Dizertační práce

The Doctrine of God and Deification in Athanasius of Alexandria: Relations and Qualities

Doktrína Boha a zbožštění podle Atanáše Alexandrijského: vztahy a kvality

Viacheslav V. Lytvynenko

Prohlášení

Prohlášuji, že jsem tuto dizertační práci s názvem 'The Doctrine of God and Deification in Athanasius of Alexandria: Relations and Qualities' napsal samostatně a výhradně s použitím citovaných pramenů.

Souhlasím s tím, aby práce byla zveřejněna pro účely výzkumu a soukromého studia.

V Praze dne 30.04.2014   …………………………..

                                          Viacheslav V. Lytvynenko

Acknowledgement

I hereby confirm that I have written this doctoral thesis on my own and that I have not used any other sources than the ones referred to in this thesis.

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Prague, April 30, 2014   …………………………..

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Bibliographic Citation

Summary

This study seeks to interpret Athanasius' concept of deification in close connection with his doctrine of God. It asks where Athanasius placed the source of divinity (in the generic essence or the Father?), in which way he used the Nicene *homoousios* formula, and what he meant by arguing that the Son was equally divine with the Father. It asks further how Athanasius' understanding of God affected the way he described salvation as deification and related three major soteriological aspects to each other: relational, ontological, and juridical. To answer these questions, this thesis examines the way Athanasius responded to the pagan worldview (in his early treatise *Contra Gentes—De Incarnatione*) and the Arian thought (mainly in his *Orationes Contra Arianos* and several other later writings). It observes that Athanasius' understanding of God was in sharp contrast to Arius' theology, and that his interpretation of the *homoousios* formula makes most sense in the context of his anti-Arian arguments. It comes to the conclusion that Athanasius' understanding of the Father-Son relationship led him to consider incarnation and crucifixion within the relational framework. In this framework the qualities of godlikeness (whether ontological or juridical) are tied to the way God gives us himself and restores us to the original state of relationship with him.

Keywords

Bibliografická citace

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Anotace

V této práci se snažíme vyložit Atanášův koncept zbožštění v úzkém vztahu s jeho doktrínou Boha. Zabýváme se otázkou, v čem Atanáš viděl zdroj božství (v obecné podstatě nebo v Otci?), jakým způsobem použil nicejskou formulaci *soupodstatnosti* a co měl na mysli svou argumentací, že Syn byl stejné božské podstaty jako Otec. Dále zkoumáme, jak Atanášovo chápání Boha ovlivnilo jeho popis spasení jako zbožštění a jakým způsobem usouvztažnil tři hlavní soteriologické aspekty: vztahový, ontologický a právní. Odpověď na tyto otázky hledáme v přezkoumání Atanášovy reakce na pohanský světonázor (v jeho raném pojednání *Contra Gentes–De Incarnatione*) a na ariánské myšlení (především v jeho *Orationes Contra Arianos* a několika dalších pozdějších pracích). Sledujeme, jak bylo Atanášovo pojetí Boha v ostrém kontrastu s Ariovou teologií a že jeho interpretace *soupodstatnosti* je nejsrozumitelnější právě v kontextu jeho anti-ariánských argumentů. Docházíme k závěru, že Atanášovo chápání vztahu Otec-Syn ho přivedlo k uvažování o vtělení a ukřižování v rámci příbuznosti. Na tomto pozadí jsou božské vlastnosti (ať už ontologické nebo právní) svázány se způsobem, jakým se nám Bůh dává a navrací nás do původního stavu příbuznosti s ním.

Klíčová slova

Zbožštění, ariánský spor, *soupodstatnost*, Trojice, vtělení, vztahové, ontologické a právnické aspekty spasení, platonismus, Irenej, Origen, synovství, přijetí, láska, radost, Antonín Veliký.

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1. Authors and Works

Albinus (Alcinous), *Epit.*	Albinus, *Epitome doctrine platonicae (Didaskalikos)*
Alexander of Alexandria, *Urk.*	Alexander of Alexandria, *Urkunden* 4b, 14
Alexander of Aphrodisias, *Arist. Met.*	Alexander of Aphrodisias, *In Aristotelis Metaphysica commentaria*
Apophthegmata Patrum, *AP*	*Apophthegmata Patrum*
Aristotle, *Metaph.*	Aristotle, *Metaphysica*
Categ.	*Categoriae*
De Anima	*De Anima*
NE	*Ethica Nicomachea*
Arius, *Urk.*	Arius, *Urkunden* 1, 6, 30
Athanasius, *CG*	Athanasius, *Contra Gentes*
Ap. Const.	*Apologia ad Constantium*
Ap. de Fuga	*Apologia de fuga sua*
Ap. Sec.	*Apologia secunda*
CA	*Orationes contra Arianos*
De Decr.	*De decretis nicaenae Synodi*
De Inc.	*De Incarnatione verbi*
De Sen. Dion.	*De sententia Dionysii*
De Syn.	*Epistula de Synodis*
Ep. Afr.	*Epistula ad Afros episcopos*
Ep. Adelph.	*Epistula ad Adelphium*
Ep. Aeg. Lib.	*Epistula ad episcopos Aegypti et Libyae*
Ep. Enc.	*Epistula encyclica*
Ep. Epic.	*Epistula ad Epictetum*
Ep. fest.	*Epistulae festales*
Ep. Jov.	*Epistula ad Jovianum*
Ep. Mar.	*Epistula ad Marcellinum*
Ep. Max.	*Epistula ad Maximum*
Ep. Ser.	*Epistulae quattuor ad Serapionem*
Exp. Fid.	*Expositio Fidei*
HA	*Historia Arianorum*
Tom. Ant.	*Tomus ad Antiochenos*
VA	*Vita Antonii*
Augustine, *Conf.*	Augustine, *Confessiones*
Cicero, *De Nat. Deor.*	Cicero, *De natura Deorum*
Epicurus, *Ep. Men.*	Epicurus, *Epistula ad Menoeceum*
Epiphanius, *Anc.*	Epiphanius, *Ancoratus*
Euripides, *Andr.*	Euripides, *Andromache*
HF	*Heracles*
Hec.	*Hecuba*
Hipp.	*Hippolytus*
Med.	*Medea*
Or.	*Orestes*
Eusebius of Caesarea, *Con. Mar.*	Eusebius of Caesarea, *Contra Marcellum*

Gregory Nazianzen, *Or.*   Gregory Nazianzen, *Orationes*

Gregory of Nyssa, *Eun.*   Gregory of Nyssa, *Refutatio confessionis Eunomii*

Hippolytus, *Ref.*   Hippolytus, *Refutatio omnium haeresium*

Homer, *Il.*   Homer, *Ilias*

   Od.   *Odyssea*

   Hymn. Hom.   *Hymni Homerici*

   Hymn. Hom. Aph.   *Hymnus Homericus ad Venerem*

   Hymn. Hom. Dem.   *Hymnus Homericus ad Demeter*

Hesiod, *Erga*   Hesiod, *Erga*

Hermias,   Hermias, *In Platonis Phaedrum Scholia*

Herodotus, *Hist.*   Herodotus, *Historia*

Ignatius of Antioch, *Eph.*   Ignatius of Antioch, *Ad Ephesios*

   Phil.   *Ad Philadelphenos*

   Tral.   *Ad Trallianos*

Irenaeus of Lyon, *Adu. Haer.*   Irenaeus of Lyon, *Aduersus haereses*

   Dem. Praed.   *demonstratio praedicationis apostolicae*

John of Damascus, *Cap. Ph.*   *Dialectica sive capita philosophica*

Justinian (emperor), *Ep. Mem.*   *Epistula ad Memnam*

Origen, *Com. Cant.*   Origen, *Commentarii in Cantica Canticorum Salomonis*

   Com. Mt.   *Commentarii in Matthaeum*

   Com. Mt. Ser.   *Commentarii Series in Evangelium Matthaei*

   Com. Ioh.   *Commentarii in Ioannem*

   Com. Rom.   *Commentarii in epistulam ad Romanos*

   Cont. Cels.   *Contra Celsum*

   De Princ.   *De principiis*

   Exh. Ad Mart.   *Exhortatio ad martyrium*

   Fragm. in Mt.   *Fragmenta in Matthaeum*

   Fragm. in Is.   *Fragmentum in Isaiae*

   Hom. Ez.   *Homiliae in Ezechielem*

   Hom. Ex.   *Homiliae in Exodum*

   Hom. Gen.   *Homiliae in Genesim*

   Hom. Lev.   *Homiliae in Leviticum*

   Orat.   *De Oratione*

Philo, *Abr.*   Philo, *De Abrahamo*

   Aet.   *De aeternitate mundi*

   Cher.   *De Cherubim*

   Det.   *Quod deterius potiori insidiari soleat*

   Ebr.   *De ebrietate*

   Fug.   *De fuga et inventione*

   Leg. All   *Legum allegoriae*

   Migr.   *De migratione Abrahami*

   Mos.   *De vita Mosis*

   Mut.   *De mutatione nominum*

   Opif.   *De opificio mundi*

   Plant.   *De plantatione*

   Post.   *De posteritate Caini*

   Praem.   *De praemiis et poenis*

   Prob.   *Quod omnis probus liber sit*

   Spec. Leg.   *De specialibus legibus*

Quod Deus	*Quod Deus sit immutabilis*
QE	*Quaestiones in Exodum*
Quis Her.	*Quis rerum divinarum heres sit*
Sacr.	*De sacrificiis Abelis et Caini*
Somn.	*De somniis*
Spec. Leg.	*De specialibus legibus*
Virt.	*De virtutibus*
Philostratus, *Vit. Apoll.*	Philostratus, *Vita Apollonii*
Pindar, *Ol.*	Pindar, *Olympian odes*
Pyth.	*Pythian odes*
Threnos.	*Threnorum fragmenta*
Plato, *Ep.*	Plato, *Epistula*
Epin.	*Epinomis*
Gorg.	*Gorgias*
Leg.	*Leges*
Parm.	*Parmenides*
Phaed.	*Phaedo*
Phaedr.	*Phaedrus*
Res.	*Respublica*
Soph.	*Sophistes*
Symp.	*Symposium*
Theaet.	*Theaetetus*
Tim.	*Timaeus*
Plotinus, *Enn.*	Plotinus, *Enneades*
Porphyry, *Exp. Cat.*	Porphyry, *In Aristotelis categorias exposition per interrogationem et responsionem commentarium*
De Antr. Nymph.	*De antro nympharum*
Reformed Creeds, *Con. Aug.*	Reformed Creeds, *Confessio Augustana*
Con. Bel.	*Confessio Belgica*
Rufinus of Aquileia, *HE*	Rufinus of Aquileia, *Historia ecclesiastica*
Socrates Scholasticus, *HE*	Socrates Scholasticus, *Historia ecclesiastica*
Sophocles, *OC*	Sophocles, *Oedipus colonus*
Sozomen, *HE*	Sozomen, *Historia ecclesiastica*
Theodoret of Cyrus, *HE*	Theodoret of Cyrus, *HE*

2. Journals, Reference Works, and Series

AJ	*Areopagus Journal*
AM	Arethusa Monography
AMA	*Antichny Mir i Arkheologiya* [*Ancient World and Archaeology*]
AnCr	Antigüedad y cristianismo: monografias Históricas sobre la antigüedad tardia
ANF	The Ante-Nicene Fathers
Anton	*Antonianum*
AS	*Ancient Society*
ASC	Analecta Sacra et Classica
ASP	American Studies in Papyrology
Aug	*Augustinianum*
BARB	*Bulletin de l'Académie Royale de Belgique*

BKhM	Biblioteka Khristianskoy Mysli [Library of Christian Thought]
BSGRT	Bibliotheca scriptorum Graecorum et Romanorum Teubneriana
BogTr	*Bogoslovskiye Trudy* [*Theological Works*]
CChR	*Coptic Church Review*
CHL	Commentationes Humanarum Litterarum
ChHRC	*Church History and Religious Culture*
ChIsl	Christianity and Islam
ChTh	Church and Theology
CS	Cistercian Studies
CSCO	Corpus Scriptorum Christianorum Orientalium (Rome)
CPG	*Clavis Patrum Graecorum* (Brepols-Turnhout, 1974-87)
CWS	The Classics of Western Spirituality
DK, *fr.*	*Die Fragmente der Vorsokratiker*, ed. by Diels and Kranz (Berlin, 1959-61)
DS	M. Viller *et al.* (eds.), *Dictionnaire de Spiritualit*é (Paris, 1932–95)
DurTh	Durham theses
ECFS	Early Church Fathers Series
ECR	*Eastern Churches Review*
FCh	The Fathers of the Church
FC	Fontes Christiani
GCS	Die Griechischen Christlichen Schriftsteller der ersten drei Jahrhunderte (Berlin, 1897)
GNO	Gregorii Nysseni Opera (Leiden, 1952—)
Gr.	*Gregorianum*
HThR	*Harvard Theological Review*
ICCHSONT	The International Critical Commentary on the Holy Scriptures on the Old and New Testaments
Irén	*Irénikon*
JECS	*Journal of Early Christian Studies*
JEH	*Journal of Ecclesiastical History*
JES	*Journal of Ecumenical Studies*
JETS	*Journal of Evangelical Theological Society*
JFSSocCh	*Journal for Faith, Spirituality and Social Change*
JHPh	*Journal of the History of Philosophy*
JHS	*The Journal of Hellenic Studies*
JRS	*The Journal of Roman Studies*
JThS	*Journal of Theological Studies*
LCL	*Leob Classical Library* (Harvard University Press, 1935—)
Lampe	G. W. H. Lampe, *A Patristic Greek Lexicon* (Oxford, 2004)
LeSh	Lewis and Short, *A Latin Dictionary* (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1891; 1969).

LL	*Lettre de Ligugé*
LM	*Le Muséon*
LSJ	Liddell, Scott, Jones, *A Greek-English Lexicon* (Oxford, 1843; 9th edn. 1940, suppl. 1996).
LXX	Septuagint, ed. by A. Rahlfs. 2 vols. (Stuttgart, 1935—)
MBTh	Münsterische Beiträge zur Theologie
ML	*Museum Lessianum*
NAKG	*Nederlands Archief voor Kerkgeschiedenis*
NedThT	*Nederlands theologisch tijdschrift*
NIV	New International Version (London, 1984).
NPB	Nova Patrum Bibliotheca
NPNF	Nicene Post-Nicene Fathers
NZSThR	*Neue Zeitschrift für systematische Theologie und Religionsphilosophe*
OCA	Orientalia christiana analecta (Rome)
OCM	Oxford Classical Monographs
OChTS	Oustanding Christian Thinkers Series
OECS	Oxford Early Christian Studies.
Orig.	*Origeniana, Quaderni di Vetera Christianorum*
OSt	*Ostkirchliche Studien*
OTM	Oxford Theological Monographs
PB	Philosophische Bibliothek (Hamburg, 1989, 91)
PC	*Penguin Classics*
PG	*Patrologia, series graeca et latina,* ed. J. P. Migne (Paris, 1847-66)
PhTh	*Philosophy & Theology*
PhPat	Philosophia Patrum
PhJud	Philosophia Judaica
PL	*Patrologia, series latina*, ed. J. P. Migne (Paris, 1841-64)
PMAIP	Pravoslavnoye Monashestvo i Asketism v Issledovaniyah i Pamatnikakh [Orthodox Monasticism and Asceticism in Documents and Research]
PMS	Patristic Monographs Series
PorPhPOS	Porphyrii Philosophi Platonici Opuscula Selecta
PPS	Popular Patristics Series
PRE	*Real-Encyklopädie für protestantische Theologie und Kirche* (Leipzig, 1896-1913; 3rd edn.)
PTMS	Princeton Theological Monograph Series
PTS	Patristische Texte und Studien
RAC	*Reallexikon für Antike und Christentum*
RECM	Routledge Early Church Monographs
RhM	*Rheinisches Museum*
RevScRel	*Revue des sciences religieuses*

RevThL	*Revue théologique de Louvain*
RSLR	*Rivista di storia e letteratura religiosa*
RSR	*Recherches de science réligieuse*
RTBS	Religion, Theology and Biblical Studies
SEAug	*Studia Ephemeridis Augustinianum*
SAC	Studies in Antiquity & Christianity
SC	*Sources chrétiennes*, ed. Lubac and Daniélou (Paris, 1941—)
SCBO	Scriptorum Classicorum Bibliotheca Oxoniensis
SCL	Sather Classical Lectures
SecCent	*The Second Century: A Journal of Early Christian Studies*
SHCT	Studies in the History of Christian Thought
SJT	*Scottish Journal of Theology*
SJTh	*Southwestern Journal of Theology*
SNAM	Studies in Neoplatonism Ancient and Modern
SOK	Studien zur Orientalischen Kirchengeschichte
StAlNT	Studien zum Alten und Neuen Testament
StAn	Studia Anselmiana
StPatr	*Studia Patristica*
StPh	Studia Philosophica
StVThQ	*St. Vladimir's Theological Quarterly*
SubHag	Subsidia Hagiographica
TDNT	*Theological Dictionary of the New Testament*
Théol.	Théologie
Theolog.	*Theologia*
ThPh	*Theologie und Philosophie*
ThRund	*Theologische Rundschau*
ThHis	Theologie Historique
ThSt	*Theological Studies*
ThStKr	*Theologische Studien und Kritiken*
ThZ	*Theologische Zeitschrift*
TSECLL	Texts and Studies of Early Christian Life and Language
VCh	*Vetera Christianorum*
VigChr	*Vigiliae Christianae* (Amsterdam, 1947—)
VizVr	*Vizantiyskiy Vremennik* [*Byzantine Chronicler*]
WTJ	*Westminster Theological Journal*
WUNT	Wissenschaftliche Untersuchungen zum Neuen Testament
ZKTh	*Zeitschrift für katholische Theologie*
ZNWK	*Zeitschrift für die neutestamentliche Wissenschaft und die Kunde der älteren Kirche*

3. Others

ca.	circa
ch.	chapter
Arm. V.	Old Armenian Version
Cop. V.	Coptic Version
Diss.	unpublished Dissertation
ed.	edited work
edn.	edition
enlar.	enlarged
esp.	especially
frag.	fragment
intr.	introduction
n.	footnote
n. s.	new series
Old-Slav. V.	Old-Slavonic Version
op. cit.	opus citatum
pass.	passage
pref.	preface
praef.	praefatio
repr.	reprinted edition
rev. edn.	revised edition
sect.	section
suppl.	supplemented
Syr. V.	Syriac Version
Lat. V.	Latin Version
trans.	translated work
viz.	videlicet
vol.	volume

NOTE ON THE USE OF THE SOURCES

In this study all my quotes from the primary literature are translated into English and given in the original in the footnotes. My Greek and Latin texts come from the latest critical editions. In the case of the ancient sources I used the English series LCL most frequently. For Origen and Irenaeus I relied primarily on the French edition of SC, and for Arius and Athanasius, the German *Urkunden.* In rare cases, when no critical edition of the primary patristic source was yet available, I used PG. For the *Vita Antonii* I consulted with the Latin, Coptic, Syriac, and old-Slavonic versions, but for my purposes I cited primarily the Greek text from SC. For the *Epistulae quattuor ad Serapionem* I consulted the Armenian version, but—with only one exception—cited the Greek. When giving the original citation, I have indicated the abbreviated Latin title (mostly according to *CPG* and *CPL*) next to it with the paragraph numbers in brackets. I also added the translator's name or series of the translation I used in parentheses. Whenever I felt it appropriate to modify the translation, I indicated that as well, and if the translation is not mentioned, I bear the responsibility for the translation myself. I have also used brackets and parentheses to enclose important information within the quotes, such as references to the biblical texts (I give the biblical citations in italics) or explanatory terms and phrases in the original language. The secondary literature in the footnotes is shortened (or sometimes abbreviated as with LeSh or LSJ), and then listed in the full form in the bibliography. In the footnotes I have given the author's last name, the title of his or her work (shortened in those cases where it is too long), and the page number from which I cite. I give the authors' full name when referring to them for the first time in my study, and afterwards I use only their last names if referred more than once.

CHAPTER ONE: Introduction

One of Athanasius' well-known assertions aimed at rebutting the Arian doctrine is his argument that the Son can *deify* precisely because he is *God*. As short as this expression is, it contains a profound theology that has proved to be both stimulating and confusing. The Council of Nicaea in 325 affirmed nothing about deification, and there is no direct textual evidence that Arius himself was concerned about salvation, let alone of deification. Nevertheless, deification is clearly one of Athanasius' chief weapons against his opponents and he is only one among many who adopted this concept. Statistically, Athanasius uses various terms of deification more than any previous writer, but what is even more unique is that he deliberately and persistently connects deification with the one who deifies. A close relation between the doctrine of God and soteriology is also reflected in the Nicene Creed, for while the heart of its statement is its anti-Arian affirmation that the Son is *homoousios* with the Father, it also speaks of the fact that Christ *came down* for our *salvation*. To express the significance of this double argument Athanasius used the terminology of deification insisting that God became man to make men divine. In contrast, Arius never spoke of deification. And while in the past this fact was convincing enough to make scholars avoid soteriological discussions, nowadays there has been a growing recognition that Arius' doctrine of God does imply some sort of soteriology. To translate this point into specific questions, it could be asked why Athanasius constantly speaks of God as Father tying the gifts of deification with the trinitarian persons, while Arius makes every effort to avoid calling God 'Father' or relate him personally to the work of salvation. Furthermore, what significance does it have that the Nicene Creed speaks of the *Son* being equally divine with the *Father* rather than defining the divinity of both of them generically with such qualities as immortality, perfection, eternal life, etc. Finally, does it make any difference for one's account of the economy and nature of salvation if God is described primarily in terms of relations (where the Father implies the coessential Son), or in terms qualities (where the Father is described in such a way that his essence appears to exclude a coessential Son).

   With regard to the latter question modern scholars have noticed that one's emphasis on either of the two—qualities or relations—significantly shapes the way one explains salvation as deification. Thus, one's depiction of God in terms of

qualities contributes to what is traditionally known as the 'physical' view of deification. Since Harnack's *Lehrbuch der Dogmengeschichte* (published in the late nineteenth century), this view has dominated the scholars' description of Athanasius' soteriology. According to this view, Athanasius taught that deification is a matter of 'physical' transformation in which one's nature, being susceptible to death and corruption, becomes immortal and incorruptible. By acquiring the qualities of God, one's being (understood as either the soul, *nous*, or the human nature as a whole) becomes transfigured and divine. The decisive emphasis in this approach is on the 'what' of deification—the gifts of immortality, incorruptibility, and eternal life—while incarnation (rather than crucifixion) is thought to be tied (in one way or another) to how such qualities are made available. It suggests that Athanasius' concern (especially in his early treatise *Contra Gentes—De Incarnatione* and later work *Orationes Contra Arianos*) was primarily ontological rather than ethical or juridical. Scholars who support this view tend to interpret the *homoousios* formula in terms of how both the Father and Son are equally divine with respect to their common essence (as opposed to how the Son is divine with respect to the Father) sharing the same set of divine qualities that make them God. Hence, they explain deification as one's becoming by grace what God is in his qualities by nature. A different way of interpreting Athanasius' soteriology has been to approach it from the juridical standpoint. What is critical here is whether Athanasius affirmed Christ's bearing of human sin by way of substitution in order to set humanity free from the penal demands of the law. Addressing Athanasius' soteriology in terms of atonement (often along the lines of the Roman Catholic-Protestant disputes) this view seeks to show the way the guilt of original sin is removed according to Athanasius (either by meritorious works or by the free gift of God's grace). Scholars who support this approach often tend to treat deification in secondary terms, emphasizing the legal qualities of what it means to be like God (such as righteousness and justification) and speaking of the change in one's status rather than in one's being. On this reading, Athanasius' soteriology is often seen as a transactional event in which the legal qualities become ours in the external way. Seen in this light, it is not always clear in which way *homoousios* formula was important for Athanasius' anti-Arian arguments and why God has to be the Father and Son instead of just being one divine essence. It is also not sufficiently clear why Christ had to come personally into this world (in the way Athanasius insisted) if the

primary thing humanity needed was the right status before God. In contrast, the third view on Athanasius' soteriology interprets the Nicene *homoousios* in direct relation to what it means to be saved and deified. It considers Athanasius as an advocate of the relational understanding of God in which the locus of divinity is identified with the Father as opposed to the generic essence, or divine qualities therein. Scholars who support this view contend that while the notion of God as monad (with no essential relations with the other trinitarian persons) was enough for Arius, it was hardly enough for Athanasius who sought to ground salvation in the fact that the Son was *homoousios* with the Father. According to this understanding, Athanasius' use of *homoousios* exhibits a soteriology closely tied with the Father-Son language. More specifically, it means that the Son's oneness with the Father points to salvation as being the work of God and to deification as our being joined to the trinitarian relationship. In this view, the 'physical' and juridical aspects of salvation are best understood in light of Athanasius' insistence on God giving us himself as a person. Accordingly, it argues that to be saved and deified is not only 'from something' (sin and mortality) but more importantly 'for Someone', and it ties the qualities of godlikeness (be it the 'physical' quality of incorruption or the legal quality of righteousness) to the God who provides them.

The differences in these approaches show that scholars' understanding of Athanasius' soteriology depends significantly on their respective interpretations of his doctrine of God. On the one hand, if Athanasius' concept of God is perceived in terms of how the Father and Son are divine with respect to the generic essence, then it is natural to treat deification as having to do with the specific qualities (whether of ontological or juridical nature) that make us godlike. On this reading, to say that the Son is *homoousios* with the Father is no different from saying that the Father is *homoousios* with the Son, or that both are *homoousioi* with each other. On the other hand, if Athanasius' concept of divinity is identified with the Father as its source, then it does matter that *homoousios* is interpreted from the Father to the Son rather than in any other way. In this approach, the economy and nature of deification depends directly on what, or rather who, makes deification possible. If the Son is *homoousios* with the Father, then it takes God to save humanity, and by being deified by the Son, we become his reflection as adopted sons of the Father. Therefore, any question about Athanasius' doctrine of deification must include a discussion about God as well. Accordingly, in this study, I will seek to clarify the

question of what Athanasius meant by the Son being *homoousios* with the Father, and therefore also the question of how he related the qualities and relations in his soteriology. I will do this by examining Athanasius' understanding of 'who' God is, 'what' he does to save the world, and 'how' the fruits of salvation are related to each other as he responded to the pagan worldview (in his early *Contra Gentes—De Incarnatione*) and the Arian thought (in his *Orationes Contra Arianos* and several other later writings). I hope to show that Athanasius' understanding of God was in sharp contrast to Arius' theology, and that it is in this context (and especially in light of the Father-Son correlativity argument) that Athanasius' interpretation of the *homoousios* formula makes most sense. In addition, I believe that a study of God and deification will help to show that Athanasius' soteriology is best understood in terms of the third approach above. From this perspective, incarnation (having to do with the 'physical' aspect of salvation) and crucifixion (having to do with the juridical aspect of salvation) are seen not as one being a mere prerequisite or consequence of the other, but as both being part of the relational framework in which the qualities of godlikeness are tied to the way God gives us himself. Having said this, I should add that just as with the other two views above, my own perspective grows out of the specific theological and philosophical standpoint. Therefore, I do not want to create an impression that my reading of Athanasius is the only right one. Instead, I simply hope to clarify the topic of God and deification from my own framework, and thus to lend support to those scholars who consider the Nicene *homoousios* and deification as closely related concepts that have a distinctly relational meaning.

To introduce a range of key issues that will form part of my discussion of God and deification in this study, I will begin my next chapter with a brief overview of the broader context: pre-Christian thought, biblical background, and Irenaeus and Origen. In doing this, I will seek to illustrate the way different emphases work in various contexts and clarify how one's beliefs about God affect the way one explains deification—whether it is an anthropomorphic immanent deity of the Greek poets, a more refined idea of the transcendent One of Plotinus, or a patristic contemplation of God as Trinity. In particular, I will consider how certain texts may create an argument leaning either toward an emphasis on the action of God (if the divine relations are used to point to his direct involvement) or toward a stress on the human action (if the qualities are used to keep God from the direct involvement).

The significance of this tension will further be examined in my third chapter devoted to Athanasius' double treatise *Contra Gentes—De Incarnatione Verbi*. My fourth chapter will address Arius' theology by exploring his extant texts and the earliest response to him from Alexander of Alexandria. I will attempt to reconstruct Arius' understanding of God and christology, look at several views on what could be the central concern of the controversy, and suggest that a comprehensive discussion of the Arian disputes should include a consideration of God and salvation. In the fifth chapter, I will relate these observations to Athanasius' later writings by examining in which way his relational concept of God and deification is a response to Arius' respective doctrines. I will contend that Athanasius' interpretation of the Nicene formula is best understood in terms of how the Son is equal to and *homoousios* with the one God, the Father, rather than in terms of how the Father and the Son (and the Holy Spirit) are one essence, or how one God can have three persons. I will then use these arguments to clarify why Athanasius thought it erroneous for Arius to describe God in the impersonal categories of the abstract essence, as well as why he drew from this understanding of God specific soteriological implications. In discussing Athanasius' soteriology, I will first explore all instances where he speaks of deification in the Christian context (which will be my most extended discussion of deification in this study), and then deal with the issue of how he relates deification to the ontological, juridical, and personal aspects of salvation, and all three of them to his understanding of God. I will supply these considerations with a brief look at the specific role the Holy Spirit plays in deification by analyzing Athanasius' pneumatological work *Epistulae quattuor ad Serapionem*. In my concluding chapter, I will examine Athanasius' biographical writing *Vita Antonii* where his teaching about God and deification finds its expression in practical Christian living and spirituality.

As I introduce this study, I will first review modern scholarship by examining three general approaches to Athanasius' soteriology: physical, juridical, and relational/personal. In the process, I will seek to show that each of these approaches tends to integrate a certain view of God that contributes to the way one explains salvation. After that I will offer some clarifications with regard to my use of the deification terminology and will continue with a discussion of the background in the next chapter.

1.1 Scholarly Views on Athanasius' Soteriology

1.1.1 Physical View of Deification

The idea of deification as a physical salvation (also known by its German term 'physische Erlösungslehre') was first expressed by Adolf von Harnack. Despite the criticism of such scholars as Karl Bornhäuser, Johannes Roldanus, and others, Harnack's view has remained the text-book judgement on Athanasius to the present.[1] Harnack is famous for his facile dismissals of deification which sometimes takes quite an emotional protest. Thus, he declares that this concept 'is basically nothing' (ist es im Grunde nichts),[2] and that it seeped into Christianity from the pagan sources and was adjusted with the help of Psalm 81:6 (LXX) and 2-Peter 1:4. Once that happened, the Hellenistic influence corrupted the distinctly Christian belief of the early Church. He laments: 'Indem aber die christliche Religion als der Glaube an die Menschwerdung Gottes und als die sichere Hoffnung auf die Gottwerdung des Menschen dargestellt wurde, wurde eine Speculation, die ursprünglich höchstens an der Grenze der religiösen Erkenntniss gelegen hatte, in den Mittelpunkt gerückt und der einfache Inhalt des Evangeliums verdeckt'.[3] When comparing the Greek religion and Christianity, Harnack relates deification (*theopoiesis*) directly with the idea of immortality (*athanasia*), and argues that for both pagans and Christians the quality of 'imperishableness' was the main aspect of deification.[4] More succinctly he states: 'Die Vergottung der sterblichen Menschen vermittelst der Erfüllung mit Unsterblichkeit (göttlichem Leben) ist der Heilsgedanke der antiken Mysterien. Hier ist er als christlicher aufgenommen'.[5] In a more expanded statement, he lists two major consequences of such adoption:

> Wie streng griechisch das gemeint ist, geht daraus hervor, daß 1. die Erlösung vom Tode ganz realistisch als pharmakologischer Prozeß vorgestellt wurde—die gottliche Natur muß einströmen und muß die sterbliche Natur umbilden—und daß 2. ewiges Leben und Vergottung identifiziert wurden. Handelt es sich aber um einen realen Eingriff in die Konstitution der menschlichen

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[1] e.g. Schmidt, *Kirchengeschichte*; Tixeront, *History of Dogmas*, 2.150; Kelly, *Early Christian Doctrines*, 377-80; Pelikan, *The Christian Tradition*, 1:153. For a concise history of how the topic of deification was developed in the German scholarship, see Georg Kretschmar, 'Die Rezeption der orthodoxen Vergöttlichungslehre', who considers deification under three headings: 'orthodoxe Vergöttlichungslehre', 'patristische Vergöttlichungslehre', and 'biblische Vergöttlichungslehre'.
[2] Harnack, *Lehrbuch der Dogmengeschichte*, 2:430.
[3] Ibid., 1:590.
[4] Ibid., 2:44.
[5] Ibid., 1:312.

Natur und um ihre Vergottung, so muß der Erlöser selbst Gott sein und Mensch werden. Nur unter dieser Bedingung ist die Tatsächlichkeit des wunderbaren Vorgangs vorstellbar.[6]

Lauding Athanasius for his concern for soteriology over cosmology, he complains, nevertheless, that trinitarian issues of the Nicene theology became too closely connected with the idea of deification, and thereby gave way to speculations in which 'nahezu alle Züge der Erinnerung an den geschichtlichen Jesus von Nazareth ausgetilgt sind'.[7] He writes: 'Die Dogmengeschichte des Orients seit dem Nicänum zeigt… [dass]… die Idee des Gottmenschen unter dem Gesichtspunkt der Erlösung des Menschengeschlechts zu göttlichem Leben—also der Glaube des Athanasius— nach allen Seiten ausgeführt [wurde]. Hierin erschöpfte sich die Dogmengeschichte im strengen Sinn des Worts'.[8] The influence of Harnack led another German scholar, Dietrich Ritschl, to suggest that '[d]ie Arbeiten Harnacks und seiner Kollegen geben der Athanasius-Forschung eine entscheidende Frage mit auf den Weg: ist es wahr, daß es sich in der Theologie des Athanasius in zentraler Weise um 'Erlösung' handelt?''[9] While the answers to this question varied, one can observe a general trend among the German scholars, who followed in the footsteps of Harnack, to view immortality as the main quality of what it means to be divine (either by nature with respect to Christ, or by grace when speaking of human beings) and thus understand salvation as a physical/naturalistic restoration of immortality lost as a result of fall.[10] The underlying assumption in this approach is that '[t]he identification of divinity with immortality in the ancient world is [thought to be] the key to understanding the development of Christian deification'.[11] For such scholars the Nicene concern may look less about how the person of the Son is equal to the person of God the Father, and more about how both of them conform to the common qualities (especially immortality) that make them God.

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[6] Ibid., *Das Wesen des Christentums*, 138.

[7] Ibid., *Lehrbuch der Dogmengeschichte*, 2:218.

[8] Ibid., *Lehrbuch der Dogmengeschichte*, 2:144; Cf. Bousset, *Kyrios Christos*, 70, whose landmark study appeared in 1913, where he shared with Harnack the belief that deification was of Hellenistic origin relating it to Irenaeus and then to Athanasius as his principle heir. Schwizer, *Die Mystik*, 111, held to much the same view arguing that deification implied the fusion of the divine and human natures which resulted in the latter becoming a 'supernatural being' (übernatürliche Wesen) and this sounded far too Hellenistic for him.

[9] Ritschl, *Athanasius*, 11.

[10] Schneemelcher, 'Athanasius von Alexandrien', 249.

[11] Collins, *Partaking in Divine Nature*, 13-4. Cf. Wilson, *Deification and the Rule of Faith*, 156: 'Athanasius connect[s] the concept of immortality… with the concept of deification [which] resemble[s] the Hellenistic philosophical traditions that relate humanity's deification to immortality and immortality to divinity'.

Hence deification of believers is most naturally understood as becoming by grace what God is in his qualities according to the divine essence. A good contemporary example of this view is Johannes Quasten who states that the main concern of the controversy was to defend 'the unity of divine essence between the Father and the Son' while considering deification in terms of obtaining immortality by grace.[12] After Harnack one can see some scholars (e.g. Hastings Rashdall[13] and John Lawson[14] writing in English, Jean Revière[15] and Alfred Loisy[16] writing in French) hardening the identification between divinity and immortality towards a very realistic/physical/naturalistic picture of salvation in Athanasius, while others (e.g. Joseph Tixeront[17] and Robert Sellers[18] writing in English, Dietrich Ritschl[19] in German, and Georgios Mantzaridis[20] in Greek) recognizing that deification has more to it than just *aphtharsia*. A good modern text-book example of the former is Alister McGrath for whom 'deification is a union with the substance of God'.[21] A modern example of the latter is a significant reconsideration of Harnack's school within the German scholarship by Martin George, who has questioned the traditional approach as representing a shortsighted '*Reduzierung*' of deification to the attainment of immortality only.[22]

In the recent times, the idea of physical salvation has continued to be a cliché for Athanasius' soteriology (although there is less distaste towards deification),[23] and one can distinguish three basic tenets associated with this approach. First, it is claimed that Athanasius' metaphysical realism fails to make an adequate distinction between the assumed humanity of Christ on the one hand, and

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[12] Quasten, *Patrology*, 3.25.

[13] Rashdall, *The Idea of Atonement in Christian Theology*, 288.

[14] Lawson, *The Biblical Theology*, 154.

[15] Revière, *Le dogme de la Rédemption*, 86.

[16] Loisy, *Le Mystères Païens*, 348.

[17] Tixeront, *History of Dogmas*, 2:149.

[18] Sellers, *The Council of Chalcedon*.

[19] Ritschl, *Athanasius*, 10-9; 36-59.

[20] Mantzaridis, *The Deification of Man*, 31-2.

[21] McGrath, *Christian Theology*, 339. Another text-book example is Houlden, *Jesus*, 55, who bluntly states that 'salvation is for Athanasius understood primarily as the gift of incorruptibility to our perishable flesh'.

[22] George, 'Vergöttlichung des Menschen', 145.

[23] Among the modern examples of treating deification with repugnance, see Benjamin Drewery, who affirms the following: 'I must put it on record that deification is, in my view, the most serious aberration to be found not only in Origen but in the whole tradition to which he contributed, and nothing that modern defenders of ἀποθέωσις... have urged has shaken in the slightest my conviction that here lies the disastrous flaw in Greek Christian thought', quoted from Russell, *The Doctrine of Deification*, 3. Cf. another claim made by Charles Cranfield: 'The idea of apotheosis was acceptable to pagans of the centuries before and after Christ, but to one who has lived in the light of the OT can it be anything but nonsense?', in Cranfield, 'Comments on Dunn's *Christology*', 271.

the humanity of individual people on the other. In this view, Athanasius is criticized for translating 'the biblical idea of solidarity into the language of Platonic realism'[24] and assuming a communication of properties, or qualities, that supposedly altered human identity by the fact that Christ was in union with humanity.[25] Therefore, a second tenet of the physical salvation perceives deification as a mechanical or automatic process that extends to all humanity and abuses human freedom and responsibility. It describes salvation as a passive event 'whereby mere contact with the divine nature of the Logos suffices to divinize the whole of human nature'.[26] In this respect, Lawson charges Athanasius for a view of the incarnation as 'all that was necessary to work the salvation of man, presumably because the salvation of the world was conceived of as a semi-mechanical inoculation of humanity with the Divine'.[27] A third aspect of the physical salvation closely related to the previous one is an insufficient emphasis on the importance of the cross, as if 'incarnation itself, apart from Christ' life and sacrificial death, was responsible for effecting our salvation and deification'.[28] In Richard Hanson's opinion

> [o]ne of the curious results of this theology of the incarnation is that it almost does away; with a doctrine of the Atonement. … [H]e [Athanasius] cannot really explain why Christ should have died. When in chapters 19 and following of the *De Incarnatione* he begins to explain the necessity of Christ's death, he can only present a series of puerile reasons unworthy of the rest of the treatise. The fact is that his doctrine of the incarnation has almost swallowed up any doctrine of the Atonement, has rendered it unnecessary.[29]

Taken together these three distinct, but interrelated, assertions form the reasoning used to dismiss Athanasius for what has been described as the physical view of salvation.

1.1.2 Deification and Atonement

Writing at the turn of the 20th century, Rivière argues that the significance of deification has simply been overblown by prejudiced historians at the expense of

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[24] Morrison, *Athanasius and his Doctrine of Divinization*, 6. Cf. Straeter, *Erlösungslehre*, 175.

[25] Cf. Anatolios, *Athanasius: The Coherence*, 143: 'Our whole salvation and deification are rooted in our human condition's being "ascribed" to the Word, for that is what essentially constitutes our being "Worded"'.

[26] Finch, 'Athanasius on the Deifying Work', 110.

[27] Lawson, *The Biblcal Theology*, 154. Cf. Harnack, *Lehrbuch der Dogmengeschichte*, 2:160-161; Revière, *Rédemption*, 147.

[28] Finch, 'Athanasius on the Deifying Work', 107.

[29] Hanson, *The Search for God*, 450.

the mystery of the cross: '… on doit dire que la prêtendue théorie d'un rédemption mystique ou physique, dont l'Incarnation farait tous les frais, n'existe pas à proprement parler chez les Pères'.[30] Since then other scholars have voiced similar objections with regard to Athanasius' soteriology, debating about the precise role and place of deification. Generally, scholars disagree as to which of the two concepts—deification (with the emphasis on incarnation) or atonement (with the emphasis on crucifixion)—is more fundamental to Athanasius' soteriology and how one is to relate them to each other.

One of the early endevours to relate deification and atonement in Athanasius is probed in the pioneering systematic work on deification by French scholar Jules Gross. In his chapter on Athanasius, he contends against Harnack that Athanasius' emphasis on the physical aspect of deification calls for corrections (appellent des correctives), but it certainly does not mean the mechanical process (processus mécanique).[31] He suggests that Athanasius' preoccupation with the issue of Christ's divinity in the anti-Arian polemic naturally hindered him from giving proper attention to the earthly life of Christ, and as a result made him underemphasize his sufferings on the cross. Nevertheless, in Gross' view, 'Athanase reconnaît à la vie humaine du Christ une certaine valeur rédemptrice, en ce sens qu'elle complétait l'efficacité de l'Incarnation'.[32] Yet, when explaining the relation of different aspects of salvation in Athanasius, Gross prefers to draw no link between them. He writes that Athanasius

> réserve à la mort du Christ une place à part dans l'œuvre du salut comme moyen d'expier nos péchés, de satisfaire à notre place à la loi de mort portée par Dieu au paradis et de nous rendre de la sorte l'incorruptibilité perdue. Mais il ne fait pas la synthèse de ces diverses données avec le rôle déifiant de l'Incarnation.[33]

What for Gross is merely a poor synthesis between deification and atonement, for Laurence Grensted (writing at about the same time as Gross) is sufficient evidence that Athanasius elaborated no doctrine of atonement. According to this commentator, '[i]t is not justifiable to claim [that] Athanasius... anywhere regards death as penal suffering, and still less that he regards Christ's death as vicarious

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[30] Rivière, *Le dogme de la Rédemption*, 89.
[31] Gross, *La Divinisation du Chrétien*, 212-3.
[32] Ibid., 213.
[33] Ibid., 213.

punishment'.[34] He concludes that Athanasius' doctrine of salvation is 'more about how man attains salvation in Christ by "becoming god" than about atonement', and he sees no way how the two could possibly be linked.[35] Similarly, finding only fragments of attention to the effect of Christ's death in Athanasius, Rashdall Hastings charges him for putting forth soteriology that 'hovers between a vague metaphysic and a purely ethical theory of redemption'.[36] A completely opposite reading of Athanasius stresses the atonement and minimizes deification. Two relatively recent examples of this approach are Paul Fiddes,[37] who believes that Athanasius advocates a juridical approach to salvation akin to that of penal substution in Calvin, and Leon Morris,[38] who finds no principal difference between Athanasius' soteriology and that of Ambrose.[39] For Fiddes, atonement implies the fact that God treats us as righteous when 'he instantly transplants perfect moral qualities into us'.[40] For Morris, it is the cross that represents the central point of how deliverance from sin happens and righteousness is obtained.[41] For both of these scholars salvation is seen as a state of right standing before God, and although they offer different answers to how this state is attained according to Athanasius, both agree that it is the attribute of God's righteousness that matters the most.

In contrast to the above scholars who find little or no connection between deification and atonement in Athanasius, or emphasize one over the other, there are some commentators who perceive a closer link between the two.[42] For Behrnard Lohse this link becomes apparent when redemption is interpreted from the perspective of Athanasius' concept of God. He continues to operate with the physical aspect of salvation as presupposing immortality for deification of humanity, but denies that redemption in this sense is limited to the ontological perspective alone. For him such fundamental categories of physical salvation as death and life somehow embrace the legal aspects of redemption such as guilt and sin. In his attempt to explain salvation in connection with Athanasius'

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[34] Grensted, *History of the Atonement*, 80.
[35] Ibid., 60.
[36] Hastings, *The Idea of Atonement*, 298-9.
[37] Fiddes, *The Christian Idea of Atonement*, 70.
[38] Morris, *The Cross of Jesus*, 12-3.
[39] For other examples, see Meyer, 'Athanasius' Use of Paul', 150; Horton, *The Christian Faith*, 514; Lawson, *Pillars of Grace*, 150-6.
[40] Fiddes, *The Christian Idea of Atonement*, 87.
[41] Morris, *The Cross of Jesus*, 12.
[42] e.g. TeSelle, 'The Cross as Ransom'; Meyer, 'Athanasius' Use of Paul'; Lohse, *Dogmengeschichte*; Dragas, 'Athanasius on Christ's Sacrifice'.

understanding of God ('Verbindung von Gotteslehre und Erlösungslehre'), he writes:

> Zudem sind Tod und Leben für Athanasius keine vorwiegend 'physischen' Begriffe, sondern sind stets inhaltlich gefüllt. Tod ist eben die schuldhafte Gottferne, ist der Fluch, der Adam und die ganze Menschheit getroffen hat. Leben dagegen ist die volle Gemeinschaft mit Gott, die nicht nur in der Vergebung der Schuld besteht, sondern die ein neues Sein bedeutet, das seinem Wesen nach nicht mehr vergänglich, sondern ewig ist.[43]

Although not providing a fuller account of how exactly the idea of deification is affected by Athanasius' teaching about God, Lohse's point is that physicality in Harnack's sense is by no means the only aspect of salvation; at the very least, it should include 'forgiveness of sins' (der Vergebung der Schuld) and 'relationship with God' (die Gemeinschaft mit Gott).[44]

A more recent attempt to relate deification and atonement in Athanasius is offered by George Dragas who suggests that deification and atonement in Athanasius have underlying meanings that tend to slip from the scholars' attention. Thus, with regard to deification, he accepts the idea of its universal effect through incarnation, but rejects the automatic benefits as interpreted by Harnack. In his view, the incarnational aspect of deification needs to be supplemented with the distinctly ethical meaning of this concept. He contends that '[h]uman beings are called to a new life of imitation and participation which ensures the appropriation of this deification. The means for achieving this are union with Christ through baptism and abiding in Christ through the life of holiness and the celebration of the holy eucharist, all of which have sacrificial status'.[45] With regard to atonement he identifies three major types of sacrifice in Athanasius—pagan, Jewish, and Christian—arguing that in contrast to the former two that possess a ritual character, the Christian sacrifice bears a much more realistic sense than is usually acknowledged in the Athanasian studies. He asserts that such statements from Athanasian writings as 'when Christ died all human beings died in him' and 'in offering himself to the Father Christ actually offered all of us to him, and so forth', show that Christ's death in Athanasius' view is closely tied with humanity as being

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[43] Lohse, *Dogmengeschichte*, 67.
[44] Finlan, *Options on Atonement*, 4.
[45] Dragas, 'Athanasius on Christ's Sacrifice', 94.

included in this sacrificial event, and therefore represent Christ as 'the real substitute for all human beings'.[46] He concludes:

> Thus the inner logic, as it were, of this substitutionary act is not to be traced to an abstract principle of forensic sacrificial transaction but to the headship of the divine Logos in creation whereby he is related to all human beings and as such can act on their behalf as their true representative. Thus the substitutionary offering of one single body (humanity) for all rests on the fact that it is the 'Dominical body' [*to Kyriakon sōma*], that is to say, the body of him who is 'above all' [*ho epi pantōn*] and 'for all' [*ho epi pantas*] and, therefore, the one who can also be 'instead of all' [*ho anti pantōn*], as the representative of all.[47]

A fairly common approach to Athanasius is to argue that deification is the central concept of Athanasius' theology and then relate all soteriological themes to this concept.[48] Such scholars find it more compelling to affirm a qualified connection between deification and atonement than to deny this connection altogether. For Irénée Dalmais,[49] Adalbert-Gautier Hamman,[50] Keith Norman,[51] Basil Studer[52] and Jeffrey Finch[53] (to name a few), deification is central because it is tied to Athanasius' anti-Arian argument for the full divinity of Christ, while other soteriological motifs are best perceived from this particular angle.

In summary, despite the difference of opinions among the scholars on whether deification and atonement fit together in Athanasius, there is a general recognition that some relation has to be established even if for some it ultimately means no relation at all. On the one hand, the more one is willing to operate with deification in Harnack's sense, the more difficulty one seems to have fitting it with atonement as a legal concept. For those who choose the latter as the main idea of Athanasius' soteriology, the saving righteousness of God tends to revolve around the cross and has primarily transactional meaning. On the other hand, the more one seeks to keep the two doctrines together, the more demand one feels to either re-conceptualize the physical connotations attached to deification, or view it from the more embracive perspectives, such as the doctrine of God or christology.

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[46] Ibid., 92.

[47] Ibid., 93.

[48] One of the most discussed arguments against deification as the central idea in Athanasius' theology was published by Hess, 'The Place of Divinization in Athanasian Soteriology', 369-74.

[49] Dalmais, 'Divinisation', 3:1380.

[50] Hamman, *L'homme image de Dieu*, 153.

[51] Norman, 'Deification: The Content of Athanasian Soteriology', 77.

[52] Studer, *Gott und unsere Erlösung*, 147-48.

[53] Finch, 'Athanasius on the Deifying Work', 104-5.

1.1.3 Deification as Personal Relationship with God

Finally, there are scholars who argue that Athanasius' soteriology is neither physical nor juridical but primarily personal and relational. This approach views salvation in close connection with Athanasius' understanding of God as Trinity and explains deification in terms of personal relationship with God. The significance of the relational aspect of deification was advanced as early as the work of Karl Bornhäuser, *Die Vergottungslehre des Athanasius*, first published in 1903. He systematically argued against Harnack's physical concept as the dominant motif of Athanasius' soteriology. In his view, 'das Verständnis des Vollendungsstandes, wie für Athanasius aller Nachdruck und alle Wertschätzung auf der Lebensgemeinschaft mit Gott durch Christus im heiligen Geiste liegt. In ihr besteht die Vergottung'.[54] Assessing the history of Athanasian scholarship, John Behr concludes that it has mistakenly perceived the Alexandrian theologian as a representative of the 'immanent' Trinity that starts with 'one God existing in three Persons' and concerns itself primarily with reconciling unity and diversity in the Godhead.[55] In this perspective the idea of divine persons, and especially Athanasius' attention to the Father-Son relationship, has given way to the notion of divine essence with regard to which the latter two are correlated. Consequently, the Nicene debates have come to be sometimes incorrectly understood as 'a philosophical enterprise, attempting to articulate a fundamental ontology, whether of being or of communion, or both' (which more likely reflects the theology of those who did not subscribe to the faith of Nicaea)[56] rather than as an attempt to explain the way the incarnated Christ relates to God the Father.[57] Instead of being a result of abstract formulae (such as *homoousios*, three *hypostases* and one *ousia*), the trinitarian theology of the fourth century, for Behr, is a reflection 'on how the crucified and exalted Lord Jesus Christ reveals the one and only God as Father, in and through the Holy Spirit, who also enables adopted sons crucified with Christ to call upon the same God as Father'.[58] This means that 'trinitarian theology has less to do with the heavenly existence of

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[54] Bornhäuser, *Die Vergottungslehre des Athanasius*, 48.
[55] Behr, *The Nicene Faith*, 2/1:5, 7.
[56] Ibid., 2/1:104, 106, n. 27.
[57] Ibid., 2/1:16.
[58] Ibid., 2/1:8.

three divine persons than with this new manner of confessing the one God—as Father, in the Son, by the Holy Spirit'.[59]

When explaining Athanasius' use of the term *ousia*, Behr argues that it is imprinted with a thoroughly relational notion of God. For even though Athanasius gradually adopted the language of 'being' or 'essence' to describe the relation between the Father and Son, he never departed from the central argument that the Son is from the Father's essence using the term essence 'not in a generic sense, but as referring to the kind of being that God is... to indicate the very being of God, God himself'.[60] Similarly, Christopher Stead points out that Athanasius' emphasis on how the Son is *homoousios* with the Father is reinforced by the fact that he never turns it into a formula of how both are *homoousioi* together. Instead, the term *homoousios* is used to depict 'the perfect continuity of the being of the Father in the Son, who is from his essence and so *homoousios* with him'.[61] In fact, the term 'was introduced into the creed because it was known that Arius and his most ardent supporters objected to it', while the fact that 'once the immediate purpose of the council had been achieved, no one, not even Athanasius, used the term for several decades' shows that 'it was not part of anyone's technical vocabulary'.[62] Thomas Weinandy uses the relational aspect of the Son's oneness with the Father to argue that it is in this perspective that deification makes sense. He asserts that 'deification is only effected by being taken into the very divine life of the Trinity. Thus, as the Son is *the Son of the Father* because he is begotten of the Father and so is ontologically one with the Father, so Christian imitate this divine oneness by being taken up into it…. Divinization then, for Athanasius, is the sharing fully in the life of the Trinity and it is this sharing in the divine life that throughly transforms the believer into the adopted likeness of the Son'.[63]

The relational concept of God in Athanasius has traditionally been used by Russian patristic scholars as the only proper framework for interpreting salvation as deification. Writing in opposition to Solovyov[64] and Bulgakov[65] as representatives of the so-called Sophianic philosophy (which their opponents considered to be a

[59] Ibid., 2/1:8.
[60] Ibid., 2/1:232.
[61] Stead, *Divine Substance*, 260.
[62] Behr, *The Nicene Faith*, 2/1:157.
[63] Weinandy, *Athanasius*, 99-100; emphasis mine.
[64] Solovyov, *Sobranie sochineniy*.
[65] Bulgakov, *The Wisdom of God.*

scholastic version of the depersonalized view of God and salvation), Florovsky and Lossky use Athanasius to argue for the relational view of these doctrines. Criticizing Bulgakov's notion of Sophia, Florovsky argues that it goes back to the deterministic view of Gnostic Deity and has nothing in common with the personal concept of God in Athanasius. In his letter to Bulgakov, he writes that '*this* Sophiology is heretical and renounced. That which you find in Athanasius relates to the other Sophia... it is not a substance' but one of the '*thrice-radiant glory*'.[66] The personal nature of who God is as Trinity leads Florovsky to affirm that '"deification" is first and foremost communion with God, participation (*metousia*) in His life'.[67] In much the same way, Lossky portrays Athanasius as a landmark example of reversing the focus from the Plotinian and Origenian vision of God's essence to the emphasis on the deifying participation in Christ. He writes that 'Athanasius considered this milieu [Church in general and ascetic life in particular] to be the realized achievement of the Christian ideal: partaking of God in the incarnated Word, Christ, who won the victory over sin and death, and gave immortality to the created nature as a pledge of the future deification'.[68]

Based on the relational understanding of God and deification, Lossky contends that Western juridical approach to soteriology reduces the content of salvation to what happens on the cross rather than considering the cross as part of what God does for bringing humanity back to himself. In his opinion the main problem of humanity is not so much that it is sinful (though this is true as well), but that it is separated from the living relationship with God. Therefore, for him 'atonement makes humanity restored in Christ, so that it would be no longer separated from God'.[69] In this sense, 'the expiatory action of Christ... is related directly to the ultimate purpose set before the creature, namely the union with God'.[70] In a more elaborate statement, he contrasts the Irenaean/Athanasian dictum

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[66] Pentkovsky, 'Pisma G. Florovskogo', 205, quoted from the English trans. at http://ishmaelite.blogspot.com/2009/05/palamas-florovsky-bulgakov-and.html (accessed on 15.01.14).

[67] Florovsky, 'Creation and Creaturehood', 76.

[68] Lossky, *Bogovideniye*, 368: 'Для св. Афанасия именно эта среда [Церковь в целом или аскетическая жизнь в частности] и является осуществлением христианского идеала: приобщение Богу в воплотившемся Слове, Христе, победившем грех и смерть, и сообщившем тварной природе начало нетленности в залог будущего обожения'.

[69] Ibid., *Dogmaticheskoye Bogosloviye*, 547: 'Правосудие Бога в том, чтобы человек не был больше разлучен с Богом, чтобы человечество восстановилось во Христе'.

[70] Ibid., *Po Obrazu i Podobiyu*, 633: 'Таким образом, искупительный подвиг Христа... непосредственно связывается здесь с конечной целью, поставленной перед тварью, а именно—соединение ее с Богом'.

('God becoming man, so that man could become god') to the juridical perspective of atonement by asserting that

> when we isolate the dogma of atonement from other doctrines (which only together make the fullness of Christian teaching), we risk to confine our interpretation of the Christian tradition to the limits of what Christ has done as Redeemer. As a result, we place a three-fold boundary on the development of Christian dogma constraining it to the original sin, its healing on the cross and the appropriation of Christ's salvific action by the believers. In such a limited perspective where atonement enjoys the dominant role, the patristic expression 'God became man, so that man could become god' looks strange and unwonted. Giving our focus to salvation alone, we leave behind the importance of union with God; or to put it more precisely, we think of union with God only in negative terms relating it to our pitiful state of affairs.[71]

Such understanding of salvation as union with God, or deification, is understood by much of modern Russian Orthodox scholarship in the context of the so-called 'essence-energies distinction in God' as a hermeneutical key to understanding patristic soteriology. This doctrine was actively rediscovered in the theology of the fourteenth century Byzantine monk Gregory Palamas by the Russian theologians (who immigrated to the West after the events of Soviet Revolution in 1917) and reapplied to Athanasius' concept of God and salvation.[72] In this approach Athanasius is interpreted as an early precursor of a sharp distinction between two modes or levels of divine existence: the inaccessible essence of God and his participable energies, or attributes. Accordingly, deification is viewed as a human encounter with God in his energies (such as holiness, immortality, and eternal life) and to protect it from appearing as a disguised version of physical deification (as contrary to Athanasius' accent on the direct relationship with God), it is argued that God's energies represent the enhypostasized (rather than impersonal) attributes of God to be attained in the free (rather than mechanical) process of divinizing cooperation with God.

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[71] Ibid., 633-4: 'Когда мы желаем рассматривать догмат об Искуплении отдельно, изолируя его от всей совокупности христианского учения, мы всегда рискуем ограничить Предание, истолковывая его исключительно в зависимости от подвига Искупителя. Развитие богословской мысли ограничивается тогда тремя пределами: первородным грехом, его исцелением на Кресте и усвоением христианами спасительно последствия подвига Христова. В этих суженных перспективах богословия, в котором главенствующее значение имеет идея Искупления, святоотеческое изречение "Бог соделался человеком, дабы человек смог стать богом" кажется странным и необычным. Занимаясь единственно лишь нашим спасением, мы забываем о соединении с Богом или, точнее, мы видим соединение с Богом только в его негативном аспекте, относящемся к нашему настоящему печальному состоянию'.

[72] For critical evaluation of this approach as being anachronistic, see Daniélou, 'Introduction', 15.

While this new perspective on Athanasius (fostered primarily by Vasiliy Krivosheine,[73] George Florovsky,[74] Vladimir Lossky,[75] and John Meyendorff[76]) is being endorsed by some and criticized by others, what is often appreciated by the scholars is the renewed attention to the role of relational and personal categories in Athanasius' description of God and salvation. Its importance (with or without the Palamite doctrine) has become an eminent subject in modern Greek scholarship (e.g. Christos Yannaras,[77] John Zizioulas,[78] Nikos Nissiotis,[79] Panayiotis Nellas[80]) that seeks to identify the image of God with the human 'personhood' and explain deification as the intimate communion with God.[81] Among other scholars writing on the same subject in English, Thomas Torrance is known for what he called the 'Athanasian-Cyrillian axis' in which Athanasius is identified with a distinctly personal perspective. Such perspective is built on the fact that '[t]hrough Jesus Christ, the Incarnate Son or Word of God, and in the Holy Spirit, it is possible for man to have direct access to God, to meet and know him personally, to hear him and speak to him face to face or person to person, and thus to experience in himself the transforming impact of God's personal Reality and Being'.[82] Similarly, Fairbairn relates Athanasius (alongside Cyril of Alexandria) to what he calls 'the personal trajectory' of patristic soteriology and defines the latter's view of deification as sharing in the Son's relationship with the Father.[83] Disputing Harnack's view of physical deification as the primary way Eastern writers depicted salvation, he draws a distinction between two (intertwined but at least partially distinct) participatory patterns of deificaiton: one that focuses primarily on the qualities of God in the way Harnack thought of it as physical ('in particular, sharing in God's incorruptible life so as to overcome human mortality and corruption'), and

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[73] Krivosheine, 'Asketicheskoe Uchenie', 114-208.

[74] Florovsky, 'Creation and Creaturehood'.

[75] Lossky, *Bogovidenie*, 437-51.

[76] Meyendorff is known for publishing a critical text of the main theological text written by Palamas, *Triads*.

[77] Yannaras, 'Essence and Energies', 232-45.

[78] Zizioulas, *Being as Communion*.

[79] Nissiotis, 'Secular and Christian Images', 947-89; 90-122.

[80] Nellas, *Deification in Christ*.

[81] For more details on the modern Greek scholarship and its growing fascination with the theme of communion with God, see Russell, 'Modern Greek Theologians', 77-92. For the critical assessment of the modern Greek conception of personhood as an importation from philosophical personalism and existentialism, see Halleux, 'Personalisme', 129-55, 265-92.

[82] Torrance, 'The Soul and Person', 113-4. Cf. Ibid., *The Trinitarian Faith*, 156; Ibid., *Mediation of Christ*, 30.

[83] Fairbairn, 'Patristic Soteriology', 304. Cf. Ibid., *Life in the Trinity*, 6-9.

the other that stresses the idea of participating 'in the personal communion with the persons of the Trinity'.[84] It is the second pattern of deification—one that places personal relationship over the impersonal qualities—that, for Fairbairn, represents the most fruitful trajectory plotted by Irenaeus, Athanasius, and Cyril of Alexandria. In Fairbairn's understanding, this personal trajectory goes along with the theology of 'God's downward action through the incarnation and crucifixion' in contrast to the first paradigm that promotes a view in which 'our action is the key to union with God' in his qualities.[85]

This brief survey of the scholarly views on Athanasius' soteriology shows that one's preference to describe it in terms of one of the three approaches to salvation—physical, juridical or personal—is significantly shaped by what one considers to be Athanasius' teaching about God. Depending on the scholar's arguments, these approaches can be used in ways that either contradict or complement each other, but certainly each one of them reveals a certain aspect of salvation more explicitly than it does other ones. If divinity is understood largely as a possession of immortality, then what is necessary for the mortal man to become divine is to acquire such quality and thereby become by grace what God is by nature. If it is the righteousness and wrath of God that demands redemption, then Athanasius' soteriology is best understood as having to do with the believer's changed status before God based on Christ's transactional sacrifice. And if deification flows from who God is as personal being, then deification needs to include the idea of restored relationship between God and man. Undoubtedly, Athanasius combined all three ways of describing salvation as he sought to appropriate various images from Scripture and interpret them in the context of his own theological and philosophical tradition. Yet, I will argue that Athanasius' concern to defend the full divinity of Christ as *homoousios* with God the Father provides a helpful standpoint from which all three aspects of salvation discussed above can be viewed as having their proper place and relation. Before I progress any further, I would like to gear this statement to the way I use my three key words— 'deification', 'relations', and 'qualities'.

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[84] Ibid., 293.
[85] Ibid., 300, 307.

1.2 Terminological Clarifications: Deification, Qualities and Relations

A growing interest to the theme of deification over the past twenty years or so has resulted in a very broad spectrum of meanings being attached to this term.[86] For this reason, I would like to give a brief explanation of how I will use this term with regard to Athanasius, and then add more technical details on its meaning in the chapters that follow. Among the most common words such as 'divinization', 'becoming god'/'godlike'/'divine', *theosis*, and *apotheosis*, I will use the English word 'deification' as my preferred option. I will employ the other words as synonyms to it. Athanasius' favourite word for deification is θεοποιέω, from which he derives the noun θεοποίησις. He does not use the word *theosis* that has now become the transliterated key term in referring to the distinctly Christian notion of deification, and to avoid the anachronistic reading I will restrain myself from using it with respect to Athanasius.

When using the English term deification, I will distinguish between two senses of this word: the narrow sense that explicitly points to making into a god, or deifying, and the broader sense that includes other terms related to deification as explanatory synonyms. In the narrow sense my use of the term deification will embrace such words as θεοποιέω, θεοποιός, θεοποίησις, θεοποιΐα, θεότητος, and ἐκθειάζω. Some of these terms are used by Athanasius both in the Christian and pagan contexts, while others are used distinctly for either Christian deification or pagan deification. A number of other terms that Athanasius never uses (but which, nevertheless, form a part of the narrow sense of deification) include such words as ἀποθεόω/ἀποθειόω, ἀποθέωσις, ἐκθεόω/ἐκθειόω, ἐκθέωσις, ἐκθεωτικός, θεόω, θέωσις, ἀποθειάζω. I will use some of these terms when discussing deification in other writers. In the broader sense of deification, I will include synonymous terminology that Athanasius uses next to the words of deification in order to describe the state of the redeemed. This will include such terminology as 'adoption', 'renewal of creation', 'union with the Logos/God', 'being sanctified, exalted', 'being perfected

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[86] Since the publication of *La divinisation du chrétien* by Gross in 1938, there has been a growing number of historical studies on deification. As a result, the use of the term deification has significantly been stretched ranging from its original Greek use to the postmodern concerns of ecological theology. The list of the recent works is prohibitively long, so I limit it to only a few titles that reflect a common interest in deification among Orthodox, Catholics and Protestants: Russell, *The Doctrine of Deification*; Daniélou, *La Déification de l'homme*; Meyendorff, '*Theōsis* in the Eastern Tradition', 470-6; Williams, *The Ground of Union*, 31-32; Olson, 'Deification in Contemporary Theology', 186-89; Finlan, *Deification in Christian Theology*; Christensen, *Parkaters of the Divine Nature*; Hinlicky, 'Theological Anthropology', 38-73; Mannermaa, 'Justification and *Theosis*', 25-41. I will provide more references to the works on deification later in this study.

in Christ', etc. Finally, I will refer to a group of participatory words that have similar meaning to deification and are used by Athanasius to clarify the character and content of the deifying work of God. This group of participatory terms will include the idea of partaking in God (μετέχω, μετουσία), fellowship with the trinitarian persons (κοινωνέω, θείας κοινωνοὶ φύσεως), sharing in his love (ἀγάπη) and delight (χαρά), being accepted as adopted sons and daughters (υἱοθεσία) of the Heavenly Father, and acquiring divine characteristics, such as immortality/incorruption (ἀφθαρσία, ἀθανασία), impassibility (ἀπάθεια), and perfection (τελείωσις). As I explore the topic of God and deification in the chapters that follow, I will provide more specific details including statistical word-data of particular terms, comparative Tables, lexical analyses, etc.

Two other words that I will use in this study are 'qualities' and 'relations'. To describe the personal aspect of God and deification (such as the Father-Son fellowship or human participation in their love), I will use the term 'relations' and synonymous words such as 'communion', 'fellowship' 'the bond of love', 'delight', etc. To describe the impersonal aspect of God and deification (such as incorruption and immortality), I will employ the term 'qualities', and synonymous words such as 'attributes', 'characteristics', 'properties', and 'energies'. As much as possible, I will try to provide the closest correlates (e.g. ἰδιότης, ποιότης, δύναμις, ἐνέργεια, οἰκειότης, etc.) to these two words in the specific texts that I study. However, due to the fact that in the period between Irenaeus and Athanasius theological terminology was still in its formative stage, I will treat this terminology in a more or less loose sense qualifying them whenever needed. I will introduce the idea of 'qualities' and 'relations' specifically with regard to my topic by the time I come to the discussion of Irenaeus and Origen. I should add that although the term 'qualities' will be used in reference to the impersonal aspects of God and salvation, it should not be taken negatively. Neither will I treat the 'qualities' as an alternative to the 'relations'. On the contrary, I believe that both 'qualities' and 'relations' are important aspects of the same reality, and to treat them in the sense of 'either-or' would risk making God and deification as either quasi-impersonal or void of content. Perhaps, the closest patristic analogue for my use of 'relations' and 'qualities' is John of Damascus' *Capita Philosophica*, where he treats these two categories in ch. 50 (περὶ τῶν πρός τι) and ch. 51 (περὶ ποιοῦ καὶ ποιότητος) as related but distinct notions. My own distinction between the 'qualities' and 'relations' will have to do primarily with the

emphases in the texts I will study. At the same time, I believe that one's emphases do shape one's language about God and deification, and by making notice of the way emphases work in different contexts, I hope to draw attention to those points that otherwise can be overlooked.

CHAPTER TWO

Athanasius in the Broader Context

Therefore, we ought to try to escape from earth to the dwelling of the gods as quickly as we can, and to escape is to become like God, so far as this is possible; and to become like God is to become just and holy and wise (Plato, *Theaet.* 176b).[87]

For he [Christ] became man that we might become divine (Athanasius, *De Inc*. 54.11-2).[88]

In these words both Plato and Athanasius speak about deification. The former describes man as a seeker, the latter depicts him as sought. In light of the emphasis on God's initiative, such as in the above quotation, Athanasius appears to be writing about God in a way that was less (rather than more) typical of the Greek tradition as a whole. At the same time, his interaction with the Greek philosophical sources and religious ideas is quite intense, and any attempt to understand him needs to take this into account. For this purpose, it is important to consider Athanasius in a larger context where the discussions about God, his involvement in the world, and salvation, have already had a long history. In this chapter, I will survey some of the most significant points in the history of deification by dividing my discussion into three major parts: antiquity (with a special focus on the Platonic tradition), biblical background, and two theological figures that predate Athanasius—Irenaeus and Origen. While the first part will be aimed primarily at tracing the development of some key terms and concepts of deification, the second and third parts will be related more directly to the issues I have discussed in the Introduction. In the process of my analysis, I will attempt to show that one's description of deification often becomes the direct expression of one's conception of God(s), or divinity. Furthermore, I will suggest that by the time of Irenaeus and Origen we can identify what I will call 'a tension of emphases' (in both theologians)[89] with respect to God and deification that needs to be taken into consideration before approaching

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[87] [LCL 123:128; Fowler 129, trans. modified]: διὸ καὶ πειρᾶσθαι χρὴ ἐνθένδε ἐκεῖσε φεύγειν ὅτι τάχιστα. φυγὴ δὲ ὁμοίωσις θεῷ κατὰ τὸ δυνατόν· ὁμοίωσις δὲ δίκαιον καὶ ὅσιον μετὰ φρονήσεως γενέσθαι.

[88] [Thomson 268; ibid. 269]: αὐτὸς [ὁ χριστός] γὰρ ἐνηνθρώπησεν, ἵνα ἡμεῖς θεοποιηθῶμεν.

[89] A term I borrowed from Fairbairn who speaks of 'tension' in the thought of Irenaeus and Origen in his *Grace and Christology*, 18-20. I also owe him for pointing out to me the significance of the Father-Son relationship and the personal subject in Christ in Athanasius.

Athanasius. This discussion will prepare a way for me to show how the philosophical and theological background pressed Athanasius to shape a distinctly trinitarian concept of God and salvation. Stamped with the emaphasis on the Father-Son relationship and on Christ as the personal subject of salvation, this concept emerges first in Athanasius' early double writing, the *Contra Gentes* and *De Incarnatione Verbi*, and then finds its way in a more mature form to his later works *Orationes Contra Arianos*, *Epistulae quattuor ad Serapionem*, and *Vita Antonii*. I will analyze all these major writings beginning with the double treatise in the next chapter (for which this chapter on the background will be most important), and then examine later writings in the rest of this study.

2.1 Ancient Notions of Divinity and Deification

As with each survey the purpose of this chapter is very modest. Rather than seeking to give a detailed analysis, I would like to focus primarily on the major turning points in the history of deification by examining the terminology, concepts, and frameworks. In what follows I will introduce both popular and philosophical traditions with a view to shed some light on the questions of the nature of divinity, the relation of God(s) to human beings, and the motivations behind the common practice of divinization. While there are different ways to treat the pre-Christian deification, my analysis is tied specifically to the study of Athanasius. Therefore, the kind of texts, figures, and traditions I choose to integrate here stem from this perspective and especially from the growing recognition of the modern scholars that Athanasius frequently operates with the ancient philosophical vocabulary and concepts (most notably in his early treatise written against the pagan worldview). As I proceed, I will provide more rationale for my choice of topics and issues.

2.1.1 Poetic Literature

It is not by chance that some ancient writers considered Homer to be the most respected 'theologizing' poet and occasionally addressed him as ὁ θεολόγος.[90] His *Iliad* and *Odyssey* provide us with the earliest insights about the nature of gods and divinization. Among the various traits he ascribes to gods are superhuman knowledge, extraordinary power, and ability to appear in any form. Yet, the most

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[90] e.g. Porphyry, *De Antr. Nymph.* 78.15-16; Hermias, *In Phaedr.* 151.7.11. Cf. Lamberton, *Homer the Theologian*, 22-31.

pronounced quality proper to the Homeric gods is their immortality. They are normally referred to as 'immortals' (ἀθάνατοι, *Il.* 2.14 [LCL 170:60) who live forever (θεοὶ αἰὲν ἐόντες, *Il.* 1.290 [LCL 170:34]) even though there was a time when they did not exist at all.[91] In both poems immortality is a recurring theme and the prime object of human desire; it is pursued as a way to not only avert death but also become divine.[92] There are at least several ways how immortality can be obtained in the Homeric poems. One of them is when a hero is being remembered for his courageous acts by future generations. A good example of such an occasion is the legendary warrior Achilles who had a choice to live a peaceful life but not be remembered, or to go to the war and know that 'my life long endure, and the doom of death will not come soon on me' (*Il.* 9.415-6 [LCL 170:424; Henderson 425]).[93] Having chosen the latter, Achilles meets his end at the battlefield fighting the Trojans, but the memory of his name and valour will live forever. Another example is Sarpedon (ally of Trojans from Lycia) who describes the heroic code to his comrade Glaukos by equating remembrance to immortality:

> Ah friend, if once escaped from this battle we were for ever to be ageless and immortal, neither should I myself fight among the foremost, nor should I send you into battle where men win glory; but now—for in any case fates of death threaten us, fates past counting, which no mortal may escape or avoid—now let us go forward, whether we shall give glory to another, or another to us (*Il.* 12.321-8 [LCL 170:580; Henderson 581]).[94]

By their heroism Homeric nobles are remembered as θεῖοι, ἀντίθεοι and ἰσόθεοι, or addressed with the divine epithets of honour such as θεοείκελ' ἀχχιλλεῦ (*Il.* 1.132 [LCL 170:22]), μεγάθυμοι ἀχαιοί (*Il.* 1.123 [LCL 170:22]), ἕκτωρ διίφιλος (*Il.* 10.49 [LCL 170:452]).[95] The heroes never become divine in the strict sense,[96] but they

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[91] Herodotus, *Hist.* 2.53 [LCL 117:340].

[92] The possibility to become divine in Homer is balanced with the opposite warning to not 'not be minded to think on a par with the gods' (μηδὲ θεοῖσιν ἶσ' ἔθελε φρονέειν) (*Il.* 5.440-1 [LCL 170:238; Henderson 239]). This is proved by the story in which Niobe was punished for having dared to compare herself to Latone. See *Il.* 24.602 [LCL 171:606]. Cf. *Od.* 5.212-3 [LCL 104:196].

[93] ἐπὶ δηρὸν δέ μοι αἰὼν ἔσσεται, οὐδέ κέ μ' ὦκα τέλος θανάτοιο κιχείη.

[94] ὦ πέπον, εἰ μὲν γὰρ πόλεμον περὶ τόνδε φυγόντε αἰεὶ δὴ μέλλοιμεν ἀγήρω τ' ἀθανάτω τε ἔσσεσθ', οὔτε κεν αὐτὸς ἐνὶ πρώτοισι μαχοίμην οὔτε κε σὲ στέλλοιμι μάχην ἐς κυδιάνειραν· νῦν δ' ἔμπης γὰρ κῆρες ἐφεστᾶσιν θανάτοιο μυρίαι, ἃς οὐκ ἔστι φυγεῖν βροτὸν οὐδ' ὑπαλύξαι, ἴομεν, ἠέ τῳ εὖχος ὀρέξομεν, ἠέ τις ἡμῖν.

[95] Cf. Clark, *The Cambridge Companion to Homer*, ch. 8.

[96] In fact, in *Il.* 5.440-2 [LCL 170:238; Murray 239], it is strictly warned against becoming a god: 'Consider, son of Tydeus, and withdraw, do not be minded to think on a par with the gods; since in no way of like sort is the race of immortal gods and that of men who walk upon the earth' (τυδείδη,

become gods for their own society who perceived them to be model for the perfect life.

An even more striking way to achieve immortality in the Homeric poems is by making this quality one's own. This is also a more 'tangible' way of becoming divine than by being remembered, though immortality becomes one's own not as one's proper quality but as that which one enjoys by being 'locally' associated with the dwelling place of gods. Thus, Ganymede is said to be taken to dwell with the immortals as Zeus' cupbearer,[97] and the Homeric *Hymn to Aphrodite* draws the obvious conclusion by making Hermes reassure Ganymede's father that he is now 'immortal and unaging just like the gods' (ὡς ἔοι ἀθάνατος καὶ ἀγήρως ἶσα θεοῖσιν).[98] There are also examples of some heroes who die and only after that become divinized. In the famous book 11 of the *Odyssey* we see Heracles described as being only an image (εἴδωλον) in *Hades*, while 'he himself [Heracles] is with the immortal gods, taking his joy in their festivities' (*Od.* 11.601-3 [LCL 104:444]).[99] Perhaps the most physically perceptive way to attain immortality in Homer is by eating ambrosia and drinking nectar. When Odysseus was taken by Calipso after the shipwreck, it is said that she 'gave him food [ambrosia and nektar (ἀμβροσίην καὶ νέκταρ)]... that would make him immortal and ageless all his days' (*Od.* 5.136 [LCL 104:192; Murray 195]).[100] In the Homeric *Hymn to Demeter* even mere contact with ambrosia, such as Demeter's anointing the human baby Demophon with it, is able to make him appear divine: 'he was like the gods to behold' (θεοῖσι δὲ ἄντα ἐῴκει).[101] The abundance of Homeric references to such means of divinization led some scholars to suggest that at this time mortality is not considered to be 'an essential attribute of human beings, it is more like a virus which can be expelled, if

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καὶ χάζεο, μηδὲ θεοῖσιν ἶσ' ἔθελε φρονέειν, ἐπεὶ οὔ ποτε φῦλον ὁμοῖον ἀθανάτων τε θεῶν χαμαὶ ἐρχομένων τ' ἀνθρώπον).

[97] *Il.* 20.232-5 [LCL 171:382; Henderson 383]. Cf. other examples when humans were brought to dwell with gods: e.g. *Od.* 5.135-6 [LCL 104:192], 5.208-209 [LCL 104:196], 15.249-51 [LCL 105:94]; *Il.* 5.265-6 [LCL 170:226].

[98] *Hymn. Hom. Aph.* 5.214 [LCL 496:174]. The *Hymns* were attributed to Homer by the ancient scholars, but modern commentators think they are alient to him. See LCL 496:5-6. In this study I treat the *Hymns* on the par with the Homeric texts.

[99] αὐτὸς [ἡρακληείην] δὲ μετ' ἀθανάτοισι θεοῖσι τέρπεται ἐν θαλίης.

[100] ἔτρεφον... θήσειν ἀθάνατον καὶ ἀγηραον ἤματα πάντα. For more examples, see *Il.* 5.265-6 [LCL 170:226]; *Od.* 5.135-6 [LCL 104:192], 5.208-209 [LCL 104:196], 15.249-51 [LCL 105:94]. Cf. Rohde, *Psyché*, 60-1.

[101] *Hymn. Hom. Dem.* 2.241 [LCL 496:50; West 51]. Tugwell, *Human Immortality*, 7, dates the hymn by the seventh century.

the right procedure for doing so can be discovered'.[102] Whether this is correct or not, the above instances make it clear that possessing immortality is necessary for one to live forever, and to do so is to be divine.

