editions of the Confessio see n.168 below.
21 Caspari, Alte und neue Quellen, 13-14, where there is also a list of scholars attesting their dissent on the issue.
22 Longinus (or Longianus), the bishop of Neocaesarea who participated in the Council of Nicaea, is a character completely obscure to us. See Caspari, Alte und neue Quellen, 31.
23 Caspari, Alte und neue Quellen, 28-32. He rightly ignores the silence of Eusebius and Jerome.
thought and that the third one on the Holy Spirit is not in contradiction to it. Nonetheless he recognised the presence of later themes. As for the fourth article on the Trinity, the opening lines do not exclude Origen’s influence and are in agreement with Basil’s defence and explanation of his doxology in the *De Spiritu Sancto*. What is said in the fourth chapter, namely that there is nothing ‘created or servant’ (κτιστόν, doulon) in the Trinity, can appear to be in contrast to Origen’s subordinationist ideas, but Caspari acknowledged the possibility that Gregory might have distanced himself from his master. On the other hand, he argued that the Sabellianism of the extract from the *Ad Gelianum* makes it unacceptable among Gregory’s works. In summary, according to Caspari, 1) the *Confessio* is authentic in all its parts, 2) it was preserved by the church of Neocaesarea without changes, 3) its literary features prove its antiquity and 4) it was written between 260 and 270 in dispute with the Sabellians—because of its assertions of the eternal and non-creational state of the Son and the Holy Spirit—but also remaining open to them.

Caspari’s study guaranteed the authenticity of the *Confessio* for a century. F. Loofs interpreted it as being written against Paul of Samosata, while A. Grillmeier, when still thinking that the *Confessio* was authentic, viewed in Arius’ *Thalia* a

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27 Caspari, *Alte und neue Quellen*, 57-61, where he takes into consideration that Gregory might have used an Arian terminology, as attested by Basil, but not in a strict sense. For Caspari the episode reminds us of the dispute of the two Dionysii. Here it is enough to remember that in *De decretis Nicaeae synodi*, 26 Athanasius records that Dionysius of Rome charged, but without explicitly mention him, Dionysius of Alexandria with having said that the Son is ποιήμα. Athanasius himself tried to counter the use of Dionysius of Alexandria’s works on the side of the Arians in the *De sententia Dionysii*. On “the issue of the two Dionysii” see M. Simonetti, *Aspetti della cristologia del III secolo: Dionigi di Alessandria*, in Id., *Studi sulla cristologia del II e III secolo*, Roma 1993 (SEAug 44), 272-297 (= Bess. 7 [1989], 37-65).
28 Caspari, *Alte und neue Quellen*, 37-38, refers to Gregory’s participation in the council against Paul of Samosata and to a manuscript reading of *Ep. 210*—which is now expunged in Courtonne’s critical edition (see n.135 below)—where it is said that Gregory wiped out the Sabellian heresy from Neocaesarea.
29 That contradicts Gregory of Nyssa telling that the *Confessio* was revealed before Gregory began his episcopal activity.
30 Caspari, *Alte und neue Quellen*, 61-64 (see also 33-36).
32 F. Loofs, *Paulus von Samosata*, Leipzig 1924, 232-236. The German scholar identified two main parallels between the fourth article of the *Confessio* and the *Exp. fid.* of Eugenius of Ancarya and used these textual resemblances—in particular one reading to be expunged (cf. below nn. 166, 178)—to show that Paul had an Economic-Trinitarian view, as Marcellus of Ancarya.
probable direct refutation of it, especially as regards the fourth article on the Trinity. K. Holl had already shown the three Cappadocians’ indebtedness to the theology of Gregory of Neocaesarea by providing a very useful list of similarities between the fourth article and passages from the works of the Cappadocians.\(^{34}\) L. Froidevaux saw that its most important contribution in the history of the Church was to put the Cappadocians on the right path to conceiving of the Holy Spirit and, above all, the Trinity; he has also suggested seeing the *Ad Gelianum* as preceding the *Confessio*, that is as expressing a less mature theological view of Gregory.\(^{35}\)

In 1963 H. Crouzel dedicated an article to the information provided by Basil on the *Ad Gelianum*.\(^{36}\) He showed that the extract quoted by Atarbius opposes Origen’s theology of the three hypostases to the point that it would have appeared heretical to a pupil of Origen. It contradicts indeed an important anti-monarchianist passage from the *Contra Celsum*, where the Father and the Son are said to be ‘two realities in hypostasis, but one in unity of mind, in agreement, and in identity of will’.\(^{37}\) As to Gregory’s use of Arian terminology, Crouzel did not see any difficulty in the case of *ktisma* inasmuch as Origen himself used it in line with the biblical vocabulary (cf. Prv 8:22; Col 1:15), while Origen never said that the Son is *poïema*. From the fact that both the *Pan. Or.* and the *Confessio* are consistent with Origen’s Trinitarian doctrine Crouzel deduced that Gregory never changed his theological point of view. On the contrary, the fourth article of the *Confessio* shows that Gregory rectified the subordinationism of his master. After having noted that several apocryphal works were ascribed to Gregory Thaumaturgus, Crouzel concluded then that the *Dialogue* should be listed ‘at least among the dubious works of Gregory’. A few years later, Crouzel slightly changed his mind and concluded that ‘Basile a dû prendre pour l’oeuvre du Thaumaturge celle d’un faussaire’.\(^{38}\)

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35 L. Froidevaux, *Le symbole des saint Grégoire le Thaumaturge*, RSR 19 (1929), 193-247, part. 235-236 and 245-247. It is impossible to give an account of the large number of remarks of detail made in this prolix study, which is focused on the vocabulary of the *Confessio* in relation to the NT and to other Fathers of the Church. However, we will take advantage of it later on.


38 *CC* VIII,12,25-26: δῶν τῇ ύποστάσει πράγματα, ἐν δὲ τῇ ὠμονοίᾳ καὶ τῇ συμφωνίᾳ καὶ τῇ ταυτότητι τοῦ ψυλλήματος. See also: *Clo* X,37,246; *CMt* 17,14.

39 *En passant* Crouzel gave credit to the hypothesis of R. Weijenborg, *De authenticitate et sensu quorumdam epistularum S. Basilio Magno et Apollinario Laodiceno adscripturam*, Anton. 33 (1958), 197-240, 317-414; 34 (1959), 245-298, who considered Atarbius as the author of the *Ad Philagrium* and of the manipulation of the correspondence between Basil and Apollinarius, and identified him with the same Atarbius who went to Palestine in 393 to organise the condemnation of Origen and found the agreement of Jerome. None of these hypotheses have won the consensus of the scholars.

40 Crouzel (ed.), *Gregoire le Thaumaturge*, *Remerciement*, 31 (see also his contributions to TRE and DPAC). Simonetti, *Una nuova ipotesi*, 288, has criticised the hypothesis of a forgery because we know nothing of about forgeries made by Monarchians during the third century. However, Crouzel does not speak of forgery made in the third century and actually tended to speak of the fourth century (cf. *Grégoire le Thaumaturge et le Dialogue avec Élien*, 430). Moreover, as Simonetti (289) has also remembered, a
H. Dehnhard and M. Tetz also underlined the influence of the *Confessio* on the theology both of Basil and of the Marcellians of the last generation by considering some textual connections of its third and fourth articles with Basil’s writings and with the *Expositio fidei* of Eugenius of Ancyra.\(^{41}\)

These links were taken into consideration again by L. Abramowski’s article in 1976, which is the most solid study opposing the authenticity of the *Confessio* in contemporary scholarship.\(^{42}\) This article consists of three parts. First, Abramowski highlighted the scant credibility of the narrative of Gregory of Nyssa’s *Vita*. In particular she convincingly shows the improbability of the baptismal use of the *Confessio* and its being ‘a careful composition by a trained hand’—a feature that is displayed by the formal balance of the last three articles and by the claimed exactness (ἀκρίβεια) of a creed revealed to Gregory of Neocaesarea at a time when he was worried about doctrinal falsifications. Like Caspari, she also did not place any weight on Gregory of Nyssa’s attestation of the existence of the autographon of the *Confessio*,\(^{45}\) but she rightly rejected Caspari’s problematic explanations of Basil’s silence and of Gregory’s quotations of its fourth article. Second, Abramowski reconstructed more in depth than before the historical context of the dispute between Basil and the Marcellians of Neocaesarea on the basis of a careful reading of Basil’s letters and *De Spiritu Sancto*. In this manner, she could emphasise Basil’s silence about the *Confessio* and his bias in defending the doctrine of the three hypostases, as well as in explaining the Monarchian statement drawn from the *Ad Gelianum*, by appealing to the tradition of Gregory of Neocaesarea but to no written text of his. As a result, Abramowski concluded, the *Confessio* was forged by Gregory of Nyssa—who, after all, was no stranger to such activities\(^{46}\)—in order to settle the controversy between Neo- and Old Nicenes in Neocaesarea. Third, Abramowski explained inversely the textual parallels pointed out by Dehnhard and Tetz, which concerned especially the third and the fourth articles, in order to show Gregory of Neocaesarea’s influence on Basil and the Marcellians: if the *Confessio* contains Basil’s ideas and a ‘profession of faith in the full Trinity, such as was acceptable to Marcellus’, then ‘Basil is the source for the

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\(^{41}\) Dehnhard, *Das Problem der Abhängigkeit des Basilius von Plotin; M. Tetz, Markellianer und Athanasios von Alexandrien. Die markellianische Expositio fidei ad Athanasium des Diakons Eugenios von Ankyra*, ZNW 64 (1973), 75-121 (Tetz did accept textual parallels between the *Confessio* and Eugenius’ *Exp. fid.* pointed out by Loofs, see n.32).

\(^{42}\) Abramowski, *Das Bekenntnis des Gregor Thaumaturgos*, 145-166. Thereafter, when necessary, we will refer between brackets to its English translation by L. Wickham published in Ead. *Formula and Context*, n. VII.


\(^{45}\) On this point see Abramowski, *Das Bekenntnis des Gregor Thaumaturgos*, 148-149.

\(^{46}\) It is the case of the three letters that Gregory of Nyssa sent under Basil’s name to bring peace between the latter and his uncle. See Bas. *Ep.* 58.
confession, not the Wonderworker the source for Basil. According to Abramowski, the most decisive point that demonstrates this dependence is the application, detected by Dehnhard, of the term \(\chiορηγός\) to the third hypostasis in Plotinus (Enn. V,1,2,9), which we find applied to the Holy Spirit in Basil’s De Spiritu and in our Confessio. Since it is impossible that Gregory of Neocaesarea knew Plotinus, whereas Basil certainly did, Gregory of Nyssa must have taken it from Basil. Finally, it is worth noting that Abramowski, unlike Crouzel, did find in Basil’s testimony about the Ad Gelianum the confirmation of its authenticity and did not find the assertion of one hypostasis in ‘irreconcilable opposition’ to Gregory’s theological statements in Pan. Or. IV, §35-39.

Among the scholars who have accepted Abramowski’s conclusions, we have to remember M. van Esbroeck, for his approach to detecting Gregory’s original Confessio which is completely different from that of the others, and M. Slusser. Van Esbroeck studied many Greek and oriental manuscripts handing down the Confessio and promised to release several publications on the issue, which were prevented by his death. That puts our point of view in a very uncomfortable position to judge his hypotheses, as many of these appear highly speculative and unsubstantiated. Van Esbroeck found a different version of the Confessio in a Syriac version of Gregory Thaumaturgus’ life (ms. Leningrad, n.s. 4). The episode, which is missing in the Greek version, describes how Gregory was given a confession of faith by it appearing on the wall of the church, which is as follows: ‘Three hypostases of the Father, the Son and the holy Ghost, one divine nature’. According to Van Esbroeck, Gregory of Nyssa omitted this episode and changed this formula removing the word hypostasis ‘clearly to avoid provoking a Marcellian reaction in Neocaesarea’. Another Georgian version of Gregory Thaumaturgus’ life, depending on a Greek model such as the Syriac Leningrad manuscript, reports the same episode but with a different formula: ‘Three hypostases of the Father, the Son and the holy Ghost, and one mind of the divinity’. Van Esbroeck argued that, even if there was an easy confusion between ‘nature’ (\(buneba\)) and ‘mind’ (\(goneba\) in the old hieratic Georgian script, ‘Three hypostases’ and ‘one nature’ would be a strange formula both in the Syriac Life and in its Greek lost model. Thus Van

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47 Abramowski, Das Bekenntnis des Gregor Thaumaturgos, 164 (Formula and Context, n. VII, 21).
48 On this text see n.195.
49 Abramowski, Das Bekenntnis des Gregor Thaumaturgos, 164, rightly remembers that the first partial edition of the Enneads was made by Porphyry after Plotinus’ death in 270.
50 Abramowski, Das Bekenntnis des Gregor Thaumaturgos, 160, n.53 (transl. Formula and Context, n. VII, 16-17), where she also recalls the episode of the two Dionysii to justify historically the reliability of Gregory of Neocaesarea’s holding a Monarchian view.
53 John the Evangelist and Mary appeared in Gregory’s sleep to confirm this formula that same night.
54 Van Esbroeck, The Credo of Gregory the Wonderworker, 258.
Esbroeck hypothesised an inversion of terms, so that the original formula was ‘Three minds (τρεῖς ἐπίνοιαι) of the Father, the Son and the holy Ghost, one hypostasis of the divinity’. For him, in this way the reactions by Gregory of Nyssa and Basil to the formula appear more comprehensible. As a matter of fact, Van Esbroeck’s reconstruction is completely arbitrary and creates more difficulties than it solves. Probably a formula containing τρεῖς ἐπίνοιαι might be in agreement with that extracted from the Ad Gelianum according to which the Father and the Son were ‘two in thought’ (ἐπινοίᾳ). But, if so, why did not Atarbius quote the alleged original formula considering that it did not put at risk the Sabellian or Marcellian acceptance of only one hypostasis or ousia? Van Esbroeck does not explain this fact as well as others. The only explanation of that would be – one supposes – that Gregory Thaumaturgus was an exponent of a some sort of neo-Sabellianism synthetised by the ‘three epinoiai’ formula, which both the Cappadocians and the Marcellians preferred to readapt. However, I do not see any good reason whatsoever to accept this formula, all the more so because it has no attestation in Church History and can hardly have made any sense in a Trinitarian context (as far as I know, there is no case of credal formula containing “two epinoiai” either). Finally, the Syriac and Georgian versions of the Confessio cannot be original for Basil would have surely taken advantage of the ‘three hypostaseis’ formula.

Michael Slusser has argued, in line with the oriental attestations that preserve simpler formulas and the Syriac version that says the creed appeared written on the wall of the church of Neocaesarea, that it would be more plausible to think that Gregory of Nyssa found a shorter baptismal formula reading ‘ΕΙΣ ΘΕΟΣ, ΕΙΣ ΚΥΡΙΟΣ, ΕΙΣ ΠΝΥΕΜΑ, ΤΡΙΑΣ ΤΕΛΕΙΑ’ and ‘could well have seized upon this as the basis for an authoritative, orthodox interpretation’55. In support of his hypothesis, Slusser has subsequently stressed two points, that Gregory of Nyssa did ‘not actually say that “the inscriptions of that blessed hand” contain the Creed he has just recited’ and the fact that ‘very few inscriptions of more than 100 words … have survived, and this one would presumably have been on an interior wall of a sturdy third-century church building that had survived at least one earthquake’56. In the light of Koetschau’s demonstration of the derivative nature of the Syriac hagiography with respect to Gregory of Nyssa’s57, we do not see on which basis one can give more credibility to the oriental versions rather than to Gregory of Nyssa. Moreover, the idea that the text ascribed to the Thaumaturgus by Gregory of Nyssa was not the content of ‘the inscriptions of that blessed hand’ appears to be in contradiction to what the latter implies in what he says before and after having quoted the Confessio. Although Slusser’s conjecture of a simpler formula has some plausibility, he himself has found ‘safer to disregard it [= the Confessio] entirely’.

For us, Gregory of Nyssa’s testimony that the Confessio was conveyed as a traditional teaching of the Thaumaturgus in the church of Neocaesarea remains a key

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55 Slusser (ed.), St. Gregory Thaumaturgus, Life and works, 55.
56 Slusser, Saint Gregory Thaumaturgus, 579-580.
57 See ch. I, n.240.
point that deserves to be tested with further analyses of its contents and of the polemical context within which it has come to light.

As we have seen, the discussion about the authorship of the *Confessio* has always been linked to the problem arising from the fragment of the *Ad Gelianum*, and it is not a case that it has been mostly tackled trying to make sense out of contradicting external testimonies. That has often led to the endorsement of two immediate hypotheses: 1) Gregory of Nyssa’s witness implies the acknowledgment of the entire text of the *Confessio*, 2) Basil’s silence means that the *Confessio* did not exist in all its parts before Gregory of Nyssa (or someone else) composed it. Gregory of Nazianzus’ quotations have been used to support both positions, but there is no question that he referred to the *Confessio* as a recent text and that it was never cited before Gregory of Nyssa. We will add other considerations shortly, but the points mentioned so far are strong enough to seriously question the existence of Gregory Thaumaturgus’ creed. However, several modern scholars had already perceived the scant credibility of the fourth article, and no one has ever tried to directly challenge Caspari’s demonstration that the first two chapters of the *Confessio* were written by the follower of Origen who wrote the *Pan. Or*. That would indicate that a ‘middle road’ hypothesis might still be possible.