However vast is the boundary between the mortal humans and immortal gods, Homer never makes the latter too perfect to enter into the realm of earthly affairs.[103] In fact, both the *Iliad* and *Odyssey* recount numerous stories when gods (in various forms) appear for all sorts of intervention. Sometimes, they are described in ways that make them much more human than divine.[104] They can be hurt, deceived, and even come under the threat of being destroyed. Yet, it is the accessibility of these gods to individual humans that mark a personal aspect of the Greek religion at this time. In his *Personal Religion among the Greeks*, André Festugière illustrates it with a reference to Athena by drawing attention to the fact that '[a]s early as the *Iliad*, we see that there is an intimate, personal bond between Athena and Achilles... In the *Odyssey*, Athena is... the guardian and adviser of Telemachus... [and] on Dorian soil... Athena encourages the Dorian hero Herakles'.[105] On one particular occasion Athena not only dissuades Achilles from striking Agamemnon, but even pulls his hair till the Myrmidonian hero soothes his anger and is able to make decisions on his own.[106] Commenting this situation in his *Greek Personal Religion*, Stephen Instone suggests that it 'shows an important way in which the Greeks thought that humans can interact with the gods: humans are relatively weak, are subject to all sorts of outside forces, and for them to be successful in life, whether physically, e.g. in war or athletics competition, or mentally in the display of good judgment, they need the help of the most powerful of all outside forces, the gods'.[107]

With Hesiod the respect to gods as supernatural beings becomes a matter of personal piety and devotion. In his didactic poem *Erga* the prescribed instructions show that a prosperous life is dependent on the farmers' individual obedience to Zues and Demeter who control the agricultural world. Thus to succeed in farming one must sacrifice to gods, pour libations, pray and honour them. In Hesiod's account the hardships of human life is a result of a deteriorated process from the

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[102] Tugwell, *Human Immortality*, 7.
[103] Cf. Jaeger, *Paideia*, 1:55-6.
[104] For more on gods' vulnerability, see Kleinknecht, 'θεός', 70.
[105] Festugière, *Personal Religion among the Greeks*, 6-7.
[106] *Il*. 1.196-200; 206-16 [LCL 170:26-8].
[107] Instone, *Greek Personal Religion*, 9.

golden age of mankind to the present iron age. If the former was the age when men lived among and mingled freely with gods in harmony and abundance, the latter is the age of misery, sorrow and toil. There is very little hope for divinization in this context. In fact, it is expected that people will no longer fear and revere gods, and once that happens 'Aidos and Nemesis... will go from the broadwayed earth and forsake mankind to join the company of immortals, and bitter sorrows will be left for mortal men, and there will be no help against evil' (*Erga* 197-201 [LCL 57:124]).[108] The motif of suffering in Hesiod becomes a subject of deeper reflection in the Greek tragic drama. The harder life is described in such poems, the more intense is one's desire to either die or become like gods and dwell in their places.[109] In *Oedipus Colonus* Sophocles declares that '[n]ot to be born comes first by every reckoning; and once one has appeared, to go back to where one came from as soon as possible is the next best thing' (*OC* 1224-1227 [LCL 21:546; Lloyd-Jones 547]).[110] With similar feelings, when Euripides describes Phaedra' difficult situation in *Hippolytus*, he makes her cry in utter despair: 'O that I could live in the secret clefts of the mountains, and that there a god might make me a winged bird amid the flying flocks!' (*Hipp*. 732-736 [LCL 484196; Kovacs 197]).[111] It is generally believed that human life is filled with sorrow and is in direct contrast to the blissful life of gods in heaven. Therefore, Euripides uses the metaphor of a bird in several similar contexts to underscore the human desire for celestial existence: 'Where to go? Shall I fly up to the lofty vault of heaven?' (*Hec*. 1099 [LCL 484:498; Kovacs 499, slightly modified]),[112] and 'soar aloft to heaven' (*Med*. 1296 [LCL 12:400; Kovacs 401].[113]

2.1.2 Greek Natural Philosophy: Xenophanes

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[108] καὶ τότε δὴ πρὸς ὄλυμπον ἀπὸ χθονὸς εὐρυοδείης λευκοῖσιν φάρεσσι καλυψαμένα χρόα καλὸν ἀθανάτων μετὰ φῦλον ἴτον προλιπόντ' ἀνθρώπους αἰδὼς καὶ νέμεσις, τὰ δὲ λείψεται ἄλγεα λυγρὰ θνητοῖς ἀνθρώποισι, κακοῦ δ' οὐκ ἔσσεται ἀλκή.

[109] Cf. Yunis, *Religious Beliefs in Euripidean Drama*, 111-21; Webster, 'Psychological Terms in Greek Tragedy', 149-54; Demina, 'Obraz Artemidy', 92.

[110] μὴ φῦναι τὸν ἅπαντα νικᾷ λόγον· τὸ δ', ἐπεὶ φανῇ, βῆναι κεῖθεν ὅθεν περ ἥκει πολὺ δεύτερον ὡς τάχιστα.

[111] ἠλιβάτοις ὑπὸ κευθμῶσι γενοίμαν, ἵνα με πτεροῦσσαν ὄρνιν ἀγέλησι ποταναῖς θεὸς ἐνθείη.

[112] ποῖ πορευθῶ; ἀμπτάμενος οὐράνιον ὑψιπετὲς ἐς μέλαθρον.

[113] πτηνὸν ἆραι σῶμ' ἐς αἰθέρος βάθος. Other examples of the same metaphor in Euripides can be found in *Ion* 1238 (πτερόεσσαν) [LCL 10:462]; *Andr*. 862 (ὄρνις) [LCL484:350]; *HF* 1157 (πτερωτός) [LCL 9:424]; *Or*. 1593 (φύγης πτεροῖς) [LCL 11:590]. On the importance of this metaphor for divinization, see Solmsen, *Intellectual Experiments*, 67.

By the time of the pre-Socratic philosophers we observe an emergence of a new way of describing divinity. It is now described not only in terms of everlasting existence but also as encompassing the qualities of moral perfection.[114] The best early example is Xenophanes, who is commonly viewed as a reformer of religion.[115] In the view of Adam Drozdek, 'God's attributes were adumbrated and even described by Xenophanes' predecessors, but Xenophanes for the first time systematically grouped them and built a consistent system from them'.[116] Although there is disagreement about the interpretation of the one God (εἷς θεός) in Xenophanes' fragments, it is clear that this god must be the most perfect being.[117] He is incomparable with any living entity for he is 'greatest among gods and men, not at all like mortals neither in form nor in thought' (*fr.* 21b23 [DK 135]).[118] His other qualities include the fact that 'he always remains in the same place, not moving at all, nor is it befitting for him to travel to various places at various times' (*fr.* 21b26 [DK 135]).[119] He sees, thinks and hears as a whole, shaking everything with his mind as a simple uncompounded (rather spherical) being.[120] *Fr.* 21b24 [DK 135] suggests that Xenophanes' God is omniscient since he is not limited by the organs of cognition. If only a part of man thinks (sees and hears), God thinks (sees and hears) as a whole. He is ingenerate and immortal, and therefore his existence does not change.[121] It is improper to think of him as 'wearing clothes and have a voice and body' (*fr.* 21b14 [DK 132]).[122]

From the viewpoint of moral perfection, the One God does not do the lawless deeds of anthropomorphic gods described by Homer and Hesiod. He does not steal, commit adultery or tell lies.[123] Instead, according to Simplicius,

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[114] Lesher, *Commentaries*, 83. Cf. Russell (ed.), *Augustine*, 5-11; Copleston, *A History of Philosophy*, 1:47; Vogel, *Philosophia I*, 397-416.

[115] Steinmetz, 'Xenophanesstudien', 69; Jaeger, *The Early Greek Philosophers*, 53; Fränkel, *Early Greek Poetry and Philosophy*, 328.

[116] Drozdek, *Greek Philosophers as Theologians*, 24.

[117] Lumpe, *Die Philosophie des Xenophanes*, 27-8; Stokes, *One and Many*, 77; Hershbell, 'The Oral-poetic Religion', 130.

[118] εἷς θεός, ἔν τε θεοῖσι καὶ ἀνθρώποισι μέγιστος, οὔτε δέμας θνητοῖσιν ὁμοίιος οὐδὲ νόημα.

[119] αἰεὶ δ' ἐν ταὐτῶι μίμνει κινούμενος οὐδέν, οὐδὲ μετέρχεσθαί μιν ἐπιπρέπει ἄλλοτε ἄλληι. For the analysis of the term θεοπρεπές, see Anton, *Essays in Greek Philosophy*, 95-6. For κινούμενος, see Peters, *Greek Philosophical Terms*, 101-8

[120] *fr.* 21b24-5 [DK 135]. According to the pseudo-Aristotelian treatise *De Xenophane Melisso Gorgia* (= *fr.* 21a28 [DK 119]), Xenophanes taught that God was spherical in shape which probably indicated his perfection.

[121] *fr.* 21b14 [DK 132].

[122] τὴν σφετέρην δ' ἐσθῆτα ἔχειν φωνήν τε δέμας τε.

[123] *fr.* 21b11 [DK 132].

Xenophanes assumed that 'God is strongest and best (ἄριστος) of all',[124] and pseudo-Aristotle says that for Xenophanes God is 'strongest and best (βέλτιστος)'.[125] By describing God in this way Xenophanes rectifies the concept of divinity and makes other gods simple manifestations of the one perfect God. They 'have no autonomous reality by being only reflections of the absolute reality. Therefore, their reality, on the one hand—when rejecting natural attributes that are ascribed to them—dissolves in natural phenomena, on the other hand, in the reality of God, whose manifestations and imperfect representations they are'.[126] There is no fragment where Xenophanes would speak of divinization, and perhaps it is not the right context to assume that he would. However, there is a sense in which his description of divinity does pave the way to a more refined idea of deification in the later writers. To illustrate this point more substantially I would like to turn to the tradition of Platonism.

2.1.3 Platonic Tradition

Before considering the representatives of Platonism, I need to explain briefly why I have chosen to concentrate on this particular tradition. Of course, a broader picture of deification might well include a discussion of Aristotle, Epicurus, and Stoics. In fact, there has been a growing number of studies that endeavour to trace various elements of deification to these philosophical schools.[127] They draw attention to the importance of the Aristotelian divine Intellect (the Unmoved Mover) and the life of knowledge (βίος θεωρητικός) that realizes the activity of the highest human faculty, intellect.[128] With regard to Epicurus—who aspired to a very different approach—it is often stressed that for him the divine life (felicitous and joyful) is the life free of disturbance, trouble, and care; this is attained by following his ethical precepts.[129] In a still different way, the divine life for the Stoics is the life lived according to

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[124] *fr.* 21a31 [DK 121]: τὸ δὲ πάντων κράτιστον καὶ ἄριστον θεός.

[125] *fr.* 21a28 [DK 117]: οὐκ ἂν ἔτι κράτιστον καὶ βέλτιστον αὐτὸν ἔναι πάντων.

[126] Drozdek, *Greek Philosophers as Theologians*, 25.

[127] e.g. Sedley, 'Becoming Like God', 327-39; O'Meara, *Platonopolis*, 32-4; Instone, *Greek Personal Religion*, 51-6; Russel, 'Virtue as "Likeness to God" in Plato', 241–260; Šedina, 'Filosofie a etika', 9-23; Erler, 'Epicurus as deus mortalis', 159-182; Passmore, *The Perfectibility of Man*; Festugière, Épicure et ses dieux; Schmidt, 'Götter und Menschen in der Theologie Epikurs', 97-156; Schulz, *Nachfolgen und Nachahmen*. For more references, see Squilloni, *Peri Basileias*, 63, n. 1.

[128] *NA* 10.7-8 [Bywater 212-7; Ross 1860]; *Metaph.* 1072b3-4 [Jaeger 252; Ross 1694]). For the differences between the Aristotelian deification and that of Plato, see Bargeliotes, 'Divinized and De-divinized', 229-246.

[129] *Ep. Men.* 135.

Nature, the divine Logos. Their ideal is the godlike sage, a perfect cosmic deity.[130] However interesting it would be to consider such perspectives on deification, I believe that Athanasius' immediate background was largely Platonic. This is not to say that his thought excluded elements from other philosophical views; rather Platonism is a kind of framework in which these elements are being interpreted by him.

Perhaps the most thorough study that specifically looks into this issue is done by Peter Meijering, *Orthodoxy and Platonism in Athanasius: Synthesis or Antithesis?* (Leiden: E. J. Brill, 1974).[131] Meijering convincingly demonstrates that although the sort of Platonism Athanasius espouses is that of Middle Platonism, he is fully aware of both Plato and Plotinus.[132] He argues that 'Athanasius could freely use philosophical ideas where it suited him' believing that 'Platonic ontology need not contradict the Christian faith, provided it was applied in the right way in theology'.[133] Meijering concludes that Athanasius on the one hand attempts to synthesize Christian faith and Platonism 'in the sense that he is constantly using Platonic language and arguments', and on the other, he sees a certain antithesis 'in the sense that Athanasius completely opposes the core of Platonic theology, *viz.*, the divine hierarchy. He regards this as idolatry'.[134] Following Meijering's arguments, I will concentrate in this section on three historical phases of Platonism by examining Plato, Philo, and Plotinus. This will form the background against which I will then consider Athanasius' early treatise where, in my view, his interaction with the philosophical concepts is most significant. For the same reason that I narrow my focus to Platonism, I also choose to not go into a discussion of popular concepts of divinization such as the ruler cult in Rome,[135] assimilation to a specific god (e.g. Osiris, Dionysius),[136] theurgical practices,[137] or mystical trends in the Jewish literature.[138] This would make excellent material for a broader study of deification, whereas mine is confined to a more specific focus.

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[130] For more details, see Merki, ʹΟΜΟΙΩΣΙΣ ΘΕΩ, 8-17.

[131] Cf. similar arguments in Beatrice,'La croix et lex idoles', 159-77, who claims that Athanasius had a sufficient knowledge of Neoplatonism and targeted his polemic especially against Porphyry.

[132] Meijering, *Orthodoxy and Platonism*, 126.

[133] Ibid., 126, 128.

[134] Ibid., 130.

[135] Gradel, *Emperor Worship*, esp. 54-108, 198-234.

[136] Price, 'Gods and Emperors', 77-85.

[137] Collins, *Partaking in Divine Nature*, 17-8.

[138] Ibid., 27-38.

2.1.3.1 Plato

Just as Xenophanes, Plato criticizes the traditional understanding of divinity as expressed by Homer and Hesiod. In the process of doing this, he develops a conceptual framework and terminology that will form the core components in the emergence of a language of deification.[139] For our purpose it will be helpful to address several notable occasions where Plato describes the process of becoming like God (ὁμοίωσις θεῷ), ask what qualities make one divine, and consider other ways in which Plato describes deification. To a certain extent, the question of what it means to become godlike for Plato is also a question of who he understands his God to be. The later part of this question is a complex one in itself and would require much attention. So, instead of treating it directly, I would like to shift the emphasis to the fact that Plato ascribes divinity to various entities which can be emulated by others. Moreover, one can emulate what is divine, or choose to emulate the opposite. In *Theaet.* 176e-177a [LCL 123:130; Sedley, 'The Ideal of Godlikeness', 795], Plato asserts: 'My friend, there are standards (παραδειγμάτων) set up in reality. The divine standard is supremely happy, the godless one is supremely wretched... and [by their acts people] are made like the one and unlike the other'.[140] Among the things that have divine status, Plato includes the gods of mythology, the souls of the heroes (they are also the 'visible' gods of the heavens), the world itself (or the soul of the world), the intellect that orders the Universe, the Forms, and their ultimate expression, 'the Good' (τὸ ἀγαθόν).

There are several instances in Plato where he makes explicit statements about godlikeness. One of them comes in the same dialogue that I just cited. In *Theaet.* 176b [LCL 123:128; Fowler 129, trans. modified], Plato makes the following argument: 'Therefore, we ought to try to escape from earth to the dwelling of the gods as quickly as we can, and to escape is to become like God (ὁμοίωσις θεῷ), so far as this is possible; and to become like God is to become just (δίκαιον) and pious (ὅσιον) with wisdom' (μετὰ φρονήσεως).[141] The urgency with which Plato discusses godlikeness occurs in the context of his opposition to

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[139] Collins, *Partaking in Divine Nature*, 16.

[140] παραδειγμάτων, ὦ φίλε, ἐν τῷ ὄντι ἑστώτων, τοῦ μὲν θείου εὐδαιμονεστάτου, τοῦ δὲ ἀθέου ἀθλιωτάτου... τῷ μὲν ὁμοιούμενοι... τῷ δὲ ἀνομοιούμενοι.

[141] διὸ καὶ πειρᾶσθαι χρὴ ἐνθένδε ἐκεῖσε φεύγειν ὅτι τάχιστα. φυγὴ δὲ ὁμοίωσις θεῷ κατὰ τὸ δυνατόν· ὁμοίωσις δὲ δίκαιον καὶ ὅσιον μετὰ φρονήσεως γενέσθαι. For a brief commentary on this passage as implying a 'filosofický a etický koncept' of godlikeness, see Šedina, 'Filosofie a etika', 4-9.

Protagoras' relativistic doctrine. To counter his view that man is the measure of all things, Plato portrays the philosopher as being concerned with the universal, objective qualities. Howerver, the qualities in the quoted passage—justice, piety, and wisdom—are described as virtues to be exercised by people, and apparently God reprsents here the perfect moral absolute and exemplar for human action. A few lines later, Plato continues: 'God is in no wise and in no manner unrighteous, but utterly and perfectly righteous (δικαιότατος), and there is nothing so like him (αὐτῷ ὁμοιότερον) as that one of us who in turn becomes most nearly perfect in righteousness'. [142] Three other explicit mentions of godlikeness are found in *Respublica*, *Phaedrus*, and *Leges*. In all three passages godlikeness has a clear ethical dimension. In *Rep.* 10.613a-b [LCL 276:486; Shorey 487], Plato describes God as our moral overseer who will hardly neglect the interests of those who are most like him in the hereafter: 'For by the gods assuredly that man will never be neglected who is willing and eager to be righteous, and by the practice of virtue to be likened unto god so far as that is possible for man'.[143] To this Plato adds that whatever happens to such a virtuous person, he can count on receiving the best from gods both in life and in death, while a similar passage from *Symp.* 212a [LCL 166:206; Sedley, 'The Ideal of Godlikeness', 796], clarifies this as implying immortality: 'It is proper to one who has born and nurtured true virtue to become dear to the gods, and for him too, if any human being does, to become immortal'.[144] A different ethical application of godlikeness is evident in *Phaedr.* 252c-253c [LCL 36:492], where Plato speaks in a mythical way of assimilation to different gods. These gods (such as Zeus, Hera, Apolo, and others) represent eleven qualities of ideal character, and the lovers are described as aspiring for their beloved to become more like the God they themselves revere (ὡς δυνατὸν ὁμοιότατον τῷ σφετέρῳ θεῷ).[145] Other phrases Plato uses to depict a person who strives to be like God in this context include (1) 'he lives, so far as he is able, honouring and imitating that

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[142] θεὸς οὐδαμῇ οὐδαμῶς ἄδικος, ἀλλ' ὡς οἷόν τε δικαιότατος, καὶ οὐκ ἔστιν αὐτῷ ὁμοιότερον οὐδὲν ἢ ὃς ἂν ἡμῶν αὖ γένηται ὅτι δικαιότατος.

[143] οὐ γὰρ δὴ ὑπό γε θεῶν ποτε ἀμελεῖται, ὃς ἂν προθυμεῖσθαι ἐθέλῃ δίκαιος γίνεσθαι καὶ ἐπιτηδεύων ἀρετὴν εἰς ὅσον δυνατὸν ἀνθρώπῳ ὁμοιοῦσθαι θεῷ.

[144] τεκόντι δὲ ἀρετὴν ἀληθῆ καὶ θρεψαμένῳ ὑπάρχει θεοφιλεῖ γενέσθαι, καὶ εἴπερ τῳ ἄλλῳ ἀνθρώπων ἀθανάτῳ καὶ ἐκείνῳ. Cf. Gaye, *The Platonic Conception of Immortality*, argues that Plato's concept of immortality grew out of the simple fact of existing imperfection and mortality, which led him to postulate the theory of Forms. He equates immortality and ὁμοίωσις θεῷ; ibid., 256.

[145] *Phaedr.* 253a [LCL 36:492].

god';[146] (2) 'so far as it is possible for a man to have part in God';[147] and (3) 'lead him to the likeness of the god whom they honour'.[148] Apparently, the fact that people cling to different gods, points to the existence of different ways (rather than only one way) of becoming good/godlike.[149] One other instance of godlikeness is found in *Leges* 4.716c [LCL 187:294], where Plato's emphasis seems to be again quite practical. In this context he refers to the sophist's claim that man is the measure of all things and contrasts it directly with 'God as the measure of all things in the highest degree' (ὁ δὴ θεὸς... πάντων χρημάτων μέτρον ἂν εἴη μάλιστα) (*Leg.* 4.716c [LCL 187:294; Bury 295]). He then suggests that to have the most moderate and best conduct 'requires one to become like this God in one's character as far as possible' (*Leg.* 4.716c [LCL 187:294; Bury 295]).[150]

So far the prevailing aspect of deification in the above instances has been clearly ethical, but Plato also speaks of other ways in which deification happens. In the context of his theory of Forms and the doctrine of tripartite soul, one can find such texts in which the effort for finding one's true (divine) identity is very much akin to his descriptions of deification. According to *Tim.* 89e-90a, each part of the soul has its own proper motions and the object after which it revolves.[151] Plato's explanation of what this means in *Tim.* 90a-d [LCL 244:244-6] became the *locus classicus* on deification.[152] Thus, speaking of the rational soul-part and its function, Plato asserts: 'God has given to each of us, as his daemon, that kind of soul which is housed in the top of our body and which raises us—seeing that we are not an earthly but a heavenly plant—up from earth towards our kindred in the heaven' (*Tim.* 90a [LCL 234:244; Bury 245]).[153] Slightly later, he adds:

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[146] Ibid. 253a [LCL 36:490; Fowler 491]: ἐκεῖνον τιμῶν τε καὶ μιμούμενος εἰς τὸ δυνατὸν ζῇ.

[147] Ibid. 253a [LCL 36:492; Fowler 493]: Καθ᾽ ὅσον δυνατὸν θεοῦ ἀνθρώπῳ μετασχεῖν.

[148] Ibid: εἰς ὁμοιότητα αὐτοῖς τῷ θεῷ... ἄγειν.

[149] Sedley, 'The Ideal of Godlikeness', 797.

[150] τὸν οὖν τῷ τοιούτῳ προσφιλῆ γενησόμενον εἰς δύναμιν ὅτι μάλιστα καὶ αὐτὸν τοιοῦτον ἀναγκαῖον γίγνεσθαι.

[151] Scholars debate Plato's idea of the soul's motion with respect to its divinity. Krische, *Die theologischen Lehren der griechischen Denker*, 76, argues that Plato derived it from Alcmaeon's understanding that the soul revolves after the divine heavenly bodies and therefore is divine and immortal. Cf. Lee, 'Reason and Rotation', 72-80; Susemihl, *Die genetische Entwicklung der platonischen Philosophie*, 229; Skemp, *The Theory of Motion*, 3-10; Ehrhardt, *The Beginning*, 92-104.

[152] Sedley, 'The Ideal of Godlikenes', 801.

[153] ὡς ἄρα αὐτὸ δαίμονα θεὸς ἑκάστῳ δέδωκε, τοῦτο ὃ δή φαμεν οἰκεῖν μὲν ἡμῶν ἐπ᾽ ἄκρῳ τῷ σώματι, πρὸς δὲ τὴν ἐν οὐρανῷ ξυγγένειαν ἀπὸ γῆς ἡμᾶς αἴρειν ὡς ὄντας φυτὸν οὐκ ἔγγειον ἀλλ᾽ οὐράνιον.

But he who has seriously devoted himself to learning and to true thoughts, and has exercised these qualities above all his others, must necessarily and inevitably think thoughts that are immortal and divine, if so be that he lays hold on truth, and in so far as it is possible for human nature to partake of immortality (μετασχεῖν ἀνθρωπίνη φύσις ἀθανασίας), he must fall short thereof in no degree.... Making the part that thinks like unto the object of its thought, in accordance with its original nature and having achieved this likeness, [he will] attain finally to that goal of life which is set before men by the gods as the most good both for the present and for the time to come (*Tim*. 90b-d [LCL 234:246; Bury 247]).[154]

In this passage Plato elaborates on the epistemological aspect of godlikeness. The cultivation of rationality—'thinking thoughts that are immortal and divine'—makes one like what he thinks. Accordingly, the final goal of life here is described as partaking of immortality in so far as it is possible for human nature. Plato's argument in this text grows out of his distinction in other dialogues between the realm of Being and Forms (and therefore true knowledge) on the one hand, and the realm of becoming and shadows of reality (and therefore mere opinion) on the other. To explain how the two realms relate, Plato uses the terminology of 'participation' (μέθεξις), 'presence' (παρουσία), and 'communion' (κοινωνία).[155] It is the participation of Forms in the lower realm of things, their presence in them and communion that make the bridge between the two realms ontologically possible. Plato does not define the extent to which the higher realm affords participation in the lower one, but the former may include not only the ideas of sensible objects and sensible qualities but also ideas of moral qualities and relations such as 'greater' or 'less' and categories of the 'same' or the 'other'.[156] In the end, 'to be', for Plato, is to participate in 'being', and when applied to humans, he uses the word imitation (μίμησις) to stress the active aspect of this process: the soul is to imitate the real being, and to imitate it, is to think the truth. Plato uses this term in several major contexts: (1) to explain the derivative character of human craftsmanship from the divine craftsmanship;[157] (2) to describe the relationship of the Forms to the sensible particulars;[158] (3) and to render the applications from the distinction between the

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[154] τῷ δὲ περὶ φιλομάθειαν καὶ περὶ τὰς ἀληθεῖς φρονήσεις ἐσπουδακότι καὶ ταῦτα μάλιστα τῶν αὑτοῦ γεγυμνασμένῳ, φρονεῖν μὲν ἀθάνατα καὶ θεῖα, ἄνπερ ἀληθείας ἐφάπτηται, πᾶσα ἀνάγκη που, καθ' ὅσον δ' αὖ μετασχεῖν ἀνθρωπίνη φύσις ἀθανασίας ἐνδέχεται, τούτου μηδὲν μέρος ἀπολείπειν.

[155] *Phaedo* 100cd [LCL 36:344]; *Res*. 476a [LCL 237:516-8].

[156] *Parm*. 130; *Phaedr*. 250b; *Rep*. 479c; *Tim*. 30cd; *Phaedo* 103de; 101af; *Theaet*. 185cd; *Soph*. 254-5

[157] *Soph*. 267a [LCL 123:452].

[158] *Parm*. 132c-133a [LCL 167:218-20]; *Tim*. 30cd [LCL 234:54-6].

original nature of true knowledge (based on real being) and opinion that imitates it.[159] In each of these contexts the imitating entity is ontologically inferior to what it imitates.[160] Hence, the end purpose of the soul's imitation of what is *real* and *true* has a similar function to achieving godlikeness in so far as the higher realm which it imitates is itself divine. Explaining how one is to succeed in this process, Plato speaks of the need to purify oneself through the practice of virtue and the training of mind. Some of the metaphors he uses to describe the end goal of this process are happiness,[161] freedom,[162] healing,[163] salvation,[164] etc. In his *Respublica* he calls to contemplate what is even beyond being,[165] the ultimate Principle. Although, on several occasions Plato claimed that the soul could suddenly (ἐξαίφνης)[166] become united with its final object of contemplation, it would be incorrect to think that he conceived godlikeness as a solitary attainment. Instead, the ideal philosopher becomes king of his own city ordering its chaotic motions according to the divine pattern of the Forms. In this way, he helps to build a divinized city:

> Then the Philosopher associating with what is divine and ordered will himself become divine and ordered as far as man can.... And if it becomes necessary for him to put into practice the things he sees yonder by applying them to the characters of men both in private and in public life instead of only moulding his own, do you think he will be a poor craftsman of moderation and justice... the city will never find happiness unless the painters [i.e. the philosopher-kings] who use the divine model sketch its outline.... They would take the city and men's characters as a draughting board, and first of all they would clean it... then, as they work, they would keep looking back and forth, to [the Forms of] justice, beauty, moderation, and all such things... and they would compose human life with reference to these, mixing and mingling the human likeness from various pursuits, basing their judgment on what Homer [*Il.* 1.131 (LCL 170:22)] too called the divine and godlike existing in man (*Rep.* 6.500c-501b [LCL 276:68-72; O'Meara, Platonopolis, 35; modified]).[167]

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[159] *Rep.* 6.509d-511e [LCL 276:108-16].

[160] Peters, *Greek Philosophical Terms*, 118.

[161] e.g. *Rep.* 518b [LCL 276:132]. Cf. also *Phead.* 111c, 115d [LCL 36:380, 392-4]; *Rep.* 372cd [LCL 237:158], 501e [LCL 276:74]; *Tim.* 68e-69a [LCL 234:176-8].

[162] e.g. *Rep.* 490b [LCL 276:28].

[163] e.g. Ibid. 515c [LCL 276:122].

[164] e.g. Ibid. 453d [LCL 237:440], 494a, 495d [LCL 276:42, 48]; *Phead.* 89a, 107d [LCL 36:306-8, 370]; Zeus is accorded with the title σωτήρ in e.g. *Rep.* 583b [LCL 276:380]; *Tim.* 48de [LCL 234:110-12].

[165] *Rep.* 508c-509b [LCL 276:102-8].

[166] e.g. *Symp.* 210e [LCL 166:204]; *Ep.* 7.341 [LCL 234:528-32].

[167] θείῳ δὴ καὶ κοσμίῳ ὅ γε φιλόσοφος ὁμιλῶν κόσμιός τε καὶ θεῖος εἰς τὸ δυνατὸν ἀνθρώπῳ γίγνεται.... ἂν οὖν τις... αὐτῷ ἀνάγκη γένηται ἃ ἐκεῖ ὁρᾷ μελετῆσαι εἰς ἀνθρώπων ἤθη καὶ ἰδίᾳ καὶ δημοσίᾳ τιθέναι, καὶ μὴ μόνον ἑαυτὸν πλάττειν, ἆρα κακὸν δημιουργὸν αὐτὸν οἴει γενήσεσθαι σωφροσύνης τε καὶ δικαιοσύνης.... οὐκ ἂν ποτε ἄλλως εὐδαιμονήσειε πόλις, εἰ μὴ αὐτὴν

By the end of Plato's career, the concept of deification allowed both individual and corporate/political aspects of becoming divine. The language now included such basic words as motion (κίνεσις), participation (μέθεξις), presence (παρουσία), communion (κοινωνία), and imitation (μίμησις). Some of them are applied to ὁμοίωσις θεῷ more directly than others, but all of them have a philosophically-laden meaning that will expand in the next generations of thinkers. Based on the way Plato describes deification, one might want to distinguish between two types of godlikeness. One of them has to do with the essential qualities that an entity possesses as its own. In this sense, the soul (or rather its highest, rational aspect) is divine in virtue of its pristine origin and participation in, or kinship with, the divine. After death it abandons the body to join the company of the gods (εἰς θεῶν γένος) (*Phaed*. 82b [LCL 36:286]). On the other hand, as it seeks to recover its identity, the soul's task is to realize its kinship or potential by ascending upward[168] and reach out to its ultimate goal (τέλος)[169]—the brightest and most blessed part of being[170] that brings satisfaction to every contemplating soul.[171] In this sense, deification is a gradual process of change; it takes one's life effort (both intellectual and moral) to acquire what one does not have. Ben Blackwell calls this later type of deificaition the 'attributive' one as opposed to 'essential' deification.[172] This distinction will have a great career in the writings of the Church fathers, especially with Irenaeus and Athanasius who will speak of it in terms of *being divine by nature* and *becoming so by grace*. Plato also distinguishes between various aspects of deification. It can be an ethical and/or epistemological godlikeness with the focus on virtue and knowledge, or it can be an ontological one in as much as an entity partakes of what is divine. The closest terminology that expresses these aspects of

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διαγράψειαν οἱ τῷ θείῳ παραδείγματι χρώμενοι ζωγράφοι.... λαβόντες... ὥσπερ πίνακα πόλιν τε καὶ ἤθη ἀνθρώπων, πρῶτον μὲν καθαρὰν ποιήσειαν ἄν.... ἀπεργαζόμενοι πυκνὰ ἂν ἑκατέρωσʼ ἀποβλέποιεν, πρός τε τὸ φύσει δίκαιον καὶ καλὸν καὶ σῶφρον καὶ πάντα τὰ τοιαῦτα... ξυμμιγνύντες τε καὶ κεραννύντες ἐκ τῶν ἐπιτηδευμάτων τὸ ἀνδρείκελον, ἀπʼ ἐκείνου τεκμαιρόμενοι, ὃ δὴ καὶ ὅμηρος ἐκάλεσεν ἐν τοῖς ἀνθρώποις ἐγγιγνόμενον θεοειδές τε καὶ θεοείκελον. Another passage about the divinized city is found in *Leg*. 739e [187:362-4]. On the relation between this city and the one described in the *Respublica*, see O'Meara, *Platonopolis*, ch. 8.

[168] For a more detailed description of the upward paradigm see e.g. *Rep*. 505de, 517b, 521c, 533cd [LCL 276:90, 128-30, 146, 202-4]; *Symp*. 211cd [LCL 166:204-6]; *Pheadr*. 249c [LCL 36:480-2].

[169] *Gorg*. 499e [LCL 166:442].

[170] *Rep*. 518c [LCL 276:134].

[171] Ibid. 540a [LCL 276:228].

[172] Blackwell, 'Christosis', 104-5.

divinization are participation and imitation. In this regard, Paul Collins suggests that Plato's category of '[i]mitation is understood in terms of the practice of the virtues and is an ethical approach', whereas '[p]articipation suggests an outcome which is more 'realistic' and has ontological implications'.[173] Plato's use of participation (μετοχή, μετάληψις, μέθεξις, κοινωνία, and other related words) seems to be more characteristic of those instances where he establishes the 'immanence' of the Forms in the particulars (though Forms also participate among themselves).[174] Plato's use of imitation, along with other words such as image (εἰκών) and likeness (ὁμοίωμα), appears to stress the transcendence of the Forms as divine models for entities that strive to be like them.[175] Plato's use of the word group ὅμοιος for the description of divinization or godlikeness is also witnessed in Athanasius. In one explicit passage where he uses this terminology in the context of deification, he like Plato in some places, combines it with the ethical idea of 'virtues' and 'imitation' as being part of what it means to be like God. Just to cite the passage for now and leave the analysis for later, he says: For we too, albeit we cannot become like (ὅμοιοι) God in essence, yet by progress in virtue (ἐξ ἀρετῆς) imitate (μιμούμεθα) God, the Lord granting us this grace, in the words, *Be ye merciful as your Father is merciful* [Luke 6:36] *Be ye perfect as your heavenly Father is perfect* [Mt. 5:48] (*Ep. Afr.* 7 [Brennecke 333; NPNF² 4:492]).[176] More commonly, Athanasius describes defication by using the technical word θεοποιέω and ἐκθειάζω. While neither of these words are evidenced in Plato, the former one (ἐκθειάζω) does appear in Philo who also adds a range of other important aspects to deification.

2.1.3.2 Philo

Philo was an elderly contemporary of Jesus Christ. Being a hellenized Jew of the Alexandrian diaspora, he presupposes that the Greek sages derived their wisdom

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[173] Collins, *Partaking in Divine Nature*, 18. For a more technical treatment of these two categories in Plato, see Vaught, 'Participation and Imitation', 17-31.

[174] e.g. *Soph.* 249e-259e [LCL 123:386-426]. Cf. Muralt, *De la participation*, 101-20; Rutenber, *Imitation of God in Plato*, 38.

[175] For classification of the participatory words in Plato, see Ross, *Plato's Theory of Ideas*, 228-30.

[176] καὶ γὰρ καὶ ἡμεῖς καίτοι μὴ δυνάμενοι ὅμοιοι κατ' οὐσίαν τοῦ θεοῦ γενέσθαι, ὅμως ἐξ ἀρετῆς βελτιούμενοι μιμούμεθα τὸν θεὸν χαρισαμένου καὶ τοῦτο τοῦ κυρίου καὶ λέγοντος· γίνεσθε οἰκτίρμονες, ὡς ὁ πατὴρ ὑμῶν οἰκτίρμων ἐστί· καὶ γίνεσθε τέλειοι, ὡς ὁ πατὴρ ὑμῶν ὁ οὐράνιος τέλειός ἐστι.

from the Pentateuch.[177] Scholars place him among the so-called middle Platonists who in different ways sought to integrate Platonism with elements from other philosophical schools (most notably Pythagorean, Aristotelian, and Stoic). [178] Therefore, Philo's concern for deification needs to include the broader framework of this middle Platonism in which one's ascent to God as the supreme transcendent being proceeds through intermediate entities.[179] In this process we can distinguish three major ways how one can become divine according to Philo.[180] I will first make a few remarks on his concept of God and then discuss these specific ways of becoming like him.

Philo narrows down the use of divinity to the God of Hebrew Scriptures. This God reveals himself as a personal being, the God of Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob. At the same time he is also unknowable in himself, his essence cannot be encompassed by human understanding. [181] Therefore, to 'inquire about essence (οὐσίας) or quality (ποιότητος) in God, is a folly fit for the world's childhood'.[182] Philo often phrases this distinction in terms of who God is in himself as the Existent (ὁ ὤν) according to the book of Exodus 3:14, and who he is in his powers (δυναμεῖς, ἐνεργεῖαι) toward the world. Though it may seem that such powers of God represent the manifested qualities of his essence, a more correct way to refer to them is in terms of subordinate beings distinct from God. (For Philo God is devoid of all qualities; he is ἄποιός, which probably means that God transcends all classifications). [183] Philo never limits these powers to a certain number, and he

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[177] e.g. *Aet.* 18 [LCL 363:196]; *Prob.* 57 [LCL 363:42]. *Spec. Leg.* 4.61 [341:44-6]. For a background on Philo, see Goodenough, *An Introduction to Philo*, 2-29. For his use of Scriptures and esp. his exegetical theory, see Pépin, *Mythe et allégorie*, 216-42; Dörrie, 'Zur Methodik antiker Exegese', esp. 13.

[178] Dillon, *The Middle Platonists*, 51, 367; Chadwick, 'Philo', 156.

[179] Armstrong, *An Introduction*, 152, characterizes such framework in the following way: 'At the head of the hierarchy stands a Supreme Mind or God, ineffably remote and exalted, combining Aristotle's Unmoved Mover with Plato's Form of the Good. Then come intermediary beings—the Second Mind, the lesser gods, the stars, the daemones—ruling and ordering and some of them inhabiting the visible universe which is itself as in the "Timaeus" a living being animated by a World-Soul'.

[180] Louth, *The Mystical Tradition*, 18-35; Russell, *The Doctrine of Deification*, 11, identifies four stages of ascent: religious, philosophical, ethical and mystical. I combine the second and third in one.

[181] This statement is not far from what Plato states in *Tim.* 28c [LCL 234:50; Bury 51; trans. modified], when speaking of the Demiurge: 'to discover the Maker and Father of this Universe is indeed a hard task' (τὸν μὲν οὖν ποιητὴν καὶ πατέρα τοῦδε τοῦ παντὸς εὑρεῖν τε ἔργον).

[182] *Post.* 168-9 [LCL 227:428; Colson 429]: ὡς περὶ οὐσίας ἢ ποιότητος ζητεῖν, ὠγύγιός τις ἠλιθιότης.

[183] *Leg. All.* 1.36 [LCL 226:170]. Cf. Tripolitis, *The Doctrine of the Soul*, 5.

describes them as unknowable in themselves.[184] Several times he identifies these powers with Plato's Forms,[185] but more often he calls them by two names: the kingly and beneficent (or occasionally, the kingly and the creative). They manifest God, respectively, as the one who rules and spreads his goodness upon man. In *Spec. Leg.* 1.49 [LCL 320:126; Colson 127], Moses asks to see God face to face. In response he receives God's warning: 'Do not, then, hope to be able to apprehend me or any of my powers in our essence (ἐμὲ μήτε τινὰ τῶν ἐμῶν δυνάμεων κατὰ τὴν οὐσίαν). But I readily and with right goodwill will admit you to share of what is attainable [which is the contemplation of the Universe]'.[186] There is, however, one other power that helps to mediate God's presence more directly than these two senior powers. Philo calls it Logos. It represents a higher power placed above and between the kingly (ἡ βασιλική) and beneficent (ἡ ἵλεως) powers.[187] It is 'the Image of God (εἰκὼν ὑπάρχων θεοῦ), chiefest of all beings intellectually perceived, placed nearest (ὁ ἐγγυτάτω), with no intervening distance to the Alone truly existent One' (*Fug.* 101 [LCL 275:64]).[188] Through this Logos as his instrument God produced the world.[189] Through him he also appeared at the burning bush to Moses[190] and by dwelling in him, he made Moses deified: 'he appointed him as god' (εἰς θεὸν αὐτὸν ἐχειροτόνει),[191] 'had him etitled the God of Pharaoh' (προσρηθεὶς φαραὼ θεός),[192] and let him 'pass from a man into a god' (ἄνθρωπον ἀλλὰ θεὸν ἀπετόλμησεν).[193] Such position makes the Logos both a transcendent and immanent being in whom 'there is direct communication with God, as opposed to the indirect experience of him afforded by the other powers'.[194] The Logos is also the soul's food, and Philo refers to it as manna.[195] Philo explains that to nourish oneself with the Logos means to meditate on Scripture that represents God' communication to the soul. In one

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[184] *Spec. Leg.* 1.47 [LCL 320:124].
[185] Ibid. 1.48 [LCL 320:124-6].
[186] μήτ' οὖν ἐμὲ μήτε τινὰ τῶν ἐμῶν δυνάμεων κατὰ τὴν οὐσίαν ἐλπίσῃς ποτὲ δυνήσεσθαι καταλαβεῖν. τῶν δ' ἐφικτῶν, ὡς εἶπον, ἑτοίμως καὶ προθύμως μεταδίδωμι.
[187] *Fug.* 95 [275:60-1].
[188] εἰκὼν ὑπάρχων θεοῦ, τῶν νοητῶν ἅπαξ ἁπάντων ὁ πρεσβύτατος, ὁ ἐγγυτάτω, μηδενὸς ὄντος μεθορίου διαστήματος, τοῦ μόνου, ὃ ἔστιν ἀψευδῶς, ἀφιδρυμένος.
[189] *Fug.* 95 [LCL 275:60-1].
[190] *Mos.* 1.66 [LCL 289:310]; *Mut.* 134 [LCL 275:210].
[191] *Sacr.* 8 [LCL 227:100; Colson 101].
[192] *Somn.* 2.189 [LCL 275:528].
[193] *Prob.* 43 [LCL 363:36; Colson 37]. Cf. *Mut.* 128 [LCL 275:208]; *Det.* 161 [LCL 227:308].
[194] Louth, *The Mystical Tradition*, 28. Cf. Bréhier, *Les Idées philosophiques*, 83-111; Daniélou, *Philon d'Alexandrie*, 153-62; Wolfson, *Philo*, 1947.
[195] *Leg. All.* 3.169 [LCL 226:414].

particular passage he draws a contrast between the Scripture and Greek philosophy:[196]

> Again, shall we on whom God pours as in snow or rain-shower the fountains of his blessings from above, drink of a well and seek for the scanty springs that lie beneath the earth, when heaven rains upon us unceasingly the nourishment which is better than the nectar and ambrosia of the myths? (*Quod Deus* 155 [LCL 247:88; Colson 89]).[197]

Interestingly, what used to be the means of immortality for the poets—nectar and ambrosia—is said to be a false way of nourishing the soul. Even though deification is not mentioned here, its idea is probably implied. The right path to God is through the 'enworded' Scripture though even this is only a stage to pass through. The ultimate goal of the soul's quest is to ascend beyond God's manifestation of himself to God in himself, and this happens through the Logos. How does this journey progress? And what are the effects for deification? Philo believes that human ascent to God has to start with conversion. In the treatise *De Migratione Abrahami*, he writes:

> In this way the mind gradually changing (μεταβαίνων) its place will arrive at the Father of piety and holiness. Its first step is to relinquish astrology, which betrayed it into the belief that the universe is the primal God (θεὸν τὸν πρῶτον) instead of being the handiwork of the primal God, and that the causes and movements of the constellations are the causes of bad and good fortune to mankind (*Migr.* 194 [LCL 261:244; Colson 245]).[198]

Philo describes the first step as a change of one's loyalty. One has to stop revering what is not divine and direct one's devotion to the true God. He is Creator of things people falsely worship as gods, and also the Father of the distinct religious qualities, piety and holiness. Pagan pantheistic deification of the elements of this world is the result of people's unwillingness to recognize that God is beyond the manifested

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[196] Another image for subordinating pagan philosophy to Scripture is Hagar and Sarah, or that of handmaid to mistress. Cf. Wolfson, *The Philosophy of the Church Fathers*, 97-101.

[197] οἷς δ᾽ ὁ θεὸς ἐπινίφει καὶ ἐπομβρεῖ τὰς ἀγαθῶν πηγὰς ἄνωθεν, ἐκ λάκκου πίνομεν καὶ βραχείας [καὶ] κατὰ γῆς λιβάδας ἀναζητοῦμεν, ὕοντος ἡμῖν ἀνεπισχέτως οὐρανοῦ τὴν νέκταρος καὶ ἀμβροσίας τῶν μεμυθευμένων ἀμείνω τροφήν;

[198] οὕτω κατὰ βραχὺ μεταβαίνων ὁ νοῦς ἐπὶ τὸν εὐσεβείας καὶ ὁσιότητος ἀφίξεται πατέρα, γενεθλιαλογικῆς ἀποστὰς τὸ πρῶτον, ἥτις παρέπεισεν αὐτὸν ὑπολαβεῖν τὸν κόσμον θεὸν τὸν πρῶτον εἶναι, ἀλλὰ μὴ τοῦ πρώτου θεοῦ δημιούργημα, καὶ τὰς τῶν ἀστέρων φοράς τε καὶ κινήσεις αἰτίας ἀνθρώποις κακοπραγίας καὶ τοὐναντίον εὐδαιμονίας.

existence.[199] On turning from idolatry people gain different concepts of God depending on their level of spiritual development.[200] Philo categorizes them according to various grades of religious beliefs, placing those who are devoted to God out of love above those who want to serve him out of fear. It is the former type that is the highest: they 'honour me for myself alone' (ἐμὲ θεραπεύουσι δι' ἐμὲ αὐτόν) (*Abr.* 129 [LCL 289:66; Colson 67]). Ultimately, the reward of such people will be the 'gifts of friendship' (ἡ χρεία φιλία)[201] with God (an idea repeated in other places),[202] while the latter type of people—'who honour me for their own sakes' (ἐμὲ θεραπεύουσι δι' ἐαυτούς)—will only 'partake of blessings' (εἰς μετουσίαν ἀγαθῶν) such as 'remission of punishment' (εὑρήσεσθαι προσδοκῶσι) (*Abr.* 128-30 [LCL 289:66; Colson 67]).

Having turned from the wrong object of worship, the soul proceeds in the next step by raising the mind from the sensible entities to the intelligible realm. The passage I quoted earlier from *Migr.* 194 [LCL 261:244; Colson 245], continues: 'Next it [the soul] enters upon the consideration of itself, makes a study of the features of its own abode, those that concern the body and sense-perception, and speech, and comes to know, as the phrase of the poet puts it: "All that existeth of good and of ill in the halls of thy homestead"'.[203] This second stage is one of self-knowledge: the soul comes to know itself and its situation in the world. Here, Philo's understanding of the soul's activity differs from that of Plato's. For the latter the soul's task to recover its pristine identity has to do with the fact that the soul's nature is originally divine. In contrast, for Philo the soul is created by God according to his image and likeness (κατ' εἰκόνα θεοῦ καὶ καθ' ὁμοίωσιν)[204] and is nothing in itself. In Louth's view, 'this means that self-knowledge is not identified with knowledge of God; in self-knowledge the soul does not realize the world of the Ideas [or Forms] within itself (as in Plotinus, and perhaps in Plato), rather, in self-knowledge the soul comes to realize its own nothingness and is thrown back on

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[199] On Philo's rejection of the pagan 'cosmic religion' that offered its own distinct deification, see Cumont, 'Le Mysticisme astral dans l'antiquité', 256-86.

[200] *Mut.* 19 [LCL 275:152]. Cf. *Abr.* 119-23 [LCL 289:62-4].

[201] *Abr.* 129 [LCL 289:66].

[202] e.g. *Vit. Cont.* 90 [LCL 163:168]; *Praem.* 43-6 [LCL 341:336].

[203] *Migr.* 195 [LCL 261:244; Colson 245]: ἔπειτ' εἰς τὴν ἐπίσκεψιν ἐλθὼν τὴν αὐτὸς ἑαυτοῦ, φιλοσοφήσας τὰ κατὰ τὸν ἴδιον οἶκον, τὰ περὶ σώματος, τὰ περὶ αἰσθήσεως, τὰ περὶ λόγου, καὶ γνοὺς κατὰ τὸ ποιητικὸν γράμμα ὅττι τοι ἐν μεγάροισι κακόν τ' ἀγαθόν τε τέτυκται.

[204] *Opif.* 69-71 [LCL 226:54].

God, him who is'.[205] Perhaps, one of the best explanations of this idea is offered in the passage from *Somn.* 1.60 [LCL 275:326-8; Colson 327-9], where it is said that Abraham

> gained much progress and improvement (ὁ ἐπιδόσεις καὶ βελτιώσεις) towards the acquisition of the highest knowledge: for when most he knew himself, then most did he despair of himself, in order that he might attain to an exact knowledge of him who in reality is (τοῦ ἀλήθειαν ὄντος). And this is nature's law: he who has thoroughly comprehended himself, thoroughly despairs of himself, having as a step to this ascertained the nothingness in all respects of created being. And the man who has despaired of himself is beginning to know him that is (τὸν ὄντα).[206]

The created nature of the soul means that it is not capable of knowing God by its own effort, and therefore needs to rely on God for such knowledge. In another text, Philo uses Moses to explain that 'he himself learnt it by a divine communication' and 'obtained a conception of him who wrought it' (*Det.* 86 [LCL 227:260; Colson 261]).[207] In the same passage it is also claimed that Moses' experience of God on this level brought him happiness and blessedness when 'he [God] breathed into him [Moses] from above of his own Deity' (*Det.* 86 [LCL 227:260; Colson 261]).[208] Although divine revelation is a God-given thing rather than natural capacity, the mortal part of human soul (created by God' subordinate powers,[209] and therefore inferior to the soul's rational part) needs purification to become spirituallys perceptive at this stage of ascent. According to Philo, this happens through the exercise in virtue, and his ethics seems to incline towards the antithesis of spirit and matter. He refers to the 'coats of skins' as the bodies of Adam and Eve after the fall. The body is the tomb of the soul and a corpse that carries it about. Along these lines, he claims that 'it is impossible that he whose abode is in the body and the mortal race should attain to being with God; this is possible only for him whom

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[205] Louth, *The Mystical Tradition*, 25.

[206] τούτων ἐστὶν ὁ ἐπιδόσεις καὶ βελτιώσεις πρὸς ἐπιστήμης ἄκρας ἀνάληψιν ἐσχηκώς· ὅτε γὰρ μάλιστα ἔγνω, τότε μάλιστα ἀπέγνω ἑαυτόν, ἵνα τοῦ πρὸς ἀλήθειαν ὄντος εἰς ἀκριβῆ γνῶσιν ἔλθῃ· καὶ πέφυκεν οὕτως ἔχειν· ὁ λίαν καταλαβὼν ἑαυτὸν λίαν ἀπέγνωκε τὴν ἐν πᾶσι τοῦ γενητοῦ σαφῶς προλαβὼν οὐδένειαν, ὁ δ' ἀπογνοὺς ἑαυτὸν γινώσκει τὸν ὄντα.

[207] μωυσέως γνώριμοι· τὴν γὰρ αἰτίαν χρησμῷ and λάβοι τοῦ δημιουργήσαντος ἔννοιαν.

[208] ἄνωθεν ἐνέπνει τῆς ἰδίου θειότητος.

[209] Philo infers it from the fact that creation of man (Gen. 1:26) is phrased in plural: ποιήσωμεν ἄνθρωπον. He also draws a conclusion that inferior powers' participation in the creation of this world should explain the existence of evil. Cf. *Agr.* 128-9 [247:172-4].

God rescues out of the prison'.[210] At the same time, he disapproves of mortification or maltreatment of the body and even refers to it as deiform (θεοειδές).[211] He calls to use the body in charitable purposes and especially to help one's fellow-men. When we share God's gift with others, we become like God in his quality of Benefactor. In *Spec. Leg.* 4.187-8 [LCL 341:122-4; Colson 123-5, modified], Philo says that 'this is to act in imitation of God (ἕπεσθαι θεῷ), since he too can do both [evil and good] but wills the good',[212] and he concludes: 'These things men must imitate (μιμεῖσθαι) if they have any aspiration to be assimilated to God (ἐξομοιώσεως τῆς πρὸς θεόν)'.[213] Such soul, for Philo, is 'compacted of perfect virtues' (παγεῖσα ἐκ τελείων ἀρετῶν) and is 'the true altar of God' (τό ἀλήθειον τοῦ θεοῦ θυσιαστήριον) (*Spec. Leg.* 1.287 (LCL 320:266; Colson 267]).

Only the purified soul (intellectually and morally) is most prepared to set out on the final stage of its journey to God, which is the mystical vision. In the last part of the quoted passage from *Migr.* 195, Philo says:

> The third stage is when, having opened up the road that leads from self (ἀφ' αὐτοῦ), in hope thereby to come to discern the Universal Father (πατέρα τῶν ὅλων), so hard to trace and unriddle, it will crown maybe the accurate self-knowledge it has gained with the knowledge of God himself. It will stay no longer in Haran, the organs of sense, but withdraw into itself (εἰς ἑαυτὸν ἐπιστραφείς). For it is impossible that the mind whose course still lies in the sensible rather than the mental should arrive at the contemplation of him that is.[214]

Philo has many descriptions of what happens to the soul when it reaches this level. He says that in mystical vision such a person is 'drunk with sober drunkenness' (μεθύει τὴν νήφουσαν μέθην),[215] he 'resembles possessed people and corybants, filled with inspired frenzy' (ὥσπερ οἱ κατεχόμενοι καὶ κορυβαντιῶντες βακχευθεῖσα

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[210] *Leg. All.* 3.42 [LCL 226:328; Colson 329]: Οὐ γάρ ἐστι <τὸν> κατοικοῦντα ἐν σώματι καὶ τῷ θνητῷ γένει δυνατὸν θεῷ συγγενέσθαι, ἀλλὰ τὸν <ὃν> ἐκ τοῦ δεσμωτηρίου θεὸς διαρρύεται.

[211] *Opif.* 69 [LCL 226:54].

[212] τὸ γὰρ ἕπεσθαι θεῷ τοῦτ' ἐστίν, ἐπεὶ κἀκείνῳ δύναμις μέν ἐστι δρᾶν ἑκάτερα, βούλεται δὲ μόνα τἀγαθά.

[213] ταῦτα μιμεῖσθαι προσήκει τοὺς ἀνθρώπους, εἴ γέ τις αὐτοῖς φροντίς ἐστιν ἐξομοιώσεως τῆς πρὸς θεόν.

[214] ἔπειτ' ἀνατεμὼν ὁδὸν τὴν ἀφ' αὐτοῦ καὶ διὰ ταύτης ἐλπίσας τὸν δυστόπαστον καὶ δυστέκμαρτον πατέρα τῶν ὅλων κατανοῆσαι, μαθὼν ἀκριβῶς ἑαυτὸν εἴσεται τάχα που καὶ θεόν, οὐκέτι μένων ἐν χαρράν, τοῖς αἰσθήσεως ὀργάνοις, ἀλλ' εἰς ἑαυτὸν ἐπιστραφείς· ἀμήχανον γὰρ ἔτι κινούμενον αἰσθητῶς μᾶλλον ἢ νοητῶς πρὸς τὴν τοῦ ὄντος ἐλθεῖν ἐπίσκεψιν.

[215] *Leg. All.* 1.84 [LCL 226:202; Colson 203].

καὶ θεοφορηθεῖσα),[216] he falls into 'divine possession' (ἡ ἔνθεος),[217] 'ecstasy' (ἡ ἔκστασις),[218] and 'madness' (ἡ μανία),[219] and the 'whole mind is snatched up in holy frenzy by the Divine, and he finds his gladness in God alone'.[220] On this level people become 'partakers of good things', and 'attain to perfect godlikeness' (ἐκθειασθῇ).[221] The most distinguished example of deification on this level is Moses. After a brief exaltation of him as a ruler, Philo says that God also 'appointed him as god (εἰς θεὸν αὐτὸν ἐχειροτόνει), placing all the bodily region and the mind which rules it in subjection and slavery to him' (*Sacr.* 8 [LCL 227:100; Colson 101]).[222] In this passage he is portrayed as a cosmic model. He is portrayed so again in another: 'For he was named god (θεός) and king of the whole race. He is said to have *entered into the darkness where God was* [Exodus 20:21], that is into the unseen, invisible, incorporeal and archetypal essence of existing things (τῶν ὄντων παραδειγματικὴν οὐσίαν), and to have beheld what is hidden from the sight of mortal nature.... He has set before us, like some well-wrought picture, a piece of work beautiful and godlike (θεοειδὲς ἔργον), a model for those who are willing to copy it (παράδειγμα τοῖς ἐθέλουσι μιμεῖσθαι)' (*Mos.* 1.158 [LCL 289:358; Colson 359, slightly modified]).[223] The result of such deification for Moses himself was the fact that he 'was changed from mortal existence to life immortal' (μεταβάλλειν ἐκ θνητῆς ζωῆς εἰς ἀθάνατον βίον) (*Virt.* 76 [LCL 341:208; Colson 209]). That he did not become God in the same way the true God is can be seen from another passage that qualifies deification as follows: 'For no created being is God in reality, but only in men's fancies, deprived as it is of the essential attribute of eternatlity' (*Virt.* 65 [LCL 341:202; Colson 203, slightly modified]).[224] Therefore, we can assume that Moses' deified status as immortal being has, what I called earlier, an attributive character

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[216] *Quis her.* 69 [LCL 261:317; Colson 316, slightly modified].

[217] Ibid. 264 [LCL 261:418; Colson 419].

[218] Ibid.

[219] Ibid.

[220] *Plant.* 39 [LCL 247:232; Colson 233]: ὅλον δὲ τὸν νοῦν ὑπὸ θείας κατοχῆς συναρπασθεὶς οἴστρῳ καὶ ἐνευφραινόμενος μόνῳ θεῷ.

[221] *Leg. All.* 3.44 [LCL 226:330; Colson 331].

[222] *Sacr.* 8 [LCL 227:100]: εἰς θεὸν αὐτὸν ἐχειροτόνει πᾶσαν τὴν περὶ τὸ σῶμα χώραν καὶ τὸν ἡγεμόνα αὐτῆς νοῦν ὑπήκοα καὶ δοῦλα ἀποφήνας.

[223] ὠνομάσθη γὰρ ὅλου τοῦ ἔθνους θεὸς καὶ βασιλεύς· εἴς τε τὸν γνόφον, ἔνθα ἦν ὁ θεός, εἰσελθεῖν λέγεται, τουτέστιν εἰς τὴν ἀειδῆ καὶ ἀόρατον καὶ ἀσώματον τῶν ὄντων παραδειγματικὴν οὐσίαν, τὰ ἀθέατα φύσει θνητῇ κατανοῶν· καθάπερ τε γραφὴν εὖ δεδημιουργημένην ἑαυτὸν καὶ τὸν ἑαυτοῦ βίον εἰς μέσον προαγαγὼν πάγκαλον καὶ θεοειδὲς ἔργον ἔστησε παράδειγμα τοῖς ἐθέλουσι μιμεῖσθαι. Cf. Goodenough, *By Light*, 186, nn. 32-34.

[224] γενητὸς γὰρ οὐδεὶς ἀληθείᾳ θεός, ἀλλὰ δόξῃ μόνον, τὸ ἀναγκαιότατον ἀφηρημένος, αἰδιότητα.

making him different from the God whom he is like.[225] In the same way as Moses, other souls become 'divinized (θεοφορεῖσθαι) by ascending not to the air or to the ether or to heaven (which is) higher than all but to (a region) above the heavens' (*QE* 2.40 [LCL 401:82; Marcus 82]). It also means that the soul becomes 'changed into the divine, so that such men become akin to God and truly divine' (*QE* 2.29 [LCL 401:82; Marcus 70]). On one particular occasion Philo himself experienced this mystical vision of 'being carried to the height in a kind of divinization of the soul' (κατά τινα τῆς ψυχῆς ἐπιθειασμόν).[226] The progressive character of deification also has a clear element of grace.[227] Philo often uses this term to emphasize the divine involvement in the process of the soul's ascent to God. In *Ebr.* 144 [LCL 247:394; Colson 395], he says: 'For without divine grace it is impossible either to leave the ranks of mortality, or to stay for ever among the immortal. Now when grace fills the soul, that soul thereby rejoices and smiles and dances, for it is possessed and inspired, so that to many of the unenlightened it may seem to be drunken, crazy and beside itself'.[228] For Philo, however, such state of the soul is the sure sign of deification as it finds itself in an 'a constant and continuous and unbroken fellowship (οἰκείωσιν ἁρμονίας) and union (ἑνώσεως) with God who is made our own' (*Post.* 12 [LCL 227:334; Colson 335, slightly modified]).[229] Interpreting the drunkenness of 1 Sam. 1.14 in the sense of being overcome by the divine possession, he declaires: 'How vast is the boldness of the soul which is filled with the gracious gifts of God!... I will... hasten to that most glorious and loveliest of visions—the Vision of the Uncreated (τὴν τοῦ ἀγενήτου)' (*Ebr.* 144 [LCL 247:396, 8; Colson 397, 9]).[230]

Obviously, Philo adds a range of aspects that widen the meaning of deification. Just as Plato and others before him, Philo refers to immortality as the main quality of deification. His vocabulary includes such terminology of divinization as ἐκθειάζω, ἐπιθειάζω, θεοφορέω, to be appointed or named 'as god'

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[225] Scholars have various opinions on the nature of Moses' deification. For a discussion, see Litwa, *Being Transformed*, 108, n. 48.

[226] *Leg. All.* 3.44 [LCL 226:330; Colson 331].

[227] On the relation of grace and human freedom in Philo, see Dihle, *The Theory of Will*, 68-98.

[228] ἄνευ γὰρ θείας χάριτος ἀμήχανον ἢ λιποτακτῆσαι τὰ θνητὰ ἢ τοῖς ἀφθάρτοις ἀεὶ παραμεῖναι· χάριτος δ' ἥτις ἂν πληρωθῇ ψυχή, γέγηθεν εὐθὺς καὶ μειδιᾷ καὶ ἀνορχεῖται· βεβάκχευται γάρ, ὡς πολλοῖς τῶν ἀνοργιάστων μεθύειν καὶ παρακινεῖν καὶ ἐξεστάναι ἂν δόξαι.

[229] τὸ συνεχὲς καὶ ἐπάλληλον καὶ ἀδιάστατον τῆς κατ' οἰκείωσιν ἁρμονίας καὶ ἑνώσεως παριστάς. Cf. *Cher.* 42-53.

[230] παμπόλλη γε παρρησία τῆς ψυχῆς, ἢ τῶν χαρίτων τοῦ θεοῦ πεπλήρωται... πρὸς τὴν τοῦ ἀγενήτου παγκάλην καὶ ἀοίδιμον θέαν ἐπειχθῆναι.

(ὡς θεός), 'be possessed by God' (ἡ ἔνθεος), and represent a 'godlike' person (θεοειδής, καθ' ὁμοίωσιν θεοῦ). Among other related words he also uses those that speak of 'imitation' (μιμέομαι, παράδειγμα), 'participation' (μετέχω, μετουσία), 'change' or 'transfer from one state to another' (μεταλαμβάνω, μεταβαίνω), 'assimilation to God' (ἐξομοίωσις πρὸς θεόν), 'union' with God (οἰκείωσις, ἁρμονία, ἕνωσις), and the need to 'follow God' (ἕπεσθαι θεῷ). The deified state itself seems to have a little more colour with Philo than with Plato. It is often described in terms of inner personal feelings or has a sense of relationship such as 'friendship with God' and 'unbroken fellowship'. The object of one's contemplation is understood to be the *living* God of Scriptures. He is a personal and active being that communicates himself through the Logos to men.[231] This idea is probably reflected in Francis Colson's translation of *Praem*. 122-3 [341:386; Colson 387], where man's mind is said to be like a house of God that possesses '*personally* (ἰδίως) the God who is the God of all'.[232] Yet the nature of the soul's relationship with this God is less clear perhaps due Philo's desire to keep it within the apophatic and mystical limits. It is interesting to note that being a Jew, Philo uses a range of biblical terms that are not found in Plato. Perhaps the starkest ones are 'grace', 'Moses', and 'nothingness of the created being'. All three of them will be important for the Christian concept of deification setting him much closer to the early Church than to rabbinic Judaism.[233] Although Athanasius never mentions Philo by name, scholars believe that he was apparently familiar with this type of Platonism, and especially with Philo's allegorical method of interpreting Scriptures.[234] Of the deification terminology that we find in Philo, Athanasius uses ἐκθειάζω to describe the divinization of created elements in the context of pagan worship. Similar to Philo, he refers to men as gods (though no more than 5 times throughout his writings, see ch. 5) and one time calls 'Moses a god of Pharaoh' (μωσῆν ἐτίθει θεὸν τοῦ φαραώ).[235] Wherever he does this, however, he frames such instances with references (or allusions) to Ps. 81:6 (LXX), making sure that human divinity is of a different type than the divinity of Christ. In his *Vita Antonii*, he depicts the

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[231] Some scholars argue that Philo's God is far from being personal. Cf. Tripolitis, *The Doctrine of the Soul*, 5-6.
[232] θεὸς ἰδίως ὁ τῶν συμπάντων θεός. Emphasis mine.
[233] Chadwick, 'Philo', 156-7.
[234] See the references to Philo with regard to Athanasius' thought in the index of names in Meijering, *Orthodoxy and Platonism*, 201.
[235] *CA* 1.39 [Metzler 149].

divinized person as exhibiting the same elements of 'unspeakable joy' and 'ecstasis' that are characteristic of the Philonic divinization. All these instances will be analized in much detail in chapters 5 and 6.

2.1.3.3 Plotinus

One of the famous expressions penned by Plotinus defines the purpose of this life as 'a flight of the alone to the Alone'[236] which 'is the life of gods and the godlike and blessed men'. [237] Plotinus understands this pattern of deification within the framework of the layered and dynamic Universe. At the top of it is the One, or the Good (τὸ ἕν, τὸ πρῶτον, τὸ ἀγαθόν). The second and third principles, or *hypostases*, are referred to respectively as Intellect (νοῦς) and Soul (ψυχὴ τοῦ παντός, or τῶν ὅλων). He calls all three *hypostases* the divine realities (τὰ θεῖα),[238] and sometimes associates them with the names of three gods: Ouranos, Kronos, and Zeus.[239] The Intellect is the second god (θεός δεύτερος),[240] and the Soul is 'divine' (θεῖον)[241] and 'the god of the lowest rank' (θεὸς οὖσα ὁ ὕστερος).[242] However, both are divine in so far as they are oriented to the highest *hypostasis*, the One. In this hierarchical structure,[243] with various degrees of divinity and perfection, deification is conceived as a process of return (ἐπιστροφή) to a divine 'homeland' (πατρίδα) where we find the Father (πατήρ), the One.[244]

According to Plotinus the One is 'beyond being' (ἐπέκεινα οὐσίας). [245] It is ineffable and escapes a positive designation. We cannot attribute any predicate to the One, even to say that it is, for it will make the One dual: 'the One' and 'is'.[246] It is often called the Good in the sense that everything desires it, while the Good itself transcends this name. In the longest passage (*Enn.* 6.8, 13-18 [LCL 468:266-89]), where Plotinus affords a luxury of describing the One in positive terms, he warns

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[236] *Enn.* 6.9.11.49-51 [LCL 468:344; Armstrong 345]): γυγὴ μόνου πρὸς μόνον.

[237] Ibid. 6.9.11.49-51 [LCL 468:344; Armstrong 345]): οὗτος θεῶν καὶ ἀνθρώπων θείων καὶ εὐδαιμόνων βίος.

[238] Ibid. 5.1.7.49 [LCL 444:38].

[239] Ibid. 5.8.12-13 [LCL 444:27-80]. Cf. Hadot, 'Ouranos, Kronos and Zeus', 124-37.

[240] Ibid. 5.5.3.3-4 [LCL 444:162].

[241] Ibid. 4.8.5.25-7 [LCL 443:412; Armstrong 413].

[242] Ibid.

[243] In this section I use the word 'hierarchical' in the sense of the 'prior' and 'posterior' orders (in which one depends on the other) rather than in the modern sense of laddered structure. Cf. O'Meara, 'The Hierarchical Ordering', 66-7.

[244] Ibid. 1.6.8.17-23 [440:256].

[245] Ibid. 1.7.1.19 [LCL 440:270].

[246] Ibid. 5.4.1.5-16 [LCL 444:140].

that he is about to speak incorrectly (οὐκ ὀρθῶς) insisting on the importance of using the verbal qualifier—'so to speak' (οἷον). Elsewhere, with such qualifier in mind, Plotinus feels free to both affirm and deny certain qualities with regard to the One. Thus, he says that the One is and is not,[247] it subsists and does not subsist,[248] it is act and no act,[249] it is free and not free,[250] it has life and has no life.[251] In one passage he combines negative and positive language in the description of the One as 'neither thing nor quality nor quantity nor intellect nor soul; not in motion, not at rest, not in place not in time; it is the self-defined, unique in form, or better, formless' (*Enn.* 6.9.3.41-3 [LCL 468:312-4; MacKenna, *Plotinus*, 617]).[252] Despite the heavy emphasis on the negative terminology in the *Enneades*, Lloyd Gerson distinguishes what he calls nine 'entative' qualities that are characteristic of the One.[253] The list includes (1) simplicity in the sense that essence and existence are identical in the One. It causes other things to exist, while itself remaining untouched by their existence. From the simplicity can be deduced (2) self-sufficiency which means that the One does not depend on any components. It is (3) perfect (τέλειον) in that there is no gap between what the One is, what it can be, or what it will be. It is (4) the most powerful being. It is (5) eternal, and (6) infinite (ἀνείδεον) because it is ἀρχή of everything else. It is (7) everywhere (πανταχοῦ) and nowhere. To describe the relation of the One to other things (where the former is untouched, while the latter is utterly dependent), Plotinus uses the words 'presence' (παρουσία), participation (μετάληψις, μέθεξις, μετουσία), and 'association' (κοινωνία). It possesses (8) the absolute goodness—perhaps the most frequent quality that Plotinus mentions—that makes other things desire it. It possesses (9) life of cognitive nature.

From the One emanate, or unfold, two other *hypostases*: the Intellect and Soul. Plotinus compares this process of emanation (πρόοδος) to the outpouring of light from the sun. Just as the sun experiences no change, so does the One remains untouched by its own emission.[254] '[The One], being perfect, by not seeking

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[247] Ibid. 6.7.38.1-4 [LCL 468:204]; 6.8.8.14-5 [LCL 468:250].
[248] Ibid. 6.8.10.35-8 [LCL 468:260]; 6.8.11.1-5 [LCL 468:260].
[249] Ibid. 6.8.20.13-5 [LCL 468:292]; 3.8.11.7-10 [LCL 442:398].
[250] Ibid. 6.8.20.17-19 [LCL 468:292]; 6.8.8.9-12 [LCL 468:250].
[251] Ibid. 5.4.2.17-9 [LCL 444:144-6]; 6.7.17.12-4 [LCL 468:140].
[252] οὐδέν ἐστιν αὐτῶν. οὔτε οὖν τι οὔτε ποιὸν οὔτε ποσὸν οὔτε νοῦν οὔτε ψυχήν· οὐδὲ κινούμενον οὐδ' αὖ ἑστώς, οὐκ ἐν τόπῳ, οὐκ ἐν χρόνῳ, ἀλλ' αὐτὸ καθ' αὑτὸ μονοειδές.
[253] Gerson, *Plotinus*, 15-20.
[254] e.g. *Enn.* 1.7.1.25-9 [LCL 440:270]; 5.1.71-7 [LCL 444:32-4].

anything, or having anything, or needing anything, overflows as it were, and its superabundance makes another' (*Enn*. 5.2.1.7-9 [LCL 444]; Deck, *Nature, Contemplation, and the One*, 27).[255] In contrast to the One who transcends being (as well as mind and thought; ἐπέκεινα νοῦ καὶ νοήσεως), the Intellect is said to be the highest and most perfect form of being. It contains the Forms, or the totality of all things in the Universe.[256] It is turned towards the One as its god ('Intellect has to look to that god in order to be Intellect')[257] whom it contemplates and becomes like it ('resembling the One').[258] The Intellect thinks the archetypal Forms as one whole[259] and is simultaneously subject and object.[260] Plotinus calls the Intellect the maker and Demiurge of the Universe (ποιητὴς καὶ δημιουργὸς τοῦ παντός) but this is not its direct function.[261] Instead, it is the function of the Soul flowing from the overabounding Intellect. It is the third *hypostasis* in the chain of being and its relation to the Intellect is similar to the relation of the second *hypostasis* to the One: the lower is the image (εἰκών) of the higher. Thus, the Intellect is the image (εἰκών),[262] imitation (μίμημα),[263] and type (εἴδωλον)[264] of the One; and the Soul is the image (εἰκών),[265] imitation (μίμημα),[266] and type (εἴδωλον)[267] of the Intellect. The Soul emanates from the Intellect and contemplates it in the same way as the Intellect emanates and contemplates the One. Instead of containing its entities as a whole (which is characteristic of the Intellect), the Soul possesses them in continuous succession as 'one act after another' (ἄλλο δὲ καὶ ἄλλο ἐνεργοῦν).[268] This makes the Soul to be in incessant motion and thereby generate an image of itself that sets the material Universe in order.[269] Plotinus identifies the creative power of the Soul with the *logoi*. The latter constitute an expression of the Forms and represent the productive structure of nature. They animate and organize the

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[255] ὃν γὰρ τέλειον τῷ μηδὲν ζητεῖν μηδὲ ἔχειν μηδὲ δεῖσθαι οἷον ὑπερερρύη καὶ τὸ ὑπερπλῆρες αὐτοῦ πεποίηκεν ἄλλο.

[256] Ibid. 5.7.1 [LCL 444:222-4].

[257] Ibid. 5.1.6.45 [LCL 444:32]: νοῦς δὲ ὡσαύτως πρὸς ἐκεῖνον, ἵνα ᾖ νοῦς.

[258] Ibid. 5.2.1.13 [LCL 444:58; Armstrong 59]: ὁμοῦ νοῦς γίγνεται καὶ ὄν.

[259] Ibid. 5.9.8.1-8 [LCL 444:304-6].

[260] Plotinus adopted the idea of the eternal mind who thinks as a whole from Aritstotle. Cf. *De Anima* 3.4.429b-430a [Ross 70].

[261] *Enn*. 2.3.18.14-15 [LCL 441:100].

[262] Ibid. 5.1.7.1 [LCL 444:32].

[263] Ibid. 5.4.2.26-7 [LCL 444:146].

[264] Ibid.

[265] Ibid. 5.8.12.16-7 [LCL 444:276].

[266] Ibid.

[267] Ibid. 5.1.7.39 [LCL 444:38].

[268] Ibid. 3.7.11.53 [LCL 442:340; Armstrong 341].

[269] Ibid. 4.8.3.26-30 [LCL 443:406].

cosmos, maintaining it in the best possible form.[270] Although the Soul is the Architect of the world, it never enters the realm of sense and change. It is at once immanent and transcendent in relation to the world. In his polemic treatise against the Gnostics, Plotinus denies that this world came into being as the result of the Soul's fall,[271] and argues that the Soul abides in the intelligible realm and produces the best of all possible worlds.[272]

In this context the individual soul (as part of the universal Soul)[273] is divine in virtue of its dynamic link to the Intellect and the One. Summarizing what this means for Plotinus' understanding of deification, Dominic O'Meara explains:

> [T]he divine, at all levels, is always present to us and available to us, whatever our aberrational preoccupation with material things and forgetfulness of our essential nature and divine 'homeland'. We are therefore anchored in divine Intellect and a part of us always remains 'there'.... The human self is mobile: we can live our lives at different levels, depending where we place our interests and activities. We can live the life of beasts, or the life of gods. Indeed we can become a god, or rather come back to live the life of the god that we essentially are.[274]

However, before the soul becomes divine, it finds itself descending first into the bodies of celestial star-gods and then to the human body that suits it the best. Plotinus describes this situation both as a fall and a necessity. It is a fall in so far as the soul voluntarily inclines[275] towards the material world in order to be independent of the World Soul. It is a necessity in the sense that every entity in the intelligible realm must be also represented in the material world.[276] The most significant result of the soul's fall is its self-isolation from the intelligible source-realm. To use the imagery of Plotinus (which he borrowed from Plato) the soul loses its wings[277] and is like a pilot who becomes so attached to his ship that he drowns with it when the vessel sinks. Elsewhere, Plotinus speaks of the fallen souls having forgotten their Fatherland,[278] no longer being able to discern their parents,[279]

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[270] Ibid. 5.9.3.21-37 [LCL 444:290].
[271] Ibid. 2.9.11.1-30 [LCL 441:266-8].
[272] Ibid. 2.8.4.1-32 [LCL 234-8].
[273] Ibid. 4.3.10.42 [LCL 443:70].
[274] O'Meara, *Platonopolis*, 38.
[275] Plotinus uses the word τόλμα to express the idea of irrepressible force in this inclination. Cf. Torchia, 'Plotinian, "Tolma"', 12-67.
[276] For the relation between freedom and necessity in Plotinus, see Leroux, 'Human Freedom', 292-314; Tripolitis, *The Doctrine of the Soul*, 54-6.
[277] *Enn*. 4.8.4.17-8 [LCL 443:408].
[278] Ibid. 1.6.8.17-23 [440:256].

and becoming 'dwellers in the Place of Unlikeness, where, fallen from all resemblance to the Divine, we lie in gloom and mud' (*Enn.* 1.8.13.16-8 [LCL 440:308; MacKenna, *Plotinus*, 76]).[280] The way out of this fateful situation is to go inward by recognizing the divine element within us. Plotinus compares the efforts of introspective withdrawal to the process of shaping a statue:

> Withdraw into yourself and look. And if you do not find yourself beautiful yet, act as does the creator of a statue that is to be made beautiful: he cuts away here, he smooths there, he makes this line lighter, this other purer, until a lovely face has grown upon his work. So do you also; cut away all that is excessive, straighten all that is crooked, bring light to all that is overcast, labour to make all one glow of beauty and never cease chiseling your statue, until there shall shine out on you from it the godlike splendour of virtue (τῆς ἀρετῆς ἡ θεοειδὴς ἀγλαΐα), until you shall see the perfect goodness surely established in the stainless shrine (*Enn.* 1.6.9 [MacKenna, *Plotinus*, 63]).[281]

By going inward, the soul recovers its simplicity, its kinship to the divine. This means that the soul's upward movement to the One is at the same time an act of inward concentration: 'For Plotinus, the higher is not the more remote; the higher is the more inward: one climbs up by climbing in, as it were'.[282] This process of climbing in, or up, involves moral and intellectual purification (κάθαρσις) by which the soul becomes progressively divinized and assimilated to the One. The moral purification implies the practice of virtue, and Plotinus draws a distinction between the civic and cathartic types of virtue. The former has to do with the good life on this earth and may have a place only in the beginning.[283] The good man 'will leave that [civic virtue; πολιτικὴ ἀρετή] behind, and choose another, the life of the gods: for it is to them, not to good men, that we are to be made like (οὐ πρὸς ἀνθρώπους ἀγαθοὺς ἡ ὁμοίωσις)' (*Enn.* 1.2.7.26-8 [LCL 440:146; Armstrong 147]).[284] And he

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[279] Ibid. 5.1.1.13 [LCL 444:10].

[280] γίνεται γὰρ παντάπασιν ἐν τῷ τῆς ἀνομοιότητος τόπῳ, ἔνθα δὺς εἰς αὐτὴν εἰς βόρβορον σκοτεινὸν ἔσται πεσών.

[281] ἄναγε ἐπὶ σαυτὸν καὶ ἴδε· κἂν μήπω σαυτὸν ἴδῃς καλόν, οἷα ποιητὴς ἀγάλματος, ὃ δεῖ καλὸν γενέσθαι, τὸ μὲν ἀφαιρεῖ, τὸ δὲ ἀπέξεσε, τὸ δὲ λεῖον, τὸ δὲ καθαρὸν ἐποίησεν, ἕως ἔδειξε καλὸν ἐπὶ τῷ ἀγάλματι πρόσωπον, οὕτω καὶ σὺ ἀφαίρει ὅσα περιττὰ καὶ ἀπεύθυνε ὅσα σκολιά, ὅσα σκοτεινὰ καθαίρων ἐργάζου εἶναι λαμπρὰ καὶ μὴ παύσῃ τεκταίνων τὸ σὸν ἄγαλμα, ἕως ἂν ἐκλάμψειέ σοι τῆς ἀρετῆς ἡ θεοειδὴς ἀγλαΐα, ἕως ἂν ἴδῃς σωφροσύνην ἐν ἁγνῷ βεβῶσαν βάθρῳ.

[282] Louth, *The Mystical Tradition*, 40.

[283] On the relation between the civic and cathartic virtues in the ethical system of Plotinus, see Dillon, 'Ethic for the Sage', 315-36.

[284] ἀλλὰ τοῦτον μὲν καταλιπών [πολιτικὴ ἀρετή], ἄλλον δὲ ἑλόμενος τὸν τῶν θεῶν· πρὸς γὰρ τούτους, οὐ πρὸς ἀνθρώπους ἀγαθοὺς ἡ ὁμοίωσις.

adds: 'Likeness to good men is the likeness of two pictures (εἰκὼν εἰκόνι ὡμοίωται) of the same subject to each other; but likeness (ὁμοίωσις) to the gods is likeness to the model (παράδειγμα), a being of a different kind to ourselves' (*Enn.* 1.2.7.28-31 [LCL 440:146; Armstrong 147]).[285] Unlike the civic virtue, the cathartic one is aimed at the detachment of the soul from the world of senses and preparation for contemplation. To purify itself in this way, the soul needs to master four cardinal virtues—wisdom, courage, self-control, and justice. In the passage where Plotinus discusses this, he concludes: 'One would not be wrong in calling this state of the soul "likeness to God" (ὁμοίωσιν πρὸς θεόν), in which its activity is intellectual, and it is free in this way from bodily affections. For the divine too is pure, and its activity is of such a kind that that which imitates (μιμούμενον) it has wisdom' (*Enn.* 1.2.3.19-22 [LCL 440:134; Armstrong 135, slightly modified]).[286] On this level the soul, being liberated from the passions, stops the exercise of its lower faculties such as opinion (δόξα), memory and remembrance (μνήμη and ἀνάμνησις), and reason (διάνοια). It can then progress with the intellectual purification which includes the mathematical and dialectic training. The study of these disciplines liberates the soul from multiplicity and effects deification and unity. We are to 'call on God who made that of which you have the mental picture, pray him to enter you. And may he come, bringing his own universe with him, with all the gods within him, he who is one and all, and each god is all the gods coming together into one' (*Enn.* 5.8.14-17 [LCL 444:264-6; Armstrong 265, slightly modified]).[287] In another passage, Plotinus says that 'here [in the purified state] is contained all that is immortal; nothing here but is divine Intellect; all is God, this is the place of every soul. Here is rest unbroken' (*Enn.* 5.1.4.11-2 [LCL 444:22; MacKenna, *Plotinus*, 372, slightly modified]).[288] Jean Trouillard calls the fruit of this intellectual purification 'générosité intellectuelle', and describes it as 'disposition d'audace, de souplesse et de dépouillement noétiques'.[289] In such disposition of the soul, Plotinus was able to

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[285] ὁμοίωσις δὲ ἡ μὲν πρὸς τούτους, ὡς εἰκὼν εἰκόνι ὡμοίωται ἀπὸ τοῦ αὐτοῦ ἑκατέρα. ἡ δὲ πρὸς ἄλλον ὡς πρὸς παράδειγμα.

[286] τὴν δὴ τοιαύτην διάθεσιν τῆς ψυχῆς καθ᾽ ἣν νοεῖ τε καὶ ἀπαθὴς οὕτως ἐστίν, εἴ τις ὁμοίωσιν λέγοι πρὸς θεόν, οὐκ ἂν ἁμαρτάνοι· καθαρὸν γὰρ καὶ τὸ θεῖον καὶ ἡ ἐνέργεια τοιαύτη, ὡς τὸ μιμούμενον ἔχειν φρόνησιν.

[287] θεὸν δὲ καλέσας τὸν πεποιηκότα ἧς ἔχεις τὸ φάντασμα εὖξαι ἐλθεῖν. ὁ δὲ ἥκοι τὸν αὐτοῦ κόσμον φέρων μετὰ πάντων τῶν ἐν αὐτῷ θεῶν εἷς ὢν καὶ πάντες, καὶ ἕκαστος πάντες συνόντες εἰς ἕν.

[288] πάντα γὰρ ἐν αὐτῷ τὰ ἀθάνατα περιέχει, νοῦν πάντα, θεὸν πάντα, ψυχὴν πᾶσαν, ἑστῶτα ἀεί.

[289] Trouillard, *La purification plotinienne*, 138.

experience the union with the Divine on more than one occasion. In one of the most cited passages, he says:

> Often I have woken up out of the body to myself and have entered into myself, going out from all other things; I have seen a beauty wonderfully great and felt assurance that then most of all I belonged to the better part; I have actually lived the best life and come to identity with the divine (τῷ θείῳ εἰς ταὐτὸν γεγενημένος); and set firm in it I have come to that supreme actuality, setting myself above all else in the realm of Intellect (*Enn.* 4.8.1.1-8 [LCL 443:396; Armstrong 397]).[290]

Other descriptions emphasize the mystical nature of such an experience. It is said that '[o]nly by a leap can we reach to this One' (*Enn.* 5.5.4.9-10 [LCL 444:166; MacKenna, *Plotinus*, 406]).[291] More frequently such an encounter with the One is characterized as a vision which happens suddenly (ἐξαίφνης).[292] Therefore, '[w]e must not run after it, but prepare ourselves for the vision and then wait tranquilly for its appearance, as the eye waits on the rising of the sun, which in its own time appears above the horizon... and gives itself to our sight' (*Enn.* 5.5.8.3-8 [LCL 444:178; MacKenna, *Plotinus*, 409; slightly modified]).[293] The nature of this vision has to do with the intelligible light whose illumination makes the seer and the seen one.[294] Such a soul comes to recognize that it 'sees principle by principle (ἀρχῇ ἀρχὴν) and that like is united with like (ὁμοίῳ τὸ ὅμοιον)'.[295] In this state the soul has finally arrived at the Fatherland:

> The man formed by this mingling with the Supreme... has become the Unity... no movement now, no passion, no outlooking desire, once this ascent is achieved; reasoning is in abeyance and all Intellection and even, to dare the word, the very self: caught away, filled with God, he has in perfect stillness attained isolation; all the being calmed, he turns neither to this side nor to that, not even inwards to himself; utterly resting he has become very rest.... [He] becomes identical with the Transcendent of Being. The self thus lifted, we are in the likeness of the Supreme.... This

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[290] πολλάκις ἐγειρόμενος εἰς ἐμαυτὸν ἐκ τοῦ σώματος καὶ γινόμενος τῶν μὲν ἄλλων ἔξω, ἐμαυτοῦ δὲ εἴσω, θαυμαστὸν ἡλίκον ὁρῶν κάλλος, καὶ τῆς κρείττονος μοίρας πιστεύσας τότε μάλιστα εἶναι, ζωήν τε ἀρίστην ἐνεργήσας καὶ τῷ θείῳ εἰς ταὐτὸν γεγενημένος καὶ ἐν αὐτῷ ἱδρυθεὶς εἰς ἐνέργειαν ἐλθὼν ἐκείνην ὑπὲρ πᾶν τὸ ἄλλο νοητὸν ἐμαυτὸν ἱδρύσας. For a comment on this passage, see 'Blumenthal, 'On Soul and Intellect', 95-6.

[291] ἀλλὰ στῆναι παντελῶς δεδιότα αὐτοῦ.

[292] *Enn.* 6.7.36.19 [LCL 468:200].

[293] διὸ οὐ χρὴ διώκειν, ἀλλ' ἡσυχῇ μένειν, ἕως ἂν φανῇ, παρασκευάσαντα ἑαυτὸν θεατὴν εἶναι, ὥσπερ ὀφθαλμὸς ἀνατολὰς ἡλίου περιμένει· ὁ δὲ ὑπερφανεὶς τοῦ ὁρίζοντον... ἔδωκεν ἑαυτὸν θεάσασθαι τοῖς ὄμμασιν.

[294] *Enn.* 6.9.11.5 [LCL 468:340]: ἓν ἦν αὐτὸς ὁ ἰδὼν πρὸς τὸ ἑωραμένον.

[295] εἰδήσει ὡς ἀρχῇ ἀρχὴν ὁρᾷ καὶ συγγίνεται [καὶ] τῷ ὁμοίῳ τὸ ὅμοιον.

is the life of gods and of the godlike and blessed among men... a flight of the alone to the Alone' (*Enn.* 6.9.8-51 [LCL 468:340-4; MacKenna, *Plotinus*, 624-5]).[296]

The idea of flight together with the expression 'the alone to the Alone' underlines the solitary aspect of the soul's deification much more than did Plato. In this perspective '[t]he One has no concern for the soul that seeks him; nor has the soul more than a passing concern for others engaged on the same quest: it has no companions'. [297] Overall, Plotinus has a very rich vocabulary of deification broadening the traditional terminology and adding other words to it. He likes to describe it in terms of divine presence, immortality, touch, mingling, blending, participation, imitation, ecstacy, self-surrender, motion, likeness to God, possessing the divine, being filled with God or in love with the One. Unlike the modern writers who prefer to distinguish between 'becoming like god' and 'becoming god' (which ancient authors do not seem to be doing that firmly),[298] Plotinus certainly assumed the possibility of both: θεῷ ὁμοιωθῆναι[299] and θεὸν εἶναι.[300] The same possibility will be assumed by Athanasius, who is able to speak both of 'becoming *like* God in essence' (ὅμοιοι κατ᾽ οὐσίαν τοῦ θεοῦ γενέσθαι)[301] and 'being gods' (θεοί ἐστε).[302] Or, what is more typical of Athanasius, he speaks of us 'being deified' and 'being gods': 'All that are called sons and gods (ὅσοι υἱοί τε καὶ θεοὶ ἐκλήθησαν)… were deified (ἐθεοποιήθησαν) through the Logos' (*CA* 1.39 [Metzler 149]). Although Athanasius is famous for having created the divinized portrait of the anchorite monk Antony, he never speaks of deification in terms of 'flight of the alone to the Alone'. However, one feature that he does make use of quite frequently in his early work is Plotinus' introspection, and I will discuss its significance for deification in chapter 3.

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[296] ἦν δὲ ἓν καὶ αὐτὸς διαφορὰν ἐν αὑτῷ.... οὐ γάρ τι ἐκινεῖτο παρ᾽ αὐτῷ, οὐ θυμός, οὐκ ἐπιθυμία ἄλλου παρῆν αὐτῷ ἀναβεβηκότι—ἀλλ᾽ οὐδὲ λόγος οὐδέ τις νόησις οὐδ᾽ ὅλως αὐτός, εἰ δεῖ καὶ τοῦτο λέγειν. ἀλλ᾽ ὥσπερ ἁρπασθεὶς ἢ ἐνθουσιάσας ἡσυχῇ ἐν ἐρήμῳ καὶ καταστάσει γεγένηται ἀτρεμεῖ, τῇ αὑτοῦ οὐσίᾳ οὐδαμῇ ἀποκλίνων οὐδὲ περὶ αὑτὸν στρεφόμενος, ἑστὼς πάντη καὶ οἷον στάσις γενόμενος.... ἔχει ὁμοίωμα ἐκείνου αὑτόν, καὶ εἰ ἀφ᾽ αὑτοῦ μεταβαίνοι ὡς εἰκὼν πρὸς ἀρχέτυπον.... καὶ οὗτος θεῶν καὶ ἀνθρώπων θείων καὶ εὐδαιμόνων βίος, ἀπαλλαγὴ τῶν ἄλλων τῶν τῇδε, βίος ἀνήδονος τῶν τῇδε, φυγὴ μόνου πρὸς μόνον.

[297] Louth, *The Mystical Tradition*, 51.

[298] Litwa, *Being Transformed*, 223. Cf. also Litwa's reference (ibid., n. 70) to the text from Sallustius, *Concerning the Gods and Universe*, 14: 'We, when we are good, have union with the Gods beause we are like them' (δι᾽ ὁμοιότητα θεοῖς συναπτόμεθα).

[299] *Enn.* 1.2.1.4 [LCL 440:126].

[300] Ibid. 1.2.6.3 [LCL 440:142].

[301] *Ep. Afr.* 7 [Brennecke 333; NPNF² 4:492].

[302] *Ep. Ser.* 1.25 [Savvidis 543].

If Heinrich Dörrie's article 'Was ist spätantiker Platonismus?' is correct in suggesting that Platonism had a religious significance besides being a philosophical school, then Plotinus' language of deification carried more than just a metaphorical sense.[303] It offered an alternative doctrine of God and deification and in that way made it important that Christianity was to be in dialogue with it. Scholars note that '[a] further development in later Neoplatonism tended to reinforce the difficulty in divinization'.[304] Such authors as Iamblichus elaborated additional levels of divinity (both from the traditional Greek pantheon associated with the hierarchical principles in Plotinus and from the Egyptian and Chaldaean religions) which gave a 'greater range in what divinization as a philosophical goal could mean'.[305] At the same time, the introduction of additional levels also had 'the effect of making the higher levels of the divine, in particular the highest principle, source of the divinity of all else, more remote, more difficult of access'.[306] While for Arthur Armstrong 'the thought and language of Plotinus about the Divine, especially the One or Good, and human encounter with God, cannot simply be dismissed... as "impersonal"',[307] the metaphysical sophistication of later Neoplatonism tended to increase such understanding. Against this background Athanasius' theological task can be seen as one of articulating the doctrine of God and deification in such a way that it is both sensitive to the Platonic language and at the same time different from it. As we will see, this strategy is especially played out in Athanasius' double treatise composed with this particular task in mind. While in the first part of his treatise (*Contra Gentes*) he generally keeps the continuity with the Platonic thought, in his second part (*De Incarnatione*) he seeks to formulate a distinctly Christian worldview. Facing either pagan or Arian opposition, Athanasius counters it most frequently by drawing his arguments from Scripture. The Old and New Testaments are the most cited source in his writings, and he uses them to shape and inform his doctrine of God and deification. Below I would like to survey a few specific passages that are helpful to keep in mind before we approach Athanasius.

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[303] Dörrie, 'Was ist spätantiker Platonismus?', 285-302.

[304] O'Meara, *Platonopolis*, 38.

[305] Ibid.

[306] Ibid., 39.

[307] Armstrong, 'Plotinus and Christianity', 122. Cf. Ibid., 'Individual and Person', 49-68; Ibid., *Plotinian and Christian Studies*, 131-2.

2.2. Deification in the Scripture

The four most famous passages that were seen as speaking of deification and godlikeness in the early Church are Ps. 81:6-7 (LXX), 2-Pet. 1:3-4, Gen. 1:26-7, and 1-Jn. 3:2-3. The text from Ps. 81:6-7 (LXX) (also cited by Jesus in Jn. 10: 34-6) reads as follows: 'I said, "You are 'gods'; you are all sons of the Most High". But you will die like mere men; you will fall like every other ruler' (NIV).[308] While it is difficult to determine from the context what 'gods' and 'sons' mean (modern commentators usually take them as honourary epithets that describe the human rulers),[309] it is clear that both words are used with reference to human beings. In this passage deification embraces the idea of sonship, and Athanasius often uses it[310] as the most primary aspect of what it means to be god. While some passages where he speaks of sonship may be taken to mean either an ontological change or a change of status, most of Athanasius' texts on sonship suggest a relational meaning expressing the idea that the Father shares with us the same fellowship he has with his natural Son. The passage from 2-Pet. 1:3-4 highlights a different aspect of deification. It speaks of the importance of specific qualities that make one deified. The passage says: 'His divine power has given us everything we need for life and godliness through our knowledge of him who called us by his own glory and goodness. Through these he has given us his very great and precious promises, so that through them you may participate in the divine nature and escape the corruption in the world caused by evil desires' (NIV).[311] Several things are noteworthy in this passage. First, it speaks of deification in terms of 'participation in the divine nature' (γένησθε θείας κοινωνοὶ φύσεως) contrasting it with the idea of 'corruption in the

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[308] ἐγὼ εἶπα, θεοί ἐστε, καὶ υἱοὶ ὑψίστου πάντες. ὑμεῖς δὲ ὡς ἄνθρωποι ἀποθνήσκετε, καὶ ὡς εἷς τῶν ἀρχόντων πίπτετε.

[309] e.g. Gerstenberger, *Psalmen in der Sprache unserer Zeit*, 135-6. Cf. Bass, *Žalmy*, 77, that translates Ps. 82:6-7 as follows: *A řekl jsem: Vyššími bytostmi jste a synové Nejvyššího jste všichni. Avšak jako člověk zemřete a jako jeden z knížat padnete.*

[310] e.g. *CA* 1.39 [Metzler 149; NPNF² 4:329], where he says: And how can there be deifying (θεοποίησις) apart from the Word and before Him? yet, saith He to their brethren the Jews, '*If He called them gods* (εἰ ἐκείνους θεοὺς εἶπε), unto whom the Word of God came.' And if all that are *called sons and gods* (υἱοί τε καὶ θεοὶ ἐκλήθησαν), whether in earth or in heaven, were adopted and deified (ἐθεοποιήθησαν) through the Word, and the Son Himself is the Word, it is plain that through Him are they all, and He Himself before all' (πῶς δὲ καὶ θεοποίησις γένοιτ' ἂν χωρὶς τοῦ λόγου, καὶ πρὸ αὐτοῦ καίτοι λέγοντος αὐτοῦ πρὸς τοὺς ἀδελφοὺς τούτων Ἰουδαιους, 'εἰ ἐκείνους θεοὺς εἶπε, πρὸς οὓς ὁ λόγος τοῦ θεοῦ ἐγένετο'; εἰ δὲ πάντες ὅσοι υἱοί τε καὶ θεοὶ ἐκλήθησαν εἴτε ἐπὶ γῆς εἴτε ἐν οὐρανοῖς διὰ τοῦ λόγου υἱοποιήθησαν καὶ ἐθεοποιήθησαν, αὐτὸς δὲ ὁ υἱός ἐστιν ὁ λόγος, δῆλον ὅτι δι' αὐτοῦ μὲν οἱ πάντες, αὐτὸς δὲ πρὸ πάντων).

[311] ὡς πάντα ἡμῖν τῆς θείας δυνάμεως αὐτοῦ τὰ πρὸς ζωὴν καὶ εὐσέβειαν δεδωρημένης διὰ τῆς ἐπιγνώσεως τοῦ καλέσαντος ἡμᾶς ἰδίᾳ δόξῃ καὶ ἀρετῇ, δι' ὧν τὰ τίμια καὶ μέγιστα ἡμῖν ἐπαγγέλματα δεδώρηται, ἵνα διὰ τούτων γένησθε θείας κοινωνοὶ φύσεως ἀποφυγόντες τῆς ἐν τῷ κόσμῳ ἐν ἐπιθυμίᾳ φθορᾶς.

world'. The Greek word for corruption is φθορά, which Athanasius uses most frequently in his early double treatise to underscore the pitiful situation of the fallen humanity and its following restoration and deification (see ch. 3). Interestingly, Peter uses the word 'escape' (ἀποφυγγάνω) to describe the process of moving from the corrupted state to the state of deification. As we saw earlier, the noun (φυγή) of this verb is also used by Plato when he speaks of 'escape' in connection with our 'becoming like God as far as this is possible',[312] and by Plotinus when he speaks of the 'flight of the alone to the Alone'.[313] Second, this passage is best understood when read together with the three other verses that immediately follow it: 'For this very reason, make every effort to add to your faith goodness; and to goodness, knowledge; and to knowledge, self-control; and to self-control, perseverance; and to perseverance, godliness; and to godliness, brotherly kindness; and to brotherly kindness, love. For if you possess these qualities in increasing measure, they will keep you from being ineffective and unproductive in your knowledge of your Lord Jesus Christ. But if anyone does not have them, he is nearsighted and blind, and has forgotten that he has been cleansed from his past sins' (NIV).[314] In light of this passage, deification implies both a progressive aspect and something that has already been fulfilled. The former is tied to the idea of qualities which Peter lists by starting with faith and ending with love. The element of 'effort' (σπουδή) in verse 5 stresses the human part in the process of deification. At the same time, the passage speaks of something that has already taken place for deification (namely, the forgiveness of sins as representing the juridical aspect) regardless of whether one makes the effort to progress in the godly qualities or not. Verse 9 states that 'if anyone does not have them [the godly qualities], he is nearsighted and blind, and has forgotten that he has been cleansed (λήθην λαβὼν τοῦ καθαρισμοῦ) from his past sins'. Athanasius uses both of these aspects of deification (progressive and completed) in his writings. However, the most prominent aspect in the 33 instances (excluding those that relate deification to Christ's body) where he speaks of deification in the Christian context, has to do with the idea of God deifying us

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[312] *Theaet.* 176b [LCL 123:128]: φυγὴ δὲ ὁμοίωσις θεῷ.

[313] *Enn.* 6.9.8-51 [LCL 468:340-4; MacKenna, *Plotinus*, 624-5]: φυγὴ μόνου πρὸς μόνον.

[314] καὶ αὐτὸ τοῦτο δὲ σπουδὴν πᾶσαν παρεισενέγκαντες ἐπιχορηγήσατε ἐν τῇ πίστει ὑμῶν τὴν ἀρετήν, ἐν δὲ τῇ ἀρετῇ τὴν γνῶσιν, ἐν δὲ τῇ γνώσει τὴν ἐγκράτειαν, ἐν δὲ τῇ ἐγκρατείᾳ τὴν ὑπομονήν, ἐν δὲ τῇ ὑπομονῇ τὴν εὐσέβειαν, ἐν δὲ τῇ εὐσεβείᾳ τὴν φιλαδελφίαν, ἐν δὲ τῇ φιλαδελφίᾳ τὴν ἀγάπην. ταῦτα γὰρ ὑμῖν ὑπάρχοντα καὶ πλεονάζοντα οὐκ ἀργοὺς οὐδὲ ἀκάρπους καθίστησιν εἰς τὴν τοῦ κυρίου ἡμῶν ἰησοῦ χριστοῦ ἐπίγνωσιν· ᾧ γὰρ μὴ πάρεστιν ταῦτα, τυφλός ἐστιν μυωπάζων, λήθην λαβὼν τοῦ καθαρισμοῦ τῶν πάλαι αὐτοῦ ἁμαρτιῶν.

because we failed to achieve deification on our own. As I will try to show in chapter 5, this emphasis is best understood in the context of Athanasius' arguments against the Arian christology as undermining the significance of the divine work and initiative.

Two other passages that I mentioned above—Gen. 1:26-7 and 1-Jn. 3:2-3—speak of deification in terms of our being like God. The famous text from Gen. 1:26-7 gives an account of the first creation Rom which man is said to be made in the image and likeness of God: 'Then God said, "Let us make man in our image (κατ' εἰκόνα), in our likeness (καθ' ὁμοίωσιν)"' (NIV).[315] While some patristic authors (e.g. Origen) distinguished between the 'image' as an inbuilt characteristic and 'likeness' as a quality to be achieved, Athanasius does not draw this distinction. Instead, he uses them as synonyms to describe the original state of people before the fall. In the *Contra Gentes*, the 'image' and 'likeness' are taken to imply man's ability to relate to God in the personal way; something that animals or stones cannot do because of being devoid of the 'image' and 'likeness' to God. Accordingly, when describing deification as a restoration of the image and likeness in man, Athanasius includes in it the idea of being joined back to the personal relationship with God. The passage from 1-Jn. 3:2-3 combines this idea of personal relationship with God and godlikeness in the 'already and not yet' perspective when it says: 'Dear friends, now we are children of God, and what we will be has not yet been made known. But we know that when he appears, we shall be like him, for we shall see him as he is. Everyone who has this hope in him purifies himself, just as he is pure'.[316] Stressing the eschatological dimension of godlikeness in this passage, Athanasius interprets it as follows: 'When the Scripture says *we shall be like Him when he will appear*, this does not mean we will be like him in essence. It means that we will be like him in sonship which we will partake from him' (*De Syn.* 53 [Opitz 276]).[317] More commonly, Athanasius refers to the idea of 'being children of God' (by citing Jn. 1:12)[318] in connection with the present reality of being given the Spirit of sonship by whom we cry 'abba Father' (Rom. 8:15 and Gal. 4:6, both cited by

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[315] καὶ εἶπεν ὁ θεός, ποιήσωμεν ἄνθρωπον κατ' εἰκόνα ἡμετέραν καὶ καθ' ὁμοίωσιν.

[316] ἀγαπητοί, νῦν τέκνα θεοῦ ἐσμεν, καὶ οὔπω ἐφανερώθη τί ἐσόμεθα. οἴδαμεν ὅτι ἐὰν φανερωθῇ, ὅμοιοι αὐτῷ ἐσόμεθα, ὅτι ὀψόμεθα αὐτὸν καθὼς ἐστιν. καὶ πᾶς ὁ ἔχων τὴν ἐλπίδα ταύτην ἐπ' αὐτῷ ἁγνίζει ἑαυτόν, καθὼς ἐκεῖνος ἁγνός ἐστιν.

[317] ὅταν γάρ, φησί, φανερωθῇ, ὅμοιοι αὐτῷ ἐσόμεθα ὅμοιοι δηλονότι οὐ τῇ οὐσίᾳ, ἀλλὰ τῇ υἱότητι, ἧς μεταλαμβάνομεν παρ' αὐτοῦ.

[318] e.g. *CA* 1.43 [Metzler 153].

Athanasius).[319] The idea of God giving us himself either as Son or Holy Spirit is a recurring theme in Athanasius, and what he sometimes stresses in speaking about it is the biblical motif of exchange expressed especially in 2-Cor. 5:21 and 8:9: 'God made him who had no sin to be sin for us, so that in him we might become the righteousness of God' (NIV),[320] and 'you know the grace of our Lord Jesus Christ, that though he was rich, yet for your sakes he became poor, so that you through his poverty might become rich' (NIV).[321] Athanasius cites neither of these two passages. Yet just like Paul draws a contrast between our old condition *apart from* Christ and our new condition *in* Christ, so does Athanasius contrast the human properties with the properties of Christ. The exchange between the two takes place when Christ becomes man by accepting what is ours and giving us what is his. Another way the Scripture speaks about our receiving the benefits of salvation is by stressing that God gives us 'the fullness of the Deity' (τὸ πλήρωμα τῆς θεότητος) (Jn. 1:16, Eph. 3:19, Col. 2:9; all three are cited by Athanasius).[322] Athanasius expresses this idea by identifying the gifts with the Giver in his two later writings *Contra Arianos* and *Epistulae ad Serapionem* (ch. 5).

The motif of exchange and human identification with God/Christ is also seen in the way the Scripture speaks about baptism and eucharist. Writing about being dead to sin and alive in Christ, Paul says in Rom. 6:3-4: 'Or don't you know that all of us who were baptized into Christ Jesus were baptized into his death? We were therefore buried with him through baptism into death in order that, just as Christ was raised from the dead through the glory of the Father, we too may live a new life' (NIV).[323] Expressing the same motif of identification with Christ, Athanasius speaks of baptism as having a purpose of joining us to the Godhead (ἵνα συναφθῶμεν τῇ θεότητι)[324] and making us one with the Son (ἵνα ἑνωθῶμεν τῷ υἱῷ).[325] Its efficacy for Athanasius is grounded on the fact that we are baptized not into the name of a creature but into the name of the Father, Son, and Holy Spirit

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[319] e.g. *CA* 2.59 [Metzler 236] (for Rom. 8:15); ibid. (for Gal. 4:6).

[320] τὸν μὴ γνόντα ἁμαρτίαν ὑπὲρ ἡμῶν ἁμαρτίαν ἐποίησεν, ἵνα ἡμεῖς γενώμεθα δικαιοσύνη θεοῦ ἐν αὐτῷ.

[321] γινώσκετε γὰρ τὴν χάριν τοῦ κυρίου ἡμῶν ἰησοῦ χριστοῦ, ὅτι δι' ὑμᾶς ἐπτώχευσεν πλούσιος ὤν, ἵνα ὑμεῖς τῇ ἐκείνου πτωχείᾳ πλουτήσητε.

[322] e.g. *De Inc.* 16.11-2 [Thomson172] (for Eph. 3:19); *De Sen. Dion.* 10 [Opitz 53] (for Jn. 1:16); *De Syn.* 38 [Opitz 265] (for Col. 2:9).

[323] ἢ ἀγνοεῖτε ὅτι, ὅσοι ἐβαπτίσθημεν εἰς χριστὸν ἰησοῦν, εἰς τὸν θάνατον αὐτοῦ ἐβαπτίσθημεν; συνετάφημεν οὖν αὐτῷ διὰ τοῦ βαπτίσματος εἰς τὸν θάνατον, ἵνα ὥσπερ ἠγέρθη χριστὸς ἐκ νεκρῶν διὰ τῆς δόξης τοῦ πατρός, οὕτως καὶ ἡμεῖς ἐν καινότητι ζωῆς περιπατήσωμεν.

[324] *CA* 2.41 [Metzler 217; NPNF² 4:370].

[325] Ibid.

(Mt. 28:19 cited by Athanasius in the context of the anti-Arian polemic).[326] Of the several eucharistic passages in Scripture (e.g. Mt. 26:26-9; Mk. 14:22-5; Luk. 22:17-20; Jn. 6:53-6; 1-Cor. 10:16-7; 1-Cor. 11:20-32), Athanasius cites only Jn. 6:54, that says: 'Whoever eats my flesh and drinks my blood has eternal life, and I will raise him up at the last day' (NIV).[327] Taking the words 'flesh' and 'blood' as 'food for the saints' (*sanctorum alimonia*),[328] Athanasius interprets this passages as speaking about nurturing the soul on Christ. Elsewhere, he identifies the food of the soul with virtue that nourishes the righteous and contrasts it with vice that feeds the wicked.[329]

As we continue our analysis, I will seek to identify how various aspects of deification surveyed above appear in Irenaeus and Origen before they find their way into Athanasius' writings. In what follows, I will examine these two major figures in the Greek patristics that precede Athanasius for about a century and form an important theological constituent to his background.

2.3 Deification in Irenaeus and Origen: Tension of Emphases

In the Introduction, I refered quickly to Fairbairn's article 'Patristic Soteriology: Three trajectories'.[330] In this work Fairbairn discusses a tendency of some modern scholars to dismiss patristic deification, believing it to place a suspicious emphasis on overcoming human mortality and corruption over the more biblical emphasis on sin and forgiveness. To illustrate this tendency he refers to Harnack who drew a sharp contrast between the Eastern and Western Church fathers in the way they taught about salvation. In Harnack's understanding, the East spoke of salvation in physical terms: that which satisfied the problem of death by means of incarnation. If one follows this reading, the purpose of deification is to save humanity from death by restoring it to the original state of immortality which it lost after the fall. Western Christianity, according to Harnack, explained salvation very differently: it 'was from the start more biblical and practical, as well as more ecclesiastical, because of its less speculative bent'.[331] Fairbairn quotes Harnack as saying that 'the

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[326] e.g. *CA* 2.42 [Metzler 219; NPNF² 4:371].
[327] ὁ τρώγων μου τὴν σάρκα καὶ πίνων μου τὸ αἷμα ἔχει ζωὴν αἰώνιον, κἀγὼ ἀναστήσω αὐτὸν τῇ ἐσχάτῃ ἡμέρᾳ.
[328] *Ep. fest.* 1.5 [PG 26:1363b-c].
[329] e.g. *Ep. fest.* 1.5 [PG 26:1363b].
[330] Fairbairn, 'Patristic Soteriology', 290-310.
[331] Ibid. 291.

West did not fix its attention above all on deification nor, in consequence, on asceticism, but kept real life more distinctly in view'.[332] Since Harnack's distinction is a generally accepted text-book view, Fairbairn suggests revisiting it by discussing two major ways (he calls them trajectories) in which the Eastern fathers spoke of deification.[333] The first one comes close to what Harnack called physical salvation. He criticized it for being an unbiblical concept dressed in the Hellenistic preoccupation with immortality. This trajectory tends to explain deification not in terms of sin, but primarily in terms of sharing in God's qualities, or perfections (in particular, God's incorruption and immortality). By partaking in these qualities humanity overcomes mortality and achieves the deified state. In this sense Fairbairn characterizes such perspective as emphasizing the impersonal aspect of salvation. The second major way in which the Church fathers spoke of deification, in Fairbairn's view, is sharing in the personal fellowship with God as Trinity.[334] According to this understanding of deification, salvation is seen as restoration of the lost relationship between humanity and God. And it is Christ's incarnation and his death on the cross that makes it possible. This perspective is emphatically personal and it speaks of qualities (immortality and sinfulness) in secondary terms. Fairbairn further qualifies his suggestion by warning that patristic writers more commonly combined elements of these two perspectives. At the same time he argues that one or another of these predominated, leading one to focus on either personal or impersonal aspects of deification.[335]

In this section on Ireneaus and Origen I will follow Fairbairn's distinction between the personal and impersonal ways of expressing deification. In addition to his terminology, I will also use two other words—relational and acquisitional—to emphasize the dynamic aspect of both concepts. Since both Irenaeus and Origen combine personal and impersonal ways of depicting God and deification, I will speak of difference in emphases. Like Fairbairn, I will attempt to illustrate how one's emphasis on either of the two makes one lean either towards the relational or the impersonal descriptions of deification. As I do so, I will also seek to observe how such descriptions contribute to an understanding of whether the qualities of God are the result of salvation or a means to it. In this way, I hope to expose those

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[332] Quoted from Fairbairn, 'Patristic Soteriology', 291, with reference to Harnack, *History of Dogma*, 5.22.
[333] Ibid., 293.
[334] Ibid., 293.
[335] Ibid., 294.

issues which I will discuss in more detail in relation to Athanasius' early double treatise *Contra Gentes—De Incarnatione Verbi*, paying special attention to the interaction of emphases between relations and qualities, God's action and human task, personal and impersonal ways of describing God and deification. At this point in my survey, I will continue tracing the development of deification, yet my primary concern now will be more with the frameworks of deification that Irenaeus and Origen create for Athanasius than with the terminology itself.

2.3.1 Irenaeus of Lyon

2.3.1.1 From God as 'What' to God as 'Who'

Irenaeus is most notable for his polemic with the Gnostic, Marcionite, and Ebionite groups that sought to undermine the goodness of the divine Creator and who radically separated the spiritual realm from the world of matter.[336] His response to the Gnostic teaching is recorded in his main work *Aduersus Haereses* (extant in Greek and Latin) in which he takes on two tasks that are relevant for my study. On the one hand, he wants to defend the good and perfect nature of the divine Creator against the Gnostics, and on the other he seeks to assert the meaning of Christian salvation. As Irenaeus elaborates the former, he sometimes gets himself occupied with the description of God that centers on the divine qualities in order to articulate the 'what' of the Christian Divinity as opposed to the 'what' of Gnostic Deity. When he shifts from this task to that of explaining the meaning of Christian salvation, his description of God changes too. It is no longer the 'what', but rather the 'who' that is under consideration. In this section I will illustrate the significance of this dynamic in the context of my focus on the doctrine of God and deification.

In *Adu. Haer.* 4.11.2 [SC 100/2:500], Irenaeus discusses the relation between God and creation, and in the process of doing this he explains the goodness of created reality by connecting it directly to the perfect being of God. In what can be a concise definition of God, Irenaeus declares: 'God is truly perfect in all things, himself equal and similar to himself, as He is all light, and all mind, and all substance, and the source of all good' (*Adu. Haer.* 4.11.2 [SC 100/2:500; ANF 1:474, slightly modified]).[337] In the same vein, but specifically against the Gnostics,

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[336] Pétrement, *A Separate God*. On the complex nature of Gnosticism, see Williams, *Rethinking 'Gnosticism'*.

[337] Deus… totus cum sit lumen et totus mens et totus substantia et fons omnium bonorum, homo vero profectum percipiens et augmentum ad Deum. Quemadmodum enim Deus semper idem est.

he writes: 'It is proper, then, that I should begin with the first and most important head, that is, God the Creator, who made the heaven and the earth, and all things that are therein (whom these men blasphemously style the fruit of a defect), and to demonstrate that there is nothing either above him or after him; nor that, influenced by any one, but of his own free will, he created all things, since he is the only God, the only Lord, the only Creator, the only Father, alone containing all things, and himself commanding all things into existence' (*Adu. Haer.* 2.1.1 [SC 294:27; ANF 1:360]).[338] In both passages God is said to be the highest reality, and therefore everything he creates flows from his perfect Being. Besides the qualities pregnant with philosophical meaning (such as 'perfection', 'light', 'mind', 'goodness', and 'substance'), God is also characterized as Lord, Creator, and Father. Irenaeus' emphasis on the 'what' of God, or his perfect qualities, leads him further to distinguish between two types of being—the *uncreated* Being of God and the *created* being of humanity. Thus, immediately after his definition of God in the first quotation, he continues: 'And in this respect God differs from man, that God indeed makes, but man is made; and truly, he who makes is always the same; but that which is made must receive both beginning, and middle, and addition, and increase' (*Adu. Haer.* 4.11.2 [SC 100/2:500; ANF 1:474]).[339] Finally, this contrast between God's perfect qualities and the derivative character of human nature presses Irenaeus to depict salvation as man's progression to God. At the end of the passage I just quoted he concludes: 'For as God is always the same, so also man, when found in God, shall always go on towards God' (*Adu. Haer.* 4.11.2 [SC 100/2:500; ANF 1:474]).[340] In a similar context, but more explicitly, he states:

> Man is to make progress day by day, and ascend towards the perfect, that is, approximating to the uncreated One. For the Uncreated is perfect, that is, God. Now it was necessary that man should in the first instance be created; and having been created, should receive growth; and having received growth, should be strengthened; and having been strengthened, should abound; and having abounded, should recover [from the disease of sin]; and having recovered, should be

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[338] Bene igitur habet a primo et maximo capitulo inchoare nos, a Demiurgo Deo, qui fecit caelum et terram et omnia quae in eis sunt, quem hi blasphemantes extremitatis fructum dicunt, et ostendere quoniam neque super eum neque post eum est aliquid, neque ab aliquo motus sed sua sententia et libere fecit omnia, cum sit solus Deus et solus Dominus et solus Conditor et solus Pater et solus continens omnia et omnibus ut sint ipse praestans.

[339] Et hoc Deus ab homine differt, quoniam Deus quidem facit, homo autem fit. Et quidem qui facit semper idem est, quod autem fit et initium et medietatem et adjectionem et augmentum accipere debet.

[340] Quemadmodum enim Deus simper idem est, sic et homo in Deo inventus semper proficiet ad Deum.

glorified; and being glorified, should see his Lord. For God is he who is yet to be seen, and the vision of God is productive of immortality, and it is immortality that renders one close to God (*Adu. Haer.* 4.38.3 [SC 100/2:954-6; ANF 1:522, slightly modified]).[341]

In light of the pre-Christian background such phrases as being 'found in God', 'ascend towards the perfect', 'approximating to the uncreated One... [who] is perfect', 'the vision of God', 'immortality', and becoming 'close to God', are full of allusions to deification. The perfect qualities of God in these texts are exactly *what* humanity is lacking, and therefore encouraged to approximate. The depiction of God in Irenaeus changes substantially when he moves toward the discussion of the Gnostic problem of separating the spiritual realm from the world of matter. In response to this dualistic worldview, he posits the immediacy of God's presence to the world through his personal agents (Christ and Holy Spirit as his two hands)[342] and develops a concept of God in which the emphasis shifts from qualities to relations. In doing so, he formulates a view of God that shows a distinctly personal perspective. A good example of this comes in his discussion of the differences between the Gnostic notion of estranged *Pleroma* and the Christian idea of God who ordains and loves the world:

> Who, as regards his greatness, is indeed unknown to all who have been made by him (for no man has searched out his height, either among the ancients who have gone to their rest, or any of those who are now alive); but as regards his love, he is always known through him by whose means he ordained all things. Now this is his Word, our Lord Jesus Christ, who in the last times was made a man among men, that he might join (*conjungeret*) the end to the beginning, that is, man to God (*Adu. Haer.* 4.20.4 [SC 100/2:634; ANF 1:488]).[343]

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[341] Homine vero paulatim proficiente et perveniente ad perfectum, hoc est proximum infecto fieri: perfectus enim est infectus, hic autem est Deus. Oportuerat autem hominem primo fieri, et factum augeri, et auctum corroborari, et corroboratum multiplicari, et multiplicatum convalescere, convalescentem vero glorificari, et glorificatum videre suum Dominum: Deus enim est qui habet videri, visio autem Dei efficax est incorruptelae, *incorruptela vero proximum facit esse Deo*. Cf. Greek variant: καὶ ἀνερχομένου πρὸς τὸ τέλειον, πλησίον τουτέστι τοῦ ἀγενήτου γινομένου· τέλος γὰρ ὁ ἀγένητος, οὗτος δέ ἐστι θεός. ἔδει δὲ τὸν ἄνθρωπον πρῶτον γενέσθαι, καὶ γενόμενον αὐξῆσαι, καὶ αὐξήσαντα ἀνδρωθῆναι, καὶ ἀνδρωθέντα πληθυνθῆναι, καὶ πληθυνθέντα ἐνισχῦσαι, ἐνισχύσαντα δὲ δοξασθῆναι, καὶ δοξασθέντα ἰδεῖν τὸν ἑαυτοῦ δεσπότην·' θεὸς γὰρ ὁ μέλλων ὁρᾶσθαι, ὅρασις δὲ θεοῦ περιποιητικὴ ἀφθαρσίας, *ἀφθαρσία δὲ ἐγγὺς εἶναι ποιεῖ θεοῦ*.

[342] e.g. *Adu. Haer.* 4.praef.4 [SC 100/2:388-90]; 4.20.1 [SC 100/2:624-6]; 5.6.1 [SC 153:72-80].

[343] Qui secundum magnitudinem quidem ignotus est omnibus his qui ab eo facti sunt—nemo enim investigavit altitudinem ejus, neque veterum neque eorum qui nunc sunt—secundum autem dilectionem cognoscitur semper per eum per quem constituit omnia. Est autem hic Verbum ejus, Dominus noster Jesus Christus, qui in novissimis temporibus homo in hominibus factus est, ut finem conjungeret principio, hoc est hominem Deo.

In this passage God is described both as transcendent (he is great and unknown) and involved (he ordains everything by his love and makes himself known through his Word). The extent of the later aspect of his being is such that he becomes man in order to 'join... man to God'. In contrast to this relational understanding of God and his activity, the Gnostic Deity resembles a non-existent being (*qui non est*) who is absolutely unknown (*ut magnum Deum putentur adinuenisse*), incommunicable (*quem nemo possit cognoscere, humano <non> generi communicantem*) and uninvolved (*nec terrena administrantem*) (*Adu. Haer*. 3.24.2 [SC 211:478]). For Irenaeus this *magne deum* is clearly different from the Christian God who '[although being] beyond comprehension, and boundless and invisible, rendered himself visible, and comprehensible, and within the capacity of those who believe, that he might vivify those who receive and behold him through faith' (*Adu. Haer*. 4.20.5 [SC 100/2:640; ANF 1:489, modified]).[344]

Irenaeus' description of what happens when God acts towards humanity—joining it back to himself and making it alive—reflects his hamartiological views. For him the main problem of fallen humanity under sin is primarily the separation between God and man. Throughout his *Aduersus Haereses* he explains the consequences of the fall in terms of a broken relationship that leads man to death and mortality. Hence salvation for Irenaeus includes both restoration of relationship with God and immortality, or eternal life. However, in those places of his writing where he seeks to refute the Gnostic dualism of spirit and body, he speaks less of the former and more of the fact that salvation effects immortality both for the soul and the body.[345] In fact, his emphasis on immortality and incorruption is so strong that some scholars regard his concept of salvation as 'physical', and identify it with the Hellenistic understanding of what it means to be divine.[346] Thus, Gustaf Aulen writes that such 'physical doctrine of salvation' represents an alien concept of 'the bestowal of "divinity"—that is, of immortality—on human nature'.[347] For Harnack and Wilhelm Bousset Irenaeus' soteriology in this sense is subverted by the Hellenistic concept of deification, and therefore corrupts the Gospel.[348] Other scholars object by pointing out that the physical aspect of salvation is one of many

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[344] Et propter hoc incapabilis et incomprehensibilis <et invisibilis> visibilem se et comprehensibilem et capacem hominibus praestat, ut vivificet percipientes et videntes se.
[345] This was drawn to my attention by Fairbairn, 'Patristic Soteriology', 294-5.
[346] e.g. Wilson, *Deification*, 53-4; Kaufman, 'Becoming Divine', 232-33.
[347] Aulen, *Christus Victor*, 34-5.
[348] Harnack, *Lehrbuch der Dogmengeschichte*, 1:589-90; Bousset, *Kyrios Christos*, 432.

that Irenaeus taught and to approach it as the main one is misleading.[349] In particular, Fairbairn contends:

> … this way of looking at Irenaeus [i.e. physical salvation] misses the fact that his abundant mention of incorruption has to do more with the opponents he is fighting than with the actual centrality of that notion to his thought. Rather than being the centerpiece of Irenaeus's soteriology, incorruption is one of the results of salvation. It is a result that suits his purposes well, since the Gnostics deny this aspect of salvation, but it is still simply a result. The heart of his soteriology is the idea of adoption.[350]

To gain a more conclusive picture of Irenaeus' doctrine of God and deification, it will be helpful to expand these themes by looking at the specific roles he ascribes to the 'who' of redemption, namely the persons of the Son and Holy Spirit.

2.3.1.2 The Roles of the Son and Holy Spirit in Deification

In his study of patristic deification, Norman Russell notes that 'Irenaeus does not use any of the technical terms of deification, and even the word 'gods' is applied to human beings only within the context of his exegesis of Psalm 81:6 (LXX). But in countering Gnostic claims concerning the spirituals he presents a 'realist' account of salvation which will provide a number of later writers—and Athanasius in particular—with the content of their doctrine of deification'.[351] While it is true that Irenaeus speaks of immortality and incorruption as the realistic aspects of salvation, scholars also note that for him to be saved is above all else to be adopted into a filial relationship with the Father, which is what deification essentially is.[352] Such adoption happens when Christ becomes man in order to join man back to the same communion he has with his Father. In doing so, he first gives us himself: 'the Son of God was made the Son of man, so that through him we may receive the adoption,—humanity sustaining, and receiving, and embracing the Son of God' (*Adu. Haer.* 3.16.3 [SC 211:298; ANF 1:441, modified]).[353] Having received Christ

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[349] e.g. Hochban, 'Irenaeus on the Atonement', 539-41; Kelly, *Early Christian Doctrine*, 173; Fairbairn, 'Patristic Soteriology', 294-7.

[350] Fairbairn, 'Patristic Soteriology', 295.

[351] Russell, *The Doctrine of Deification*, 105.

[352] e.g. Fairbairn, 'Patristic Soteriology', 294-7; Hart, 'Physical Redemption', 165-6; Behr, *The Way to Nicaea*, 131; Ibid., *Asceticism in Irenaeus*, 62, 69-70, 127.

[353] Filius Dei hominis Filius factus, ut per eum adoptionem percipiamus, portante homine et capiente et complectente Filium Dei.

himself, humanity regains an access to the Father and enters into the divine fellowship with him. Irenaeus states:

> [I]t was incumbent upon the Mediator between God and men, by his relationship to both, to bring both to friendship and concord, and present man to God, while he revealed God to man.[354] For, in what way could we be partaken of the adoption of sons, unless we had received from him through the Son that fellowship which refers to himself, unless his Word, having been made flesh, had entered into communion with us? Wherefore also he passed through every stage of life, restoring to all communion with God (*Adu. Haer.* 3.18.7 [SC 211:364-6; ANF 1:448]).[355]

In this passage salvation is expressed in terms of adoption[356] and communion[357] with God. Christ, the Son of God, is described as having οἰκειότητος/*communio* with his Father, and we are restored into this very communion by being adopted as God's children. The idea of adoption also figures in two of the three occasions where Irenaeus refers to Ps. 81:6 [LXX][358] and speaks directly of divinization. In the first instance he starts with a reference to Ps. 81:1 [LXX] that says: '*God stood in the congregation of the gods, he judges among the gods*'.[359] He interprets this passage as 'referring to the Father and the Son, and those who have received the adoption... [namely] the Church' (*Adu. Haer.* 3.6.1 [SC 211:67-8; ANF 1:419, modified]).[360] After that he quotes several other biblical texts (including one from Ps. 81:6 LXX) and draws the same implications: 'Speaking of Christ he says, *The God of gods, the Lord has spoken....* [Ps. 49:1 LXX]. Who is meant by God? He of whom he has said, *God shall come openly, our God, and shall not keep silence* [Ps.

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[354] Cf. the Latin fragment of this text: Oportuerat enim mediatorem Dei et hominum, per suam ed utrosque domesticitatem, in amicitiam et concordiam utrosque reducere, et facere, ut et Deus assumeret hominem, et homo se dederet Deo.

[355] Oportuerat enim Mediatorem Dei et hominum per suam ad utrosque domesticitatem in amicitiam et concordiam utrosque reducere, et facere ut et Deus adsumeret hominem et homo se dederet Deo. Qua enim ratione filiorum adoptionis eius participes esse possemus, nisi per Filium eam quae est ad ipsum recepissemus ab eo communionem, nisi uerbum eius communicasset nobis caro factum? Quapropter et per omnem uenit aetatem, omnibus restituens eam, quae est ad Deum communionem. Cf. Greek fragment: ἔδει γὰρ τὸν μεσίτην θεοῦ τε καὶ ἀνθρώπων διὰ τῆς ἰδίας πρὸς ἑκατέρους οἰκειότητος εἰς φιλίαν καὶ ὁμόνοιαν τοὺς ἀμφοτέρους συναγαγεῖν, καὶ θεῷ μὲν παραστῆσαι τὸν ἄνθρωπον, ἀνθρώποις δὲ γνωρίσαι τὸν θεόν.

[356] For other key references to adoption, see e.g. *Adu. Haer.* 3.6.1 [SC 211:64-8]; 4.praef.4 [SC 100/2:388-90]; 4.16.4 [SC 100/2:568-70]; 5.12.2 [SC 153:142-8]; 5.18.2 [SC 153:238-44].

[357] For more examples about the idea of communion, see *Adu. Haer.* 4.14.2 [SC 100/2:542-4]; 4.20.5 [SC 100/2:636-42]; 5.14.2-3 [SC 153:186-90].

[358] This passage will play an important role for deification much beyond Irenaeus. See Nispel, 'Christian Deification', 289-304; Cf. Mosser, 'Patristic Interpretation of Psalm 82', 30-74.

[359] *Adu. Haer.* 3.6.1 [SC 211:66; ANF 1:419]: *Deus stetit in synagoga deorum, in medio autem deos discernit.*

[360] De Patre et Filio et de his qui adoptionem perceperunt dicit; hi auntem sunt Ecclesia.

49:3 LXX]; that is, the Son, who came manifested to men who said, *I have openly appeared to those who seek me not* [Is. 65:1]. But of what gods [does he speak]? [Of those] to whom he says, *I have said, you are gods, and all sons of the Most High* [Ps. 81:6 LXX]. To those, no doubt, who have received the grace of the *adoption, by which we cry, Abba Father* [Rom. 8:15]' (*Adu. Haer.* 3.6.1 [SC 211:68; ANF 1:419, modified]).[361] In the second instance where Irenaeus refers to Ps. 81:6, he fights the christological heresy that considered Christ to be a mere man. In response, he says that such people become 'deprived of His gift, which is eternal life... and adoption' because they 'despise the incarnation of the pure generation of the Word of God. Of them it is written: *I said, you are all the sons of the Highest, and gods; but you shall die like men* [Ps. 81:6 LXX]' (*Adu. Haer.* 3.19.1 [SC 211:372; ANF 1:448, modified]).[362] He concludes his discussion with the so-called formula of exchange:

> For it was for this end that the Word of God was made man, and he who was the Son of God became the Son of man, that man, having been taken into the Word, and receiving the adoption, might become the son of God. For by no other means could we have attained to incorruptibility and immortality, unless we had been united to incorruptibility and immortality. But how could we be joined to incorruptibility and immortality, unless, first, incorruptibility and immortality had become that which we also are, so that the corruptible might be swallowed up by incorruptibility, and the mortal by immortality, that we might receive the adoption of sons? (*Adu. Haer.* 3.19.1 [SC 211:374; ANF 1:448]).[363]

According to this statement deification includes two major elements: (1) receiving the adoption, or becoming the sons of God; and (2) attaining to incorruptibility and

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[361] De quo iterum dicit: *Deus deorum Dominus locutus est et uocauit terram*. Quis Deus? De quo dixit: *Deus manifeste ueniet, Deus noster, et non silebit*, hoc est Filius, qui secundum manifestationem hominibus aduenit, qui dicit: *Palam apparui his qui me non quaerunt*. Quorum autem deorum? Quibus dicit: *Ego dixi: Dii estis et filii Altissimi omnes*, his scilicet qui adoptionis gratiam adepti sunt, per quam *clamamus: Abba Pater*.

[362] Priuantur munere eius quod est uita aeterna... et adoptione.... Ad quos Verbum ait, suum munus gratiae narrans: *Ego dixi: Dii estis et filii Altissimi omnes; uos autem sicut homines moriemini*.

[363] Propter hoc enim Verbum Dei homo, et qui Filius Dei est Filius hominis factus est <ut homo>, commixtus Verbo Dei et adoptionem percipiens, fiat filius Dei. Non enim poteramus aliter percipere incorruptelam et immortalitatem nisi aduniti fuissemus incorruptelae et immortalitati. Quemadmodum autem adunari possemus incorruptelae et immortalitati nisi prius incorruptela et immortalitas facta fuisset id quod et nos, ut absorberetur quod erat corruptibile ab incorruptela et quod erat mortale ab immortalitate, uti filiorum adoptionem perciperemus? The general idea of this passage is quite evident despite the poor preservation of the Latin text. Cf. Greek variant: εἰς τοῦτο γὰρ ὁ λόγος ἄνθρωπος καὶ υἱὸς ἀνθρώπου ὁ υἱὸς τοῦ θεοῦ, ἵνα ὁ ἄνθρωπος χωρήσας τὸν λόγον καὶ τὴν υἱοθεσίαν λαβὼν γένηται υἱὸς τοῦ θεοῦ.

immortality. While it is a question of interpretation which of these elements is primary, it is clear that deification for Irenaeus is not limited with the physical aspect—immortality is not the end in itself. Ultimately deification leads to the restoration of the broken relationship with God and revolves around the 'who' of salvation (the persons of the Trinity) rather than the 'what' (immortality and incorruption). The passage also gives a downward perspective with regard to God's action. Humanity is not expected to acquire the divine qualities. Instead, God gives incorruptibility and immortality to man by joining him to his own fellowship. It happens through the incarnation of Christ but also with the help of the Holy Spirit as can be seen from another passage:

> Since the Lord thus has redeemed us through his own blood, giving his soul for our souls, and his flesh for our flesh, and has also poured out the Spirit of the Father for the union and communion of God and man, imparting indeed God to men by means of the Spirit, and, on the other hand, attaching man to God by his own incarnation, and bestowing upon us at his coming immortality durably and truly, by means of communion with God,—all the doctrines of the heretics fall to ruin (*Adu. Haer.* 5.1.1 [SC 151:20; ANF 1:527]).[364]

In this trinitarian text the primary aspect of salvation is relational. The fellowship with God includes 'the Spirit of the Father for the union and communion of God and man'. The acquisitional perspective is absent (man is not expected to acquire divine qualities to be able to share in God's relationship) and God himself comes down into man. The Spirit's role in this event is to attach man to God, his incarnation, fellowship, and immortality. In other texts Irenaeus asserts that the coming of the Holy Spirit into the believer effects the restoration of the image (εἰκών) and likeness of God (ὁμοίωσις) in man.[365] Elsewhere, he continues his

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[364] Suo igitur sanguine redimente nos Domino, et dante animam suam pro nostra anima et carnem suam pro nostris carnibus, et effundente Spiritum Patris in adunitionem et communionem Dei et hominum, ad homines quidem deponente Deum per Spiritum, ad Deum autem rursus imponente hominem per suam incarnationem, et firme et vere in adventu suo donante nobis incorruptelam per communionem quae est ad eum, perierunt omnes haereticorum doctrinae.

[365] *Dem. Praed.* 97 [SC 406:215-6]. Blackwell, *Christosis*, 67, argues that '[d]eification then is the process of restoration of the image and likeness through a restored relationship with God'. The theme of image and likeness in Irenaeus and especially its relation to each other is complex and debatable. Thus, Andia, *Homo vivens*, 68, argues for a dynamic connection from image to likeness in man: 'Le terme εἰκών ou *imago* semble toujours garder la note d'extériorité ou de visibilité chez Irénée, á l'inverse de la ressemblance (ὁμοίωσις—similitudo) qui implique, comme nous le verrons, un élément dynamique, nécessairement requis pour une assimilation spirituelle'. In contrast, Finch, 'Irenaeus on Human Divinization', 88, argues that Irenaeus' 'interchangeable use of "image" and "likeness" as well as his concept that the only true and full Image of God is the Son, "after whose

practice of personalizing the gifts of salvation by identifying them repeatedly with both Christ and the Holy Spirit.[366] The relational aspect of deification is also present in his later work *Demonstratio praedicationis apostolicae*. One good example of such understanding appears in his doctrine of *recapitulatio*,[367] where he writes that the Son 'in the last times, to recapitulate all things [*recapitulanda-et-instauranda*/ἀνακεφαλαιόομαι], became a man amongst men, visible and palpable, in order to abolish death, to demonstrate life, and to effect communion [κοινωνία] between God and man' (*Dem. Praed.* 6 [SC 406:92; Behr 43-4]).[368] As in the earlier passage Christ takes the initiative of reconstituting the human nature (*replasmari*/ἀναπλασθῆναι) and in doing this he gives it a new source of life in himself, or under his 'headship'.[369]

Scholars note that Irenaeus' use of personal language for the description of deification connects him back with the theology of Ignatius of Antioch.[370] The latter spoke of the unity among believers as the image of union in God and called Christians to be carriers of Christ (χριστοφόροι), and of God (θεοφόροι).[371] Irenaeus speaks of the same motifs, elaborating them in his own context. His terminology broadly reflects some Platonic themes and the common ancient emphasis on immortality, but his overall theological framework gives it a more personal meaning. His understanding of God as communion of trinitarian persons and deification as restoration of the broken relationship leads him to a soteriology in which the downward act of God becomes central. On the other hand, his emphasis on the 'what' of God (his qualities) portrays him in a less personal way and creates a sense of need for human action as a vehicle of salvation. If this later perspective is the primary aspect of Ireneaus' theology—and therefore qualities are the means to salvation—then it is important to explain how it relates to the personal nature of

image man was made", would seem to weigh against finding in Irenaeus any decisive differentiation between a *natural* image and a *supernatural* likeness'.

[366] e.g. *Adu. Haer.* 3.24.1 [SC 211:472-4]; 4.38.1 [SC 100/2:944-6].

[367] For a more detailed description of this idea, see Lawson, *The Theology of Irenaeus*.

[368] Qui et in fine temporum ad recapitulanda-et-instauranda (ἀνακεφαλαιόομαι) omnia homo in hominibus factus (est) visibilis et palpabilis, ad destruendam mortem et ostendendam vitam et comunionem-concordiae (κοινωνία) Dei et hominis operandam.

[369] For similar ideas, see e.g. *Adu. Haer.* 3.19.1 [SC 211:370-4], 3.21.10-22.4 [SC 211:426-444].

[370] e.g. Torrance, *The Doctrine of Grace*, 76, n. 4; Hill, *The Three Personed God*, 33; Loewe, 'Irenaeus' Story of Salvation', 39; Grillmeier, *Christ in Christian Tradition*, 119; Behr, *The Way to Nicaea*, 114, 117.

[371] *Eph.* 9 [Holmes 190]. For more examples, see *Eph.* 5 [Holmes 186]; *Tral.* 11 [Holmes 220-2]; *Phil.* 5 [Holmes 238-40].

God and deification. However, if the primary aspect of Irenaeus' theology is his relational perspective—and therefore qualities are the results of salvation—then human action follows the prior action of God. In either case deification according to Irenaeus is derivative: whatever quality or relation man is given, he remains a created and imperfect being in contrast to the uncreated and perfect nature of God who deifies humanity. Therefore, one never becomes god in the same sense that the true God is. Finally, both themes—immortality and relations (in the sense of adoption)—have a biblical base and Irenaeus' use of them is sometimes interpreted[372] as an attempt to integrate two Pauline passages: 1 Cor. 15:53-4 (on immortality)[373] and Gal. 4:4-7 (on adoption).[374]

2.3.2 Origen of Alexandria

2.3.2.1 Relations and Qualities: Posing the Question

Besides being a theologian, Origen is also known as a biblical scholar, philosopher, and Christian mystic. It is sometimes noted that Origen's emphasis on the relational aspect of God and deification is best seen in his role of the Scriptural exegete, pastor, and mystic, while the impersonal language appears in his theological and philosophical writings.[375] Expressing the former, he can speak of deification as sonship or adoption,[376] and distinguish the roles of the Father, Son and Holy Spirit as the personal agents of salvation.[377] Thus, he can say that God can make men gods by dwelling in them to the point that they become adopted brethren 'christs' and saintly 'holy spirits'.[378] The relationship of the Son to the Father is such that the Son is intimately present with his Father and contemplates him unceasingly.[379] Origen connects immortality closely to the person of the Logos[380] and underlines

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[372] e.g. Blackwell, *Christosis*, 47-9; Andia, *Homo vivens*, 176-7; Noormann, *Irenäus*, 149.

[373] δεῖ γὰρ τὸ φθαρτὸν τοῦτο ἐνδύσασθαι ἀφθαρσίαν καὶ τὸ θνητὸν τοῦτο ἐνδύσασθαι ἀθανασίαν. ὅταν δὲ τὸ φθαρτὸν τοῦτο ἐνδύσηται ἀφθαρσίαν καὶ τὸ θνητὸν τοῦτο ἐνδύσηται ἀθανασίαν.

[374] ὅτε δὲ ἦλθεν τὸ πλήρωμα τοῦ χρόνου, ἐξαπέστειλεν ὁ θεὸς τὸν υἱὸν αὐτοῦ, γενόμενον ἐκ γυναικός, γενόμενον ὑπὸ νόμον, ἵνα τοὺς ὑπὸ νόμον ἐξαγοράσῃ, ἵνα τὴν υἱοθεσίαν ἀπολάβωμεν. ὅτι δέ ἐστε υἱοί, ἐξαπέστειλεν ὁ θεὸς τὸ πνεῦμα τοῦ υἱοῦ αὐτοῦ εἰς τὰς καρδίας ἡμῶν κρᾶζον, ἀββα ὁ πατήρ. ὥστε οὐκέτι εἶ δοῦλος ἀλλὰ υἱός· εἰ δὲ υἱός, καὶ κληρονόμος διὰ θεοῦ.

[375] This distinction was pointed out to me in my conversations with Dr. Lenka Karfíková.

[376] *Com. Mt.* 16.29; *Orat.* 27.12 [PG 11:505a-522a].

[377] *Orat.* 25.2 [PG 11:495b-9a], *De Prin.* 1.3.5 [SC 252:152-4]. Cf. *Com. Rom.* 4.9 [SC 539:337-47].

[378] *Fragm. in Is.* [PG 13:217a–218a]; *Com. Ioh.* 6.3 [SC 157:130].

[379] *Com. Ioh.* 2.18 [SC 120:218].

[380] *Orat.* 27.9 [PG 11:505a-522a].

that it is by feeding on him that man is deified.[381] It is also significant that Origen uses the technical vocabulary of deification (ἀποθεόω, ἐκθεόω, ἐκθειάζω, and θεοί in connection with Ps. 81:6 [LXX])[382] mostly in his exegetical texts, which probably means that he did not intend it to be a philosophical term.[383] In most of the occasions where he refers to Ps. 81:6 [LXX], his interpretation of the phrase 'You are "gods"; you are all sons of the Most High', has a practical implication of living a life of the Spirit and putting to death the deeds of the flesh.[384] In his observation of Origen's doctrine of deification Russell concludes that it makes Origen different from his predecessor, Clement of Alexandria, whose thought is 'close to that of Plato and Philo' in that '[i]t expresses the way in which creatures come to possess attributes which belong properly to a higher level of being. Participation in the attributes of God is the means by which likeness to God is brought about'.[385] In contrast, Origen, according to Russell, 'uses participation in a more dynamic way to signify 'living with the life of God... making them spirits, christs, and gods'.[386] In a similar way, Henri Crouzel asserts: 'Les "dieux" ne reçoivent pas seulement en eux quelque chose de la réalité du Père et du Verbe, les fils et les logika ne sont pas seulement les reflets du Fils Unique et du Logos; mais ils sont faits dieux, fils et logika par l'action volontaire des deux Personnes divines'.[387]

At the same time, scholars note that Origen placed a considerable emphasis on the importance of qualities for deification. Rebecca Lyman identifies them as the ἐπίνοιαι—aspects, or characteristics, which Origen ascribed to Christ—'that correspond to the hierarchy of being and the spiritual growth of the Christian'.[388] By using these ἐπίνοιαι of Christ 'one grows in faith... [and] is able to move beyond physical appearances and moral discipline to full participation in the Son and, through him, the Father'.[389] Lawrence Hennessey, ties these ἐπίνοιαι primarily with such qualities as immortality and incorriptibility as the main attributes that humanity receives by participation in God. He explains that for Origen 'the primary

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[381] Ibid. 27.13 [PG 11:505a-522a]: τρεφόμενοι τῷ ʽἐν ἀρχῇʼ ʽπρὸς θεὸςʼ θεῷ λόγῳ θεοποιηθῶμεν.

[382] For an overview of Origen's use of technical terminology of deification with references to specific texts, see Russell, *The Doctrine of Deification*, 142, nn. 41-4.

[383] Ibid., 144.

[384] Ibid. For other instances of Ps. 81:6 [LXX] in Origen's writings, see *Hom. Ex.* 6.5 [SC 321:164-8], 8.2 [SC 321:244-50]; *Hom. Ez.* 1.9 [SC 352:74-6].0

[385] Ibid., 155.

[386] Ibid.

[387] Crouzel, *De l'image de Dieu*, 173.

[388] Lyman, *Christology and Cosmology*, 72.

[389] Ibid.

ground of the soul's unity with the Father or with the divine Logos is the real participation in their divine perfections, the *epinoiai*.... By his incarnation into this world, Christ makes it possible for us to share in his *epinoiai* (attributes), which he, in turn, receives from the Father, who is the ultimate source of immortality'.[390] Another scholar, Williamina Macaulay groups the qualities of Christ around three categories based on Origen's *Commentarii in Ioannem*: (1) What he is 'to himself and others' (αὐτῷ ἀλλ' ἐτέροις); (2) What he is 'not to himself but others' (οὐχ αὐτῷ καὶ ἐτέροις); and (3) What he is 'to no one but himself' (ἑαυτῷ καὶ οὐδενί).[391] After a long list of specific qualities for each of this group, Macaulay notes that the task of humanity is to start with the more visible characteristics of Christ (e.g. his manhood and crucified appearance) as 'First Steps in Divinity', and progress towards knowing him in his other aspects (such as wisdom and power of God) as a higher stage leading to a fuller participation.[392] More broadly, José Alviar distinguishes between the entitative qualities (such as God's incorporeity, spirituality, and rational nature),[393] and operative qualities (such as his wisdom, goodness, righteousness, and holiness).[394] He suggests that for Origen man's vocation ultimately means to become as much as possible like God in his perfections.[395] Scholars debate this aspect of Origen's thought (and especially its cosmological context, to be considered below) and some regard it as rather problematic for his doctrine of God and deification.[396] I would like to examine briefly why and in what ways it creates a problem.

Perhaps one of the most controversial (and debatable as to its genuineness)[397] passages in Origen's writings is his trinitarian account of God in the first book of *De Principiis*. In *De Princ*. 1.3.5 [SC 252:152; Dillon, 'Origen's Trinity', 19-20, modified], he points out that 'God the Father... holds the universe together, reaches each being and, taking His own nature as a starting point, imparts

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[390] Hennessey, 'The Fate of the Soul', 168, 173. The same point is made by Lieske, *Die Theologie der Logosmystik*, 54.

[391] *Com. Ioh.* 2.12 [SC 120:214].

[392] Macaulay, *The Nature of Christ*, 180.

[393] e.g. *De Princ.* 1.2.6 [SC 252:120-4]; 1.2.2-3 [SC 252:112-6].

[394] e.g. Ibid. 1.2.2 [SC 252:112-4]; 1.2.13 [SC 252:140-2].

[395] Alviar, *Klesis*, 28-37.

[396] e.g. Fairbairn, 'Patristic Soteriology', 297-300; Louth, *The Mystical Tradition*, 65.

[397] This passage comes as a fragment from an anti-Origenistic florilegium. The emperor Justinian inserted it his *Epistula ad Memnam*, and it has been included in the critical editions of GCS and SC. For the arguments on the authenticity of this passage, see Lilla, 'Christian Trinity', 139. Cf. Crouzel, 'Les personnes de la Trinité', 109-23. Because of the textual differences, I quote both Latin and Greek passages: the former (with a longer text) from SC, and the latter (with a shorter text) from PG.

to each being the gift of existence; in a lesser degree with respect to the Father, the Son, being the second after Him, reaches only the rational beings; and in an even lesser degree the Holy Spirit reaches only the saints'.[398] In a similar passage from *Cont. Cels.* 8.15 [CS 150:206-8; Lilla, 'Christian Trinity', 140], he states:

> We say in fact quite clearly... that the Son is not stronger than the Father but inferior to Him. We say this obeying him who said, *the Father who sent me is greater than I am* [Jn. 14:28]. None of us is so silly as to say 'the son of man is the Lord of God'. We say that the Saviour dominates all those beings which are subject to him especially when we conceive him as God, as *logos*, as wisdom, as justice and as truth; but this does not mean that he dominates his Father and God, who on the contrary dominates him.[399]

In both passages, the terms ἐλαττόνως, ἡττόνως, μείζων, πλείων, οὐκ ἰσχυρότερον, ὑποδεέστερον, κρατοῦντος, emphasize the subordinate position of the Son and Holy Spirit with respect to God the Father.[400] Salvatore Lilla argues that such a description of God reflects the Neoplatonic concept of being, in which 'the more general principles embracing a greater number of beings are higher than the more particular principles concerned with a narrower number of realities'.[401] And Ziebritzki draws the analogy between Origen's God and Plotinus' Intellect (νοῦς): 'der Gottesbegriff des Origenes steht grundsätzlich auf einer Stufe mit Plotins Intellektenbegriff, trägt aber auch Merkmale von Plotins Begriff des Einen'.[402] Generally, scholars note that Origen's depiction of God in such terms accords with his view of Christian life as a progressive contemplation from one person of the

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[398] Arbitror igitur operationem quidem esse patris et filii tam in sanctis quam in peccatoribus, in hominibus rationabilibus et in mutis animalibus, sed et in his, quae sine anima sunt, et in omnibus omnino quae sunt; operationem uero spiritus sancti nequaquam prorsus incidere uel in ea, quae sine anima sunt, uel in ea, quae animantia quidem sed muta sunt, sed ne in illis quidem inueniri, qui rationabiles quidem sunt sed in malitia positi nec omnino ad meliora conuersi. Cf. the Greek text from PG [11:148c]: ὁ μὲν θεὸς καὶ πατὴρ συνέχων τὰ πάντα φθάνει εἰς ἕκαστον τῶν ὄντων μεταδιδοὺς ἑκάστῳ ἀπὸ τοῦ ἰδίου τὸ εἶναι· ὢν γάρ ἐστιν· ἐλάττων δὲ πρὸς τὸν πατέρα ὁ υἱὸς φθάνων ἐπὶ μόνα τὰ λογικά· δεύτερος γάρ ἐστι τοῦ πατρός· ἔτι δὲ ἧττον τὸ πνεῦμα τὸ ἅγιον ἐπὶ μόνους τοὺς ἁγίους δεικνούμενον·

[399] καὶ τοῦτο λέγομεν... εἰπόντι τό· ὁ πατὴρ ὁ πέμψας με μείζων μου ἐστί. καὶ οὐδεὶς ἡμῶν οὕτως ἐμβρόντητός ἐστιν, ὡς λέγειν· κύριός ἐστιν τοῦ θεοῦ ὁ υἱὸς τοῦ ἀνθρώπου. κρατεῖν δέ φαμεν τὸν σωτῆρα μάλιστα, ὅτε νοοῦμεν αὐτὸν θεὸν λόγον καὶ σοφίαν καὶ δικαιοσύνην καὶ ἀλήθειαν, πάντων μὲν τῶν ὑποτεταγμένων αὐτῷ, καθὸ ταῦτά ἐστιν, ἀλλ᾽ οὐχὶ καὶ τοῦ κρατοῦντος αὐτὸν πατρὸς καὶ θεοῦ.

[400] Of course the subordinate position of Christ and Holy Sprit did not preclude their (perhaps gradated) divinity. For an analysis of Origen's defence of Christ's divinity and its meaning with respect to his humanity, see Gamble, 'Euhemerism and Christology', 15-29; Frede, 'Celsus' Attack on the Christians', 230-1, 235-6.

[401] Lilla, 'Chrsitian Trinity', 139.

[402] Ziebritzki, *Heiliger Geist und Welseele*, 140. Cf. ibid., 143.

Trinity to another.[403] Thus, in *Com. Ioh.* 19.37-8 [SC 290:68; Lilla, 'Christian Trinity', 140], he explains the movement from the Son to the Father by using the image of the Holy of Holies and the Temples' steps:

> It is not possible to conceive or to contemplate first God and then the truth; one must first conceive and contemplate the truth, as to reach the contemplation either of the essence of God or of his power and nature, lying above essence (ἐπὶ τὸ ἐνιδεῖν τῇ οὐσίᾳ ἢ τῇ ὑπερέκεινα τῆς οὐσίας) [Cf. Plato, *Rep.* 509b (LCL 276:106)].[404] As in a temple there is a flight of steps through which it is possible to enter the Holy of Holies, in the same way our flight of steps (ἀναβαθμοί) is represented by the only-begotten Son of God.[405]

In this passage the ascent to God is described as a progress from the only-begotten Son of God to the first God. The former is the truth and the first object of contemplation. The latter is the ultimate goal of this ascent. The image of flight reflects the general Platonic idea of the soul's alertness for becoming like God (e.g. *Theaet.* 176b [LCL 123:128]), and the analogy to Origen's ἀναβαθμοί can be found in Plotinus' κρηπῖδος in *Enn.* 5.5.3.6 [LCL 444:162]. The image of the Holy of Holies (τὰ ἅγια τῶν ἁγίων), or sanctuary, is also used by Philo (*Somn.* 2.189 [LCL 275:528]) and Plotinus (*Enn.* 6.9.11.16-30 [LCL 468:342])[406] in similar contexts of one's advance to God. In his philosophical writing, *De Pincipiis*, Origen explains this laddered progress in terms of receiving three major qualities: existence from the Father, rationality from the Logos, and its holiness from the Spirit.[407] Clarifying the role of Christ in this movement to God with the help of the biblical imagery, Origen writes:

> As we cannot be in the Father or with the Father except by ascending from below upwards and coming first to the divinity of the Son (κάτωθεν ἀναβαίνοντα ἐπὶ τὴν τοῦ υἱοῦ θεότητα), through which one may be led by the hand and brought to the blessedness of the Father himself, so the Saviour has the inscription 'the Door'. And as he is a lover of men, and approves the impulse of

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[403] e.g. Macaulay, *The Nature of Christ*, 180; Lilla, 'Christian Trinity', 139-40; Russell, *The Doctrine of Deification*, 152; Balás, *METOUSIA THEOU*, 9-10.

[404] It does not seem that Origen was conclusive about whether God is essence' or 'beyond essence'. For a detailed discussion on this subject, see Lilla, 'Christian Trinity', 141-2.

[405] οὐ γὰρ νοεῖ τις τὸν θεὸν ἢ θεωρεῖ αὐτόν, καὶ μετὰ ταῦτα τὴν ἀλήθειαν, ἀλλὰ πρότερον τὴν ἀλήθειαν, ἵν' οὕτως ἔλθῃ ἐπὶ τὸ ἐνιδεῖν τῇ οὐσίᾳ ἢ τῇ ὑπερέκεινα τῆς οὐσίας δυνάμει καὶ φύσει τοῦ θεοῦ. καὶ τάχα γε ὥσπερ κατὰ τὸν ναὸν ἀναβαθμοί τινες ἦσαν, δι' ὧν εἰσῄει τις εἰς τὰ ἅγια τῶν ἁγίων, οὕτως οἱ πάντες ἡμῶν ἀναβαθμοὶ ὁ μονογενής ἐστιν τοῦ θεοῦ.

[406] For an analysis of this analogy, see Simmonetti, 'Note sulla teologia trinitaria', 284.

[407] *De Prin.* 1.3.8 [SC 252:162-4].

human souls to better things, even of those who do not hasten to the Logos, but like sheep have a weakness and gentleness apart from all accuracy and reason, so he is the Shepherd (*Com. Ioh.* 1.188 [SC 120bis:152-4; ANF 10:313]).[408]

Various qualities that describe Christ in this passage—'divinity', 'Son', Saviour', 'Door', 'Logos', and 'Shepherd'—are given a metaphysical rationale by Origen. Slightly later in the same writing, he explains that Christ's assisting role towards humanity derives from the fact that the Father is αὐτόθεος (the source of divinity), while the Son is θεοποιούμενος (the one who participates in the divine source).[409] The former is ὁ θεός *with* the article, while the latter is θεός *without* the article. Just as the Son receives his divinity from the Father, so do men become deified by the Son 'who has drawn from God the power that enables them to become gods' (εἰς τὸ θεοποιηθῆναι αὐτούς) (*Com. Ioh.* 2.17 [SC 120:218; ANF 10:323, modified]).[410] In relation to this aspect of Origen's thought, scholars note that even if he did not intend to subordinate the trinitarian persons to each other, his strong emphasis on the metaphysical role of Christ for deification does tend to diminish the importance of his bodily incarnation.[411] Louth demonstrates this by referring to a series of passages[412] where Origen speaks of incarnation as a preliminary stage in which Christ (according to flesh) is to give way to Christ (according to spirit). He remarks that in such cases (though not in all of Origen's writings) incarnation is understood as something to be surpassed, or transcended, by the cosmic role of the eternal Logos.[413] Likewise, Russell points out that for Origen 'there is thus a hierarchy of elements even within Christ. The Logos remains dominant, for the lower reality participates in the higher, acquiring its attributes. The soul is deified by the Logos, just as the Logos himself is deified by the Father'.[414] He concludes that 'Origen does not succeed in establishing a real ontic unity—there is a defective sense of the

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[408] καὶ ἐπεὶ ἐν τῷ πατρὶ οὐκ ἔστι γενέσθαι ἢ παρὰ τῷ πατρὶ μὴ φθάσαντα πρῶτον κάτωθεν ἀναβαίνοντα ἐπὶ τὴν τοῦ υἱοῦ θεότητα, δι᾽ ἧς τις χειραγωγηθῆναι δύναται καὶ ἐπὶ τὴν πατρικὴν μακαριότητα, "θύρα" ὁ σωτὴρ ἀναγέγραπται. φιλάνθρωπος δὲ ὢν καὶ τὴν ὅπως ποτὲ ἐπὶ τὸ βέλτιον ἀποδεχόμενος τῶν ψυχῶν ῥοπὴν τῶν ἐπὶ τὸν λόγον μὴ σπευδόντων ἀλλὰ δίκην προβάτων οὐκ ἐξητασμένον ἀλλὰ ἄλογον τὸ ἥμερον καὶ πρᾷον ἐχόντων ποιμὴν γίνεται.

[409] *Com. Ioh.* 2.17 [SC 120:218].

[410] ἀπὸ τοῦ θεοῦ ἀρυσά<μενος> εἰς τὸ θεοποιηθῆναι αὐτούς.

[411] On the problem of the minimized role of incarnation in Origen, see Rowe, 'Origen's Doctrine of Subordination', esp. 31-51.

[412] *Com. Cant.* 3.5 [SC 136:20-4]; 6.14 [SC 147:212-4]; *Com. Ioh.* 2.8 [SC 120:212]; *Hom. Ex.* 12.4 [SC 321]. Cf. also *Con. Cels.* 3.41 [136:94-8]; *Com. Mt. Ser.* 33.

[413] Louth, *The Mystical Tradition*, 64-6.

[414] Russell, *The Doctrine of Deification*, 152.

person of Christ'.[415] Perhaps one of the most graphic ways in which Origen's emphases on what it means 'to acquire the Logos attributes' (as Russell puts it)[416] displays itself is his vision of Christian life as a movement from the image to likeness.

2.3.2.2 From the Image to Likeness

Arguing against the deterministic view of Gnostic dualism that divided people into different classes, Origen postulated his famous theory of the cosmic fall in which the spirits became souls, and formed the existing diversities.[417] In light of this theory the human task, according to Origen, is to regain the initial state of equality (as opposed to diversity) through union with God. Towards this end, he distinguishes between the image[418] of God as an in-built characteristic, and the divine likeness which humanity is called to achieve. Explaining this dynamic view of human nature, he writes:

> Now the fact that he said, *he made him in the image of God*, and was silent about the likeness, points to nothing else but this, that man received the honour of God's image in his first creation, whereas the perfection of God's likeness was reserved for him at the consummation. The purpose of this was that man should acquire it for himself by his own earnest efforts to imitate God, so that while the possibility of attaining perfection was given to him in the beginning through the honour of the image, he should in the end through the accomplishment of these works obtain for himself the perfect likeness (*De Princ*. 3.6.1 [SC 268:236; Butterworth 245]).[419]

On the cosmic scale such distinction between image and likeness in man goes together with Origen's concept of freedom which he emphasized against Marcion,

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[415] Ibid. Cf. the same point of criticism in Grillmeier, *Christ in Christian Tradition*, 146.

[416] Russell, *The Doctrine of Deification*, 152.

[417] *De Princ*. 1.8.1 [SC 252:220-3]; 2.8.3 [SC 252:342-8].

[418] Origen locates the image of God in the soul rather than entire man and understands it as consisting of the divine qualities: 'It is our inner man, invisible, incorporeal, incorruptible, and immortal which is made *according to the image of God*. For it is in such qualities as these that the image of God is more correctly understood' (Ist autem, qui *ad imaginem Dei* factus est, interior homo noster est, inuisibilis et incorporalis et incorruptus atque immortalis. In his enim talibus Dei imago rectius intelligitur) (*Hom. Gen*. 1.13 [SC 7:56-8; FCh 63]). Origen also believes that human being consists of a rational spirit, soul and body, while the soul has rational and irrational parts. Cf. e.g. *De Princ*. 3.4.1 [SC 268:198-200].

[419] Hoc ergo quod dixit *ad imaginem dei fecit eum* et de similitudine siluit, non aliud indicat nisi quod imaginis quidem dignitatem in prima conditione percepit, similitudinis uero ei perfectio in consummatione seruata est: scilicet ut ipse sibi eam propriae industriae studiis ex dei imitatione consciceret, quo possibilitatem sibi perfectionis in initiis datam per imaginis dignitatem, in fine demum per operum expletionem perfectam sibi ipse similitudinem consummaret.

Valentinus, and Basilides who denied it.[420] In his understanding, free will is the principle of movement that led rational beings from the original state of equality to diversity, and it also gives a possibility of return to that original state.[421] He affirms that unlike God, who is essentially (οὐσιωδώς) good, rational creatures possess their goodness accidentally (κατὰ συμβεβηκός).[422] Therefore, to achieve likeness to God requires that we freely choose to continue in the good. Throughout his writings, Origen describes this in terms of gradual ascent to union with God that proceeds by imitating Christ,[423] who is God's very image (εἰκὼν εἰκόνος in contrast to man who is κατ᾽ εἰκόνα in relation to him).[424] In the general sense this means to develop the same characteristics that Christ has, such as love,[425] sinfulness,[426] obedience,[427] meekness,[428] and other qualities.[429] In the more specific sense, Origen distinguishes three basic stages of progress to God in which Christ's role is integrated according to the various aspects of his being. According to Karen Torjesen, they can be classified as purification, knowledge, and perfection.[430] She reconstructs them in the way Origen specifically interprets the book of Numbers, Psalm 37, Song of Songs, Jeremiah and the Gospels.[431]

The first stage, or moral purification, begins with the recognition of one's sin. This happens as the soul acquires self-knowledge ('scito te ipsum' vel 'cognosce teipsum').[432] In the process, it realizes where it came from, or its original

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[420] Origen's concept of freedom is a hotly debated subject among scholars. He is often discussed against the Stoics who tended to identify everything with the natural order of the Universe, and Plotinus who thought that action was free only when it was directed towards the good. For Origen, free will was of indifferent character and implied a real choice between the good and evil. See *De Princ.* 2.8.4 [SC 252:348]; *Com. Ioh.* 32.18 [SC 385:194]. Cf. Frede, *A free Will*, 102-24; Tzamalikos, *Origen*, 313-6, 321-4; Jackson, 'Sources of Origen's Freedom', 13-23.

[421] *De Princ.* 1.8.4 [SC 252:228-32].

[422] *Cont. Cels.* 6.44 [SC 147:286].

[423] *De Princ.* 3.6.1 [SC 268:234-8]. Cf. *De Princ.* 4.4.9-10 [SC 268:422-8].

[424] *Orat.* 22.4 [PG 11:482c-486c]. For the use of κατ᾽ εἰκόνα, see e.g. *Con. Cels.* 6.63 [SC 147:338]; *Com. Ioh.* 6.49 [SC 157:320]; *Hom. Gen.* 1.13 [SC 7bis:56-64]). Cf. Crouzel, *De l'image de Dieu*, 107, 125-6.

[425] e.g. *Exh. ad Mart.* 43.

[426] e.g. *Com. Ioh.* 19.86 [SC 290:98-100].

[427] e.g. Ibid. 28.14-22 [SC 385:66-8].

[428] e.g. *Fragm. in Mt.* 81.

[429] On the topic of imitation in Origen, see Crouzel, *De l'image de Dieu*, 222-32; Bertrand, *Mystique de Jésus*, 106-20; Wiles, *The Divine Apostle*, 117.