Indeed, some contemporary scholars appeared more cautious than Abramowski and have shown a certain tendency to take into consideration this possibility. In 1979 P.J. Fedwick wrote as follows: ‘It is not at all impossible that Gregory of Nyssa is quoting in the symbol most or some of the *ipsissima verba* of the founder of the church of Neoicaesarea as they were transmitted orally through his disciples, notably Macrina. There could be posterior additions by some of his successors in the see of Neoicaesarea’\(^\text{58}\). R. Hübner admitted the existence of an original creed, whose third article was revised in the fourth century, while the fourth article may have been added\(^\text{59}\). M. Simonetti has given credit to many of Abramowski’s arguments but, at the same time, has considered admissible the authenticity of the first two articles of the *Confessio*\(^\text{60}\). As for the third and fourth articles, even though their terminology is compatible with that of Origen, Simonetti dated them to the second half of fourth century. Indeed, their dimension—equal to the article on the Son—is striking if we consider that the Holy Spirit and the Trinity played a marginal role in the theological debates during the third century. According to Simonetti, the weak point in Abramowski’s view is the hypothesis of forgery by Gregory of Nyssa, because the compromise in theological disputes usually does not satisfy any of the opposing

\(^{58}\) P.J. Fedwick, *The Church and the Charisma of leadership in Basil of Caesarea*, Toronto 1979 (MS 45), 3. In reply to Abramowski’s view see also Crouzel, *La cristologia in Gregorio Taumaturgo*, 745-746 (n.6), who limited himself to stressing the incompatibility of Gregory of Nyssa’s imprudence in quoting a forgery while saying that its original text was held in Neoicaesarea.

\(^{59}\) *Apud* Weischer, *Qērellos IV* 3, 70. Weisher himself considers Abramowski’s arguments not completely convincing (*ibidem*, 69).

\(^{60}\) Simonetti, *Una nuova ipotesi*, 278-279, 295-298. See also, Id., *Gregorio il Taumaturgo*, NDPAC II, 2476.
factions. Charging Gregory of Nyssa with that might be softened by admitting that he
rehashed only the second half of the Confessio: the original confession would have
been composed of three articles, of which the third was very different from the present
one. But Simonetti noted also that to counter Atarbius’ quotation from the Ad Gelianum
and to show that Gregory was not a Sabellian but a theologian of the Logos, Basil could
cite just the first two articles of the Confessio61, or even only the first lines of the first
article62. At the same time, Simonetti declared his indecision about the hypothesis of a
total forgery or of a partial readaptation of the original Confessio, especially because
there would be no total incompatibility among the Confessio and the Ad Gelianum, the
Ad Theopompum, and the Ad Philagrium, once one considered that these last three
works were addressed to pagans63. Indeed, as Simonetti and Prinzivalli have further
argued, the fragment drawn from the Ad Gelianum might be explained in the light of
Gregory’s intention to insist on God’s unity—a sensitive theme for contemporary
learned pagans—without feeling the need to make use of technical Trinitarian
terminology when speaking to outsiders64.

Therefore, the hypothesis that the Confessio conveys doctrines originally
attributed to Gregory Thaumaturgus remains open. In the pages which follow, we will
test that. First, we will analyse again the writings of Basil which are at issue in order to
provide a historical account of the doctrinal and polemical context where the Ad Gelianum
and the Confessio appeared. Then, by inspecting the contents of the Confessio, we will show that the argument of Basil’s silence against its authenticity is solid only with regard to the third and fourth articles. We will argue that if it is true that
Basil never quoted the Ad Gelianum because it was ‘entirely useless for his purposes’65,
that is to convince his Marcellian adversaries about the doctrine of the three hypostases,
the same has to be said with regard of the first two articles of the Confessio fidei.

II. The historical context

II.1. Basil’s letters

As we have seen in the first part of this research, Basil mentions Gregory’s name in
the De Spiritu Sancto and in some of his letters (28, 204, 207, 210), which he addressed

61 Simonetti, Una nuova ipotesi, 297.
62 Simonetti, Gregorio il Taumaturgo e Origene, 23.
63 Simonetti, Una nuova ipotesi, 297. This point is not reaffirmed in Gregorio il Taumaturgo e Origene,
where Simonetti appears more sceptical on the entire issue. He also proposed taking into consideration
the hypothesis that Gregory could already have endorsed a monarchian interpretation of Origen’s
Trinitarian doctrine such as that of Pan. Or. IV, §36-37. The same view was already held by Abramowski,
Das Bekenntnis des Gregor Thaumaturgos, 160, n.53.
VII, 17).
to Neocaesarea and concern the episcopal succession after the death of Musonius. The Ep. 204, 207 and 210 were composed in all likelihood at Annesi. All these texts are to be dated between 371 and 376, in the midst of Basil’s episcopal activity. Therefore, when these documents express Basil’s position in the matter of Trinitarian theology, they reflect the most mature stage of his thought.

Indeed, as is generally accepted, while in a first stage Basil preferred the διόμως και τ’ ουσίαν formula to describe the relation between the Father and the Son and to interpret the homoousios, subsequently he put his efforts into strengthening the pro-

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67 These letters were composed during Basil’s ‘long journey’ in Pontus (cf. Ep. 217,1; 210,1; 216). See P. Rousseau, Basil de Césarée, Berkeley-Los Angeles-London 1994, 273-278. I believe that this is also the case of the Ep. 126 (to Atarbius) (see below n.89).


70 More precisely the expression was διόμως και τ’ ουσίαν ἀπαραλλάξων (‘invariably like according to essence’), see Ep. 361 and 9. In the latter, however, Basil already acknowledges the homoousios. The διόμως και τ’ ουσίαν formula was established at the synod of Ancyrâ of 358 (cf. Epiphanius, Panarion 73,2,1–11,11), where Basil of Ancyrâ, who identified ὄσια and ὑπόστασις (both meaning an individual substance), had proposed this solution as intermediate between the radical Arianism and the homoousios, which aroused the suspicion of Monarchianism. This entailed the statement of two ousiai and hypostases of the Father and the Son though, it was in conflict with the Nicene Creed that affirmed only one ousia and hypostasis. Basil’s correspondence with Apollinaris, which comprehends the Ep. 361, has been called into doubt several times in the past, but is currently considered authentic by the majority of the scholars on the basis of the studies of G.L. Prestige, St. Basil the Great and Apollinaries of Laodica. Edited by H. Chadwick, London 1956, and H. de Riedmatten, La Correspondance entre Basile de Césarée et Apollinaire de Laodicée, JThS 7 (1956), 199-210; 8 (1957), 53-70.

71 Bas. Ep. 70 (d. 371). Basil abandoned the homoiousian view that there are two substances in the Adversus Eunomium (364 ca.), where he embraced the idea that ousia means not an individual substance but what is common to the Father and the Son, whose names mean the ‘individual features’ (διόμως και τ’ ουσίαν, Eun. II,4-5; II,28). He avoided saying one hypostasis, because this could have been understood in the Sabellian sense, and mentioned once (III,3) the three hypostases with reference to Is 6:3.
Nicene party and defending the *homoousios* formula\(^ {72} \). From a doctrinal point of view, this change depended on Basil’s progressive awareness of the technical language, namely of ὑπόστασις as different from ὄσια and as the specific term for defining the ontological status of the divine persons. It was in the *Ep.* 125, dated to 373, that Basil plainly stated the three *hypostaseis*. To this end, after having noted that the Nicene creed contained only the term ousia, Basil underlined the fact that the two terms were not considered equivalent by the bishops of Nicea for they anathematised ‘those who affirm that [the Son] is from a different hypostasis or ousia’\(^ {73} \). Through this contrived reading of the Nicene Creed and its anathematisms, Basil could introduce not only the three hypostases\(^ {74} \), but also the problem of the divinity of the Holy Spirit\(^ {75} \), a topic fully developed in his treatise *De Spiritu Sancto* (d. 375), which theoretically was built on the three hypostases doctrine\(^ {76} \). Finally, in 376 – the same year as the letters 204, 207, 210 – Basil provided the clearest distinction between ousia and hypostasis and admitted three prosopa only if they implied three hypostaseis\(^ {77} \).

The *Ep.* 125 is not only an essential historical document for understanding the history of the achievement of the Creed of Constantinople. It also marked the end of the friendship between Basil and Eustathius of Sebaste, who, immediately after having signed it, changed his mind and became the leader of the Pneumatomachians offering strong opposition to the new interpretation of Nicea and to its most important representative, Basil\(^ {78} \). It is in this climate that we have to place Basil’s relation with Atarbius, bishop of Neocaesarea, and the documents that appeal to Gregory of Thaumaturgus’ figure.

In the next pages we will consider the epistles according to their chronological order, with the exception of leaving to the end the treatment of the *Spir.*, although it surely precedes the *Ep.* (126,) 204, 207 and 210\(^ {79} \).

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\(^{72}\) In *Ep.* 204,6 Basil says that he followed Athanasius’ authority in accepting the faith of Nicaea (see below).

\(^{73}\) Bas. *Ep.* 125,1,32-49.

\(^{74}\) Bas. *Ep.* 125,1,42-46: Δεὶ τοῖνυν ὁμολογεῖν ὁμοόσιον τὸν Υἱὸν τῷ Πατρί, καθὼς γέγραπται. Ὁμολογεῖν δὲ ἐν ἰδίᾳ μὲν ὑποστάσει τὸν Πατέρα, ἐν ἰδίᾳ δὲ τὸν Υἱὸν καὶ ἐν ἰδίᾳ τὸ Πνεῦμα τὸ Ἁγιον, καὶ τοῖς αὐτοῖς σαφῶς ἐκδεδώκασαν.

\(^{75}\) In *Ep.* 125,3 Basil wrote that ‘those who say that the Holy Spirit is a creature … [and] do not confess that He is holy by nature’ and established as ‘a proof of orthodox opinion is not to separate Him from the Father and the Son … so we give glory to Father, Son and Holy Ghost’. The subscribers of the letter declared also ‘that we do not say that the Holy Spirit is either unbegotten, for we recognise one Unbegotten and one Origin of all things, the Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, nor begotten, for we are taught in the tradition of faith that there is one Only-begotten; then, having been taught that the Spirit of Truth proceeds from the Father (Jn 15:26), we confess that He is from God without being created’ (transl. Way, slightly altered, I, 259).

\(^{76}\) See, in particular, Bas. *Spir.* XVIII,44-45 and XXV,59.

\(^{77}\) Bas. *Ep.* 236,6; 214,3-4; 210,5.

\(^{78}\) For the doctrinal reasons for this break see H. Dörries, *De spiritu sancto. Der Beitrag des Basilius zum Abschluß des trinitarischen Dogmas*, Göttingen 1956 (AAWG.PH III, 39), 39-41.

\(^{79}\) Abramowski, dates *Spir.*, *Ep.* 204, 207 and 210 to 375.
The *Epistle 28* (d. 371/372) is a letter of consolation, very similar to a funeral oration, in which Basil glorifies the human qualities of Musonius, who is known to us only by what Basil says. The most important trait of Musonius’ personality in Basil’s words was his fidelity to the tradition of the Fathers. Musonius ‘keeper of the laws of the Fathers, enemy of the innovation (φύλαξ πατρών θεσσόν, νεωτεροποιίας ἐγκαθιστάς) …brought forth nothing of his own nor any discovery of a more recent mind’ (οὐδὲν οἴκοθέν οὐδὲ νεωτέρας φρενός εὐρήμα προέφερεν, *Ep.* 28,1,21-28). This is the reason for the intervention of Basil, who fears that the church of Neocaesarea will not have another bishop able to defend it from ‘the storm of the heretic winds’ (ἀἱρετικῶν πνευμάτων ζάλη, 28,1,38) and to preserve ‘the grace of the peacefulness’ that the Lord had granted to Gregory, the founder and ‘the great patron’ of that church (μέγας προστάτης, 28,2,44). Thus Basil, acting as spokesman for the Fathers, the “sound” faith and Musonius, and, not to forget, as eparchos of Cappadocia and Pontus, expresses his hope that the Church of Neocaesarea, in the metropolitan see of Pontus Polemoniacus, will choose a bishop in communion with the tradition established by Gregory and cherished by Musonius and Basil himself (28,3). In these passages, however, Basil does not omit to remember that certain “preconceptions” prevented Musonius being in communion with him. Basil prefers not to be precise. The fact that Musonius was the name of that local notable who, according to Gregory of Nyssa’s *Vita*, struggled to host Gregory Thaumaturgus with the certainty that this would have honoured his house and his descendants, makes one wonder. Taking into consideration that in notable families there was the custom of handing down the name of the pater familias, it seems probable that there was a family link between the two Musonius. However, we should not think that between Basil and Musonius there was a reflection of the collision between two notable families of Neocaesarea over its episcopal see. It appears more likely that the cause of their distance was Basil’s friendship with Eustathius of Sebaste, who had been condemned by a council held in Neocaesarea around thirty years before. Moreover, Basil, who kept friendly relations with influential citizens of Neocaesarea, must have been aware of the ideas circulating

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81 Basil assumed this title by being bishop of Caesarea, which was the ecclesiastical metropolis of Cappadocia and Pontus.
84 Sozomenus, *Hist. Eccl.* IV,24. No precise dating of it is possible, but it preceded that of Gangra, which J. Gribomont, *Eustathe de Sébaste*, DHGE 16 (1964), 28 dated at around 340. However, in the following years the church of Neocaesarea had an Arian bishop, Theodulus, who took part in the council of Serdica (see Hilarius, *Collectanea Antiriana Parisina (Fragmenta historica)*, Series A IV.3,76,18, CSEL 65).
85 Cf. Bas. *Ep.* 131, 211 (to Olympios), 208 (to Eulankios).
among their churchmen and indeed remained on a certain alert because of the silence of the new bishops of Neocaesarea and Ancyra.

Musonius’ successor was Atarbius, a cousin of Basil. He actually embodied Basil’s concerns that a heretic could threat the tradition established by the Thaumaturgus. The name of Atarbius was already absent from the list of the bishops being in communion with Basil, and, among others, Meletius of Antiochia and Eustathius of Sebaste, concerning the adoption of the Nicean creed (Ep. 92, d. 372; synodal letter to the Westeners). The relationship with Atarbius was then cold from the very beginning, and the continuing silence of Atarbius drove Basil to write first and to beg his interlocutor to stop his isolation from the communion of the churches (Ep. 65, d. 373). The attempt was vain and the relationship was never re-established.

After two or three years of silence and after the composition of the Spir., Basil wrote the Ep. 126 to invite Atarbius to meet him, while he was at Annesi, and to clarify the rumours about his Sabellian ideas. From it we learn also that Atarbius abandoned a synod at Nicopolis in all haste before Basil’s arrival. This synod was the second one gathered to settle the election of Fronton as bishop of Nicopolis after Theodotus’ death. The election was organised by the vicarius Demosthenes, whose politics were to strengthen the Arian party in the region also with the help of Eustathius and his circle. But the Nicopolitans had resisted Fronton’s election and this had led Demosthenes to summon another synod in order to enforce the results of the first one. To this end Demosthenes was able to assemble together both Eustathius’ followers and some bishops from Galatia and Pontus, among whom was Atarbius. In Ep. 237,2, from which we extract these events, we find also that the same group of bishops from Galatia and Pontus took part in the second synod of Nyssa that deposed Gregory of Nyssa. We cannot establish if Atarbius was present also at the deposition of Gregory, but even only his participation in the second synod of Nicopolis is enough to understand Atarbius’ level of hostility towards Basil, inasmuch as he put aside his theological divergences with Eustathius to oppose the bishop of Caesarea. Eustathius’ activity

\[\text{\textsuperscript{86}}\text{Bas. Ep. 30 (to Eusebius of Samosata): ‘In the meantime Neocaesarea and Ancyra seem to have had successors to those passed, and till now they are silent’. Evidently this letter cannot be dated before (thus Fedwick, A Chronology, 12-13) but after Ep. 28, that is between it (371/372) and Ep. 65 (373).} \]

\[\text{\textsuperscript{87}}\text{Only in the case of the Ep. 65 does the dating of R. Pouchet differ significantly from that of P.J. Fedwick. The French scholar dates the Ep. 28 to 371 and the Ep. 65 to the end of the same year; see Pouchet, Basile le Grand, 269. But the dating of the Ep. 65 to 373, proposed by Fedwick, seems to be confirmed by the fact that Basil complains about Musonius’ silence (Ep. 65,1) and is aware of his perseverance in division (Ep. 65,26-27). Moreover, this last aspect is in agreement with the dating of the Ep. 92 to 372.} \]

\[\text{\textsuperscript{88}}\text{ Cf. n.90.} \]

\[\text{\textsuperscript{89}}\text{Bas. Ep. 126,28 (little distance from Neocaesarea).} \]

\[\text{\textsuperscript{90}}\text{My reconstruction implies that the Ep. 126 has to be dated to 376 and not to 373 (Courtonne) or to 375 (Hauschild and Fedwick): this is due to the fact that the synod of Nicopolis mentioned in the Ep. 126 can be only the second one. It is based on Ep. 237,2 (d. 376), where Basil speaks of a “first assault” by Demosthenes (that is the imposition of Fronton), the resistance of the Nicopolitans, and the expectation of a synod (to confirm Fronton’s election).} \]

\[\text{\textsuperscript{91}}\text{Bas. Ep. 239,1.} \]
against Basil in Pontus and its vicinity had already provoked great disturbance in Dazimon, to the point that Basil tried to seek a resolution by asking the bishop of Comana Elpidius to organise a synod of reconciliation with the Pontic bishops. But Atarbius also seems to have had influence on the Pontic bishops of the coast, to whom Basil addressed the Ep. 203 (d. 376). In short, in Pontus Basil had to face two enemies with opposing doctrinal positions, Sabellianism and Arianism, according to him, the former being a covert version of Judaism, the latter being a form of Hellenism (polytheism). Basil’s apologetic attitude should always to be borne in mind while reading the documentation at issue.

Thus Basil ceased his direct correspondence with Atarbius, but in the same year he addressed other letters to Neocaesarea. The Ep. 204 was written in trying to re-establish some relationship with the priests of Neocaesarea, who had not been in contact with him for a long time because of their bishop. Basil mentions two reasons to convince them to communion, the evangelical commandment to charity and the common spiritual descent from ‘the eminent Gregory’:

… if the sharing of the same teachers makes a great contribution to union, you and we have not only the same teachers of the mysteries of God, but also the same spiritual Fathers, who from the beginning laid the foundations of your church (οἱ άυτοί ύμὲν τε εἰσὶ καὶ ήμέν διδάσακαλι τε τῶν μυστηρίων τοῦ Θεοῦ καὶ πατέρες πνευματικοί, οί δὲ ἀρχής τὴν Ἐκκλησίαν τὴν ὑμετέραν θεμελιωσάντες). I mean the eminent Gregory (Γρηγόριον λέγω τὸν πάνυ) and all who after him succeeded to the episcopal throne among you; one after another, like rising stars, they followed along the same footsteps, so as to leave clearly distinguishable signs of a heavenly administration to those who wished them (Ep. 204,2,1-10; transl. Way, II, 71-72).

Basil easily interprets their silence as their readiness to give ear to the gross slanders that Atarbius spread about him and blames them for their lack of impartial wisdom. Basil, the accused, neither is concerned to rectify his errors, nor to provide written explanations for them. He wishes that Atarbius would act openly showing which of his works are erroneous, so that a capable judge, that is learned and given the Spirit to discern spiritual matters, can evaluate the case. Basil, who obviously implies that

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92 Bas. Ep. 216,5-7.
93 Bas. Ep. 205. On this issue see Pouchet, Basil le Grand, 469-471, who also notes that the bishop of Amaseia was Arian.
94 Cf. Pouchet, Basile le Grand, 472.
95 Cf. n.110.
97 It has to be noted that Basil follows the Sophistic custom of never mentioning the name of Atarbius, which is attested only by the titles of the Ep. 65 and 126.
98 Bas. Ep. 204,1,1-5.
100 Bas. Ep. 204,2,13-25.
Atarbius is devoid of both things, reveals that the latter reproached him for his words from the standpoint of the “wisdom of this world”\(^\text{101}\). In other words Basil invokes, as in the case of Dazimon, a synod to settle the issue. Which were then the errors that Atarbius charged Basil with at this point? The allusions to a written text\(^\text{102}\) and to the Spirit\(^\text{103}\) suggest that these errors were related to the reactions to the first circulation of the treatise \textit{Spir.}, that was completed in 375\(^\text{104}\). However, we have to consider that, in the same year, Basil had addressed to a friend in Neocaesarea a letter to defend himself against two accusations, that he was in communion with Apollinaris of Laodicea, and that he was a tritheist\(^\text{105}\). Both charges were spread by Eustathius, who had also undertaken journeys in Pontus to slander Basil\(^\text{106}\) after their rupture on the subject of the Holy Spirit\(^\text{107}\). Eustathius had spread also a rough Sabellian creed under Basil’s name and the old correspondence between him and Apollinaris in order to give the impression that they were still in communion\(^\text{108}\). In any case, the accusation that Basil was Sabellian could hardly have had any effect on Atarbius. It seems that, even if Eustathius was probably still not welcomed by many in Neocaesarea\(^\text{109}\), Atarbius was not prevented from using both Eustathius’ links with and slander against Basil in order to strengthen his own sphere of influence\(^\text{110}\). Basil does not say a word in the \textit{Ep.} 204 about his relationship with Apollinaris and focuses on justifying his past communion with

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\textsuperscript{101} Bas. \textit{Ep.} 204.4–5.

\textsuperscript{102} Bas. \textit{Ep.} 204.5.1–5.

\textsuperscript{103} Bas. \textit{Ep.} 204.5.23–31 (‘Spirit’ is mentioned five times in two phrases).

\textsuperscript{104} As described by Pruche (ed.), Basile de Césarée, \textit{Sur le Saint-Esprit}, 52–57, on the basis of a passage from the Acts of the Council of Chalcedon, Basil had released his work ‘after having requested the approval of the signatures of his chorebishops’; according to Pruche, Amphilochius bishop of Iconium, whose questions had led Basil to write this treatise, received the work after these approvals, between 376 and 377.

\textsuperscript{105} Bas. \textit{Ep.} 131 (to Olympius). The chronological closeness between the \textit{Spir.} and the \textit{Ep.} 131 should not surprise because Eustathius’ hostility towards Basil started in 373.

\textsuperscript{106} Bas. \textit{Ep.} 216; 226,4.

\textsuperscript{107} This allegation is often taken into consideration by Basil in the \textit{Spir.} (for instance: XVI,38; XVII,42; XVIII,44–45). For further investigations on the Eustathian character of it see Pouchet, \textit{Basile le Grand}, 468, n.7.

\textsuperscript{108} Cf. Bas. \textit{Ep.} 130 (d. 374), 129, 131, 223 (d. 375) and 244 (d. 376). The only fragment from this creed is preserved in \textit{Ep.} 129,1,17: ... ὅστε παντεχῆ συνεξεγμένως, μᾶλλον δὲ ᾐμωμένως τῇ ἐπερύθτη νοεῖν ἀναγκαῖον τὴν πρότην ταυτότητα, καὶ δευτέραν καὶ τρίτην λέγοντας τὴν αὐτήν. Ὅπερ γὰρ ἢστι πρῶτος ὁ Πατέρα, τούτῳ ἢστι δευτέρας ὁ Υἱός καὶ τρίτως τὸ Πνεῦμα. Αὕτως δὲ ὅπερ ἢστι πρῶτος τὸ Πνεῦμα, τούτῳ δευτέρως τὸν Υἱόν, καθὼ δὲ καὶ ὁ Κύριος ἢστι τὸ Πνεῦμα· καὶ τρίτως τὸν Πατέρα, καθὼ δὲ Πνεῦμα ὁ Θεός. Καὶ, ὡς μικρότερον σημαίνει τὸ ἄρρητον, τὸν Πατέρα πατρικὸς ὁ Υἱόν εἶναι, τὸν δὲ Υἱόν υἱὸς Πατέρα. Καὶ ὡσπερ ἢστι τοῦ Πνεύματος, καθὼ δὲ εἰς Θεός ἢ Τριάς. In this same paragraph Basil recognises Apollinaris as the author of this text and detects his approximation to the heresy of Sabellius. In \textit{Ep.} 130,2 and 244,5 seems that Basil charges Eustathius with being its author.

\textsuperscript{109} Both for theological divergences (Eustathius was a subordinationist, Atarbius an Old-Nicene) and for the council that excommunicated him more than thirty years before (see n.84).

\textsuperscript{110} It is not a case, indeed, that many resemblances exist in the argumentations of \textit{Ep.} 204 and \textit{Ep.} 203 (to the bishops likely influenced by Atarbius’ campaign of slander).
Eustathius by stressing that he had never welcomed Arius’ heresy anyway\textsuperscript{111}. To this end and to convince the priests of Neocaesarea to enter into communion with him, Basil exposes his beliefs and his doctrinal authorities.

What clearer proof of our faith could there be than that we were brought up by our grandmother, a blessed woman, who came from among you? I have reference to the illustrious Macrina, by whom we were taught the words of the most blessed Gregory, which, having been preserved until her time by uninterrupted tradition, she also guarded, and she formed and molded me, still a child, to the doctrines of piety (παρ’ ἦς ἐδιδάχθημεν τά τοῦ μακαρωτάτου Γρηγορίου ἑρμήνευον ὡς πρὸς αὐτὴν ἁκολουθία μνήμης [Lk 2:51] διασωθέντα αὐτῇ τε ἐφύλασσε καὶ ἡμᾶς ἔτι νηπίους ὄντας ἐπιταττε καὶ ἐμόρφου τοῖς τῆς εὐσεβείας δόγμασιν). But, after we received the power of understanding, and reason had been perfected in us through age, having traversed much of the earth and sea, whenever we found any who were walking according to the traditional rule of piety (τῷ παραδεδεόντι ἱκανόν τῆς εὐσεβείας στοιχεῖον), we claimed them as our fathers and made them the guides of our soul on the journey to God (Ep. 204,6,1-13; transl. Way, II, 76-77).

Thus, the traditional teachings of Gregory guided Basil through his life, allowing him to retain the ‘healthy doctrine’ (ὑγιαινούσα διδασκαλία)\textsuperscript{112} and to enter into communion with Athanasius\textsuperscript{113}. Basil adds that the bishop of Alexandria sent to him a letter (‘which I have in my hands and show to those who ask’) in which he ‘explicitly orders’ to admit to the communion those who deny Arius’ heresy and confess the faith of Nicea. That was stated in the Tomus ad Antiochenos, which recorded the achievements of the synod of Alexandria in 362. In 371 Basil had asked Athanasius to push for Marcellus’ condemnation by the Romans, lamenting the fact that they often condemned Arius but not Marcellus, whose doctrine was “diametrically opposed” to that of Arius. In Basil’s eyes, Marcellus

has been sacrilegious as regards the very existence of the divinity of the Only-begotten (εἰς αὐτὴν τὴν ὑπάρξειν τῆς τοῦ Μονογενοῦς Θεότητος) ... He declares, indeed, that the Only-begotten was called ‘the Word’, and that He came forth according to the need and the time, but had again returned to Him whence He had come forth, and that He neither existed before His procession nor does He subsist after His return (οὕτε πρὸ τῆς ἐξόδου εἶναι οὕτε μετὰ τὴν ἐπάνωδου ύπεστάναι)\textsuperscript{114}.

\textsuperscript{111} Bas. Ep. 204,5,18-20, where Eustathius is not openly mentioned.

\textsuperscript{112} The same concepts of Ep. 204,6,1-13, but without referring to Gregory Thaumaturgus and to the divinity of the Holy Spirit, are present also in Ep. 223,3, which marked Basil’s definitive separation from Eustathius.

\textsuperscript{113} Bas. Ep. 204,6,13-37.

It was in order to reply to the ‘slanderers’ of Marcellus’ theology and to attest its orthodoxy – that is, in line with Athanasius’ *Tomus* — that Eugenius of Ancyra wrote the *Expositio fidei*. It, indeed, 1) confessed the *homoousios*, 2) declared that the Son is ‘eternal and subsisting’ (ἐξίσως ὢν καὶ ὑφεστώς)116, and condemned 3) Arius (together with those who say that the Holy Spirit is κτίσμα) and 4) Sabellius (though it continued to speak only of one *hypostasis*). Furthermore, it was confirmed by letters of approval of the bishops of Greece and Macedonia, and it was exactly about these bishops’ approval of points 1) and 3) that Athanasius wrote to Basil117. From these data and from the fact that Basil never referred again to Athanasius’ letter afterwards, we can deduce that Athanasius sent to Basil a communication on the recent Marcellians’ alignment with the directions drawn up by the synod of Alexandria in 362, embraced by Basil himself since 373118. It remains difficult to determine the reason why Basil did not refer also to the church of Ancyra in the *Ep.* 204, considering that it would have been a good argument to attract the Marcellians of Neocaesarea at least to start a dialogue with him. Probably, Marcellus’ agreement was implicitly clear to everybody; we cannot even expect linear equations in matters of controversy. Whatever the reason may be, after about five years from its release, and considering the link between Neocaesarea and Ancyra119, both Basil and the Marcellians of Neocaesarea must have known of Eugenius’ *Expositio*. What is sure is that Basil considered them heretics, while the Marcellians of Neocaesarea were aware that the goal of Basil’s pressure on them was not the communion according to Athanasius’ instructions of 362. Marcellus’ theology, even in Eugenius’ expression, remained in contradiction to the “three hypostases”.

After having provided a long lists of regions where the faith of Nicea was already confessed, Basil tells in a threatening tone that no one will recognise the church of Neocaesarea, if it continues to refuse communion with him120. The communicative strategy of Basil is clear. He has put himself as a direct inheritor of ‘the words of the most blessed Gregory’, approved by Athanasius, and, in this manner, as an authoritative alternative to Atarbius. He has avoided defining the doctrinal errors of his rival and insists on speaking of the Holy Spirit. He merely refers to Nicea and to Athanasius’ authority in order to open a direct dialogue with the churchmen of Neocaesarea, but that this was not the only point at issue is clear from the accusation of tritheism levelled at him in the city and from the contents of the other letters.

116 Eugen. Exp. fid. 2,30 (79 Tetz).
118 Cf. Bas. *Ep.* 125, 140. Athanasius, who never considered the three hypostaseis as binding from the doctrinal point of view, likely communicated just the essentials of the position of the Marcellians to the insistent bishop of Caesarea.
119 See above n.86.
120 Bas. *Ep.* 204,7,1-17.
The Ep. 207 (d. 376) shows more clearly the doctrinal reasons behind the clash. Although the priests did not bother answering his letter and notwithstanding their hatred of him, Basil kept on writing them, being more and more concerned about the diffusion of Atarbius’ ideas and impatient with the calumnies aimed at him. ‘The leader of the war against me’, that is Atarbius, is accused not only of teaching the doctrines of Sabellius of Libya and Marcellus of Galatia (Ancyra), but also of spreading ‘pseudo-prophetical visions’ and for defaming Basil’s teachings as pernicious. On the other hand, Atarbius criticised harshly two innovations made by Basil, the institution of ascetic communities and the introduction of alternate psalmody. Basil, who had already rejected his association with Eustathius in the Ep. 204, praises the men and women ‘whose conduct of life is heavenly … being free from distractions and constantly waiting on the Lord’, and strongly defends them by mentioning that other communities led a similar ascetic life in Egypt, Palestine and Mesopotamia. Also as to the alternate psalmody used during collective prayers, Basil attests its practice with a long list of regions where it is well known. Basil is clearly using the argument of the agreement of the churches in order to support these customs, but he is also aware that they are unknown to the Neocaesareans and not handed down among the teachings of Gregory. Basil reacts by noticing that while the litanies used by the ascetes originate from ‘the words of the Spirit’, those used in Neocaesarea are from human words; that the priests of Neocaesarea have not kept any of Gregory’s ‘testimonies’ (μαρτυρίαι) that the Neocaesarean custom of prayer with the head covered was not handed down by Gregory, because he was a true disciple of St. Paul, ‘pure soul, worthy of the fellowship of the Holy Spirit’, who openly forbade it in I Cor. The insistence on these themes should lead us to conclude that the μαρτυρίαι of Gregory are nothing but liturgical

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121 Bas. Ep. 207,1.1.  
122 Bas. Ep. 207,1.15-16. In Ep. 126 Basil limited himself to associating the rumours about Atarbius’ teachings with Sabellianism.  
123 Thus Bas. Ep. 211 (d. 376). See also Ep. 207,1.27-28; 210,2,20; 210,3,9-13; 210,6. On this issue see Pouchet, Basile le Grand, 481-483.  
126 Bas. Ep. 207,2.30-35. The whole passage is full of biblical references; Phil 3:20 and I Cor 7:35 in our fragment.  
129 Bas. Ep. 207,4.9.  
130 Bas. Ep. 207,4.10-15: I Cor 11:4 (‘Every man praying or prophesying, having his head covered, dishonours his head’) and I Cor 11:7 (‘a man indeed ought not to cover his head forasmuch as he is the image of God’). The contradiction to St. Paul’s viewpoint is in particular due to the fact that the custom of covering the head was synagogal. This accusation fits well with Basil’s judgement of Sabellius’ and Marcellus’ theology as being Judaism (cf. Ep. 210,3,13-15).
customs. However, the conclusion of the letter leaves the impression that these testimonies also pointed to Gregory’s doctrines:

Only, let the essentials be sound, and silence the innovations concerning the faith. Do not reject the hypostaseis. Do not deny the name of Christ. Do not misinterpret the words of Gregory (Μόνον ἐφρόσυθω τὰ προηγούμενα καὶ τὰς περὶ τὴν πίστιν καυνοτομίας κατασκεύασε. Τὰς ὑποστάσεις μὴ ἀθετεῖτε. Τὸ ὄνομα τοῦ Χριστοῦ μὴ ἀπαρνεῖσθε. Τὰς Γρηγορίου φωνὰς μὴ περεξηγεῖσθε)\(^\text{131}\).

This extract shows the puzzling rebuke strategy of Basil\(^\text{132}\). He establishes a close connection between the Sabellian errors spread by Atarbius and the misinterpretation of the words of Gregory, and detects in the alteration of Gregory’s teachings the ‘innovations’ that led the Neocaesareans to refuse the plurality of the hypostaseis. This was the core of the dispute, as would appear also from Basil’s claim to acknowledge the “name” of Christ, which had precise anti-Sabellian and anti-Marcellian connotations\(^\text{133}\).

The Ep. 210 (d. 376), addressed to the notable laymen of Neocaesarea, demonstrates that Atarbius did actually use the words of Gregory. It is the extreme attempt by Basil to make the Neocaesareans aware of their errors. Some false stories on his life circulating among the plain folks and the disturbance provoked by his presence in Annesi obliged Basil to repeat and to make more precise his personal bonds with the city.

Both through my acquaintance with this place from childhood (for I was raised here by my grandmother) and through my long stay here afterwards, when I was fleeing political disturbances, I realized that this place was suitable for studying philosophy because of the silence of the solitude; and I spent many successive years here. Moreover, because my brothers now dwell here, I gladly came to this solitude, not by this means to cause trouble for others, but to satisfy my own desire (Ep. 210,1,13-24; transl. Way, 87-88).