[430] Torjesen, *Origen's Exegesis*, 72. Cf. Louth, *The Mystical Tradition*, 58, who characterizes these three stages in Origen as *ethike* (learning virtue), *physike* (adopting a right attitude to natural things), and *enoptike* (ascending to contemplation of God) with the corresponding counterparts in the Scripture: Proverbs, Ecclesiastes, and the Song of Songs. Cf. a more recent study on the Scripture's role in the mystical theology of Origen in Martens, *Origen and Scripture*, 206-9, 221-5.

[431] Ibid., 22-35; 85-107.

[432] e.g. *Com. Cant.* 2.5.1 [SC 375:354].

divine nature as λογικόν, and its tendency to live in sin (esp. passions). On this level Christ enlightens[433] the soul and gives it grace[434] of cooperation according to the progress it makes in understanding itself.[435] By practicing good deeds such as giving alms, or exercising love to others,[436] the soul purifies itself of evil. In this sense, good deeds 'lead toward perfection in so far as they are an imitation of the goodness of God. In doing good works the soul becomes progressively more like God through imitation'.[437] It thus becomes prepared for the higher stage—to receive the wisdom and knowledge of Christ. This type of knowledge consists of knowing the *logos* of things, or that which causes them to be.[438] By studying the *logoi* of things one gains partial knowledge of the *Logos*-Christ himself.[439] Torjesen remarks that, [t]his progressive knowledge of the intelligibles is as well a progressive assimilation of the soul to the Logos. This is because knowledge which has its roots in the natural affinity of rational things to each other leads to union with the thing known'.[440] This second stage ends with what Origen calls 'theoria et intellectuas dei', the original state of contemplation of God. He also speaks of it as a mystical union with God[441] charecterizing it as the absence of variety[442] and the restoration of the perfection of God's likeness.[443] In his chapter on Origen in the *Mystical Tradition*, Louth observes that this final stage of one's ascent to God is characterized by the presence of grace, or God's mercy. He writes: 'This... links up with Plato's idea that at the summit of the mystic ascent the soul passes beyond what it can achieve by its own efforts. The final vision appears suddenly, *exaiphnes*, and this implies... both that the soul can do nothing to elicit this final *theoria*, and

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[433] e.g. *Cont. Cels.* 7.33 [SC 150:88-90].

[434] e.g. *De Princ.* 2.3.3 [SC 252:256-8]. For more on the role and meaning of grace in Origen, see Drewery, *Doctrine of Grace*, 205-6.

[435] e.g. *Com. Ioh*. 2.8 [SC 120:212].

[436] e.g. *Hom. Lev*. 2.4 [SC 286:106-12].

[437] Torjesen, *Origen's Exegesis*, 81.

[438] e.g. *Com. Ioh*. 1.34 [SC 120:78].

[439] e.g. *De Princ.* 1.1.7 [SC 252:104-6].

[440] Torjesen, *Origen's Exegesis*, 83.

[441] e.g. *Com. Cant.* 1.7 [SC 375:254].

[442] e.g. *De Princ.* 3.6.4 [SC 268:242-4].

[443] e.g. Ibid. 3.6.1 [SC 268:234-8]. For the analysis of Origen's lanugage of ecstacy, see Völker, *Das Vollkommenheitsideal des Origenes*, 124, 139. Scholars disagree on the nature of Origen's mysticism. Some claim that it has every evidence for being a personal encounter with God (e.g. Louth, *The Mystical Tradition*, 70-1), while others are hesitant to say so (e.g. Dodds, *Age of Anxiety*, 70). Perhaps, such ambivalent attitude among scholars has to do with Origen's description of God that vacilates from being relational to quite impersonal.

also that in this final vision the soul is immediately present to the Supreme Beauty'.[444]

It would be anachronistic to judge Origen by the standards of Nicene Orthodoxy,[445] and surely there is a lot for which he could be appreciated. His influence continues far beyond his own life, and throughout Athanasius' writings one can sense a respectful attitude toward him (he also mentions Origen by name on several occasions). [446] When compared with Irenaeus, Origen's language does look different, but as I have tried to show both of them can speak of God and deification by combining the relational and impersonal aspects. There is a sense, however, in which the combination of these two aspects (as seen in both authors) creates a tension of emphases between God's action (when his personal role is stressed) and the human task (when the divine qualities are accentuated in such a way that they are more a means to becoming like God rather than the results of deification). In my next chapter, I would like to show how this tension finds its expression in an elaborated form in Athanasius. To explain the nature of this tension and the manner in which Athanasius deals with it, I would like to turn now to his double treatise *Contra Gentes* and *De Incarnatione Verbi*, proceeding in the context of the background I have examined thus far.

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[444] Louth, *The Mystical Tradition*, 70.

[445] A suggestion made by Scott, *Origen on the Problem of Evil*, 6, n. 33. Often times scholar's evaluation of Origen's theology depends on the way they interpret his dependence on, or appropriation of, the Greek philosophy. On this, more generally, see Ivánka, *Plato Christianus*, 101-42. Cf. more specifically in the context of this study, O'Cleirigh, 'Theology in Origen and Plotinus', 19-28, who argues that Origen's theology is philosophical (and more specifically Platonic) even though the bulk of his writings is exegetical. Tripolitis, 'Return to the Divine', 171-8, on the other hand, attempts to show that Origen's religious orientation made him adapt the Platonism in such a way that his thought was more biblical than Platonic.

[446] Athanasius' direct references to Origen appear in his *De Decretis*, where the latter is called a 'labour-loving Origen' (φιλόπονος ὠριγένος) in *De Decr.* 27 [Opitz 23]. He also refers to Origen by name (four times) in support of his arguments about the divinity of the Holy Spirit in *Ep. Ser.* 4.2-3, 4 [Savvidis 581-3].

CHAPTER THREE

God, Man, and Deification
in the *Contra Gentes* and *De Incarnatione Verbi*

Athanasius' early treatise is the only writing where he adds a significant anthropological focus to his otherwise dominant topics of God and salvation. Scholars have noticed that the way he integrates this focus connects him closely to the Hellenistic mode of thinking. In fact, it is often argued that besides being a theological treatise, this is one of the most consice pieces of *philosophical* work in the early history of the Christian thought. Furthermore, it is sometimes claimed that of the two parts of Athanasius' double treatise, the first one, *Contra Gentes*, is the most impacted by Platonism. This is especially contended on the basis of the way Athanasius describes the nature of the human being and its vocation to become divine. The other part of the treatise, *De Incarnatione*, is governed by a very different christological concern and is much less impacted by the common Greek ideas. Therefore, it is not uncommon to see scholars use such qualifiers as 'tension', 'conflict', 'inconsistency', or 'Athanasius' over-dependence on the Greek worldview in the *Contra Gentes* versus the christologically informed theology in the *De Incarnatione*' to describe the nature of the differences between the two parts of Athanasius' treatise. The way Athanasius structures this work has been a matter of lively discussions, and I will attempt to show that major confusions could be most effectively resolved when seen from the perspective of the (philosophical and theological) background and the inner consistency of the treatise. In this chapter, I will examine the issue of consistency and how it contributes to Athanasius' method of conceptualizing God and salvation in distinctly relational terms, as well as expressing various aspects of salvation by giving them their proper place. I will begin this chapter with the analysis of the *Contra Gentes*, and then move to the exegesis of the *De Incarnatione Verbi*. More immediately, I will consider the issue of consistency in light of my own terminological framework.

3.1 Deification and the Issue of Inconsistency in the Double Treatise

While there is a disagreement as to whether deification is central to Athanasius' thought, commentators commonly recognize that it is an undoubtedly essential and

vital motif.[447] In his chapter on Athanasius Gross observes that for him 'la divinisation du chrétien n'est pas, comme chez la plupart des Pères antérieurs, un élément plus ou moins secondaire et adventice, mais l'idée centrale de sa théologie'.[448] In the same way, Lossky remarks that the very core of the Christian life according to Athanasius was expressed in terms of 'participation in the incarnated Word, Christ'.[449] As with Ireneaus and Origen, one can find both the relational (personal) and acquisitional (impersonal) aspects in Athanasius' theology, and scholars emphasize one or the other depending on which one of them they consider to be primary. Thus, stressing the importance of the latter aspect, Lyman points out that 'soteriology in Athanasius centers on the communication of the qualities of transcendent divine nature to mutable humanity through the incarnation of the Son'.[450] More commonly, scholars identify this emphasis as a 'physical salvation' and seek to align it with the corresponding concept of God as a largely substantial Deity. In his study of patristic deification, Ivan Popov (a Russian Orthodox scholar who studied under Harnack in 1901-2) asserts that 'the main characteristic of the religious aspirations based on Athanasius' soteriology is the craving for a physical renewal through the communion with the divine nature'.[451] He also speaks of deification as a 'physical union with God' (emphasizing immortality) and 'participation in his substantial life'.[452] Likewise, Wilson remarks that '[b]oth Irenaeus and Athanasius are well known for presenting the "physical" theory of atonement, which specifically involves the physical union of God and humanity'.[453]

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[447] The significance of deification in Athanasius' writings has been noted by many scholars. See e.g. Sträter, *Die Erlösungslehre des hl. Athanasius*; Bornhäuser, *Die Vergottungslehre des Athanasius*, 13-48; Gross, *The Divinization of the Christian*, 163-75; Bernard, *L'Image de Dieu d'après Athanase*; Demetropoulos, ἡ ἀνθροπολογία τοῦ μεγάλου ἀθανασίου, 116-23; Dalmais, 'Divinisation—patristique grecque', 1380-1; Roldanus, *Le Christ et I'homme*, 162-70, 192-5; Bilaniuk, 'The Mystery of *Theosis*'; Skurat, *Ucheniye o Spasenii*; Stăniloae, 'La Doctrine de saint Athanase sur le salut'; Kolp, 'Partakers of the Divine Nature'; Strange, 'Athanasius on Deification'; Norman, 'Deification: The Content of Athanasian Soteriology'; Russell, *The Doctrine of Deification*, 166-88; Finlan, 'Athanasius on the Deifying Work', 104-121. Among the recent works, Hess, 'The Place of Divinization in Athanasius', argues against the centrality of deification in Athanasius' thought, while Fairbairn, *Life in the Trinity*, emphasizes the importance of interpreting deification in connection with Athanasius' doctrine of God.

[448] Gross, *La Divinisation du Chrétien*, 202.

[449] Lossky, *Bogovideniye*, 368: 'приобщение к Богу в воплотившемся Слове, Христе'.

[450] Lyman, *Christology and Cosmology*, 158.

[451] Popov, *Trudy po Patrologii*, 18: 'Основной чертой религиозных упований, выстраивавшихся в сотериологии Афанасия, служит жажда физического обновления через общение с Божественной природой'.

[452] Ibid., 24: 'Физическое соединение с Богом', and 'причастие субстанциальной жизни'.

[453] Wilson, *Deification*, 53-4.

Other scholars highlight the role of the relational aspect as opposed to the physical one. Sometimes this is done to underline the contrast between the physical and relational concepts as in Fairbairn, *Life in the Trinity*.[454] According to this interpretation, Athanasius' relational vision drives him to stress the importance of God's primary action in Christ as opposed to emphasizing the human effort in acquiring the divine qualities (such as immortality and perfection) as the main soteriological factor. Other times, scholars approach the relational aspect as being merely a positive qualifier; it helps to add a personal dimension to the otherwise rudely physical deification. Thus, even Harnack, who consistently accusses Athanasius for advocating a physical soteriology, admits: 'Heidenthum und Judenthum haben die Menschen nicht in die Gemeinschaft mit Gott gebracht, auf die Alles ankommt. Durch Christus sind wir in diese Gemeinschaft versetzt worden; er ist gekommen, um uns zu vergöttlichen, d. h. uns per adoptionem zu Gottessöhnen und Göttern zu machen.[455] This ambivalence in identifying the primary aspect of Athanasius' thought has contributed to a tendency that approaches his early work—*Contra Gentes-De Incarnatione Verbi*—as consisting of two different (if not opposite) theological writings. Scholars who support this position usually point out the tension between the anthropological perspective in the *Contra Gentes* (with the emphasis on the human role in salvation) and the incarnational perspective in the *De Incarnatione Verbi* (with the emphasis on Christ's saving work). Recognizing this tension, I will argue here that Athanasius' doctrine of God and deification is best considered within the overall apologetic structure and purpose of his double treatise. When examined from this standpoint, Athanasius' soteriology appears consistent throughout his early work. It is not about motivating people to attain salvation, but rather about demonstrating (in an apologetic manner) that they failed to do so, and therefore God's Son comes down to save them. To describe this idea I will use the word 'tension' as a way of showing that Athanasius deliberately chooses to map the history of salvation by bringing together something of both Irenaeus and Origen. At the same time, his way of integrating different aspects of God and deification is perhaps more intentional than what we find in either of them. In this sense, Athanasius is of special interest

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[454] Fairbairn, *Life in the Trinity*, e.g. 6-7, 30-35. I follow this line of interpretation in my article Lytvynenko, '*Theosis* in Athanasius and Lossky', 9-18.
[455] Harnack, *Lehrbuch der Dogmengeschichte*, 2:203.

for the paradigm he provides here, and it is the same paradigm that drives his major later writings.

Examining Athanasius' double treatise is an excellent way to introduce his theology in a nutshell. Behr remarks that it represents 'a clear exposition of Athanasius' theological vision, one which is based on key intuitions that he had learnt from Alexander and that had been upheld at Nicaea, and which continued thereafter to drive his struggle to give fuller expression to Nicene theology'.[456] However, it remains unclear as to when this work was written, and for this reason scholars debate which phase of Athanasius' career it represents. Lately, commentators have leaned toward a later date (as opposed to an earlier time around 318-23),[457] when Athanasius was already fighting the Arian heresy. This can be either the time *before* his first exile to Trier between 328 and 335,[458] or *during* his first exile from 335 to 337.[459] As important as this discussion is, it has little bearing on this study as long as it is maintained that the double treatise was written after Athanasius' two other works—*Orationes Contra Arianos* and *Epistula ad Serapionem*—which is rarely questioned.[460] Since the treatise gives no direct reference to the anti-Arian polemic, it will be convenient to discuss Arius in the next chapter, while focusing on Athanasius in the remaining part of this one.

3.2 Man and Deification in the *Contra Gentes*

3.2.1 The Original Relationship with God and the Fall

It has been noted[461] that throughout the *Contra Gentes* Athanasius describes two types of relationship with God—one before and one after the fall. In the first one, humanity is described in its original state of union with God. In the second humanity turns away from God, substituting falsely deified idols. The most detailed depiction of the former is given in the preface to the main body of the treatise and is worth being quoted in full:

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[456] Behr, *The Nicene Faith*, 2/1:168.

[457] e.g. Meijering, *Orthodoxy and Platonism*, 108-13.

[458] Anatolios, *Athanasius: Coherence*, 26-9.

[459] Barnes, *Constantine and Eusebius*, 206. For a detailed analysis of dating, see Kannengiesser, 'La date de l'apologie d'Athanase', 383-428, and more recently, Ernest, *Bible in Athanasius of Alexandria*, 423-4.

[460] Nordberg, 'A Reconsideration of the Date', 262-6, who dates the double treatise around 361-3.

[461] e.g. Anatolios, *Athanasius: Coherence*, esp. 32-5; Behr, *The Nicene Faith*, 2/1:171-3; Meijering, 'Struktur und Zusammenhang', 316.

For God, the creator of the universe and king of all, who is beyond all being and human thought, since he [God] is good and bountiful (ἀγαθὸς καὶ ὑπέρκαλος ὤν), [he] has made mankind in his own image (κατ᾽ ἰδίαν εἰκόνα) through his own Word, our Saviour Jesus Christ; and he also made man perceptive and understanding of reality through his similarity to him (πρὸς αὐτὸν ὁμοιώσεως), giving him also a conception and knowledge of his own eternity, so that as long as he kept this likeness (ταυτότητα) he might never abandon his concept of God or leave the company of the saints, but retaining the grace of him who bestowed it on him, and also the special power (δύναμιν) given him by the Father's Word, he might rejoice and converse with God (ἀγάλληται καὶ συνομιλῇ τῷ θείῳ), living an idyllic and truly blessed and immortal life. For having no obstacle to the knowledge of the divine, he continuously contemplates (θεωρεῖ) by his purity (καθαρότητος) the image of the Father, God the Word, in whose image (κατ᾽ εἰκόνα) he was made, and is filled with admiration when he grasps his providence towards the universe. He is superior to sensual things and all bodily impressions, and by the power of his mind clings (τῇ δυνάμει τοῦ νοῦ συναπτόμενος) to the divine and intelligible realities in heaven. For when men's mind has no intercourse with the body (συνομιλεῖ τοῖς σώμασιν ὁ νοῦς), and has nothing of the latter's desires mingled with it from outside but is entirely superior to them, being self-sufficient as it was created in the beginning (ὅλος ἐστὶν ἄνω ἑαυτῷ συνὼν ὡς γέγονεν ἐξ ἀρχῆς), then it transcends the senses and all human things and it rises high above the world, and beholding the Word sees in him also the Father of the Word (λόγον ἰδών, ὁρᾷ ἐν αὐτῷ καὶ τὸν τοῦ λόγου πατέρα). It rejoices in contemplating him (ἡδόμενος ἐπὶ τῇ τούτου θεωρίᾳ) and is renewed by its desire for him (ἀνακαινούμενος ἐπὶ τῷ πρὸς τοῦτον πόθῳ), just as the holy Scriptures say that the first man to be created, who was called Adam in Hebrew, had his mind fixed on God in unembarrassed frankness, and lived with the saints (συνδιαιτᾶσθαι τοῖς ἁγίοις) in the contemplation of intelligible reality, which he enjoyed in that place which the holy Moses figuratively called Paradise. Indeed the purity of the soul make it able to contemplate even God by itself, as the Lord himself said: *Blessed are the pure in heart, for they shall see God* (CG 2.5-35 [Thomson 6-8; ibid. 7-9]).[462]

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[462] ᾧ μὲν γὰρ τοῦ παντὸς δημιουργὸς καὶ παμβασιλεὺς θεός, ὁ ὑπερέκεινα πάσης οὐσίας καὶ ἀνθρωπίνης ἐπινοίας ὑπάρχων, ἅτε δὴ ἀγαθὸς καὶ ὑπέρκαλος ὤν, διὰ τοῦ ἰδίου λόγου τοῦ σωτῆρος ἡμῶν ἰησοῦ χριστοῦ τὸ ἀνθρώπινον γένος κατ᾽ ἰδίαν εἰκόνα πεποίηκε· καὶ τῶν ὄντων αὐτὸν θεωρητὴν καὶ ἐπιστήμονα διὰ τῆς πρὸς αὐτὸν ὁμοιώσεως κατεσκεύασε, δοὺς αὐτῷ καὶ τῆς ἰδίας ἀϊδιότητος ἔννοιαν καὶ γνῶσιν, ἵνα, τὴν ταυτότητα σώζων, μήτε τῆς περὶ θεοῦ φαντασίας ποτὲ ἀποστῇ, μήτε τῆς τῶν ἁγίων συζήσεως ἀποπηδήσῃ, ἀλλ᾽, ἔχων τὴν τοῦ δεδωκότος χάριν, ἔχων καὶ τὴν ἰδίαν ἐκ τοῦ πατρικοῦ λόγου δύναμιν, ἀγάλληται καὶ συνομιλῇ τῷ θείῳ, ζῶν τὸν ἀπήμονα καὶ μακάριον ὄντως ἀθάνατον βίον. οὐδὲν γὰρ ἔχων ἐμπόδιον εἰς τὴν περὶ τοῦ θείου γνῶσιν, θεωρεῖ μὲν ἀεὶ διὰ τῆς αὐτοῦ καθαρότητος τὴν τοῦ πατρὸς εἰκόνα, τὸν θεὸν λόγον, οὗ καὶ κατ᾽ εἰκόνα γέγονεν· ὑπερεκπλήττεται δὲ κατανοῶν τὴν δι᾽ αὐτοῦ εἰς τὸ πᾶν πρόνοιαν. ὑπεράνω μὲν τῶν αἰσθητῶν καὶ πάσης σωματικῆς φαντασίας γινόμενος, πρὸς δὲ τὰ ἐν οὐρανοῖς θεῖα καὶ νοητὰ τῇ δυνάμει τοῦ νοῦ συναπτόμενος. ὅτε γὰρ οὐ συνομιλεῖ τοῖς σώμασιν ὁ νοῦς ὁ τῶν ἀνθρώπων, οὐδέ τι τῆς ἐκ τούτων ἐπιθυμίας μεμιγμένον ἔξωθεν ἔχει, ἀλλ᾽ ὅλος ἐστὶν ἄνω ἑαυτῷ συνὼν ὡς γέγονεν ἐξ ἀρχῆς· τότε δή, τὰ αἰσθητὰ καὶ πάντα τὰ ἀνθρώπινα διαβάς, ἄνω μετάρσιος γίνεται, καὶ τὸν λόγον ἰδών, ὁρᾷ ἐν αὐτῷ καὶ τὸν τοῦ λόγου πατέρα, ἡδόμενος ἐπὶ τῇ τούτου θεωρίᾳ, καὶ ἀνακαινούμενος ἐπὶ τῷ πρὸς τοῦτον πόθῳ· ὥσπερ οὖν τὸν πρῶτον τῶν ἀνθρώπων γενόμενον, ὃς καὶ κατὰ τὴν ἑβραίων γλῶτταν ἀδὰμ ὠνομάσθη, λέγουσιν αἱ ἱεραὶ γραφαὶ κατὰ τὴν ἀρχὴν ἀνεπαισχύντῳ παρρησίᾳ τὸν νοῦν ἐσχηκέναι πρὸς τὸν θεόν, καὶ συνδιαιτᾶσθαι τοῖς ἁγίοις ἐν τῇ τῶν νοητῶν θεωρίᾳ, ἣν εἶχεν ἐν ἐκείνῳ τῷ τόπῳ, ὃν καὶ ὁ ἅγιος μωϋσῆς τροπικῶς παράδεισον

As seen from this passage the original relationship of man with God included a number of important elements. Perhaps the most significant relational element is described in the way the original man enjoyed a close communion with God. More specifically, it is said that he contemplated him in such a way that 'seeing the Logos he was able to behold the Father in him' (λόγον ἰδών, ὁρᾷ ἐν αὐτῷ καὶ τὸν τοῦ λόγου πατέρα). Being placed in the relationship with God in Paradise (which is not understood literally in this passage), Adam 'rejoiced and conversed with the Divine' (ἀγάλληται καὶ συνομιλῇ τῷ θείῳ).[463] The same word συνομιλῇ is used here to describe the closeness of the mind to the body in the phrase 'when men's mind (ὁ νοῦς) has no intercourse (συνομιλεῖ) with the body (τοῖς σώμασιν)'. Apparently, man's closeness to God is understood as being akin to that of his mind's closeness to the body. The intensity of the relationship with God is also underscored by the fact that the first man 'was rejoicing' (ἡδόμενος) as he contemplated God and grew in his desire (πόθος) for him. Whatever is the intended meaning of the phrase συνδιαιτᾶθαι τοῖς ἁγίοις, it indicates that the original state of human beings was marked by fellowship. Khale Anatolios argues that according to Athanasius, man's ability to be in communion with God implied a possibility of apprehending him consciously, or personally, in virtue of man being created 'in the image of God' (κατ᾽ ἰδίαν εἰκόνα) and retaining the godlikeness (διὰ τῆς πρὸς αὐτὸν [sc. τὸν θεὸν] ὁμοιώσεως). Quoting from the same passage I have cited above, he states: 'Thus humanity was made "perceptive (θεωρητήν) and understanding (ἐπιστήμονα) of reality through its similarity with God".… In this way, the relation between humanity and God is consciously apprehended by the latter with an attendant joy, desire, and blessedness'.[464] I will return to this idea in sec. 3.2.2.3, but for now it is worth noting that the same closeness and warmth that characterized man's original relationship with God is also characteristic of the relationship between the Father and the Logos. Since I will spend more time examining it later, I will only point out several key facts now.

One of the special traits of the divine relationship, according to Athanasius, is that one person of the Trinity belongs to the other. This is evident from the fact

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ὠνόμασεν. ἱκανὴ δὲ ἡ τῆς ψυχῆς καθαρότης ἐστὶ καὶ τὸν θεὸν δι᾽ ἑαυτῆς κατοπτρίζεσθαι, καθάπερ καὶ ὁ κύριός φησι· *μακάριοι οἱ καθαροὶ τῇ καρδίᾳ, ὅτι αὐτοὶ τὸν θεὸν ὄψονται.*
[463] *CG* 2.14 [Thomson 6; ibid. 7].
[464] Anatolios, *Athanasius: Coherence*, 58.

that the Logos is consistently described as being the Father's 'own Word' (ἴδιος λόγος). In his later writing *Contra Arianos*, Athanasius will use this term as the technical expression to describe the Son's substantial equality with God the Father. It will also be used (both in this treatise and in the *Contra Arianos*) to describe the way the Logos owned his body after he became man. Although it is not clear whether Athanasius intended it as a technical term in this treatise, it fits well in the context of his description of the nature of relationship between the divine persons. To characterize them, he asserts towards the end of the *Contra Gentes* that the Logos was near to the Father (ὡς πλησίον), and he employs the same word 'to converse with' (συνομιλέω) which he used to describe the first man's relationship with God. Thus, interpreting the plural occurrence in the Genesis account when God creates man, he suggests: 'He... commanded in these words: *Let us make man, and let plants come forth* [allusion to Gen. 1:26], whereby God is shown to be speaking (διαλεγόμενος) about these things to someone 'near by' (ὡς πλησίον). So there was necessarily someone with him (ἀνάγκη συνεῖναι τινα τούτῳ), to whom he spoke (ὁμιλῶν) when making the universe. Who then could it be except his Word, for to whom could one say God speaks (ὁμιλεῖν) except to his own Word? And who was with him (συνῆν) when he was making all created being except his wisdom?' (*CG* 46.38-44 [Thomson 128; ibid. 129]).[465] To seal his argument, Athanasius refers to John 5:19 concluding that 'being the power of the Father (δύναμις δὲ ὢν τοῦ πατρός), he [Logos] gave all things the strength to come into existence (εἰς τὸ εἶναι), as the Saviour says: *All that I see the Father doing, I also do likewise*' (*CG* 46.48-50 [Thomson 130; ibid. 131]).[466] The Logos is referred to here as the Saviour, which points to the fact that he is the same person in both parts of the treatise—the *Contra Gentes* and *De Incarnatione*. In other words, he enjoys a close fellowship with the Father before the creation of the world, and he remains in the same fellowship even when he comes as man. This statement is a little too comprehensive for this context, and I will spend more time later explaining what it means.

The account of the primordial state of humanity also includes important elements of a less personal nature such as 'immortal life' (ἀθάνατος βίος), 'purity'

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[465] νῦν... προστάττει δὲ λέγων· *ποιήσωμεν ἄνθρωπον, καὶ ἐξελθέτω βοτάνη· ἀφ'* ὧν δείκνυται ὁ θεὸς ὡς πλησίον τινὶ διαλεγόμενος περὶ τούτων· οὐκοῦν ἀνάγκη συνεῖναί τινα τούτῳ, ᾧ καὶ ὁμιλῶν ἐποίει τὰ ὅλα. τίς οὖν ἂν εἴη εἰ μὴ ὁ τούτου λόγος; τίνι γὰρ ἄν τις φαίη θεὸν ὁμιλεῖν ἢ τῷ ἑαυτοῦ λόγῳ; ἢ τίς τούτῳ συνῆν ποιοῦντι τὴν γενητὴν πᾶσαν οὐσίαν ἢ ἡ τούτου σοφία.

[466] δύναμις δὲ ὢν τοῦ πατρός, τὰ ὅλα εἰς τὸ εἶναι ἐσχυροποίει, ᾗ φησι καὶ ὁ σωτήρ· *πάντα ὅσα βλέπω τὸν πατέρα ποιοῦντα.*

(καθαρότητος), 'special power' (ἰδία δύναμις), 'self-sufficiency' (ὅλος ἐστὶν ἄνω ἑαυτῷ συνὼν ὡς γέγονεν ἐξ ἀρχῆς), and 'intelligible reality' (τὰ ὄντα). The original man is portrayed as being wholly attached to the 'divine and intelligible realities in heaven' (τὰ ἐν οὐρανοῖς θεῖα καὶ νοητά), and detached from 'the sensual things and all bodily impressions' (τὰ αἰσθητὰ καὶ πάντα τὰ ἀνθρώπινα διαβάς). He is said to have had a pure soul (ἡ ψυχὴ καθαρότη), and to remain in that state he, as a rational being, had to cleave to God with his mind and feed on the divine knowledge. By doing that, he was able to enjoy 'an idyllic and truly blessed and immortal life' (ζῶν τὸν ἀπήμονα καὶ μακάριον ὄντως ἀθάνατον βίον). This exalted depiction of the first man corresponds to the equally sublime picture of God who is called the Creator and King of the Universe and is 'beyond all being and human thought' (ὑπερέκεινα πάσης οὐσίας καὶ ἀνθρωπίνης ἐπινοίας ὑπάρχων). While scholars disagree as to whether this clause implies the Neoplatonic concept of God who transcends Being and Intellect,[467] Athanasius does speak about God's relation to man as a Platonist would speak about κόσμος νοητός and κόσμος αἰσθητός.[468] It is in this Platonic schema (rather than in terms of the historical event)[469] that he portrays the human fall as a turning to the non-being of evil. This is clearly reflected in the next three chapters of the *Contra Gentes* (chs. 3-5 [Thomson 9-4]), where he switches the subject in order to discuss the fall. One of the key passages comes in *CG* 4.1, 9-14, 18-20, 31-5 [Thomson 10-1 ibid. 11-2]):

Abandoning the contemplation of intelligible reality (τῆς τῶν νοητῶν θεωρίας)... it [the soul] moves (κινεῖται) no longer on the path of virtue, nor with a view to seeing God (τὸν θεὸν ὁρᾶν), but reflecting on unreality it alters its own abilities (τὸ ἑαυτῆς δυνατὸν μεταποιεῖ), abusing them for the desires it has thought up, since it had been created with free will (αὐτεξούσιος γέγονε). For it can just as well incline to the good (πρὸς τὰ καλὰ νεύειν) as turn away from the good (τὰ καλὰ ἀποστρέφεσθαι); but when it abandons the good it considers things which are completely the opposite.... Now reality is the good, unreality what is evil (οὐκ ὄντα δὲ τὰ φαῦλα). I call reality

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[467] Meijering, *Orthodoxy and Platonism*, 7, suggests that 'this phrase should not be interpreted in a Neo-Platonic way, meaning that God transcends Being and thinking, but as a polemical remark against idolatry: the true God is above every creature and above the perverted imagination of men, whilst the gods of the Pagans are no more than creatures, deified by the perverted imagination of men'. For a more detailed discussion of this clause, see Whittaker, 'ΕΠΕΚΕΙΝΑ ΝΟΥ ΚΑΙ ΟΥΣΙΑΣ', 91-104.

[468] Meijering, *Orthodoxy and Platonism*, 9. Cf. Plato, *Theaet.* 157d [LCL 123:60]; *Rep.* 508d [LCL 276:102].

[469] Cf. Louth, 'The Soul in Athanasius', 228-9, who argues that the timeless description of the fall is not typical for Athanasius, but is typical for the Alexandrian theology as whole.

what is good because it has its examplar in God who is real (ἐκ τοῦ ὄντος θεοῦ τὰ παραδείγματα ἔχει); and I call unreality what is evil (οὐκ ὄντα δὲ τὰ κακὰ) because what has no real existence has been invented by the conceits of men.... And it thought that provided it was in motion it would preserve its own integrity (ἅπαξ κινουμένη, σώζει τὴν ἑαυτῆς ἀξίαν) and would not be at fault in exercising its capabilities, not realizing that it had been created not simply for movement, but for movement towards the right objective (οὐχ ἁπλῶς κινεῖσθαι, ἀλλ' εἰς ἃ δεῖ κινεῖσθαι γέγονε). For that reason the Apostle's saying gives warning: *All things are allowed, but not all things are expedient.*[470]

According to this passage, man's exercise of freedom in the wrong way (or towards the wrong objective) resulted in his inability to continue seeing God (τὸν θεὸν ὁρᾶν). Having focused on what is not real, and therefore evil (as opposed to God who is true reality, and therefore true good), man became self-centered failing to sustain himself. Elsewhere, Athanasius continues speaking of man's deviation from the proper, original or primary, relationship with God in terms of timeless account. He describes the fallen man with such phrases as 'abandoning his thinking of God',[471] 'falling into fleshly desires',[472] 'turning his attention to the direction opposite of divine things',[473] 'becoming focused on thoughts of mortality',[474] 'turning aside his eyes',[475] etc. In this condition human being is very much like a drunk man who purposelessly wonders around,[476] or like a horse rider who has lost his goal (σκοπός) and risks running into a crowd of people.[477] Athanasius accentuates two major consequences that followed man's fall: evil deeds and idolatry. Considering the first consequence, he enumerates multiple sins to which humanity became prone including murder, disobedience, adultery, blasphemies,

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[470] ἀποστᾶσα τῆς τῶν νοητῶν θεωρίας... κινεῖται οὖν οὐκ ἔτι μὲν κατὰ ἀρετήν, οὐδὲ ὥστε τὸν θεὸν ὁρᾶν· ἀλλὰ τὰ μὴ ὄντα λογιζομένη, τὸ ἑαυτῆς δυνατὸν μεταποιεῖ, καταχρωμένη τούτῳ εἰς ἃς ἐπενόησεν ἐπιθυμίας, ἐπεὶ καὶ αὐτεξούσιος γέγονε. δύναται γὰρ ὥσπερ πρὸς τὰ καλὰ νεύειν, οὕτω καὶ τὰ καλὰ ἀποστρέφεσθαι· ἀποστρεφομένη δὲ τὸ καλόν, πάντως τὰ ἐναντία λογίζεται.... ὄντα δέ ἐστι τὰ καλά, οὐκ ὄντα δὲ τὰ φαῦλα. ὄντα δέ φημι τὰ καλά, καθότι ἐκ τοῦ ὄντος θεοῦ τὰ παραδείγματα ἔχει· οὐκ ὄντα δὲ τὰ κακὰ λέγω, καθότι ἐπινοίαις ἀνθρώπων οὐκ ὄντα ἀναπέπλασται.... καὶ νομίζουσα ὅτι, ἅπαξ κινουμένη, σώζει τὴν ἑαυτῆς ἀξίαν, καὶ οὐχ ἁμαρτάνει ποιοῦσα ὃ δύναται· οὐκ εἰδυῖα ὅτι οὐχ ἁπλῶς κινεῖσθαι, ἀλλ' εἰς ἃ δεῖ κινεῖσθαι γέγονε· τούτου γὰρ χάριν καὶ ἀποστολικὴ παρεγγυᾷ φωνή· *πάντα ἔξεστιν, ἀλλ' οὐ πάντα συμφέρει.*
[471] *CG* 3.18 [Thomson 8; ibid. 9]: ἀπέστη μὲν τῆς πρὸς τὸν θεὸν διανοίας.
[472] Ibid. 3.19 [Thomson 8; ibid. 9]: εἰς ἐπιθυμίαν τοῦ σώματος ἔπεσαν.
[473] Ibid. 3.22 [Thomson 8; ibid. 9]: πρὸς τὰ ἐναντία τὴν διάνοιαν μετήνεγκαν.
[474] Ibid. 3.28-29 [Thomson 10; ibid. 11]: θνητὰ φρονεῖν τῇ ψυχῇ προσγέγονεν.
[475] Ibid. 4.30 [Thomson 12; ibid. 13]: τὸν οφθαλμὸν ἀποστρέφει.
[476] Ibid. 23.39-47 [Thomson 64].
[477] Ibid. 5.11-26 [Thomson 12-4]. This image reappears in *CG* 32.24-6 [Thomson 88]. Cf. Plato, *Tim.* 69c [LCL 234:178] and *Phaedr.* 246-7 [LCL 36:470-6].

abuse, perjury, stealing, drunkenness, gluttony, etc.[478] He concludes that 'all these things are evil and sins of the soul, but they have no other cause save the turning away from better things' (*CG* 5.10-11 [Thomson 12; ibid. 13]).[479] Making a comment on this instance, Mejering argues that it is incorrect to think that Athanasius regarded human sins as the result of the material existence. Rather the material existence was now affected by the sins that followed man's fall. He points out that Athanasius initial account 'describes how man forsook his original relationship to God, how he forgot his original destination and turned his attention to the material world. The result was that man became a sinner. It should be noted, however, that Athanasius describes the fall of man, who was already created.... [In this sense] he sharply differs from the Platonists who regard material existence itself already as the fall of man'.[480]

Another consequence of the fall, according to Athanasius, is the perversion of the concept of God that led people to idolatry. He devotes to this analysis twenty two chapters of the *Contra Gentes* (chs. 7-29), in which he traces the history and motives of the pagan divinization. He points out that people's deviation from the Creator resulted in them deifying the created things. They began to ascribe divine status to the visible phenomena 'applying the divine and transcendental title of God to stone and wood, and reptiles in the sea or on land, and to irraitional wild beasts, paying them full divine honours and rejecting the true and real God, the Father of Christ' (*CG* 9.16-9 [Thomson 24, ibid. 25]).[481] They also divinized themselves. To illustrate this point Athanasius refers to the Roman governor Adrian as an example of the imperial cult.[482] On this occasion Russell makes an important observation that Athanasius' 'objection to the cult is specifically that the senate has no authority to deify when its members are merely human: "those who make gods should themselves be gods".... By dying they prove their decrees of deification to be false. Here we have a foreshadowing of the argument which was to be advanced by Athanasius to prove the true deification of the Christian, for the Son can deify

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[478] Ibid. 5.4-10 [Thomson 12].

[479] ἅπερ πάντα κακία καὶ ἁμαρτία ψυχῆς ἐστιν. αἰτία δὲ τούτων οὐδεμία, ἀλλ' ἡ τῶν κρειττόνων ἀποστροφή.

[480] Meijering, *Orthodoxy and Platonism*, 9-10.

[481] εἰς τὰ τῶν ἀλόγων ἀνήμερα ζῶα, τὴν θείαν καὶ ὑπερκόσμιον τοῦ θεοῦ προσηγορίαν μετήνεγκαν, πᾶσαν τιμὴν αὐτοῖς θεοῦ ἀπονέμοντες, καὶ τὸν ἀληθινὸν καὶ ὄντως ὄντα θεὸν τὸν τοῦ χριστοῦ πατέρα ἀποστρεφόμενοι.

[482] *CG* 9.34-48 [Thomson 24-6].

precisely because he *is* God'.[483] Besides deifying themselves, people also divinized invisible things such as qualities of the human body and character, and devised nonexistant gods including all the major male and female Greek deities. He refers to such inventions as non-real things and calls them evil in contrast to those things which have their 'examplar in God who is real' (ἐκ τοῦ ὄντος θεοῦ τὰ παραδείγματα ἔχει).[484] It surprises him that even the wisest men of Greece, such as Socrates and Plato (renowned for meditating on God), did not recognize this and went on practicing idol worship.[485] In contrast to these deified non-real beings, the true God for Athanasius is 'incorporeal, incorruptible and immortal, lacking nothing whatever'.[486] He alone is the Creator who gives life and sustains everything.[487] Other gods cannot meet this criterion, and therefore they are proved to be false.

3.2.2 Pagan Deification: Texts and Analysis

When describing the 'divine' status of idols, Athanasius uses several words for deification.[488] They include two verbs (θεοποιέω and ἐκθειάζω) and one noun (θεοποιΐα). Below I have identified 22 instances where they are used (all deification terms are underlined) and have put them into short passages (henceforth, I will abbreviate 'passage' as 'pass.') that could be examined brieifly. I will first cite the texts and then offer a quick analysis.

3.2.2.1 Texts

θεοποιέω (17 occurrences):

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[483] Russell, *The Doctrine of Deification*, 169.

[484] *CG* 4.19 [Thomson 10; ibid. 11]. This remark shows that Athanasius was fairly acquainted both with Platonism (Cf. Plato, *Tim*. 28a and 37c [LCL 234:48-9 and 74]) and Middle-Platonism (Cf. Albinus, *Epit*. 9.1). It is also possible that his source for this idea was a text from Hippolytus (Cf. *Ref*. 1.19), or Irenaeus (Cf. *Adu. Haer*. 2.18.3 [SC 294:176-8]).

[485] *CG* 10.35-7 [Thomson 30].

[486] Ibid. 22.26 [Thomson 60]: ἀσώματός ἐστι καὶ ἄφθαρτος καὶ ἀθάνατος, οὐδενὸς εἰς ὁτιοῦν δεόμενος.

[487] Ibid. 28.4-6 [Thomson 76].

[488] The tree words which Athanasius uses for deification (θεοποιέω, ἐκθειάζω, and θεοποιΐα) embrace a range of meanings beginning with a simple act of identifying a certain object (person, entity, or concept) as a god by a person or wider community to a more developed practice of worshiping it as part of the established cult. The words θεοποιέω and θεοποιΐα are generally used with regard to the Christian deification, and the term ἐκθειάζω is more often applied to the pagan divinization. Cf. Lampe, 427, 630-31; LSJ, 506, 791.

(1) For some have so degraded their understanding and darkened their mind that they have invented and deified (θεοποιῆσαι) things which do not exist at all nor can be seen in the created world (*CG* 9.21-4 [Thomson 24]).[489]

(2) And others have extended their impiety to the point of deifying (θεοποιήσαντες) and worshipping the excuse for their inventions and wickedness—pleasure and desire (*CG* 9.31-3 [Thomson 24]).[490]

(3) But those they hate they call men, regarding them as enemies and admitting their human nature, whereas those they admire they decree to be worshipped for their virtue, as if they had the authority to deify (τὸ θεοποιεῖν) when they are merely men and do not deny that they are mortal (*CG* 9.53-8 [Thomson 26]).[491]

(4) But those who make gods (θεοποιοῦντας) should themselves be gods, for the maker must be better than what he makes, and the judge necessarily has jurisdiction over the judged, and the giver has to bestow what is in his possession (*CG* 9.58-61 [Thomson 26]).[492]

(5) But the remarkable thing is that by dying like men they prove their decree concerning those they deified (θεοποιηθέντων) to be false (*CG* 9.64-6 [Thomson 26]).[493]

(6) Not only did he commit adultery, but he even deified (θεοποιήσας) the children born to him from his adultery, devising the cheat of deification (θεοποιίας) as a cover for his crime: among these are Dionysos, Heracles, the Dioscuri, Hermes, Perseus and Soteira (*CG* 12.6-10 [Thomson 34]).[494]

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[489] τοσοῦτον γάρ τινες καταπεπτώκασι τῇ διανοίᾳ καὶ ἐσκοτίσθησαν τὸν νοῦν, ὥστε καὶ τὰ μηδ᾽ ὅλως μηδαμῶς ὑπάρχοντα, μηδὲ ἐν τοῖς γενομένοις φαινόμενα, ὅμως ἑαυτοῖς ἐπινοῆσαι καὶ θεοποιῆσαι.

[490] ἐπιτείνοντες δὲ τὴν ἀσέβειαν ἕτεροι, τὴν πρόφασιν τῆς τούτων εὑρέσεως καὶ τῆς ἑαυτῶν κακίας τὴν ἡδονὴν καὶ τὴν ἐπιθυμίαν θεοποιήσαντες προσκυνοῦσιν.

[491] οἷς μὲν γὰρ ἀπεχθάνονται, τούτους ὡς πολεμίους τὴν φύσιν ὁμολογοῦσι, καὶ ἀνθρώπους ὀνομάζουσιν· οὓς δὲ καταθυμίους ἔχουσι, τούτους δι᾽ ἀνδραγαθίαν θρησκεύεσθαι προστάττουσιν, ὥσπερ ἐπ᾽ ἐξουσίας ἔχοντες τὸ θεοποιεῖν, αὐτοὶ ἄνθρωποι τυγχάνοντες, καὶ εἶναι θνητοὶ μὴ ἀρνούμενοι.

[492] ἔδει δὲ θεοποιοῦντας αὐτοὺς μᾶλλον αὐτοὺς εἶναι θεούς· τὸ γὰρ ποιοῦν τοῦ ποιουμένου κρεῖττον εἶναι δεῖ, καὶ ὁ κρίνων τοῦ κρινομένου ἐξ ἀνάγκης ἄρχει, καὶ ὁ διδοὺς πάντως ὃ ἔχει χαρίζεται.

[493] ἀλλὰ τὸ θαυμαστόν ἐστι τοῦτο, ὅτι αὐτοὶ ἀποθνήσκοντες ὡς ἄνθρωποι ἐλέγχουσι τὴν ἑαυτῶν περὶ τῶν θεοποιηθέντων ὑπ᾽ αὐτῶν ψῆφον εἶναι ψευδῆ.

[494] ὅτι μὴ μόνον ἐμοίχευσεν, ἀλλὰ καὶ τοὺς ἐκ τῆς μοιχείας γενομένους ἀτῷ παῖδας θεοποιήσας ἀνέθηκεν, ἐπικάλυμμα τῆς παρανομίας αὐτοῦ τὴν τῆς θεοποιίας φαντασίαν κατασκευάζων· ὧν εἰσι διόνυσος καὶ ἡρακλῆς καὶ διόσκουροι καὶ ἑρμῆς καὶ περσεὺς καὶ σώτειρα.

(7) For those who hate the adulterer who assaults their own wives are not ashamed <u>to deify</u> (θεοποιοῦντες) the exponents of adultery; and although they do not have intercourse with their sisters, they worship those who do (*CG* 12.34-7 [Thomson 34]).[495]

(8) If these were really to be admired, it would be essential to acknowledge the artist's skill but not to put a higher estimate on his products than on their creator. For it is not the matter that has adorned and <u>deified</u> (ἐθεοποίησε) his art, but his art the matter (*CG* 13.15-8 [Thomson 36]).[496]

(9) So if skills <u>deify</u> (θεοποιοῦσι), and it is on their account that statues are carved of the gods, then those who invented other subsequent skills must, in their view, also be gods (*CG* 18.32-5 [Thomson 50]).[497]

(10) For although they abominate actual animals, beasts and birds and reptiles, and avoid them either because of their savagery or because of their filth, yet they <u>deify</u> (θεοποιοῦσιν) their images, making statues of them in stone and wood and gold (*CG* 20.14-7 [Thomson 56]).[498]

(11) But then so much the more should the man who sculpted and cast them, I mean the artist, <u>be deified</u> (θεοποιηθῆναι), as being more powerful and divine than these images, inasmuch as they were carved and formed according to his will (*CG* 21.24-7 [Thomson 58]).[499]

(12) Practically all the material of which the Egyptians' idols are made is sacrificed to other peoples' gods; so the Egyptians are ridiculed by the latter for <u>deifying</u> (θεοποιοῦσιν) not gods but what are for others and even themselves propitiatory offerings and sacrifices (*CG* 24.17-20 [Thomson 66]).[500]

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[495] τῇ γὰρ ἑαυτῶν γυναικὶ μισοῦντες τὸν ἐπιβαίνοντα μοιχόν, τοὺς τῆς μοιχείας διδασκάλους θεοποιοῦντες οὐκ αἰσχύνονται· καὶ ταῖς ἀδελφαῖς αὐτοὶ οὐκ ἐπιμισγόμενοι τοὺς τοῦτο ποιήσαντας προσκυνοῦσι.

[496] ἔδει δέ, εἴπερ ἦν θαυμάζειν ταῦτα, τὴν τοῦ ἐπιστήμονος τέχνην ἀποδέχεσθαι, καὶ μὴ τὰ ὑπ' αὐτοῦ πλασθέντα τοῦ πεποιηκότος προτιμᾶν. οὐ γὰρ ἡ ὕλη τὴν τέχνην, ἀλλ' ἡ τέχνη τὴν ὕλην ἐκόσμησε καὶ ἐθεοποίησε.

[497] εἴπερ οὖν αἱ ἐπιστῆμαι θεοποιοῦσι, καὶ διὰ ταύτας εἰσὶ θεοὶ γλυπτοί, ἀνάγκη καὶ τοὺς ὕστερον ἐκείνων ἐφευρετὰς τῶν ἄλλων γενομένους εἶναι κατ' αὐτοὺς θεούς.

[498] τὰ γὰρ φύσει ζῷα τετράποδά τε καὶ πετεινὰ καὶ ἑρπετὰ βδελυττόμενοι καὶ ἀποστρεφόμενοι ἢ διὰ τὴν ἀγριότητα ἢ διὰ τὴν ῥυπαρίαν, ὅμως τοὺς τούτων τύπους ἐν λίθοις καὶ ξύλοις καὶ χρυσῷ γλύψαντες θεοποιοῦσιν.

[499] ἀλλὰ γοῦν τὸν ταῦτα γλύψαντα καὶ χαράξαντα, φημὶ δὴ πάλιν τὸν τεχνίτην, πολλῷ πλέον ἔδει θεοποιηθῆναι, ὡς μᾶλλον ἐκείνων δυνατώτερον καὶ θειότερον ὑπάρχοντα, ὅσῳ κἀκεῖνα κατὰ τὴν αὐτοῦ βούλησιν ἐξέσθη καὶ τετύπωται.

[500] σχεδὸν δὲ πᾶσα ἡ τῶν αἰγυπτίων εἰδωλοποιία τῶν παρ' ἄλλοις θεῶν ἐστι θυσία· ὥστ' ἂν αὐτοὺς καὶ παρ' αὐτῶν ἐκείνων χλευάζεσθαι, ὅτι μὴ θεούς, ἀλλὰ τὰ τῶν ἄλλων ἔτι τε καὶ παρ' αὐτοῖς ἀποτροπιάσματα καὶ θυσίας ὄντα θεοποιοῦσιν.

(13) The spurious sages reject him, yet worship and deify (θεοποιοῦσι) his creation, although the latter itself worships and confesses the Lord whom they deny it its favour (*CG* 27.19-22 [Thomson 72]).[501]

(14) Or again, if we accept the view about God that he is all-powerful, that nothing dominates him but that he dominates and rules the universe, how can those who deify (θεοποιοῦντες) creation not see that it does not fall within such a definition of God? (*CG* 29.5-8 [Thomson 78]).[502]

(15) For if our argument has shown that those called gods by the poets are not gods at all, and has refuted those who deify (θεοποιοῦντας) creation as being in error, and has proved that the idolatry of the Gentiles is complete godlessness and impiety, then as these have been overthrown, the orthodox religion must needs be ours, and the only true God he whom we worship and preach, the Lord of creation and demiurge of all existence (*CG* 40.6 [Thomson 110]).[503]

(16) It is not as if there were other gods that Scripture forbids men to have them, but lest anyone, turning away from the true God, should begin to deify (θεοποιεῖν) for himself non-existent things, such as are the spurious gods mentioned and indicated by the prophets and historians (*CG* 45.40-4 [Thomson 126]).[504]

(17) And in place of the truly existent God they have deified (ἐθεοποίησαν) unrealities, *worshipping creation instead of the creator* [Rom. 1:25], which is foolish and impious behaviour (47.18 [Thomson 132]).[505]

ἐκθειάζω and θεοποιΐα (5 occurrences):

(18) In similar fashion men of old foolishly sank to the desires and fantasies of the body and, forgetting their conception and idea of God, with feeble reasoning or rather irrationally—represented phenomena as gods and glorified creation instead of the creator,

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[501] ὃν ἀποστρέφονται μὲν οἱ δοκησίσοφοι, τὴν δὲ παρ᾽ αὐτοῦ γενομένην κτίσιν προσκυνοῦσι καὶ θεοποιοῦσι, καίτοι προσκυνοῦσαν καὶ αὐτὴν καὶ ὁμολογοῦσαν ὃν ἐκεῖνοι δι᾽ αὐτὴν ἀρνοῦνται κύριον.

[502] καὶ πάλιν, εἰ ὁ περὶ θεοῦ κρατεῖ λόγος, δυνατὸν αὐτὸν εἶναι κατὰ πάντα, καὶ μηδὲν μὲν αὐτοῦ κρατεῖν, αὐτὸν δὲ τῶν πάντων κρατεῖν καὶ δεσπόζειν· πῶς οἱ τὴν κτίσιν θεοποιοῦντες οὐχ ὁρῶσιν αὐτὴν ἐκτὸς οὖσαν τοῦ τοιούτου περὶ θεοῦ ὅρου;

[503] εἰ γὰρ δὴ τοὺς παρὰ ποιηταῖς λεγομένους θεοὺς οὐκ εἶναι θεοὺς ὁ λόγος ἔδειξε, καὶ τοὺς τὴν κτίσιν θεοποιοῦντας ἤλεγξε πλανωμένους, καὶ καθόλου τὴν τῶν ἐθνῶν εἰδωλολατρείαν ἀθεότητα καὶ ἀσέβειαν οὖσαν ἀπέδειξεν· ἀνάγκη πᾶσα τούτων ἀναιρουμένων, λοιπὸν παρ᾽ ἡμῖν εἶναι τὴν εὐσεβῆ θρησκείαν, καὶ τὸν παρ᾽ ἡμῶν προσκυνούμενον, καὶ κηρυττόμενον τοῦτον μόνον εἶναι θεὸν ἀληθῆ, τὸν καὶ τῆς κτίσεως κύριον καὶ πάσης ὑποστάσεως δημιουργόν.

[504] οὐχ ὡς ὄντων δὲ θεῶν ἄλλων κωλύει τούτους αὐτοὺς ἔχειν, ἀλλ᾽ ἵνα μή τις, τὸν ἀληθινὸν ἀποστραφεὶς θεόν, ἑαυτῷ τὰ μὴ ὄντα θεοποιεῖν ἄρξηται, ὁποῖοί εἰσιν οἱ παρὰ ποιηταῖς καὶ συγγραφεῦσιν ὀνομασθέντες καὶ δειχθέντες οὐκ ὄντες θεοί.

[505] καὶ ἀντὶ τοῦ ὄντος ὄντος θεοῦ τὰ μὴ ὄντα ἐθεοποίησαν, *τῇ κτίσει παρὰ τὸν κτίσαντα λατρεύοντες*, πρᾶγμα πάσχοντες ἀνόητον καὶ δυσσεβές.

deifying (ἐκθειάζοντες) its works rather than their cause and fashioner and Lord, God (*CG* 8.26-31 [Thomson 22]).[506]

(19) Others have distinguished individual parts of the body—the head or shoulder or hand or foot—and exalted them as gods and deified (ἐξεθείασαν) them, as if they were not satisfied with the worship of the body as a whole (*CG* 9.28-31 [Thomson 24]).[507]

(20) Not only did he [Zeus] commit adultery, but he even deified (θεοποιήσας) the children born to him from his adultery, devising the cheat of deification (θεοποιίας) as a cover for his crime: among these are Dionysos, Heracles, the Dioscuri, Hermes, Perseus and Soteira (*CG* 12.6-10 [Thomson 34]).[508]

(21) And so if you too had sane reasoning you would not have transferred to matter so great an indication of divinity, nor would you have exalted the statue over the sculptor. For if like letters they really indicate the manifestation of God, on that account as signs of God they are worthy of deification (θεοποιίας) (*CG* 21.19-23 [Thomson 58]).[509]

(22) Therefore their worship and deification (θεοποιία) is the beginning not of piety, but of godlessness and all impiety, and proof of great deviation from the knowledge of the one and only true God, I mean the Father of Christ (*CG* 29.38 [Thomson 80]).[510]

3.2.2.2 Analysis

Terminology. Of the 3 words that Athanasius uses to describe the pagan deification in the *Contra Gentes*, the most frequent one is θεοποιέω. It occurs 17 times.[511] The only other time when it occurs within the double treatise is in the *De*

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[506] οὕτω καὶ οἱ πάλαι τῶν ἀνθρώπων παράφρονες, καταδύντες εἰς τὰς τῶν σαρκῶν ἐπιθυμίας καὶ φαντασίας, καὶ ἐπιλαθόμενοι τῆς περὶ θεοῦ ἐννοίας καὶ δόξης, ἀμυδρῷ τῷ λογισμῷ, μᾶλλον δὲ ἀλογίᾳ χρησάμενοι, τὰ φαινόμενα θεοὺς ἀνετυπώσαντο, τὴν κτίσιν παρὰ τὸν κτίσαντα δοξάζοντες, καὶ τὰ ἔργα μᾶλλον ἐκθειάζοντες ἤπερ τὸν τούτων αἴτιον καὶ δημιουργὸν δεσπότην θεόν.

[507] ἄλλοι δὲ τὰ μέρη τῶν σωμάτων, κεφαλὴν καὶ ὦμον καὶ χεῖρα καὶ πόδα καθ᾽ ἑαυτὰ διελόντες, ἕκαστον εἰς θεοὺς ἀνέθηκαν καὶ ἐξεθείασαν, ὥσπερ οὐκ ἀρκούμενοι ἐξ ὁλοκλήρου τοῦ ὅλου σώματος ἔχειν τὴν θρησκείαν.

[508] ὅτι μὴ μόνον ἐμοίχευσεν, ἀλλὰ καὶ τοὺς ἐκ τῆς μοιχείας γενομένους ἀτῷ παῖδας θεοποιήσας ἀνέθηκεν, ἐπικάλυμμα τῆς παρανομίας αὐτοῦ τὴν τῆς θεοποιίας φαντασίαν κατασκευάζων· ὧν εἰσι διόνυσος καὶ ἡρακλῆς καὶ διόσκουροι καὶ ἑρμῆς καὶ περσεὺς καὶ σώτειρα.

[509] οὕτω καὶ ὑμεῖς, εἴπερ ἐρρωμένον εἴχετε τὸν λογισμόν, οὐκ ἂν τὸ τηλικοῦτον τῆς θεότητος γνώρισμα εἰς ὕλην κατεφέρετε· ἀλλὰ καὶ τὸ γλύμμα οὐκ ἂν προετιμήσατε τοῦ γλύψαντος ἀνθρώπου. εἰ γὰρ καὶ ὅλως ὡς γράμματα σημαίνουσι τὴν τοῦ θεοῦ ἐπιφάνειαν, καὶ διὰ τοῦτο ὡς θεὸν σημαίνοντα, θεοποιίας εἰσὶν ἄξια.

[510] διὸ καὶ ἡ περὶ ταῦτα θρησκεία καὶ θεοποιία οὐκ εὐσεβείας, ἀλλὰ ἀθεότητος καὶ πάσης ἀσεβείας ἐστὶν εἰσήγησις, καὶ μεγάλης πλάνης ἔλεγχος ἀπὸ τῆς πρὸς τὸν ἕνα καὶ μόνον ἀληθινὸν θεὸν γνώσεως, λέγω δὴ τὸν τοῦ χριστοῦ πατέρα.

[511] *CG* 9.24, 33, 57, 58, 65 [Thomson 24-6]; 12.7, 36 [Thomson 34]; 13.18 [Thomson 36]; 18.33 [Thomson 50]; 20.17 [Thomson 56]; 21.25 [Thomson 58]; 24.20 [Thomson 66]; 27.21 [Thomson 72]; 29.7 [Thomson 78]; 40.6 [Thomson 110]; 45.42 [Thomson 126]; 47.18 [Thomson 132].

Incarnatione.[512] On that occasion it is used to describe the deification of believers and I will examine this particular instance later in this chapter. It is not clear why Athanasius has such a disbalance of occurrence, but one reason may have to do with his fear that the true and false types of deification might become mingled by the reader. Therefore, he spares this term with regard to the deification of believers by using it only once in the Christian context. As we will see in chapter 5, the word group θεοποιέω is used 32 times in 6 later writings of Athanasius and I will examine all these instances at the appropriate time. Two other words that express the false type of deification in the *Contra Gentes* are ἐκθειάζω and θεοποιΐα. They occur only 5 times altogether (the former 2 times[513] and the latter 3 times[514]) exclusively in the context of Athanasius' discussion of making false gods. Neither of these two words appear anywhere else in Athanasius' works perhaps because nowhere else does he deal with the pagan deification as extensively as he does in the *Contra Gentes*. Interestingly, there are 5 occasions when Athanasius uses deification with another term in the same word form. Again, it is not clear why he does this, but perhaps by using the additional terms he sought to give a more definite meaning of deification. In any way, the list is quite revealing; it includes such pairs of words as 'invented and deified'—ἐπινοῆσαι καὶ θεοποιῆσαι (pass. 1); 'deifying and worshipping'—θεοποιήσαντες προσκυνοῦσιν (pass. 2); 'adorned and deified'—ἐκόσμησε καὶ ἐθεοποίησε (pass. 8); 'worship and deify'—προσκυνοῦσι καὶ θεοποιοῦσι (pass. 13); 'exalted them as gods and deified'—ἕκαστον εἰς θεοὺς ἀνέθηκαν καὶ ἐξεθείασαν (pass. 19); 'worship and deification'—θρησκεία καὶ θεοποιΐα (pass. 22).

The objects of deification. Athanasius highlights 4 types of objects that are deified by the pagans. The first one has to do with 'non-existent things' (pass. 16, 17), or 'things that do not exist nor can be seen in the created world' (pass. 1). In pass. (16), he relates them to 'the spurious gods mentioned and indicated by the prophets and historians'. In the context, this means inventions of deities by 'irrational imagination' of which the Scripture says: *you will have no other gods except me* [Ex. 20:3]' (*CG* 45.40 [Thomson 124]).[515] This type of deification includes pagan gods, such as Zeus and other deities (pass. 6, 7) carved in statues

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[512] *De Inc.* 49.5 [Thomson 256].
[513] *CG* 8.30 [Thomson 22]; 9.29 [Thomson 24].
[514] Ibid. 12.8 [Thomson 34]; 21.23 [Thomson 58]; 29.38 [Thomson 80].
[515] οὐκ ἔσονταί σοι θεοὶ ἕτεροι πλὴν ἐμοῦ.

(pass. 9). Several times (pass. 10, 13, 14) the object of deification is identified with creation, and more specifically with animals, such as beasts, birds, and reptiles (pass. 10). Their images are said to be made of stone, wood, or gold (pass. 10). The third object of deification is human beings (pass. 3, 5, 6). Their deification involves divinizing either man as a whole (pass. 10, 19) or certain parts of his body such as head, shoulder, hand, or foot (pass. 19). The fourth object of deification is art (pass. 8), the artist's skills (pass. 9), or the artist himself (11). Since Athanasius denies that deification of these 4 types involves a real change of one into god, it can be assumed that he seeks to speak of deification by name or status rather than of one by nature or being.

Factors leading to deification. There are a number of factors that led people to deify all these objects. First, deification occurred as a result of man's 'turning away from the true God' (pass. 16) and 'forgetting his conception and idea of God' (pass. 18). Closely related to this factor is another one: man's degraded understanding (pass. 1), darkened mind (pass. 1), insane and feeble reasoning (pass. 18, 21), irrationality (18), and foolish surrender to the desires and fantasies of the body (pass. 18). The invention of gods further served the purposes of worship (pass. 2, 3, 7, 13, 17, 19, 22) and propitiatory offerings and sacrifice (pass. 12). On one occasion, deification is said to be devised as a cheat, which Zeus used to cover his crime (pass. 6). Both in this case and in other ones when deification took place, it is characterized with epithets of religious, moral, and epistemological deviation: impiety (pass. 2), pleasure and desire (pass. 2), error committed by pagan poets (pass. 14), 'foolish and impious behaviour' (17).

Deification and the Deifier. Several times Athanasius draws a connection between deification and the deifier. In pass. (4), he sets a principle that 'those who make gods should themselves be gods'. In a number of other passages, he further uses it to discredit the pagan practice of deification. Thus, he argues that the creator is to be more esteemed than his products, 'for it is not the matter that has adorned and deified his art, but his art the matter' (pass. 8). The same argument is made in pass. (9) and (11). In the first one, he contends that the faulty logic of pagan deification should lead to the conclusion that 'skills deify', and therefore 'those who invented other subsequent skills must also be gods'. In the second one, he criticizes the wrong relation between images of art and the artist himself. The latter is more

'powerful and divine' than things which he 'carved and formed according to his will'. Therefore, he must be god.

   Deified idols and the True God. However, the fact that a certain object is deified does not make him the same as the true God. Athanasius emphasizes this by drawing a series of contrasts between deified deities and the true God. The contrast is made between the deified creation and all-powerful God 'whom nothing dominates' but who 'dominates and rules the universe' (pass. 14); between the deified idols of the Gentiles and 'the only true God whom Christians worship and preach, the Lord of creation and demiurge of all existence' (pass. 15); between the 'unrealities' and 'the truly existent God' (pass. 17); between the glorified creation and the creator, cause, fashioner and Lord, God (pass. 18). A contrast is also drawn between 'godlessness and impiety on the one hand, and Orthodox religion on the other (pass 15), as well as between the Christian worship of the only true God who is 'the Father of Christ' and the pagan practice of deification which demonstrates no knowledge of him' (pass. 22).

In contrast to the deified gods of pagan tradition, the true God for Athanasius (on three specific occasions where he attempts to define him)[516] includes such qualities as 'incorporeal' (ἀσώματος), 'immortal' (ἀθάνατος), 'untouchable' (ἄψαυστος τῇ φύσει), 'incorruptible' (ἄφθαρτος), 'invisible' (ἀόρατος), 'uncompound' (οὐ μέρη), 'whole' (ὅλον), 'self-sufficient' (οὐδενὸς εἰς ὁτιοῦν δεόμενος), and 'all-powerful' (δυνατός ἐστιν κατὰ πάντα).[517] Pagan gods do not possess such characteristics, and therefore they are proved to be false. Neither do these characteristics exhaust Athanasius' understanding of God, for he is not only the transcendent being but also a distinctly relational one, as we saw earlier. Therefore, we might expect that the relational aspect in Athanasius' thought would lead him to develop a downward perspective similar to those parts of Irenaeus and Origen where God and salvation are described in more personal terms. Yet, what Athanasius does in the rest of the *Contra Gentes* is offer quite an upward perspective. He becomes preoccupied with the aquisitional aspect of deification (explaining how one is to acquire immortality) rather than the relational one (how God brings one back to his divine fellowship). In what follows, I will attempt to show that Athanasius does this for a special reason.

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[516] *CG* 22.26 [Thomson 60]; 28.19-20 [Thomson 76]; 29.2-3, 5-6 [Thomson 78].
[517] Ibid.

By emphasizing man's action over the action of God, he wants to demonstrate that humanity failed to achieve what it needed. Scholars generally recognize this deliberate strategy, and I will elaborate on this point by arguing that the whole treatise is structured in such a way as to show that the incarnation happened precisely because humanity was not able to achieve salvation on its own. To bring more substance to this argument, I would like to examine three fundamental ways, or means (prior to the incarnation) which, according to Athanasius, God used to redirect the fallen humans back to himself. In the process, I will show that Athanasius' heavy emphasis on both man and God's transcendence is, nevertheless, mitigated by a relational perspective in which God appears to be involved on behalf of the created Universe and humanity.

3.2.3 Three Primary Ways of Redirecting Man to God
3.2.3.1 The Soul

The redirection of man to God proceeds first by means of man himself—by his soul, or reason. The second redirection is through the order of creation. The third and final means of redirection is through Scripture.[518] Athanasius first goes through each of these ways in the *Contra Gentes*, and then specifically summarizes them in one extended passage in *De Inc*. ch. 12 [Thomson 163-5]. To explain the first means, man's soul, or reason, Athanasius spends four chapters (chs. 30-34) proving that man has a rational and immortal soul that links him to God in the sense of kinship and conscious awareness of him. In the process he (much like Origen)[519] defines the soul as a self-moving organ responsible for its own actions and choices. He starts with a simple argument: 'Further, if the soul moves the body, as has been shown, without being moved itself by other forces, then it follows that the soul is self-moving' (*CG* 33.9 [Thomson 90; ibid. 91]).[520] In this position the soul can move either to good (true being) or to evil (non-being). However, once man misused his free will, the soul constantly concentrates on the bodily desires instead of being focused on God. As a result, people are overcome by suffering and death in their mortal bodies. Nevertheless, this condition is not fatal since God has endowed

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[518] This scheme of Athanasius' first treatise is traced carefully in the exegetical study of the *Contra Gentes* by Meijering, *Athanasius: Contra Gentes*.

[519] Cf. e.g. *De Princ*. 2.8.4 [SC 252:348].

[520] καὶ πάλιν εἰ ἡ ψυχὴ τὸ σῶμα κινεῖ, ὡς δέδεικται, καὶ οὐχὶ ὑπὸ ἄλλων αὐτὴ κινεῖται, ἀκόλουθόν ἐστιν ὑφ' ἑαυτῆς κινουμένην τὴν ψυχήν.

people with the power of mind, or the rational soul. By using it, they can redirect themselves back to God:

Or why, as they have abandoned God, do they not similarly turn back to him again for refuge? For just as they turned away from God with their mind (ἀπεστράφησαν τῇ διανοίᾳ τὸν θεόν) and invented gods from non-existent entities, so they can rise towards God with the mind of their soul (ἀναβῆναι τῷ νῷ τῆς ψυχῆς) and again turn back towards him. They can turn back if they cast off the stain of all desire which they have put on, and wash themselves until they have eliminated every addition foreign to the soul and show it unadulterated, as it was made, in order that in this way they may be able to contemplate therewith the Word of the Father (ἐν αὐτῇ θεωρῆσαι τὸν τοῦ πατρὸς λόγον), in whose image they were made in the beginning (*CG* 34.11-9 [Thomson 92-4; ibid. 93-5]).[521]

Therefore, it follows that the wrong movements of the soul can be corrected by the mental power of redirection. In another passage, Athanasius adds that 'the soul has an idea of the contemplation of God, and is its own path (αὐτὴ ἑαυτῆς γίνεται ὁδός), taking the knowledge and understanding of God the Word not from outside but from itself (οὐκ ἔξωθεν, ἀλλ' ἐξ ἑαυτῆς)' (*CG* 33.40-3 [Thomson 33; ibid. 34]).[522] To function in this way man needs to elevate himself from the material realm and purify his soul from fleshly desires.[523] Illustrating this idea, Athanasius refers to the analogy of the mirror. In the same way as a clean mirror is able to make a good reflection of external objects, so the soul can have a clear vision of God when it is pure.[524] Contemplating God within his soul, man becomes godlike.[525] In this perspective one finds the way to God by turning inward.

3.2.3.2 The Creation

If humanity neglects the soul, God provides a second option—creation. This takes the largest part of Athanasius' discussion on the redirection of man to God (*CG* chs.

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[521] ἢ διὰ τι, ὥσπερ ἀπέστησαν ἀπὸ τοῦ θεοῦ, οὕτως οὐ καταφεύγουσι πάλιν πρὸς αὐτόν; δύνανται γάρ, ὥσπερ ἀπεστράφησαν τῇ διανοίᾳ τὸν θεὸν καὶ τὰ οὐκ ὄντα ἀνεπλάσαντο εἰς θεούς, οὕτως ἀναβῆναι τῷ νῷ τῆς ψυχῆς, καὶ πάλιν ἐπιστρέψαι πρὸς τὸν θεόν. ἐπιστρέψαι δὲ δύνανται, ἐὰν ὃν ἐνεδύσαντο ῥύπον πάσης ἐπιθυμίας ἀπόθωνται, καὶ τοσοῦτον ἀπονίψωνται, ἕως ἂν ἀπόθωνται πᾶν τὸ συμβεβηκὸς ἀλλότριον τῇ ψυχῇ, καὶ μόνην αὐτὴν ὥσπερ γέγονεν ἀποδείξωσιν, ἵν' οὕτως ἐν αὐτῇ θεωρῆσαι τὸν τοῦ πατρὸς λόγον, καθ' ὃν καὶ γεγόνασιν ἐξ ἀρχῆς, δυνηθῶσι.

[522] τῆς περὶ θεοῦ θεωρίας ἔχει τὴν ἔννοιαν, αὐτὴ ἑαυτῆς [sc. ψυχή] γίνεται ὁδός, οὐκ ἔξωθεν, ἀλλ' ἐξ ἑαυτῆς λαμβάνουσα τὴν τοῦ θεοῦ λόγου γνῶσιν καὶ κατάληψιν. Cf. *CG* 30.4-7 [Thomson 82].

[523] *CG* 33.41-3 [Thomson 33; ibid. 34].

[524] Ibid. 34.22-6 [Thomson 94]. For a discussion of similar allusions to the image of the mirror in the classical philosophy and the Apologists, see Meijering, *Orthodoxy and Platonism*, 30-1.

[525] Ibid. 33.33-5 [Thomson 92] and 33.38-40 [Thomson 92].

35-45a [Thomson 94-124]). It begins with the consideration of the harmony and order in the created Universe. Athanasius argues that cosmic regular motions point to at least two things. First, they prove the existence of the divine Creator who binds and holds everything in a harmonious whole. He asks rhetorically: 'Who would not think that there was one power ordering and managing them [earthly objects] as it chose, itself remaining still? These could never coexist by themselves because of their mutual difference of nature' (*CG* 36.21-23 [Thomson 98; ibid. 99]).[526] On several occasions, he identifies the Creator with the Logos[527] and argues that the world is one because God is one.[528] Elsewhere he ascribes God's creative activity to the Father through the Logos. He explains: 'Who then is he, if not the all-holy Father of Christ, beyond all created being, who as supreme steersman, through his own wisdom and his own Word, our Lord and Saviour Christ, guides and orders the universise for our salvation, and acts as seems best to him?' (*CG* 40.11-6 [Thomson 104; ibid. 105]). Being the Creator of the Universe, Logos 'remains unmoved with the Father', while at the same time 'moving everything as seems good to the Father' (*CG* 42.28-9 [Thomson 116; ibid. 117, slightly modified]). In this context, Athanasius presents an upward model of a laddered contemplation from the creation to the Logos and to the Father: 'As by looking up to heaven and seeing its order and the light of the stars one can form an idea of the Word who sets their order, so when thinking of the Word of God one must also think of his Father, God' (*CG* 45.1-4 [Thomson 122; ibid. 123]).[529] The second thing to which the cosmic order points is that the Universe has a created nature. Toward that purpose, Athanasius uses the expression 'out of nothing' (ἐκ τοῦ μὴ ὄντος) in order to stress the derived nature of this world.[530] Contrasting the Creator and the created Universe, Athanasius states: 'For the nature of created things, having come into being from nothing, is unstable, and is weak and mortal when considered by itself; but the God of all is good and

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[526] οὐκ ἂν ἐνθυμηθείη ὅτι ἐστὶ μία δύναμις ἡ ταῦτα διακοσμησαμένη καὶ διέπουσα, ὡς ἂν αὐτῇ δοκῇ, μένουσα καλῶς. αὐτὰ μέν γὰρ καθ᾽ ἑαυτὰ οὐκ ἂν συσταίη καὶ φανῆναί ποτε δυνηθείη διὰ τὴν πρός ἄλληλα τῆς φύσεως ἐναντιότητα. Logos is also called ἀκίνητος in *CG* 42.28 [Thomson 116], but not in the sense that he is uninvolved; rather he is unmoved in contrast to the moving and unstable order of the created world.

[527] *CG* 38.25-6 [Thomson 104]; 40.11-34 [Thomson 110].

[528] Ibid. 39.4-6 [Thomson 107].

[529] ἀναβλέψαντας εἰς τὸν οὐρανὸν καὶ ἰδόντας τὸν κόσμον αὐτοῦ καὶ τὸ τῶν ἀστρων φῶς, ἔστιν ἐνθυμεῖσθαι τὸν ταῦτα διακοσμοῦντα λόγον· οὕτω νοοῦντας λόγον θεοῦ, νοεῖν ἐστιν ἀνάγκη καὶ τὸν τούτου πατέρα θεόν.

[530] Cf. *CG* 41.11 [Thomson 112]. For a discussion of Athanasius' concept of *ex nihilo*, see Florovsky, 'The Concept of Creation in Athanasius', 36-57.

excellent by nature' (*CG* 41.10-3 [Thomson 112; ibid. 113]).[531] Specifically of the human beings, he writes that 'men are composed of parts and created from nothing... compound and dissolvable' (*CG* 41.3-5 [Thomson 112; ibid. 113]).[532]

Having made this distinction between God and created beings, Athanasius shows that the divine care of man, his philanthropy, is specifically seen in the way that 'the Word of God came to created beings' (ὁ τοῦ θεοῦ λόγος τοῖς γενομένοις ἐπιβέβηκεν).[533] In this role he is characterized as 'living' (ζῶν)[534] and 'active' (ἐνεργής)[535] within creation, which makes him radically different from the false gods who are 'inanimate' (ἄψυχοι)[536] and 'immobile' (ἀκινουμένους).[537] Hence the Logos vivifies and illumines (φωτίζων καὶ ζωοποιῶν) that which he creates.[538] Another way the Logos demonstrates his immediacy to the world is through his special powers. Athanasius calls them (in plural) 'invisible powers' (τὰς ἀοράτους δυνάμεις), while referring to the Logos (in the singular) as 'the power of the Word' (τοῦ λόγου τὴν δύναμιν),[539] 'Logos' own power' (τῇ ἑαυτοῦ δυνάμει),[540] or 'the power of the Father' (δύναμις ὢν τοῦ πατρός).[541] Being the divine power, the Logos' role is ultimately to point to the Father: 'The Word of God by a single mere act of will through his own power moves and supports both the visible world and the invisible powers.... When we see the power of the Word we form an idea of his good Father, as the Saviour himself says: *Who has seen me, has seen the Father*' (*CG* 44.26-7, 45.9-11 [Thomson 122; ibid. 123]).[542] In this sense, whether humanity starts from itself, or from the created order sustained by the divine power, it is always propelled upward to the Logos and further to the Father. If, however, man takes little or no advantage of the self and creation, there is still a third way: the possibility to know God through the revelation of the Scriptures.

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[531] τῶν μὲν γὰρ γενητῶν ἐστιν ἡ φύσις, ἅτε δὴ ἐξ οὐκ ὄντων ὑποστᾶσα, ῥευστή τις καὶ ἀσθενὴς καὶ θνητὴ καθ' ἑαυτὴν συγκρινομένη τυιγχάνει· ὁ δὲ τῶν ὅλων θεὸς ἀγαθὸς καὶ ὑπέρκαλος τὴν φύσιν ἐστί.

[532] ἄνθρωποι μὲν γὰρ ἐκ μερῶν συγκείμενοι, καὶ ἐκ τοῦ μὴ ὄντος γενόμενοι, συγκείμενον ἔχουσι καὶ διαλυόμενον.

[533] *CG* 41.8-9 [Thomson 112; ibid. 113].

[534] Ibid. 40.29 [Thomson 110].

[535] Ibid.

[536] Ibid. 15.10 [Thomson 42].

[537] Ibid. 15.5 [Thomson 42].

[538] Ibid. 44.17-8 [Thomson 120].

[539] Ibid. 45.9 [Thomson 122].

[540] Ibid. 44.26 [Thomson 122].

[541] Ibid. 46.48-9 [Thomson 130].

[542] αὐτὸς ὁ τοῦ θεοῦ λόγος ἐνὶ καὶ ἁπλῷ νεύματι, τῇ ἑαυτοῦ δυνάμει τόν τε ὁρατὸν κόσμον καὶ τὰς ἀοράτους δυνάμεις κινεῖ καὶ συνέχει.

3.2.3.3 The Scriptures

In *CG* 45-7 [Thomson 122-132], Athanasius ask the rhetorical question: 'Did then the inspired teaching remain silent after confuting the godlessness of the Gentiles and idolatry, and simply leave the human race to drift deprived of any knowledge of the Deity?' (*CG* 46.1-3 [Thomson 126; ibid. 127]).[543] To this he responds with an exegesis of some biblical texts—interpreting most of them christologically—that rebuke idolatry and reveal the knowledge of God.[544] On one occasion he makes it clear that Scriptures (referred to as inspired—θεοπνεύστη γραφή)[545] contain a fuller revelation of God (κατὰ πλεῖον) than the works of creation, which probably suggests that it is a more efficient means of redirecting people to God than the two previous ones.[546] Going through the various passages of the Old Testament, Athanasius seeks to show that correct (christological) interpretation of the Scripture reveals that the Logos is the divine Creator (he is the Word and Wisdom by which the Father made the world),[547] and that he and the Father are the true God as opposed to the pagan idols. In the process of doing this, he places the Logos on the same level with the Father by describing him with the terminology of closeness such as ὡς πλησίον, ἀνάγκη συνεῖναι τινα τούτῳ, and συνῆν.[548] As I mentioned briefly earlier, Athanasius deduces this idea of closeness between the Logos and the Father from the plural occurrence of Genesis 1:26 that says: 'Let us make man' (ποιήσωμεν ἄνθρωπον).[549]Exploring the implications of this passage, he makes a trinitarian/binitarian argument that there were two subjects who created the Universe, and he describes them as intimately speaking to each other. In fact, he uses four different verbs (a total of 10 times) to express this intimacy between the Logos and the Father in the one short text that I quoted earlier: λέγω (2),[550] διαλέγω (1),[551] ὁμιλέω (4),[552] λαλέω (3).[553] He deepens the meaning of this relationship by

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[543] ἆρ' οὖν, ἀνελὼν τὴν τῶν ἐθνῶν ἢ εἰδώλων ἀθεότητας, σεσιώπηκεν ἡ ἔνθεος διδασκαλία καὶ ἁπλῶς ἀφῆκε τὸ τῶν ἀνθρώπων γένος ἄμοιρον τῆς τοῦ θείου γνώσεως φέρεσθαι;

[544] For a comment on the specific way Athanasius interprets Scripture, see Ernest, *The Bible in Athanasius of Alexandria*, 104.

[545] *CG* 46.10 [Thomson 126]. In *De Inc*. 4.31 [Thomson 144], he refers to the Scriptures as divine—θεία γραφή.

[546] Ibid. 45.36-8 [Thomson 124].

[547] Ibid. 46.48-47 [Thomson 130].

[548] Ibid. 46.38-44 [Thomson 128; ibid. 129].

[549] Ibid. 46.39 [Thomson 128].

[550] Ibid. 46.35, 44 [Thomson 128].

[551] Ibid. 46.40 [Thomson 128].

[552] Ibid. 46.32, 34, 41, 43 [Thomson 128].

referring to John 14:10 and explains it in an ontological sense evokative of the language he will use in his later writing, *Orationes Contra Arianos*. Emphasizing the economic function of the Father's Logos toward the world, he states: 'Having such a good Son and creator as his offspring, the Father did not hide him away from created beings, but reveals him to all every day through the subsistence and life of the universe which he brings about. In him and through him (ἐν αὐτῷ δὲ καὶ δι' αὐτου) he reveals himself, as the Saviour says: *I am in the Father, and the Father is in me*. So of necessity (ἐξ ἀνάγκης) the Word is in his begetter and the begotten coexist eternally with the Father (ἐν τῷ γεννήσαντι, καὶ τὸν γεννηθέντα σὺν τῷ πατρὶ διαιωνίζειν)' (*CG* 46.6-13 [Thomson 130; ibid. 131]).[554] In a similar way, bringing together such titles as the Logos, Power, and Wisdom, Athanasius writes: 'Being with him [the Father] as wisdom, and as Word seeing the Father, he created the universe, formed it and ordered it; being the power of the Father (δίναμις δὲ ὢν τοῦ πατρός), he [Logos] gave all things the strength to come into existence (εἰς τὸ εἶναι), as the Saviour says: *All that I see the Father doing, I also do likewise*' (*CG* 46.47-50 [Thomson 128-30; ibid. 129-31]).[555]

To further clarify the way the creation is related to the Logos, Athanasius affirms that it 'shares (μεταλαμβάνουσα) in the Word who is truly from the Father' (*CG* 41.24-5 [Thomson 114; ibid. 115]).[556] Immediately after that he draws a distinction between the created souls that participate (τοὺς αὐτοῦ μετέχοντας)[557] in the Logos, and the Logos who 'is not so by participation' (οὐ κατὰ μετοχὴν ταῦτα ὢν).[558] This implies at least several things. In the first place, the idea of participation provides an additional insight into the meaning of man's relationship to God as being marked with a conscious, or personal, apprehension. Here it is illustrated with two types of participatory models. According to the first one, the main reason the creation is able to resemble the Creator is because it participates

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[553] Ibid. 46.33, 35, 36 [Thomson 128].

[554] τοιοῦτον ἄρα ἀγαθὸν καὶ δημιουργὸν υἱὸν ἔχων ἐξ ἑαυτοῦ ὁ πατήρ, οὐκ ἀφανῆ αὐτὸν τοῖς γενητοῖς ἀπέκρυψεν· ἀλλὰ καὶ ὁσημέραι τοῦτον ἀποκαλύπτει τοῖς πᾶσι διὰ τῆς τῶν πάντων δι' αὐτοῦ συστάσεως καὶ ζωῆς. ἐν αὐτῷ δὲ καὶ δι' αὐτοῦ, καὶ ἑαυτὸν ἐμφαίνει, καθὼς ὁ σωτήρ φησιν· ἐγὼ ἐν τῷ πατρὶ καὶ ὁ πατὴρ ἐν ἐμοί· ὥστε ἐξ ἀνάγκης εἶναι τὸν λόγον ἐν τῷ γεννήσαντι, καὶ τὸν γεννηθέντα σὺν τῷ πατρὶ διαιωνίζειν.

[555] συνὼν δὲ ὡς σοφία, καὶ ὡς λόγος τὸν πατέρα βλέπων, ἐδημιούργει τὸ πᾶν καὶ συνίστη καὶ διεκόσμει· δύναμις δὲ ὢν τοῦ πατρός, τὰ ὅλα εἰς τὸ εἶναι ἐσχυροποίει, ᾗ φησι καὶ ὁ σωτήρ· *πάντα ὅσα βλέπω τὸν πατέρα ποιοῦντα*.

[556] ἅτε δὴ τοῦ ὄντως ὄντος ἐκ πατρὸς λόγου μεταλαμβάνουσα.

[557] *CG* 46.55 [Thomson 130].

[558] Ibid. 46.54 [Thomson 130; ibid. 131].

(μεταλαμβάνω) in the power (δύναμις) of the Logos. However, as Anatolios, remarks 'in humanity the reflection achieves an altogether different level, and it is this qualitative difference that is articulated in terms of humanity's being κατ' εἰκόνα'[559]. Therefore, the way humanity participates in God is different from that of creation. According to this type of participation the ontological link to the Logos is more personal and conscious. On this point, Régis Bernard remarks: 'la participation à l'Image de Dieu est, sinon le fruit d'une action tout autre, du moins d'une tout autre intensité et d'une tout autre valeur que la participation du cosmos au Logos: par la connaissance de Dieu, elle est intime et personelle'.[560] Moreover, Athanasius does not distinguish between the image and the likeness in the same way Origen did. Instead of conceptualizing the likeness as something to be attained, both the image and likeness are part of the original human state in which God's closeness to man was already a given.[561] In the second place, participation for Athanasius means that such properties as 'Logos' and 'Wisdom' do not 'accrue to him from outside in the way of those who participate in him' (οὐδὲ ἔξωθεν ἐπιγενομένων τούτων αὐτῷ κατὰ τοὺς αὐτοῦ μετέχοντας) (*CG* 46.54-5 [Thomson 130; ibid. 131]). Instead, he has 'power' and 'reason' in himself (ἐν αὐτῷ), and everything he possesses he does so in the absolute sense.[562] He is 'absolute wisdom, very Word, and himself the Fathers' own power, absolute light, absolute truth, absolute justice, absolute virtue, and indeed stamp, effulgence, and image. In short, he is the supremely perfect issue of the Father, and is alone Son, the express image of the Father' (*CG* 46.56-61 [Thomson 130; ibid. 131]).[563] In this position of being distinct and transcendent over the created souls, the Logos, nevertheless, makes himself accessible to the created beings, for they participate in him. In *CG* 47.2-6 [Thomson 130; ibid. 131], Athanasius extrapolates this point when he says: 'For he is the Word and wisdom of the Father, and at the same time condescends to created beings; to give them knowledge and an idea of his begetter, he is absolute holiness

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[559]Anatolios, *Athanasius: Coherence*, 56. Cf. the same point in his more recent work *Retrieving Nicaea*, 148-50.

[560] Bernard, *L'Image de Dieu*, 45.

[561] On Athanasius' use of the 'image and likeness', see e.g. *De Inc.* 11.14-20 [Thomson 160]. Cf. Anatolios, *Athanasius: Coherence*, 57.

[562] *CG* 46.56 [Thomson 130].

[563] αὐτοσοφία, αὐτολόγος, αὐτοδύναμις ἰδία τοῦ πατρός ἐστιν, αὐτοφῶς, αὐτοαλήθεια, αὐτοδικαιοσύνη, αὐτοαρετή, καὶ μὴν καὶ χαρακτὴρ καὶ ἀπαύγασμα καὶ εἰκών. καὶ συνελόντι φράσαι, καρπὸς παντέλειος τοῦ πατρὸς ὑπάρχει, καὶ μόνος ἐστὶν υἱός, εἰκὼν ἀπαράλλακτος τοῦ πατρός. This language comes close to Origen's terminology, e.g. *Cont. Cels.* 3.41 [SC 136:94-8]; 5.39 [SC 147:116-20]. Cf. Gruber, *ΖΩΗ*, 104.

and absolute life, he is door, shepherd, and way, king, guide, and Saviour for all, life-giver and light and universal providence'.[564] The idea of God's condescension brings us to the final and most extreme way of his manifestation—the incarnation of Christ.

3.3 Christ and Deification in the *De Incarnatione Verbi*

3.3.1 From the Process of Redirection to its Accomplishment

At the very end of the *Contra Gentes* Athanasius declares that through Christ the true γνῶσις and θεοσέβεια are displayed again in the world. The highest peak of this manifestation is Christ's incarnation. According to Athanasius' flow of argument it is the fourth and superior means of God's redirecting people to relationship with himself. He devotes the rest of his double treatise *De Incarnatione Verbi* to this subject. In this writing, he makes a visible transition from the expectation that humanity will use God's tools of redirection—the soul, creation, and Scripture—to the actual accomplishment of redirection in and through Christ. As I mentioned previously, this shift of emphasis has led some scholars to question the consistency of Athanasius' theology in his early writing. They observe that once Athanasius comes to the second part of his treatise, he leaves behind his optimistic expectations toward man and paints quite a pessimistic picture. Thus, of all the parts from the *Contra Gentes* that he chooses to reiterate in the first chapters of the *De Incarnatione*, he decides to focus on *CG* chs. 2-29 that speak more of the fact that original humanity declined toward non-existence rather than of its task to ascend back to God. Likewise, even when describing the immortal and godlike state of humanity, he uses conditional conjunctions and emphasizes the fact that it did not remain (ἔμεινεν) in that state. In a more or less balanced description of humanity, he first writes:

> For man is by nature mortal (κατὰ φύσιν ἄνθρωπος θνητός) in that he was created from nothing (ἐξ οὐκ ὄντων). But because of his likeness to him (πρὸς τὸν ὄντα ὁμοιότητα) who exists, if he had kept this through contemplating God, he would have blunted his natural corruption and would have remained incorruptible (ἔμεινεν ἄφθαρτος), as the book of Wisdom says: *The keeping of the law is the assurance of incorruptibility* [Wisd. 6:18]. But being incorruptible (ἄφθαρτος δὲ

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[564] ἔστι γὰρ ὥσπερ τοῦ πατρὸς λόγος καὶ σοφία, οὕτω καὶ τοῖς γενητοῖς συγκαταβαίνων, γίνεται πρὸς τὴν τοῦ γεννήτορος γνῶσιν καὶ ἔννοιαν αὐτοαγιασμὸς καὶ αὐτοζωὴ καὶ θύρα καὶ ποιμὴν καὶ ὁδός, καὶ βασιλεὺς καὶ ἡγεμὼν καὶ ἐπὶ πᾶσι σωτήρ, καὶ ζωοποιὸς καὶ φῶς, καὶ πρόνοια τῶν πάντων.

ὤν) he would thenceforth have lived as God (ὡς θεός), as also somewhere the Divine Scripture declares, saying: *I said that you are gods and all sons of the Highest: but you die like men and fall as one of the prices* [Ps 81:6-7, LXX] (*De Inc.* 4.26-33 [Thomson 144]).[565]

However, immediately after these words, he continues:

> But men, turning away from things eternal (ἀποστραφέντες τὰ αἰώνια) and by the counsel of the devil turning towards things corruptible (εἰς τὰ τῆς φθορᾶς ἐπιστραφέντες), were themselves the cause of the corruption (φθορᾶς) in death…. Since this happened, men died, and corruption (φθορά) thenceforth took a strong hold on them, and was more powerful than the force of nature over the whole race, the more so as it had taken up against them the threat of God concerning the transgression of the law. For in their trespasses men had not stopped at the set limits, but gradually moving forward (ὀλίγον ἐπεκτεινόμενοι λοιπόν), at length had advanced beyond all measure…. For these reasons death held greater sway and corruption (φθορᾶς) stood firm against men; the race of men was being destroyed (ἐφθείρετο), and man who was rational and who had been made in the image was being obliterated (ἠφανίζετο); and the word created by God was perishing (παραπώλλυτο) (*De Inc.* 5.2-5, 11-7; 6.1-4 [Thomson 144]).[566]

Such words as ἐφθείρετο, ἠφανίζετο, and παραπώλλυτο with regard to the fallen situation of humanity make an undoubtedly tragic sound, and Athanasius retains this gloomy picture till he comes to the subject of the incarnation. He makes it clear that even having been 'bestowed with an extra grace' (πλέον τι χαριζόμενος αὐτοῖς)[567] (which is another way of saying that humanity was endowed with the power of the rational soul), people could not achieve the original state of purity, and were overcome by the mortality of their own corrupted bodies. Observing such pessimism, Louth argues that in the *De Incarnatione* 'even at its first creation

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[565] ἔστι μὲν γὰρ κατὰ φύσιν ἄνθρωπος θνητός, ἅτε δὴ ἐξ οὐκ ὄντων γεγονώς. διὰ δὲ τὴν πρὸς τὸν ὄντα ὁμοιότητα, ἣν εἰ ἐφύλαττε διὰ τῆς πρὸς αὐτὸν κατανοήσεως, ἤμβλυνεν ἂν τὴν κατὰ φύσιν φθοράν, καὶ ἔμεινεν ἄφθαρτος· καθάπερ ἡ σοφία φησίν· *προσοχὴ νόμων, βεβαίωσις ἀφθαρσίας* ἄφθαρτος δὲ ὤν, ἔζη λοιπὸν ὡς θεός, ὥς που καὶ ἡ θεία γραφὴ τοῦτο σεμαίνει λέγουσα· *ἐγὼ εἶπα θεοί ἐστε, καὶ υἱοὶ ὑψίστου πάντες· ὑμεῖς δὲ ὡς ἄνθρωποι ἀποθνήσκετε, καὶ ὡς εἷς τῶν ἀρχόντων πίπτετε.*

[566] οἱ δὲ ἄνθρωποι, ἀποστραφέντες τὰ αἰώνια, καὶ συμβουλίᾳ τοῦ διαβόλου εἰς τὰ τῆς φθορᾶς ἐπιστραφέντες, ἑαυτοῖς αἴτιοι τῆς ἐν τῷ θανάτῳ φθορᾶς γεγόνασιν…. τούτου δὲ γενομένου οἱ μὲν ἄνθρωποι ἀπέθνησκον, ἡ δὲ φθορὰ λοιπὸν κατ' αὐτῶν ἤκμαζε, καὶ πλέον τοῦ κατὰ φύσιν ἰσχύουσα καθ' ὅλου τοῦ γένους, ὅσῳ καὶ τὴν ἀπειλὴν τοῦ θείου διὰ τὴν παράβασιν τῆς ἐντολῆς κατ' αὐτῶν προειλήφει. καὶ γὰρ καὶ ἐν τοῖς πλημμελήμασιν οἱ ἄνθρωποι οὐκ ἄχρις ὅρων ὡρισμένων εἱστήκεισαν· ἀλλὰ κατ' ὀλίγον ἐπεκτεινόμενοι λοιπὸν καὶ εἰς ἄμετρον ἐληλύθασιν…. διὰ δὴ ταῦτα πλέον τοῦ θανάτου κρατήσαντος, καὶ τῆς φθορᾶς παραμενούσης κατὰ τῶν ἀνθρώπων, τὸ μὲν τῶν ἀνθρώπων γένος ἐφθείρετο· ὁ δὲ λογικὸς καὶ κατ' εἰκόνα γενόμενος ἄνθρωπος ἠφανίζετο· καὶ τὸ ὑπὸ τοῦ θεοῦ γενόμενον ἔργον παραπώλλυτο.

[567] *De Inc.* 3.19 [Thomson 140].

human nature is weak and unstable (3.3-4), needs divine pity (ibid.), is subject not only to corruption but to total destruction, the "second death" (3.5). As it is, the λογικοί are corrupted (6.7, 8.2), the soul defiled (11.4) and deceived (14.4 etc.). The consequences of the fall are φθορά, and death, and man can be saved from this plight only by the intervention of the Incarnate Word. *Contra Gentes* presents a rather different picture'.[568] These and other findings lead Louth further to a view of Athanasius in which the latter is described as going through a career from a young Origenist to an independent thinker.[569] It has also been suggested by other scholars that Athanasius offers dissimilar anthropologies and different views of redemption.[570] Still other scholars argue that despite the contrast between the *Contra Gentes* and *De Incarnatione*, Athanasius offers a consistent narrative. Thus, Alvyn Pettersen remarks that 'while there are different emphases in the *Contra Gentes* and the *De Incarnatione*, there are not different conceptions of mankind's redemption'.[571] In the same vein, Anatolios contends that the seeming tension between the two parts of the double treatise disappears once we realize that 'the whole work is structured to dramatize the point that humanity failed to repair its breach with God apart from the incarnation'.[572] He also points out that the treatise has a clearly apologetic strategy. It is presented as 'a defence against the accusation that faith in Christ is irrational, ἄλογον [*CG* 1.17, Thomson 2]'.[573] In the process Athanasius shows 'the consistency between the order of creation, the Christian message of redemption, and the course of history itself as all testifying that the one who died on the cross is really the Lord and God of creation and the history, the Word who is one with the Father'.[574] Anatolios concludes that '[t]his apologetic strategy accounts for the systematic nature of this treatise, its character as a fairly comprehensive little catechesis'.[575] Likewise, Meijering, who also stresses the

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[568] Louth, 'Soul in Athanasius', 227. Cf. Roldanus, *Le Christ et l'homme*, 23.

[569] Louth, *The Mystical Tradition*, 77-80.

[570] More on this in Pettersen, *Athanasius and the Human Body*, 14-20. Cf. more generally on other points of tension in the double treatise in Widdicombe, *The Fatherhood of God*, 147-8; Robertson, *Christ as Mediator*, 148-151. Stead, 'Knowledge of God'; Haarlem, *Incarnatie en Verlossing*, 58; Roldanus, *Le Christ et l'Homme*, 11-123.

[571] Pettersen, *Human Body*, 16. Cf. Anatolios, *Athanasius*, 31, who makes a similar statement arguing that the variance in Athanasius' works has to do with a difference in emphases: 'he [Athanasius] maintains a remarkable consistency in his theological vision and even vocabulary, albeit with some notable developments and variance of emphases'.

[572] Anatolios, *Athanasius: Coherence*, 216, n. 25.

[573] Ibid., 38.

[574] Ibid., 30.

[575] Ibid.

apologetic structure of the treatise and recognizes four different means (or 'die Wege') of the restoration of humanity, explains:

> Als der Mensch über diese drei Wege [namely, the soul, creation and the Scriptures] die Gotteserkenntnis nicht erlangen konnte, erschien das Wort, das ihn im Anfang erschuf, in einem menschlichen Körper, um so das Bild Gottes und damit die Gotteserkenntnis im Menschen zu erneuern…. Somit stellt sich der globale Aufbau des Doppelwerkes so dar, als dass von den vier Wegen der Gottesoffenbarung drei in *CG* behandelt warden und der vierte in *DI*. In den Hauptsacchen kann sich keine Veränderung in den Ansichten des Athanasius vollzogen haben, etwa in dem Sinne, dass in *CG* den Heiden aufgrund einer 'natürlichen Theologie' weiter entgegen käme als in *DI*, das 'christozentrische Theologie' bietet. Die Feststellung in *DI* 12, dass der Mensch über die ersten drei Wege Gotteserkenntnis hätte erlangen können, er sie aber wegen seiner Sünde eben faktisch nicht erlangte, war auch bereits in *CG* getroffen worden.[576]

In *De Inc*. 4.1-11 [Thomson 142; ibid. 143], just before Athanasius turns to the discussion of incarnation, he himself offers a provisory explanation of why he structured the treatise in such a way. Speaking to his addressee he points out:

> Perhaps you are wondering why, when we proposed to speak about the incarnation of the Word, we are now treating of the beginning of mankind. But this is not irrelevant to the purpose of our exposition. For we must, when speaking of the manifestation of the Saviour to us, speak also of the beginning of mankind, in order that you may know that our own cause (ἡ ἡμῶν αἰτία) was the reason of his coming, and that our own transgression called forth the mercy of the Word (ἡ ἡμῶν παράβασις τοῦ λόγου τὴν φιλανθρωπίαν ἐξεκαλέσατο), so that the Lord came even to us and appeared among men. For we were the cause (ὑπόθεσις) of his incarnation, and for our salvation he had compassion to the extent of being born and revealed in a body (ἐφιλανθρωπεύσατο καὶ ἐν ἀνθρωπίνῳ γενέσθαι καὶ φανῆναι σώματι).[577]

This is far from being the only instance where Athanasius purports to explain the reason for the incarnation of Christ, but what is remarkable here is that we find a

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[576] Meijering, 'Struktur und Zusammenhang', 316. The apologetic structure of the double treatise is also seen in the fact that Athanasius spends most of his time in *Contra Gentes* (chs. 4-29 [Thomson 11-82]) exposing and refuting the deception of paganism and only then he begins to formulate the essence of the Christian worldview in the remaining chapters of the *Contra Gentes* (chs. 30-47 [Thomson 82-132]) and the *De Incarnatione*.

[577] ἴσως θαυμάζεις τί δήποτε περὶ τῆς ἐνανθρωπήσεως τοῦ λόγου προθέμενοι λέγειν, νῦν περὶ τῆς ἀρχῆς τῶν ἀνθρώπων διηγούμεθα. ἀλλὰ καὶ τοῦτο οὐκ ἀλλότριόν ἐστι τοῦ σκοποῦ τῆς διηγήσεως. ἀνάγκη γὰρ ἡμᾶς λέγοντας περὶ τῆς εἰς ἡμᾶς ἐπιφανείας τοῦ σωτῆρος, λέγειν καὶ περὶ τῆς τῶν ἀνθρώπων ἀρχῆς, ἵνα γινώσκῃς ὅτι ἡ ἡμῶν αἰτία ἐκείνῳ γέγονε πρόφασις τῆς καθόδου, καὶ ἡ ἡμῶν παράβασις τοῦ λόγου τὴν φιλανθρωπίαν ἐξεκαλέσατο, ὥστε καὶ εἰς ἡμᾶς φθάσαι καὶ φανῆναι τὸν κύριον ἐν ἀνθρώποις. τῆς γὰρ ἐκείνου ἐνσωματώσεως ἡμεῖς γεγόναμεν ὑπόθεσις, καὶ διὰ τὴν ἡμῶν σωτηρίαν ἐφιλανθρωπεύσατο καὶ ἐν ἀνθρωπίνῳ γενέσθαι καὶ φανῆναι σώματι.

methodological formulation of motifs for why Christ came. What is overtly stated is the fact that incarnation was needed because of man's fall, but what is also implied is that the human situation required nothing less than the incarnation of Christ for the main problem to be solved. Based on our analysis of the *Contra Gentes* this problem is twofold. It has to do both with the fact that man is separated from God (he turned away from his original relationship), and that he is devoid of immortality, or eternal life (which is the main consequence of being disjoined from God). Therefore, for the incarnation of Christ to be effective, it should be able to deal with both of these aspects of the human problem: it should join humanity back to God, and render it immortal. Another major result of the human fall in the *Contra Gentes* is sin, and it is important to ask in what way it is dealt with in the *De Incarnatione*, and how it is related to other aspects of God's restoration of man. As I begin to examine the second part of Athanasius' treatise, I will seek to clarify these points by dividing my discussion into three parts: the divinity of Christ, incarnation, and the fruits of salvation.

3.3.2 Christ's Divinity

Arguing for the coherence of Athanasius' thought, Anatolios remarks that '[t]he treatise is conceived and designed with a view to defending the Christian faith that the one who was crucified on the cross is really God'.[578] This becomes especially obvious when we approach the *De Incarnatione* where Athanasius contends that it takes God to save humanity. In *De Inc.* 41.1-16 [Thomson 234-6; ibid. 235-7], Athanasius reflects on the difficulty of such an argument from the apologetic standpoint:

> As for the Greeks, one is most amazed that they laugh at things which are not to be mocked, and are blind in their shamelessness which they do not perceive, having devoted themselves to stones and wood. But since our exposition is not deficient in proofs, let us then put them also to shame with reasonable arguments and especially but what we ourselves see. For what is unfitting or ridiculous in our position, except that we claim that the Word was revealed in the body? Yet even they would admit that it was not unsuitable for this to occur, if they were friends for the truth. So if they completely deny that there is a Word of God, they are acting foolishly in mocking at what they do not know. But if they confess that there is a Word of God and that by his providence all things take light and life and being, and that he reigns over all, so that by the works of his

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[578] Anatolios, *Athanasius: Coherence*, 67.

providence he is known and through him the Father—consider, I beg you, if it does not escape their attention that they are bringing their ridicule upon themselves.[579]

Athanasius' desire to provide the proofs (ἀποδείξες) against the mocking of the gentiles leads him to develop his argumentation in two directions. First, he seeks to prove the divinity of the Logos by placing him alongside the Father, ascribing to him the divine characteristics, and arguing that Christ must be God based on the works he has accomplished. Second, he spends a great deal of time showing that it was fitting (ἄξιον, εὔλογον, πρεπής) for the Logos to become incarnate and clarifying the way he as the Saviour was related to his assumed body. I will consider the first point in this section, and then turn to the second one in the section that follows.

One of the ways in which Athanasius attempts to prove the divinity of the Logos is by placing him alongside the Father. In this position, the Logos is characterized with such expressions as 'being in union with his Father' (αὐτὸς συνὼν τῷ ἑαυτοῦ πατρί),[580] being 'the beloved Son of the Father' (ὁ ἀγαπητὸς τοῦ πατρὸς υἱός),[581] being 'the true Son and only begotten Word of God' (θεοῦ υἱὸν ἀληθινὸν μονογενῆ λόγον),[582] who is seated in the glory of the Father at his right hand.[583] While the relation of the second person of the Trinity to the world is that of the Logos who gives life, his relation to the Father is rather personal, as that of the Son: 'as the Word, he gave life to everything, and as the Son, he was with the Father' (ὡς λόγος τὰ πάντα ἐζωογόνει, καὶ ὡς υἱὸς τῷ πατρὶ συνῆν) (*De Inc.* 17.25-6 [Thomson 174; ibid. 175, slightly modified]). To stress the intimate nature of this relation, Athanasius refers to John 10:37-8 that says, *the Father is in me and*

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[579] Ἕλληνας δὲ καὶ πάνυ τις θαυμάσειε γελῶντας μὲν τὰ ἀχλεύαστα, πεπηρωμένους δὲ ἐπὶ τῇ ἑαυτῶν αἰσχύνῃ, ἣν ἐν λίθοις καὶ ξύλοις ἀναθέντες οὐχ ὁρῶσι. πλὴν οὐκ ἀποροῦντος ἐν ἀποδείξεσι τοῦ παρ' ἡμῖν λόγου, φέρε καὶ τούτους ἐκ τῶν εὐλόγων δυσωπήσωμεν, μάλιστα ἀφ' ὧν καὶ αὐτοὶ ἡμεῖς ὁρῶμεν. τί γὰρ ἄτοπον, ἢ τί χλεύης παρ' ἡμῖν ἄξιον; ἢ πάντως ὅτι τὸν λόγον ἐν σώματι πεφανερῶσθαι λέγομεν; ἀλλὰ τοῦτο καὶ αὐτοὶ συνομολογήσουσι μὴ ἀτόπως γεγενῆσθαι, ἐάνπερ τῆς ἀληθείας γένωνται φίλοι. εἰ μὲν οὖν ὅλως ἀρνοῦνται λόγον εἶναι θεοῦ, περιττῶς ποιοῦσι, περὶ οὗ μὴ ἴσασι χλευάζοντες. εἰ δὲ ὁμολογοῦσιν εἶναι λόγον θεοῦ, καὶ τοῦτον ἡγεμόνα τοῦ παντός, καὶ ἐν αὐτῷ τὸν πατέρα δεδημιουργηκέναι τὴν κτίσιν, καὶ τῇ τούτου προνοίᾳ τὰ ὅλα φωτίζεσθαι καὶ ζωογονεῖσθαι καὶ εἶναι, καὶ ἐπὶ πάντων αὐτὸν βασιλεύειν, ὡς ἐκ τῶν ἔργων τῆς προνοίας γινώσκεσθαι αὐτὸν καὶ δι' αὐτοῦ τὸν πατέρα· σκόπει, παρακαλῶ, εἰ μὴ τὴν χλυένην καθ' ἑαυτῶν κινοῦντες ἀγνοοῦσι.
[580] *De Inc.* 8.4 [Thomson 150].
[581] Ibid. 52.2 [Thomson 264].
[582] Ibid. 56.36 [Thomson 272].
[583] Ibid. 57.19-21 [Thomson 274] with the reference to Mt. 26:64.

I am in the Father (ἐν ἐμοὶ ὁ πατὴρ κἀγὼ ἐν τῷ πατρί).[584] He claims that Christ 'proceeds as very Word from the Father and Wisdom and Power' (ἐξ αὐτοῦ οἷα δὴ ἐκ πατρὸς ἴδιος λόγος καὶ σοφία καὶ δύναμις ὑπάρχων),[585] and calls him God throughout the *De Incarnatione*. It should be noted, however, that due to the apologetic nature of the treatise, Athanasius does not seem to be much concerned about elaborating on the intimacy of relationship between the Father and Son. Instead, he takes the task of showing how the divinity of the Logos helps to prove *rationally* the existence of God the Father. Yet, even doing so, he retains the binitarian background in which the Father and the Son are two distinct but intimately related personal subjects, and therefore to recognize the Son is to come to know the Father. Thus, he writes that since 'the divinity of the Word (τὴν τοῦ λόγου θειότητα) extended over the world, [man] is no longer mistaken about God but worships him only, and through him recognizes well the Father' (*De Inc.* 45.28-31 (Thomson 248; ibid 249).[586] Another way to recognize the Father is through the deeds of his Son. In *De Inc.* 46.29-32 [Thomson 250; ibid. 251], Athanasius asserts that what 'Christ has done, has persuaded not only those near by but the entire world to worship one and the same Lord and through him God his Father'.[587] In both passages the recognition of Christ (whether by the proofs of his divinity or by the proofs of his divine works) leads to the right worship in which both persons are given the equal honour.

The idea of divine deeds is a constantly recurring motif throughout the *De Incarnatione*, and Athanasius often uses it as proof that Christ is God. His deeds are superior both to those of mere men and to those of pagan deities. Of the former he writes: 'So if the Saviour is not a mere man, nor a magician nor a demon, but by his divinity (τῇ ἑαυτοῦ θειότητι) has destroyed and eclipsed the suppositions of the poets and the illusions of the demons and the wisdom of the Greeks, it should be clear and will be admitted by all that he is truly the Son of God (ἀληθῶς θεοῦ υἱός ἐστί), being the Word and Wisdom and Power of the Father. For this reason his works are not human but superhuman (ὑπὲρ ἄνθρωπον), and they are recognized as truly of God (θεοῦ τῷ ὄντι), both by the events themselves and by comparison with

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[584] Ibid. 17.15 [Thomson 176].
[585] Ibid. 32.27-8 [Thomson 212].
[586] ἐπὶ γῆς ἡπλωμένην τὴν τοῦ λόγου θειότητα βλέπων, οὐκ ἔτι μὲν ἀπατᾶται περὶ θεοῦ, μόνον δὲ τοῦτον προσκυνεῖ, καὶ δι' αὐτοῦ καλῶς τὸν πατέρα γινώσκει.
[587] τοῦτο ὁ χριστὸς πεποίηκεν, οὐ μόνον τοὺς πλησίον ἀλλὰ καὶ πᾶσαν ἁπλῶς τὴν οἰκουμένην πείσας ἕνα καὶ τὸν αὐτὸν κύριον σέβειν, καὶ δι' αὐτοῦ θεὸν τὸν αὐτοῦ πατέρα.

men's' (*De Inc.* 48.36-44 [Thomson 256; ibid. 257]).[588] In the same way, Christ's deeds are superior to those of pagan deities:

> For what man who ever existed formed for himself a body from a virgin only? Or what man ever healed such diseases as the Lord common to all? And who restored what was lacking to nature and caused the man blind from birth to see? Asclepios was made a god (ἐθεοποιήθη) by them because he practiced healing and discovered herbs for bodily sufferings, not fashioning them himself from the earth but discovering them through his natural wisdom. But what was that compared to what was done by the Saviour, who did not heal a wound but fashioned existence and restored humanity? Heracles was worshipped as a god (ὡς θεὸς προσκυνεῖται) by the Greeks because he fought with men equal to himself and killed wild beasts by trickery. What was that compared to what was accomplished by the Word, who banished illnesses and demons and death itself from men? Dionysos was worshipped (θρησκεύεται) by them because he taught men intoxication. But the real Saviour and Lord of all who taught sobriety is mocked by them (*De Inc.* 49.1-15 [Thomson 256-8; ibid. 257-9]).[589]

To reinforce his arguments about the divinity of Christ, Athanasius applies special names and expressions that depict him as the true God. Some of them relate him to the Father in ways not possible for anyone else, others show him as possessing the same divine attributes that God the Father possesses, and still others show him in the unique position of the one whose works of creation and salvation prove him to be God. Thus, some of the most significant references applied to Christ in relation to the Father are as follows:

(1) *The Son of the Father:*

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[588] οὐκοῦν εἰ μήτε ἄνθρωπος ἁπλῶς μήτε μάγος μήτε δαίμων τις ἐστιν ὁ σωτήρ, ἀλλὰ καὶ τὴν παρὰ ποιηταῖς ὑπόνοιαν καὶ δαιμόνων φαντασίαν καὶ ἑλλήνων σοφίαν τῇ ἑαυτοῦ θειότητι κατήργησε καὶ ἐπεσκίασε, φανερὸν ἂν εἴη καὶ παρὰ πᾶσιν ὁμολογηθήσεται ὅτι οὗτος ἀληθῶς θεοῦ υἱός ἐστι, λόγος καὶ σοφία καὶ δύναμις τοῦ πατρὸς ὑπάρχων. διὰ τοῦτο γὰρ οὐδὲ ἀνθρώπινά ἐστιν αὐτοῦ τὰ ἔργα, ἀλλ᾽ ὑπὲρ ἄνθρωπον, καὶ θεοῦ τῷ ὄντι γινώσκεται ταῦτα καὶ ἀπ᾽ αὐτῶν τῶν φαινομένων καὶ ἀπὸ τῆς πρὸς ἀνθρώπους συγκρίσεως.

[589] τίς γὰρ τῶν πώποτε γενομένων ἀνθρώπων ἐκ παρθένου μόνης ἑαυτῷ συνεστήσατο σῶμα; ἢ τίς πώποτε ἀνθρώπων τοιαύτας νόσους ἐθεράπευσεν, οἵας ὁ κοινὸς πάντων κύριος; τίς δὲ τὸ τῇ γενέσει ἐλλεῖπον ἀποδέδωκε, καὶ ἐκ γενετῆς τυφλὸν ἐποίησε βλέπειν; ἀσκληπιὸς ἐθεοποιήθη παρ᾽ αὐτοῖς ὅτι τὴν ἰατρικὴν ἤσκησε καὶ βοτάνας πρὸς τὰ πάσχοντα τῶν σωμάτων ἐπενόει, οὐκ αὐτὸς ταύτας πλάττων ἀπὸ γῆς, ἀλλὰ τῇ ἐκ φύσεως ἐπιστήμῃ ταύτας ἐφευρίσκων. τί δὲ πρὸς τὸ ὑπὸ τοῦ σωτῆρος γενόμενον, ὅτι οὐ τραῦμα ἐθεράπευσεν, ἀλλὰ γένεσιν ἔπλασε καὶ ἀπεκατέστησε τὸ πλάσμα; ἡρακλῆς ὡς θεὸς προσκυνεῖται παρ᾽ ἕλλησιν ὅτι πρὸς ἴσους ἀνθρώπους ἀντεμαχέσατο καὶ θηρία δόλοις ἀνεῖλε. τί πρὸς τὰ ὑπὸ τοῦ λόγου γενόμενα, ὅτι νόσους καὶ δαίμονας καὶ τὸν θάνατον αὐτὸν ἀπήλαυνε τῶν ἀνθρώπων; διόνυσος θρησκεύεται παρ᾽ αὐτοῖς ὅτι μέθης γέγονε διδάσκαλος τοῖς ἀνθρώποις. ὁ δὲ σωτὴρ τῷ ὄντι καὶ κύριος τοῦ παντός, σωφροσύνην διδάξας, χλευάζεται παρ᾽ ἐκείνων.

'The true Son and only begotten Word of God'.[590]

'The beloved Son of the Father'.[591]

'The all-holy Son of the Father'.[592]

'The immortal Son of the Father'.[593]

'The incorruptible Son of God'.[594]

'He is in union with his Father'.[595]

'Being Son, he was with the Father'.[596]

(2) *The Word, Wisdom, Power, Life, and Very Image of God:*

'God the Word of the all-good Father'.[597]

'The Word of the Father'.[598]

'The Word of God'.[599]

'The divine Word of the true God'.[600]

'God the Word and the Power of God'.[601]

'The very Word from the Father and Wisdom and Power'.[602]

'The Power of God and the Word of God and Life itself'.[603]

'The very image of God'.[604]

Athanasius also ascribes to Christ those attributes and titles which he used to describe God in the *Contra Gentes*.[605] Some special instances include the following:

(3) *Divine Characteristics:*

'Incorruptible'.[606]

'Immortal'.[607]

'Incorporeal'.[608]

'Immaterial'.[609]

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[590] *De Inc.* 56.36 [Thomson 272; ibid. 273]: θεοῦ υἱὸν ἀληθινὸν μονογενῆ λόγον.

[591] Ibid. 52.2 [Thomson 264; ibid. 265]: ὁ ἀγαπητὸς τοῦ πατρὸς υἱός.

[592] Ibid. 14.5-6 [Thomson 166; ibid. 167]: ὁ πανάγιος τοῦ πατρὸς υἱός.

[593] Ibid. 9.2 [Thomson 152; ibid. 153]: ὁ ἀθάνατος τοῦ πατρὸς υἱός.

[594] Ibid. 9.13-4 [Thomson 154; ibid. 155]: ὁ ἄφθαρτος τοῦ θεοῦ υἱός.

[595] Ibid. 8.4 [Thomson 150; ibid. 151]: αὐτὸς συνὼν τῷ ἑαυτοῦ πατρί.

[596] Ibid. 17.25-6 [Thomson 174; ibid. 175]: ὡς υἱὸς τῷ πατρὶ συνῆν.

[597] Ibid. 10.6 [Thomson 156; ibid. 157]: ὁ τοῦ παναγάθου θεὸς λόγος πατρός.

[598] Ibid. 11.11-2 [Thomson 158; ibid. 159]: ὁ τοῦ πατρὸς λόγος.

[599] Ibid. 15.24-5 [Thomson 170; ibid. 171]: τοῦ θεοῦ λόγος.

[600] Ibid. 47.16 [Thomson 252; ibid. 253]: ἀληθινοῦ θεοῦ θεὸς λόγος.

[601] Ibid. 55.33-4 [Thomson 272; ibid. 273]: ὁ θεός ὁ λόγος καὶ θεοῦ δύναμις.

[602] Ibid. 32.27-8 [Thomson 212; ibid. 213]: ἐκ πατρὸς ἴδιος λόγος καὶ σοφία καὶ δύναμις ὑπάρχων.

[603] Ibid. 21.27 [Thomson 186; ibid. 187]: θεοῦ δύναμις, καὶ θεοῦ λόγος ἐσί, καὶ αὐτοζωή.

[604] Ibid. 13.26 [Thomson 164; ibid. 165]: αὐτῆς τῆς τοῦ θεοῦ εἰκόνος.

[605] *CG* 22.26 [Thomson 60]; 28.19-20 [Thomson 76]; 29.2-3, 5-6 [Thomson 78].

[606] *De Incr.* 9.13-4 [Thomson 154; ibid. 155]: ἄφθαρτος.

[607] Ibid. 9.2 [Thomson 152; ibid. 153]: ἀθάνατος.

[608] Ibid. 8.1 [Thomson 150; ibid. 151]: ἀσώματος.

'Invisible'.[610]

'Indiscernible'.[611]

(4) *Divine Titles:*

'The true God'.[612]

'Christ alone is the true Lord and God'.[613]

'Remaining as God'.[614]

'Christ alone has been known among men as God'.[615]

'Christ's power and divinity is indisputable'.[616]

Finally, Athanasius describes Christ as the Creator and Saviour. Based on the divine deeds Christ has accomplished, he argues that Jesus is God and worthy of the appropriate title. Here are some concise statements that Athanasius uses towards that end:

(5) *Christ as the Divine Creator:*

'He gave all men no small indication of his divinity'.[617]

'Anyone could see his divinity'.[618]

'The Maker of the sun and Lord'.[619]

'The Lord of the creation of men'.[620]

'Christ the true life'.[621]

'Although he is invisible and indiscernible, yet by his works he revealed and made himself known to be… the leader and king of the universe'.[622]

(6) *Christ as the Divine Saviour:*

'Although they saw him as a man, he might persuade them through the works he did [in his body] that he was not merely a man but God'.[623]

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[609] Ibid. 8.1 [Thomson 150; ibid. 151]: ἄϋλος.

[610] Ibid. 16.23 [Thomson 172; ibid. 173]: ἀφανής.

[611] Ibid. 16.23 [Thomson 172; ibid. 173]: ἀόρατος.

[612] Ibid. 55.32 [Thomson 272; ibid. 273]: ἀληθινός θεός.

[613] Ibid. 45.21-2 [Thomson 248; ibid. 249]: μόνον εἶναι τὸν χριστὸν ἀληθινὸν κύριον καὶ θεόν.

[614] Ibid. 55.36 [Thomson 272; ibid. 273]: μένων εἶναι θεόν.

[615] Ibid. 47.15-6 [Thomson 252; ibid. 253]: μόνος δὲ ὁ χριστὸς ἐν ἀνθρώποις ἐγνωρίσθη θεός.

[616] Ibid. 32.7 [Thomson 212; ibid. 213]: τοῦ χριστοῦ δίναμις καὶ θεότητα ἐστί ἀναντίρρετοι.

[617] Ibid. 18.33 [Thomson 178; ibid. 179]: μὴ μικρὸν τῆς θεότητος αὐτοῦ γνώρισμα πᾶσι παράσχῃ.

[618] Ibid. 18.25-6 [Thomson 178; ibid. 179]: τὸν τυχόντα τὴν θεότητα θεωρεῖν.

[619] Ibid. 17.34 [Thomson 176; ibid. 177]: ὁ τοῦ ἡλίου ποιητὴς καὶ κύριος.

[620] Ibid. 18.39 [Thomson 178; ibid. 179]: ποιήσαντα κύριον εἶναι καὶ κτίστην.

[621] Ibid. 30.4 [Thomson 206; ibid. 207]: ζωῆς ὄντως χριστός.

[622] Ibid. 16.23-5 [Thomson 172; ibid. 173]: ὅτι ἀφανὴς ὢν καὶ ἀόρατος, διὰ τῶν ἔργων ἐνέφαινε, καὶ ἐγνώριζεν ἑαυτὸν εἶναι... τὸν τοῦ παντὸς ἡγεμόνα καὶ βασιλέα.

[623] Ibid. 16.4-6 [Thomson 172; ibid. 173]: ὡς ἄνθρωπον αὐτὸν ὁρῶντας, δι' ὧ ἐργάζεται ἔργων, πείσῃ μὴ εἶναι ἑαυτὸν ἄνθρωπον μόνον, ἀλλὰ καὶ θεόν.

'What was done by our Saviour is truly divine and worthy of his divinity'.[624]

'[Casting demons] was not a human deed, but a divine one'.[625]

'[Those who saw him healing, how would] 'they still think that he was a man and not God?'[626]

'Lord of all and Saviour'.[627]

'Our Saviour Jesus Christ'.[628]

'The common Saviour of all, Christ the true life'.[629]

'The merciful and universal Saviour'.[630]

Even a quick glance at the instances I have outlined above shows that Athanasius was very determined to prove the divinity of Christ. Of course, this is not surprising given his earlier effort to combat the practice of pagan deification in the *Contra Gentes*. The points (1), (2), (3), and (4) are intended to stress Christ's transcendent status. In this position, he is 'the *Word of God*, who also in the beginning had created the universe from nothing'.[631] Scholars have noted that this understanding allows Athanasius to draw an ontological line between the *created* things on the one hand, and the *uncreated* realm of God with the Father and Son on the other. In his later writing *Contra Orationes*, this dividing line will be used by Athanasius to explain the difference between the ideas of God creating the Universe by will, and generating the Son by essence. Florovsky makes a concise point about this: 'Everything created, wrote St. Athanasius the Great, "is not in the least like its Creator in substance, but is *outside* of Him", and therefore also could have *not* existed. Creation "comes into being, made up from outside". And there is no similarity between that which bursts forth from nothing and the Creator Who verily is, Who brings creatures out of nothing. Will and volition preceded creation. Creation is an act of will [*ek boulematos*], and therefore is sharply distinguished from the Divine generation, which is an act of nature [*genna kata physin*]'.[632] In this regard, Lyman observes that Athanasius' demarcation between the two extreme poles—'Uncreated' and 'created', 'by essence' and 'by will'—is 'a critical step in

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[624] Ibid. 21.21-2 [Thomson 186; ibid. 187]: τὸ δὲ ὑπὸ τοῦ σωτῆρος γενόμενον, θεῖον ἀληθῶς καὶ ἄξιον τῆς αὐτοῦ θεότητος διὰ πολλά.

[625] Ibid. 18.20 [Thomson 178; ibid. 179]: οὐκ ἀνθρώπινον ἀλλὰ θεῖόν ἐστι τὸ ἔργον.

[626] Ibid. 18.22 [Thomson 178; ibid. 179]: ἔτι ἄνθρωπον καὶ οὐ θεὸν ἡγεῖτο;

[627] Ibid. 9.27 [Thomson 154; ibid. 154]: σωτὴρ τοῦ θεοῦ υἱός.

[628] Ibid. 13.27 [Thomson 164; ibid. 165]: σωτὴρ ἡμῶν ἰησοῦς χριστός.

[629] Ibid. 30.4 [Thomson 206; ibid. 207]: ὁ κοινὸς πάντων σωτήρ καὶ ζωῆς ὄντως χριστός.

[630] Ibid. 15.11 [Thomson 170; ibid. 171]: ὁ φιλάνθρωπος καὶ κοινὸς πάντων σωτήρ.

[631] Ibid. 7.17-8 [Thomson 150; ibid. 151]: τοῦ καὶ κατὰ τὴν ἀρχὴν ἐκ τοῦ μὴ ὄντος πεποιηκότος τὰ ὅλα τοῦ θεοῦ λόγου.

[632] Florovsky, 'Creation and Creaturehood', 49, emphasis in the original.

the liberation of God from mere Creator to being the Father of Jesus Christ'.[633] Having placed Christ on the same level with the Father, Athanasius considers it natural to stress that the two divine persons penetrate each other's Being and share the same attributes. Athanasius uses this argument to prove effectively the divinity of the Son. As the transcendent Being, alongside the Father, the Logos possesses qualities of which the false deities fall short. On the other hand, the points (5) and (6) make both the Father and Son the immanent Beings. Both of them are involved in the same kind of work. To use this idea for the proof of Christ's divinity, Athanasius argues that the Logos performs such works of creation and salvation that prove him to be the true God, more powerful in every respect than pagan deities. Of course, the most remarkable sign of his divinity is that the Son becomes man in order to bring man back to the Father, and restore the original relationship.

3.3.3 Incarnation: the Personal Subject of Christ

In *De Inc.* ch. 8 [Thomson 151], Athanasius offers one of the most comprehensive passages about the incarnation of Christ. After having stated that the Logos is 'incorporeal, incorruptible and immaterial',[634] he goes on to stress that he 'was not previously distant' (οὔτι γε μακρὰν ὢν πρότερον), and that 'in his benevolence (φιλανθρωπία) he condescended (συγκαταβαίνων) to come and be made manifest'.[635] More specifically he writes:

> Therefore he had pity on our race, and was merciful to our infirmity, and submitted to our corruption, and did not endure the dominion of death. And lest what had been created should perish and the work of the Father among men should be in vain, he took to himself a body (λαμβάνει ἑαυτῷ σῶμα), and that not foreign to our own (οὐκ ἀλλότριον τοῦ ἡμετέρου). For he did not wish simply to be in a body (ἁπλῶς ἐν σώματι γενέσθαι), nor did he wish merely to appear (μόνον φανῆναι), for if he had wished only to appear he could have made his theophany through some better means (δι' ἑτέρου κρείττονος τὴν θεοφάνειαν αὐτοῦ ποιήσασθαι). But he took our body (λαμβάνει τὸ ἡμέτερον), and not simply that, but from a pure and unspotted virgin ignorant of a man, a body pure and truly unalloyed by intercourse with men. For he, although powerful and the creator of the universe, fashioned for himself in the virgin a body as a temple (κατασκευάζει ἑαυτῷ ναὸν τὸ σῶμα), and appropriated it for his own as an instrument

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[633] Lyman, *Christology and Cosmology*, 141. Cf. the same observation in Ricken, 'Nikaia als Krisis', 340.

[634] *De Inc.* 8.1 [Thomson 150; ibid. 151]: ὁ ἀσώματος καὶ ἄφθαρτος καὶ ἄϋλος.

[635] Ibid. 8.1 [Thomson 150; ibid. 151]: ἀλλὰ παραγίνεται συγκαταβαίνων τῇ εἰς ἡμᾶς αὐτοῦ φιλανθρωπίᾳ καὶ ἐπιφανείᾳ.

(ἰδιοποιεῖται τοῦτο ὥσπερ ὄργανον) in which to be known and dwell (γνωριζόμενος καὶ ἐνοικῶν). And thus taking a body like ours (οὕτως ἀπὸ τῶν ἡμετέρων τὸ ὅμοιον λαβών), since all were liable to the corruption of death, and surrendering it to death on behalf of all (ἀντὶ πάντων), he offered it to the Father (προσῆγε τῷ πατρί). And this he did in his loving kindness in order that, as all die in him (ὡς μὲν πάντων ἀποθανόντων ἐν αὐτῷ), the law concerning corruption in men might be abolished (λυθῇ)—since its power was concluded in the Lord's body and it would never again have influence over men who are like him (χώραν ἔχοντος κατὰ τῶν ὁμοίων ἀνθρώπων)—and in order that, as men had turned to corruption (εἰς φθορὰν ἀναστρέψαντας), he might turn them back again to incorruption (πάλιν εἰς τὴν ἀφθαρσίαν ἐπιστρέψῃ) and might give them life for death (ζωοποιήσῃ τούτους ἀπὸ τοῦ θανάτου), in that he had made the body his own (τῇ τοῦ σώματος ἰδιοποιήσει), and by the grace of the resurrection had rid them of death as straw is destroyed by fire (*De Inc*. 8.14-35 [Thomson 152; ibid. 153]).[636]

In this passage Athanasius gives a concise christological summary. He underscores the fact that the Logos performed a unique initiative by descending to the world as man. Being the Creator of the Universe (δημιουργὸς τῶν ὅλων), he became incarnate in one small part of it—the human body. To explain what it means Athanasius uses several key phrases that qualify the Logos' presence in the body. He says that Christ was neither 'simply *in* the body' (ἁπλῶς ἐν σώματι γενέσθαι) nor 'appeared in the body as phantom' (μόνον φανῆναι). Rather, he assumed our body, or took it into himself in the very real way from the virgin. He uses the word λαμβάνω[637] to stress the real, or physical, connotation of this act, and argues that it was *our* (τὸ ἡμέτερον) body, or a body *like ours* (ἡμετέρων τὸ ὅμοιον), 'not foreign to *our own*' (οὐκ ἀλλότριον τοῦ ἡμετέρου) that the Logos took to himself. The way Athanasius relates the body to the Logos is by using the analogy of the 'temple' (ναόν), and referring to it as an 'instrument' (ὄργανον). In both cases, the Logos

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[636] ἐλεήσας τὸ γένος ἡμῶν, καὶ τὴν ἀσθένειαν ἡμῶν οἰκτειρήσας, καὶ τῇ φθορᾷ ἡμῶν συγκαταβάς, καὶ τὴν τοῦ θανάτου κράτησιν οὐκ ἐνέγκας, ἵνα μὴ τὸ γενόμενον ἀπόληται καὶ εἰς ἀργὸν τοῦ πατρὸς τὸ εἰς ἀνθρώπους ἔργον αὐτοῦ γένηται, λαμβάνει ἑαυτῷ σῶμα, καὶ τοῦτο οὐκ ἀλλότριον τοῦ ἡμετέρου. οὐ γὰρ ἁπλῶς ἠθέλησεν ἐν σώματι γενέσθαι, οὐδὲ μόνον ἤθελε φανῆναι· ἐδύνατο γάρ, εἰ μόνον ἤθελε φανῆναι, καὶ δι' ἑτέρου κρείττονος τὴν θεοφάνειαν αὐτοῦ ποιήσασθαι· ἀλλὰ λαμβάνει τὸ ἡμέτερον, καὶ τοῦτο οὐχ ἁπλῶς, ἀλλ' ἐξ ἀχράντου καὶ ἀμιάντου ἀνδρὸς ἀπείρου παρθένου, καθαρὸν καὶ ὄντως ἀμιγὲς τῆς ἀνδρῶν συνουσίας. αὐτὸς γὰρ δυνατὸς ὢν καὶ δημιουργὸς τῶν ὅλων, ἐν τῇ παρθένῳ κατασκευάζει ἑαυτῷ ναὸν τὸ σῶμα, καὶ ἰδιοποιεῖται τοῦτο ὥσπερ ὄργανον, ἐν αὐτῷ γνωριζόμενος καὶ ἐνοικῶν. καὶ οὕτως ἀπὸ τῶν ἡμετέρων τὸ ὅμοιον λαβών, διὰ τὸ πάντας ὑπευθύνους εἶναι τῇ τοῦ θανάτου φθορᾷ, ἀντὶ πάντων αὐτὸ θανάτῳ παραδιδούς, προσῆγε τῷ πατρί, καὶ τοῦτο φιλανθρώπως ποιῶν, ἵνα ὡς μὲν πάντων ἀποθανόντων ἐν αὐτῷ λυθῇ ὁ κατὰ τῆς φθορᾶς τῶν ἀνθρώπων νόμος (ἅτε δὴ πληρωθείσης τῆς ἐξουσίας ἐν τῷ κυριακῷ σώματι, καὶ μηκέτι χώραν ἔχοντος κατὰ τῶν ὁμοίων ἀνθρώπων)· ὡς δὲ εἰς φθορὰν ἀναστρέψαντας τοὺς ἀνθρώπους πάλιν εἰς τὴν ἀφθαρσίαν ἐπιστρέψῃ, καὶ ζωοποιήσῃ τούτους ἀπὸ τοῦ θανάτου, τῇ τοῦ σώματος ἰδιοποιήσει, καὶ τῇ τῆς ἀναστάσεως χάριτι, τὸν θάνατον ἀπ' αὐτῶν ὡς καλάμην ἀπὸ πυρὸς ἐξαφανίζων.
[637] LSJ, 1026-7.

made it his own: 'he appropriated it' (ἰδιοποιεῖται), or 'had made the body his own' (τῇ τοῦ σώματος ἰδιοποιήσει), and 'dwelled' in it (ἐνοικῶν).[638] Athanasius cautions that this relation between the Logos and his body does not imply a mix of one with the other. Instead, the presence of the Logos in the body was similar to his presence in the world, and Athanasius uses such terms as συνέχω,[639] περιέχω,[640] and μεταλαμβάνω[641] to explain it. Accordingly, the body partook of the Logos, while the Logos himself contained it. In *De Inc.* 17.7-12 [Thomson 174; ibid. 175], he writes: 'And giving life to all, separately and together, he contains (περιέχων) the universe and is not contained (μὴ περιεχόμενος), but in his Father only he is complete in everything. So also being in a human body and giving it life himself, he accordingly gives life to everything, and was both in (ἐν) all and outside (ἔξω) all'.[642] Similarly, he states: 'For as he is in creation, yet in no way partakes (μεταλαμβάνει) of creation, but rather everything partakes (μεταλαμβάνει) of his power, so also, although he used the body as an instrument, he partook (μετεῖχεν) of none of the body's attributes, but rather himself sanctified (ἡγίαζε) the body'.[643]As seen from the passage I quoted earlier, the Logos assumed the body for a special purpose: to offer it to the Father (προσάγω τῷ πατρί) by dying for all men, or to say it differently, that men would die in him (πάντες ἀποθανέω ἐν αὐτῷ).

One striking thing in this christological description is that Athanasius identifies what we would now call the centre of Jesus' consciousness with the Logos. This understanding, known as the 'Logos-sarx' christology, or the 'organon-concept', has led some scholars to suggest that Athanasius failed to incorporate the soul of Christ into his humanity. One of the classic examples of this complaint is found in the Grillmeier's *Christ in Christian tradition*. He argues that 'the soul of Christ is not in Athanasius the theological factor…. Athanasius displays a general tendency to weaken the character of certain of Christ's inner experiences which might be attributed to a human soul…. As a result, we have Athanasius' remarkable

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[638] To describe Christ's relation to the body, Athanasius uses four verbs (ἰδιοποιεῖσθαι, λαβεῖν and ἀναλαβεῖν, and ἐνδύεσθαι) and two nouns (συναφή and ἐπίβασις).

[639] Ibid. 17.4 [Thomson 174].

[640] Ibid. 17.8-9 [Thomson 174].

[641] Ibid. 17.29 [Thomson 176].

[642] καὶ ἕκαστον καὶ πάντα ὁμοῦ ζωοποιῶν, περιέχων τὰ ὅλα καὶ μὴ περιεχόμενος, ἀλλ᾽ ἐν μόνῳ τῷ ἑαυτοῦ πατρὶ ὅλος ὢν κατὰ πάντα. οὕτως καὶ ἐν τῷ ἀνθρωπίνῳ σώματι ὤν, καὶ αὐτὸς αὐτὸ ζωοποιῶν, εἰκότως ἐζωοποίει καὶ τὰ ὅλα καὶ ἐν τοῖς πᾶσιν ἐγίνετο, καὶ ἔξω τῶν ὅλων ἦν.

[643] ὥσπερ γὰρ ἐν τῇ κτίσει ὤν, οὐδέν τι τῆς κτίσεως μεταλαμβάνει, ἀλλὰ μᾶλλον τὰ πάντα τῆς αὐτοῦ δυνάμεως μεταλαμβάνει, οὕτως καὶ τῷ σώματι ὀργάνῳ χρώμενος, οὐδενὸς τῶν τοῦ σώματος μετεῖχεν, ἀλλὰ μᾶλλον αὐτὸς ἡγίαζε καὶ τὸ σῶμα.

procedure of making the 'flesh' of Christ the physical subject of experiences which normally have their place in the soul'.[644] Similar objections were voiced as early as 1841 by Ferdinand Baur,[645] and then later in 1899 by two other German scholars, Karl Hoss[646] and Alfred Stülcken,[647] who argued that Athanasius did not assign an important role to the human soul. More recently, these arguments were elaborated by Hanson, who contends that Christ's soul for Athanasius is functionless, and he illustrates Athanasian Christ with an image of one who is dressed in a space-suit.[648] While such arguments do reflect the deficit of Athanasius' discussion on the human soul of Christ, I believe there is a sense in which such criticism can be misleading. One major problem with this interpretation is that it tends to read into Athanasius' theology the christological concerns of the fifth century. Moreover, the concerns themselves in this approach seem to be understood as having to do with the task of identifying the *composition* of the incarnated Christ rather than his *personal subject*.[649] Recognizing this point, Anatolios makes the following argument with regard to Grillmeier's view:

> Grillmeier's preconceived framework is that of analytical christology; he is concerned with the internal composition or structure of the God-man. For him, the human soul of Christ is a vital mediating link within that structure—mediating between the supernatural and natural agency of the Word-made-flesh. So he reviews the development of christological doctrine with a particular view to finding this link or pointing out its absence. Within such an analytical framework, Grillmeier confronts Athanasius's conception of Christ's body as 'instrument' with the question of how this instrument is connected to the Logos as agent. He interprets this notion with a view to the composition of Christ, and asks how and by what order it is linked to the other 'part', the Logos. He then answers his own question by the statement that Athanasius's use of the 'organon-concept' indicates that the body as instrument is connected to the Logos 'directly and physically'.[650]

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[644] Grillmeier, *Christ in Christian Tradition*, 315.

[645] Baur, *Die christliche Lehre*, 570.

[646] Hoss, *Studien über die Theologie des Athanasius*, 76-9.

[647] Stülcken, *Athanasiana*, 90-106.

[648] Hanson, *The Search for God*, 446-58. For cimilar criticism, see Burrus, '*Begotten, Not Made*', 40-7. For criticism of Hanson's terminology of 'space-suit' with regard to Athanasius' christology, see Leithart, *Athanasius*, 121-46.

[649] The problem of this approach was convincingly pointed out by Fairbairn, *Grace and Christology*, 7-11. He argues that it was the personal subject of Christ rather than the concern for the composition that drove the christological debates between Cyril and Nestorius. Therefore, 'the central issue of the controversy was the question of whether God himself entered the world personally through the incarnation'; ibid. 9.

[650] Anatolios, *Athanasius: Coherence*, 71. Cf. the same argument in ibid., 'The Body as Instrument', 78-84.

Likewise, Behr remarks that applying wrong questions to Athanasius have led to 'an approach which holds that the proper task of christology is to analize the composition of the being of Jesus Christ, to determine whether he has the requisite elements of a true human being, or whether the divine Word has replaced the soul, the question which has beset modern scholarship on Athanasius'.[651] While there have been other arguments[652] against the tendency to downplay the role of soul in Athanasius' christology (e.g. Louth's argument that Athanasius' was concerned to avoid the Origenistic pitfalls,[653] the evidence of Athanasius' clause that Christ is not 'σῶμα ἄψυχον' in the *Tomus ad Antiochenos* 7,[654] and the likelihood of Athanasian authorship of the two anti-Apollinarian treatises *De Incarnatione Contra Apollinarium* I-II[655]), I think the most significant ones for understanding the double treatise are those that expose the scholars' pursuit of the misguided questions. By posing them to Athanasius, such scholars risk misperceiving Athanasius' main concern, which was to stress the Logos as the personal subject of the incarnated Christ. I will illustrate the significance of this concern briefly with several examples. In *De Inc.* 18.1-20 [Thomson 176-8; ibid. 177-9], Athanasius makes one of the most profound christological statements about what it meant for Christ as God's Son to live in the human body. He writes:

> When therefore the theologians who speak of him say that he ate and drank and was born, know that the body was born as a body (τὸ μὲν σῶμα, ὡς σῶμα, ἐτίκτετο) and was nourished on suitable food; but God the Word, who was with the body (ὁ συνὼν τῷ σώματι θεὸς λόγος) yet orders the universe, also made known through his actions in the body that he himself was not a man but God the Word (οὐκ ἄνθρωπον ἑαυτόν, ἀλλὰ θεὸν λόγον). But these things are said of him, because the body which ate and was born and suffered was no one else's but the Lord's; and since he became man, it was right (ἔπρεπε) for these things to be said of him as a man (ταῦτα ὡς περὶ ἀνθρώπου λέγεσθαι), that he might be shown to have a true, not an unreal, body. But as thereby he was known to be bodily present (σωματικῶς παρών), so by the works which he did through the body he proved himself to be the Son of God (υἱὸν θεοῦ ἑαυτόν). So he cried to the

[651] Behr, *The Nicene Faith*, 2/1:186.
[652] For a good summary of the scholarly views on this topic, see Nathan, 'A Review of Modern Discussions', 23-31. He concludes that 'while the evidences supporting Athanasius' recognition of Christ's human soul are not conclusive, the arguments for rejecting it are even weaker.... Unless new powerful and persuasive evidences emerge, I see no reason for treating Athanasius as a supporter of the Logos-sarx Christology', ibid., 31.
[653] Louth, 'Humanity of Christ', 309-18.
[654] Pettersen, '*Tomus ad Antiochenos* VII', 183-98.
[655] Dragas, 'Athanasius' *Contra Apollinarem*', 13-90.

unbelieving Jews and said: *If I do not do the works of my Father, do not believe me; but if I do them, even if you do not believe in me, believe in my works, that you may know and realize that the Father is in me and I am in the Father.* For as he is invisible yet is known by the works of creation, so, becoming a man and not visible in a body, it would have been known from his works that it was not a man but the Power of God and Word who was performing them (οὐκ ἄνθρωπος ἀλλὰ θεοῦ δύναμις καὶ λόγος ἐστὶν ὁ ταῦτα ἐργαζόμενος).[656]

Athanasius makes it clear that the Logos was born as man. His body required food and drink, and was capable of experiencing suffering just as anybody else's body. Since he had 'a true body, not an unreal one' (ἀληθείᾳ καὶ μὴ φαντασίᾳ σῶμα ἔχων), Athanasius believes it is appropriate to predicate to him as man these human qualities. But why is he insisting on the Logos as the subject of such experiences? Why not ascribe them to the human soul of Christ? Is the soul not the primary organ that allows a human being to experience such feelings as hunger, thirst, and pain of suffering? To answer such questions, it is important to keep in mind that Athanasius' primary purpose is to prove the divinity of Christ (as revealed both in creation and in his incarnated state) in the context of his polemic against the falsely deified idols. For this reason, he argues that Christ's works are the same as his Father's, claiming that this is sufficient proof that he is God. He makes this point even more explicitly when he says in the next chapter: 'It is our task to describe… his life and activity in the body… in order that you may know that particularly from this Christ is known to be God and the Son of God' (*De Inc*. 19.20-1, 24-5 [Thomson 180; ibid. 181, slightly modified]).[657] From this standpoint, Athanasius' strategy to emphasize the Logos as the personal subject in Christ (rather than his soul) goes together with his desire to prove the divine nature of his actions. Having assumed the human body, the Logos nevertheless remains the same as he has been

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[656] ὅταν τοίνυν ἐσθίοντα καὶ πίνοντα καὶ τικτόμενον αὐτὸν λέγωσιν οἱ περὶ τούτου θεολόγοι, γίνωσκε ὅτι τὸ μὲν σῶμα, ὡς σῶμα, ἐτίκτετο καὶ καταλλήλοις ἐτρέφετο τροφαῖς, αὐτὸς δὲ ὁ συνὼν τῷ σώματι θεὸς λόγος τὰ πάντα διακοσμῶν, καὶ δι' ὧν εἰργάζετο ἐν τῷ σώματι οὐκ ἄνθρωπον ἑαυτόν, ἀλλὰ θεὸν λόγον ἐγνώριζε. λέγεται δὲ περὶ αὐτοῦ ταῦτα, ἐπειδὴ καὶ τὸ σῶμα ἐσθίον καὶ τικτόμενον καὶ πάσχον, οὐχ ἑτέρου τινός, ἀλλὰ τοῦ κυρίου ἦν· καὶ ὅτι ἀνθρώπου γενομένου, ἔπρεπε καὶ ταῦτα ὡς περὶ ἀνθρώπου λέγεσθαι, ἵνα ἀληθείᾳ καὶ μὴ φαντασίᾳ σῶμα ἔχων φαίνηται. ἀλλ' ὥσπερ ἐκ τούτων ἐγινώσκετο σωματικῶς παρών, οὕτως ἐκ τῶν ἔργων ὧν ἐποίει διὰ τοῦ σώματος υἱὸν θεοῦ ἑαυτὸν ἐγνώριζεν. ὅθεν καὶ πρὸς τοὺς ἀπίστους ἰουδαίους ἐβόα λέγων· *εἰ οὐ ποιῶ τὰ ἔργα τοῦ πατρός μου, μὴ πιστεύητέ μοι· εἰ δὲ ποιῶ, κἂν ἐμοὶ μὴ πιστεύητε, τοῖς ἔργοις μου πιστεύσατε· ἵνα γνῶτε καὶ γινώσκητε, ὅτι ἐν ἐμοὶ ὁ πατὴρ κἀγὼ ἐν τῷ πατρί.* ὡς γὰρ ἀόρατος ὢν ἀπὸ τῶν τῆς κτίσεως ἔργων γινώσκεται, οὕτως ἄνθρωπος γενόμενος, καὶ ἐν σώματι μὴ ὁρώμενος, ἐκ τῶν ἔρων ἂν γνωσθείη, ὅτι οὐκ ἄνθρωπος ἀλλὰ θεοῦ δύναμις καὶ λόγος ἐστὶν ὁ ταῦτα ἐργαζόμενος.

[657] τῆς ἐν σώματι διαγωγῆς καὶ περιπολήσεως αὐτοῦ διηγήσασθαι... ἵνα γνῷς ὅτι καὶ ἐκ τούτου μᾶλλον οὐδὲν ἧττον γινώσκεται θεὸς ὁ χριστὸς καὶ τοῦ θεοῦ υἱός.

eternally, and who has also ordered the Universe. Though being invisible (ἀόρατος) as Logos, he made himself visible (ὁρώμενος) and known first through his divine works of creation (ἀπὸ τῶν τῆς κτίσεως ἔργων γινώσκεται), and now more intensely through a human body (ἐν σώματι) which he made his own (οὐχ ἑτέρου τινός, ἀλλὰ τοῦ κυρίου ἦν). Several times in the quoted passage Athanasius uses the formula 'not this, but that' (οὐκ—ἀλλά) to emphasize that whatever Christ did, he did so as God: 'he himself was *not* a man *but* God the Word' (οὐκ ἄνθρωπον ἑαυτόν, ἀλλὰ θεὸν λόγον ἐγνώριζε); 'it was *not* a man *but* the Power of God and Word who was performing them' (οὐκ ἄνθρωπος ἀλλὰ θεοῦ δύναμις καὶ λόγος ἐστὶν ὁ ταῦτα ἐργαζόμενος). Therefore, Athanasius' silence about the soul of Christ has to do with his overall aim to affirm the divine personal subject behind the actions of Christ as the Creator and Saviour of the world. If he were to seek what 'parts' Christ consisted of, he would be in a better position to speak of his soul. But because his christology is driven by other motifs, he is less interested in the analytical abstract thinking regarding the composition of Christ and far more in his personal subject who is able to create and save. In light of this observation, to ascribe to Athanasius the Apollinarian tendency that the Logos animated the body in place of a soul is to misunderstand his main christological concern and charge him with rather anachronistic expectations.

There is also one other reason why Athanasius is so intent to emphasize the Logos as the personal subject in Christ. Considering the structure of the treatise, Athanasius has now come to the point where he is ready to reflect thoroughly on the saving work of Christ. Thus far he has outlined three major ways of God's redirection of humanity and showed that even with the grace of being given a rational soul, creation, and Scriptures, people failed to reach salvation. Therefore, it revealed the need for someone who could do this for them. He had to be God to do what humanity was not able to do, and he had to be man in order to save human beings. That this is Athanasius' strategy is obvious from one of his key passages where he ponders on the reason why Christ came. He writes:

> The grace of being in the image was sufficient for one to know God the Word and through him
> the Father. But because God knew the weakness of men he anticipated their negligence, so that if
> they failed to recognize God by themselves, through the works of creation they might be able to
> know the Creator. But because the negligence of men sank gradually to the worse, God again

provided for such weakness of theirs and sent the law and the prophets, who were known to them…. By knowing the law, they could desist from all wickedness and lead lives of virtue. For the law was not for the Jews only, nor on their account only were the prophets sent—though they were sent to the Jews and persecuted by the Jews—but they provided holy instruction for the whole world about the knowledge of God and the conduct of one's soul. Although, therefore, such was the goodness and mercy of God, nevertheless men, being overcome by their present desires and the illusions and deceits of demons, did not look towards the truth, but sated themselves with many vices and sins, so that they no longer appeared rational beings, but from their behaviour were considered to be irrational. Since men had become so irrational and the deceit of evil spirits was casting such a wide shadow everywhere and hiding the knowledge of the true God, what was God to do? (*De Inc.* 12.1-8, 19-13.3 [Thomson 162-4; ibid. 163-5]).[658]

In this passage Athanasius recounts three major ways God has been drawing people back to himself, and he ends it with a question. In the rest of the treatise he answers this question by arguing that the most appropriate thing for God to do in that situation was to come down as man. Therefore, it was God the Logos who became incarnate to save the humankind. To emphasize this point, he applies the same formula 'not this, but that'—which he used to distinguish between the humanity of Christ and the Logos as the personal divine subject—to make a soteriological argument. In doing this, he asserts throughout the *De Incarnatione* that salvation was made possible *not because of* people *but because of* the Father's Logos, his own Son. Thus, discussing the role of the Logos as the very image of the Father, Athanasius writes: 'But how could this [the renewal of the image in men] have been done, unless the very image of God (αὐτῆς τῆς τοῦ θεοῦ εἰκόνος) were to come, our Saviour Jesus Christ? For neither by men was it possible (οὐκ ἦν δυνατόν), since they had been created in the image, nor by the angels, for neither were they images. So the Word of God came in his own person (ὁ τοῦ θεοῦ λόγος δι' ἑαυτοῦ), in order

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[658] αὐτάρκης μὲν γὰρ ἦν ἡ κατ' εἰκόνα χάρις γνωρίζειν τὸν θεὸν λόγον, καὶ δι' αὐτοῦ τὸν πατέρα· εἰδὼς δὲ ὁ θεὸς τὴν ἀσθένειαν τῶν ἀνθρώπων, προενοήσατο καὶ τῆς ἀμελείας τούτων, ἵν' ἐὰν ἀμελήσαιεν δι' ἑαυτῶν τὸν θεὸν ἐπιγνῶναι, ἔχωσι διὰ τῶν τῆς κτίσεως ἔργων τὸν δημιουργὸν μὴ ἀγνοεῖν. ἐπειδὴ δὲ ἡ ἀνθρώπων ἀμέλεια ἐπὶ τὰ χείρονα κατ' ὀλίγον ἐπικαταβαίνει, προενοήσατο πάλιν ὁ θεὸς καὶ τῆς τοιαύτης αὐτῶν ἀσθενείας, νόμον καὶ προφήτας τοὺς αὐτοῖς γνωρίμους ἀποστείλας.... ἐξὸν δὲ ἦν αὐτοὺς καὶ τὸν νόμον ἐγνωκότας παύσασθαι πάσης παρανομίας καὶ τὸν κατ' ἀρετὴν ζῆσαι βίον. οὐδὲ γὰρ διὰ ιουδαίους μόνους ὁ νόμος ἦν οὐδὲ δι' αὐτοὺς μόνους οἱ προφῆται ἐπέμποντο, ἀλλὰ πρὸς ιουδαίους μὲν ἐπέμποντο, καὶ παρὰ ιουδαίων ἐδιώκοντο· πάσης δὲ τῆς οἰκουμένης ἦσαν διδασκάλιον ἱερὸν τῆς περὶ θεοῦ γνώσεως, καὶ τῆς κατὰ ψυχὴν πολιτείας. τοσαύτης οὖν οὔσης τῆς τοῦ θεοῦ ἀγαθότητος καὶ φιλανθρωπίας, ὅμως οἱ ἄνθρωποι, νικώμενοι ταῖς παραυτίκα ἡδοναῖς καὶ ταῖς παρὰ δαιμόνων φαντασίαις καὶ ἀπάταις, οὐκ ἀνένευσαν πρὸς τὴν ἀλήθειαν· ἀλλ' ἑαυτοὺς πλείοσι κακοῖς καὶ ἁμαρτήμασιν ἐνεφόρησαν, ὡς μηκέτι δοκεῖν αὐτούς λογικούς, ἀλλὰ ἀλόγους ἐκ τῶν τρόπων νομίζεσθαι. οὕτω τοίνυν ἀλογωθέντων τῶν ἀνθρώπων, καὶ οὕτως τῆς δαιμονικῆς πλάνης ἐπισκιαζούσης τὰ πανταχοῦ καὶ κρυπτούσης τὴν περὶ τοῦ ἀληθινοῦ θεοῦ γνῶσιν, τί νὸν θεὸν ἔδει ποιεῖν;

that, as he is the image of his Father, he might be able to restore man who is in the image. In any other way it could not have been done…. For this, then, none other than the image of the Father (τῆς εἰκόνος τοῦ πατρός) was required' (*De Inc*. 13.25-31, 34-5 [Thomson 164-6; ibid. 165-7]).[659] Here Athanasius makes one of his typical arguments in which he brings together the human need for salvation and the requirements of its accomplishment. He asks who is able to save man, and immediately qualifies his question by pointing out that any viable candidate must be the very image of the Father. Since neither men, nor angels are in such a unique position, he resorts to Christ as the only one who is able to restore humanity in its original state of being God's unimpaired image (or rather the image of the very Image who is Christ). In a similar context, Athanasius states: '[I]ndicating the reason why no other save God the Word himself (αὐτὸν τὸν θεὸν λόγον) should be incarnate, he says: *For it was fitting that he, for whom are all things and through whom are all things and who brought many sons to glory, should make the leader of their salvation perfect through sufferings* [Heb. 2:10]. By this he [the writer of Hebrews] means that it was the task of no one else to bring men from corruption which had occurred save God the Word (τοῦ θεοῦ λόγου), who also in the beginning had created them. It was for the sacrifice on behalf of the bodies similar to his that the Word himself (αὐτὸς ὁ λόγος) had also taken to himself a body' (*De Inc*. 10.21-9 [Thomson 156; ibid. 157, slightly modified]).[660] If the former passage requires that the Saviour be the very image of God, this one says that he needs to be God the Logos. In either case, it is the second person of the Trinity that saves men. Whether he is represented as the 'very image of the Father', or 'God the Logos', it is clearly not his soul, or humanity, that makes salvation possible. Of course the contrast Athanasius seeks to make here is not between the Logos and his soul; it is between the Logos and human beings. Yet, his desire to emphasize that 'none other than the image of the Father' (μὴ αὐτή ἡ τοῦ θεοῦ εἰκών), and 'no other save God

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[659] τοῦτο δὲ πῶς ἂν ἐγεγόνει, εἰ μὴ αὐτῆς τῆς τοῦ θεοῦ εἰκόνος παραγενομένης τοῦ σωτῆρος ἡμῶν ἰησοῦ χριστοῦ; δι᾽ ἀνθρώπων μὲν γὰρ οὐκ ἦν δυνατόν, ἐπεὶ καὶ αὐτοὶ κατ᾽ εἰκόνα γεγόνασιν· ἀλλ᾽ οὐδὲ δι᾽ ἀγγέλων, οὐδὲ γὰρ οὐδὲ αὐτοί εἰσιν εἰκόνες. ὅθεν ὁ τοῦ θεοῦ λόγος δι᾽ ἑαυτοῦ παρεγένετο, ἵνα ὡς εἰκὼν ὢν τοῦ πατρὸς τὸν κατ᾽ εἰκόνα ἄνθρωπον ἀνακτίσαι δυνηθῇ. ἄλλως δὲ πάλιν οὐκ ἂν ἐγεγόνει…. οὐκοῦν ἑτέρου πρὸς ταύτην τὴν χρείαν οὐκ ἦν, εἰ μὴ τῆς εἰκόνος τοῦ πατρός.

[660] εἶτα καὶ τὴν αἰτίαν τοῦ μὴ ἄλλον δεῖν ἦν αὐτὸν τὸν θεὸν λόγον ἐνανθρωπῆσαι σημαίνει λέγων· ἔπρεπε γὰρ αὐτῷ δι᾽ ὃν τὰ πάντα, καὶ δι᾽ οὗ τὰ πάντα, πολλοὺς υἱοὺς εἰς δόξαν ἀγαγόντα τὸν ἀρχηγὸν τῆς σωτηρίας αὐτῶν διὰ παθημάτων τελειῶσαι. τοῦτο δὲ σημαίνει λέγων, ὡς οὐκ ἄλλου ἦν ἀπὸ τῆς γενομένης φθορᾶς τοὺς ἀνθρώπους ἀνενεγκεῖν ἢ τοῦ θεοῦ λόγου, τοῦ, καὶ κατὰ τὴν ἀρχὴν πεποιηκότος αὐτούς…. διὰ τὴν περὶ τῶν ὁμοίων σωμάτων θυσίαν σῶμα καὶ αὐτὸς ὁ λόγος ἔλαβεν ἑαυτῷ.

the Word himself'(μὴ ἄλλος ἦν αὐτὸς ὁ θεὸς λόγος) could redeem humanity also implies that the human soul of Christ is not competent to accomplish salvation. Only someone who is truly divine can do this, and that is God's very image, or the Logos.[661] This brings me to the last point I would like to consider in this chapter, and that is to ask what salvation is for Athanasius.

3.3.4 The Fruits of Salvation

While scholars disagree about the extent to which deification is central for Athanasius, I believe it is just as important to ask about the nature of this concept, and explore in what way it is tied to his understanding of God. At first glance, it may seem that Athanasius speaks more of the physical fruits of salvation such as incorruption for the mortal bodies rather than of man's restoration to the original relationship with God or forgiveness of sins. In fact, in one specific passage Athanasius explicitly downplays the legal aspect of the sin's consequence by emphasizing immortality and saying very little of the importance of relationships:

> What therefore in this matter had to occur, or what should God have done? Demand repentance from men for the transgression (μετάνοιαν ἐπὶ τῇ παραβάσει τοὺς ἀνθρώπους ἀπαιτῆσαι)? For one might say that this was fitting (ἄξιον) for God, that as they had become subject to corruption by the transgression, so by repentance they might return to incorruption. But repentance would not have saved God's honour, for he would still have remained untruthful unless men were in the power of death. Repentance gives no exemption from the consequences of nature, but merely looses sins. If, therefore, there had been only sin and not its consequences of corruption, repentance would have been very well. But if, since transgression had overtaken them, men were now prisoners to natural corruption, and they had been deprived of the grace of being in the image, what else should have happened? Or who was needed for such grace and recalling except the Word of God, who also in the beginning had created the universe from nothing? For it was his task both to bring what was corruptible back again to incorruption, and to save what was above all fitting (εὔλογον) for the Father (*De Inc.* 7.20 [Thomson 148-50; ibid. 149-51]).[662]

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[661] For more examples of God's initative, see e.g. *De Inc.* 8.5-6 [Thomson 150], 8.13-8 [Thomson 152], 10.6-9 [Thomson 156], 10.25-8 [Thomson 156], 10.37-9 [Thomson 158], 14.5-8 [Thomson 166], 14.34-40 [Thomson 168], 16.21-3 [Thomson 172], 19.18-9 [Thomson 180], 25.9-17 [Thomson 194], 25.23-8 [Thomson 194-6], 31.19-20 [Thomson 210], 35.16-7 [Thomson 218], 37.31-3 [Thomson 224], 40.51-5 [Thomson 234], 45-1-5 [Thomson 246], 46.9-11 [Thomson 250], 47.14-6 [Thomson 252], 49.26-7 [Thomson 258], 52.1-4 [Thomson 264], 54.11-3 [Thomson 268].

[662] τί οὖν ἔδει καὶ περὶ τούτου γενέσθαι ἢ ποιῆσαι τὸν θεόν; μετάνοιαν ἐπὶ τῇ παραβάσει τοὺς ἀνθρώπους ἀπαιτῆσαι; τοῦτο γὰρ ἄν τις ἄξιον φήσειε θεοῦ, λέγων ὅτι ὥσπερ ἐκ τῆς παραβάσεως εἰς φθορὰν γεγόνασιν, οὕτως ἐκ τῆς μετανοίας γένοιντο πάλιν ἂν εἰς ἀφθαρσίαν, ἀλλ' ἡ μετάνοια οὔτε τὸ εὔλογον τὸ πρὸς τὸν θεὸν ἐφύλαττεν· ἔμενε γὰρ πάλιν οὐκ ἀληθής, μὴ κρατουμένων ἐν τῷ θανάτῳ τῶν ἀνθρώπων· οὔτε δὲ ἡ μετάνοια ἀπὸ τῶν κατὰ φύσιν ἀνακαλεῖται, ἀλλὰ μόνον παύει

This passage does provoke a question as to whether the legal aspect of redemption, and especially Christ's death on the cross, is of any importance for Athanasius. Is repentance not necessary at all? Does forgiveness of sins affect anything? While the quoted text stresses the incarnation rather than Christ's sacrificial death, nevertheless, both are important aspects in the *De Incarnatione*. Moreover, each aspect is considered according to the saving impact it makes. Therefore, to appreciate the significance of this approach in Athanasius, we need to take into account both the incarnation and Christ's death from the standpoint of their saving impacts. In light of the quoted passage it would be appropriate to ask how much Athanasius speaks about salvation in the legal sense. To answer it shortly, he does this quite a bit. To mention just a few most obvious cases, he treats Christ's suffering on the cross and his death as the most appropriate way to bring salvation. He writes: 'So his death for us on the cross was suitable and fitting, and its cause appeared to be eminently reasonable. It was also justified because in no other way except through the cross did the salvation of all have to take place'.[663] In one particular instance, he even rationalizes the manner in which Christ died through the crucifixion: 'Why did he not die in some other fashion but endured the cross?... [Because] how else would he have called us had he not been crucified? For only on the cross does one die with hands stretched out. Therefore the Lord had to endure this and stretch out his hands, that with the one He might draw the ancient people and with the other those of the Gentiles, and that he might join both in himself. This he himself said when he indicated by what manner of death he would ransom all men: *When I shall be raised up I shall draw all men to myself* [Jn. 12:32]'.[664] On

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τῶν ἁμαρτημάτων. εἰ μὲν οὖν μόνον ἦν πλημμέλημα καὶ μὴ φθορᾶς ἐπακολούθησις, καλῶς ἂν ἦν ἡ μετάνοια. εἰ δὲ ἅπαξ προλαβούσης τῆς παραβάσεως, εἰς τὴν κατὰ φύσιν φθορὰν ἐκρατοῦντο οἱ ἄνθρωποι, καὶ τὴν τοῦ κατ᾽ εἰκόνα χάριν ἀφαιρεθέντες ἦσαν, τί ἄλλο ἔδει γενέσθαι, ἢ τίνος ἦν χρεία πρὸς τὴν τοιαύτην χάριν καὶ ἀνάκλησιν, ἢ τοῦ καὶ κατὰ τὴν ἀρχὴν ἐκ τοῦ μὴ ὄντος πεποιηκότος τὰ ὅλα τοῦ θεοῦ λόγου; αὐτοῦ γὰρ ἦν πάλιν καὶ τὸ φθαρτὸν εἰς ἀφθαρσίαν ἐνεγκεῖν, καὶ τὸ ὑπὲρ πάντων εὔλογον ἀποσῶσαι πρὸς τὸν πατέρα.