\(^{131}\) Bas. Ep. 207,4,38-40. Transl. Way, II, 85-86; I kept only hypostaseis instead of “persons”.

\(^{132}\) After all, how could Basil denounce someone else’s innovations while he insisted on integrating the Nicean Creed with the clause of the three hypostaseis?

\(^{133}\) Cf. Marcellus’ Fr. 43 Klostermann (3 Vinzent), according to which “Christ” as well as other names (Jesus, Life, etc.) can be applied to the Logos only after the incarnation; Asterius ap. Marcellus Fr. 65 Klostermann (1 Vinzent), 72-74 Kl. (125, 73, 75 V.); the third article of the so-called Second Creed of Antioch of 341, where it is confessed, in explanation of the evangelical baptism formula of Mt 28:19, ‘a Father Who is truly Father, and a Son Who is truly Son, and of the Holy Spirit Who is truly Holy Spirit, the names not being given without meaning or effect, but denoting accurately the peculiar subsistence, rank and glory of each that is named, so that they are three in subsistence, and one in agreement’ (…δηλούντο πατρός, ἀληθὸς πατρός ὄντος, ὑπὸ δὲ ἀληθίας ὑπὸ ὄντος. τοῦ δὲ ἄγιου πνεύματος ἀληθὸς ἄγιο πνεύματος ὄντος, τῶν ὄνοματων οὕτω ἀπλῶς οὕθεν ἄρχων κείμενων, ἀλλὰ συμβιβασμένων ἀκριβῶς τὴν οἰκεῖαν ἐκάστου τῶν ὄνομαζόμενων ὑπόστασιν τε καὶ τάξιν καὶ δόξαν, ὡς εἶναι τῇ μὲν ὑποστάσει τρία, τῇ δὲ συμφωνίᾳ ἐν; Athan. De syn. Ariminii 23,6,1-7,2; 249 Optiz, Athanasius Werke, II.1). Transl. by J.N.D. Kelly, Early Christian Creeds, 269 (see, ibidem, 263-274 for further remarks).
Basil explains that these are the reasons for his presence in Pontus and charges Atarbius – ‘the leaders of the people’ (2,22) – with the disorder in Neocaesarea, because it is necessary to ‘answer to the challenge’ of his heretical teachings\textsuperscript{134}.

A perversion of faith is being practiced among you, hostile both to the apostolic and evangelical doctrines and to the tradition of the truly great Gregory and his successors up to the blessed Musonius, whose teachings are certainly even now ringing in your ears. The evil of Sabellius, stirred up long ago, but extinguished by the Fathers, these men are now endeavoring to revive; fearful of refutation, they are inventing dreams against us\textsuperscript{135}.

Basil then provides a description of the errors of Sabellius. He denies ‘the eternal pre-existence of the Only-begotten’ (προσιόντος τοῦ Μονογενοῦς ὑπαρξίας)\textsuperscript{136} by saying that ‘Father, Son and Holy Spirit are one thing manifold in character (πράγμα πολυπρόσωπον), and explains the hypostasis of the three as one’. Sabellius denies also the Son’s incarnation and descent into hades, his resurrection and final judgment, and ‘the activities proper to the Spirit’ (τὰς ἱδιαζωόσας τοῦ Πνεύματος ἐνεργείας)\textsuperscript{137}. Basil says that Atarbius was even capable of declaring that the name of the Only-begotten one is that of the ‘adversary’ on the basis of Jn 5:43 (‘I have come in the name of my Father, and you have not received me; if another come in his own name, him you will receive’), and that there is only one name on the basis of Mt 28:19 (‘Make disciples of all nations, baptising them in the name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Spirit’)\textsuperscript{138}. In replying to this argumentation Basil is aware that he has to fight two opposing errors, those of Eunomius and of Sabellius\textsuperscript{139}. First, he stresses that the name of Christ is that of the Son of God referring to Phil 2:9 and to Acts 4:12\textsuperscript{140}. Then, he

\textsuperscript{134} Bas. \textit{Ep.} 210,1-2.
\textsuperscript{135} Compare with the passage concerning Marcellus from \textit{Ep.} 69,2 quoted above (§II,1).
\textsuperscript{136} Bas. \textit{Ep.} 210,3,15-21 (192 Courtonne). Similar arguments are found in \textit{Ep.} 214,3 (Sabellius), 263,5 (Marcellus) and 226,4. Cf. Bas. \textit{Spir. XXIX}, 72,17-20 (504 Pruche), where Dionysius is quoted as defending the three hypostaseis against Sabellius.
\textsuperscript{137} Bas. \textit{Ep.} 210,3-23-34.
\textsuperscript{138} Bas. \textit{Ep.} 210,4,1-7.
\textsuperscript{139} Bas. \textit{Ep.} 210,4,8-19.
provides an argumentation which Basil used against Sabellius already in the Spir., but which has also an anti-Eunomian significance: by saying ‘Paul and Silvanus and Timothy’, that is by joining the names by the syllable “and”, we imply that each name is a different thing, as in the case of ‘Father, Son and Holy Spirit’ \(^{141}\). Since this entails that each thing has an ‘individual and perfect existence’ (\(\text{ιδιαξουσα καὶ αυτοτελης υπαρξες}\); III,26-27), Basil concludes that Father, Son and Holy Spirit are one ‘nature’ and ‘divinity’, while it is necessary not to confound ‘the properties of each’ in order to fully perform the doxology to the Father and to the Son and to the Holy Spirit\(^{142}\).

Basil subsequently exposes the attempts made by Atarbius to approach by letter Meletius of Antioch and Anthimus of Tyana. The former seems to have condemned Atarbius’ ideas, while the latter received a letter in which it was attested that Gregory of Neocaesarea said ‘in an exposition of faith that Father and Son are two in thought, but one in hypostasis’ (ἐν ἔκθεσι πίστεως Πατέρα καὶ Υἱον ἐπινοια μὲν ἐξαι δύο, ὑποστάσει δὲ ἐν)\(^{143}\). Basil’s reply needs to be quoted extensively (the numeration is ours):

… (I) That this is not said dogmatically, but controversially in the argument with Gelian (Τοῦτο δὲ ἄτι ὦ δογματικῶς εἰρηται, ἀλλ‘ ἀγωνιστικῶς ἐν τῇ πρὸς Γελιανῷ Διαλέξει), they were not able to understand, they who were congratulating themselves on the subtlety of their minds. (II) In this dispute there are many copyists’ errors, as we shall show you in the writings themselves, God willing. (III) In fact (‘Ἐπειτα μέντοι), at the time in trying to persuade the Greek, Gregory did not think that it was necessary to be exact about his words, but that he should in a way make concessions to the custom of him who was being brought in, so that the latter might not offer resistance in matters of importance. (IV) Therefore (Διὸ δὴ), you might truly find many words there which furnish the greatest support to the heretics, such as creature”(κτίσμα) and “thing made”(ποίημα) and the like. (V) Then, too, many words spoken concerning the union with man are referred to the doctrine of the divinity when heard by those lacking instruction in the writings, and such is what is carried among these (Πολλὰ δὲ καὶ περὶ τῆς πρὸς τὸν ἄνθρωπον συναφείας εἰρημένα εἰς τὸν περὶ τῆς θεότητος ἀναφέρουσι λόγον οἱ ἀπευθεύτως τῶν γεγραμμένων ἀκούοντες, ὅποιον ἐστι καὶ τούτο τὸ παρὰ τούτων περιφερόμενον)\(^{144}\). (VI) It must be well understood that, as he who does not confess a community of substance falls into polytheism, so he who does not grant the individuality of the Persons is carried away into Judaism (Εὗ γὰρ εἰδέναι χρῆ ὅτι ὁσπερ ὁ τὸ κοινὸν τῆς οὐσίας μὴ ὁμολογῶν εἰς πολυθεῖν

\(^{141}\) Ep. 210,4,16-26, to be compared with Spir. XXV,59 (458-462 Pruche). Cf. also Ep. 38,2 (this letter is handed down in Basil’s epistolary but is ascribed by most scholars to Gregory of Nyssa, who also used the image of Paul, Silvanus and Timothy in Eur. 1,1,202).


\(^{144}\) Way’s translation of these last lines (93) seems to imply, with no reason, that Basil is referring to Atarbius’ quotation: ‘and of such a sort is this expression which is being bruited about by them’. Courton, 195, translates: ‘et telle est aussi cette erreur que ces auteurs colportent partout’. 234
After having attacked together Sabellians and Arians at the end of this passage (point VI), Basil continues by rebuking only the Sabellians. He stresses that it is necessary to acknowledge the *idioma* of the paternity to grasp the concept of God as Father. Since Sabellius’ modalistic view that God transforms himself into one of the members of the Trinity is based on the conception that each *proposon* is anypostaton, it is necessary to admit that each *prosopon* exists in a real *hypostasis*, not only to enumerate the different *prosopa*\(^{145}\). The Ep. 210 ends with a personal attack: Atarbius ascribes to himself oneirocritical skills and even the gift of prophecy\(^{146}\).

We have already reviewed how the complicated passage quoted above has led several scholars to be suspicious with regard to the reliability of Basil’s argumentation and to his silence about the existence of the *Confessio*. In sum, as argued by Lardner, it seems that there are two options for interpreting the issue: ‘either there was no written *Creed* at Neocaesarea, reputed Gregorie’s, or that it was not to Basil’s purpose (sic)’. L. Abramowski has opted for the first hypothesis: first, because Basil’s silence, within the context both of the letters and the *Spir.*, remains baffling; secondly, because his arguments in the *Ep.* 210 tend to contradict each other with the result of undermining his apology of Gregory’s work\(^{147}\).

In the next pages, after the treatment of the *Spir.*, we will try to weigh up the first point raised by Abramowski. As to the second point, Abramowski’s interpretation of Basil’s passage at issue is not balanced. If we look at its entirety, we have the impression that Basil’s tortuous reply is mainly due to his effort to use Gregory’s *Dialogue* to retort both to Sabellians and to Arians. Atarbius did not cite or denounce Gregory for being open toward Arius’ ideas. It is Basil who mentions this possibility. It is, therefore, in the light of his critique brought against both groups that we have to interpret his argumentation. Point (I) is, indeed, detached and independent from the others. Basil deals with Atarbius’ interpretation only here, and will resume the argument only with Sabellius later on. Points (II-V) tend to solve a possible Arian interpretation of the *Dialogue*, which is difficult to relate to Atarbius’ activity. Point (III) provides us with the information that the *Dialogue* was addressed to a Greek, and it fits exactly with the progression of the argumentation (II-V). Point (V) is difficult to interpret, because Basil does not seem at a first sight to contrast a particular position; what seems clear is...


\(^{146}\) See above n.123.

\(^{147}\) Abramowski, *Das Bekenntnis des Gregor Thaumaturgos*, 159-160, where, though, no doctrinal comparison between the *Confessio* and the *Dialogue* is carried out.
that the πρὸς τὸν ἄνθρωπον συνάψεια means the incarnation. If this is correct, and the Sabellians are referred to, it is hardly understandable how these lines can apply to Atarbius’ quotation\textsuperscript{148}. If it is the Arians who are alluded to, the sentence seems to fit better with considering the Son a creature, which was at issue in the previous point (IV), was already an accusation levelled at Basil, and was a sensitive point among those who appreciated Origen’s works\textsuperscript{149}.

That said, while points (II-V) hardly appear convincing, for they appeal in a very apologetical way to the work of Gregory, we do not know anything else about the matter besides what Basil says. Still, point (I) can hardly be questioned in the same way. Indeed, it is in itself clear enough as a reply to Atarbius’ quotation: Basil knew the Dialogue and immediately denounces Atarbius’ dogmatic interpretation of a passage extracted from a discussion\textsuperscript{150}. However puzzling Basil’s passage concerning the Dialogue may be, and however abusive his explanation of the Arian terminology contained in that work may appear, Basil’s treatment of Atarbius’ quotation remains unequivocal and credible in itself: it is not a dogmatical text and it cannot be taken as such.

\textbf{II.2. The De Spiritu Sancto}

The treatise \textit{Spir.} was written between 373 and 375\textsuperscript{151}. It responds to the request of Amphilochius, bishop of Iconium, who questioned Basil about the value of the prepositions of the doxology used by him in the public prayer: glory to God the Father ‘with the Son and with the Holy Spirit’ (μετὰ τοῦ Υἱοῦ σὺν τῷ Πνεύματι τῷ ἁγίῳ). They changed the traditional formulation ‘through the Son in the Holy Spirit’ (διὰ τοῦ Υἱοῦ ἐν τῷ ἁγίῳ Πνεύματι)\textsuperscript{152}, and this fact had already provoked the charges of having used ‘strange and mutually contradictory terms’ on the part of some of those who heard them (\textit{Spir.} I,3,1-6). Basil used both formulae, but the preposition σὺν introduced a variation that, putting the Holy Spirit in a symmetrical position as regards to the Father and the Son, meant that he was considered worthy to receive glory as God. The defence of the divinity of the Holy Spirit and the refutation of the objections made by Arians and Pneumatomachians against this concept are the main subjects of the

\textsuperscript{148} Basil might have referred to the Patripassian thesis somehow, but why, then, did he not speak of the Father instead of the ‘divinity’ (δόγματι) and did never charge Atarbius with this idea?

\textsuperscript{149} We refer to the issue of the two Dionysii, on which see above n.27.

\textsuperscript{150} As is well known, Origen often refers to the necessity of the theoretical exercise in theological research (e.g. in \textit{Prin} I, \textit{Praef.}, 3; I,6,1; I,7,1), and this argument is persistently appealed to by Pamphilus in the \textit{Apologia pro Origenes} and by Rufinus’ \textit{De adulteratione librorum Origenis} (see also his \textit{praef.} to the \textit{Prin}).

\textsuperscript{151} The dating is questioned by scholars for reasons too complex to be recounted. Here it is enough to say that no one dates the \textit{Spir.} after 375.

\textsuperscript{152} In \textit{Exp. fid.} 3,3 the Marcellians had declared ‘one faith in one God through the Son in the Holy Spirit’ (… δι’ ἕνας Ἰδιὸν ἐν Πνεύματι ἁγίῳ).
treatise\textsuperscript{153}. Basil did never come to declare that the Holy Spirit was God or consubstantial with the Father and the Son, but did restrict himself to expressing and defending the absolute divinity of the Spirit by according it the same \textit{isotimia}, that is, the same honour as accorded to the Father and the Son\textsuperscript{154}. Placing, in this manner, the Spirit at the same level as the other two persons of the Trinity, Basil introduced the conception of the divinity of the Spirit without using formulae that were not founded on the Scriptures and that could complicate matters for the majority of the oriental bishops, who opposed Arians and the Pneumatomachians\textsuperscript{155}.

Basil defends the formulation ‘with the Holy Spirit’ by first of all applying it to the Scriptures. This allowed him to state that the various prepositions used to describe the nature of the Father, Son and Spirit referred indifferently to all three Persons and did not entail a difference of nature or dignity\textsuperscript{156}. But in order to reply more strongly to the accusation of the Pneumatomachians that the doxological formula ‘with the Holy Spirit’ could not be founded on the Scriptures, Basil called into question also the ‘non-scriptural’ (\textit{agraphos}) tradition of the liturgical customs and of the Fathers\textsuperscript{157}. In order to highlight the importance of their testimonies Basil established the famous distinction between \textit{kerygma} and \textit{dogmata}\textsuperscript{158}. Basil gives some examples of what \textit{agraphos} is by

\begin{footnotesize}
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\item For an introduction to the treatise see the ample and detailed study by Pruche in his edition. We must remember that Dörries, studying in detail the chapters 10-27 of the treatise, considered them as the account of the meeting between Basil and Eustathius in 372 (cf. \textit{Ep.} 99,2). See Dörries, \textit{De spiritu sancto}, 81-90.
\item As is well known, the contribution of Basil to the discussion about the divinity of the Holy Spirit was ratified by the Council of Constantinople of 381, that defined the Spirit ‘the Lord, the Giver of Life, Who proceeds from the Father, Who with the Father and the Son together is worshipped and glorified’ (\textit{τὸ κύριον καὶ τὸ ζωοποιόν, τὸ ἐκ τοῦ Πατρὸς ἐκπορευόμενον, τὸ σὺν Πατρὶ καὶ Υἱῷ συμπροσκυνούμενον καὶ συνδοξαζόμενον}). We must observe that this Creed does not literally define the Spirit as either \textit{theos} or \textit{homoousios}. For the Greek text of the Creed see, G.L. Dossetti, \textit{Il Simbolo di Nicca e di Costantinopoli}. Ed. crit., Roma-Freiburg-Basel-Barcelona-Wien 1967 (TRSR 2), 248-250.
\item The majority of the oriental bishops was homoiousian, as they admitted that the Son was like the Father according to substance but not of one substance with Him according to a strict reading of the Nicene \textit{homoousios}. In general, the supporters of the \textit{homoiousios} considered traditional the doctrine of the three \textit{hypostaseis}, which derived from Origen, and could not accept that the unity of essence was interpreted so that the Trinity was deemed apparent. Such a conclusion was that of Sabellius and this was one of the main reasons for the difficulty in accepting the \textit{homoousios}.
\item Cf. Bas. \textit{Spir.}, IV; V; XXVI; XXVII; XXIX.
\item Bas. \textit{Spir.} XXVII,66,1-10 (478-480 Pruche): ‘Of the “dogmata” and the “kerygmata” which are preserved in the Church, some we possess derived from the “written” teaching (ἐκ τῆς ἐγγράφου
referring to liturgical customs like the sign of the cross on the catechumens, the prayer to the East and the words of the invocation and consecration at the liturgical offering, and says that the Apostles and the Fathers established these institutions (δικαθεσμοθετήσεντες, Spiritus XXVII,66,50), preserving and keeping them in secret and silence. Then Basil adds that the dogma ‘is kept secret, the kerygmata are made public’ (ibidem, 57-58). But the dogmata are concerned with both the doctrinal contents of the Scriptures and the ecclesiastical practices themselves. The kerygmata are the open proclamations of faith, for instance the Scriptures, the Nicene Creed and the liturgical practices (in their public expression), whereas the dogmata are the right understanding of their doctrinal contents. Since the ecclesiastical practices Basil refers to were universally recognised, as being kept by the churches, although their origin was ‘unscriptural’, the Fathers’ tradition of the doxology ‘with the Spirit’ became a criterion for determining its authority.