[663] *De Inc*. 26.1-4 [Thomson 196; ibid. 197]: πρέπων οὖν ἄρα καὶ ἁρμόζων ὁ ἐν τῷ σταυρῷ γέγονε θάνατος ὑπὲρ ἡμῶν· καὶ ἡ αἰτία τούτου εὔλογος ἐφάνη κατὰ πάντα, καὶ δικαίους ἔχει τοὺς λογισμούς, ὅτι μὴ ἄλλως, ἀλλὰ διὰ τοῦ σταυροῦ ἔδει γενέσθαι τὴν σωτηρίαν τῶν πάντων.

[664] Ibid. 25.3, 11-2, 15-7 [Thomson 194; ibid. 195]: διὰ τί μὴ ἑτέρως ἀλλὰ σταυρὸν ὑπέμεινεν.... πῶς ἂν ἡμᾶς προσεκαλέσατο, εἰ μὴ ἐσταύρωτο; ἐν μόνῳ γὰρ τῷ σταυρῷ ἐκτεταμέναις χερσί τις ἀποθνήσκει. διὸ καὶ τοῦτο ἔπρεπεν ὑπομεῖναι τὸν κύριον, καὶ τὰς χεῖρας ἐκτεῖναι, ἵνα τῇ μὲν τὸν παλαιὸν λαόν, τῇ δὲ τοὺς ἀπὸ τῶν ἐθνῶν ἑλκύσῃ, καὶ ἀμφοτέρους ἐν ἑαυτῷ συνάψῃ. τοῦτο γὰρ καὶ αὐτὸς εἴρηκε, σημαίνων ποίῳ θανάτῳ ἔμελλε λυτροῦσθαι τοὺς πάντας. *ὅταν ὑψωθῶ, πάντας ἑλκύσω πρὸς ἐμαυτόν.*

other occasions, he speaks of 'the sacrifice of his own body'[665] describing Christ's death as the 'ransom for all',[666] or 'substitute for all people'.[667] His death provides 'forgiveness of sins',[668] and deals with such juridical issues as the 'transgression of the law',[669] 'guilt',[670] and 'condemnation'.[671] In particular, he writes of Christ: 'He now on behalf of all men offered the sacrifice and surrendered his own temple to death on behalf of all, in order to make them all guiltless and free from the first transgression'.[672] And again: 'Since the common Saviour of all has died for us, no longer do we the faithful in Christ now die as before according to the threat of the law, for such condemnation has ceased'.[673]

As essential as these instances are, it is important to ask further what their place is in Athanasius' soteriology, and why they are overshadowed by the more frequently recurring fruit of salvation which is the incorruption, or immortality. Based on my analysis of the double treatise, I suggest that this has to do with Athanasius' concern about describing two types of relationship with God—one before and one after the fall. To remind what this means for Athanasius, in the first type of relationship, humanity was represented in its original state of union with God, and in the second it turned away from God, substituting the falsely deified idols in his place. Accordingly, Athanasius seems to place the juridical aspect of salvation within this larger framework where salvation is not just about having the legal status but more fundamentally and personally about being restored in the pre-fallen relationship with God. In the context of the *De Incarnatione* this restoration includes at least two major aspects: ontological and relational. The former one is 'the renewal of the origin of life'[674] and 'the restoration of the image'.[675] It is in this restorational sense, that Athanasius stresses the importance of such qualities as

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[665] Ibid. 10.35 [Thomson 154; ibid. 155]: ἡ τοῦ ἰδίου σώματος θυσία.

[666] ὁ θάνατος τοῦ κυρίου λύτρον ἐστὶ πάντων.

[667] *De Inc.* 9.11 [Thomson 154; ibid. 155]: ἀντίψυχος ὑπὲρ πάντων.

[668] Ibid. 14.9 [Thomson 166; ibid. 167]: ἡ ἄφεσις τῶν ἁμαρτιῶν.

[669] Ibid. 5.14 [Thomson 144; ibid. 145]: ἡ παράβασις τῆς ἐντολῆς.

[670] Ibid. 20.37 [Thomson 184; ibid. 185]: ἵνα τοὺς μὲν πάντας ἀνυπευθύνους ποιήσῃ [sc. χριστος].

[671] Ibid. 21.3 [Thomson 184; ibid. 185]: ἡ καταδίκη.

[672] Ibid. 20.14-7 [Thomson 182; ibid. 183]: ἤδη λοιπὸν καὶ ὑπὲρ πάντων τὴν θυσίαν ἀνέφερεν, ἀντὶ πάντων τὸν ἑαυτοῦ ναὸν εἰς θάνατον παραδιδούς, ἵνα τοὺς μὲν πάντας ἀνυπευθύνους καὶ ἐλευθέρους τῆς ἀρχαίας παραβάσεως ποιήσῃ.

[673] Ibid. 20.1-3 [Thomson 184; ibid. 185]: ἀμέλει, τοῦ κοινοῦ πάντων σωτῆρος ἀποθανόντος ὑπὲρ ἡμῶν, οὐκέτι νῦν ὥσπερ πάλαι κατὰ τὴν τοῦ νόμου ἀπειλὴν θανάτῳ ἀποθνήσκομεν οἱ ἐν χριστῷ πιστοί· πέπαυται γὰρ ἡ τοιαύτη καταδίκη.

[674] Ibid. 10.35 [Thomson 158; ibid. 159]: ἀρχὴν ζωῆς ἡμῖν εκαίνισεν [sc. χριστός].

[675] Ibid. 10.35 [Thomson 158; ibid. 159]: ἵνα ὡς εἰκὼν ὢν τοῦ πατρὸς τὸν κατ᾽ εἰκόνα ἄνθρωπον ἀνακτίσαι δυνηθῇ.

immortality and incorruption. They are the integral elements of what it means to be a restored humanity, and Christ makes them available anew by becoming man: 'Then this also must be known, that the corruption which had occurred was not outside the body, but was involved with it; and it was necessary that instead of corruption, life should adhere to it so that, as death had been in the body, so might life also be in it' (*De Inc*. 44.19-22 [Thomson 244; ibid. 245]).[676] More concisely, Athanasius states: 'For in two ways our Saviour had compassion through the incarnation: he both rid us of death and renewed us' (*De Inc*. 16.21-3 [Thomson 172; ibid. 173]).[677] Even though humanity still dies, it can hope for the future resurrection in Christ. Combining the legal and christological themes, Athanasius formulates what he thinks is the 'primary cause of the incarnation' (αἰτία πρώτη τῆς ἐνανθρωπήσεως):

For by the sacrifice of his own body he both put an end to the law which lay over us, and renewed for us the origin of life by giving hope of the resurrection. For since by men death had laid hold of men, so for this reason by the incarnation of God the Word were effected the overthrow of death and the resurrection of life. For the man who put on Christ says: *Since by man came death, also by man came the resurrection of the dead; for as in Adam all die, so also in Christ all will be made alive* [1-Cor. 15:21-2], and so on. For now no longer as condemned do we die, but as those who will rise again we await the general resurrection of all, which God *in his own time will reveal* [1-Tim. 6:15], he who also made and granted it to us. This therefore, is the primary cause of the incarnation of the Saviour (*De Inc*. 10.34-47 [Thomson 158; ibid. 159]).[678]

Here Athanasius ties the hope of the resurrection both with the incarnation of Christ and his death. Taken together they *give* as well as *effect* the hope of resurrection. Therefore, the primary cause of the incarnation of the Saviour is salvific and restorational; it seeks to renew humanity by connecting it directly to Christ and

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[676] ἔπειτα καὶ τοῦτο ἰστέον, ὅτι ἡ γενομένη φθορὰ οὐκ ἔξωθεν ἦν τοῦ σώματος, ἀλλ᾽ αὐτῷ προσεγεγόνει, καὶ ἀνάγκη ἦν ἀντὶ τῆς φθορᾶς ζωὴν αὐτῷ προσπλακῆναι, ἵνα ὥσπερ ἐν τῷ σώματι γέγονεν ὁ θάνατος, οὕτως ἐν αὐτῷ γένηται καὶ ἡ ζωή.

[677] ἀμφότερα γὰρ ἐφιλανθρωπεύετο ὁ σωτὴρ διὰ τῆς ἐνανθρωπήσεως, ὅτι καὶ τὸν θάνατον ἐξ ἡμῶν ἠφάνιζε, καὶ ἀνεκαίνιζεν ἡμᾶς.

[678] τῇ γὰρ τοῦ ἰδίου σώματος θυσίᾳ καὶ τέλος ἐπέθηκε τῷ καθ᾽ ἡμᾶς νόμῳ, καὶ ἀρχὴν ζωῆς ἡμῖν ἐκαίνισεν, ἐλπίδα τῆς ἀναστάσεως δεδωκώς· ἐπειδὴ γὰρ ἐξ ἀνθρώπων εἰς ἀνθρώπους ὁ θάνατος ἐκράτησε, διὰ τοῦτο πάλιν διὰ τῆς ἐνανθρωπήσεως τοῦ θεοῦ λόγου ἡ τοῦ θανάτου κατάλυσις γέγονε καὶ ἡ τῆς ζωῆς ἀνάστασις, λέγοντος τοῦ χριστοφόρου ἀνδρός· *ἐπειδὴ γὰρ δι᾽ ἀνθρώπου θάνατος, καὶ δι᾽ ἀνθρώπου ἀνάστασις νεκρῶν. ὥσπερ γὰρ ἐν τῷ ἀδὰμ πάντες ἀποθνήσκουσιν, οὕτως καὶ ἐν τῷ χριστῷ πάντες ζωοποιηθήσονται·* καὶ τὰ τούτοις ἀκόλουθα. οὐκέτι γὰρ νῦν ὡς κατακρινόμενοι ἀποθνήσκομεν, ἀλλ᾽ ὡς ἐγειρόμενοι περιμένομεν τὴν κοινὴν πάντων ἀνάστασιν, ἣν *καιροῖς ἰδίοις δείξει* ὁ καὶ ταύτην ἐργασάμενος καὶ χαρισάμενος θεός. αἰτία μὲν δὴ πρώτη τῆς ἐνανθρωπήσεως τοῦ σωτῆρος αὕτη.

have it resurrected into life. In this sense, Athanasius' christology is fundamentally soteriological, for Christ restores humanity in himself: *As in Adam all die, so also in Christ all will be made alive.* To put it differently, 'the person and work of Christ are inseparable, they form a coherent whole; therefore, the person no less than the work has redemptive significance'.[679]

The other major aspect of the restoration of man is relational. Although Athanasius does not discuss the Holy Spirit in the double treatise (he mentions him along with the other persons of the Trinity only at the end of this writing,[680] and it is only later in his *Epistulae quattuor ad Serapionem* that the divinity of the Holy Spirit will present itself as an issue), he stresses quite consistently that salvation implies one's sharing in the trinitarian life. The way humanity can do this is by being joined to Christ and through him to the Father. In the apologetic context of his writing, Athanasius phrases this idea with the epistemological emphasis: to know the Son is to know the Father. The principle behind this statement is that the invisible God makes himself known through his works, most importantly through Christ who assumed the visible body.[681] In *De Inc*. 32.25-33 [Thomson 212; ibid. 213], Athanasius asserts: 'It should be clear—and let no one obstinately resist the truth—that the Saviour… is the true Son of God, from whom he proceeds as very Word from the Father and Wisdom and Power (ἐκ πατρὸς ἴδιος λόγος καὶ σοφία καὶ δύναμις ὑπάρχων); who in the last times for the salvation of all took a body, and taught the world about the Father, destroyed death and bestowed incorruptibility on all through the promise of the resurrection'.[682] Emphasizing the deeds of the Logos as an instrument for making the Father known, he says: 'For this reason the merciful and universal Saviour, the Word of God, took to himself a body and lived as a man among men… in order that they might know the truth from the works which the Lord did through the actions of his body, and through him might come to know the Father' (*De Inc*. 15.11-16 [Thomson 170; ibid. 171, modified]).[683] In both

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[679] Habets, *Theosis*, 51. This aspect is noticed by many scholars, e.g. Behr, *The Nicene Faith*, 2/1:186-7; Anatolios, *Athanasius: Coherence*, 67; Torrance, *The Trinitarian Faith*, 156; ibid., *The Mediation of Christ*, 30; Anatolios, 'Athanasius' Christology Today', 36-41.

[680] *De Inc*. 57.22-3 [Thomson 276].

[681] Ibid. 32.1-33 [Thomson 210-2].

[682] φανερὸν ἂν εἴη, καὶ μηδεὶς ἀναιδευέσθω πρὸς τὴν ἀλήθειαν, ὅτι... θεοῦ υἱός ἐστιν ἀληθινός, ἐξ αὐτοῦ οἷα δὴ ἐκ πατρὸς ἴδιος λόγος καὶ σοφία καὶ δύναμις ὑπάρχων, ὃς χρόνοις ὕστερον ἐπὶ σωτηρίᾳ τῶν πάντων ἔλαβε σῶμα, καὶ τὴν μὲν οἰκουμένην περὶ πατρὸς ἐδίδαξε, τὸν δὲ θάνατον κατήργησε, πᾶσι δὲ τὴν ἀφθαρσίαν ἐχαρίσατο διὰ τῆς ἐπαγγελίας τῆς ἀναστάσεως.

[683] τούτου ἕνεκα ὁ φιλάνθρωπος καὶ κοινὸς πάντων σωτήρ, ὁ τοῦ θεοῦ λόγος, λαμβάνει ἑαυτῷ σῶμα, καὶ ὡς ἄνθρωπος ἐν ἀνθρώποις ἀναστρέφεται, καὶ τὰς αἰσθήσεις πάντων ἀνθρώπων

passages, Christ is said to have a special position with the Father—he is the Word of God, Wisdom, and Power—while to restore the knowledge of God the Father, he comes down to us as man. The same idea is also reflected in the only passage in the treatise where Athanasius applies deification in the Christian context.[684] In *De Inc*. 54.11-21 [Thomson 268; ibid. 269], he affirms:

> For he became man that we might become divine (θεοποιηθῶμεν); and he revealed himself through a body that we might receive an idea of the invisible Father; and he endured insults from men that we might inherit incorruption. He himself was harmed in no respect, as he is impassible and incorruptible (ἀπαθὴς καὶ ἄφθαρτος) and the very Word and God (αὐτολόγος ὢν καὶ θεός), but he cared for and saved suffering men, for whom he endured these things, by his impassibility. And, in short, the achievements of the Saviour effected through his incarnation are of such a kind and so great, that if anyone wished to expound them he would be like those who gaze at the vast expanse of the sea and wish to count the number of its waves…. So it is better not to view or speak of all of which one cannot even express a part, but to recall one part, leaving you to wonder at the whole'.[685]

What is significant in this passage is that it summarizes all important aspects of salvation: legal, ontological, and relational. It mentions the fact that Christ endured the insults and he is referred to as the Saviour, while his incarnation is said to have effected incorruption and the revelation of the invisible Father. In this context deification (which almost literally repeats Irenaeus' dictum) is far from being a strictly physical concept; it is a much broader one that includes other vital aspects of salvation. Moreover, it is even less a concept of the upward movement. Here, as elsewhere in the *De Incarnatione*, Athanasius points out that salvation is based on God's initiative (it is described in terms of providential care), and he ties it to the fact that Christ, who accomplished it, is 'the very Word and God' (αὐτολόγος ὢν καὶ θεός). While in the earlier parts of the *De Incarnatione*, Athanasius described the body of Christ as the instrument, or tool, and predicated to it human qualities,

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προσλαμβάνει, ἵνα οἱ ἐν σωματικοῖς νοοῦντες εἶναι τὸν θεόν, ἀφ' ὧν ὁ κύριος ἐργάζεται διὰ τῶν τοῦ σώματος ἔργων, ἀπ' αὐτῶν νοήσωσι τὴν ἀλήθειαν, καὶ δι' αὐτοῦ τὸν πατέρα λογίσωνται.

[684] The same dictum reappears in *Ep. Adelph*. 4 [PG 26:1057a].

[685] αὐτὸς γὰρ ἐνηνθρώπησεν, ἵνα ἡμεῖς θεοποιηθῶμεν· καὶ αὐτὸς ἐφανέρωσεν ἑαυτὸν διὰ σώματος ἵνα ἡμεῖς τοῦ ἀοράτου πατρὸς ἔννοιαν λάβωμεν· καὶ αὐτὸς ὑπέμεινε τὴν παρ' ἀνθρώπων ὕβριν ἵνα ἡμεῖς ἀφθαρσίαν κληρονομήσωμεν. ἐβλάπτετο μὲν γὰρ αὐτὸς οὐδέν, ἀπαθὴς καὶ ἄφθαρτος καὶ αὐτολόγος ὢν καὶ θεός· τοὺς δὲ πάσχοντας ἀνθρώπους, δι' οὓς καὶ ταῦτα ὑπέμεινεν, ἐν τῇ ἑαυτοῦ ἀπαθείᾳ ἐτήρει καὶ διέσωζε. καὶ ὅλως τὰ κατορθώματα τοῦ σωτῆρος τὰ διὰ τῆς ἐνανθρωπήσεως αὐτοῦ γενόμενα τοιαῦτα καὶ τοσαῦτά ἐστιν, ἃ εἰ διηγήσασθαί τις ἐθελήσειεν, ἔοικε τοῖς ἀφορῶσιν εἰς τὸ πέλαγος τῆς θαλάσσης καὶ θέλουσιν ἀριθμεῖν τὰ κύματα ταύτης.

here he makes it clear that Christ's divinity remained unchanged—impassible and incorruptible—even though he assumed the body. Interestingly, Athanasius gives up at the task of enumerating all the aspects of Christ's saving accomplishments. He says this almost at the very end of his double treatise when he could otherwise be satisfied with what he has written. Instead, he ends with a typically patristic note of apophatic theology recognizing the unexhausted mystery of God's work. At the same time, Athanasius does articulate the central message of salvation pinpointing that most fundamentally it is about restoring humanity to the same state of original being and relationship which it lost after the fall.

The efficacy of Christ' death is also shown by Athanasius in the fact that 'the Lord came to overthrow the devil'[686] (a motif repeated quite frequently)[687] and that his death is being imitated by the Christian martyrs. Since the power of death has been destroyed by Christ, the death is no more feared by the Christians, and they die for their faith as Christ's heroes. Athanasius writes: 'For formerly, before the divine coming of the Saviour occurred, all used to weep for the dead as if they were lost. But now that the Saviour has raised up his body death is no longer to be feared, but all believers in Christ tread on it as something non-existent and would rather die than deny their faith in Christ' (*De Inc*. 27.7-12 [Thomson 198; ibid. 199]).[688] And slightly later, he continues: 'Is this, then, an insignificant refutation of the weakness of death, or a feeble demonstration of the victory won by the Saviour over it, when Christian boys and young girls despise this present life and prepare themselves for dying? For by nature man is afraid of death and of the dissolution of the body. But what is most wonderful (παραδοξότατον) is that he who has put on the faith of the cross scorns the things of nature, and is not afraid of death because of Christ' (*De Inc*. 28.1-8 [Thomson 200-2; ibid. 201-3]).[689] The followers of Christ lead a better life (σωφρονέστερος βίος)[690] than the gods and the Greeks who worshipped them, and we are to imitate the life and deeds of the saints. Athanasius

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[686] *De Inc*. 25.24 [Thomson 194; ibid. 195];

[687] e.g. Ibid. 14.17-26 [Thomson 166-8]; 20.38-41 [Thomson 184]; 25.30-4 [Thomson 196].

[688] πάλαι μὲν γὰρ πρὶν τὴν θείαν ἐπιδημίαν γενέσθαι τοῦ σωτῆρος, πάντες τοὺς ἀποθνήσκοντας ὡς φθειρομένους ἐθρήνουν. ἄρτι δὲ τοῦ σωτῆρος ἀναστήσαντος τὸ σῶμα, οὐκέτι μὲν ὁ θάνατός ἐστι φοβερός, πάντες δὲ οἱ τῷ χριστῷ πιστεύοντες ὡς οὐδὲν αὐτὸν ὄντα πατοῦσι, καὶ μᾶλλον ἀποθνήσκειν αἱροῦνται ἢ ἀρνήσασθαι τὴν εἰς χριστὸν πίστιν.

[689] ἆρ' οὖν τοῦτο μικρὸς ἔλεγχός ἐστι τῆς τοῦ θανάτου ἀσθενείας; ἢ μικρά ἐστιν ἀπόδειξις τῆς κατ' αὐτοῦ γενομένης νίκης παρὰ τοῦ σωτῆρος, ὅταν οἱ ἐν χριστῷ παῖδες καὶ νέαι κόραι παρορῶσι τὸν ἐνταῦθα βίον καὶ ἀποθανεῖν μελετῶσιν; ἔστι μὲν γὰρ κατὰ φύσιν ὁ ἄνθρωπος δειλιῶν τὸν θάνατον καὶ τὴν τοῦ σώματος διάλυσιν· τὸ δὲ παραδοξότατον τοῦτό ἐστιν, ὅτι τὴν τοῦ σταυροῦ πίστιν ἐνδυσάμενος καταφρονεῖ καὶ τῶν κατὰ φύσιν, καὶ τὸν θάνατον οὐ δειλιᾷ διὰ τὸν χριστόν.

[690] *De Inc*. 53.19 [Thomson 266].

calls his readers to 'a life modeled on the saints' (τῆς πρὸς τοὺς ἁγίους τοῦ βίου μιμήσεως),[691] and encourages 'to approach the saints in the imitation of their deeds' (πρὸς αὐτοὺς τοὺς ἁγίους ἀφικέσθαι τῇ ὁμοιότητι τῶν πράξεων αὐτῶν).[692] By doing this, a believer cultivates a good life (βίος καλός), pure soul (ψυχή καθαρά), and virtue in Christ (ἡ κατὰ χριστὸν ἀρετή).[693]

3.4 Conclusions

As I bring this chapter to a close, it is appropriate to take a moment and consider Athanasius briefly in the general context which I have placed him. It is obvious that the Greek tradition had an undoubtedly deep impact on Athanasius. Even if he did not have a specialized education,[694] his terminology and ideas reflect a decent knowledge of Platonism. However, when it comes to the Platonic framework as a whole, this is where, I believe, he parts ways with this tradition most noticeably. His concept of God as the intimate communion of the Father and Son shows itself most clearly in the way he describes the incarnation of Christ and the fruits of salvation. Both are fundamentally personal notions. In the incarnation it is the Father's Son, the second person of the Trinity, that is the subject of salvific actions, and even though his mission is to point to the Father, both of them do the same work. While salvation includes a legal and ontological dimension, it is a distinctly relational concept in which man is ultimately restored to the original relationship with God. Although Athanasius does not speak a lot about deification in the Christian context (and he is silent about such personal images of salvation as adoption, or sonship, probably because of the apologetic nature of the treatise), the only instance where he does so is grounded on this Athanasian framework. Based on these observations, it seems that while there is much that Athanasius appropriates from Platonism, there is even more that he leaves behind. This point corroborates well with what Jon Robertson writes when he asserts that Athanasius' use of the Hellenistic sources 'does not suggest a deep adoption of their underlying philosophies but rather a borrowing of metaphors and illustrations to support a point

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[691] Ibid. 57.5-6 [Thomson 274; ibid. 275].
[692] Ibid. 57.13-4 [Thomson 274; ibid. 275].
[693] Ibid. 57.2 [Thomson 274; ibid. 275].
[694] Meijering, *Orthodoxy and Platonism*, 105, suggests that Athanasius' teachers (to which he himself refers twice in the double treatise, *CG* 1.11 [Thomson 2], and *De Inc*. 56.8 [Thomson 272]), are most likely 'the Alexandrian theologians and the heads of Origen's school, Dionysius, Pierius, Theognostus, Serapion, Peter, Alexander'.

he is making at the moment. This would seem to indicate that Athanasius, rather than actually espousing a particular philosophical school of thought, simply appropriated in a somewhat superficial way what he considered useful of the general philosophical heritage of his day'.[695] This conclusion is also supported by Meijering who argues (as I had indicated in 2.1.3 where I give my rationale as to why I see Platonism as the major context for Athanasius) that 'Athanasius could freely use philosophical ideas where it suited him' believing that 'Platonic ontology need not contradict the Christian faith, provided it was applied in the right way in theology'.[696] Mejering concludes that Athanasius on the one hand endevours to synthesize Christian faith and Platonism 'in the sense that he is constantly using Platonic language and arguments', and on the other, he sees a certain antithesis 'in the sense that Athanasius completely opposes the core of Platonic theology, *viz*., the divine hierarchy. He regards this as idolatry'.[697]

As I have attempted to show, Athanasius' double treatise represents a unified whole. While the traits of 'tension' are present, they do not mean conflict or inconsistency. Moreover, this 'tension' can be understood as part of the intended structure governed by the apologetic nature of the treatise. Even though Athanasius draws a sharp contrast between three lesser means of God's redirection of people (the soul, creation, and Scriptures) and the superior one (incarnation), he does not present them in a discontinuous way. The same God who initially created humanity comes down to save it after the fall, and the same grace of the image that was given to man is now restored by the very image of the Father, Christ himself. To stress the continutity of God's revelation and grace Athanasius describes God as a good teacher (ὁ ἀγαθὸς διδάσκαλος)[698] who adapts to the failures of humanity in the history of salvation, and does what they were not able to do on their own.

Athanasius goes on to elaborate much more on these ideas from his early treatise in his main dogmatic work—*Orationes Contra Arianos*—and to set the stage for the discussion of this writing, it will be important first to consider Athanasius' opponent, Arius of Alexandria. I will do this in the next chapter.

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[695] Robertson, *Christ as Mediator*, 143.
[696] Meijering, *Orthodoxy and Platonism*, 126, 128. Cf. ibid., 114-32.
[697] Ibid., 130.
[698] *De Inc*. 15.1 [Thomson 168]. Cf. *De Sen. Dion*. 6.11-12 [Opitz 50].

CHAPTER FOUR

God the Father, Christ, and Deification
in Arius' Letters and the *Thalia*

In the previous chapter I have dealt with the writing that never mentions Arius by name. While scholars disagree about the extent to which the double treatise reflects anti-Arian motifs and whether it was written before the controversy in 318[699] or some time afterwards, there is no doubt that Athanasius' later writings (to be discussed in chs. 5-6) are significantly influenced by the disputes against Arius. Therefore, one helpful way to approach Athanasius' later thought is by examining first Arius' theology as the immediate context in which Athanasius formulated his views. In light of the issues I have considered thus far, there are several ways in which Arius' thought is starkly different from that of Athanasius. First, Arius definitely lacks Athanasius' emphasis on God as relational being. He understands God as the supreme Monad that possesses the fullness of divine qualities, or perfections, which are not to be shared by the other trinitarian *hypostases*. Being devoid of such qualities, Christ and Holy Spirit stand in the subordinated position to the true God who is only rarely called Father. Second, Arius makes no direct mention of Christ's initiative to restore humanity into divine relationship. In fact, Arius never writes about salvation. This may have to do either with the fact that only a handful of his writings survived (and some of those which did are extant only in fragments), or with the tendency to cast his ideas in a strictly metaphysical form. While Arius' understanding of Christ is a hotly debated subject, there is a growing agreement among scholars that his christology entails some kind of soteriological significance.

In this chapter, I will explore two major elements in Arius' theology. The first one will be related to his understanding of God, and the second—to his description of Christ and deification. I will approach the latter with caution since no soteriological statements from Arius have survived. In the course of this study I will explain my rationale for believing why it is still important to treat the subject of salvation in relation to Arius. As I begin, I will first examine Arius' letters that represent his own extant words, and then analyze the extracts from his major

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[699] For an extensive discussion of the reasons and dates of the outbreak of the controversy, see Hanson, *The Search for God*, 129-38.

theological work, the *Thalia* quoted primarily in Athanasius' *Contra Arianos* 1.5-6 and *De Synodis* 15. I will conclude this chapter with a brief discussion of the response Arius received from his earliest opponent Alexander of Alexandria. This response is preserved in Alexander's two most important writings known as ἑνὸς σώματος (sometimes believed to be Athanasius') and ἡ φίλαρχος. More immediately, I will begin this study by surveying modern scholarship on the Arian controversy in order to outline those concerns which scholars believe to have played central roles in the dispute, and for the rest of the chapter I will concentrate on showing how the study of God and deification can provide a helpful framework for assessing Arius' thought.

4.1 Scholarly Opinions about the Arian Dispute: Cosmological and Soteriological Arguments

Generally, modern treatments of Arius' teaching fall into two major categories, or approaches, to the controversy.[700] On the one hand, there are those who think that his primary concern was cosmological, and on the other there are those who consider soteriology as the determining factor. Since a given scholars' evaluation of Arius is often dependent on which of these two approaches one believes to be dominant in the dispute, I will first make a brief review of these approaches before I examine Arius himself.

4.1.1 Cosmological Approach: The Influences of Later Hellenism, Monotheistic Tendencies of Judaism, and Biblical Exegesis

One of the traditional interpretations of the controversy (with representatives found both in ancient and modern times), considers Arius as the trinitarian subordinationist. Scholars who approach Arius in this way often believe that the closest link to his views is later Platonism. As I mentioned in the chapter on the background,[701] one of the fundamental tenets of the Platonic worldview is a multi-level hierarchy of *hypostases*. The top of this pyramid is occupied by the intellectual realm, the bottom by the material one. Each lower level of reality on this scale participates in the higher one, reflecting its beauty and intellectual

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[700] For an excellent survey of various views on the Arian controversy from nineteenth to twentieth centuries, see Williams, *Arius*, 2-25. Cf. Wiles, *Heresy*, and Kannengiesser, 'Athanasian Decade', 524-41.

[701] For a more detailed analysis of the Platonic tradition, see sects. 2.1.3.1-3.

structure to the degree in which the lower is able to embrace the higher. Seen in this light, Arius' understanding of God comes close to the Platonic concept of the highest reality, a transcendent entity inaccessible to human knowledge and encounter. The inaccessibility of the supreme God, however, is compensated for by the intermediary beings who serve as the points of contact between the lowest and highest realms of reality. Within this approach scholars disagree as to whether Platonic influence came to Arius through pagan channels or through ecclesiastical ones. Arguing for the former, Harnack[702] is a classic example, viewing Arius as a Hellenistic thinker who works within the neo-Platonic framework. According to this understanding, Arius perceived Christ to be the created mediator between the transcendent God and the material realm. Arguing for the ecclesiastical sources, other scholars[703] suggest that Arius' subordinationist christology was shaped under the influence of either Origen or his successors in Alexandria. While disagreeing on the principal sources of Arius' teaching, both groups of scholars consent, to varying degree, that his concept of God precludes an emphasis on the divine relationship with humanity. Although most of these commentators[704] (esp. Harnack in the past and Rowan Williams[705] in more recent times) deny that Arius had any soteriology, some of them believe that his concept of God implied a specific view of salvation.[706] Thus, George Prestige insists that Arius created an impassable wedge between God and humanity so much so that man was 'to look for salvation to

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[702] Harnack, *Lehrbuch der Dogmengeschichte*, 2.217. Cf. Ricken, 'Nikaia als Krisis', 321-41 (esp. 330 on Arius), who ties Arius' teaching of God with the mature expression of the Middle Platonism. Similarly, Kannengiesser, 'Hellenistic Hermeneutics', 37, writes that '… we perceive fundamental affinities between Plotinus and Arius: the same moving exaltation of the triadic Principle, the One, transposed by Arius into the biblical figure for the Father; the same Triadic schema inspired by the classical problem of the passage from the One to the multiple'. For more views that attribute Platonic influence on Arius' thought, see Meijering, 'ἨΝ ΠΟΤΕ ΟΤΕ ΟΥΚ ἨΝ Ο ΥΙΟΣ', 161-68.

[703] Thus, Stead, 'The Platonism of Arius', 26, concludes that 'Arius draws upon a Platonic tradition evolving within the Church. His theology fits naturally into place among the disputes which arose over the disposal of Origen's effects. His main debt to Origen is a subordinationist doctrine of the Son, which he greatly intensifies and divests of its qualifications'. Cf. Prestige, *God in Patristic Thought*, 116; Loofs, 'Arianismus', 9, 25; Klein, *Konstantius II*, 19.

[704] Hanson, *The Search for God*, 96, observes that 'Williams and Harnack denied that Arius, at least, had any soteriology. Most scholars, perhaps unwittingly, come to much the same conclusion. It is understandable that this should be so, because almost every word (though not quite every word) by Arius that survives is concerned with the relation of the Father to the Son independently of the Incarnation'.

[705] Williams came to acknowledge the importance of the soteriological factor in the controversy by the time of his second edition of *Arius*. In his first edition of this study he holds to the view that Arius' concern was exclusively cosmological. See Williams, *Arius*, 256-61.

[706] Ibid., 122.

sources other than the Lord of heaven and earth'.[707] A more explicit remark is made by Hanson who recognizes Arius' philosophical bent, and argues that his doctrine of God implied a certain soteriological stance even though no direct textual evidence supports it:

> The ontology fitted the soteriology and the soteriology the ontology. Once we understand the true rationale of Arianism, we realize that the two sides fit very well together, have in fact been devised to fit together, and that it is only by accident that we have been given the impression that either Arius or his followers cared only for defining the relation of the Son to the Father. They laboured for and upheld that definition because they held a concrete and by no means contemptible doctrine of salvation which that definition was intended to undergird.[708]

Besides Platonism scholars have also suggested a number of other philosophical influences and sources for Arius' teaching. In fact, there has been such a variety of them, that Robert Gregg and Dennis Groh draw quite an extended list. They observe that '[a] bewildering array of precursors have been postulated for Arian doctrine by modern scholarship: Aristotle, Plato (and Platonists like Atticus and Albinus), Philo, Origen, Lucian, Paul of Samosata, and the exegetes of the "schools" in Alexandria and Antioch'.[709] Despite this diversity of opinions among scholars, the central issue on this reading was strictly philosophical. Generally, this interpretation purports to explain the controversy in terms of two perspectives that came to clash with each other. One is associated with Arius and is understood as an endeavour to protect God from direct involvement along the lines of Platonic structure of being. The other one is associated with Alexander and Athanasius and is exactly the opposite. It is seen as a desire to defend the personal involvement of God whether by appealing to the non-philosophical sources, or by drawing from Platonism while rejecting its ontological assumptions.

In contrast, another interpretation contends that Arius' beliefs were determined by Judaizing motifs. Commentators who support this view argue that Arius was a strict monotheist who sought to maintain the transcendence of the one God. This opinion was first introduced by John Newman who suggested that Arius was influenced by Paul of Samosata via the Antiochene school of Lucian of Antioch. He believes that such influence had both doctrinal and historical bases,

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[707] Prestige, *Fathers and Heretics*, 91.
[708] Hanson, *The Search for God*, 122.
[709] Gregg, *Early Arianism*, 79.

and he regards Lucian as the forefather of the Arian doctrine.[710] In Newman's view the prevailing presence of Judaism in the Church of Antioch inspired a tendency to emphasize the human Jesus and diminish his divinity.[711] This account of Arian history was later revisited by Walter Elliger who added a soteriological argument by claiming that Arius sought to defend a moral type of union with God on the level of will as opposed to being.[712] Another soteriological reading was proposed slightly earlier by Henry Gwatkin. He drew an analogy between the Arian and Pelagian disputes arguing that it was 'the Pelagianism which is an essential element of the Arian system'.[713] Gwatkin also challenged Newman's view that traced Arius to the Antiochene theology by pointing out that the fourth-century Alexandria had as much Jewish influence as Antioch.[714] The subject of Jewish background was later picked up by Rudolf Lorenz who proposed to view the Arian teaching as being rooted in the 'Engelchristologie im Judenchristentum' that supposedly approached Christ as the angelic mediator.[715] Finally, the Jewish influence for Arius' teaching was solidified by Thomas Kopeček who advanced a view that it 'emerged from and was nourished by a conservative eucharistic liturgical tradition which was pronouncedly Jewish-Christian in character'.[716] These scholars and others who consider Jewish influence as the main factor in the controversy argue that Arius' main concern was to reconcile strict monotheism (sustained by the Hellenized synagogues) and devotion to Jesus Christ as a divine but created being.

One other interpretation of Arius' teaching contends that the primary concern of the controversy had to do with the biblical exegesis rather than cosmology. It describes Arius as seeking to deal with the difficult passages from the Old and New Testament where the Son is given an inferior status than the Father (e.g. Prov. 8:22; Mark 10:18; Jn. 10:36; Phil. 2:5-11; 1-Cor. 15:25-8; Heb. 5:8). In this approach scholars often argue that Arius' views were nurturted primarily by his literalistic reading of Scripture. Therefore, '[f]ar from being a philosopher anxious

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[710] Newman, *The Arians of the Fourth Century*, 1-24. Among the modern scholars this view was advanced by Pollard, 'The Origins of Arianism', 103-11.

[711] Newman, *The Arians of the Fourth Century*, 403-16.

[712] Elliger, 'Bemerkungen zur Thologie des Arius', 250-1.

[713] Gwatkin, *Arianism*, 25.

[714] Ibid. 17-20. Similar criticism was advanced by Simonetti, 'Le Origini deil' Arianesimo', 317-30. In modern scholarship Newman's reconstruction of the controversy (developed in his *Arians of the Fourth Century* in 1833) as a clash between 'Anteochene' and 'Alexandrian' theology has been largely abandoned. Cf. Lienhard, 'The "Arian" Controversy', 419.

[715] Lorenz, *Arius judaizans?* 148-74.

[716] Kopeček, 'Neo-Arian Religion', 155.

to safeguard a particular cosmology, Arius and his followers were first and foremost men of the Book who desired to achieve terminological clarity'.[717] Gregg and Groh come very close to this view when they remark that 'Arius and his circle are described again and again as philosophers, logicians, demipagans, but only rarely as persons concerned to exegete the Scriptures by a careful and self-conscious hermeneutic'.[718] On the other hand, there are scholars who argue that Arius read the Bible through the lens of the Alexandrian theology. This approach is frequently accompanied with a distinction between the two supposedly competing schools of patristic exegesis, one based in Antioch and the other in Alexandria.[719] According to Charles Kannengiesser (who regards Arius as the product of the Alexandrian school of theology) Antioch and Alexandria were characterized by different senses of the value of historical narratives: the former treated them literally, while the latter interpreted them allegorically.[720] Following this distinction, Henri-Irénée Marrou depicts Arius as a 'Denys d'Alexandrie première manière' and defines his teaching as a 'phénomène alexandrine'.[721] Likewise, for Wiles Arius' exposition of the Scriptures has nothing new in itself; it simply follows the Alexandrian strand of thought—Clement, Origen, and Dionysius of Alexandria—which derives from Philo. In Wiles' view, it is this particular strand of thought (which Arius endorsed and Alexander rejected) that became the 'crucial factor in the split between Athanasius and the Arians'.[722] Later in his article 'The Philosophy in Christianity', he added another argument claiming that besides the scriptural interpretation, another major motif that drove Arius' thought was the doctrine of salvation. In his opinion, Arius' soteriology can be understood as a 'determination to safeguard the presentation of Christ's passion and crucifixion as unequivocally the passion and crucifixion of God'.[723] In contrast to this view, Kannengiesser contends that Arius

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[717] Gavrilyuk, *The Suffering of the Impassible God*, 107-8.

[718] Gregg, *Early Arianism*, 8.

[719] Cf. Fairbairn, 'Patristic Exegesis', who argues that in the context of the fifth century a model of two competing schools—one in Antioch and one in Alexandria—is built on a false assumption that they propogated mutually exclusive worldviews. Instead, he suggests that what was really Antiochene should be associated with only a handful of people, most notably Diodore of Tarsus, Theodore of Mopsuestia, and Nestorius. Cf. Lienhard, 'The "Arian" controversy, who warns that '[t]he relationship between theological speculation in the early fourth century and the christological controversy of the fifth century is complex and unclear; and to try to interpret the first period by later categories does neither a service'.

[720] Kannengiesser, 'A Key for the Future of Patristics', 102.

[721] Marrou, 'L'arianisme comme phénomène alexandrin', 533, thinks that Arius represents an Alexandrian tendency to subordinate God in the Origenistic manner.

[722] Wiles, 'The Philosophy in Christianity', 42. Cf. ibid., 'In Defence of Arius', 339-47.

[723] Ibid., 'Asterius', 136.

had no soteriological concern whatsoever by claiming that 'Arius' tragedy was to engage his dedication to the church into a strictly metaphysical issue, at a time when the church was only seeking for "a view of salvation" adjusted to the new situation of the 4th century'.[724]

Apparently, all three interpretations of Arius' teaching tend to view the controversy from a specific standpoint. They also expose a whole range of attitudes towards the soteriology either asserting its significance in Arius' thought (Prestige, Elliger, Wiles), or implying it (Gwatkin, Hanson), or denying it altogether (Harnack, Williams [although less so now],[725] Kannengiesser). Moreover, the stronger one emphasizes the cosmological issue the more likely one is to sense a need for clarifying why soteriology could or could not play a role in the debates. Thus, Hanson who spends most of his time describing Arius' cosmology, ends up concluding his analysis with a soteriological remark. He writes: 'Arianism was a theology of salvation as well as a theory of the inner relations of the Trinity.... Its originator was as concerned with our salvation as his disciples were, even if by chance almost none of his sayings upon the subject has survived'.[726]

4.1.2 Soteriological Approach

A fundamentally different view on the Arian controversy is supported by those scholars who deliberately place soteriology at the heart of the matter. They argue that salvation was at stake, not a disagreement on cosmological views. Among the modern commentators Mönnich[727] seems to be the first one who approached the Arian debate in this way. In his opinion, Arius sought to describe Christ as the ethical prototype of the deified creature. It is by following his example, namely, eradicating their sinful will, that human beings can achieve the same state of divinization that Christ had achieved.[728] According to this interpretation, the conflict between Arius and Athanasius is understood as having to do with the means of salvation rather than with a certain cosmological view. More specifically, while

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[724] Kannengiesser, 'Alexander and Arius of Alexandria', 402.

[725] Williams came to acknowledge the importance of the soteriological factor in the controversy by the time of his second edition of *Arius*. In his first edition of this study he holds to the view that Arius' concern was exclusively cosmological. See Williams, *Arius*, 256-61.

[726] Hanson, *The Search for God*, 26-7.

[727] Mönnich, 'De Achtergrond van de arianse Christologie', 378-412.

[728] Ibid., 407.

for Arius salvation could be achieved through the individual ascetic efforts, for Alexander and Athanasius it was possible only by divine grace within the Church.

Mönnich's interpretation of the controversy has recently been elaborated by Gregg and Groh who are known for their so-called exemplarist soteriology. These commentators disagree in principle with those who describe the debate in terms of cosmological preoccupation. They argue that the controversy could not become so intense if it were exclusively about the technical issues of cosmology such as ὁμοούσιος or ἦν ποτε, ὅτε οὐκ ἦν. In contrast, Gregg and Groh endorse the third of the fore-mentioned interpretations by claiming that instead of being concerned with cosmology, Arius was above all a biblical exegete who understood Christ in terms of moral example. Although Arius' views were nurtured by the literalistic interpretation of the Bible, his christology, according to Gregg and Groh, was influenced by the ethical view of Stoicism. Therefore, they suggest that Arius understood Christ as a mutable (τρεπτός) creature who was capable of increasing in virtue (προκοπή) toward a complete dispassion (ἀπάθεια). He lived a life of total obedience to his Father's will, and thereby left a perfect example for other creatures to follow. In this sense, Arius' christology encouraged an ethical type of deification modeled after the Stoic sage. More specifically, it meant that by following Christ's example of spiritual progress we can become like him. Gregg and Groh's reconstruction of the central issue in the Arian controversy has evoked a lot of scholarly debates some of which I will mention later. Making a specific observation about the way they separate the soteriological and cosmological concerns, Paul Gavrilyuk notes: 'To postulate a vital soteriological interest that overrode cosmological issues is to introduce an opposition between soteriology and cosmology that the fourth-century theologians would never have endorsed…. And nowhere do we find the Arians making such a typically Stoic claim as that Christ grew morally towards *apatheia*'.[729] While disagreeing with Gregg and Groh on various points of their interpretation, scholars generally recognize that their contribution helped to draw attention to the issues that had long been overshadowed by the cosmological emphasis.[730]

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[729] Gavrilyuk, *The Suffering of the Impassible God*, 110-1. For more critical remarks about Gregg and Groh's approach, see Stead, 'Arius in Modern Research', 24-36.

[730] e.g. Hanson, *The Search for God*, 91; Pettersen, *Athanasius and the Human Body*, 139; Williams, *Arius*, 256-61.

Another soteriological approach was proposed by Catherine LaCugna. In her opinion the thwart of the Arian teaching resulted in a negative phenomenon for the fourth-century Church. It produced a de-emphasis, or 'weakening of the soteriological basis for the Christian doctrine of God'.[731] In particular, she states:

> To answer Arius the Council of Nicaea taught that Christ is *homoousios* with God. This immediately shifted attention away from the patent subordination of the economy to an intradivine realm, *theologia*, in which God and Christ, Father and Son, could be equal in substance. But this 'solution' created another problem. The unquestioned axiom that God cannot suffer was contradicted by the suffering of Christ; if he were truly God, God would suffer. The way around this was to say that Christ suffered in his humanity but not in his divinity, not as the Logos. The result was a small gap between *theologia*, in which God and the divine Christ were equal, and *oikonomia*, in which God and the human Christ remained unequal.[732]

In LaCugna's understanding, Arius' theology reflects the pre-Nicene focus on God's disclosure in the world (*oikonomia*) rather than on his intra-trinitarian life (*theologia*). More specifically, this means that the pre-Nicenes sought to base their theology on the scriptural revelation of God the Father through the incarnation of Christ and the sending of the Holy Spirit. This approach to know God from his manifestation in the world is fundamentally different from the way Athanasius (and the Cappadocians) sought to know God. The latter's desire to combat the Arian teaching led them beyond the historical revelation of God to the discussions of his inner being, or *theologia*. In doing this, they abandoned the biblical concept of God, substituting foreign metaphysical speculations. LaCugna concludes:

> While the separation of 'economy' and 'theology', implicit at Nicaea, allowed Athanasius and the Cappadocians to effectively counter Arianism, the distinction also made it possible for the Christian theology of God, specifically, trinitarian theology, to develop to some extent apart from soteriology. Having discovered that it was possible to make inferences about *theologia* on the basis of *oikonomia*, theologians began to reflect on *theologia* itself, in some cases before or without considering the economy of salvation. Within a short time this deductive or descending order was accepted as the normal procedure for theology.[733]

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[731] LaCugna, *God for Us*, 9.
[732] Ibid. 8.
[733] Ibid. 43; cf. Blum, 'Oikonomia und Theologia', 284.

This brief survey shows that modern scholars assess the Arian debates differently depending on what they think its major concern was. Some believe that the controversy revolved around cosmological concerns having to do with either later Hellenistic thought or the monotheistic tendencies of Judaism. Other commentators tend to minimize the scale of the cosmological interest by stressing the role of biblical exegesis, while still others argue that the dispute was primarily about salvation. At the same time, all groups of scholars acknowledge to varying degrees that both doctrines—that of God and that of salvation—were somehow interconnected in the controversy, if not directly affected each other. In continuation with this intuition, I will attempt to show in this chapter that bringing cosmology and soteriology together creates a helpful framework from which we could evaluate Arius' theology.

As we approach Arius, it is important to realize that we possess only a handful of texts that can be claimed as reliably representing his own words.[734] These are three complete letters[735] (the confession of faith presented to Alexander of Alexandria, Arius' letter to Eusebius of Nicomedia, and the confession submitted by Arius and Euzoius to the emperor in 327) and a few fragments of a fourth.[736] Apart from these documents, we are wholly dependent upon quotations from Arius' *Thalia*[737] written in the Sotadean metre. This document is quoted by Athanasius in varying detail in his *Orationes Contra Arianos*, *De Decretis Nicaenae Synodi*, *De Sententia Dionysii*, *Epistola ad Episcopos Aegypti et Libyae*, and also found in the 'Blasphemies of Arius' in the *De Synodis*. In my analysis of Arius' thought I will give priority to his letters so as to understand how he himself presented his case. After that I will bring into the discussion the Athanasian fragments of the *Thalia*. The reason for doing this is because Arius is quoted in the *Thalia* through the prism of his most vehement

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[734] When citing the Arian texts, I will first give the number of the old Opitz's edition (1934) and then in the brackets the number of the revised Opitz's edition (2007) in which the chronology of the Arian documents is different, and therefore it gives the same documents new document numbers.

[735] The dating adopted here is that proposed by Williams, *Arius*, 48-61: *Letter of Arius to Eusebius of Nicomedia* (*Urk.* 1[15]) dated in 321/2; *Profession of Faith by Arius and his followers to Alexander of Alexandria* (*Urk.* 6[1]) dated in 321; and *Formula of Faith by Arius and Euzoios to Emperor Constantine* (*Urk.* 30[34]) dated in the end of 327.

[736] Passages of Arius' fourth letter are cited by Constantine in *Urk.* 34[27]. Eight letters written in support of Arius include *Urk.* 2[16]; *Urk.* 3[10]; *Urk.* 7[9]; *Urk.* 8[4]; *Urk.* 9[5]; *Urk.* 11[11]; *Urk.* 12[6]; *Urk.* 13[7].

[737] For the *Thalia* I have adopted the dating of Williams which is mid-323; Williams, *Arius*, 62-6. The novel thesis of Kannengiesser, 'Scripture and Hermeneutics', that the *Thalia* was written in 359 has not been widely accepted and is conclusively refuted by Williams, 'The Quest of the Historical *Thalia*', 1-35.

opponent, which makes these fragments less objective than Arius' own letters. Since I am interested both in what Arius *stated*, and how he was *perceived*, I will allow the side perspective from Alexander and Athanasius whenever they provide helpful data. In doing this, however, I will be careful to not use them as a way of compensating Arius' own views. Moreover, I do not pretend to reconstruct a complete 'profile' of Arius, or provide the answer as to what were the actual sources from which he drew. I also realize that 'Arianism' is becoming an outdated terminology that does not do justice to the wide variety of opinions that were held in the fourth century.[738] Due to growing distrust of an overarching notion of 'Arianism', I will seek to confine myself specifically to the task of identifying Arius' theology rather than 'Arianism' as a whole. I will start my analysis by looking at Arius' teaching about God, and then will turn my attention to his concept of Christ and salvation.

4.2 God as the Transcendent Being and the Unique Possessor of Divine Qualities in Arius

Arius' letters together with the fragments of the *Thalia* present us with a very specific understanding of God. He is described as the transcendent being whose divine qualities are unique to him. This idea is reflected primarily in the way Arius relates the subordinated position of the Son to the Father who surpasses him. I will consider five major arguments about this relation by referring to them as (1) Quasi-temporal priority, (2) Substantial difference, (3) Incomprehensibility, (4) Preeminence of the will, and (5) Trinitarian subordinationism.

4.2.1 Arius' Letters[739]

(1) Quasi-temporal Priority. What is most distinctive in Arius' documents is the emphasis on the absolute transcendence of the Father. He is consistently defined in terms of singularity, uniqueness, sovereignty, and absolute freedom of will. In this

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[738] Approaching 'Arianism' as a coherent system has been criticized most fully in the recent study of Williams, *Arius*. Cf. Vaggione, *Eunomius*, esp. 39-49; 60-73. According to Behr, *The Nicene Faith*, 2/1:132-3, the main problem of this approach is that it draws 'from texts of later non-Nicene writers, presuming that they all belonged to a coherent "Arian" position, of which they then claim to present the essence or the rationale', whereas in actuality 'there was no single theological agenda shared by all those opposed to Nicaea, and their attitudes toward Arius himself varied considerably'. Cf. also ibid., 23-7.

[739] For a fuller picture of Arius' ideas I will make occasional reference to the *Letter of Alexander to all Bishops* (*Urk.* 4b[2.2] [Opitz 6-11]), which preserves additional quotations of Arius' words.

position the Father is superior both to the Son and the world. In the statement from *Urk.* 6[1].4, Arius clarifies this point by affirming that: 'As monad (μονάς) and origin (ἀρχή) of all, God is prior to everything; therefore he is also prior to the Son' ([Opitz 13; NPNF[2] 4:458, modified]).[740] The idea of the Father's superiority to the Son shows up most clearly in the way Arius speaks of the former as being prior to the latter in some kind of 'quasi-time'. According to this argument the Father represents the most solitary being (μονώτατος) with no beginning, while the Son is begotten, created and established by the Father.[741] This logic is reflected in Arius' letter to his old friend, Eusebius of Nicomedia. He complains there that he was unjustly excommunicated for heresy by Alexander of Alexandria, and claims a list of supporters who believed with him 'that God had an existence prior to that of his Son' (ὅτι προϋπάρχει ὁ θεὸς τοῦ υἱοῦ ἀνάρχως) (*Urk.* 1[15].3 [Opitz 2; NPNF[2] 3:41]). To this he adds that he is being persecuted for teaching that 'the Son has a beginning, but that God is without beginning (ἄναρχος), and that the Son is brought into existence out of nothing (ἐξ οὐκ ὄντων ἐστίν)' (*Urk.* 1[15].5 [Opitz 3]).[742] The way his opponents perceived such statements is expressed by Alexander who writes that Arius was responsible for formulas like 'there was a time when God was not the Father' (ἦν ὅτε ὁ θεὸς πατὴρ οὐκ ἦν), and 'there was a time when he [Christ] was not' (διὸ καὶ ἦν ποτε ὅτε οὐκ ἦν) (*Urk.* 4b[2.2].7 [Opitz 7]).

(2) Substantial difference. Another way in which Arius makes the Father superior to the Son has to do with the difference of substance. A good illustration of it is found at the end of Arius' letter to Eusebius, where he asserts that 'he [the Son] has no share in God, nor is he of any essential being'.[743] A similar statement occurs in Alexander's letter to all Bishops (ἑνὸς σώματος) where Arius is quoted as saying that Christ is 'not like the Father in substance'[744] but rather 'alien, different and excluded from the substance of God'.[745] The Father, according to Arius, is alone self-subsistent, immaterial and non-compound; his substance is subject to no natural

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[740] ὡς μονὰς καὶ ἀρχὴ πάντων, οὕτως ὁ θεὸς πρὸ πάντων ἐστί. διὸ καὶ πρὸ τοῦ υἱοῦ ἐστιν.

[741] *Urk* 6[1].2 [Opitz 12]. Cf. *De Syn.* 15.1 [Opitz 243; NPNF[2] 4:457]: 'The monad was; the dyad was not, before it was in existence' (σύνες ὅτι ἡ μονάς ἦν ἡ δυὰς οὐκ ἦ πρὶν ὑπάρξη).

[742] ἀρχὴν ἔχει ὁ υἱός, ὁ δὲ θεὸς ἄναρχός ἐστι. διὰ τοῦτο διωκόμεθα καὶ ὅτι εἴπομεν, ἐξ οὐκ ὄντων ἐσίν.

[743] *Urk.* 1[15].5 [Opitz 3]: οὐδὲ μέρος θεοῦ ἐστιν οὐδὲ ἐξ ὑποκειμένου τινός.

[744] Ibid. 4b[2.2].7 [Opitz 7]: οὔτε δὲ ὅμοιος κατ' οὐσίαν τῷ πατρί ἐστιν'.

[745] Ibid. 4b[2.2].8 [Opitz 8]: ξένος τε καὶ ἀλλότριος καὶ ἀπεσχοινισμένος ἐστιν ὁ λόγος τῆς τοῦ θεοῦ οὐσίας.

process or diffusion.[746] In contrast, the Son is created and mutable by nature. Quoting Arius, Alexander writes: 'He [Christ] is by very nature susceptible to change and mutable, equally with other rational beings.... He was made for our sake, so that God might create us through him as by an instrument' (*Urk.* 4b[2.2].8, 9 [Opitz 8; NPNF[2] 2:3-5, modified]).[747] Denouncing the substantial identity of the Father and Son, Arius argues that the Son's being does not exist together with the Father's, for if it were, we would be led to postulate 'two unoriginated ultimate principles' (δύο ἀγεννήτους ἀρχάς) (*Urk.* 6[1].4 [Opitz 13]). Based on this logic, he also protests against the argument from the relations (ὥς τινες λέγουσι τὰ πρός)[748] that assumes the existence of the Son from the existence of the Father. Peter Widdicombe, who specifically analized Arius' reference to this argument, concludes:

> By definition Arius is neither concerned to explore a relation (of Father and Son) within the divine nature; nor is he concerned to explore what particular significance the language of Father and Son might have, an enterprise which, in any case, might have run the risk of implying that there was a natural continuity between the Father and the Son.[749]

(3) Incomprehensibility. Arius' claims that the Father has a 'quasi-temporal' priority and is substantially different from the Son have two major implications for him. In the first place, they establish the epistemological gap between the transcendent Father and the Son who is 'one of the things made' (εἷς ἐστιν τῶν ποιημάτων) (*Urk.* 4b[2.2].12 [Opitz 8]). This means that the difference of nature makes the Father incomprehensible to the Son. According to Alexander's witness, Arius affirmed that: 'The Father is invisible to the Son; for neither does the Word perfectly and accurately know the Father, nor can he perfectly see him' (*Urk.* 4b[2.2].8, 9 [Opitz 8; NPNF[2] 2:3-5, modified]). This being the case, 'the Son', for Arius, 'indeed does not know his own substance as it is' (*Urk.* 4b[2.2].8 [Opitz

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[746] Ibid. 6[1] [Opitz 12-3].

[747] διὸ καὶ τρεπτός ἐστι καὶ ἀλλοιωτὸς τὴν φύσιν ὡς καὶ πάντα τὰ λογικά.... δι' ἡμᾶς γὰρ πεποίηται, ἵνα ἡμᾶς δι' αὐτοῦ ὡς δι' ὀργάνου κτίσῃ ὁ θεός.

[748] This argument goes back to Aristotle's *Categ.* 7[b]15 [Minio-Paluello 22]. In the third century we can find it present in Alexander of Aphrodisias (*Arist. Met.* 406.8-10), Plotinus (*Enn.* 6.1.7 [LCL 445:30-4]), and Porphyry (*Exp. Cat.* 119.4ff).

[749] Widdicombe, *The Fatherhood of God*, 144. Cf. Lorentz, *Arius Iudaizans?*, 56-7; Barnard, 'What was Arius' Philosophy?', 114-6; Gregg, *Early Arianism*, 35, n. 79; Stead, 'Platonism of Arius', 28-30.

8]).[750] Williams suggests that 'this may be a rather condensed way of saying that a creature cannot know itself as God knows himself, that is, eternally and necessarily, or it may be an affirmation that no creaturely self-knowledge can be knowledge of an *ousia*'.[751] In either case, the Son's knowledge is clearly not perfect; it is limited both with regard to the Father, and to himself.[752]

(4) *Preeminence of will*. In the second place, the Father's superiority over the Son implies the fact that the latter exists by God's free will, while the Father is alone free and self-determining.[753] The Father's preeminence of will over the Son is reflected in Arius' letter to Eusebius, where he places Christ in a position dependent on the Father by asserting that 'he [the Son] does not derive his subsistence from any matter, but by his [Father's] will and council he has subsisted before time, and before ages' (*Urk.* 1[15].4 [Opitz 3; NPNF² 3:41, modified]).[754] A similar statement is given in Arius' letter to Alexander where he claims that 'he [the Father] made him [the Son] subsist at his own will' (ὑποστήσαντα ἰδίῳ θελήματι),[755] and further again where it is said about Christ that he is 'at the will of God, created before times and ages' (θελήματι τοῦ θεοῦ πρὸ χρόνων καὶ πρὸ αἰώνων κτισθέντα).[756] Williams believes that Arius' argument about the Father's preeminent will grows out of his emphasis on God's transcendent perfection. He writes: 'God is the *sole* source of all, and has none beside him, so that his will is uniquely sovereign; his will is not to be restricted by anything that smacks of material or temporal limitation, or by any natural "inner dynamism" compelling God to go forth in creation beyond his own perfection'.[757] In fact, God's freedom of will in relation to the created order is so crucial for Arius that he systematically excludes anything that can threaten it, including the Son.

(5) *Trinitarian subordinationism*. Arius' way of diminishing the Son's status, leads him to describe Christ as a lesser being than the Father. One way in which he does this is by referring to the Father as the sole being who possesses a set

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[750] καὶ ἀόρατός ἐστιν ὁ πατὴρ τῷ υἱῷ. οὔτε γὰρ τελείως καὶ ἀκριβῶς γινώσκει ὁ λόγος τὸν πατέρα, οὔτε τελείως ὁρᾶν αὐτὸν δύναται.

[751] Williams, *Arius*, 106. Cf. ibid., 'The Quest of the Historical *Thalia*', 1-35.

[752] The doctrine of the Father's utter incomprehensibility is not directly witnessed as being present in Arius' letters themselves, and the earliest testimony for this doctrine remains to be that of Alexander's in *Urk.* 4b[2.2] [Opitz 6-11].

[753] See *Urk.* 1[15].5 [Opitz 3], where ὁρισθή may imply deliberation.

[754] οὔτε ἐξ ὑποκειμένου τινός, ἀλλ᾽ ὅτι θελήματι καὶ βουλῇ ὑπέστη πρὸ χρόνων καὶ πρὸ αἰώνων.

[755] *Ukr.* 6[1].2 [Opitz 12; NPNF² 4:458].

[756] Ibid. 6[1].3 [Opitz 13; NPNF² 4:458].

[757] Williams, *Arius*, 98; emphasis is in the original.

of divine qualities that are unique to him. The best example of such a description of God is found in Arius' profession of faith where he offers a list of the following characteristics:

> We acknowledge one God, alone ingenerate, alone everlasting, alone without beginning, alone true, alone having immortality, alone wise, alone good, alone sovereign, judge, governor, and provider of all, unalterable and unchangeable, just and good, God of law and prophets and New Testament (*Urk.* 6[1].2 [Opitz 12; NPNF² 4:458, modified).[758]

This passage shows the full strength of Arius' assumption that God is the perfect and transcendent being. Especially noteworthy is the fact that he attaches the word 'sole' (μόνον) seven times in the one short text in order to mark the unique attributes of the 'one God' (ἕνα θεόν). Another way in which Arius explicitly describes the Son as a lesser being than the Father is by subordinating him within the Trinity. Unfortunately, we have only a few remarks on the Trinity in the extant texts apart from the *Thalia*. The first trinitarian passage is found in *Urk.* 6[1], where Arius declares: 'He [the Father] is the source of all things. Thus there are three subsistences (ὑποστάσεις). And God, being the cause of all things, is unbegotten and altogether sole, but the Son… was made to subsist by the Father' (*Urk* 6[1].4 [Opitz 13; NPNF² 4:458, modified]).[759] The second passage is found in Arius' short letter written by him together with Euzoius while both of them were in exile. The distinctive feature about this document is that it was addressed to the emperor Constantine as a plea for a return and re-admission to the Church. Therefore, it is carefully divested of any controversial wording in order to assure the emperor that they 'receive truly the doctrines concerning the Father, the Son, and Holy Spirit, as they are taught by the whole Catholic Church and by the holy Scriptures' (*Urk.* 30[34].4 [Opitz 64]).[760] The heart of their creedal statement reads as follows:

> We believe in one God, the Father almighty, and in his Son the Lord Jesus Christ, who was begotten from him before all ages, God the Word, by whom all things were made, whether things

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[758] οἴδαμεν ἕνα θεόν, μόνον ἀγέννητον, μόνον ἀΐδιον, μόνον ἄναρχον, μόνον ἀληθινόν, μόνον ἀθανασίαν ἔχοντα, μόνον σοφόν, μόνον ἀγαθόν, μόνον δυνάστην, πάντων κριτήν, διοικητήν, οἰκονόμον, ἄτρεπτον καὶ ἀναλλοίωτον, δίκαιον καὶ ἀγαθόν, νόμου καὶ προφητῶν καὶ καινῆς διαθήκης θεόν.

[759] πηγὴ [ὁ πατήρ] γάρ ἐστιν πάντων. ὥστε τρεῖς εἰσιν ὑποστάσεις. καὶ ὁ μὲν θεὸς αἴτιος τῶν πάντων τυγχάνων ἐστιν ἄναρχος μονώτατος, ὁ δὲ υἱὸς... ὑπὸ τοῦ πατρὸς ὑπέστη.

[760] πιστεύομεν καὶ ἀποδεχόμεθα ἀληθῶς πατέρα καὶ υἱὸν καὶ πνεῦμα ἅγιον ὡς πᾶσα ἡ καθολικὴ ἐκκλησία καὶ αἱ γραφαὶ διδάσκουσιν.

in heaven or on earth; he came and took upon him flesh, suffered and rose again, and ascended into heaven, from where he will come again to judge the quick and the dead.

We believe also in the Holy Spirit…. (*Urk.* 30[34].2-3 [Opitz 64; NPNF[2] 2:28, modified]).[761]

At the end of this letter the authors suggest that all 'useless questions and disputes may be put aside' so that they could again dwell in peace with the Church and the emperor. There are several elements in this passage that are different from the one I quoted earlier. First, we find a clear-cut definition which spells out the Catholic faith in the Trinity in the traditional way of *regula fidei*. Arius lists all three persons of the Godhead distinguishing between their names and status. Second, we find no list of divine qualities or perfections similar to Arius' profession of faith in *Urk.* 6[1].2. Instead, we find an affirmation that describes God alongside Christ with no provocative distinctions. The second person of the Trinity is referred to as the Son, the Lord Jesus Christ, and God the Word. He is begotten from the Father, but also took flesh and suffered in it. Because of the context in which this Creed was written, scholars are usually reluctant to regard it as the genuine expression of Arius' beliefs. They give greater preference to the first of the two trinitarian passages.[762] According to that statement, there are three subsistences (their names and roles are left unspecified) and apparently one of them, namely the Son, is 'made to subsist by the Father'. The latter is said to be the sole cause and fountain of everything. Noticeably, we find no reference to the incarnation characteristic of the previous Creed. Instead, we have a formulation that is quite consistent with Arius' overall emphasis on God as the unique transcendent being.

4.2.2 Fragments of the Thalia

Turning now from Arius' documents to the extracts of the *Thalia*, his only theological work, we find that the bulk of its ideas is quoted in the *Orationes Contra Arianos* 1.5-6 and *De Synodis* 15. Together with the letters, the *Thalia* comprises our most important piece of evidence for Arius' theology. At the same time, the extracts of the *Thalia* present us with a dilemma due to the fact that all of its quotations were reproduced by Athanasius, who was Arius' fiercest opponent

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[761] πιστεύομεν εἰς ἕνα θεὸν πατέρα, παντοκράτορα· καὶ εἰς κύριον ἰησοῦν χριστὸν τὸν υἱὸν αὐτοῦ τὸν μονογενῆ, τὸν ἐξ αὐτοῦ πρὸ πάντων τῶν αἰώνων γεγεννημένον, θεὸν λόγον, δι᾽ οὗ τὰ πάντα ἐγένετο τά τε ἐν τοῖς οὐρανοῖς καὶ τὰ ἐπὶ τῆς γῆς, τὸν κατελθόντα καὶ σάρκα ἀναλαβόντα καὶ παθόντα καὶ ἀναστάντα καὶ ἀνελθόντα εἰς τοὺς οὐρανοὺς καὶ πάλιν ἐρχόμενον κρῖναι ζῶντας καὶ νεκρούς. καὶ εἰς τὸ ἅγιον πνεῦμα.

[762] See Athanasius' discussion of Arius' trinitarian beliefs in *CA* 1.17 [Metzler 127].

and therefore could easily misrepresent what he said. In addition, modern scholars have noticed that the *Thalia* of the *Contra Arianos* is to a certain extent different from the *Thalia* of the *De Synodis*, and some have argued for different authorship of them. Thus, in Hanson's view the former passage represents a less favourable redaction of Arius' thought, and therefore it is more likely to be quoted by Athanasius. As to the latter passage he argues that, in addition to having a more obvious metrical pattern in which the *Thalia* is claimed to be written,[763] it is less provocative in style. Therefore, in his view, it must have been reproduced by the anonymous compiler of 'The Blasphemies of Arius',[764] and then given its title by Athanasius.[765] Most other scholars,[766] whether sharing Hanson's conviction or not with regard to the different authorship of the two passages of the *Thalia*, normally agree that they need to be treated distinctly and with a fair amount of confidence that the passage from *De Syn.* 15 represents a more reliable account of the surviving fragments of Arius' theological work. With this idea in mind, I will distinguish between the two passages under consideration and will analize each of them in their turn. I will first pay attention to those elements of the *Thalia* which are similar to the ideas we have already highlighted from Arius' letters, and then consider other points which are missing in the letters, but present in the *Thalia*. In this way, I will endevour to reconstruct the specific content of both passages in order to determine those elements which are unique to each one of them, and use this data to expand our understanding of Arius.

4.2.2.1 Contra Arianos *1.5-6*[767]

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[763] On the Sotadean metre of *Thalia*, see Bardy, *Lucien d'Antioche*; Stead, 'The *Thalia* of Arius', 20-52; West, 'The Metre of Arius' *Thalia*', 98-105.

[764] See *CA* 1.7 [Metzler 116], where Athanasius qualifies the *Thalia* as 'blasphemies of Arius' (ταῖς ἀρείου βλασφημίαις).

[765] Hanson, *The Search for God*, 10-2.

[766] e.g. Stead, 'The *Thalia* of Arius', 20-52; West, 'The Metre of Arius' *Thalia*', 98-105; Williams, 'The Quest of the Historical *Thalia*', 1-35. With the current state of documentation, it is not possible to reach a full account of Arius' teaching bypassing Athanasian witness in *Contra Arianos* 1.5-6 and *De Synodis* 15. Cf. Kannengiesser, 'Arius and the Arians', 460, who contends that 'we reach the essential Arius through Athanasius, and in no other way', and '[t]he historian who writes on Arius without the needed concern for the Athanasian literary mediation can easily miss the point, as soon as he or she characterizes Arius' thought and position with the help of quoted extracts, which must be understood in the light of the writer who transmits them to us'.

[767] In this section I have adjusted the order of rubrics to Athanasius' flow of argument in *CA* 1.5-6 [Metzler 113-5]: (1) Quasi-temporal priority, (2) Substantial difference, (3) Trinitarian subordinationism, (4) Incomprehensibility, (5) The Preeminence of will.

(1) Quasi-temporal priority. The quotations of the *Thalia* from *CA* 1.5-6 [Metzler 113-5], reiterate Arius' argument about the 'quasi-temporal' priority of the Father over the Son to which he referred in his letters. To stress the Son's posteriority he uses the same word 'sole' (μόνον) with regard to the Father that he used in his letters.[768] In the first of the two instances where this word appears, Arius aims at refuting the fatherhood of God. He says: '"God was not always a Father"; but "once God was alone (μόνος), and not yet a Father, but afterwards He became a Father"' (*CA* 1.5 [Metzler 114; NPNF² 4:308]).[769] It seems that Athanasius' quote here is intended to show that Arius attributed a change in God suggesting that God's 'fathering of the Son is a pretty peripheral matter'.[770] Generally, scholars find it doubtful that Arius would embrace such implications and believe that Athanasius' citations here go beyond what Arius actually said. Widdicombe, who has come to conclude that 'wittingly or not, the pattern of Arius' use of fatherhood language suggests a de-emphasizing of fatherhood as a divine attribute',[771] explains this point as follows:

> It is doubtful whether Arius would have been prepared to accept that such conclusions about the fatherhood of God could be legitimately derived from his theology. And it is even more doubtful that, if he had been, he would have been prepared to state the conclusions in as forthright a manner as they appear in Athanasius' summaries, which presumably would have caused needless offence among the faithful and not helped the credibility of his theology.[772]

This may well be so, since we do not find an explicit parallel to this idea in Arius' letters. However, the fact that Alexander ascribes the denial of the fatherhood of God to Arius in his ἑνὸς σώματος ('God was not always the Father, but there was a time when God was not the Father' in *Urk.* 4b[2.2].7 [Opitz 7]),[773] may suggest that at least by 325 [774] (if not earlier) this doctrine was already recognized as undermining the Christian faith in God as Father. The same perception is also

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[768] In addition to the two occurrences of the word μόνον considered here, it is also used in *CA* 1.5 [Metzler 114] and 1.6 [Metzler 115] without any significant theological meaning.

[769] οὐκ ἀεὶ ὁ θεὸς πατὴρ ἦν· ἀλλ' ἦν ὅτε ὁ θεὸς μόνος ἦν, καὶ οὕτω πατὴρ ἦν ὕστερον δὲ ἐπιγέγονε πατήρ.

[770] Williams, *Arius*, 104.

[771] Widdicombe, *The Fatherhood of God*, 140.

[772] Ibid. 163. Cf. Gregg, *Early Arianism*, 84, who suggest that '[f]atherhood and sonship are neither absolute nor essentialist words in the Arian vocabulary. They pertain to priority of importance, sequence of time, and quality of relationship'.

[773] οὐκ ἀεὶ ὁ θεὸς πατὴρ ἦν, ἀλλ' ἦν ὅτε ὁ θεὸς πατὴρ οὐκ ἦν.

[774] See the note on the dating of *Urk.* 4b below in sect. 4.3.2.

prompted by the fact that such expressions as 'he [the Father] is before the Son'
(πρὸ τοῦ υἱοῦ ἐστιν),[775] or 'we say that the Son has a beginning, while God is
without origin' (ἀρχὴν ἔχει ὁ υἱός, ὁ δὲ θεὸς ἄναρχός ἐστι),[776] could lead to an
implication that God was not always the Father. Whether Arius did deny the eternal
fatherhood of God or not, Athanasius considers it to be the crux of Arian thought,
and this may be one of the reasons why he spends so much time trying to refute it (a
subject to be discussed in the next chapter). The second instance where the word
μόνον occurs in the *Thalia* is just another way of describing the 'quasi-temporal'
priority of the true God. In the short statement from *CA* 1.5 [Metzler 114; NPNF²
4:309], which looks more like a paraphrase, we read: '"For God", he says, "was
alone, and the Word as yet was not, nor the Wisdom"'.[777] Here the language is less
personal: the names 'Father' and 'Son' are substituted by the terms 'God' for the
Father, and 'Logos' and 'Wisdom' for the Son. It implies that the existence of the
second person of the Trinity is 'posterior' to that of the Father who has eternally
been the true God.

    (2) Substantial difference. Another way in which the Father's superiority
over the Son is emphasized in the *Thalia* has to do with the difference of substance.
In the first place, we find that Athanasius ascribes to Arius the belief that the
Father's substance is radically different from the substance of created beings. In
particular, Arius is said to assert that all beings are 'foreign and different from God
in essence' (πάντων ξένων καὶ ἀνομοίων ὄντων τοῦ θεοῦ κατ᾽ οὐσίαν) (*CA* 1.6
[Metzler 115; NPNF² 4:309]). Extending this contrast between the Father and
created things to Christ, the fragment continues: '"the Word alien and unlike in all
things to the Father's essence and propriety", but belongs to things originated and
created, and is one of these' (*CA* 1.6 [Metzler 115; NPNF² 4:309]).[778] Being placed
above the order of created beings, the Father's substance is superior to Christ's. The
latter is described in this statement as being 'alien' (ἀλλότριος) and 'unlike'
(ἀνόμοιος) to God both in his 'essence' (οὐσία) and 'the individual qualities'
(ἰδιότης).[779] Therefore, the difference between the Father and Son is the difference

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[775] *Urk.* 6[1].4 [Opitz 13].

[776] Ibid. 1[15].5 [Opitz 3].

[777] ἦν γὰρ, φησὶ, μόνος ὁ θεὸς, καὶ οὔπω ἦν ὁ λόγος καὶ ἡ σοφία.

[778] καὶ οὕτω καὶ ὁ λόγος ἀλλότριος μὲν καὶ ἀνόμοιος κατὰ πάντα τῆς τοῦ πατρὸς οὐσίας καὶ
ἰδιότητός ἐστι τῶν δὲ γενητῶν καὶ κτισμάτων ἴδιος καὶ εἰς αὐτῶν τυγχάνει.

[779] For a discussion of Arius' concept of the Son's 'foreignness' with regard to the Father, see
Mortley, 'The Alien God', 205-15, who analyses the same terminology in Plotinus concluding that

of nature. Interestingly, we do not find the terms ἀλλότριος and ἀνόμοιος in Arius' letters. The earliest occurrence of the word ἀλλότριος is in *Urk.* 4b, where Alexander reports Arius to be teaching that Christ is 'alien, different and excluded from the substance of God'.[780] Based on this observation, Hanson doubts that such a terminology really belonged to Arius' theological vocabulary. At the same time, he observes that later Arians were indeed associated with this doctrine and tended to avoid it in the face of their opponents' criticism.[781] Perhaps, what could lead Arius' opponents to charge him for teaching that the Son was foreign to the Father is his consistent practice of singling out the Father's qualities. Indeed, to stress that Christ is devoid of the perfect qualities that the sole God possesses may not be too far from saying that the former is radically unlike the latter. Interestingly, each time Arius introduces the idea of qualities—be it the created qualities of the Son (as in *CA* 1.6), or the unique qualities of the Father (as in *Urk.* 6[1])—he retains the consistent intention: to protect God's transcendence from everything that can potentially rob it of its perfections. Gregg and Groh believe that this distinction of the substantial qualities between the Father and the Son lays at the heart of what it means to be Father and Son. In their study on early Arian thought, they write:

> The point to be registered… has to do with the significance which Arians attached to the terms "Father" and "Son". They are descriptive of a relationship in which priority of importance and sequence of time are clear; and they underline, in addition, qualities which define the bond between the one who derives existence and power, submitting himself (ὑπομένει), and the one who creates, empowers, and rules.[782]

(3) Trinitarian subordinationism. Another way in which we may see the substantial difference between the Father and the Son is the trinitarian conception of the *Thalia*. The fragment which discusses the idea of the Trinity reads as follows:

> And that 'the essences of the Father and the Son and the Holy Spirit, are separate in nature, and estranged, and disconnected, and alien, and without participation of each other'; and, in his own words (ὡς αὐτὸς ἐφθέγξατο), 'utterly unlike from each other in essence and glory, unto infinity'.

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while the latter stressed the continuity between the three *hypostases*, Arius sought to emphasize the discontinuity between the Father and the Son.

[780] *Urk.* 4b[2.2].8 [Opitz 8]: ξένος τε καὶ ἀλλότριος καὶ ἀπεσχοινισμένος ἐστὶν ὁ λόγος τῆς τοῦ θεοῦ οὐσίας.

[781] Hanson, *The Search for God*, 23.

[782] Gregg, *Early Arianism*, 86.

Thus as to 'likeness of glory and essence', he says (φησίν) that the Word is entirely diverse from both the Father and the Holy Spirit (*CA* 1.6 [Metzler 115; NPNF² 4:309, modified]).[783]

From the way the passage is put together (ὡς αὐτὸς ἐφθέγξατο and φησίν), it does not look that Athanasius is quoting Arius directly; rather it seems that he is paraphrasing Arius in a more or less independent way. In addition to the two words ἀλλότριος and ἀνόμοιος used in the previously discussed fragment (*CA* 1.6) Arius uses here several other terms in relation to the three persons of the Trinity. These are ἀπεξενωμέναι, ἀπεσχοινισμέναι, and ἀμέτοχοι. Together with the word ἀνόμοιοι these terms seem to go with the phrase 'unto infinity' (εἰσὶν ἐπ' ἄπειρον) which is probably meant to emphasize the Father's transcendence over the other trinitarian *hypostases*. The same idea can be inferred from the fact that the Father's substance cannot be shared (ἀμέτοχοι);[784] it suggests that the Father is utterly transcendent and uniquely incommunicable. In Williams' view this means that 'whatever is communicated from the Father to Son, then, is not *ousia* or *phusis*…. God and the Son cannot be joint 'participants' in a common form of Godhead'.[785] Likewise, Gregg and Groh point out that Arius' formulations about the Trinity have 'the purpose to prohibit belief in any substantialist connection between the Persons'.[786] A similar remark is made by Hanson who concludes that '[t]he union which makes them a Trinity is a purely moral one, a unity of will and disposition'.[787] Seen in this way, the uniqueness of the Father's substance is what presses Arius to subordinate the Son and Holy Spirit[788] to the transcendent God.

 (4) Incomprehensibility. Closely related to Arius' concern for the transcendence of God are two other arguments: one has to do with knowledge, the

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[783] καὶ ὅτι μεμερισμέναι τῇ φύσει, καί ἀπεξενωμέναι καὶ ἀπεσχοινισμέναι, καὶ ἀλλότριοι, καὶ ἀμέτοχοί εἰσιν ἀλλήλων αἱ οὐσίαι τοῦ πατρὸς καὶ τοῦ υἱοῦ καὶ τοῦ ἁγίου πνεύματος, καὶ, ὡς αὐτὸς ἐφθέγξατο, ἀνόμοιοι πάμπαν ἀλλήλων ταῖς τε οὐσίαις καὶ δόξαις εἰσὶν ἐπ' ἄπειρον. τὸν γοῦν λόγον φησὶν εἰς ὁμοιότητα δόξης καὶ οὐσίας ἀλλότριον εἶναι παντελῶς ἑκατέρων τοῦ τε πατρὸς καὶ τοῦ ἁγίου πνεύματος.

[784] The same word in the analogous context is used again in *CA* 1.6 [Metzler 115; NPNF² 4:309, modified]: 'He says that the Son is in no respect partaker of the Father' (καὶ ἀμέτοχον κατὰ πάντα τοῦ πατρὸς τὸν υἱὸν ἔφησε).

[785] Williams, *Arius*, 222.

[786] Gregg, *Early Arianism*, 98. Cf. *CA* 3.10 [Savvidis 316-8].

[787] Hanson, *The Search for God*, 23.

[788] Arius' doctrine of the Holy Spirit needs to be approached with caution, since we have no explicit descriptions about it in his extant writings. Hanson, *The Search for God*, 24, suggests that 'speculation can be indulged about what Arius' doctrine of the Spirit would be if we knew it, but this is a futile exercise. It is enough to say that he rigourously subordinated the Son to the Father so no doubt he subordinated the Holy Spirit to the Son. Certainly his disciples, of every colour and period, did so'.

other with will. Earlier we mentioned that only the second idea (that the Father is volitionally preeminent over the Son) is directly present in Arius' letters. In the *Thalia* of *CA* 1.6 we find that out of the two ideas only the first one (that the Father is incomprehensible to the Son) is conveyed in the form of an elaborated argument, whereas the second one is mentioned only in passing. Thus, in the fragment that speaks about the Son's ignorance of the Father's substance as well as his own, we read the following statement: '"even to the Son the Father is invisible", and "the Word cannot perfectly and exactly either see or know his own Father"; but even what he knows and what he sees, he knows and sees "in proportion to his own nature"' (*CA* 1.6 [Metzler 115; NPNF² 4:309].[789] Immediately after that, it is added: 'For the Son, too, he says, not only knows not the Father exactly, for he fails in comprehension, but "he knows not even his own essence"' (*CA* 1.6 [Metzler 115; NPNF² 4:309]).[790] In this passage, we see all the essential elements of the Father's incomprehensibility which Alexander pointed out in *Urk.* 4b[2.2]. In the first place, it is the fact that the Father is ineffable to the Son and, in the second—that he cannot be known or seen in a perfect and accurate way. Additionally, several other things are adduced here which we do not find in *Urk.* 4b[2.2]. First, the Son is said to be limited in knowledge of the Father in proportion to his natural abilities (ἀναλόγως τοῖς ἰδίοις μέτροις). Second, a parallel is drawn between the Son's ability to know the Father and our ability to know him (both come to know the Father according to their natural powers which are certainly less than absolute). And third, the Son is understood as being short of comprehending (εἰς τὸ καταλαβεῖν) the Father because of the lack of necessary power in his being. All three elements have christological significance, and I will return to them in my discussion of Christ and salvation in the next section.

(5) *The Preeminence of will.* Arius' argument about the Father's volitional preeminence over the Son is given in the *Thalia* in the form of a short phrase: '"For wisdom", says he, "by the will of the wise God, had its existence in Wisdom"' (*CA* 1.5 [Metzler 114; NPNF² 4:309]).[791] It is somewhat unclear what Arius means by making a distinction between two wisdoms in this statement. In Behr's view it is

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[789] καὶ τῷ υἱῷ ὁ πατὴρ ἀόρατος ὑπάρχει, καὶ οὔτε ὁρᾶν, οὔτε γινώσκειν τελείως καὶ ἀκριβῶς δύναται ὁ λόγος τὸν ἑαυτοῦ πατέρα· ἀλλὰ καὶ ὃ γινώσκει καὶ ὃ βλέπει, ἀναλόγως τοῖς ἰδίοις μέτροις οἶδε καὶ βλέπει, ὥσπερ καὶ ἡμεῖς γινώσκομεν κατὰ τὴν ἰδίαν δύναμιν.

[790] καὶ γὰρ καὶ ὁ υἱός, φησὶν, οὐ μόνον τὸν πατέρα ἀκριβῶς οὐ γινώσκει· λείπει γὰρ αὐτῷ εἰς τὸ καταλαβεῖν· ἀλλὰ καὶ αὐτὸς ὁ υἱὸς τὴν ἑαυτοῦ οὐσίαν οὐκ οἶδε.

[791] ἡ σοφία γὰρ, φησὶ, τῇ σοφίᾳ ὑπῆρξε σοφοῦ θεοῦ θελήσει.

another way of making Christ distant from the Father. He believes that this phrase is intended to emphasize that the proper wisdom belongs to the Father alone, while Christ is wisdom in the derived and secondary sense.[792] In any way, the statement clearly implies that rather than being an extension of the Father's nature, the Son is a creation of the divine will. According to Gregg and Groh's documentation of the early Arian sources, this is exactly how the phrase ἐκ τοῦ θεοῦ was interpreted in the Arian texts: not 'out of his substance', but 'by his will'.[793] Although never mentioned again in this version of the *Thalia*, the argument about the Father's relation to the Son through the will rather than nature is continuous with what Arius claims in similar instances in *Urk.* 1 and 6. In all these cases, Christ is said to be created to subsist by the will and council of the Father who is superior over him in all respects.

4.2.2.2 De Synodis *15*

Turning now to the fragments of the *Thalia* in *De Syn.* 15 [Opitz 242-3], we find that they largely cover all the previously discussed ideas from *CA* 1.5-6 [Metzler 113-5], and yet express them in a language that is far more neutral and refined. To make it easier for us in identifying the points of difference or emphasis between the two fragments of the *Thalia* and determine the degree to which the version of *De Syn.* 15 expands on the ideas from *CA* 1.5-6, I will use a comparative table in which summaries of both versions are placed consecutively in a thematical manner. In this table, I will attempt to locate as many quotations as possible and in as much length as I can to fit in the complete texts of both versions (apart from the christological allusions which will be examined separately in the next section) in order to expose the specific elements proper to each of them. Certainly my arrangement of the material is arbitrary, but I hope that by placing it into two separate columns (one for *CA* 1.5-6 and one for *De Syn.* 15) I will be able to illustrate more tangibly the key ideas which are to be discussed afterwards. In quoting from *CA* 1.5-6, I will be using Robertson's translation in NPNF² edition, while for the extracts of the *Thalia* from *De Syn.* 15, I will employ the translation of Stead.[794] All the quotations under the five major rubrics are numerated with the Roman numbers in order to maintain

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[792] Behr, *The Nicene Faith*, 2/1:145-6.
[793] Gregg, *Early Arianism*, 5-6.
[794] Stead, 'The *Thalia* of Arius', 218-50.

their original order and allow one to see where they belong in the flow of the *Thalia* argument.[795]

CA 1.5-6[796]

(1) Quasi-temporal priority:

(i) 'God was not always a Father'; but 'once God was alone, and not yet a Father, but afterwards he became a Father'. 'The Son was not always'; for, whereas all things were made out of nothing, and all existing creatures and works were made, so the Word of God himself was 'made out of nothing'; and 'once he was not', and 'he was not before his origination', but he as others 'had an origin of creation'. 'For God', he says, 'was alone, and the Word as yet was not, nor the Wisdom. Then, wishing to form us, thereupon he made a certain one, and named him Word and Wisdom and Son, that he might form us by means of him'.

(iv) '…but [the Word] belongs to things originated and created, and is one of these'.

(2) Substantial difference:

(iii) 'And, whereas all beings are foreign and different from God in essence, so too is 'the Word alien and unlike in all things to the Fathers' essence and propriety…'

(3) Incomprehensibility:

(v) '…even to the Son the Father is invisible', and 'the Word cannot perfectly and exactly either see or know his own Father'; but even what he knows and what he sees, he knows and sees 'in proportion to his own measure', as we also know according to our own power. For the Son, too, he says, not only knows the Father exactly, for he fails in comprehension, but 'he knows not even his own essence'.

(4) The preeminence of will:

(ii) 'For Wisdom', says he, 'by the will of the wise God, had its existence in Wisdom'.

(5) Trinitarian Subordinationism:

(vi) '… the essences of the Father and the Son and the Holy Ghost, are separate in nature, and estranged, and disconnected, and alien, and without participation of each other; and, in his own words, 'utterly unlike from each other in essence and glory, unto infinity'. Thus as to 'likeness of glory and essence', he says that the Word is entirely diverse from both the Father and the Holy Ghost'.

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[795] All the dots, if not bracketed, are mine; otherwise, they are not omissions, but the parts of the corrupted texts indicated by the editor.

[796] I have kept the inverted comas of NPNF's edition to differentiate direct citations from the paraphrase.

De Syn. 15[797]

(1) Quasi-temporal priority:

(iii) We call him unoriginated (ἀγέν[ν]ητον) in contrast to him who is originated (γέννητον) by nature […] we praise him as without beginning in contrast to him who has a beginning, we worship him as eternal in contrast to him who came into existence in times (χρόνοις). He who was without beginning made the Son a beginning of all things which are produced (γεννήτων), and he made him into a Son for himself; begetting (τεκνοποιήσας) him.

(viii) The Greater One is able to beget (γεννᾶν) someone equal to the Son.

(2) Substantial difference:

(ii) He alone has no equal, none like him, none of equal glory.

(iv) He (the Son) has nothing peculiar to (ἴδιον) God according to the reality of that which is peculiarly his (καθ' ὑπόστασιν ἰδιότητος), and he is not equal […] far less is he consubstantial (ὁμοούσιος) to him (God). And God is wise because he is the Teacher of Wisdom.

(3) Incomprehensibility:

(i) God Himself, therefore, in himself remains mysterious (ἄρρητος).

(v) As a sufficient proof that God is invisible (ἀόρατος) to all, that he is invisible to the Son's people and to the Son himself […] I will declare roundly, how the invisible can be visible to the Son: by the power in which God can see, the Son is able to see […] the Father according to his individual […] capacities (ἰδίοις...μέτροις), as is determined (θέμις).

(x) To summarize, God is mysterious (ἄρρητος) to the Son, for he is to him that which he is, i.e. ineffable (ἄλεκτος), so that none of the things … [text is corrupt for some words] for it is impossible for him to trace out in the case of the Father what he is in himself. Indeed the Son himself does not know his own substance (οὐσία)…

(xii) … for what sense does it make that he who is from the Father should [text corrupt] in comprehending his own begetter? For it is clear that that which has a beginning could not possibly comprehend or grasp the nature (ὃς ἔστιν) of him who is without a beginning.

(4) The preeminence of will:

(vii) So the Son having not existed attained existence by the Father's will… Wisdom became Wisdom by the will of the wise God…

(ix) It is by the will of God that the Son has his stature and character (ἥλικος καὶ ὅσος) when and whence and from what time he is from God.

(xi) … for though he is the Son he is really so by the will of the Father.

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[797] In addition to the text below, Stead adds two more rather less securely established lines: 'They are altogether infinitely dissimilar (ἀνόμοιοι) from each other in their levels of glory' (ταῖς δόξαις). 'He (God) is set apart (διηρημένος) in himself and in every way without a participator (ἀμέτοχος)'.

(5) Trinitarian subordinationism:

(vi) Certainly there is a Trinity […] their individual realities (ὑποστάσεις) do not mix with each other, and they possess glories of different levels (δόξαις οὐχ ὁμοίαις). The sole glory is of the Sole (μία τῆς μίας), infinitely more splendid in his glories. The Father is in his substance (οὐσίαν) alien (ξένος) from the Son because he remains without beginning. Understand therefore that the Monad (μονάς) existed, but the Dyad (δυάς) did not exist before it attained existence.

The appearance of new terminological expressions in *De Syn.* 15 has led some scholars to doubt that this piece of writing really belongs to Arius. For example, Kannengiesser believes that this fragment was transmitted not 'from Arius, but from a neo-Arian in the second half of the fourth century' because it introduces 'new terms, new images, which need a special justification'.[798] More specifically, he states: 'In the Blasphemies, the quoted text is continuous… But what is remarkable in this continuous series of propositions is the fact that their logical and rhetorical continuity had been assured by a disciple of Arius (not Arius himself), before they fell into the hands of Athanasius. In other words, the Blasphemies include phrases coming from the *Thalia* fragments, transmitted by Athanasius since *c. Ar.* 1.5-6, but in a continuous text, itself Arian'.[799] Others have noted that the language of *De Syn.* 15 is more philosophical and succinct than in the fragments of *CA* 1.5-6, and even more technical than in Athanasius' writings. In Williams' understanding, Arius is presented in *De Syn.* 15 'as a scholarly trained philosopher who speaks and writes in a technical language, who presents in his lexical data and his style the rigour of a systematic thinker, who belongs to a definite school of thought'.[800] More recently, a new work on the text of the *Thalia* published by Karin Metzler[801] has shown that we have some solid ground that the passages of the *Contra Arianos* and *De Synodis* come from the same source and make the same point. Taking these considerations into account, I will further argue in my own analysis of these two passages that even if *De Syn.* 15 is indeed a kind of remake of Arius' *Thalia*, it nevertheless reinforces his central idea about God as the transcendent being and the unique possessor of divine qualities. To substantiate this

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[798] Kannengiesser, 'Arius and the Arians', 474.
[799] Kannengiesser, 'The Blasphemies of Arius', 68-69. A similar view is promoted by Stead, 'The *Thalia* of Arius', 27.
[800] Williams, 'The Logic of Arianism', 76, in Kannengiesser, 'Arius and the Arians'.
[801] Metzler, 'Ein Beitrag zur Rekonstruktion der '*Thalia*' des Arius', 11-45.

claim and highlight some of the distinctive emphases of *De Syn.* 15, I will take a brief look at the five arguments, or themes, into which I have divided the passages.

(1) Quasi-temporal priority. When we compare the quotations (i) and (iv) of the *Contra Arianos* with the quotations (iii) and (viii) of the *De Synodis*, we observe that both versions of the *Thalia* draw a fundamental contrast between the Father and the Son in terms of 'quasi-temporal' priority. The Father is always primary, the Son is always secondary. This idea of contrast is established in the *De Synodis* through a series of oppositions in which the Father is 'unoriginated', 'without beginning', and 'eternal', while the Son is 'originated', 'has a beginning', and 'came into existence in times'. The Father is said to be 'the Greater One' in (viii) of the *De Synodis*, and his 'quasi-temporal' priority of existence suggests that he transcends the Son. The main emphasis of the quotation from the *Contra Arianos* seems to be on clarifying the idea of God's solitariness ('once God was alone') by drawing a contrast between the One who existed even before becoming a Father and the one who came to be and once was not. The denial of fatherhood in the *Contra Arianos* (if not genuine)[802] may represent either a deduced paraphrase of the *De Synodis* or Athanasius' way of reductive argument: if the Son was not, then God was not the Father. In either way, Arius' emphasis on the transcendent aspect of God's existence is perceived as making a strong claim for the inferiority of the Son who is said to belong to the created things and made out of nothing. At the same time, the author of the *Thalia* in the *Contra Arianos* does not seem to be interested in clarifying the nature of Christ's creaturehood; he does not distinguish Christ from other creatures. This fact is sometimes used to charge Athanasius for making blunt polemic statements without providing the proper distinctions, or clarifications, of what Arius really said. More specifically, he is accused for de-emphasizing the fact that the Arian Christ, though being a creature, was understood as having the highest status in the whole created realm. Thus, to quote Arius as saying that Christ is a creature without clarifying what it means is a half-truth, for the created nature of Christ, according to Arius, was in some sense higher than the nature of the rest of the created things. I will come back to this argument when I discuss Arian christology.[803] For now, however, it is worth noting that if Athanasius did quote

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[802] Williams, *Arius*, 104, doubts that this quotation really belonged to Arius. He argues that the phrase ἕνα τινα, which is used here in relation to Christ, is 'almost certainly a deliberately contemptuous paraphrase'.

[803] See sect. 4.3.1.

Arius in a biased way, it does not seem to be the case here. Instead, the more credible passage of the *Thalia* in the *De Synodis* is just as silent about the meaning of the created nature of Christ as the same passage from the *Contra Arianos*. Moreover, the overall dynamic of the *De Synodis*' argument is identical with that of the *Contra Arianos*, for both passages make Christ emphatically lesser than the true God.

(2) Substantial difference. The argument of the Father's substantial superiority over the Son in the quotations (ii) and (iv) of the *De Synodis* is expressed in three ways; one of them has no exact terminological parallel in the *Contra Arianos*. First, we find that God is said to be 'alone' (μόνος), and therefore no one is like him; no being possesses the glory which he has. Second, God's individual qualities (καθ᾽ ὑπόστασιν ἰδιότητος) are such that the Son cannot be proper (ἴδιον) to him. By implication, the Son is described as not being equal to God and in no way consubstantial (ὁμοούσιος) to him. The fact that the word ὁμοούσιος appears in the more credible version of the *Thalia* from the *De Synodis* and is not paralleled in the *Contra Arianos* may indicate the likelihood that it was obscure or ambiguous for Athanasius; he uses it only once in all of his *Contra Arianos*.[804] Since it is not entirely clear what this word means in the immediate context, I will come back to this issue in my discussion of Arius' understanding of Christ.[805] For now, it is important to highlight that the term ὁμοούσιος functions here as a way of stressing the substantial difference between the Father and the Son. In his article 'Nikaia als Krisis', Friedo Ricken draws seven specific qualities from *De Syn.* 15 that circumscribe the Father's substance and cannot be attributed to the Son.[806] Ricken's list includes such qualities as ἄρρητος, ἀγέννητος, ἄναρχος, ἀΐδιος, ἀόρατος, μόνας, and βασιλεύς. They make the Father substantially superior to the Son in much the same way in which Arius himself does this in his own letters.

(3) Incomprehensibility. The next argument of the *Thalia* has to do with the Father's incomprehensibility. It is worth noting that no other subject covers so much space in the passage of the *De Synodis* as this one. In fact, the passage opens up with the statement about God's incomprehensibility and it ends with the same argument. The quotations (i), (v), (x), and (xii) of the *De Synodis* reiterate the basic

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[804] For a discussion on Athanasius' use of ὁμοούσιος in *Contra Arianos*, see Pettersen, *Athanasius*, 147-55.
[805] See sect. 4.3.1.
[806] Ricken, 'Nikaia als Krisis', 323.

argument of the *Contra Arianos* and add several more elements that are intended to clarify what it means for God to be incomprehensible. First, both passages use a special terminology to stress the fact that God is unknown to the Son. The key word for the incomprehensibility in the quotation (v) of the *Contra Arianos* is ἄρρητος. The passage in the *De Synodis* uses two other words for the same idea—ἀόρατος (used twice) and ἄλεκτος (used once)—which makes the argument sound stronger. Second, we find that the author of the *De Synodis* adds an argument which is missing in the *Contra Arianos*. This argument is expressed in the line where it is said that 'that which has a beginning could not possibly comprehend or grasp the nature (ὃς ἔστιν) of him who is without a beginning'. Given some scholarly opinions, such as one by Gustave Bardy (the first scholar to charge Athanasius for citing Arius carelessly) who says that '[l]'évêque d'Alexandrie indique très inexactement ses sources…. abrège, résume, bouleverse les textes qu'ilcite',[807] it is hard to rationalize why Athanasius might have missed to integrate such an important argument in his *Contra Arianos*. Instead, it seems that at least in this case Athanasius is not being simply polemic. He seeks to generalize in the *Contra Arianos* what is more specifically stated in the *De Synodis*, while making the same point.

(4) The preeminence of will. The argument of the Father's preeminence of will in the quotations (vii), (ix), and (xi) of *De Synodis* is just as suspicious in this regard. It is four times longer than the corresponding argument in the quotation (ii) of the *Contra Arianos*, and it is used not so much as an incidental remark (like in the *Contra Arianos*), but as an important fact stated four times. Just as in the quotation (ii) of the *Contra Arianos* the passage of the *De Synodis* calls Christ Wisdom and repeats literally the key phrase that he is 'by the will of the wise God'. According to the *De Synodis*, the Son's stature and character (ἥλικος καὶ ὅσος) rests on the will of God and his whole existence depends on it as well.

(5) Trinitarian subordinationism. Finally, the concept of the Trinity in the quotation (vi) of the *De Synodis* is couched in the same language of subordinationism as we find it in the quotation (vi) of the *Contra Arianos*. The distinctive emphasis of the *De Synodis* seems to revolve around two contrasting

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[807] Bardy, 'Recherches sur saint Lucien d'Antioche', 247. The same argument is made in his 'Alexandre d'Alexandrie'. For similar concerns, see Stead, 'The *Thalia* of Arius', 20-38; Williams, *Arius*, 104-6.

categories: the Father as 'the Monad' (μονάς) whose existence is primary, and the Son as 'the Dyad' (δυάς), whose existence is secondary.[808] On the Son's status as the Dyad Thomas Böhm makes a helpful remark that 'δυάς doesn't mean the twoness of Father *and* Son, but the "twofold" as non-monas and the second after the Father who has caused him'.[809] In general, the way the quotation of the *De Synodis* is phrased gives an impression of a philosophical argument supplied with the proper technical terminology. In particular, it speaks about the Trinity by assigning to it the individual *hypostases* that do not mix with each other, and it distinguishes between their glories (δόξαις οὐχ ὁμοίαις) in terms of 'the sole of the Sole' (μία τῆς μίας). When speaking about the Father who 'remains without beginning', the *De Synodis* uses the same word 'foreign' (ξένος) as in the *Contra Arianos* to draw a radical distinction between the Father's essence and the essence of the Son. This difference is said to be infinite both in the *De Synodis* and the *Contra Arianos*. Overall, this drives home the main point of Arius' theology that seeks to stress the transcendence of God and his unique qualities.

4.2.3 Conclusions

Although the amount of Arius' extant writings is scarce and the certainty about how representative they are is not at all obvious, it is still appropriate to make several observations from what I have examined thus far. First of all, my brief comparative analysis of the *Thalia* fragments in the *Contra Arianos* and the *De Synodis* corroborate with the view of those scholars who discern that there is more overlap between the two than a marked difference. Such is the view of Metzler who has convincingly argued that both passages of the *Thalia* fragments come from the same source and seem to be intended for the homogenous argument.[810] Similarly, Williams concludes that, all in all, there is a common style between the two,[811] while Martin West argues that even the metre is uniform.[812] Furthermore, we find a great deal of continuity between the way Arius presents himself in the letters and the way he is quoted in the extracts of the *Thalia*. In both cases God is consistently

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[808] Kannengiesser, 'Blasphemies of Arius', remarks that 'ἡ μονάς and ἡ δυάς are completely new in a supposed quotation of the *Thalia*. Only the *Letters to Serapion* 1 and 3, from 357-359, start, in the Athanasian writings, to denounce the Arian dyas'.
[809] Böhm, 'Exegesis of Arius', 700.
[810] Metzler, 'Ein Beitrag zur Rekonstruktion der 'Thalia' des Arius', 11-45.
[811] Williams, 'The Quest of the Historical *Thalia*', 1-35.
[812] West, 'The Metre of Arius' *Thalia*', 98-105.

described as the sole being that possesses unique qualities and transcends everything else. Again, in both cases, the Father's qualities are said to be proper only to him and in the *Thalia* it is somewhat more emphatically established that they cannot be shared in any real or substantialist way by Christ.

Second, the differences that we do find between the letters and the *Thalia* on the one hand, and the fragments of the *Contra Arianos* and the *De Synodis* on the other, have to do largely with a set of additional terms or phrases which actually reinforce the most controversial points of Arius' thought rather than softening it. In light of this fact, the difference of emphasis between the letters and the fragments of the *Thalia* as well as the difference of emphasis between the two passages of the *Thalia* fragments are indicative of a continuous development rather than of sharp contrast. At times, Athanasius does quote Arius' *Thalia* in a biased way, but it would be an exaggeration to say that the fragments of the *Contra Arianos* are radically 'other' than the fragments of the *De Synodis*. This leads me to the third point that the language of the *Contra Arianos* is undoubtedly more contentious than the language of the *De Synodis*. One can probably charge Athanasius for making arguments in less than gentle terms, or even inserting his own words, but we need not forget that he was a man of his time and we cannot judge him according to the standards of modern rhetoric or political correctness. In this regard, Gregg and Groh remind that 'plain speech is not the style of patristic debate',[813] and I propose that a more helpful approach to Athanasius is the one expressed by Kannengiesser. In his view '[t]he practice of polemic quotations in late antiquity presents certain flexibility. Even careful authors, like Eusebius of Caesarea, may put their own mark on their citations. In dogmatic polemics it is not always easy to detect where a quotation starts or ends, or if its text has only been paraphrased. Before being charged as untrustworthy or negligent, these authors deserve to be recognized as following the practices of quotation customary in their time'.[814] Aside from this, it is thanks to having both passages that we can reconstruct what strikes a fair balance between Arius' own letters and the quoted passages of his *Thalia*.

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[813] Gregg, *Early Arianism*, 45.

[814] Kannengiesser, 'Arius and Arians', 460. Cf. Gregg, *Early Arianism*, 45, who writes that '[t]he orthodox and the Arians observed the codes and conventions of polemic and were equally adept at argument by insinuation, slander by association, and the deflection and misrepresentation of opponents' assertions'.

All this being said, I suggest that it is not absolutely obvious that Arius' theology is 'unmistakably a hymn to the living God of scriptural narrative'.[815] We do possess some evidence that Arius' used a number of biblical quotations in the course of his arguments (e.g. Rom. 11:36, Ps. 110:3 LXX], and Jn. 8:42 in *Urk.* 6), and could have in mind a variety of other biblical allusions.[816] However, the language in which he writes reflects a more metaphysical way of describing God; it does not seem to be explicitly informed by the scriptural terminology. This is so much so that some scholars completely rule out the biblical concern in Arius' language. Perhaps the clearest example of this approach is Thomas Pollard who concludes the following:

> There can be no doubt that the compelling motive of Arianism was the desire to preserve a strict monotheism, but that does not mean that its monotheism was "biblical". The God whom the Arians declare to be "One" is not the Living God of the Bible, but rather the Absolute of the philosophical schools.[817]

This criticism may be harsher than Arius deserves if one considers it significant that he retains some biblical/theological terminology and imagery throughout his writings. At the same time, his philosophical rigour does lead him to explain himself in a way that makes the scriptural language less obvious. Furthermore, independent of what we consider to be the central concern in the controversy—be it Arius' monotheistic tendency, or his philosophical rigourism, or else his attempt to be consonant with the Scriptures—Arius' preoccupation with cosmological issues creates specific repercussions for soteriology. To explain this point a little more, Arius' focus on the transcendence of God and his unique qualities leads him to make Christ as far apart from the Father as possible. Indeed, as soon as one is concerned primarily with defending the transcendence of God one is likely to become concerned about ensuring that no lesser being compromises the perfections of this highest Deity. As a result, the Arian God turns out to be so remote that he

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[815] Williams, *Arius*, 111.

[816] A helpful study on Arius' own exegesis can be found in Böhm 'Exegesis of Arius', 687-705, who also provides a complementary bibliography on Arian exegesis on pages 704-5. Cf. Gregg, *Early Arianism*, 89-91, who offer some suggestions as to what could be the biblical texts that Arius might have alluded to. In particular, they list Romans 16:27; John 17:3; 1-Timothy 1:17, 6:15-16; Mark 10:18. All in all, however, we have very little information in Arius' letters, or in the fragments of the *Thalia*, that would provide us with any direct scriptural quotations by which Arius could reach his conclusions.

[817] Pollard, 'The Origins of Arianism', 104.

cannot be directly involved in creation and salvation. In this sense, LaCugna's arguments against the Nicene preoccupation with metaphysics (as opposed to soteriology) should really be directed to Arius rather than to Athanasius. When addressed to Arius her warnings about the danger of taking refuge in what she calls 'the metaphysical properties of God' sound quite reasonable. Understandable is also her suggestion that 'the root of the nonsoteriological doctrine of God is its metaphysics of substance: the pursuit of what God is "*in se*", what God is "in Godself" or "by Godself"'.[818] Seen in this perspective, it is not surprising that incarnation is not found in Arius. Instead, we find a paradigm preoccupied with *what* God is in himself, not *who* he is in his relation toward humanity. If this is a fair observation, then it does raise a question about what kind of soteriology this approach implies.

4.3 The Saviour Who is to Be Saved: Arian Christ, Salvation, and Alexander's Response

In the beginning of this chapter, I discussed Gregg and Groh's view that deliberately emphasizes the importance of the soteriological theme in the Arian dispute. These two scholars attribute Arius' christology to the influence of Stoicism and interpret his soteriology in terms of Christ's moral progress to perfection as an example to be followed by all believers. Their study has drawn both positive and negative responses from scholars. Among the critical assessments of this theory (in addition to those I have alluded to before)[819] modern commentators have paid attention to several major issues. First, Gregg and Groh seem to overlook the fact that Arians considered Christ as a soulless being. On this basis, scholars argue that there is significant evidence which indicates the Arians emphatically distinguished the Son from the rest of creation, and therefore did not conceive of him as fully human and like us in all respects.[820] Second, among the Arian statements about Christ there are a few texts that claim Christ's special position as a unique creature that stood in a subordinate, yet exceptional relation to the Father. In particular, he is called μονογενής θεός,[821] ἰσχυρὸς θεός,[822] ἄνωθεν θεός,[823] ἄτρεπτος[824] and so forth.

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[818] LaCugna, *God for Us*, 3.
[819] See sect. 4.1.2.
[820] e.g. Hanson's Review of *Early Arianism* in 'New Light on Arianism', 433-4, who provides references to Epiphanius, *Anc.* 35.1-6; Gregory of Nyssa, *Eun.* 15.473 [GNO 163], and a few others. Gregg and Groh never discuss the issue of Christ's soulless being in the Arian texts.
[821] *De Syn.* 15 [Opitz 243].

Nevertheless, Gregg and Groh repeatedly emphasize that 'the earthly Arian redeemer emphatically was not God; he was an embodied creature'.[825]

I find these points of criticism fair enough and, in addition, I think that Gregg and Groh's argument about the Stoic influence and the exemplarist soteriology is difficult to maintain due to the lack of direct evidence about it in the Arian texts. Nevertheless, I do find their perspective helpful and I also find it plausible that 'soteriology never recedes very far into the background whether attention is being addressed to christology… or to cosmology'.[826] In this section I will discuss Arian christology and will interact closely with Gregg and Groh's views on the subject. I will proceed by exploring the meaning of those passages from Arius' letters and the *Thalia* which either elevate or demean Christ's status with occasional references to Alexander and Athanasius' perception of these ideas. I will then introduce Alexander's response to Arius in order to show how the latter was perceived in addition to what he himself stated.

4.3.1 Christ's Preeminent and Inferior Status, and the Implications for Soteriology

In Arius' letters there are several christological statements which at first glance appear surprisingly non-Arian. In the first statement recorded in *Urk.* 6[1].2 [Opitz 12], we read that Arius draws a contrast between the preaching of Alexander and his own belief. In doing this, he proclaims that the Son is an 'unalterable, unchangeable, and perfect creature of God (ἄτρεπτον καὶ ἀναλλοίωτον, κτίσμα τοῦ θεοῦ τέλειον)'. Another similar statement is found in Arius' *Urk.* 6[1], where it says that God (also referred to as unalterable and unchangeable—ἄτρεπτον καὶ ἀναλλοίωτον)[827] made his 'only begotten Son' to 'subsist at his own will… but not as one of the creatures; offspring, but not as one of things begotten'.[828] When we turn to the fragments of the *Thalia*, we find that Athanasius recognized the fact that Arius' called Christ 'God' in *CA* 1.5-6. We also have several extended lines of christological argument in *De Syn.* 15 [Opitz 243; Stead op. cit.], where Arius writes the following: 'he [Christ] is only-begotten God and he is different from any

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[822] Ibid. 15 [Opitz 243].
[823] Ibid. 15 [Opitz 243].
[824] *Urk.* 6[1].2 [Opitz 12].
[825] Gregg, *Early Arianism*, 16; emphasis in the original.
[826] Ibid. 70.
[827] *Urk.* 6[1].2 [Opitz 12].
[828] Ibid. 6[1].2 [Opitz 12; NPNF[2] 4:458]: γεννήσαντα υἱὸν μονογενῆ... ὑποστήσαντα ἰδίῳ θελήματι... ἀλλ᾽ οὐχ ὡς ἕν τῶν κτισμάτων, γέννημα, ἀλλ᾽ οὐχ ὡς ἕν τῶν γεγεννημένων.

others. …and so he is apprehended in an uncountable number of aspects (ἐπινοίαις). He is God's glory and truth, and image and Word. Understand too that he is apprehended as reflection (ἀπαύγασμα) also and light'.[829] And then toward the end of the passage, it is added (apparently with a reference to Isa. 9:15) that Christ is 'the mighty God' (ἰσχυρὸς θεός).[830]

In light of such statements about the *preeminent* role of Christ it is not clear how they fit other claims that make him profoundly inferior to the Father. In particular, Christ's exalted status as God runs into a conflict with Arius' arguments (examined above) that the second person of the Trinity is posterior to God the Father, substantially less than him, limited in knowledge, and sustained by the divine will. How can then Christ's divinity be truly divine if Arius makes him so different from the Father? Or how can Christ be God if Arius denounces the following essentials about him in *Urk.* 1[15] [Opitz 2; NPNF[2] 3:41]:

> Thus he [Alexander] drives us out of every city like godless men, since we will not agree with his public statements: that there was 'always a God, always a Son'; 'as soon as the Father, so soon the Son [existed]'; 'with the Father co-exists the Son unbegotten, ever-begotten, begotten without begetting'; 'God neither precedes the Son in aspect or in a moment of time'; 'always a God, always a Son, the Son being from God himself'.[831]

How can Arius' combine such inferior statements about Christ with those claims where he exalts him above every created being? One way to deal with this question is to ask further to what end Arius portrayed Christ as God. The best answer to this question is provided by Alexander who was the first one to respond to the teaching of Arius. Apparently, from the beginning of the controversy Arius cited Psalm 44:7 [LXX] as evidence of Jesus' advance in virtue.[832] To counter this argument Alexander devotes a major part of his letter to his episcopal namesake in Thessalonica in order to show that Arius' claim about Christ's moral improvement stems from his belief that Christ was a changeable being. He asks Arius: 'For what

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[829] μονογενὴς θεός ἐστι καὶ ἑκατέρων ἀλλότριος οὗτος... ἐπινοεῖται γοῦν μυρίαις ὅσαις ἐπινοίαις... δόξα θεοῦ, ἀλήθειά τε καὶ εἰκὼν καὶ λόγος οὗτος. σύνες ὅτι καὶ ἀπαύγασμα καὶ φῶς ἐπινοεῖται.

[830] *De Syn.* 15 [Opitz 243].

[831] ὥστε ἐκδιῶξαι ἡμᾶς ἐκ τῆς πόλεως ὡς ἀνθρώπους ἀθέους, ἐπειδὴ οὐ συμφωνοῦμεν αὐτῷ δημοσίᾳ λέγοντι, ἀεὶ θεὸς ἀεὶ υἱός, ἅμα πατὴρ ἅμα υἱός, συνυπάρχει ὁ υἱὸς ἀγεννήτως τῷ θεῷ, ἀειγεννής, ἀγεννητογενής, οὔτ' ἐπινοίᾳ οὔτ' ἀτόμῳ τινὶ προάγει ὁ θεὸς τοῦ υἱοῦ, ἀεὶ θεὸς ἀεὶ υἱός, ἐξ αὐτοῦ τοῦ θεοῦ ὁ υἱός.

[832] *Urk.* 14[17].14 [Opitz 22].

advance can the wisdom of God make [1 Cor 1:24]? What increase can the truth itself and God the Word receive? How can the life and the true light [John 14:6; 1:4, 9] be made better?' (*Urk.* 14[7].30 [Opitz 24; NPNF2 3:38, modified]).[833] To answer his own questions, Alexander goes on to argue that there is nothing that God needs in order to be what he is, and if Christ is God then he must be so by nature, rather than by advance or moral progress. To this end, Alexander draws a contrast between the natural (φύσει) sonship of Christ and the believers' sonship by adoption (θέσει). He writes that on the one hand 'the sonship of our Saviour has nothing at all in common with the sonship of the rest', whereas, on the other, 'men and angels, who are his creatures, have received his blessing that they might make progress, exercising themselves in virtues and in the commandments of the law in order to avoid sin' (*Urk.* 14[17].28, 30-1 [Opitz 24; NPNF[2] 3:37-8, modified]).[834] The former type of sonship is truly divine and unalterable, while the latter is subject to change and attainment.[835] Arius' Christ, however, falls precisely together with other creatures whose sonship is not natural but attained. Against this Alexander contends that Christ is not a creature, and therefore does not need to make progress towards a better status. In his letter to the Egyptian church he summarizes these points of Arius' teaching as he seeks to explain why the Nicene Council issued the anathema for Arius:

> We unanimously decided that his impious opinion should be anathematized… that 'the Son of God came to be out of nothing', that 'there was a time when he was not', and even that 'the Son of God, because he possessed free will, was capable either both evil and good'. They also call him a creature (κτίσμα) and a work (ποίημα). The holy Council has anathematized all these ideas (*Urk.* 23[25].3-4 [Opitz 48; NPNF[2] 2:12-3, modified]).[836]

The fact that Christ is 'capable either both evil and good' like all other creatures explains in what sense Arius was prepared to call Christ God. According to

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[833] τί γὰρ ἂν καὶ προκόψαι ἔχοι ἡ τοῦ θεοῦ σοφία, ἢ τί προσλαβεῖν ἡ αὐτοαλήθεια; ἢ ὁ θεὸς λόγος πῶς ἂν ἔχοι βελτιωθῆναι ἢ ἡ ζωὴ ἢ τὸ ἀληθινὸν φῶς;

[834] ἐξ ἧς ἔστιν ἰδεῖν τὴν υἱότητα τοῦ σωτῆρος ἡμῶν οὐδεμίαν ἔχουσιν κοινωνίαν πρὸς τὴν τῶν λοιπῶν υἱότητα' and 'οἱ δὲ κτίσματα αὐτοῦ τυγχάνοντες, ἄνθρωποί τε καὶ ἄγγελοι, καὶ εὐλογίας εἰλήφασι προκόπτειν ἀρεταῖς ἀσκούμενοι καὶ νομίμοις ἐντολαῖς πρὸς τὸ μὴ ἁμαρτάνειν.

[835] *Urk.* 14[17].29 [Opitz 24].

[836] καὶ παμψηφὶ ἔδοξεν ἀναθεματισθῆναι τὴν ἀσεβῆ αὐτοῦ δόξαν... λέγων 'ἐξ οὐκ ὄντων εἶναι' καὶ 'πρὶν γεννηθῆναι μὴ εἶναι' καὶ 'εἶναί ποτε ὅτε οὐκ ἦν', καὶ αὐτεξουσιότητι κακίας καὶ ἀρετῆς δεκτικὸν τὸν υἱὸν τοῦ θεοῦ λέγοντος καὶ κτίσμα ὀνομάζοντος καὶ ποίημα. ἅπαντα ἀνεθεμάτισεν ἡ ἁγία σύνοδος.

Athanasius' witness Arius taught that 'Christ is not very God, but he, as others, was made God by participation' (*CA* 1.9 [Metzler 118; NPNF² 4:311]).[837] Apparently, the same sort of differentiation stands behind Arius' declaration in the *Thalia* that Christ is not true God but possesses this name, as do others, by participation.[838] Based on this distinction between the true God and those who are gods by participation, Greg and Groh make the following conclusion: 'When therefore Arius describes Christ as "God" (θεός) without the article, we have every right to read "divine" (θεῖος); for he has in mind the scheme of a perfected creature who, after progress in virtue, has been raised by the Creator to the status of a υἱός, understood to mean θεός (= θεῖος)'.[839] Although Arius' letters do not provide sufficient data (only the *Thalia* fragments do) to support such an observation, this is exactly how Arius was perceived both by Alexander and Athanasius. On one particular occasion, Athanasius presses Arius' understanding of Christ to what it may imply soteriologically:

> If then the Word is not in such sense from God, as a son, genuine and natural, from a father, but only as creatures because they are framed, and as 'all things are from God', then neither is he from the essence of the Father, nor is the Son again Son according to essence, but in consequence of virtue, as we who are called sons by grace (*De Decr.* 22 [Opitz 19; NPNF² 4:165]).[840]

According to this passage the fact that Christ does not share the Father's substance—which is the same as saying that he is not truly God—implies that he is in need of being saved like all others by grace. Whether Arius himself would be prepared to make such a statement, his description of Christ does fit what he teaches about God. More specifically, his non-relational emphasis on God as the transcendent being leaves very little room for the divine involvement and creates a risk of relegating salvation to the practice of moral advancement. If this observation is fair, then it is quite possible that Arius did have a soteriological view even if we do not find it explicitly stated. Moreover, some scholars find this possibility more definite than not. Thus, based on their own documentation of data, Gregg and Groh

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[837] οὐκ ἔστιν ἀληθινὸς θεὸς ὁ χριστός, ἀλλὰ μετοχῇ καὶ αὐτὸς ἐθεοποιήθη.

[838] e.g. *CA* 1.6 [Metzler 115]; 1.9 [Metzler 118]; *Ep. Aeg. Lib.* 12 [Metzler 52].

[839] Gregg, *Early Arianism*, 21.

[840] εἰ μὲν οὖν μὴ ἐκ τοῦ θεοῦ ἐστιν ὁ λόγος, ὡς ἂν εἴη υἱὸς φύσει γνήσιος ἐκ πατρός, ἀλλ᾽ ὡς τὰ κτίσματα διὰ τὸ δεδημιουργῆσθαι λέγεται καὶ αὐτὸς ὡς τὰ πάντα ἐκ τοῦ θεοῦ, οὔτε ἐκ τῆς οὐσίας ἐστὶ τοῦ πατρὸς οὔτε αὐτὸς ὁ υἱὸς κατ᾽ οὐσίαν ἐστὶν υἱός, ἀλλ᾽ ἐξ ἀρετῆς, ὡς ἡμεῖς οἱ κατὰ χάριν καλούμενοι υἱοί.

suggest that 'the literature of the controversy contains indications that the Arian spokesmen produced their own version of a doctrine of the deification of believers—one "high" enough to compete with and threaten the Athanasian theory that the incarnation effected the reversal of human corruptibility and enabled persons to become divine'.[841] A similar suggestion is made by Williams in the postscript to his second edition of *Arius*. He concludes that 'Arians claimed to take *theōsis* no less seriously than Nicenes; but Athanasius makes a powerful case for denying that this can be done while still clinging to the idea of a mediatorial created redeemer'.[842] I will return to this point once more towards the end of this section.

Just as with the name 'God' for Christ, Arius' use of other christological titles—Wisdom, Word and Power—is not intended as the descriptions of his ontological identity with God the Father. Rather they are understood as metaphors of the pre-incarnate position of Christ in the role of the Father's instrument. This functional sense of Christ's role as Wisdom, Word, and Power was clearly recognized by Alexander and Athanasius. The former affirms that for Arius, Christ 'was made for our sake, so that God might create us through him as by a tool' (*Urk.* 4b[2.2].8, 9 [Opitz 8; NPNF[2] 2:3-5, modified]).[843] The latter reconstructs this point more extensively in the *Thalia* of *CA* 1.5 [Metzler 114; NPNF[2] 4:309]:

> Accordingly, he [Arius] says that there are two wisdoms, first, the attribute coexistent with God, and next, that in this wisdom the Son was originated, and was only named Wisdom and Word as partaking of it. 'For Wisdom', says he, 'by the will of the wise God, had its existence in Wisdom'. In like manner, he says, that there is another Word in God besides the Son, and that the Son again, as partaking of it, is named Word and Son according to grace. And this too is an idea proper to their heresy, as shewn in other works of theirs, that there are many powers; one of which is God's own by nature and eternal; but that Christ, on the other hand, is not the true power of God; but, as others, one of the so-called powers, one of which, namely, the locust and the caterpillar [Joel 2:25], is called in Scripture, not merely the power, but the 'great power'. The others are many and are like the Son, and of them David speaks in the Psalms, when he says, 'The Lord of hosts' or 'powers' [Ps. 23:10 LXX].[844]

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[841] Gregg, *Early Arianism*, 66.

[842] Williams, *Arius*, 241, who supports his claim with the reference to the long quotation from Eusebius of Emesa in Theodore's *Eran.* 3 [PG 83:312c-317a], as a possible evidence for the Arian interest in the subject of deification.

[843] *Urk.* 4b[2.2].8, 9 [Opitz 8; NPNF[2] 2:3-5, modified]: διὸ καὶ τρεπτός ἐστι καὶ ἀλλοιωτὸς τὴν φύσιν ὡς καὶ πάντα τὰ λογικά... δι' ἡμᾶς γὰρ πεποίηται, ἵνα ἡμᾶς δι' αὐτοῦ ὡς δι' ὀργάνου κτίσῃ ὁ θεός.

[844] δύο γοῦν σοφίας φησὶν εἶναι, μίαν μὲν 'τὴν ἐδίαν καὶ συνυπάρχουσαν τῷ θεῷ', τὸν δὲ υἱὸν ἐν αὐτῇ τῇ σοφίᾳ γεγενῆσθαι ταύτης τε μετέχοντα ὠνομάσθαι μόνον σοφίαν καὶ λόγον. 'ἡ σοφία

The delineation which is made here concerns two types of Word, Wisdom, and Power. The real qualities of Word, Wisdom, and Power are intrinsic only to God. In Christ they are manifested derivatively. He is Word, Wisdom, and Power by name rather than by nature. The assumption behind this distinction is that God's transcendence excludes Christ from sharing the Father's substantial characteristics. In Arius' understanding, God can be God only by retaining his own Wisdom, Word, and Power which Gregg and Groh consider as a 'protection of God's enduring attributes'[845] because 'no theory of the Word issuing from God which obscures God's full sovereignty or the utter dependency of the Son is allowable'.[846] It is not surprising that this long quotation from the *Thalia* ends with the christological application in which the Son is represented as on par with other creatures:

> And by nature, as all others, so the Word himself is alterable, and remains good by his own free will and choices. When, however, he wills, he can alter as we can, as being of an alterable nature. For 'therefore', he says, 'as foreknowing that he would be good, did God by anticipation bestow on him this glory, which afterwards, as man, he attained from virtue. Thus in consequence of his works foreknown, did God bring it to pass that he, being such, should come to be' (*CA* 1.5 [Metzler 114-5; NPNF² 4:309, modified]).[847]

Here Christ is said to be of alterable nature, but persistent in good deeds. In fact, it is by virtuous living that he achieved the position of honour proleptically held by him. Thus, Christ wins divine approval and promotion to the glories and dignities ascribed to him in the Scriptures as the Word, Wisdom, and Power of God by his free obedience in the performance of good acts. How does then Christ's alterable nature square with the fact that he was a perfect and unchangeable creature? It does

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γάρ', φησί, 'τῇ σοφίᾳ ὑπῆρξε σοφοῦ θεοῦ θελήσει'. οὕτω καὶ λόγον ἕτερον εἶναι λέγει παρὰ τὸν υἱὸν ἐν τῷ θεῷ καὶ τούτου μετέχοντα τὸν υἱὸν ὠνομάσθαι πάλιν κατὰ χάριν λόγον καὶ υἱὸν αὐτόν. ἔστι δὲ καὶ τοῦτο τῆς αἱρέσεως αὐτῶν ἴδιον φρόνημα δηλούμενον ἐν ἑτέροις αὐτῶν συγγράμμασιν, ὅτι 'πολλαὶ δυνάμεις εἰσί· καὶ ἡ μὲν μία τοῦ θεοῦ ἐστιν ἰδίᾳ φύσει καὶ ἀίδιος· ὁ δὲ χριστὸς πάλιν οὐκ ἔστιν ἀληθινὴ δύναμις τοῦ θεοῦ, ἀλλὰ μία τῶν λεγομένων δυνάμεών ἐστι καὶ αὐτός, ὧν μία καὶ 'ἡ ἀκρὶς καὶ ἡ κάμπη' οὐ δύναμις μόνον, ἀλλὰ καὶ 'μεγάλη' προσαγορεύεται· αἱ δ' ἄλλαι πολλαὶ καὶ ὅμοιαί εἰσι τῷ υἱῷ, περὶ ὧν καὶ δαβὶδ ψάλλει λέγων· 'κύριος τῶν δυνάμεων'. Cf. similar statements in *Urk*. 4b[2.2].7-9 [Opitz 7-8].

[845] Gregg, *Early Arianism*, 104.
[846] Ibid. 105.
[847] καὶ τῇ μὲν φύσει, ὥσπερ πάντες, οὕτως καὶ αὐτὸς ὁ λόγος ἐστὶ τρεπτός, τῷ δὲ ἰδίῳ αὐτεξουσίῳ, ἕως βούλεται, μένει καλός· ὅτε μέντοι θέλει, δύναται τρέπεσθαι καὶ αὐτὸς ὥσπερ καὶ ἡμεῖς τρεπτῆς ὢν φύσεως. 'διὰ τοῦτο γάρ', φησί, 'καὶ προγινώσκων ὁ θεὸς ἔσεσθαι καλὸν αὐτὸν προλαβὼν ταύτην αὐτῷ τὴν δόξαν δέδωκεν, ἣν ἂν καὶ ἐκ τῆς ἀρετῆς ἔσχε μετὰ ταῦτα'· ὥστε ἐξ ἔργων αὐτοῦ, ὧν προέγνω ὁ θεός, τοιοῦτον αὐτὸν νῦν γεγονέναι.

so according to the same logic by which Arius called Christ God. Just as Christ's divinity was about his moral status rather than nature, so does his unchangeability and perfection have to do with his virtuous living and the unswerving love to God rather than with his substantial relatedness to the Father. Gregg and Groh explain this point (correctly in my view) in full length:

> When the orthodox put forward the word "unchangeable" (ἄτρεπτος) as a term which could not describe creatures but only the Son, the Arians present at the synod assented to this term also, confident that it did not damage their case. In defence of the applicability of "unchangeable" to themselves, they paraphrased Paul's utterance in the eighth chapter of Romans. "Nothing will separate *us* from the love of Christ", they declared. By using this text in this way, the Arians made clear that for them unchangeability had to do with constancy of affection, with persistence in willing, with steadfast faith. To be ἄτρεπτος, they held, was not to possess a natural property reserved to Godhead alone but to intend and to do those things which accord with the Father's good purpose. Inseparability from the love of God was that which the chosen one and other adopted sons could be said to share in their perfected state.[848]

Thus, we can conclude that whatever title Christ is given by Arius (be it God, Son, Word, Wisdom, Power, or perfect and unchangeable being) it is always on account of grace, name, or participation rather than on account of his nature. In other words, Christ is not of 'the same essence' (ὁμοούσιος) with the Father and his close relation to him in the role of the Son can be defined only in conceptual (in contrast to substantial) terms. A closer examination of this point shows that Arius might have denied the substantial communion[849] between the Father and Son because of the way he understood the word ὁμοούσιος. This word carried at least two meanings for him. First, there is evidence that he understood it to mean a compound and divisible substance. In this sense, the word ὁμοούσιος had materialist implications because 'it conveyed the notion that two or more subsistents were co-ordinate members of the same class'.[850] Arius rules out this meaning of Christ's relation to the Father in his letters because it threatened to undermine the divine simplicity and immutability of

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[848] Gregg, *Early Arianism*, 68.

[849] Arius claims that the Son is 'not of one essence (οὐδὲ ὁμοούσιος) with the Father', and that his 'essence is foreign to [the Father's] essence (ξένος... κατ' οὐσίαν)' (*De Syn.* 15 [Opitz 242]). He also rejects the idea that the Son is 'a one-in-essence-portion' (μέρος ὁμοούσιον) with the Father in his letter to Alexander (*Urk.* 6[1].3 [Opitz 12]), and denies that the Son is 'a portion of the ingenerate' (μέρος ἀγεννήτου) in *Urk.* 1[15].4 [Opitz 3]. For a discussion of Arius' interpretation of the word ὁμοούσιος, see e.g. Widdicombe, *The Fatherhood of God*, 141-3; Williams, 'Arius', 63-6; Hanson, *The Search for God*, 92-3; Gregg, *Early Arianism*, 25, 70.

[850] Widdicombe, *The Fatherhood of God*, 141-2.

God. More exactly, he asserts: 'But if the terms *from him* [Rom. 11:36], and *from the womb* [Ps. 110:3 LXX], and *I came forth from the Father, and I have come* [Jn. 16:28] be understood by some to mean as if a part of him, one in essence (ὁμοουσίου) or as an issue, then the Father is according to them compounded and divisible and alterable and material, and, as far as their belief goes, has the circumstances of a body, who is the incorporeal God' (*Urk.* 6[1].5 [Opitz 13; NPNF² 4:458, modified]).[851] The second meaning of the term ὁμοούσιος is commented in the *Thalia*, where it is claimed that the Son 'is not equal' (οὐδὲ... ἐστιν ἴσος), nor one in essence (οὐδὲ ὁμοούσιος)' with the Father (*De Syn.* 15 [Opitz 242; NPNF² 4:458). In Widdicombe's view 'this phrase implies that such an equality would mean a total identity of attributes, so the Son, like the Father, would be ingenerate, eternal, and without beginning'. This idea of ὁμοούσιος is equally rejected by Arius when he says: 'The Father is in his substance (κατ᾽ οὐσίαν) other than the Son because he remains without beginning' (*De Syn.* 15 [Opitz 242; Stead op. cit.]).[852] I will return to this argument in my discussion of Alexander's response to Arius.[853] For now, however, it is important to ask why then it was so crucial for the Nicene representatives to insist on using the word ὁμοούσιος, if it had such misleading connotations at that time. According to Behr, originally this term was neither a part of anyone's technical vocabulary, nor the rallying point that it would later become. Its meaning was no yet fully clear, but it was introduced most likely 'because it was known that Arius and his most ardent supporters objected to it'.[854] In this perspective, the word ὁμοούσιος was used in order to defend the substantial unity between the Father and Son in view of the cosmological concern in the controversy. But if Arius' theology allows us to draw the soteriological implications based on his view of God, as I pointed out earlier, then how does the word ὁμοούσιος apply here? Gregg and Groh answer this question in light of what they call exemplarist soteriology:

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[851] εἰ δὲ τὸ 'ἐξ αὐτοῦ' καὶ τὸ 'ἐκ γαστρὸς' καὶ τὸ 'ἐκ τοῦ πατρὸς ἐξῆλθον καὶ ἥκω' ὡς μέρος αὐτοῦ ὁμοουσίου καὶ ὡς προβολὴ ὑπό τινων νοεῖται, σύνθετος ἔσται ὁ πατὴρ καὶ διαιρετὸς καὶ τρεπτὸς καὶ σῶμα κατ᾽ αὐτοὺς καὶ τὸ ὅσον ἐπ᾽ αὐτοῖς τὰ ἀκόλουθα σώματι πάσχων ὁ ἀσώματος θεός.

[852] ξένος τοῦ υἱοῦ κατ᾽ οὐσίαν ὁ πατήρ, ὅτι ἄναρχος ὑπάρχει.

[853] Sect. 4.3.2.

[854] Behr, *The Nicene Faith*, 2/1:157.

Believing the Arian picture of salvation blasphemous, orthodox representatives introduced and took battle positions behind the word ὁμοούσιος, judging that this idea of identity of essence could alone differentiate the Son's divine likeness and unchangeability from that imitation (μίμησις) which the faithful appropriate "through virtue from keeping commandments.[855]

In Gregg and Groh's understanding the whole controversy revolved around two alternative perspectives of deification. The first one, associated with the early Arians, was advocating a saviour who was imitable to Christians. This model understood Christ as a perfect example of virtuous life; by following him believers could reach the same progress. The other perspective of deification was associated with the adherents of the Nicene faith. It placed Christ alongside the Father and used the word ὁμοούσιος to safeguard his divine ability to deify human beings. While this distinction between two alternative models of deification can be objected on the ground that Arius himself does not present Christ for imitation, Gregg and Groh do make a helpful point; they draw attention to the issues left unnoticed before. One thing that is noteworthy is that according to the witness of Alexander and Athanasius the Arian Christ appears to be capable of doing the same things as the rest of the creatures. To quote just one example from Alexander, we read: 'The accursed ones say, "Certainly we also are able to become sons of God, just like that one [Christ]". For it is written, "I begot and raised up sons" [Isa. 1:2]' (*Urk.* 14[17].11 [Opitz 21; NPNF[2] 3:37]).[856] We also find many analogous statements throughout Athanasius' main writing *Contra Arianos* (to be considered in the next chapter). Gregg and Groh approach such instances as evidence that Arius taught what they call exemplarist soteriology, namely the notion of salvation in which Christ is the perfect example of how one is to be saved. They argue that Arian watchwords such as 'there was when he was not', 'creature', 'work', and 'changeable' had soteriological implications which were

epitomized and made explicit in phrases like 'even as we', 'like us', 'as all others'. He [Christ] had a beginning of his existence, as others. He is called 'power' as others, and knows the Father as we also do. He is changeable and wills the good as we can. He carries the title 'God' by participation of grace, like others.[857]

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[855] Gregg, *Early Arianism*, 70.

[856] δυνάμεθα γοῦν καὶ ἡμεῖς', φασὶν οἱ ἀλάστορες, 'υἱοὶ γενέσθαι θεοῦ, ὥσπερ κἀκεῖνος'. γέγραπται γάρ· 'υἱοὺς ἐγέννησα καὶ ὕψωσα.

[857] Gregg, *Early Arianism*, 68.

Scholars dispute whether this perception of the imitability of Christ (insisted by Arius' opponents) is true to what Arius actually taught. With no direct witness in Arius' own texts, there is always a temptation to dismiss the arguments of Alexander and Athanasius as irrelevant. However, their perception might not be completely groundless. After all, as we saw earlier, Arius' doctrine of God does imply specific soteriological repercussions, and I suggest that regardless of whether we are willing to take the witness of Alexander and Athanasius as credible, we do need to consider at least two major points.

In the first place, as I have just indicated, Arius' view of God as the utterly transcendent being leaves very little room, if any, for personal salvation. In other words, Arius' doctrine of God finds its counterpart in the unstated concept of salvation in which the saving subject is not God—he is too transcendent for a direct, or personal involvement—but human beings. Seen in this perspective, salvation stops being God's initiative and becomes dependent on the human role. Furthermore, Arius' insistence that God's perfection is based on his possession of the unique qualities (which the Son and Holy Spirit do not share) makes the ὁμοούσιος formula unnecessary. And in as much as ὁμοούσιος is unnecessary, the Father-Son language is redundant as well. Hence, there is more sense to speak of God as the self-contained essence rather than a communion of the trinitarian persons. In fact, this is exactly how Athanasius perceived Arius talking about God, and I will discuss this point in more detail in the next chapter. For now, it is important to note that the sort of deification this approach encourages (even though Arius himself never said this) is to become as far like God as possible in those qualities that make him what he is in the supreme sense. It is this logic that may be at work in Arius' christology, for it seems to suggest a deification account of how one unique creature becomes promoted to the status of god, rather than how God—the Son being ὁμοούσιος with the Father—becomes an embodied creature. If this observation is fair, then the reason why both Alexander and Athanasius were so persistent in emphasizing the role of virtue for Arius' christology is because it was the only way how Christ could become like God and resemble the perfection of his qualities.

In the second place, Gregg and Groh are sometimes criticized for not taking into account the fact that early Arians understood Christ to be soulless. [858] In light of this characteristic, Christ is claimed to be special and unlike other creatures, which means that he cannot be a model in the true sense. Can such a christology be soteriological? According to Meijering, Arian cristology could hardly be soteriological even if Christ were thought to possess the exemplary role. He remarks: 'Can a doctrine which advocates the imitation of the perfect creature Christ be called a doctrine of salvation? Is this not moralism?'[859] However, the fact that Christ does the same things others do (whether he is the soulless being or a being like us in all respects) shows him to fall short of being the true God and suggests that he is in need of progress and salvation like all others. Perceiving it precisely in this way, Athanasius would later say in his *CA* 2.41 [Metzler 217; NPNF[2] 4:370]: 'If the Son be a creature, the nature of rational creatures being one, no help will come to creatures from a creature, since all need grace from God'.[860] Seen from this perspective, Arius' christology is quite soteriological, even though Christ himself appears in need of salvation rather than saving those who need him.

4.3.2 Alexander's Response to Arius' Teaching about God and Salvation

If Arius considered God in terms of the transcendent being whose divine qualities could not be communicated—neither its substance, nor its intrinsic wisdom, word or power—but all creation (including Christ) depended on his divine will, Alexander inclined sharply toward the opposite pole. For him the key to salvation lay in the fact that the Father and Son share in the same divine nature. More precisely this means that the latter's natural sonship is the ground for human sonship by grace. Alexander introduced into the early stages of the debate most of the basic categories that were later used by Athanasius to counter Arius' stance that Christ was posterior to the Father, substantially less than him, limited in knowledge, and sustained by his will. He also underscored the downward act of God for the salvation of humanity. Among the extant writings[861] (archived by the fifth-century

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[858] For more critical remarks on Gregg and Groh's approach in which particular emphases of Arius' christology are considered as being dictated by the exemplarist soteriology, see Williams, 'The Logic of Arianism'.

[859] Meijering, in his Review, 67-8, of Gregg, *Early Arianism*.

[860] εἰ κτίσμα ἐστὶν ὁ υἱὸς μιᾶς οὔσης τῆς φύσεως τῶν λογικῶν κτισμάτων, οὐδεμία παρὰ κτίσματος κτίσμασι βοήθεια γενήσεται διὰ τὸ πάντας δεῖσθαι τῆς παρὰ τοῦ θεοῦ χάριτος.

[861] The dating adopted here is that put forward by Williams: ἑνὸς σώματος (*Urk.* 4b[2.2] [Opitz 6-11]) dated ca. early in 325 and ἡ φίλαρχος (*Urk.* 14[17] [Opitz 19-29]) dated ca. 321/2; see

historians Socrates and Theodoret) that belong to Alexander, the two most important ones are a short *Letter of Alexander to all Bishops* (also known as ἑνὸς σώματος from its opening words, and sometimes believed to be Athanasius) and a longer *Letter to Alexander of Thessalonica*[862] (known as ἡ φίλαρχος), which was written when the controversy had already lasted for several years. I will look at both of these letters in their turn.

Alexander's letter to the bishops is written in the form of a synodal report and addressed to his Alexandrian colleagues 'of the Catholic Church in all places'.[863] It does not reveal much of Alexander's own ideas, because it was aimed primarily at recapitulating what Arius taught. The central part of the letter offers a summary of the most distinctive elements of Arius' teaching in the form of the quotation that reflects the *Thalia* propositions:

God was not always the Father; but there was a time when God was not the Father. The Word of God was not always, but was made 'out of nothing;' for he who is God fashioned the non-existing from the non-existing; wherefore there was a time when he was not. For the Son is a thing created, and a thing made: nor is he like to the Father in substance; nor is he the true and natural Word of the Father; nor is he his true Wisdom; but he is one of the things fashioned and made. And he is called, by a misapplication of the terms, the Word and Wisdom, since he is himself made by the proper Word of God, and by that wisdom which is in God, in which, as God made all other things, so also did he make him. Wherefore, he is by his very nature changeable and mutable, equally with other rational beings. The Word, too, is alien and separate from the substance of God. The Father also is ineffable to the Son; for neither does the Word perfectly and accurately know the Father, neither can he perfectly see him. For neither does the Son indeed know his own substance as it is. Since he for our sakes was made, that by him as by an instrument God might create us; nor would he have existed had not God wished to make us. Someone asked of them whether the Son of God could change even as the devil changed; and

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Williams, *Arius*, 48-61 and esp. 58-9 where the author gives a list of documents and dates. This dating means that the *Thalia* was written some time after ἡ φίλαρχος but before ἑνὸς σώματος. This makes sense of apparent ignorance of the *Thalia* in Alexander's ἡ φίλαρχος and explains the appearance of the extended *Thalia* quotation in his ἑνὸς σώματος. Many scholars now believe that ἑνὸς σώματος was written by Athanasius at the request of Alexander. For this view, see Stead, 'Athanasius' Earliest Work', 76-91. For the arguments on Alexander's authorship, see Barnes, *Constantine and Eusebius*, 202-3. For the discussion on the relationship between ἑνὸς σώματος and ἡ φίλαρχος (which is still debated by scholars), see Williams, *Arius*, 48-59; Parvis, *Arian Controversy*, 68-81.

[862] Although Opitz presents ἡ φίλαρχος as being referred to 'Alexander of Thessalonica', Theodoret (*HE* 1.3.3 [SC 501:150-2]) reports that it was sent to Alexander of Byzantium, the archbishop of Constantinople. More on this, see Behr, *The Nicene Faith*, 2/1:63; Williams, *Arius*, 267, n. 3.

[863] *Urk.* 4b[2.2].1 [Opitz 6]: τοῖς ἀπανταχοῦ τῆς καθολικῆς ἐκκλησίας.

they feared not to answer that he can; for since he was made and created, he is of mutable nature (*Urk.* 4b[2.2].7-10 [Opitz 7-8; NPNF² 2:5, modified]).[864]

This quotation fully concords with all the most important aspects of Arius' thought found in his letters and the fragments of the *Thalia*. Having quoted Arius' own words, Alexander goes on to state (with reference to Jn. 1:1; 3:18; Ps. 45:2 [LXX]; Wis. 7:26; Col. 1:15; Heb. 1:3; and Mal. 3:6) that the Son's essence is like that of the Father, that the Son is unchangeable in his nature, and that he possesses perfect knowledge of his Father.

Alexander's ἡ φίλαρχος is more extensive in length. It deals with a range of key theological issues ordered around the Father-Son relationship with specific implications for soteriology. After a short description of the ongoing debate, which had now spread accross most of the Eastern churches, Alexander discusses the typical expressions of the Arian propaganda. The first one is that 'there was a time when the Son of God was not' (ἦν ποτε ὅτε οὐκ ἦν ὁ υἱὸς τοῦ θεοῦ),[865] and the second one is that 'God created all things out of nothing' (πάντα... ὁ θεὸς ἐξ οὐκ ὄντων ἐποίησε),[866] including the Son. He expresses a concern that Arius and his advocates 'deny the divinity of our Saviour' (τὴν θεότητα του σωτῆρος ἡμῶν ἀρνούμενοι),[867] and reduce him to 'the level of being equal to all others'.[868] As a result, the kind of Christ that Arians posit is a mutable creature whose sonship is dependent on his moral endeavor. Alexander counters these tenets of Arius' teaching by arguing that God should be understood as a communion of three divine persons.[869] This communion is shown to us most clearly in the relationship of the

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[864] οὐκ ἀεὶ ὁ θεὸς πατὴρ ἦν, ἀλλ' ἦν ὅτε ὁ θεὸς πατὴρ οὐκ ἦν. οὐκ ἀεὶ ἦν ὁ τοῦ θεοῦ λόγος, ἀλλ' ἐξ οὐκ ὄντων γέγονεν. ὁ γὰρ ὢν θεὸς τὸν μὴ ὄντα ἐκ τοῦ μὴ ὄντος πεποίηκε. διὸ καὶ ἦν ποτε ὅτε οὐκ ἦν. κτίσμα γάρ ἐστι καὶ ποίημα ὁ υἱός. οὔτε δὲ ὅμοιος κατ' οὐσίαν τῷ πατρί ἐστιν οὔτε ἀληθινὸς καὶ φύσει τοῦ πατρὸς λόγος ἐστιν οὔτε ἀληθινὴ σοφία αὐτοῦ ἐστιν, ἀλλ' εἷς μὲν τῶν ποιημάτων καὶ γενητῶν ἐστι, καταχρηστικῶς δὲ λέγεται λόγος καὶ σοφία, γενόμενος καὶ αὐτὸς τῷ ἰδίῳ τοῦ θεοῦ λόγῳ καὶ τῇ ἐν τῷ θεῷ σοφίᾳ ἐν ᾗ καὶ τὰ πάντα καὶ αὐτὸν πεποίηκεν ὁ θεός. διὸ καὶ τρεπτός ἐστι καὶ ἀλλοιωτὸς τὴν φύσιν ὡς καὶ πάντα τὰ λογικά. ξένος τε καὶ ἀλλότριος καὶ ἀπεσχοινισμένος ἐστὶν ὁ λόγος τῆς τοῦ θεοῦ οὐσίας καὶ ἀόρατός ἐστιν ὁ πατὴρ τῷ υἱῷ. οὔτε γὰρ τελείως καὶ ἀκριβῶς γινώσκει ὁ λόγος τὸν πατέρα, οὔτε τελείως ὁρᾶν αὐτὸν δύναται. καὶ γὰρ καὶ ἑαυτοῦ τὴν οὐσίαν οὐκ οἶδεν ὁ υἱὸς ὡς ἔστι. δι' ἡμᾶς γὰρ πεποίηται, ἵνα ἡμᾶς δι' αὐτοῦ ὡς δι' ὀργάνου κτίσῃ ὁ θεός. καὶ οὐκ ἂν ὑπέστη, εἰ μὴ ἡμᾶς ὁ θεὸς ἠθέλησε ποιῆσαι. ἠρώτησε γοῦν τις αὐτούς, εἰ δύναται ὁ τοῦ θεοῦ λόγος τραπῆναι ὡς ὁ διάβολος ἐτράπη, καὶ οὐκ ἐφοβήθησαν εἰπεῖν, ὅτι ναὶ δύναται· τρεπτῆς γὰρ φύσεώς ἐστι γενητὸς καὶ κτιστὸς ὑπάρχων.

[865] *Urk.* 14[17].10 [Opitz 21].
[866] Ibid. 14[17].11 [Opitz 21].
[867] Ibid. 14[17].4 [Opitz 20].
[868] Ibid. 14[17].37 [Opitz 25].
[869] In Ibid. 14[17].53 [Opitz 27; NPNF² 3:41, modified], Alexander asserts: 'And besides the pious opinion concerning the Father and the Son, we acknowledge the one Holy Spirit, as the divine

Father and Son. He insists that 'the Father is always present with the Son' (ἔστι δὲ πατὴρ ἀεὶ παρόντος τοῦ υἱοῦ),[870] and that there is no 'interval' or 'distance' (διάστημα—a term he uses 5 times to describe the Father-Son relation)[871] between them. In fact, it is on account of this close union between the two that the Father is called 'Father'.[872] The Son's relation to the Father resembles that of the original light and brightness (ἀπαύγασμα).[873] Several times Alexander depicts the Son as the Father's image (εἰκών),[874] and 'the expression of his Father's person' (χαρακτὴρ τῆς πατρικῆς ὑποστάσεως).[875] To seal these arguments, he appeals to the confession of the Apostolic Church that believes

> in one Father unbegotten, who has from no one the cause of his being, who is unchangeable and immutable, who is always the same, and admits of no increase or diminution; who gave to us the law, the prophets, and the gospels; who is Lord of the patriarchs and apostles, and all the saints. And in one Lord Jesus Christ, the only-begotten Son of God; not begotten of things which are not, but of him who is the Father; not in a corporeal manner, by excision or division as Sabellius and Valentinus thought, but in a certain inexplicable and unspeakable[876] manner (*Urk.* 14[17].46 [Opitz 26-7]).[877]

While Alexander's attempt to bring the Father and Son together reflects his desire to combat Arius' doctrine of subordinationism, there are also indications that he was concerned to qualify the divine relationship in such a way that the Son would

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Scriptures teach us' (πρὸς δὲ τῇ εὐσεβεῖ ταύτῃ περὶ πατρὸς καὶ υἱοῦ δόξῃ, καθὼς ἡμᾶς αἱ θεῖαι γραφαὶ διδάσκουσιν, ἓν πνεῦμα ἅγιον ὁμολογοῦμεν). Socrates reports that Alexander used the expression ἐν τριάδι μονάδα (*HE* 1.5).

[870] *Urk.* 14[17].26 [Opitz 23].

[871] The specific instances where the term διάστημα is used by Alexander to stress a close union between the Father and Son are: *Urk.* 14[17].18 [Opitz 22]; *Urk.* 14[17].22 [Opitz 23]; *Urk.* 14[17].23 [Opitz 23]; *Urk.* 14[17].24 [Opitz 23]; *Urk.* 14[17].26 [Opitz 23].

[872] Ibid. 14[17].26 [Opitz 23].

[873] Ibid. 14[17].48 [Opitz 27].

[874] Ibid. 14[17].39 [Opitz 25]; *Urk.* 14[17].48 [Opitz 27].

[875] Ibid. 14[17].48 [Opitz 27].

[876] Alexander's logic here is that if the Father is unknowable, then the manner of origin and the *hypostasis* of the Son is also beyond the comprehension of created minds (*Urk.* 14[4].21 [Opitz 23]). Cf. Williams, *Arius*, 155, who says that 'if the begetting of the Son is an eternal and "necessary" aspect of the divine life, part of the proper account of "what it is to be God", the Father cannot be more unknowable than the Son; what is incomprehensible is not the persona of the Father but the pattern of the divine nature'.

[877] εἰς μόνον ἀγέννητον πατέρα, οὐδένα τοῦ εἶναι αὐτῷ τὸν αἴτιον ἔχοντα, ἄτρεπτόν τε καὶ ἀναλλοίωτον, ἀεὶ κατὰ τὰ αὐτὰ καὶ ὡσαύτως ἔχοντα, οὔτε προκοπὴν οὔτε μείωσιν ἐπιδεχόμενον, νόμου καὶ προφητῶν καὶ εὐαγγελίων δοτῆρα, πατριαρχῶν καὶ ἀποστόλων καὶ ἁπάντων ἁγίων κύριον· καὶ εἰς ἕνα κύριον ἰησοῦν χριστόν, τὸν υἱὸν τοῦ θεοῦ μονογενῆ, γεννηθέντα οὐκ ἐκ τοῦ μὴ ὄντος, ἀλλ' ἐκ τοῦ ὄντος πατρός, οὐ κατὰ τὰς τῶν σωμάτων ὁμοιότητας ταῖς τομαῖς ἤ ταῖς ἐκ διαιρέσεων ἀπορροίαις, ὥσπερ σαβελλίῳ καὶ βαλεντίνῳ δοκεῖ, ἀλλ' ἀρρήτως καὶ ἀνεκδιηγήτως.

not threaten the Father's unique status as the unbegotten (ἀγέννητος), or the first principle (ἀρχή).[878] The way Alexander does this has led some scholars to believe that he lacked a proper trinitarian terminology,[879] and to argue that he 'does not wholly banish the subordination of the Son to the Father'.[880] Thus, in the several instances where Alexander slides into subordinationist expressions, he affirms that Christ holds 'the middle place' (μεσιτεύουσα φύσις μονογενής)[881] between the Father and created beings, and that he is 'inferior' (λειπόμενον)[882] to the Father in that he is not unbegotten. In the creedal part of his letter he seems to struggle finding such a definition of the Son's eternity that would be compatible with the Father as alone unbegotten. He ends up suggesting that we must preserve the proper dignity of the Father as the unbegotten, while confessing that 'the Son must also be given his own honour, since his generation from the Father has no beginning… not rejecting his divinity'.[883] While Alexander's language of describing the Son in relation to the Father may be questionable, it should not be so if what he states has a functional meaning rather than ontological. In this regard, Behr points out that 'Alexander does not clarify what he means by describing the Word as a "mediating nature". It would seem, however, that the "mediation" is functional, in terms of being the means by which the Father created all things, rather than ontological, placing the Word at a mid-point in a chain of being, for he is clear that the Word is not included amongst created things, which have come into being by him and which stand at a great distance from the Father, but is instead begotten by the Father himself'.[884] If Alexander's terminology is sloppy, it is because he was not driven by terminological clarity. Rather his main concern was to safeguard the truth that Christ was God, not someone promoted to that status by means of virtue.

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[878] In sect. 4.2.1, I remarked that Arius protested against the substantial identity of the Father and Son as postulating 'two unoriginated ultimate principles' (δύο ἀγεννήτους ἀρχὰς) (*Urk.* 6[1].4 [Opitz 13]), and I promised to return to this argument again in my discussion of Alexander's response to Arius.

[879] Thus, Widdicombe, *The Fatherhood of God*, 134, concludes that 'Arius' claim that Alexander described the Son as ἀγεννητογενής, if it is not simply satirical, suggests that Alexander was prone to resort to novel and paradoxical expressions to resolve this tension in his Trinitarian thought'.

[880] Hanson, *The Search for God*, 144. Cf. Simonetti, *Studi*, 133-4; Widdicombe, *The Fatherhood of God*, 134-7.

[881] *Urk.* 14[17].45 [Opitz 26].

[882] Ibid. 14[17].47 [Opitz 27]. Alexander attaches to this argument the quotation from John 14:28, where Christ says that 'my Father is greater than I' (ὁ πατὴρ μείζων μού ἐστιν) in *Urk.* 14[17].52 [Opitz 28].

[883] Ibid. 14[17].53 [Opitz 28; NPNF[2] 3:41, modified]: τῷ δὲ υἱῷ τὴν ἁρμόζουσαν τιμὴν ἀπονεμητέον, τὴν ἄναρχον αὐτῷ παρὰ τοῦ πατρὸς γέννησιν ἀνατιθέντας... θεότητα αὐτοῦ μὴ παραιτούμενοι.

[884] Behr, *The Nicene Faith*, 2/1:129.

Alexander's depiction of the Father-Son relationship in terms of close union allows him to speak of salvation in terms of adoption, giving it a distinctly personal sense. Drawing a sharp distinction between Christ and believers, he introduces the idea of two kinds of sonship: natural and adoptive. He writes:

> For just as it has been shown that the nature of his existence cannot be expressed by language, and infinitely surpasses in excellence all things to which He has given being, so his sonship, naturally partaking in his paternal divinity, is unspeakably different from the sonship of those who, by his appointment, have been adopted as sons (*Urk.* 14[17].29 [Opitz 24; NPNF² 3:38, modified]).[885]

By distinguishing between these two kinds of sonship, Alexander is able to show the difference between them in ontological terms. Christ's sonship is natural and immutable just as the Son is immutable and wanting in nothing. The adoptive sonship, on the other hand, is subject to change and increase. Shortly after that, Alexander draws a soteriological implication as he writes:

> And do not these words, I begot thee '*from the womb before the morning* [Ps 109:3 LXX]', plainly show the natural sonship of the paternal birth, which he obtained not by the careful framing of his manners, not by the exercise of and increase in virtue, but by individuality of nature (φύσεως ἰδιώματι)? Therefore, the only-begotten Son of the Father, indeed, possesses an indefectible sonship; but the adoption of rational sons belongs not to them by nature, but is prepared for them by the probity of their life, and by the free gift of God (δωρεᾷ θεοῦ) (*Urk.* 14[17].34 [Opitz 24-5]).[886]

According to this passage Christ's natural sonship is the basis for the adoptive sonship of men; the former is 'by individuality of nature', the latter is 'by the free gift of God'. Moreover, Christ's natural sonship is not obtained 'by the exercise of and increase in virtue'. Rather, it belongs to him in virtue of being the only-begotten Son of the Father. Another way in which Alexander expresses the personal nature of salvation is by stressing the divine subject of Christ. Towards the end of

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[885] ὃν τρόπον γὰρ ἡ ἄρρητος αὐτοῦ ὑπόστασις ἀσυγκρίτῳ ὑπεροχῇ ἐδείχθη ὑπερκειμένη πάντων οἷς αὐτὸς τὸ εἶναι ἐχαρίσατο, οὕτως καὶ ἡ υἱότης αὐτοῦ, κατὰ φύσιν τυγχάνουσα τῆς πατρικῆς θεότητος, ἀλέκτω ὑπεροχῇ διαφέρει τῶν δι' αὐτοῦ θέσει υἱοθετηθέντων.

[886] τί δὲ καὶ τὸ *ἐκ γαστρὸς πρὸ ἑωσφόρου ἐγέννησά σε* οὐχὶ ἄντικρυς τῆς πατρικῆς μαιώσεως φυσικὴν ἐνδείκνυται υἱότητα, οὐ τρόπων ἐπιμελείᾳ καὶ προκοπῆς ἀσκήσει, ἀλλὰ φύσεως ἰδιώματι ταύτην λαχόντος; ὅθεν καὶ ἀμετάπτωτον ἔχει τὴν υἱότητα ὁ μονογενὴς υἱός τοῦ πατρός. τὴν δὲ τῶν λογικῶν υἱοθεσίαν οὐ κατὰ φύσιν αὐτοῖς ὑπάρχουσαν ἀλλὰ τρόπων ἐπιτηδειότητι καὶ δωρεᾷ θεοῦ καὶ μεταπτώτην οἶδεν ὁ λόγος.

his letter he writes that '[o]ur Lord… had a true body, of Mary mother of God, not merely the appearance of a body; in the fullness of time he came to live among humanity in order to bring forgiveness of sins. He was crucified and died, and yet did not perceive any detriment to his divinity. He rose from the dead, was taken into heaven, and sat down at the "right hand of the Majesty on high [Heb 9:26]"' (*Urk.* 14[17].54 [Opitz 28; NPNF² 3:41]).[887] What is noteworthy here is that Alexander attributes to the pre-incarnate Christ those actions which he did while living in body. In particular, it is stated that Christ came down to live among men, took 'a true body' (as opposed to a mere bodily appearance) and experienced those things which were necessary for our salvation. He suffered the death of crucifixion for 'the forgiveness of sins', but being God, he 'rose (ἀναστάς) from the dead' (the verb form is used in the active voice rather than passive 'was risen') in order to return to his Father from whom he came. All these actions point to one and the same person, the Father's Son, whose ability and initiative to save is effective precisely because he is God.[888] Alexander does not use the specific terminology of deification in either of his two letters. His way of expressing the idea of godlikeness is to affirm that we can become like the natural Son of God. It was Athanasius' task to explain what this means.

By way of conclusion, it is worth noting that both Arius and Alexander presented their own statements of faith. This is not surprising since both of them sought to clarify their respective positions. What is illustrative, however, is the way they start their confessions. Arius begins by saying that 'we recognize (οἴδαμεν) one God….',[889] whereas Alexander states 'we believe (πιστεύομεν) in one unbegotten Father….'[890] In light of my analysis, this difference is not incidental; it reflects something very fundamental, namely the way both of these thinkers understood God. It should be clear by now that it matters much if God is presented as the Monad whose qualities are not to be shared with the other trinitarian persons, or if

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[887] ὁ κύριος ἡμῶν ἰησοῦς χριστός, σῶμα φορέσας ἀληθῶς καὶ οὐ δοκήσει ἐκ τῆς θεοτόκου μαρίας 'ἐπὶ συντελείᾳ τῶν αἰώνων εἰς ἀθέτησιν ἁμαρτίας', ἐπιδημήσας τῷ γένει τῶν ἀνθρώπων, σταυρωθεὶς καὶ ἀποθανών, ἀλλ᾽ οὐ διὰ ταῦτα τῆς ἑαυτοῦ θεότητος ἥττων γεγενημένος, ἀναστὰς ἐκ νεκρῶν, ἀναληφθεὶς ἐν οὐρανοῖς, καθήμενος 'ἐν δεξιᾷ τῆς μεγαλωσύνης'.