Basil declared that the word σῶν was delivered to him by his bishop, Dianius of Caesarea, and then he provided the first florilegium of patristic texts by quoting directly six authors, Dionysius of Alexandria, Clement of Rome, Irenaeus of Lyons, Eusebius of Palestine (Caesarea), Origen and Julius Africanus. Among them, the quotations of Irenaeus and Clement of Rome did not confirm openly the doxology with σῶν; that by Clement was moulded on the baptismal formula of Mt 28:19. Basil added to the list of authorities the names of a certain “Athenogenes”, Firmilianus of Caesarea, who agreed with Dörries concerning the origin of the dogmata and ΔΟΓΜΑ in the theological thought of St. Basil of Caesarea, JThS 16 (1965), 129-142.

διδασκαλίας); and other we have received, handed down to us in a mystery (ἐν μυστηρίῳ), by the tradition of the Apostles (ἐκ τῆς τῶν ἄποστόλων παραδόσεως). Both of them have the same strength for piety (πρὸς τὴν εὐσέβειαν). And nobody will gainsay these; no one, in any case, who has the least experience of the institutions of the Church (θεσμοῦ ἐκκλησιαστικοῦ). For, if we were to attempt to reject the “unwritten” ordinances of custom (τὰ ἁγία ἄρτες τῶν ἐθνῶν), on the ground that they have no great force, we would be, without knowing it, injuring the Gospel in its most important points themselves, or rather we would be reducing the ‘kerygma’ to a mere name’ (transl. Amand de Mendieta, The ‘Unwritten’ and ‘Secret’ Apostolic Traditions, 1-2). On this distinction see E. Amand de Mendieta, The pair ΚΗΡΥΓΜΑ and ΔΟΓΜΑ in the theological thought of St. Basil of Caesarea, JThS 16 (1965), 129-142.

159 Bas. Spiritus XXVII,66,11-17 (480 Pruche). At any rate, Basil is more precise concerning the ‘words of the epiclesis’, saying that in this liturgical custom the Church adds words to those from the Apostle (Paul) and the Gospel, see lines 17-19. For other examples see ibidem, 21-28.

160 Bas. Spiritus XXVII,66,57-95.

161 The confusion may rise because of the overlapping of the distinctions between what is scriptural and what is not, and between dogmata and kerygmata. Basil considered dogmata all that was agraphos, and given that the ecclesiastical customs are agraphos, they would be only dogmata. But since the liturgical practices were public, they were also kerygmata. This is the main reason for the different opinions of the scholars mentioned in the previous notes. J. Gribomont, who agreed with Dörries concerning the original occasion of the composition of this writing (see above n.151), and reckoned this as the reason for the improvised argumentations of Basil (Ésotérisme et Tradition, 40-41), wrote with balance: ‘Il serait périlleux, en effet, de prendre ses [Basil’s] formules pour l’expression d’un système pleinement élaboré, comme s’il avait mûri les termes et avait pris la responsabilité des conclusions qu’un logicien en peut déduire’ (23).


163 Bas. Spiritus XXIX,71,28-32. As rightly noted by Gribomont, Ésotérisme et Tradition, 54-55, Amand de Mendieta erroneously emphasises the apostolic origin of the Trinitarian doxology.
Meletius from Pontus\textsuperscript{164} and dedicated a remarkable space to Gregory “the Great”, the first part of which we have already quoted above (Ch. I, §II.5).

... [Gregory’s] memory has not grown old with time, remaining as fresh in the churches as the green of spring. There has not been added a single practice, word, or sacramental rite to those he established for his church (Οὐκοῦν οὕτω πρᾶξεν τινα, οὐ λόγον, οὐ τύπον τινα μυστικόν, παρ’ οὗ ἐκεῖνος κατέλιπε τῇ ἐκκλησίᾳ, προσεύχησεν); in fact, they follow such a primitive usage that outsiders think their services are incomplete. His successors permit no innovations, but administer the Churches in exactly the same way he did (Οὐδὲν γὰρ ἐγέρχοντο οἳ κατὰ διαδοχὴν τὰς ἐκκλησίας οἰκονομήσαντες τῶν μετ’ ἐκεῖνον ἐφευρεθέντων παραδέξασθαι εἰς προσθήκην). Now one of Gregory’s institutions is the doxology in the manner now contested, and his church preserves this usage as a tradition received from him (Ἐν τοῖς ἐκ τῶν Γρηγορίου καὶ ἐν νῦν ἀντιλεγόμενοι τρόποι τῆς δυσλογίας ἐστίν, ἐκ τῆς ἐκείνων παραδόσεως τῇ Ἐκκλησίᾳ περιληθημένος); if you insist on proof, all you need do is make a short journey and hear it yourselves. My own predecessor Firmilian used this doxology; you can find it in his writings, and Meletius’ contemporaries say that he most assuredly used it as well\textsuperscript{165}.

The statement that the church of Neocaesarea had preserved, with no innovations, the teachings and the institutions established by Gregory is clearly in contrast to the two accusations Basil addressed to Atarbius and the churchmen of Neocaesarea in Ep. 204,4: that of not having having kept Gregory’s μαρτυρίαι and that of having introduced ‘innovations’ by teaching Sabellian ideas. This point has given several scholars pause for thought\textsuperscript{166}. Actually there is no substantial contradiction between the Spir. and the letters. First of all, the letters attesting the clash between Atarbius and Basil as already having happened (126, 204, 207 and 210) are posterior to the Spir. Secondly, the letters describe a concrete situation of conflict, whereas in the Spir., whose goal was to create a consensus on behalf of his doxographical formula, Basil had no interest in highlighting the disagreement of opinions when mentioning a great Saint such as Gregory. Since, moreover, Basil was completely aware of the potential danger of Atarbius’ activity and of his supposed manipulation of Gregory Thaumaturgus’ tradition, it is not difficult to interpret his silence as a clear example of damnatio memoriae. In the same way, then, one should interpret also the Vita of Gregory of Nyssa, who does not say a single word about Atarbius, stresses the respect the

\textsuperscript{164} Cf. Eusebius, \textit{Hist. Eccl.} VII,32,26. Probably from Sebastopolis, according to Philostorgius, \textit{Hist. Eccl.},1,8, who says also that Meletius was at the Council of Nicea, information whose reliability is questioned by scholars; cf. Bardy, SC 41, 230 n.25.


\textsuperscript{166} Cf. Abramowski, \textit{Das Bekenntnis des Gregor Thaumaturgos} 156-157, who stresses Basil’s functional use of the “tradition” theme in this case; cf. also, Way (FaCh 28), 84, n.8, who has minimised this contradiction already pointed out by the Benedectine edition, and Gain, \textit{L’ Église de Cappadoce}, 175, 339, who did not attempt to solve it.
Neocaesareans paid to their ecclesiastical traditions and very concisely alludes to theological disputes.

In any case, the entire passage gives the strong impression that Basil did not know of any mystagogia left in Neocaesarea by Gregory of Neocaesarea such as that described by Gregory of Nyssa. On this point, Abramowski is right. However, as we will see in the next section, only the second half of the Confessio can confirm this assumption from the point of view of its internal analysis.

III. The articles 4 and 3 of the Confessio

At the time of the editio princeps of the Vita (1638), Morellus had already separated the original text of the Confessio from the last lines of the fourth article, provoking the disapproval of some men of learning. This was also followed by Heil, who put that section between brackets in his critical edition because not all the manuscripts contain it. However, Slusser was probably right in deducing that Gregory of Nyssa meant to present as original also the third article; another reads ‘the monad did not grow into a dyad, nor the dyad into the triad’ (οὔτε εὐζήτησεν μονὰς εἰς δύαδα οὐδὲ δύαδα εἰς τριάδα), after another reading of the fourth article. Van Esbroeck adds other minor observations about other manuscripts containing these and other readings, which are of little interest for us. The Ethiopic version of the Confessio is edited by Weischer, Qērellos IV 3, 70-74.

167 For instance, Luis Ellies du Pin, Nouvelle Bibliothèque des Auteurs ecclésiastiques, T. 1, 1, 1698, 543, who admitted the authenticity of the last passage of the Confessio for it was translated by Rufinus and quoted by Gregory of Nazianzus. Thus also Cellier, Histoire générale des auteurs sacrés et ecclésiastiques, t. III, 314-315 and Fabricius, Bibliotheca Graeca, l. V, 250. Federicus Morellus’ text is edited also in PG 46, 912D–913A.

168 In the last section see Heil (ed.), GNO X,1, cvi. Here I provide Heil’s text but I restore partially Morellus’ punctuation. Heil has studied the Greek, Latin and partially also the Syriac tradition of the Confessio. Van Esbroeck, The Credo of Gregory the Wonderworker, 260-263, studied a very large number of Greek, Syriac, Latin, Armenian, Georgian, Slavonic, Coptic, Arabic and Ethiopic manuscripts handing down the Confessio, but did not notice any weakness in the tradition of the last part of it (!). He had identified two other families of the Confessio one reads ‘holy spring’ (πηγή ἁγίας) after θεόν ζωτίου αἰτία in the third article; another reads ‘the monad did not grow into a dyad, nor the dyad into the triad’ (οὔτε εὖζητεσ μονάς εἰς δύαδα οὐδὲ δύαδα εἰς τριάδα) after οὔτε υἱὸς τοῦ τριών in the fourth article. Van Esbroeck adds other minor observations about other three manuscripts containing these and other readings, which are of little interest for us. The Ethiopic version of the Confessio is edited by Weischer, Qērellos IV 3, 70-74.

169 ‘Whoever would like to be convinced of this should listen to the church, in which he proclaimed the doctrine, where the very inscriptions of that blessed hand are preserved to this very day’ (transl. Slusser, 55).
The text which presents in its entirety the most important overall similarities with the Confessio is the “private” confession of faith of Basil’s Ep. 105 (d. 372/373).

The links between it and Gregory’s Confessio led Lipatov to think that the latter was the source of the former (151). The very little documentary evidence and the absence of a Greek text prevent us from appraising critically Lipatov’s hypotheses; however, the dating to 360 remains untenable anyway, because it is hard to admit that Basil could state the three hypostaseis so openly at this stage (Basil speaks of three hypostaseis just once in the entire Eun., at III.3).

makes the entire creation, true Son of true Father, invisible of invisible, and incorruptible of incorruptible, and immortal of immortal, and eternal of eternal.

One Holy Spirit, who has existed from God, and manifested through the Son (namely to human beings), perfect image of the perfect Son, the life who is cause of living beings, sanctity who provides sanctification, in whom are made manifest God the Father, who is over all and in all, and God the Son, who is through all.

Perfect Trinity, in glory and eternity and sovereignty neither divided nor estranged.

(Therefore there is nothing created or slave in the Trinity, nor anything introduced which did not exist before but came later. Therefore neither did the Son fall short of the Father, nor the Spirit of the Son; but the same Trinity remains always immutable and unaltered)

(transl. Slusser, slightly altered, 54)

... Πατέρα τήν πάντων ἁρχήν. Υἱόν Μονογενῆς, ἐξ αὐτοῦ γεννηθέντα, ἡλιθινὸν Θεόν, τέλειον ἐν τελείῳ, εἰκόνα ζωῆς, ὁλὸν δεικνύντα ἐν ἑκτὸ τὸν
[You have believed in] Father, the beginning of all things; only begotten Son, born from Him, true God, Perfect from Perfect, living image, displaying the Father entirely in

The text which presents in its entirety the most important overall similarities with the Confessio is the “private” confession of faith of Basil’s Ep. 105 (d. 372/373). Though we have to postpone the discussion of the resemblances concerning the first two articles of the Confessio, I have underlined all the Greek words that show the closeness between the two texts.
The identification of textual and conceptual relations between the fourth article and works to be dated to the second half of the fourth century makes it clear that the final article of the Confessio is not original.

Gregory of Nazianzus quoted the first two lines of the fourth article in his important Or. 31 (On the Holy Spirit), when he states his faith with these words: ‘God the Father, God the Son, God the Holy Spirit, three properties, one divinity, not divided in glory, in substance and reign, as a bearer of God philosophised not long ago’ 172. Abramowski underlined the fact that ‘not long ago’ (μικρῶ πρόσθεν) is in contrast to Gregory Thaumaturgus’ authorship of this formula. Although the rhetorical tone of the phrase matches this extemporary “quotation” well, as pointed out by Caspari, it remains true that the concept of the divinity ‘not divided in glory, in substance and reign’ can be comprehended only on the basis of the pneumatological debate of the second half of the fourth century. Indeed, Gregory of Nazianzus might have referred also to Basil’s Ep. 105. As a matter of fact, the initial expression of the fourth article implies one of the main themes of the Spir., namely that of the isotimia (“same glory”) of the three persons of the Trinity. As we have seen, Basil sustained it also by listing Gregory of Neoceasarea among those who witnessed the doxology ‘with the Son and with the Holy Spirit’. It is then extremely relevant in considering its authenticity to note that Basil did not cite the fourth article of the Confessio in any of his works, the Spir. included.

The fourth article of the Confessio is quoted again in Or. 40,42, where Gregory of Nazianzus, after having professed his faith more amply than in the Or. 31 173, wrote:

171 In Or. Pan. IV, §35, Gregory defines ‘fountain of all good things’ the Father.
172 Gr. Naz., Or. 31,28 (330,2-5 Gallay): Θεόν τὸν Πατέρα, Θεόν τὸν Υἱόν, Θεόν τὸ Πνεῦμα τὸ ἀγνον, τρεῖς ἰδιότητας, θεότητα μίαν, δόξη, και τιμή, και ὑστερία, και βασιλεία μὴ μεριζομένην, ὡς τῶν μικρῶ πρόσθεν θεοφόρων εφιλοσοφόειν.
173 In Or. 40,41 Gregory of Nazianzus professes τὴν εἰς Πατέρα, καὶ Υἱόν, καὶ ἄγιον Πνεῦμα ὑμωλόγια, τὴν μίαν θεότητα τε καὶ δύναμιν ἐν τοῖς τρισὶν εὐρισκομένην ἐνικᾶς, καὶ τὰ τρία συλλαμβάνομεν μεριστάς: ὡς ἀνώμαλον ὑστερίας ἢ φύσεως, ὡς ἀνωτάτου ..., τριών ἄπειρον ἄπειρον συμφύσην, ἂς ἀκατοσκοπίως ἄκατον ἀκατά μεριζομένον, ὡς Πατέρα καὶ Υἱόν, ὡς Υἱόν καὶ τὸ...
‘Nothing of the Trinity, my dears, is slave or created or added from outside, that I heard a wise man saying’ (Οὐδὲν τῆς Τριάδος, ὃ ὤτου, δοῦλον οὔτε κτιστὸν οὔτε ἐπείσακτον, ἥκουσα τῶν σοφῶν τινος λέγοντος)\textsuperscript{174}.

The words Θεόν τὸ Πνεῦμα τὸ ἄγιον in the Or. 31 make it unlikely that Gregory of Nazianzus was citing a different creed in its entirety, though this may appear to be the case. Indeed, in Or. 31,28 he explains that the necessary veneration of the Holy Spirit (as He is the actor of the divinisation of men through baptism) implies that He has to be called God\textsuperscript{175}, a step that was not taken by Basil and certainly also not by Gregory Thaumaturgus. That should not exclude the possibility that Gregory of Nazianzus may have known another version of the Confessio, if not a different creed entirely, if we consider also that he does not mention the name of its author and that the Or. 31 (as well as the Or. 40) is roughly contemporary with Gregory of Nyssa’s Vita. But, since Gregory of Nazianzus quotes twice the Confessio introducing it with common elements of description\textsuperscript{176}, it seems more plausible that he knew the fourth article as a whole, probably thanks to Gregory of Nyssa\textsuperscript{177}.

The same line mentioned above in the Or. 40 had appeared also in the Expositio fidei, which Eugenius of Ancyra had brought to Athanasius in Alexandria in 371\textsuperscript{178}. After the condemnation of the Arians, Sabellius and the Anomeans, Eugenius declared that there is ‘nothing created or added from outside in the Trinity’ (οὐδὲν ἐπείσακτον οὐδὲ κτίσμα ἔστιν ἐν τῇ τριάδῃ)\textsuperscript{179}. M. Tetz acknowledged also another passage as dependent on the Confessio, but it relies on a manuscript reading excluded by all the editors of the text\textsuperscript{180}.

The last lines of the fourth article of the Confessio are also found in Ps. Basil, Contra Eunomium V (PG 29, 753B: οὐκ ἴνελπινεν υἱός ποτε τῷ πατρὶ οὐδὲ υἱὸς πνεύμα, ἀλλ' ἀτρεπτος καὶ ἀναλλοίωτος ἢ τριάς ἅει)\textsuperscript{181}. The authorship of this

\textsuperscript{174} Or. 40,42 (296,11-13 Moreschini).
\textsuperscript{175} See also Or. 31,10. A similar argumentation in Athanasius, Epistulae ad Serapionem, I,24.
\textsuperscript{176} Or. 31: … ὃς τοις μικροῖς πρόσθεν θεοφόρων ἐφιλοσόφησεν. Or. 40 … ἥκουσα τῶν σοφῶν τινος λέγοντος.
\textsuperscript{177} Cf. also Mitchell, The life and lives of Gregory Thaumaturgus, 111 (who dates the Vita before the Orationes).
\textsuperscript{178} See Tetz, Markellianer und Athanasius von Alexandrien, 116-119; Martin, Athanase d’Alexandrie et l’Égypte, 615-616.
\textsuperscript{179} Eugen. Exp. fid. 3,2 (80,41-42 Tetz).
\textsuperscript{180} Compare the reading from the Confessio oúte συζέται μονάς εἰς δυάδα οὐδὲ δυάς εἰς τριάδα with Exp. Fidei, 3,4 (81,47-48 Tetz), ἀναθεματίζομεν τούς φρονοῦντας καὶ λέγοντας· ἢν ποτε μονάς μὴ ὄντος υἱοῦ, καὶ ἢν ποτε δυάς μὴ ὄντος ἡγίον πνεύματος. See: Holl, Paul of Samosata, 233 and Fragmente Vornicänischer Kirchenväter aus den Sacra Parallela, Leipzig 1899 (TU V, 2), 157-158; Caspari, Alte und neue Quellen, 15, n.38, and Tetz, Markellianer und Athanasius von Alexandrien, 97-98.
\textsuperscript{181} The passage was identified by Hübner ap. Abramowski, Das Bekenntnis des Gregor Thaumaturgos, 166, n.72.
work is still in question, having been ascribed mainly to Didymus, Apollinarius and Basil\(^2\), but since this work appears to be a collection of Neo-Nicene theology, it is elementary to say that it was its author who quoted the *Confessio*. In any case, we have similar statements already in Athanasius’ works and in Eugenius’ *Expositio*, which, as pointed out by Tetz, was in its turn influenced by Athanasius\(^3\). And indeed in *Ep. ad Serap.* I,28 we read a passage that has also other similarities with the fourth article of the *Confessio*:

> There is, then, a Triad, holy and complete, confessed to be God in Father, Son and Holy Spirit, having nothing foreign or external mixed with it, not composed of one that creates and one that is originated, but all creative... (transl. Sharpland, 134-135)\(^4\).

Finally, it has to be remembered that the Council of Nicaea condemned those who asserted that the Son is κτιστός or τρεπτός or ἀλλοιωτός and that it was only starting in the second generation of Arians that the Spirit was defined as δοῦλος\(^5\). While there was an open resistance to “created, mutable and altered” as addressed to the Spirit already in Athanasius\(^6\), it is in Basil and Gregory of Nyssa that we find both this terminology and the opposition to the definition of the Spirit as a “slave”\(^7\). Therefore, for a status questionis see E. Cavalcanti, *Excerpta e temi sullo Spirito Santo in Ps.-Basilio, “Adv. Eunomium”, IV-V*, in Forma Futuri, 1003-07 (also in *Studi Eunomiani*, Roma 1976 [OCA 202], 47-51) and M. Zambon, *Didyme d’Alexandrie* (forthcoming in DPA).


\(^{183}\) Cf. for instance, *Exp. Fidei*, 3,4 (81,48-49 Tetz: ἀδίδου γὰρ καὶ ἀειτελείαν οἴδαμεν καὶ ὀσωτήρως ἐχώσαν τὴν ἀγίαν τριάδα); 4,2 (82,64-67: ἀναθεματίζομεν τοὺς λέγοντας καὶ φρονοῦντας, ποτὲ τὸν πατέρα ἐναὶ χωρὶς τοῦ υἱοῦ καὶ ποτὲ τὸν υἱὸν χωρὶς τοῦ ἁγίου πνεύματος. πνεύμα γὰρ θεοῦ ἐστιν, καὶ τελεία καὶ ἀδίκις ἐστιν ἢ τριάς); Ath. *I Adv Arianos* 18 (19-20 Wright: οὐκ ἐστι γεννητὴ ἢ Τριάς ἢ ἄλλη ἀδίδου καὶ μία θεότης ἢστιν ἐν Τριάδι, καὶ μία δόξα τῆς ἀγίας Τριάδος... Χριστιανοὶ δὲ οἱ πίστις ἄστρεντος καὶ τελείαν καὶ ἕως ὀσωτήρως ἐχώσαν τὴν μακαρίαν οἴδα τριάδα...). For further remarks on Athanasius’ influence on the *Expositio* and on the Marcellians’ faith as following the directions established by the *Tomus ad Antiochenos*, see Tetz, *Markellianer und Athanasios von Alexandrien and Martin, Athanase d’Alexandrie et l’Égypte*, 617, n.263.


\(^{186}\) Athanasius, *Ep. ad Serap.* I,28 (see above, n.184). Cf. Caspari, *Alte und neue Quellen*, 58. Cf. also, for instance, Basil *Ep.* 125,3,16-21 and 34-36; 128,2,6-10; Gr. *Nyss. Adv. Maced.* 10 (PG 45, 1313B = GNO III,1,97,9). Arius defined τρεπτός or ἀλλοιωτός the Son in the confession quoted by Alexander of Alexandria (Letter to all bishops 8), an idea that Arius had also withdrawn (Letter to Alexander 2). Both the letters are published and shortly introduced by M. Simonetti (ed.), *Il Cristo, II: Testi teologici e spirituali in lingua greca dal IV al VII secolo*, Milano 2003\(^7\), 74-91 (in part. 76 and 84). The sequence ἄστρεντος καὶ ἀναλλοιωτός is present also in Origen, see, for instance *CC* 1,21 and *Orat* XXIV,2. A precedent can be found also in *Corp. Herm.* XIII,6.

in the fourth article of the *Confessio* it is possible to notice a more advanced theological progress, as some of these argumentations are used in defence of the Trinity. But we have important precedents to those statements by Basil and Gregory of Nyssa.

In the latter’s case we have to deal with the Ep. 5. In 379, surely after Basil’s death188, Gregory of Nyssa was entrusted by Neo-nicene bishops gathered in the council of Antioch to consider the case of the Marcellians. To reply to those who accused him of having received them ‘without discernment and examination (…) into the communion of the Catholic Church’, Gregory of Nyssa wrote the Ep. 5 (381), to declare his faith189. Gregory’s creed is quite limited in extent (§5c)190, while the main focuses of the letter are the Holy Trinity and the acknowledgment of the three hypostases. The baptismal formula, which was communicated by the Lord, reveals the importance of the names of the three members of the Trinity and this allows Gregory to state the three hypostases (§4-5b) and to declare his communion with those who adopt them (§9). Since the ‘grace of incorruptibility is bestowed on us’ through the faith in ‘Father and Son and Holy Spirit’ Gregory of Nyssa explains how to interpret the Holy Trinity: ‘We believe that nothing servile, nothing created, nothing unworthy of the majesty of the Father is to be numbered together with him in the Holy Trinity’(§6)191.

This passage is inspired by Basil’s *Against Eunomius* III,5, where it is written that in the baptismal formula ‘no creature or servant is ranked together with the Father and the Son, as if the divinity becomes complete in a Trinity’ (οὐδὲν ἐπείσακτον οὐδὲ δούλου Πατρὶ καὶ Γίῳ συντεταγμένου, ὡς τῆς θεότητος ἐν Τριάδι συμπληρουμένης)192.

That it was Gregory of Nyssa who wrote the fourth article appears then well founded. What remains probably less demonstrable—but this point is, after all, minor— is that Gregory of Nyssa quoted Eugenius’ *Expositio Fidei*, 3.2 (οὐδὲν ἐπείσακτον οὐδὲ κτίσμα ἐστὶν ἐν τῇ τριάδι). Indeed, even if the idea that there is nothing ἐπείσακτος in the Trinity has no precedent to the *Expositio*, the adjective ἐπείσακτος was rarely used but significantly by Eunomius in his *Apologia apologiae* and by Gregory of Nyssa to counter him193. We are dealing with specific terminology well known to Gregory of Nyssa194. However, Gregory of Nyssa’s historical attempts to

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190 It is worth noting that the Son is called the ‘fountain’ and ‘author’ of life (Ps 35:10; Acts 3:15), and the Holy Spirit ‘the Spirit who gives life’ (Jn 6:4).
191 Transl. Silvas, 139: … οὐδὲν δούλον οὐδὲ κτιστόν οὐδὲ τῆς μεγαλειότητος τῶν πατρὸς ἄναξίου τής ἄγιας τριάδις συναριθμηθείσαν πιστεύωμεν. The relation between this passage and the *Confessio* was already pointed out by Holl, *Amphilochius von Ikonium*, 118. Cf. also Bas. Ep. 125,3.
bring the Marcellians near to orthodoxy makes somehow convincing the hypothesis that he was quoting Eugenius in the *Confessio*.

As to the third article, it is still possible to argue for the presence of ideas to be considered, if not authentic, at least stemming from the third century.

Even if Caspari realised that it did not contradict Origen, he did not find clear evidence to substantiate this point. In fact, it was H. Dehnhard who pointed out some links substantiating the relation of the third article to Origen, as well as to Basil, especially with regard to its central lines: εἰκών τοῦ υἱοῦ τελείου τελεία, ζωὴ ζώντων αἰτία, [πηγὴ ἄγνα] ἀγιότης ἀγιασμοῦ χορηγός. The German scholar had studied it in connection with the ps. Basilian *De Spiritu* (= *De Sp.*)195, a “Plotinian cento” which he ascribed to the young Basil also on the basis of the fact that its pneumatology, as well as that of the genuine *De Spiritu Sancto*, would be inspired by Gregory’s *Confessio*.196 Here we cannot dare to discuss all the links between the *Confessio* and the *De Sp.* pointed out by Dehnhard, but we have to put some of his most significant suggestions into perspective, all the more so since Abramowski appealed also to these links in support of her thesis that the author of the *Confessio* relied on Basil (whom she considers the author of *De Sp.*)197. In particular, Dehnhard argued that the influence of Plotin and Origen can be detected in the *De Sp.*: all three authors would agree in considering the third hypostasis (*Anima mundi* / Holy Spirit) as the εἰκών of the second one (intellect / Son)198. This claim appears to be unproven when considering that: 1) ‘In DS (=De Sp.) wird (...) nicht ausdrücklich gesagt, daß das Pneuma Eikon des Logos ist

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197 Abramowski, *Das Bekenntnis des Gregor Thaumaturgos*, 164-165.

2) Dehnhard could only allude to a passage from Origen’s CRom, where Rom 8:29 is at issue, which is of no effective use for his purpose. It is interesting to note that Athanasius was inspired precisely by this passage of Paul’s epistle when he first explicitly formulated that the Holy Spirit is the image of the Son, as we will see shortly. On this ground, the expression εἰκῶν τοῦ υἱοῦ τελειώ τελεία seems to imply a doctrinal development that makes it unlikely that Gregory could apply it to the Holy Spirit.

Dehnhard tried to defend at length also the authenticity of the reading πνευμάτικος χορηγός against Caspari’s doubts, but Heil’s critical edition invalidates his attempt.

More significant are the parallels between Origen and the Confessio concerning ζωής κόσμων αἰώνας and ἀγίωτες ἄγιασμον χορηγός. Dehnhard identified the expression ἄγιασμον χορηγός as referring to the Father in the Latin sanctitatis largitor found in a passage from an homily on 1 Sm 1-2, and rightly highlights other passages from Origen’s works where it is the Holy Spirit who is considered to be the bestower of sanctification and of life. Here it is worth drawing attention to one fundamental passage, namely Clo XIII,23,140, which Dehnhard hardly took into consideration.

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199 Origen’s passage is preserved in Phil XXV,2 (228, 1 Robinson): ‘Now we know there is a Person, Who is the image of the invisible God (Col 1:15), and it is His image which is called the image of the Son of God; and we think that this image is the human soul which the Son of God assumed, and which for its merit became the image of the image of God. And it was to this, which we think is the image of the Son of God, that God foreordained those to be conformed, whom, on account of His foreknowledge of them, He did foreordain’ (transl. Lewis, 210). Dehnhard, Das Problem der Abhängigkeit des Basilius von Plotin, 29 commented upon it as follows: ‘Origenes nannte die ψυχή Christi Eikon des Logos, also der zweiten Hypostase’; then (31-32), he referred to Origen’s being a pupil of Ammonius and to a fragment of Numenius in order to substantiate his point. We find this line of thought not persuasive.

200 Dehnhard, Das Problem der Abhängigkeit des Basilius von Plotin, 21-24, 29-30. However, the persistent presence of both πνεύματικος and χορηγός in some passages of Origen’s works makes one think. Πνεύματικος χορηγός is biblical (Ps 35:10) and Gregory of Nyssa applies it to the Father in Ep. 5,5 (but diffusely also to the other members of the Trinity in others of his works).

201 See Dehnhard, Das Problem der Abhängigkeit des Basilius von Plotin, 24-25.

202 Origenes, HREI, 11 (20,11-13 Baehrens, GCS 33): Sed quantumcumque homo non potest sicut Dominus, quia ille sanctitatis largitor est, iste susceptor, ille sanctitatis foas est... In Clo XXXVI,6 God is defined as ‘perfect and provider of perfection through our perfect high priest Jesus Christ’ (ἔπικαλεσάμενοι τὸν τέλειον καὶ τελείοττος χορηγὸν θεὸν διὰ τοῦ τελείου ἁρχιερέως ἡμῶν Ἰησοῦ Χριστοῦ). In Clo XIII,308 the Son is considered as the ‘provider of the seeds’ (χορηγός τῶν σπερμάτων) of the fruits of the eternal life. Dehnhard, Das Problem der Abhängigkeit des Basilius von Plotin, 49-50 identifies other occurrences of the word χορηγός also in other authors. To this list we can add an interesting comment of Clement of Alexandria to 1 Cor 2:9-11, where Paul declares that the wisdom of God was manifested to him by God through the Spirit. Clement said that the ‘spiritual and gnostic man’ is a disciple of the Holy Spirit ‘sent by God’ (Strom. V,4,25,5: πνευματικῶν γῆς καὶ γνωστικῶν οἱ δήν τοῦ ἄγιον πνεύματος μακρινή τὸν ἐκ θεοῦ χορηγοῦμένου, ὁ ἐστὶ νοῦς Χριστοῦ); in other words, he thought that the perfection of the Christian life was obtained by the revelation of the Holy Spirit.


204 Dehnhard, Das Problem der Abhängigkeit des Basilius von Plotin, 25.
It seems to me that something similar to this is also meant by the statement "God is spirit." For since we are made alive by the spirit, so far as ordinary life, and what we usually mean by the term life, is concerned, when the spirit that is in us draws what is called, in the literal sense, the breath of life, I suppose it has been understood from this that God, who brings us to the true life, is called spirit. In the Scriptures, the spirit is said to make alive. It is clear that this "making alive" refers not to ordinary life, but to that which is more divine. For the letter also kills and produces death, but it is not death in the sense of the separation of the soul from the body, but death in the sense of the separation of the soul from God, and from the Lord himself, and from the Holy Spirit (Transl. Heine, 97).

All this makes it likely that Gregory may have defined the Holy Spirit as ζωή ζώντων αἵτια and ἀγιότης ἀγιασμοῦ χορηγῶς. This counterbalances also Abramowski’s view that the (αγιασμοῦ) χορηγῶς in the third article of the Confessio must depend on the (ζωής) χορηγῶς found in Basil’s Spir. IX,22,25. She thought so on the ground that both ‘Gregory’ and Basil applied χορηγῶς to the Third Hypostasis and because the only precedent of this phenomenon is found in Plotinus’ Enn. V,1,2,9(-10; in a context where the World soul is said to ‘grant life in the whole universe and in individual things’), which Gregory of Neocaesarea, unlike Basil, could not have known. It is true that χορηγῶς is explicitly applied to the Third Hypostasis first by Plotinus, but Origen was able to provide Gregory with enough, and more coherent, theoretical foundation to declare that the Spirit is ἀγιασμοῦ χορηγῶς.

Still, that does not adequately give an explanation for Basil’s silence about an alleged original written text of Gregory’s Confessio containing these expressions, all the more so while considering that they were received in Spir. IX,22.

205 Or. Clo XIII,23,140: Τοιοῦτον τί μοι φαίνεται καὶ περὶ τό «Πνεῦμα ὁ θεός» ἐπεὶ γάρ εἰς τήν μέσην καὶ κοινότερον καλομέγδην ζωήν, φασώντως τοῦ περὶ ἡμᾶς πνεύματος τήν καλομέγδην σωματικότερον πνοήν ζωῆς, ζωοποιούμεθα ἀπὸ τοῦ πνεύματος, ὑπολαμβάνω ἀρκετοῦ εἴλθυσαι τό πνεύμα γιγνομένον στὸν θεὸν πρός τήν ἀληθινήν ζωήν ἡμᾶς ἀγνότας τό πνεύμα γάρ κατά τήν γραφήν λέγεται ζωοποιεῖν, φανερὸν δὴ ἡμιοποιήσας οὐ τήν μέσην ἀλλὰ τῆς θεοτέραν καὶ γάρ το γράμμα ἀποκτείνει καὶ ἐμποιεῖ θάνατον, οὐ τοῦ κατὰ τόν χωρισμόν τῆς ψυχῆς ἀπὸ τοῦ σώματος, ἀλλὰ τοῦ κατὰ τόν χωρισμόν τῆς ψυχῆς ἀπὸ τοῦ θεοῦ, καὶ τοῦ κυρίου τοῦ, καὶ τοῦ ἀγίου πνεύματος.

206 Plot. Enn. V,1,2,1-10: Ἐνθυμεῖσθο τοίνυν πρῶτον ἐκείνῳ πάσα ψυχή, ὡς κάτη μὲν ζωῆς ἐποίησε πάντα ἐμπνεύσασα κάτως ψωμί, ἀ τε γῆ τρέφει ἀ τε θάλασσα ἀ τε ἐν ἀέρι ἀ τε ἐν ωρανίῳ ἀστρα θεία, κάτη δὲ ἦλιον, κάτη δὲ τό κενόν τούτον ωρανόν, καὶ κάτη ἐκκυθήσασα, κάτη δὲ ἐν τάξει περιάγει φόσις ὄσαι ἐκέρα ὡς καὶ ως καὶ ἐκέρα καὶ ἐκέρα καὶ τούτων ἀνάγκη εἶναι τιμωτέραν, γυμνομένων τούτων καὶ φθειρομένων, ὅταν κάτη ψυχή ἀπολήσῃ ἡ χορήγη τό ζήν, κάτη δὲ ὄσαι ἄκου τοῦ καὶ ἄκου ἀπολησθήσῃ ἐκείνῃ. Τίς δὴ τρόπος τῆς χορήγης τοῦ ζήν ἐν τῇ τοῖς σύμπαντι ἐν τῇ τοῖς ἐκάκοις, οἷς λογίζεσθο... For the Greek text (drawn from the editio minor of Henry and Schwyzer) and the Engl. transl. we follow A.H. Armstrong’s for Loeb, vol. V, Enneads V. 1-9, Cambridge (MA)-London 1984, 14-15.

207 One might say the same with regard to Plotinus, for he defines the One as χορηγῶς ἀληθινῆς ζωῆς (Enn. VI,9,50). That Basil made use of Enn. V.1 and VI,9 is admitted also by Rist, Basil’s “Neoplatonism”, 211. Cf. Pruche (ed.), Basile de Césarée, Sur le Saint-Esprit, 324-325, nn.2-3.

may be raised also in respect of Origen’s possible influence on the ontological terminology of the third article, namely where the Holy Spirit is said to have his existence from God (ἐκ Θεοῦ τὴν ὑπαρξίαν ἔχον). Origen wrote that the Holy Spirit has ‘an intelligible hyparxis’ (τὸ πνεῦμα νοητὴν ὑπάρξειν ἔχον; FrIo 20) and is an ousia, ‘not an activity of God without individuality of existence’ (οὐ γὰρ … ἐνέργεια ἐστὶ Θεοῦ, οὐκ ἔχον κατ’ αὐτοῦ ὑπάρξεις ἰδιότητα; FrIo 37). The vagueness and the neutrality of hyparxis in itself appears even in Origen’s words for he did not leave it without demarcation (“intelligible” and “individuality”). It was surely less characterising from the doctrinal point of view than hypostasis. Since Origen attributed a hypostasis also to the Holy Spirit (Clo 2,75), and since even Eugenius admitted that the Spirit was ὑφεστός (Exp. Fidei 2,4), it appears justifiable to suspect that the choice of hyparxis was aimed to avoid, although without ruling out, a Neo-Nicene use of it. In effect, the concept that the Holy Spirit has its hyparxis from God can be detected in two passages from writings of Basil and Gregory of Nazianzus. However philologically dubious the text at issue may be, Basil’s case is particularly important because it comes from the Ep. 105, which bears also other resemblances to the Confessio. Furthermore, Dehnhard has shown that the concept that the Holy Spirit is manifested through the Son (δι’ Υἱοῦ περιηγώς) is certainly in agreement with Basil’s writings. However, the use of hyparxis for defining the ontological status of the Holy Spirit has its most significant precedent in Athanasius’ first Epistula ad Serapionem, which presents other singular doctrinal convergences with the Confessio. That appears clearly also by considering the interpretation of Eph 4:6 provided in the last lines of the third article: ‘in whom (ἐν ᾧ; scil. Holy Spirit) are made manifest God the Father, who is over all and in all (ὁ ἐπὶ πάντων καὶ ἐν πάσιν), and God the Son, who is through all (ὁ δὲ πάντων)’. This use of Eph 4:6 is unusual and seems to have originated from Ep.


210 Cf. Pepin, ‘Ὑπαρξίες et ὑπόστασες en Cappadoce, 69: ‘la déterminer en “existence intelligible” est, pour Origène, une façon de désigner les êtres intelligibles’. Pepin’s study shows that hyparxis maintained a wide meaning for all three Cappodocians.

211 This may appear the case for Bas. Ep. 210,3,26-27, where hyparxis is reinforced by “individual”. In any case, the expressions εἰκὼν τοῦ υἱοῦ τελεία and Τριάς τελεία in the third and fourth articles could help further for a Neo-Nicene interpretation of Thaumaturgus’ Confessio.

212 In Or. 32,5 (d. 379), after having lamented the sectarianism within the Church, Gregory of Nazianzus invoked unity, also by providing a simple Trinitarian where the Πνεῦμα is said to be ἐν ἐκ Θεοῦ τὴν ὑπαρξίαν ἔχον. That confirms the conciliatory meaning of the expression.

213 Bas. Ep. 105,1,24-25: Πνεῦμα Ἀγίου, ἐκ Θεοῦ ὑπαρχον… Courtonne prefers this reading to ἐκ Θεοῦ τὴν ὑπαρξίαν ἔχον which coincides with Gregory’s Confessio and is handed down by other manuscripts. I have checked also the terminology of the Eun. and of the Spir. with no significant results (cf., though, προσώπων ὑπάρξις in Spir. XXVI, 63; 472 Pruche). In the contested Ep. 38 the Holy Spirit is τὸ ἐκ τοῦ Πατρός ύπερτάσσεται (PG 32, 329C).

214 Dehnhard, Das Problem der Abhängigkeit des Basilius von Plotin, 44-45. I Cor 8:6 and Rom 11:36 played an important role in Basil’s Spir.
ad Serap. I,28. After having stated the holiness, perfection and unity of the Trinity, Athanasius wrote:

Thus one God is preached in the Church, 'who is over all, and through all, and in all' - 'over all', as Father, as beginning, as fountain (ὡς ἀρχή, καὶ πηγή); 'through all', through the Word; 'in all', in the Holy Spirit. It is a Triad not only in name and form of speech, but in truth and actuality (ἀλλὰ ἀληθείᾳ καὶ ὑπάρξει Θεόν). For as the Father is he that is, so also his Word is one that is and God over all. And the Holy Spirit is not without actual existence, but exists and has true being (Καὶ τὸ Πνεῦμα τὸ ἁγιόν οὐκ ἀνυπαρκτὸν ἔστιν, ἀλλ' ὑπάρχει καὶ ὑφεστηκεν ἀληθῶς).

Likewise, we may also find in Athanasius’ letter the peculiar idea that the Holy Spirit is the ‘image of the Son’216. It is only implied by Basil in Spir. XXVI,64217, while it is explicitly mentioned in Ps. Basil, Adv. Eun. V, which depends, in its turn, on Athanasius, Ep. ad Serap. I,24218. That Basil’s reasonings can be somehow influenced by Athanasius appears also in Spir. XVIII,46: to say that the Holy Spirit ‘is from God’ means ‘proceeding from’ the mouth of God as incorporeal ‘living substance’ (οὐσία ζωῆς) and as ‘power of sanctification’ (ἀγιασμὸς χυρᾶ), even if its modus essendi (τρόπος τῆς ὑπάρξεως) remains indicible219. Elsewhere, Basil defines the Holy Spirit as πηγή ἀγιασμοῦ and πηγή τῆς ἁγιώτατος220.

In sum, some elements of the third article can be still defended as originating from Gregory of Neocaesarea, because they are in agreement with Origen or show a certain archaic terminology, namely the following expressions: ἐκ Θεοῦ τὴν ὑπάρξειν ἔχων; ζωῆς ζωντων αἰτία; ἁγιώτητος ἀγιασμοῦ χορηγὸς221. But they remind us of Basil’s Ep.

213 Translation extracted from The Letters of Saint Athanasius Concerning the Holy Spirit. Transl. with Intr. and Notes by C.R.B. Shapland, London 1951, 135. Athanasius repeats several times the idea that the Holy Spirit is ἐκ τοῦ Θεοῦ in the Epp. ad Serap. (e.g. I,22; III,2; in accordance with I Cor 2:12), and identifies οὐσία, ἡμιστάσιον and ἡμισφαίριον in Ep. ad Afros. 4.


217 For a list of other occurrences of this idea in patristic sources see Simonetti, La crisi Ariana, 488. Athanasius’ case is the first in history, while Cavalcanti, «Excerpta» e temi sullo Spirito Santo, 1015 appears to be wrong in pointing out Eusebius, De Eccl. Theol. III,5,19-20. That appears clear on the basis of the use both authors made of Rom 8:29 (cf. PG 26, 588B and PG 29, 724C). Cf. Cavalcanti, «Excerpta» e temi sullo Spirito Santo, 1016-1019 also for other occurrences in Adv. Eun. V.

218 Bas. Spir. XVIII,46 (408 Pruche): Καὶ οὐκ ἐνεπνέεσθαι μονὸν τῆς κατὰ τὴν φύσιν κοινωνίας κί ἀποδιέξομαι, ἀλλ' ὅτι καὶ ἐν τοῦ Θεοῦ εἶναι λέγεται. οὐκ ὡς τὰ πάντα ἐκ τοῦ Θεοῦ, ἀλλ' ὡς ἐκ τοῦ Θεοῦ προελθόν. ὡς γεννητὸς ὡς ὁ Ως, ἀλλ' ὡς Πνεῦμα στόματι κυτοῦ. Πάντως δὲ οὔτε τὸ στόμα μέλος, οὔτε πνεῦμα λυμένη τὸ Πνεῦμα. ἀλλ' καὶ τὸ στόμα Θεοπρεπῶς, καὶ τὸ Πνεῦμα ὑπόν ἐστιν, ἀγιασμοῦ χυρᾶ, τῆς μὲν οἰκειότητος δηλωμένης ἐνεπνέεσθαι, τοῦ δὲ τρόπου τῆς ὑπάρξεως ἄρτητος φύλασσομένου.

219 Bas. Eun. 3,2; Ep. 105.

220 As to the latter one see Dehnhard, Das Problem der Abhängigkeit des Basilius von Plotin, 50-51.
Is Basil the source of inspiration for Gregory of Nyssa? I do not know a good answer. Even if we have seen that these statements are well received by Athanasius and Basil, and that it is in the context of their works that other pneumatological expressions of the third article of the *Confessio* also find their natural place, we have to acknowledge that Origen’s teachings could provide Gregory with all the theological premises to confess ‘One Holy Spirit, who has the existence from God, and manifested through the Son … the life who is cause of living beings, sanctity who provides sanctification’. That Basil could have learned these expressions from his grandmother Macrina as originating from Gregory Thaumaturgus cannot be excluded.

At the same time, it follows that, if there were a written creed or even an oral tradition of a creed deriving from Gregory of Neocaesarea, it could hardly convey all the expressions which Gregory of Nyssa ascribed to him in the third article and especially in the fourth one. If so, this would provide sufficient justification for the fact that Basil did not cite any of them when he referred to Gregory of Neocaesarea in the *Spir.*

That said, can we conclude that there was no codified tradition of the Thaumaturgus’ teachings about the faith? In order to attempt to reply to this question we have to go back to the argument of Basil’s silence during the dispute with Atarbius of Neocaesarea. According to Abramowski, on that occasion Basil should have mentioned it. Simonetti has better defined the doctrinal aspect of this in fact very old objection against the existence of the *Confessio*.

**IV. The last objection: articles 1 and 2**

Simonetti has argued that, had the *Confessio* existed, Basil could have easily quoted from its first two articles or even only the words πατὴρ λόγου ζηντος, σοφίας υφεστώσης, to counter effectively Atarbius’ quotation from the *Dialogue*, according to which, Gregory would have said that ‘Father and Son are two in thought, but one in hypostasis’ (ἐπινοία μὲν εἶναι δύο, ύποστάσει δὲ ἓν)\(^{222}\). According to Simonetti, the first part of the *Confessio* supplied Basil with sufficient evidence to defend Gregory as a representative of the theology of the Logos against the presumption that he had sustained dogmatically (ἐν ἔκθεσι πίστεως) one hypostasis of the divinity. Surely, if the *Confessio* was extant and had a status of venerated tradition established in written form by Gregory Thaumaturgus—as Gregory of Nyssa relates in the *Vita*—, it remains striking that Basil did not quote from it\(^{223}\).

\(^{222}\) Simonetti, *Una nuova ipotesi*, 297, and `Gregorio il Taumaturgo e Origene*, 23.

\(^{223}\) In our analysis of the *Ep.* 210, we have shown that the old suspicion that Basil’s reply to Atarbius is artificial and unreliable is not seriously justified. He had simply responded that the passage from the *Dialogue* was not dogmatical and that he was able to demonstrate that, likely even in a synod. Basil hardly took into consideration the doctrinal threat constituted by Atarbius’ quotation. It simply offered Basil the pretext to criticise the Arians, because Gregory of Neocaesarea had written in the *Dialogue* something that could appear Arian.
Nonetheless, the doctrinal aspect of this objection is not persuasive. Indeed, as we have to deduce from Atarbius’ documented activity outside the church of Neocaesarea, from Basil’s suspicions (Ep. 30) and from the plausible diffusion of Eugenius’ *Expositio* in the five years after its publication, Atarbius was in contact with the Marcellians of Ancyra and very likely aware of their recent dogmatical position expressed in Eugenius’ *Expositio*. And we have seen that Basil also had received a communication from Athanasius about the *Expositio*. If so, then, Basil would have found very little in the first two articles of the *Confessio* to convince Atarbius not only of the fact that Gregory was not a Sabellian, because Eugenius’ *Expositio* and Gregory’s *Confessio* presented significant doctrinal convergences even with regard to the ontological status of the Logos, but also over the three hyposesis, which was the primary aim of Basil’s letters to the Neocaesareans. As it will appear in the following table the *Confessio* could not help Basil in overcoming the expressions of the *Expositio* to the point that his Neo-Nicene interpretation of Gregory’s *Confessio* could dispel the quotation from the *Ad Gelianum*.

| Eἰς θεός, πατήρ λόγου ζώντος, (σοφίας ὑφεστώσεως καὶ δύναμιώς καὶ χαρακτήρος άλθίσεως), τέλειος τελείου γεννήτωρ, πατήρ υοῦ μονογενοῦς. | 4,3 (83,70-76 Tetz): ... ὃτι μὴ λέγουσι τὸν τοῦ θεοῦ Λόγον ζώντα Λόγον εἶναι καὶ ἐνεργὴ ... δι’ οὗ τὰ πάντα ἐγένετο, ἀλλὰ ὡς ἀνθρώπων λόγον προφορικὸν μόνον, καὶ ὃτι μὴ φρονοῦσι τὸν υὸν τοῦ Θεοῦ αὐτὸν εἶναι τὸν Λόγον, ... ὃτι μὴ δε Θεοῦ ἀληθινὸν αὐτὸν εἶναι πιστεύουσιν. | [we anathemize those] that do not say that the Word of God is living Word and active, ... by whom all things are created, but [understand him] only as an uttered human word, and that do not think that the Son of God himself is the Word, ... that do not believe that this is true God. |
| Εἰς κύριος, μόνος ἐκ μόνου, θεὸς ἐκ θεοῦ, χαρακτήρ καὶ εἰκὼν τῆς θεότητος, λόγος ἐνεργός, σοφία τῆς τῶν ὁλῶν συστάσεως περιεκτική καὶ δύναμις τῆς ὁλης κτίσεως ποιητικῆ, υὸς ἀληθινὸς ἀληθινοῦ πατρός, ἀφράτου, ἀποτέλεσμα, (καὶ) ἀρθράτους ἀρθράτου, (καὶ) ἀλάνατος ἀθανάτου, (καὶ) ἅθιδος | 2,2 (79,22): τὸν Λόγον εἶναι υόν, σοφίαν, δύναμιν τοῦ πατρός. | [we think] that the Word is Son, wisdom, power of the Father. |
| 2,4 (79,29-32): ἡμεῖς γάρ ὡμολογοῦμεν πατέρα ἅθιδον | We indeed confess the eternal Father of the eternal Son who is and subsists, and the eternal |

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224 That appears clear also from another of Simonetti’s views, namely that there is no complete incompatibility between the Monarchian passage from the Dialogue and the divisive expressions of the *Confessio* (cf. *Una nuova ipotesi*, 297).

225 That can be noted in the progression of their arguments: I) Basil invokes Athanasius’ letter that informed him about the Marcellians’ alignment with the *Tomus ad Antiochenum* (Ep. 204); II) ‘Do not reject the *hypostaseis* ... Do not misinterpret the words of Gregory’ (Ep. 207); III) exposition of the three hypostases theology as a solution to the errors made by the Arians and Sabellians (Ep. 210).

226 Tetz did not mention in his *apparatus* Athan. *Contra Gentes* 40: ἀλλὰ τὸν τοῦ ἀγαθοῦ καὶ Θεοῦ τῶν ὁλῶν ζώντα καὶ ἐνεργὴ Θεοῦ αὐτολόγον λέγω ...
The late Marcellians had no trouble in recognising the Son as subsisting, but did not mention different *hypostases*\(^\text{228}\). This latter was the reason for Atarbius’ quotation from Gregory’s *Dialogue*. It is not clear then what Basil could find so useful in the first two articles of Gregory’s *Confessio* to be quoted against Atarbius. They do not contradict the Marcellian ideas attested by Eugenius’ *Expositio* and, therefore, they were ‘not to Basil’s purpose’ of convincing Atarbius over the three hypostases. In conclusion, the argument of Basil’s silence within the authentic context of his debate with Atarbius is not sufficient evidence for denying the existence of the *Confessio* also in its first part.

Does that imply that Gregory of Nyssa also rehashed the first two articles of the *Confessio* to bring the Marcellians of Neocaesarea back to orthodoxy? How does this play a role in our evaluation of the similarities between Basil’s *Ep. 105* and the first article of the *Confessio*?\(^\text{229}\) In my opinion the supposition that Gregory of Nyssa also manipulated the first two articles of the *Confessio* has a certain plausibility, especially if we take into account the importance of his intervention in the second half of it. But that he did so to be conciliatory with the Marcellians cannot be proven\(^\text{230}\). We can speak of

\[\text{Holy Spirit who is and subsists. We do not say that the Triad is without subsistence, but we recognize it in subsistence.}\]

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\[\text{227Cf. also Eug., Exp. Fidei, 3,4 (81,48-49 Tetz): } \τριάς \text{ Perfect begetter of perfect, Father begetter of the living Word and the firstborn of all c…}\]

\[\text{228In the declaration of faith the Marcellians were asked for by the eleven Egyptian bishops exiled to Diocaesarea in Palestine, we find the confession of the Nicene Creed and the anathema of those who do confess ‘that the Son of God … is of another substance or essence’ (Epiphanius, Panarion, 72,12,4; transl. Williams, II, 442).}\]

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<table>
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<tr>
<th>Αἶδιος.</th>
<th>υἱὸς άιδιοῦ ἄντος καὶ υφεστῶτος καὶ πνεῦμα ἁγιον αἰδιως ὃν καὶ υφεστῶς. οὐ γὰρ ἀνυπόστατον τὴν τριάδα λέγομεν, ἄλλον ἐνύποστάσει αὐτῶν γινώσκομεν.(^\text{227}).</th>
<th>Holy Spirit who is and subsists. We do not say that the Triad is without subsistence, but we recognize it in subsistence.</th>
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\[\text{230To appreciate at the same time the Origenism of the first two articles of the *Confessio* and the great contrast between the original theological position of Marcellus and his last followers, one may profit by reading Epiphanius, Panarion, 72,6-7, where Asterius and Acacius of Caesarea are quoted. Asterius had written that the Logos was ‘the exact image of his essence’ (72,6,3), ‘for the Father is another, who has begotten of himself the only-begotten Word and the firstborn of all creation—Unique begetter Unique, Perfect begetter Perfect, King begetter King, Lord begetter Lord, God begetter God, the exact image of his essence, will, power and glory’ (72,6,1: ἀλλὸς μὲν γὰρ ἐστιν ὁ πατὴρ ὁ γεννήσας ἐξ ἑαυτοῦ τὸν μονογενὴ λόγου καὶ πρωτότοκον πάσης κτίσεως, μόνος μόνον, τέλειος τέλειον, βασιλεύς}|

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conciliation only with regard to the fact that the three hypostases are absent. One thus should understand why the *Confessio* is so close to Basil’s private confession in the *Ep. 105*, where he had not yet openly expressed the three hypostases. Nonetheless, this does not rule out the possibility that Basil may have learned these expressions from Macrina the Elder. In effect, Caspari’s demonstration that the two first articles are in full agreement with Origen and can easily be ascribed to Gregory Thaumaturgus still stands out. Caspari did not find significant parallels with Origen’s works only with regard to *σοφία* τῆς τῶν ὅλων συστάσεως περιεκτική καὶ δύναμις τῆς ὕλης κτίσεως ποιητική καὶ ἀπορρητος ἀφόρτου, (καὶ) ἀφθαρτος ἀφθάρτου, (καὶ) ἀδόνατος ἀθενάτου, (καὶ) ἀίδιος ἀίδιου (18.6-7, 10-12 Heil). But Froidevaux has already highlighted the connections of these latter lines with the terminology of Paul’s letters and with that of the *Letter* sent by six Palestinian bishops, Teotecnus of Caesarea included, to Paul of Samosata before his condemnation. Also G. Bardy has noted ‘grandes analogies’ between the *Confessio* and this *Letter*. In fact the terminology and the doctrines present in the *Letter* confer credibility to the ascription of the first two articles of the *Confessio* to Gregory Thaumaturgus, who had indeed taken part in the

βασιλεῖα, κύριος κύριον, θεός θεόν, ούσιας τα καὶ θουλής καὶ δυνάμεως καὶ δύσες ἀπαράλλακτον εἰκόνα; transl. Williams, II, 437). Marcellus objected: ‘if he is an image he is not Lord or God, but an article of the Lord and God,’ ‘if he is the image of an essence, he cannot be self-existence (οὐκ οὖν εἰ ούσια εἰσὶ εἰκῶν, οὐκέτι οὕτωσι δύναται εἰναι). If he is the image of a will, he cannot be absolute will. If he is the image of power, he cannot be power; if of glory, he cannot be glory’ (72.6-4-5). In Acacius’ eyes, Marcellus has denied that ‘the God from God, the Word, is the Son and is Unique from Unique, Perfect from Perfect’ (72.7,1: νῦν δὲ ἀρχηγόμενος τοῦ θεοῦ ἐκ θεοῦ λόγων ὑπατος τὸν ὑόν καὶ μονόν ἐκ μόνου καὶ τέλειον ἐκ τελείου) and has understood ‘the image of the Great King’ as without ‘life, Godhead, will, power, glory and essence’ (72.7.2). Acacius replied by explaining that the ‘exactness’ of the image implies that ‘the divinity, and every action of the image is expressly and precisely like the divinity, and every action, of the Father’ (72.7,4), and, after having reinforced Asterius’ teachings with further explanations (72.7.5-8), by stating that ‘The divine Word is therefore an image, a living wisdom, subsistent an active Word and Son, himself invested with being’ (εἰκὼν ἄρα ἔστιν ὁ λόγος θεος, ἑσσα σοφία, ἀποστατική, λόγος ἐνεργής καὶ υός, ἀυτή οὕτωσι εἰναι; for the translations I have amply followed that of Williams, vol. II, 437-38).

231 A comparison between the *Confessio* and Gregory of Nyssa’s *Ep. 5* makes this evident.

232 From this perspective, when Basil explained his Neo-Nicene views to the Old Nicenes of Neocaesarea as a sort of coherent updating of the teachings of Gregory Thaumaturgus, which he had kept since he was very young, in agreement with the teachings of other ecclesiastical authorities, he appears credible.


234 Froidevaux, *Le Symbole de Saint Grégoire*, 210-211. The French scholar (212-214) has also pointed out the absence of any reference to the incarnation in the *Confessio* as an “Alexandrian” feature.


236 The Greek text of the *Letter* is edited by E. Schwart, *Eine fingierte Korrespondenz mit Paulus dem Samosaten*. SBAW.PPH 3 (1927), 42-46. The most significant passages are as follows: §2: ὁ θεός ἀγέννητος, εἰς ... ἀφράτου, ἀναλλοίωτος ... τούτον δὲ τὸν ὑόν γεννητόν, μονογενὴς ὑόν, εἰκόνα τοῦ ἀφράτου θεοῦ τυχάνοντα ...[Col 1:15] σοφία καὶ λόγων καὶ δύναμεως θεοῦ, πρὸ ἀπαφών ὑπατος οὐ περιγράφει άλλα οὕσει καὶ ἀποστάτα τοῦ θεοῦ, ἐκ τοῦ ὑόν τοῦ θεοῦ, §3: θεὸν τὸν ὑόν τοῦ θεοῦ; §4: ὡς ὁ θεός ἀγέννητος καὶ ἐνεργητός - ὡς λόγος ἄρα καὶ θεὸς ὑπατος τα πάντα πεποίηκεν, οὕτως ἐπὶ ἀγέννητος ὑόν, γεννητός καὶ ἐνεργητός καὶ ἐνεργητός τα πάντα ἐπὶ πάσην ... §5: ὁ δὲ
debates preceding the condemnation of Paul of Samosata. It follows that to postulate that Gregory of Nyssa also manipulated the teachings of the Thaumaturgus about the Father and the Son appears difficult to demonstrate.

V. Conclusions

Our survey on the creeds ascribed to Gregory Thaumaturgus in the Cappadocian context confirms the “middle-road” hypothesis pointed out more recently by Fedwick, Hübner and Simonetti. In sum, we assume the following conclusions:

- Gregory of Nyssa’s saying that the church of Neocaesarea kept the Confessio as the creed written by Gregory Thaumaturgus and still used it in the late fourth century is false;
- there is no serious objection to assuming that the contents of the first two articles of the Confessio stem from Gregory Thaumaturgus;
- some expressions of the third article appear original, others have been added by Gregory of Nyssa;
- the fourth article was written by Gregory of Nyssa, probably in its entirety\(^\text{237}\);
- the quotation from the Ad Gelianum is in itself not sufficient to make us think that Gregory Thaumaturgus developed a theological position in explicit contrast to Origen’s, for Basil’s pronouncement that it was taken out of the context of a dispute appears credible.

Was Gregory of Nyssa’s source written or oral? Once it is admitted that what Gregory of Neocaesarea could have said about his faith corresponds to little more than half of the Confessio, there are no strong objections to either of the two options. If so, indeed, Gregory’s teachings could have been preserved without the necessity of being manipulated either by Atarbius or by Gregory of Nyssa. Furthermore, Atarbius’ attempt to push the Thaumaturgus’ teachings in a Sabellian direction made it useless to appeal to a confession of faith such as the one we believe we have outlined in these pages.

From all this there follows also another fundamental fact. Basil, one of the rare ancient authors who knew some (or just one?) of Gregory Thaumaturgus’ writings, did not appeal to oral teachings or texts of the venerated bishop of Neocaesarea that stated the theology of the three hypostases.

\(^{237}\) We cannot exclude that Gregory Thaumaturgus’ original creed contained a reference to the Trinity.
CONCLUSIONS TO PART II

Even if the limited number of works handed down under Gregory’s name that we have investigated here can only render a partial image of his intellectual profile, the *Pan. Or.*, the *Metaphrasis*, and the *Ad Theopompum* share one key common trait, namely that they were addressed mostly to pagans. One implication originating from this fact is that these writings are characterised mainly by apologetic, propagandistic and protreptic elements. Another interwoven implication is that their theological contents are incomplete and this hardly encourages linear scholarly classifications. Let us summarise our views with regard to these two general features of Gregory’s literary output.

From a theological perspective, there are no sufficiently motivating factors to persuade us to adjust the traditional profile of Gregory and have him listed outside the Alexandrian tradition or as an opponent of Origen. In particular, it is highly questionable that the absence in the *Ad Theopompum* of precise theological statements openly confirming those we find in the *Pan. Or.* can be taken to add force to the Monarchian significance of the preserved fragment of the *Ad Gelianum*. The *Ad Theopompum* is not explicitly or rigidly Monarchian, as has been argued, certainly not to the extent of convincing us to disregard Basil’s explanation that the formula drawn from the *Ad Gelianum* was extracted from a dispute with a pagan and had no dogmatic value. After all, Gregory’s dedication to facing the issues posed when dealing with outsiders had led him to sacrifice completely (*Metaphrasis*) or partially (*Pan. Or.* and *Ad Theop.* ) the exposition of his own Christian belief for apologetic and protreptic motives. In other words, we find extremely problematic the method of considering the fragment of the *Ad Gelianum* as one of the main starting-points for scrutinizing the rest of Gregory’s corpus.

On the basis of the results of the first part of this research we believe that the *Pan. Or.* remains a reliable document testifying to the theological position of Gregory of Neocaesarea despite the incomplete outline of it we can obtain from this text. That Gregory changed his stance after he went back home and became bishop cannot be ruled out, but there is no evidence to prove it. That Gregory rejected Origen’s theological teaching cannot be conclusively argued either on the basis of a sole fragment extracted from a dispute with a pagan that appeared more than one century after his death, or on the grounds that the *Ad Theopompum*—another dispute with a pagan—does not furnish a precise distinction between the Father and the Son, and does not speak of the Logos.

The wide and documented alteration of the text that Gregory of Nyssa presents as the creed of Gregory of Neocaesarea forces us to look very suspiciously at all its statements. Although the doubts surrounding the credibility of this document makes it almost completely useless for determining the ideas of Gregory of Neocaesarea, the first part of it preserves a certain number of characteristics that can mirror both Origen’s teachings and the synodal debates which prepared for the condemnation of Paul of
Samosata. The hypothesis that Gregory of Nyssa reformulated mostly the second part of the *Confessio* may appear too convenient an *escamotage* to those who, understandably, prefer to hold a more sceptical stance towards the Nyssen’s witness as a whole. Yet, we have seen that this hypothesis remains justifiable in the light of the historical and doctrinal problems implicated in the context where the *Confessio* appeared. Moreover, Gregory of Nyssa did not read the *Pan. Or.* and did not know of Gregory of Neocaesarea’s involvement in the Council of Antioch. Consequently, Gregory’s participation in the first (or second?) synod of that Council, where a significant number of bishops were followers of Origen, cannot have been accidental, nor is the fact that the first part of the *Confessio* bears resemblances to the *Letter of the six bishops* that preceded the condemnation of Paul of Samosata. In no case do we share the approach that takes the *Confessio*, either in part or entirely, as a point of departure to ascertain Gregory’s theological stance, but that the theological views expressed in its first part are genuine appears to have a certain historical reliability.

The most remarkable fact that we can draw from the late dispute between Basil and the church of Neocaesarea is that none of the works of the Thaumaturgus known to Basil—provided that he did not know only the *Ad Gelianum*—stated the doctrine of the three hypostases. As a consequence, Gregory of Neocaesarea cannot be considered the link which ensured its transmission to the Cappadocians, either by means of writings or of oral traditions preserved by Macrina the Elder.

The absence of clear Christian doctrines in the *Metaphrasis* is not surprising when one considers its literary genre, its protreptic aim and its addressees. These elements caused the massive use of allegorical interpretations and the search for Christ in the Old Testament to be useless. Without doubt, the *Metaphrasis* does not reflect the exegetical genius of Origen, but it seems arbitrary to appeal to these features in order to deduce some sort of opposition between master and pupil. As a matter of fact, the overall interpretation of Ecclesiastes given in the *Metaphrasis* as well as several conceptual and exegetical elements of detail comply with what we know of Origen’s and are signs of his influence on Gregory. Furthermore, the *Metaphrasis* should not be regarded any longer as a mere literary exercise that was intended to make more palatable the Greek of Ecclesiastes and more traditional its contents only by means of a rigid literal exegesis. It was, instead, a thorough exegetical work inspired by aims and methods, such as *prosopopoeia* and allegorism itself, which Gregory assimilated at Origen’s school.

In all three main works we have studied, Gregory makes apology of and propaganda for Christianity. In the *Pan. Or.* Gregory has expressed before an audience composed mostly of pagans the agreement of the Christian religion with the culture of the contemporary Roman world conveyed in the philosophical schools. Yet, the Christian religion is of superior order, because the Logos himself is its foundation, as well as the fact that Origen, the ‘friend and prophet’ of the Logos, is superior to all the contemporary philosophers. In the *Metaphrasis* Gregory exhorts everyone, especially pagans, to change their way of life. We draw this conclusion both from the absence of precise Christian doctrines and from the convergence between the contents of the work
and the Weltanschauung that Origen deemed necessary for anyone to escape evil, even when unwilling to become a Christian (CC VIII,52). In the Ad Theopompum Gregory makes use of rational argumentations in order to solve the philosophical hindrances that prevented a pagan admitting that the impassible God suffered and bore human passions. Gregory’s reply is structured in a way that the philosophical argumentation, grounded on examples taken from the physical world and classical history, is progressively enriched with biblical allusions and figures, and ends with the proclamation that Jesus, the ‘king of all’, has come to cure men of their passions. The Pan. Or. and the Metaphrasis share the protreptic tone typical of the exhortations to philosophical conversion. The Pan. Or. and the Ad Theopompum share the apologetic and propagandistic strategy of making use of allusions to images and ideas capable of stimulating, by association, the mind of both pagans and Christians; this aimed, in line with Origen’s perspective (Hier XX,5), to make acceptable the truth of the Christian doctrine.

Gregory does not appear to have been a brilliant thinker, but his works bear testimony to his knowledge of philosophy, of the classics, and even of Judaic traditions, and to his studies of the Scriptures. The commitment shown by Gregory in re-elaborating Ecclesiastes and in disputing against the principles of Epicurean philosophy (Ad Theopompum) even mirrors the significance that these two topics had in Origen’s teaching, since Dionysius of Alexandria also dealt with them. Eventually, even if we are not able to furnish a plausible dating of the Metaphrasis and the Ad Theopompum, we come to agree with the traditional judgement that interpreted Gregory’s works as composed mostly in connection with his work of evangelisation.

There are still several points of the Gregorian issue that remain uncertain and deserve additional studies, as well as several writings of his corpus which are in need of edition and further investigations. However, at present, it appears unnecessary to hypothesise either different authors or substantial changes of mind to explain the facets of the main works ascribed to Gregory. These actually appear to be ascribable to the same person that the tradition identifies as that well-bred pagan young man who travelled from Pontus to Palestine, was converted and taught by Origen, and then turned out to sacrifice his public career for an ecclesiastical one, becoming the bishop of Neocaesarea.
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