[888] The main text where Alexander is occupied in explicating the meaning of Christ as God incarnate is his sermon *De Corpore et Anima* that survived in Syriac. For more on this, see Baumstark, *Geschichte der syrischen literatur*, 261; Urbina, *Patrologia Syriaca*, 248.

[889] *Urk.* 6[1]2 [Opitz 12].

[890] Ibid. 14[17].46 [Opitz 26-7].

he is conceived as the Father who has natural relationship with the Son. While the best that Arius' view of God could theoretically offer was the model of what one was to be like (without God being personally involved on behalf of humanity), Alexander's concept of God offered something different. It spoke of God in the relational sense and described salvation as God's initiative to make us his adopted children. Seen in this light, the term ὁμοούσιος carried both properly theological and soteriological significance. It described the natural relations between the Father and Son, and it indicated the kind of relationship we enter by being saved. (I will spend more time considering this link in the next chapter). Therefore, I suggest that the controversy included both cosmological and soteriological concerns. It was not only about God, but about the God who accomplishes salvation. Even though Arius' texts are emphatically cosmological, I have tried to show that they do imply a certain soteriology, as Hanson puts it: 'the ontology fitted soteriology and the soteriology the ontology'.[891] Both Alexander and Athanasius recognized this, and the way the Nicene Creed defends Christ's divinity shows that salvation was a part of what Christ did as God. This observation questions LaCugna's argument that fourth-century theology displays 'a de-emphasis on the details of the economy of redemption, and a weakening of the soteriological basis for the Christian doctrine of God'.[892] Based on my own analysis, if the 'weakening' did happen in the fourth century, it happened above all in Arius' teaching. Its potential consequences were timely recognized at Nicaea and in many ways, Athanasius' later writings, to which I now turn, is a profound reflection of what the Nicene Creed was aimed to teach about God and salvation.

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[891] Hanson, *The Search for God*, 122.
[892] LaCugna, *God for Us*, 9.

CHAPTER FIVE

God and Deification
in Athanasius' Later Writings

Athanasius' doctrine of God and deification finds its mature expression in his later writings. Of these writings seven are of special interest for my purpose in this chapter. They include three *Orationes contra Arianos* (c. 339/40-345), [893] *De decretis nicaenae Synodi* (c. 352), *Tomus ad Antiochenos* (362) together with various letters, especially *Epistula de Synodis* (359), *Epistulae ad Serapionem* (late 350s), *Epistula ad Epictetum* (c. 371), and *Epistulae festales* (written in the period between 329 and 373). In all of these writings Athanasius writes about God and deification in one breath, and to follow his model, I will include both topics in one chapter. I will start with the consideration of God in Athanasius' *Contra Arianos* by looking at two major sections where he contrasts his relational understanding of divinity with the Arian concept of God. This discussion will be followed by an examination of the Father-Son relationship which Athanasius describes in terms of participation, love, and eternal delight. After that I will turn to the work of the Son and Holy Spirit. I will explore Athanasius' method of christological/partitive interpretation of Scripture and consider 26 passages where he uses deification as a way of reflecting on the divine initiative and the personal nature of our participation in God. When summarizing my analysis of deification, I will pose three specific questions that have to do with the modern criticism of this concept as described in the Introduction to this study. Based on my own examination of Athanasius' deification, I will revisit some traditional assumptions in this regard, and suggest a more comprehensive approach that considers the physical and juridical aspects of salvation within the relational framework. I will conclude this chapter with a brief look at the identity and work of the Holy Spirit—a question that occupied Athanasius' later career—by bringing to attention the specifically pneumatological and trinitarian passages that complete Athanasius picture of God and deification. More immediately, I will begin with an introductory discussion of the modern scholarship on the starting points for the doctrine of God.

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[893] Kannengiesser's argument about the genuiness of the third *Oration* has been convincingly questioned and disputed within the last 20 years or so. Cf. Kannengiesser, 'Athanasius' *Three Orations Against the Arians*', 981-95; Stead, 'Review of C. Kannengiesser, "Athanase d'Alexandrie, évêque et écrivain"', 220-29.

5.1 God as Father

5.1.1 Starting Points for the Doctrine of God: Modern Discussions

Athanasius' doctrine of God and the Nicaean Creed—both of which place a strong emphasis on the distinct persons of the Trinity—have sometimes been interpreted as being concerned primarily with the one essence of God. One precedence of such interpretation is pointed out by Fairbairn[894] as going back to the sixteenth century when the Nicaean Creed was cast in the distinctly essentialist terms in the *Confessio Augustana* and the *Confessio Belgica*. In the first Creed the Nicaean faith is summarized in the following way:

> Our churches with full consent do teach that the decree of Nicene Council regarding the unity of the Godhead or divine essence and of the three persons is true, and ought to be believed without any doubting, that is to say, that there is one deity of divine essence, which is both called and is indeed God, everlasting, without body, without parts, unmeasurable in power, wisdom and goodness, the maker and preserver of all things, as well visible as invisible, and yet be three distinct persons all of one Godhead or essence, and all of one power, and which be co-eternal, that is to say, the Father, the Son and the Holy Ghost (*Con. Aug.* I [*Creeds*, Pelikan 50; Taverner 16-7, slightly modified]).[895]

The other Creed, *Confessio Belgica*, offers a similar statement of faith stating that 'we believe in the one only true God, who is one in essence, but truly distinguished from all eternity by His matchless and incommunicable attributes into three Persons—namely, the Father, the Son, and the Holy Ghost' (*Con. Bel.* VIII [*Creeds*, Pelikan 81; Jones 207]).[896] Citing these two Creeds Fairbairn illustrates that both of them identify God with the divine essence which is reflective of neither the Nicaean Creed nor Athanasius. He also points out that while the reformed Creeds begin with the one God, or his essence, the Nicaean Creed as well as Athanasius' formulations begin with the Father and proceed to the other trinitarian persons. Discussing the same type of interpretation in his *The Nicene Faith*, Behr refers to the entry under

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[894] Fairbairn, 'Reflections on the Patristic Approach to the Trinity' (audio file).

[895] Ecclesiae magno consensu apud nos docent, decretum Nicaenae synodi de unitate essentiae divinae et de tribus personis verum et sine ulla dubitatione credendum esse, videlicet, quod sit una essentia divina, quae et appellatur et est Deus, aeternus, incoporeus, impartibilis, immensa potentia, sapientia, bonitate, Creator et Conservator omnium rerum, visibilium et invisibilium; et tamen tres sint personae eiusdem essentiae et potentiae, et coaeternae, Pater, Filius et Spiritus Sanctus.

[896] Secundum hanc veritatem et Dei Verbum credimus in unum Deum, qui est unica essential, in qua tres sunt Personae, incommunicabilibus proprietatibus ab aeterno revera ac reipsa distinctae; nempe Pater, Filius et Spiritus Sanctus.

'Trinity' in the *Oxford Dictionary of the Christian Church* that says: 'The central dogma of Christian theology, that the one God exists in three Persons and one substance, Father, Son, and Holy Spirit. God is one God equally in three distinct modes of existence, yet remains one through all eternity'. Behr's insightful comments that follow are good to be cited in full:

> These 'facts of dogma' have been assumed as a given, and so trinitarian theology concerns itself with reflecting on how the one God can simultaneously be three eternally distinct persons, without the plurality destroying the unity or the unity undermining the reality of the distinctions. In this form, such theology begins with what can be known and said of this God—that he is one, the uncreated origin of all creation, love, goodness and so on; and then proceeds to analize how this same God is three—how the persons of the Trinity are related, their different characteristics and relationship. Having explained this 'immanent' trinitarian theology, describing the being of such a God as it is in itself, the next step is to relate this Trinity to the activity of revelation, the economy of salvation recorded in Scripture, the "economic" dimension of trinitarian theology. But now, because of the position already established, it is simply assumed, beginning with Augustine, that the theophanies described in the Old Testament were not uniquely manifestations of the Son and Word of God, but of any of the three, or the Trinity itself, the one Lord God, as Augustine put it [*De Trin*. 3.1.3] . Finally, it is claimed, first by Peter Lombard, though it is still a common presupposition, that while it was the Son who became man, as Jesus Christ, it was nevertheless possible (and that it still is would seem to be the working presupposition for much modern theology), for the Father and the Spirit also to be incarnate. Trinitarian theology is thus made into a realm unto itself, requiring subsequent reflection on "the incarnation" of one of the three divine persons: Triadology are taken as being the linchpins of Christian theology—Christian faith is "trinitarian" and "incarnational", the unquestioned premise for most modern theology.

Slightly later he continues:

> The basic scriptural grammar of trinitarian theology—that the one God, the God of Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob, is the Father of the Lord Jesus Christ, the Son of God, made known in and through the Spirit—is preserved in the most abstract discussions of the fourth century, in the creeds of Nicaea and Constantinople, and in liturgical language. Yet this fundamental grammar is overlooked when the point of these discussions is neglected and the resulting formulae are taken in abstraction, as referring to an 'immanent' Trinity—one God existing in three Persons—which is then presupposed and superimposed upon the scriptural revelation.

For scholars who interpret the Nicene Creed in this way the heart of its formulation reads less about how the person of the Son is equal to the person of God the Father, and more about how both of them conform to the qualities of the divine essence such as those to which Behr refers—'love', 'goodness', 'one', 'the uncreated origin of all creation', etc. The same view of God in terms of the divine essence has also been attributed to Athanasius. Benjamin King traces such interpretation specifically to Newman (nineteenth-century Athanasian expert and translator) who, in his view, 'changed interpretation of Athanasius from one in which "the one God" signified the Father to one in which each of the three persons is equally the one God'.[897] Having examined particular instances where this interpretation shows up most clearly, he suggests that 'Newman seems to have been following his Catholic contemporaries by implying in the revised translation [of Athanasius' *Contra Arianos*] that the doctrine of God divided into *de Deo uno* (on God's unity) and *de Deo trino* (on God's Trinity)'. Criticizing Newman's statement that 'the three persons are each *really* identical with the one divine essence… yet each *really* distinct',[898] King writes that 'for Athanasius, the *hypostases* differed because God's very essence (*ousia*) was the Father's alone, from whom the Son and Spirit were eternally derived in the doctrine of the *monarchia*'.[899] Yet, in his view, it is Newman's interpretation of Athanasius' doctrine of God as 'One divine essence' that shaped the history of doctrine. It especially influenced twentieth-century British scholars, and most notably, Bright's Greek edition of *The Orations of St. Athanasius Against the Arians*. As a result, Newman's scholarship solidified what King calls a 'Latinized'[900] notion of God guided by 'a generical' view of substance. According to this view, 'God's substance is where Father, Son, and Spirit find their unity'.[901] In one of his concluding remarks, King observes: 'The Latin way in which Newman read the Eastern patriarch would influence generation of Anglophone readers [the list includes Bright, Kaye, Gwatkin, Robertson, Cross, Marriott and Cureton] through the widespread availability of the first translation [of the *Contra Arianos*] in A Library of the Fathers and the Nicene and Post-Nicene Fathers series. Newman's second translation in volume 1 of *Select Treatise*s and the amplified

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[897] King, *Newman and the Alexandrian Fathers*, 212.
[898] Newman, *Tracts*, 172. The italics are original.
[899] King, *Newman and the Alexandrian Fathers*, 241.
[900] Ibid. 260-1.
[901] Ibid. 201.

annotations gathered in volume 2, were less widely available. Yet, the notes in particular shaped the way Athanasius was interpreted'.[902]

In contrast to Newman's interpretation of Athanasius' doctrine of God, other scholars argue that Athanasius had a distinctly personal theology. According to Behr, Athanasius' use of the *ousia* language is stamped with a relational concept of God. He never departs from the central argument that the Son is from the Father's essence using the term essence 'not in a generic sense, but as referring to the kind of being that God is... to indicate the very being of God, God himself'.[903] Presenting a similar argument, Zizioulas suggests that Athanasius' trinitarian theology is best understood in terms of what he calls 'the ontology of communion'.[904] He writes:

> By connecting the Son's being with the very substance of God, Athanasius also transformed the idea of substance. And it is here that his departure from the cosmological thinking of Origen appears…. To say that the Son belongs to God's substance implies that substance *possesses almost by definition a relational character*…. If God's being is by nature relational, and it can be signified by the word "substance", can we not then conclude almost inevitably that, given the ultimate character of God's being for all ontology, substance, in as much as it signifies the ultimate character of being, can be conceived only as communion?[905]

Discussing Athanasius' argument that the Son is *homoousios* with the Father, Stead points out that Athanasius never turns it into a formula of how both are *homoousioi* together. Instead, the term *homoousios* is used to depict 'the perfect continuity of the being of the Father in the Son, who is from his essence and so *homoousios* with him'.[906] For Widdicombe this argument shows up most strongly in the way Athanasius speaks of God as Father.[907] He suggests that Athanasius relates the divine attributes not to the essence of God, but to the personal source, the Father. He writes that 'all the divine attributes are necessarily subordinate and can be given their proper weight only in relation to fatherhood'.[908] Accordingly, instead of seeing Athanasius as measuring the Father and Son against their common essence as that which makes both of them God, Widdicombe understands his main point in terms

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[902] Ibid. 261.
[903] Behr, *The Nicene Faith*, 2/1:232.
[904] Zizioulas, *Being as Communion*, 83.
[905] Ibid. The italics are in the original.
[906] Stead, *Divine Substance*, 260.
[907] Widdicombe, *The Fatherhood of God*, 172.
[908] Ibid. 171.

of how the Son is equal to God the Father.[909] For these scholars trinitarian theology of the fourth century is not a result of abstract formulae such as *homoousios*, three *hypostases*, and one *ousia*. Rather, it is a reflection 'on how the crucified and exalted Lord Jesus Christ reveals the one and only God as Father, in and through the Holy Spirit, who also enables adopted sons crucified with Christ to call upon the same God as Father'.[910] This means that 'trinitarian theology has less to do with the heavenly existence of three divine persons than with this new manner of confessing the one God—as Father, in the Son, by the Holy Spirit'.[911] One example of such reflection is Baxter Kruger's discussion of what it means to believe in God according to the early Creeds. In his book, *The Great Dance*, he cites a portion from the *Larger Catechism* that says:

> Question 7. What is God?
>
> A. God is a Spirit, in and of himself infinite in being, glory blessedness, and perfection; all-sufficient, eternal, unchangeable, incomprehensible, everywhere present, almighty; knowing all things, most wise, most holy, most just, most merciful and gracious, long-suffering, and abundant in goodness and truth.[912]

Describing his experience of making sense of this Creed, he admits that '[i]t is this God, this severely abstract divinity, that created the dilemma for me', and it is 'under... the writings of Athanasius and others, that my basic notion of God was being converted. It was moving from the abstract to the concrete, from the austere to the personal'.[913] Slightly later, he writes:

> When we recite the Nicene Creed of the Apostle's Creed and affirm that Jesus Christ is the eternal Son of God, we are saying that there has never been a moment in eternity when God was alone. We are saying that God has always been Father, Son and Spirit. We are saying that there was never a time when the Father was not Father, when the Son and the Spirit were not there and there was just God, so to speak, just some abstract divinity. God has always existed in relationship. Fellowship, camaraderie, togetherness, communion have always been at the centre of the very being of God, and always will be.[914]

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[909] Ibid., 172.
[910] Behr, *The Nicene Faith*, 2/1:8.
[911] Ibid., 2/1:8.
[912] Kruger, *The Great Dance*, 20.
[913] Ibid., 14, 21.
[914] Ibid., 23-4.

To this he adds:

> The early Church understood this, and their understanding is reflected in the opening sentence of the Nicene Creed. 'We believe in one God, the Father almighty, maker of heaven and earth'. The Creed does not say: 'We believe in one *God*, maker of heaven and earth'. It says, 'God, *the Father* almighty, maker of heaven and earth'. That is very deliberate on the part of the authors. They were placing creation in the context of the Fatherhood of God, and that means in the context of the relationship of the Father, Son and Spirit.[915]

For Kruger and others, Athanasius' concept of God is fundamentally relational. It begins with the Father as the personal source of divinity; it does not start with the impersonal essence or the qualities therein. But what difference does it make (if any) for Athanasius' soteriology if God is understood in either of these two ways? Identifying the concept of God as the divine essence with the Latin way of describing God, Lossky answers this question with a polemical remark: 'The tradition of the Eastern Church does not have a place for the theology of the divine essence…. The ultimate purpose of the spiritual life and eternal bliss in the kingdom of Heaven is not a contemplation of the essence, but above all sharing in the divine life of the Holy Trinity, becoming deified and participating in God's nature. By becoming created gods in the likeness of the uncreated God we receive by grace what the Holy Trinity possesses by nature'.[916] In his 'Reflections on the Patristic Approach to the Trinity', Fairbairn[917] offers a more specific distinction. He suggests that the way we describe God (emphasizing either the essence or the persons of God) directly affects our description of deification. If God is understood primarily in terms of the divine essence, then deification is related to our sharing in the divine qualities that tend to be impersonal and independend of God himself (an approach that fits the 'physical soteriology'). And if God is understood primarily as a communion of the Father, Son, and Holy Spirit, then deification is about God's personal initiave of restoring us into his divine relations rather than implying that his gifts alone (with our cooperation) are supposed to make us godlike.

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[915] Ibid., 24-5.

[916] Lossky, *Otcherk Misticheskogo Bogosloviya*, 159: 'В предании Восточной Церкви нет места для богословсия Божественной сущности…. Конечная цель духовной жизни и вечное блаженство в Царствии Небесном – не созерцание сущности, но прежде всего соучастие в Божественной жизни Пресвятой Троицы, обоженное состояние «сонаследников Божественного естества», как богов, созданных после несозданного Бога, и обладающих по благодати всем, чем Пресвятая Троица обладает по природе'.

[917] Fairbairn, *Life in the Trinity*, e.g. 6-9.

Based on the above observations, I will endevour to show that Athanasius' later thought corresponds to the second of the two interpretations of God and deification. He presents God as a communion of the trinitarian persons, and depicts deification in the personal sense of being joined to God as adopted children of the Father. I will also argue that behind this understanding of God and salvation stands Athanasius' passion (inspired by the Nicene formula about the Father-Son relation) to explain how the Son is equal to and *homoousios* with the One God, the Father, rather than how Father and Son (and Holy Spirit) are one essence, or how one God could have three persons.

5.1.2 Person versus Essence in the Contra Arianos *1.14-34*

Defending Christ's divinity and eternal sonship against the Arian teaching, Athanasius charges his opponents for excluding the Son from the natural relationship with the Father by deliberately depicting the Godhead in abstract ways. To refute this way of conceptualizing God, he argues that proper theological discourse should start with God as a personal being expressed to us in Father-Son language. He lays down this argument in two passages of the *Contra Arianos*: *CA* 1.14-29 [Metzler 123-39] and 30-4 [Metzler 139-44]. In the first one, he deals with the Arian reproach that the Son's equality with the Father implies that the former is the latter's brother and a potential father. In the second, he grapples with the issue of eternal generation of the Son rebutting the charge that it implies two unoriginate entities. In the first passage, Athanasius affirms that the most appropriate description of God in the order of theology is one that begins with the Father and proceeds to the Son. In the second one, he adds that the best epistemological starting point is to begin with the revelation of the Son and proceed to the Father. In what follows, I will consider each passage separately, paying special attention to Athanasius' reasoning about God as a personal and relational being.

5.1.2.1 Contra Arianos *1.14-29*

In *CA* 1.14 Athanasius begins with the Arian contention that 'If there never was, when the Son was not', say they, 'but he is eternal, and coexists with the Father, you call him no more the Father's Son, but brother' (*CA* 1.14 [Metzler 123; NPNF²

4:314]).[918] Although it is not certain that either Arius or his supporters made this claim,[919] its logic is clear: if the Father and Son are coeternal, there must be a third pre-existing origin from which both persons have come. In the process of responding to this charge, Athanasius shows what kind of language about God he sought to avoid in the face of the Arian opposition:

> For the Father and the Son were not generated from some pre-existing origin (ἔκ τινος ἀρχῆς προϋπαρχούσης), that we may account them brothers, but the Father is the origin of the Son and begat him; and the Father is Father, and not born the Son of any; and the Son is Son, and not brother (*CA* 1.14 [Metzler 124; NPNF² 4:314]).[920]

In this passage Athanasius draws a contrast between two different ways of speaking about God: one that begins with the pre-existing essence, and the other that starts with the Father. The difference between the two is so fundamental that it leads to completely dissimilar notions of God. If one begins with the pre-existing essence, then the natural way to relate the Father and Son to each other is by tying both of them to this pre-existing essence. But if one begins with the Father, then instead of postulating the pre-existing essence it follows that the Father implies the Son. His discussion of this argument recurs in a more elaborate form in *De Syn.* 51 [Opitz 274-5]. He starts by citing the Arian indictment against the use of ὁμοούσιος:

> They say then, as you have written, that it is not right to say that the Son is coessential with the Father, because he who speaks of 'coessential' speaks of three, one essence pre-existing, and that those who are generated from it are coessential: and they add, 'If then the Son be coessential with the Father, then an essence must be previously supposed (οὐσίαν τινὰ προυποκειμένην), from which they have been generated; and that the One is not Father and the other Son, but they are brothers together (*De Syn.* 51 [Opitz 275; NPNF² 4:477]).[921]

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918 εἰ μὴ ἦν ποτε ὅτε οὐκ ἦν, ἀλλ᾽ ἀίδιός ἐστιν ὁ υἱὸς καὶ συνυπάρχει τῷ πατρὶ, οὐκέτι υἱὸν, ἀλλ᾽ ἀδελφὸν εἶναι τοῦ πατρὸς λέγετε τοῦτον.

919 A third-man argument is also found in Eusebius of Caesarea in *Urk.* 3[10] [Opitz 4-6].

920 οὐ γὰρ ἔκ τινος ἀρχῆς προϋπαρχούσης ὁ πατὴρ καὶ ὁ υἱὸς ἐγεννήθησαν, ἵνα καὶ ἀδελφοὶ νομισθῶσιν· ἀλλ᾽ ὁ πατὴρ ἀρχὴ τοῦ υἱοῦ καὶ γεννητής ἐστι καὶ ὁ πατὴρ πατήρ ἐστι καὶ οὐχ υἱός τινος γέγονε· καὶ ὁ υἱὸς δὲ υἱός ἐστι καὶ οὐκ ἀδελφός.

921 φασὶ τοίνυν, ὡς ὑμεῖς ἐγράψατε, μὴ χρῆναι λέγειν ὁμοούσιον τὸν υἱὸν τῷ πατρὶ, ὅτι ὁ λέγων ὁμοούσιον τρία λέγει, οὐσίαν τινὰ προυποκειμένην καὶ τοὺς ἐκ ταύτης γεννωμένους ὁμουσίους εἶναι. καὶ ἐπιλέγουσιν· 'ἐὰν οὖν ὁ υἱὸς ὁμοούσιος ᾖ τῷ πατρί, ἀνάγκη προυποκεῖσθαι αὐτῶν οὐσίαν, ἐξ ἧς καὶ ἐγεννήθησαν, καὶ μὴ εἶναι τὸν μὲν πατέρα, τὸν δὲ υἱόν, ἀλλ᾽ ἀμφοτέρους ἀδελφούς'.

Here Athanasius asserts that the Arian rejection of ὁμοούσιος has led them to a mistaken belief that the Father and Son derive from a pre-existing essence (οὐσίαν τινὰ προυποκειμένην). To deal with this issue, Athanasius goes on to discuss what it means for a generated thing to be ὁμοούσιον with what has generated it.[922] In the process, he makes several arguments. First, he points out that there is a fundamental difference between the human generation and the generation proper to God. While people beget by employing an existing entity (ἡ ὑποκειμένη ὕλη), God generates out of himself as Father having nothing that would preexist him. Therefore, to think of God as being born of another essence is to project unto him a human way of generation and 'give a corporeal sense to coessential'.[923] Second, Athanasius contends that for the Son to be ὁμοούσιος with the Father means to possess the same qualities as the latter does. Locating these qualities within the Father (as opposed to the pre-existing essence), he argues that for the Son to be of the Father means to possess the qualities of his Father's essence (ἰδιότητα τῆς πατρικῆς οὐσίας).[924] It also means that being of the Father's essence the Son is ὁμοούσιος with him. Clarifying this argument, he states: 'Since the Son's nature is not divisible from the Father, and the Father's divinity is essentially in the Son (τῆς πατρικῆς θεότητος οὔσης ἐν τῷ υἱῷ), everyone *who has seen* the Son *has seen the Father* in Him [Jn. 14:9]. Why then should not the Son be called coessential?' (*De Syn.* 52 [Opitz 276; NPNF² 4:478, modified]).[925]

To make the same point in *CA* 1.21 [Metzler 130], Athanasius draws a list of ten divine qualities in the following order: 'eternal', 'immortal', 'powerful', 'light', 'king', 'almighty', 'God', 'Lord', 'creator', 'maker'.[926] Having listed them, he goes on to ascribe these qualities to the Father and the Son in the same way as he did in *De Syn.* 51-2. He remarks that 'if we consider the attributes of the Father [contained in the list] we will come to know whether this image [namely, Son] is really his…. These attributes must be in the image, to make it true that he *who has seen* the Son *has seen the Father* [Jn. 14:9]' (*CA* 1.21 [Metzler 130; NPNF² 4:318,

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[922] *De Syn.* 51 [Opitz 275]: τὸ ἔκ τινος γεννώμενον ὁμοούσιόν ἐστι τῷ γεννήσαντι.

[923] Ibid. 51 [Opitz 275; NPNF² 4:478]: ἐπὶ θεοῦ τὸ ὁμοούσιον σωματικῶς ἐκλαμβάνειν.

[924] Ibid. 51 [Opitz 276].

[925] τοιαύτης δὲ οὔσης καὶ μᾶλλον ἀδιαιρέτου τῆς φύσεως τοῦ υἱοῦ πρὸς τὸν πατέρα καὶ οὐκ ἐπισυμβάσης τῆς θεότητος τῷ υἱῷ, ἀλλὰ τῆς πατρικῆς θεότητος οὔσης ἐν τῷ υἱῷ, ὥστε *τὸν ἑωρακότα τὸν υἱὸν ὁρᾶν ἐν αὐτῷ τὸν πατέρα*, διὰ τί ὁ τοιοῦτος μὴ ἂν λέγοιτο ὁμοούσιος;

[926] ἀΐδιος, ἀθάνατος δυνατός, φῶς, βασιλεύς, παντοκράτωρ, θεός, κύριος, κτίστης, ποιητής.

modified])'.[927] When compared to the way Arius treated the divine qualities, the difference is stark. While the latter used the divine qualities (his list consists of 'one God', 'alone ingenerate', 'alone everlasting', 'alone without beginning', 'alone true', 'alone having immortality', 'alone wise', 'alone good', 'alone sovereign', 'judge', 'governor', 'provider of all', 'unalterable' 'unchangeable', 'just', and 'good')[928] to exclude the Son from the true God, Athanasius uses them here for precisely the opposite—to prove that the Son is coessential and coeternal with the Father. Seen in this light, Arian rejection of the Son's divinity such as 'there was a time when he was not' (ἦν ποτε, ὅτε οὐκ ἦν), 'he was not before he came to be' (οὐκ ἦν πρὶν γένηται), and he came 'from nothing' (ἐξ οὐκ ὄντων) has to do directly with his way of speaking about God.[929] Athanasius clarifies: 'They do not explain who it is they ask about, so as to allow of an answer, but they say in an abstract way, "He who is", "him who is not". Who then "is", and what "are not", O Arians? Or who "is", and who "is not"? What are said "to be", what "not to be"?' (*CA* 1.24 [Metzler 133; NPNF[2] 4:320]).[930] In contrast to this way of approaching God in the abstract terms such as ὁ ὤν, ὁ μὴ ὤν, τὰ ὄντα, and τα μὴ ὄντα, the Christian tradition, according to Athanasius, begins with the personal concept of God as Father. And once God is seen as Father then Christ is seen as his natural Son who must have the same qualities as the one from whom he is begotten. Only this way of understanding God, according to Athanasius, can result in the proper christology that confesses the Son to be coessential and coeternal with the Father.

Another issue that was posed by the Arians had to do with turning the Son into the potential father. Athanasius reports them claiming the following: 'If the Son is the Father's offspring and image, and is like in all things to the Father, then it necessarily holds that as he is begotten, so he begets, and he too becomes father of a son. And again, he who is begotten from him, begets in his turn, and so on without

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[927] ἴδωμεν τὰ τοῦ πατρός, ἵνα καὶ τὴν εἰκόνα ἐπιγνῶμεν.... ταῦτα εἶναι δεῖ ἐν τῇ εἰκόνι, ἵνα ἀληθῶς ὁ τὸν υἱὸν ἑωρακὼς ἑωρακὼς ᾖ τὸν πατέρα.

[928] *Urk.* 6[1].2 [Opitz 12; NPNF[2] 4:458]:   ἕνα θεόν, μόνον ἀγέννητον, μόνον ἀΐδιον, μόνον ἄναρχον, μόνον ἀληθινόν, μόνον ἀθανασίαν ἔχοντα, μόνον σοφόν, μόνον ἀγαθόν, μόνον δυνάστην, πάντων κριτήν, διοικητήν, οἰκονόμον, ἄτρεπτον καὶ ἀναλλοίωτον, δίκαιον καὶ ἀγαθόν. For a discussion of Arius' treatment of these qualities, see sect. 4.2.1, point (5).

[929] *CA* 1.5 [Metzler 113-5].

[930] οὐ γὰρ σημαίνουσι περὶ τίνος πυνθάνονται, ἵνα καὶ ὁ ἐρωτώμενος ἀποκρίνηται· ἀλλ᾽ ἁπλῶς λέγουσιν, ὁ ὤν τὸν μὴ ὄντα'. τίς οὖν 'ὁ ὤν' καὶ τίνα 'τὰ μὴ ὄντα', ὦ ἀρειανοί; ἢ τίς 'ὁ ὤν' καὶ τίς 'ὁ μὴ ὤν', καὶ τίνα λέγεται ὄντα ἢ μὴ ὄντα;

limit' (*CA* 1.21 [Metzler 131; NPNF² 4:319]).[931] In response, he elaborates on the argument about the difference between the human and divine types of generation mentioned above in connection with *De Syn.* 51 [Opitz 275]. He argues that the difference between the two is that the human beings are imperfect and therefore beget in time, while God is perfect and begets eternally and impassibly.[932] In the created order, there can be no son without a father who exists before him, and once being born from his father the son himself becomes a potential father to someone else. Being of transitory nature, human way of begetting is bound to time and exhibits a passible reproduction. In the Godhead, however, the Father does not beget a Son in such a way that the latter would become a father; instead they remain in their respective positions in the absolute sense (κυρίως). Athanasius asserts: 'Thus it belongs to the Godhead alone, that the Father is properly father, and the Son properly son, and in them, and them only, does it hold that the Father is always Father and the Son always Son' (*CA* 1.21 [Metzler 131-2; NPNF² 4:319, modified]).[933] To seal this argument, he refers to Eph. 3:15[934] (*from whom every family in heaven and on earth is named*) and asserts that God is the immutable exemplar of human generation. Interestingly, Athanasius ties the immutability of God directly to the Father and through him to the Son.[935] More specifically, he writes: 'If the Father is unalterable, and what he is that he continues, necessarily does the image also continue what he is, and will not alter' (*CA* 1.22 [Metzler 132; NPNF² 4:319]).[936] Here, as elsewhere,[937] Athanasius predicates the divine attribute of immutability to the Father (as opposed to the pre-existing entity), presenting him as the source of the same attribute in the Son. Discussing this relation more fully in *CA* 3.4 [Savvidis 310; NPNF² 4:395], Athanasius argues that the Son reflects all the

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[931] εἰ γέννημά ἐστιν ὁ υἱὸς τοῦ πατρὸς καὶ εἰκὼν καὶ ὅμοιός ἐστι κατὰ πάντα τοῦ πατρός, ὀφείλει πάντως, ὥσπερ γεγέννηται, γεννᾶν καὶ ὁ υἱὸς καὶ γίνεσθαι καὶ αὐτὸς πατὴρ υἱοῦ· πάλιν τε ὁ ἐξ αὐτοῦ γεννώμενος γεννᾶν καὶ αὐτὸς καὶ καθεξῆς ἕως εἰς ἄπειρον.

[932] Athanasius emphasizes in various ways that God is not like man (οὐ γὰρ ὡς ἄνθρωπος ὁ Θεός) (*CA* 1.21 [Metzler 130-1]).

[933] εἰ δὲ 'οὐκ ἔστιν ὡς ἄνθρωπος ὁ θεός' οὐκ ἔστι γάρ, οὐ δεῖ τὰ ἀνθρώπων ἐπ' αὐτοῦ λογίζεσθαι.... ὅθεν ἐπὶ τῆς θεότητος μόνης ὁ πατὴρ κυρίως πατήρ ἐστι καὶ ὁ υἱὸς κυρίως υἱός ἐστι, καὶ ἐπὶ τούτων καὶ μόνων ἕστηκε τὸ πατὴρ ἀεὶ πατὴρ εἶναι καὶ τὸ υἱὸς ἀεὶ υἱὸς εἶναι.

[934] ἐξ αὐτοῦ γὰρ πᾶσα πατριὰ ἐν οὐρανοῖς καὶ ἐπὶ γῆς ὀνομάζεται.

[935] Cf. *CA* 1.28 [Metzler 137-8]: διὰ τοῦτο ἀεὶ πατήρ, καὶ οὐκ ἐπιγέγονε τῷ θεῷ τὸ πατήρ. ἵνα μὴ καὶ τρεπτὸς εἶναι νομισθῇ.

[936] εἰ δὲ ἄτρεπτός ἐστιν ὁ πατὴρ καὶ ὅ ἐστιν οὕτως διαμένει, ἐξ ἀνάγκης καὶ εἰκὼν ὅ ἐστι διαμενεῖ καὶ οὐ τραπήσεται.

[937] e.g. *CA* 1.21 [Metzler 130-1]; 1.42 [Metzler 152]; 3.4 [Metzler 310].

divine qualities that are found in the Father and is the same as he is except for being the Father and not Son. He writes:

> And so, since they are one, and the Godhead itself one, the same things are said of the Son, which are said of the Father, except his being said to be Father:—for instance, that he is God, 'And the Word was God'; Almighty, 'Thus says he which was and is and is to come, the Almighty'; Lord, 'One Lord Jesus Christ'; that he is Light, 'I am the Light'; that he wipes out sins, 'that you may know', he says, 'that the Son of man has power upon earth to forgive sins'; and so with other attributes. For 'all things', says the Son himself, 'whatsoever the Father has, are mine'; and again, 'And mine are thine' (*CA* 3.4 [Savvidis 310; NPNF² 4:395]).[938]

The principle behind this statement is that the Father is the source of divinity, and therefore all divine qualities are properly indwelled in him. Furthermore, being embedded in the Father's being, these qualities are shared by the Son in the way that what is said of the Father should also be said of the Son. If the former is 'God', 'Almighty', 'Light', and 'Forgiver', so is the latter except that he is named Son, and not Father. Consequently, in view of the Father and Son being one, we can speak of the indivisible Godhead as resting on the person of the Father rather than on a pre-existing divine essence, or entity.

While Athanasius is consistent in describing God in terms of the Father-Son relationship, in one particular passage he seems to exploit such categories that separate God from the divine persons. In *CA* 1.16 [Metzler 125-6], he speaks of the danger of dividing God's being into different essences (οὐσίαι), and in the process of doing this, he resorts to such phrases as 'division of God's essence' (μερισμὸν τῆς τοῦ θεοῦ οὐσίας),[939] 'division of that blessed essence' (μερισμός ἐστι τῆς μακαρίας ἐκείνης οὐσίας),[940] and 'division of the essence of God' (μερισμὸν τῆς οὐσίας τοῦ θεοῦ).[941] This is the closest Athanasius ever comes to using impersonal language for God. However, a closer look at this passage reveals that what Athanasius means by the essence of God is not an isolated entity, but the *Father's*

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[938] οὕτω γοῦν ἓν αὐτῶν ὄντων καὶ μιᾶς οὔσης τῆς θεότητος τὰ αὐτὰ λέγεται περὶ τοῦ υἱοῦ, ὅσα λέγεται καὶ περὶ τοῦ πατρὸς χωρὶς τοῦ λέγεσθαι πατήρ· οἷον 'θεός', καὶ θεὸς ἦν ὁ λόγος', τὸ 'παντοκράτωρ', τάδε λέγει ὁ ἦν καὶ ὁ ὢν καὶ ὁ ἐρχόμενος ὁ παντοκράτωρ', τὸ 'κύριος', εἷς κύριος ἰησοῦς χριστός', τὸ εἶναι φῶς, 'ἐγώ εἰμι τὸ φῶς', τὸ ἐξαλείφειν ἁμαρτίας—ἵνα δὲ', φησίν, 'εἰδῆτε, ὅτι ἔχει ἐξουσίαν ὁ υἱὸς τοῦ ἀνθρώπου ἐπὶ τῆς γῆς ἀφιέναι ἁμαρτίας'—καὶ ὅσα ἄλλα ἂν εὕροις. 'πάντα' γάρ, φησὶν αὐτὸς ὁ υἱός, 'ὅσα ἔχει ὁ πατήρ, ἐμά ἐστι'· καὶ πάλιν τὰ ἐμὰ σά ἐστιν.

[939] *CA* 1.16 [Metzler 126].

[940] Ibid.

[941] Ibid.

essence. Thus, arguing against the Arian way of understanding the Father-Son relation as implying two different οὐσίαι, he writes that it is more accurate to say that the Son's being is derived from the Father's. He affirms that 'what is from the essence of the Father' (τὸ ἐκ τῆς οὐσίας τοῦ πατρός), and proper (ἴδιον) to him is entirely (σύμπαν) the Son'.[942] Therefore, we are to describe the Son not in terms of a separate οὐσία, but as 'the offspring of the Father's essence' (ἐκ τῆς οὐσίας τοῦ πατρὸς γέννημα)[943] and being 'proper to the essence of the Father' (ἴδιον τῆς οὐσίας τοῦ πατρός).[944] In all of the above instances the divine essence is identified directly with the Father, and the Son's relation to him is such that he cannot be other than what he is, the Father's own (ἴδιος) Son. I will discuss this argument and Athanasius' use of the term ἴδιος more specifically later in this chapter. For now, it is important to note that Athanasius' focus on the Father-Son language affects the way he speaks of God as the personal being even in those instances where it seems that he does otherwise.

Another way in which Athanasius counters the Arian way of describing God in *CA* 1.14-29 is by drawing a distinction between two types of relations. He explains it as follows:

> A work is external to the nature, but a son is the proper offspring of the essence; it follows that a work need not have been always, for the workman frames it when he wills; but an offspring is not subject to will, but is proper to the essence. And a man may be and may be called maker, though the works are not as yet; but father he cannot be called, nor can he be, unless a son exist (*CA* 1.29 [Metzler 139; NPNF² 4:323]).[945]

Behind this statement stands the Arian charge that if the Father has eternal power to beget the eternal Son, then creation must also be eternal, for both the Son and creation come from the same source, the Father.[946] In response, Athanasius objects by pointing out to the lack of proper distinction between two types of relations: between the Father and his Son on account of the same nature or being, and

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[942] Ibid. 1.16 [Metzler 125; NPNF² 4:315]: τὸ 'ἐκ τῆς οὐσίας τοῦ πατρὸς' ἴδιον αὐτοῦ σύμπαν εἶναι τὸν υἱόν.

[943] Ibid. 1.16 [Metzler 126; NPNF² 4:316].

[944] Ibid.

[945] τὸ ποίημα ἔξωθεν τοῦ ποιοῦντός ἐστιν, ὥσπερ εἴρηται, ὁ δὲ υἱὸς ἴδιον τῆς οὐσίας γέννημά ἐστι· διὸ καὶ τὸ μὲν ποίημα οὐκ ἀνάγκη ἀεὶ εἶναι· ὅτε γὰρ βούλεται ὁ δημιουργός, ἐργάζεται· τὸ δὲ γέννημα οὐ βουλήσει ὑπόκειται, ἀλλὰ τῆς οὐσίας ἐστὶν ἰδιότης. καὶ ποιητὴς μὲν ἂν εἴη καὶ λέγοιτο, κἂν μήπω ᾖ τὰ ἔργα· πατὴρ δὲ οὐκ ἂν λεχθείη οὐδ' ἂν εἴη μὴ ὑπάρχοντος υἱοῦ.

[946] *CA* 1.29 [Metzler 128-9].

between the Maker and his works on the basis of will. Discussing the former,[947] he establishes the correlation between the one who wills and the thing willed. He points out that that which is willed are 'created things' (τὰ γενητά) that come 'from nothing' (ἐξ οὐκ ὄντων).[948] They are directly dependent on the subject that wills them. In other words, every created being derives its existence from the Creator, while the Creator himself exists independent of whether he creates anything or not. In contrast to this type of relation, the other one—that of being—implies a necessary existence. Athanasius explains the precise difference between the two types of relation as follows: 'Whereas when we call God a Maker, we do not of necessity intimate the things which have come to be, for a maker is before his works. But when we call God Father, at once with the Father we signify the Son's existence' (*CA* 3.6 [Savvidis 312; NPNF² 4:396-7]).[949] Here the existence of one entity, namely the Father, necessarily entails the existence of another, namely the Son. To illustrate this logic with regard to the Father-Son relation, Athanasius uses an analogy from human experience. In *CA* 1.26 [Metzler 135-6], he points out that in ordinary life we distinguish between owning a house and owning a child. Of the two only the child can be proper (ἴδιον) to someone's being, not the house. Likewise, a father cannot obtain a son in the same way as he would a house, or any other possession. While the house is 'external' (ἔξωθεν) and 'foreign' (ἀλλότριον) to the father, the son is proper to the father's being (ἴδιον τῆς οὐσίας) and is 'out of him' (ἐξ ἑαυτοῦ).[950] In the same way, the Son is related to the Father. He is begotten from him by nature (κατὰ φύσιν), and therefore has a qualitatively different relation than the works to their Maker. To substantiate this claim, Athanasius refers to the fact that even the Scripture depicts the father and son as two simultaneous and coinherent subjects. Thus, before Levi was born, he was already considered to be in the loins of his great-grand father. After the latter attained the age of being able to have children, he produced a son and became a father.[951] Applying this analogy to

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[947] On the subject of will in Athanasius and Arius, see Stead, 'The Freedom of the Will and the Arian Controversy', 245-57; Meijering, 'The Doctrine of the Will and of the Trinity in the Orations of Gregory of Nazianzus', 224-34, and his *Orthodoxy and Platonism*, 69-85.

[948] *CA* 1.29 [Metzler 128-9].

[949] ὁ μέντοι ποιητὴν λέγων τὸν θεὸν οὐ πάντως καὶ τὰ γενόμενα δηλοῖ—ἔστι γὰρ καὶ πρὸ τῶν ποιημάτων ποιητής—ὁ δὲ πατέρα λέγων εὐθὺς μετὰ πατρὸς σημαίνει καὶ τὴν τοῦ υἱοῦ ὕπαρξιν. Cf. Williams, *Arius,* 229: 'What [the Father] does in producing the Son is the enactment of what he is; and as his acts are not temporal and episodic, he always and necessarily "does" what he is—by the necessity of his own being'.

[950] *CA* 1.26 [Metzler 136].

[951] Ibid.

the Son, Athanasius makes him speak in the first person: 'Therefore I too am wholly in him, while I remain myself what I am' (*CA* 1.26 [Metzler 136; NPNF² 4:322]).[952] This coinherence between the Father and Son is such that one cannot be without the other, while the works—being external and dependent on the will of their Maker—may or may not be.

Athanasius specifies this concept God—grounded on the primacy of persons—by qualifying the content of the Father-Son relationship in terms of union and love. He insists: 'Thus let everyone religiously account of the pleasure (τὸ θέλειν) and the not-unwillingness of God (τὸ μὴ ἀβούλητον). For by that good pleasure (τῇ θελήσει) wherewith the Son is the object of the Father's pleasure (θέλεται παρὰ τοῦ πατρός), is the Father the object of the Son's love, pleasure, and honour (ἀγαπᾷ καὶ θέλει καὶ τιμᾷ); and one is the good pleasure (θέλημα) which is from Father in Son, so that here too we may contemplate the Son in the Father and the Father in the Son' (*CA* 3.66 [Savvidis 379-80; NPNF² 4:430]).[953] Athanasius is so intent about stressing the personal nature of the Father-Son relationship that he allows himself to use the words βούλομαι and θέλω (usually reserved for the description of the contingent relations) in order to express the kind of intimacy that the Father and Son enjoy between themselves. To not be taken incorrectly, he explains that 'to say, 'The Father's good pleasure is the Son', and 'The Word's good pleasure is the Father', implies, not a precedent will, but genuineness of nature (φύσεως γνησιότητα), and propriety and likeness of essence (οὐσίας ἰδιότητα καὶ ὁμοίωσιν)' (*CA* 3.66 [Savvidis 380; NPNF² 4:430]).[954] In this relationship love, pleasure, and honour are both given and received. They begin with the Father (Athanasius quotes Jn. 5:20 that says, *for the Father loves the Son and shows him all his works*),[955] and once they are passed to the Son, the latter returns them to their initial source. Athanasius states: 'the Father has love and good pleasure towards the Son, and the Son has love and good pleasure towards the Father' (*CA* 3.66

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[952] διὸ καὶ ἐν ἐκείνῳ ὅλος εἰμὶ μένων αὐτὸς ὅ εἰμί .

[953] καὶ οὕτως τὸ θέλειν καὶ τὸ μὴ ἀβούλητον τοῦ θεοῦ τις εὐσεβῶς λογιζέσθω. καὶ γὰρ ὁ υἱὸς τῇ θελήσει ᾗ θέλεται παρὰ τοῦ πατρός, ταύτῃ καὶ αὐτὸς ἀγαπᾷ καὶ θέλει καὶ τιμᾷ τὸν πατέρα, καὶ ἕν ἐστι θέλημα τὸ ἐκ πατρὸς ἐν υἱῷ, ὡς καὶ ἐκ τούτου θεωρεῖσθαι τὸν υἱὸν ἐν τῷ πατρὶ καὶ τὸν πατέρα ἐν τῷ υἱῷ.

[954] τὸ δὲ λέγειν 'ὁ πατὴρ θέλει τὸν υἱὸν' καὶ 'ὁ λόγος θέλει τὸν πατέρα' οὐ βούλησιν προηγουμένην δείκνυσιν, ἀλλὰ φύσεως γνησιότητα καὶ οὐσίας ἰδιότητα καὶ ὁμοίωσιν γνωρίζει.

[955] ἐγὼ ἐν τῷ πατρί, καὶ ὁ πατὴρ ἐν ἐμοί ἐστιν.

[Savvidis 380; NPNF² 4:430]).[956] This reciprocal dynamic of the love-bond between the Father and Son exists eternally for its own sake. It is grounded on God's eternal being in which 'the Father has love and good pleasure (ἀγαπᾷ καὶ θέλει) towards his Son who is his own by nature' (ἴδιον ὄντα φύσει) (CA 3.66 [Savvidis 380; NPNF² 4:430]).[957] This intimacy of relationship between the Father and Son is such that there can be nothing intermediate (μηδὲ μέσον τις, or τις μεταξύ)[958] between them. In the context, the sort of intermediacy Athanasius speaks about is the Gnostic concept of 'will' that pre-exists the willing act of the Father towards the Son. Discerning here the same logic as in the Arian desire to superimpose the pre-existing essence over the persons of the Father and Son, Athanasius rejects it by pointing out that 'to say, "of will he came to be" ('ἐκ βουλήσεως γέγονε') implies that once he was not' (CA 3.66 [Savvidis 380; NPNF² 4:430]).[959] Therefore, neither the Arian 'pre-existing essence', nor the Gnostic 'pre-existing will' fit the proper understanding of God. The only right way (ὀρθῶς) of approaching the Deity is one that begins with the Father and regards the Son as coessential and coeternal with him.

5.1.2.2 Contra Arianos 1.30-4

In the second passage where Athanasius gives specific arguments about God as Father, we see him combating the Arian tendency to impersonalize the divine relations. His particular opponent is a pro-Arian theologian[960] by the name Asterius 'the Sophist'.[961] In CA 2.37 [Metzler 213-4] and De Syn. 18 [Opitz 245-6], we are informed that Asterius acknowledged Christ to be the unique and only-begotten Power and Wisdom of God, yet believed him to be created and sustained by the

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[956] ὁ πατὴρ ἀγαπᾷ καὶ θέλει τὸν υἱόν, καὶ ὁ υἱὸς ἀγαπᾷ καὶ θέλει τὸν πατέρα. This statement together with the quoted passage from CA 3.66, may indicate that Athanasius used the words love and will interchangeably as a way to emphasize the unity of action and will within the divine being, while basing his argument on the notion of personal relationship between the Father and Son.

[957] ἴδιον ὄντα φύσει τὸν υἱὸν αὐτοῦ ἀγαπᾷ καὶ θέλει αὐτόν.

[958] CA 3.66 [Savvidis 380; NPNF² 430].

[959] τὸ μὲν γὰρ λέγειν 'ἐκ βουλήσεως γέγονε' πρῶτον μὲν τὸ μὴ εἶναί ποτε τοῦτον σημαίνει.

[960] Scholars generally agree that Asterius' theology comes close to that of Arius. Cf. e.g. Gregg, Early Arianism, 112; Kinzig, In Search of Asterius, 217-18, and more recently Gwynn, The Eusebians, 205-121, whose view, however, is more qualified and nuanced than that of the other two. Cf. an excellen summary of Asterius' theology in Dudzik, 'Diskuse o Vztahu Božího Syna k Bohu Otci ve Sporu o Areiovu Nauku', 23-9.

[961] Vincent, Asterius von Kappadokien, 22, describes Austerius as the one who 'ist der Systematiker, vielleicht der Systematiker, der Eusebianer und der Vordenker für Arius' (italics original). The largest part of evidence for Asterius' theology is contained in the fragments quoted by Athanasius (primarily in the Contra Arianos and De Synodis) and by Marcellus of Ancyra (preserved in the Contra Marcellum of Eusebius of Caesarea).

Father's will.[962] Agreeing with Arius that the Son derived his Power and Wisdom from the inherent qualities of the Father rather than having them by his own nature, he postulated that only the Father was unbegotten and without beginning. The starting point of Asterius' argumentation was to ask whether 'the Unoriginate is one or two' (ἕν τὸ ἀγένητον ἢ δύο)[963] if both of them are believed to be eternal.

In response, Athanasius makes two claims. In the first place, he argues that Asterius' question is unfair because it gives no proper explanation of what the word ἀγένητον means, while implying that the Son should be placed among the originate entities.[964] He refers to three different meanings that could be adduced to the word ἀγένητον from the philosophical vocabulary of that time. The first meaning can be related to something that can exist, but has not yet come to be (e.g. wood which can potentially become a vessel). Another meaning of ἀγένητον can be related to that which neither has nor ever can come to be (e.g. a triangle can never become a rectangle nor has it ever been one; likewise, an odd number can never become even nor has it ever been one). Finally, ἀγένητον can mean something that has nothing/nobody prior to it; it has no father. Asterius not only ignores these distinctions, but also adds his own one by interpreting ἀγένητον as 'that which is not made, but ever is' (τὸ 'μὴ ποιηθὲν, ἀλλ' ἀεὶ ὄν') (*CA* 1.30 [Metzler 141; NPNF² 4:324, modified]). Having established the fact that ἀγένητον may be defined in more than one way, Athanasius replies to Asterius' question on whether 'the Unoriginate is one or two' by noting that 'many are such and nothing is such, many, which are capable of origination, and nothing, which is not capable' (*CA* 1.31 [Metzler 141; NPNF² 4:324]).[965] If, however, Asterius' own definition of ἀγένητον is to be accepted—'what is not a work but was always' (τὸ μὴ ποίημα, ἀλλ' ἀεὶ ὂν ἀγένητον εἶναι)[966]—the answer to his question would be that 'the Son as well as the Father must in this sense be called unoriginate' (*CA* 1.31 [Metzler 141; NPNF² 4:324]).[967] Hence, the Son's status as unoriginate, according to this logic, must be rejected. Having outlined this point, Athanasius concludes that Asterius'

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[962] For a more detailed analysis of Asterius' view of 'Power' and 'Wisdom' with regard to the Father and Son, see Barnes, 'One Nature, One Power', 205-23; Kinzig, 'Asteius Sophista oder Asterius Ignotus?', 128-9, and Vincent, 'Gottes Wesen, Logos, Weisheit und Kraft', 170-91.

[963] *CA* 1.31 [Metzler 141].

[964] Ibid. 1.30 [Metzler 139-40].

[965] πολλά τε εἶναι καὶ οὐδέν, πλεῖστα μὲν τὰ δυνάμενα γενέσθαι, οὐδὲν δὲ τὸ μὴ δυνάμενον.

[966] *CA* 1.31 [Metzler 141; NPNF² 4:324].

[967] ὁ υἱὸς οὕτως κατὰ ταύτην τὴν ἐκδοχὴν ἀγένητος ἂν λεχθείη.

problematic christology derives from his faulty way of speaking about God as ἀγένητον. Ultimately, it leads to an impersonalization of God's inner being by separating (the precise verb is διαστήσωσι) [968] the divine persons from each other—one as ἀγένητον, and the other as created.

Athanasius' more significant argument with regard to Asterius' use of the word ἀγένητον is that it was invented by the Greeks and is not found in the Scriptures. He explains the contrast between the Greek reference to God as ἀγένητον and the Christian way of calling him Father as the difference between two kinds of relations: unoriginate-originate relation and the Father-Son relation. According to the first relation, there can be no likeness between God as unoriginate, on the one hand, and everything else as originate, on the other. However, addressing God as Father means that he has the Son who is like the one from whom he was begotten. Making a comment on this point, Widdicombe suggests that ultimately what Athanasius has in mind is distinguishing between two orders of reality as 'parallel instances of correlativity'.[969] He states:

> Athanasius has altered the basis of the discussion in a way which allows him to advance the claim that it is more appropriate to call God Father than to call him unoriginate. God is to be regarded first through his relation with the Son. Athanasius posits two distinct orders in the logic of relations: Father and Son are correlatives, and unoriginate and originate are correlatives. These two orders correspond to the two orders of reality, the divine and the created. The Arians are guilty of failing to recognize the existence of the two orders of relations.[970]

Athanasius argues that the main reason the Arians approach God as the Unoriginate instead of Father has to do with their epistemological starting point. Rejecting the Son's existence, like Greeks, they draw their knowledge of God from the created order, or things of originate nature, rather than from the Son.[971] As a result, they become left with an impersonal concept of God that is inadequate from the Christian standpoint. In his double treatise *Contra Gentes* chs. 7-29, Athanasius describes the consequences of such approach as resulting in divinization of the created things and idolatry. Instead of honouring the Father and Son who are the

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[968] *CA* 1.30 [Metzler 140].
[969] Widdicombe, *The Fatherhood of God*, 167.
[970] Ibid. 166.
[971] *CA* 1.33 [Metzler 142-3].

true God—'incorporeal, incorruptible and immortal'[972]—the fallen mind ends up worshipping non-real deified beings. The only proper way to approach God is by way of the Son; we are 'to signify (σημαίνειν) God from the Son and call him Father' (*CA* 1.34 [Metzler 143; NPNF² 4:326]).[973] For Athanasius, it is this distinctness that is missing in the Arian doctrine of God and approaching him as the Unoriginate, they treat him hardly more than a mere impersonal contact:

> Therefore it is more pious and more accurate to signify God from the Son and call him Father, than to name him from his works only and call him unoriginate. For the latter title, as I have said, does nothing more than signify all the works, individually and collectively, which have come to be at the will of God through the Word; but the title Father has its significance and its bearing only from the Son (*CA* 1.34 [Metzler 143-4; NPNF² 4:326]).[974]

According to this argument, the 'Father-Son' terminology provides a very specific definition of God's relational nature, whereas the 'Unoriginate-originate works' terminology is nothing but an abstract indication. The former leads from the Son to the Father and is an accurate way of knowing God. The latter makes the mind caught up with the horizontal perspective that starts from the impersonal point (namely, the works), instead of beginning with the divine person (namely, the Son). Once again he says:

> And 'unoriginate' is a word of the Greeks, who do not know the Son, but 'Father' has been acknowledged and vouchsafed by our Lord. For he, knowing himself whose Son he was, said, *I am in the Father, and the Father is in me* [Jn. 14:10]; and, *He who has seen me, has seen the Father* [Jn. 14:9], and *I and the Father are one* [Jn. 10:30]; but nowhere is he found to call the Father unoriginate (*CA* 1.34 [Metzler 144; NPNF² 4:326, modified]).[975]

Here Athanasius contends that the way God reveals himself as Father is through the Son. Therefore, the right way to know God is to begin with the person of the Son

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[972] *CG* 22.26 [Thomson 60]: ἀσώματός ἐστι καὶ ἄφθαρτος καὶ ἀθάνατος.

[973] τὸν θεὸν ἐκ τοῦ υἱοῦ σημαίνειν καὶ πατέρα λέγειν.

[974] οὐκοῦν εὐσεβέστερον καὶ ἀληθὲς μᾶλλον ἂν εἴη τὸν θεὸν ἐκ τοῦ υἱοῦ σημαίνειν καὶ πατέρα λέγειν ἢ ἐκ μόνων τῶν ἔργων ὀνομάζειν καὶ λέγειν αὐτὸν ἀγένητον. τοῦτο μὲν γὰρ καὶ μόνον ἕκαστον, καθάπερ εἶπον, καὶ κοινῇ πάντα τὰ ἐκ τοῦ βουλήματος τοῦ θεοῦ διὰ τοῦ λόγου γενόμενα ἔργα σημαίνει· τὸ δὲ 'πατὴρ' ἐφ' υἱοῦ μόνον σημαίνεται καὶ ἵσταται.

[975] καὶ τὸ μὲν 'ἀγένητον' παρ' ἑλλήνων εὕρηται τῶν μὴ γινωσκόντων τὸν υἱόν· τὸ δὲ 'πατὴρ' παρὰ τοῦ κυρίου ἡμῶν ἐγνώσθη καὶ κεχάρισται. καὶ γὰρ εἰδὼς αὐτὸς τίνος ἐστὶν υἱὸς ἔλεγεν ἐγὼ ἐν τῷ πατρὶ καὶ ὁ πατὴρ ἐν ἐμοί καὶ ὁ ἑωρακὼς ἐμὲ ἑώρακε τὸν πατέρα καὶ ἐγὼ καὶ ὁ πατὴρ ἕν ἐσμεν καὶ οὐδαμοῦ φαίνεται τὸν πατέρα καλῶν 'ἀγένητον' αὐτός.

rather than Unoriginate. To start with the latter is to become occupied with speculations that are not reflective of the scriptural language about God. This argument corresponds to Athanasius' general principle of knowing God from below. As we saw earlier, he elaborates on it in his double treatise, and he uses it here again to stress that God is known not as an impersonal essence but as a relational being that reveals himself in the world. Hence, Athanasius insists that we are to approach God in the way he made himself known to us and to support this point, he cites several passages from Scripture. He refers to a number of examples where Jesus calls God Father and commands us to do the same. He notes that when the Son 'teaches us to pray, he does not say, "When you pray, say, oh God Unoriginate", but rather, "When you pray, say, our Father who is in heaven"' (*CA* 1.34 [Metzler 144; NPNF² 4:326, modified]).[976] Likewise, taking a lesson from the baptism as representing 'the summary of our faith' (τὸ κεφάλαιον δὲ τῆς πίστεως ἡμῶς),[977] we are instructed to be baptized 'not into the name of Unoriginate and originate, nor into the name of Creator and creature, but into the name of Father, Son, and Holy Spirit' (*CA* 1.34 [Metzler 144; NPNF² 4:326, modified]).[978]

Thus, looking back at Athanasius' way of speaking about God in *CA* 1.14-29 [Metzler 123-39] and 30-4 [Metzler 139-44], we find that he can either start with the Father to postulate the Son, or start with the Son to postulate the Father. The former counters the Arian approach to God as the pre-existing essence and proves the divinity of the Son. The latter refutes the concept of God as the Unoriginate and reveals him as Father. In both cases, the relational understanding of God is in sharp contrast to God as an impersonal being.

5.2 Father and Son

5.2.1 μετοχή

One of the ways both Athanasius and Arius relate the Son to the Father is through participation (μετοχή). For methodological purposes, we can distinguish between two types of participation: one related to the essence of the Father and the other

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[976] ἡμᾶς εὔχεσθαι διδάσκων οὐκ εἶπεν 'ὅταν δὲ προσεύχησθε, λέγετε· θεὲ ἀγένητε', ἀλλὰ μᾶλλον· 'ὅταν δὲ προσεύχεσθε, λέγετε· πάτερ ἡμῶν, ὁ ἐν τοῖς οὐρανοῖς.

[977] *CA* 1.34 [Metzler 144; NPNF² 4:326].

[978] οὐκ 'εἰς ὄνομα ἀγενήτου καὶ γενητοῦ', οὐδὲ 'εἰς ὄνομα ἀκτίστου καὶ κτίσματος', ἀλλ' 'εἰς ὄνομα πατρὸς καὶ υἱοῦ καὶ ἁγίου πνεύματος.

related to his qualities. In Arius,[979] the first type of participation is expressed in three quotations. Two of them are found in *CA* 1.5-6 and one in *CA* 1.9:

(1) The essences [of the Father, Son and Holy Spirit] are separate in nature, and estranged, and disconnected, and alien, and without participation (ἀμέτοχοί) of each other (*CA* 1.6 [Metzler 115; NPNF² 4:309]).[980]

(2) The Son is distinct by himself, and in no respect partakes (ἀμέτοχον) of the Father (*CA* 1.7 [Metzler 115; NPNF² 4:309, modified]).[981]

(3) Christ is not very God, but he, as others, was made God by participation (μετοχῇ) (*CA* 1.9 [Metzler 118; NPNF² 4:311]).[982]

In all of the above statements, Arius draws a sharp contrast between the Father's essence and the essence of the Son (and Holy Spirit). He either makes their essences different from each other so much so that they are 'separated', 'estranged', 'disconnected', and 'alien' (the first quote), or forthrightly rejects the Son's participation in the Father (the second quote). When he does allow the Son's participation in God (third quote), he qualifies it making clear that his participation is not one of essence.

Arius' only discussion of the second type of participation is recorded in *CA* 1.5 [Metzler 114; NPNF² 4:309]:

Accordingly, he [Arius] says that there are two wisdoms, first, the attribute coexistent with God, and next, that in this wisdom the Son was originated, and was only named Wisdom and Word as partaking (μετέχοντα) of it. 'For Wisdom', saith he, 'by the will of the wise God, had its existence in Wisdom'. In like manner, he says, that there is another Word in God besides the Son, and that the Son again, as partaking (μετέχοντα) of it, is named Word and Son according to grace.[983]

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[979] For a specific discussion of Arius' concept of participation, see Lorenz, *Arius judaizans*, 59. Cf. Williams, 'The Logic of Arianism', 74; Stead, 'The *Thalia* of Arius and the Testimony of Athanasius', 33, and ibid., 'Rhetorical Method', 132-3.

[980] καὶ ὅτι 'μεμερισμέναι τῇ φύσει καὶ ἀπεξενωμέναι καὶ ἀπεσχοινισμέναι καὶ ἀλλότριαι καὶ ἀμέτοχοί εἰσιν ἀλλήλων αἱ οὐσίαι'.

[981] 'διῃρημένον δὲ εἶναι καθ' ἑαυτὸν καὶ ἀμέτοχον κατὰ πάντα τοῦ πατρὸς' τὸν υἱὸν.

[982] οὐκ ἔστιν ἀληθινὸς θεὸς ὁ χριστός, ἀλλὰ μετοχῇ καὶ αὐτὸς ἐθεοποιήθη.

[983] δύο γοῦν σοφίας φησὶν εἶναι, μίαν μὲν 'τὴν ἐδίαν καὶ συνυπάρχουσαν τῷ θεῷ', τὸν δὲ υἱὸν ἐν αὐτῇ τῇ σοφίᾳ γεγενῆσθαι ταύτης τε μετέχοντα ὠνομάσθαι μόνον σοφίαν καὶ λόγον. 'ἡ σοφία γάρ', φησί, 'τῇ σοφίᾳ ὑπῆρξε σοφοῦ θεοῦ θελήσει'. οὕτω καὶ λόγον ἕτερον εἶναι λέγει παρὰ τὸν υἱὸν ἐν τῷ θεῷ καὶ τούτου μετέχοντα τὸν υἱὸν ὠνομάσθαι πάλιν κατὰ χάριν λόγον καὶ υἱὸν αὐτόν. Cf. Similar statements in *Urk.* 4b[2.2].7-9 [Opitz 7-8].

In this passage, Arius' use of the verb μετέχω in both instances is aimed at clarifying in which way Christ can be said to participate in God. This type of participation has to do with the qualities that the Son is claimed to share. His titles 'Wisdom' and 'Word' are not descriptions of his ontological oneness with God the Father. Rather they are applied to him in the secondary sense. In the same way, he is called Son only on account of grace, not according to nature. To counter this view of Christ' participation, Athanasius does two things. First, he disputes Arius' concept of participation by elucidating the sense in which the Son can be said to participate in the Father's essence and qualities. Second, he adopts the word ἴδιος to formulate his own way of expressing the ontological unity between the Father and Son. I will consider briefly both of these arguments below.

Treating the first type of participation that relates the Son to the Father's essence, Athanasius argues that for the former to partake of the latter means to be begotten. He explains that 'it is all one to say that God is wholly participated (ὅλως 'μετέχεσθαι'), and that He begets (γεννᾷ). Therefore, what does begetting signify but a Son? And thus of the Son Himself, all things partake (μετέχει) according to the grace of the Spirit coming from Him; and this shows that the Son Himself partakes (μετέχει) of nothing, but what is partaken (μετεχόμενον) from the Father, is the Son' (*CA* 1.16 [Metzler 125; NPNF² 4:316, slightly modified]).[984] Here Athanasius identifies participation with begetting. He describes the Father as being 'wholly participated' by the Son excluding any other sense of participation; the Son partakes of nothing else (οὐδενὸς μετέχει). Slightly later, Athanasius adds that just as the Son's participation does not mean the division of God's essence, so does begetting does not imply affection of either of the divine persons. He writes: 'Since to be partaken (τὸ μετέχεσθαι) no one of us would ever call affection or division of God's essence (for it has been shown and acknowledged that God is participated (μετέχεσθαι), and to be participated is the same thing as to beget); therefore that which is begotten is neither affection nor division of that blessed essence. Hence it is not incredible that God should have a Son, the Offspring of his own essence; nor do we imply affection or division of God's essence, when we speak of 'Son' and

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[984] τὸ γὰρ ὅλως 'μετέχεσθαι' τὸν θεὸν ἴσον ἐστὶ λέγειν ὅτι καὶ γεννᾷ· τὸ δὲ 'γεννᾷ' τί σημαίνει ἢ υἱόν; αὐτοῦ γοῦν τοῦ υἱοῦ μετέχει τὰ πάντα κατὰ τὴν τοῦ πνεύματος γινομένην παρ' αὐτοῦ χάριν· καὶ φανερὸν ἐκ τούτου γίνεται ὅτι αὐτὸς μὲν ὁ υἱὸς οὐδενὸς μετέχει, τὸ δὲ ἐκ τοῦ πατρὸς μετεχόμενον, τοῦτό ἐστιν ὁ υἱός.

'Offspring;' but rather, as acknowledging the genuine, and true, and Only-begotten of God, so we believe' (*CA* 1.16 [Metzler 125; NPNF² 4:316]).[985] Refuting Arius' second type of participation, Athanasius argues that the Father-Son oneness in John 10:30 (*I and the Father are one*)[986] suggests an ontological identity of qualities.[987] One of the most extended presentations of this argument is found in his second *Epistula ad Serapionem*. In *Ep. Ser.* 1.2 [Savvidis 540; Shapland 153-4, modified], he sets this as a theological principle:

> Of that which the Father has, there is nothing which does not belong to the Son. Therefore the Son is in the Father, and the Father is in the Son; for the qualities that belong to the Father, are also found in the Son, and again they are seen in the Father. Thus is understood the saying: *I and the Father are one* [Jn. 10:30]. For there are not some qualities in the Father and others in the Son; but the qualities that are in the Father are in the Son also. And if you see in the Son those qualities which you see in the Father, you have a right understanding of the saying: *He that has seen me has seen the Father* (*Ep. Ser.* 1.2 [Savvidis 540; Shapland 153-4, modified]).[988]

Based on this principle of identity, Athanasius contends that the Son's qualities are rooted in the very being of the Father. Hence, Christ' titles 'Wisdom', 'Word', and 'Son' belong to him by nature rather than 'by name' (ὀνόματι),[989] or 'as a quality' (κατ' ἐπίνοιαν).[990] To postulate the latter is to approach Christ 'improperly' (καταχρηστικῶς).[991] Athanasius concludes that since Christ is the true God, his participation in the Father's qualities is of unchangeable nature. In contrast, human beings are gods by grace and their participation involves change.[992] Generally, Athanasius is reluctant to use the terminology of participation with regard to the

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[985] ὥσπερ δὲ τὸ μετέχεσθαι οὐκ ἄν τις ὑμῶν ἔτι πάθος εἴποι καὶ μερισμὸν τῆς τοῦ θεοῦ οὐσίας· δεδώκατε γὰρ καὶ ὡμολογήκατε μετέχεσθαι τὸν θεὸν καὶ ταὐτὸν εἶναι μετέχεσθαι καὶ γεννᾶν, οὕτως τὸ γέννημα οὐ πάθος οὐδὲ μερισμός ἐστι τῆς μακαρίας ἐκείνης οὐσίας. οὐκ ἄπιστον ἄρα ἐστιν υἱὸν ἔχειν τὸν θεόν, τῆς ἰδίας οὐσίας τὸ γέννημα· οὐδ' ἄρα πάθος καὶ μερισμὸν τῆς οὐσίας τοῦ θεοῦ σημαίνομεν λέγοντες 'υἱὸν καὶ γέννημα', ἀλλὰ μᾶλλον τὸ γνήσιον καὶ τὸ ἀληθινὸν καὶ τὸ μονογενὲς ἐκ τοῦ θεοῦ γινώσκοντες, οὕτω πιστεύομεν.

[986] Athanasius slightly reformulates it as αὐτὸς καὶ ὁ πατὴρ ἕν εἰσι (*CA* 1.16 [Metzler 126; NPNF² 4:316]).

[987] *CA* 1.16 [Metzler 126; NPNF² 4:316].

[988] καὶ ὅλως οὐδέν ἐστιν, ὧν ἔχει ὁ πατήρ, ὃ μὴ τοῦ υἱοῦ ἐστι. διὰ τοῦτο γὰρ ὁ υἱὸς ἐν τῷ πατρὶ καὶ ὁ πατὴρ ἐν τῷ υἱῷ· ἐπειδὴ τὰ τοῦ πατρός, ταῦτα ἐν τῷ υἱῷ ἐστι καὶ πάλιν ταῦτα ἐν τῷ πατρὶ νοεῖται, οὕτω νοεῖται καὶ τὸ *ἐγὼ καὶ ὁ πατὴρ ἕν ἐσμεν*. ἐπειδὴ οὐκ ἄλλα ἐν τούτῳ καὶ ἄλλα ἐν τῷ υἱῷ· ἀλλὰ τὰ ἐν τῷ πατρί, ταῦτα ἐν τῷ υἱῷ ἐστι. καὶ ἃ βλέπεις δὲ ἐν τῷ πατρί, βλέπεις ἐν τῷ υἱῷ· νοεῖται καλῶς τὸ *ὁ ἐμὲ ἑωρακὼς ἑώρακε τὸν πατέρα*.

[989] *CA* 1.9 [Metzler 118].

[990] Ibid. 1.9 [Metzler 118].

[991] *Urk.* 4b[2.2].7 [Opitz 7].

[992] *Ep. Ser.* 1.4 [Savvidis 543].

Father-Son relations. With the exception of the above instances, he reserves its use exclusively for the description of human beings' sharing in God.

5.2.2 ἴδιος

Instead of describing the Father-Son relations through participation, Athanasius prefers to use the term ἴδιος ('one's own', or 'proper to') for that purpose.[993] Scholars note that before this word acquired technical significance in the patristic literature, it has been used in the New Testament to describe some sort of belonging. The only two occurrences of this word with regard to the Father-Son relations indicate a possessive meaning. It is used in John 5:18 where Christ calls God 'his own Father' (πατέρα ἴδιον), and in Rom. 8:32 where God is said to not have spared 'his own Son' (τοῦ ἰδίου υἱοῦ). Fairbairn notes that besides the possessive sense, this word can also be used to describe a personal relation and intimacy as in John 10:3, 4 and 10, where Jesus addresses his disciples as 'his own sheep' (τὰ ἴδια πρόβατα). In Fairbairn's analysis Athanasius never uses ἴδιος in this latter sense; he only uses it to describe the unity of substance between the Father and Son against the Arian teaching.[994] Widdicombe identifies two instances when the passages from Jn. 5:18 and Rom. 8:32 were used in the Alexandrian tradition.[995] They were used by Origen (albeit without any comment or reference to ἴδιος)[996] and by Alexander of Alexandria (to draw the contrast between the only begotten Son and sons by adoption).[997] Possibly they were also used by Dyonysius of Alexandria. Thus, before Athanasius started using the word ἴδιος, several earlier theologians already lay their hands on it in the Alexandrian theological tradition. Yet, the frequency with which Athanasius uses it is unprecedented. It occurs 682 times in the form of ἴδιος, 26 times in the form of ἰδιότης, and 10 times as ἰδιοποιέω. Louth

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[993] One other term that Athanasius uses in the same sense as ἴδιος is οἰκειότης. It occurs only 2 times with regard to the Father-Son relations. The first occurrence is in *CA* 3.4 [Savvidis 310; NPNF² 4:395]: 'He [the Son] and the Father are one in propriety and peculiarity of nature, and in the identity of the one Godhead' (ἐν εἰσιν αὐτὸς καὶ ὁ πατὴρ τῇ ἰδιότητι καὶ οἰκειότητι τῆς φύσεως καὶ τῇ ταυτότητι τῆς μιᾶς θεότητος). The second occurrence is in *CA* 3.16 [Savvidis 326; NPNF² 4:403]: 'For the Son is proper to that One, and inseparable according to the propriety and peculiarity of his essence' (τοῦ γὰρ ἑνὸς ἴδιος καὶ ἀδιαίρετός ἐστιν ὁ υἱὸς κατὰ τὴν ἰδιότητα καὶ οἰκειότητα τῆς οὐσίας).

[994] Fairbairn, *Grace and Christology*, 84-6.

[995] Widdicombe, *The Fatherhood of God*, 194.

[996] The references provided by Widdicombe are *Com. Joh.* 20.35.313 [SC 290:310] for Jn. 5:18, and in *Cont. Cels.* 8.42 [150:264-6] for Rom. 8:32.

[997] Widdicombe notes that Alexander uses Rom. 8:32 as part of his argument about the Son's coeternity with the Father. That this can be the precise context of the Rom. 8:32, see Cranfield, *A Critical and Exegetical Commentary*, 436.

points out that he employs this word to describe the idea of inseparability in two types of relations: between the Father and Son, and between the Logos and his body.[998] A brief sketch of these two ideas will confirm Louth's distinction to which I will add a third one—a relation of the subject and qualities. I will also suggest that while the personal sense of ἴδιος is missing in Athanasius (as noted by Fairbairn), one word group that comes most closely for expressing the idea of intimacy between the Father and Son in his latter writings is χαρά and χαιρεῖν.

(1) With regard to the Father-Son relations, Athanasius often uses the word ἴδιος to draw a contrast between the Son and created things. Thus, he claims that 'the Son is different in kind and different in essence from things originate, and on the contrary is proper to the Father's essence (τῆς τοῦ πατρὸς οὐσίας ἴδιος) and one in nature (ὁμοφυής) with it' (*CA* 1.58 [Metzler 169; NPNF² 4:340]).[999] In similar contexts, he can use ἴδιος as an antonym to the words 'external' (ἔξωθεν), 'alien' (ξένος), and 'estranged' (ἀλλότριος) when arguing that Arius divided the Trinity into different essences.[1000] The word ἴδιος is used to indicate the Son' unique status as in *CA* 2.23 [Metzler 199; NPNF² 4:360, modified], where Athanasius asserts that '[t]he Father shows him to be his own proper (ἴδιον) and only (μόνον) Son, saying "You are my Son", and "This is my beloved Son in whom I am well pleased"'.[1001] While the idea of the Son being proper to the Father clearly dominates Athanasius' use of ἴδιος, it can also be employed in conjunction with the term 'proper offspring' (ἴδιον γέννημα),[1002] or as a synonym for the phrase 'from the Father' (ἐκ τοῦ πατρός).[1003] Interestingly, Athanasius never reverses the order of who is proper to who's being: only the Son can be proper to the Father's essence, not the Father to the Son's. (This is probably due to Athanasius' concept of God in which the Father is the source for divinity). At the same time, the *person* of the Father (as opposed to the Father's essence) can be described as being proper to the Son just as the person of the Son is proper to the Father as in *CA* 2.59 [Metzler 236; NPNF² 4:380], where

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[998] Louth, 'The Use of the Term ἴδιος', 198-200.
[999] ἑτερογενὴς ἄρα καὶ ἑτεροούσιός ἐστιν ὁ υἱὸς τῶν γενητῶν καὶ μᾶλλον τῆς τοῦ πατρὸς οὐσίας ἴδιος καὶ ὁμοφυὴς τυγχάνει.
[1000] *De Syn.* 15 [Opitz 242]. Cf. *CA* 1.20 [Metzler 129-30], 1.26 [Metzler 136].
[1001] υἱὸν δὲ αὐτὸν ἴδιον καὶ μόνον δείκνυσιν ἑαυτοῦ ὁ πατὴρ λέγων· υἱός μου εἶ σύ [Ps. 2:7 LXX] καὶ οὗτός ἐστιν ὁ υἱός μου ὁ ἀγαπητός, ἐν ᾧ ηὐδόκησα [Mt. 3:17].
[1002] *CA* 1.15 [Metzler 124].
[1003] Ibid. 2.22 [Metzler 198-9].

he says that '"Father" is proper to the Son and not "creature", but "Son" is proper to the Father'.[1004]

(2) With regard to the Logos-body relation, Athanasius uses ἴδιος[1005] as the antonym to the words ἐκτός and ἔξωθεν.[1006] Thus, neither the Logos is external to the body, nor the body is external to the Logos.[1007] Instead, both the Logos and the body are proper to each other. Williams points out that instead of indicating 'an "essential condition"… of a particular concrete reality', something that exists in and of itself, the word ἴδιος according to the philosophical use of that time denoted a contingent property, or quality.[1008] This observation fits the Athanasian use of this word in relation to Christ's body. The latter is appropriated by Christ (as in *De Inc*. 8.33-4 [Thomson 152; ibid. 153], where he makes the body his own [τῇ τοῦ σώματος ἰδιοποιήσει]); it does not exist separately or independently from his person. Therefore, whatever belongs or happens to the flesh also belongs and happens to the Logos. This is true even with regard to the affections of the Logos' body. Since the body is his own, the affections are his (ἴδια)[1009] as well. According to Athanasius, this has an important soteriological significance. By sharing in the Logos who saved us on account of his divinity, we become proper to him (ἴδιοι) and anticipate living eternally.[1010] In contrast, our identification with Adam afforded grace 'from without' (ἔξωθεν), and thus made it ineffective.[1011]

(3) In addition to the two senses of ἴδιος described above, Athanasius also uses it to relate the subject and qualities. Thus, invisibility[1012] is proper (ἴδιον) to God in the *De Incarnatione*, omnipotence[1013] and unalterability[1014] are proper (ἴδια) to the divine being in the *Epistula 2 ad Serapionem*, and light[1015] is proper (ἴδιον) to God who radiates it in the *Contra Arianos*. More importantly, Athanasius sets forth a principle of identity (mentioned above) in which the word ἴδιος plays a role of the predicate. Based on the argument that 'He [the Son] is the same as God; and He and

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[1004] τὸ 'πατὴρ' τοῦ υἱοῦ ἐστιν ἴδιον, καὶ οὐ τὸ κτίσμα, ἀλλὰ τὸ 'υἱὸς' τοῦ πατρός ἐστιν ἴδιον.
[1005] *CA* 3.32 [Savvidis 343].
[1006] Ibid.
[1007] Ibid.
[1008] Williams, 'The Logic of Arianism', 60.
[1009] *CA* 3.32 [Savvidis 343].
[1010] Ibid.
[1011] Ibid. 2.68 [Savvidis 245].
[1012] *De Inc*. 32 [Thomson 210-2].
[1013] *Ep. Ser*. 1.5 [Savvidis 544].
[1014] Ibid.
[1015] *CA* 3.4 [Savvidis 310].

the Father are one in propriety (τῇ ἰδιότητι) and peculiarity of nature [οἰκειότητι], and in the identity (τῇ ταυτότητι) of the one Godhead',[1016] Athanasius formulates it as follows: 'On hearing the attributes of the Father spoken of a Son, we shall thereby see the Father in the Son; and we shall contemplate the Son in the Father, when what is said of the Son is said of the Father also. And why are the attributes of the Father ascribed to the Son, except that the Son is an offspring from him? And why are the Son's attributes proper (ἴδια) to the Father, except again because the Son is the proper (ἴδιον) offspring of his essence? And the Son, being the proper (ἴδιον) offspring of the Father's essence, reasonably says that the Father's attributes are his own also' (*CA* 3.5 [Savvidis 310-1; NPNF² 395-6]).[1017] The way Athanasius relates the subject and qualities according to the above principle of identity shows once again that he avoided describing God in terms of impersonal essence. The divine qualities do not exist by themselves; they belong to the Father in whom they are properly indwelled. And since the Son is the Father's natural offspring, the same qualities are proper to him as well.

5.2.3 χαρά, χαίρω, and εὐφρονέω

While the word ἴδιος clearly indicates the essential oneness between the Father and Son, it does not necessarily mean that their relation is one of personal intimacy and fellowship. To express the latter idea Athanasius uses a different word group χαρά ('joy', 'delight') and χαίρω ('to have a delight'). All instances of this word group for the description of the Father-Son relations appear 28 times in three different later writings: *De decretis nicaenae Synodi* (1 times),[1018] *De sententia Dionysii* (4 time),[1019] and *Contra Arianos* (23 times).[1020] In all of these instances Athanasius bases his arguments on Prov. 8:30 that says: *I was daily his delight, rejoicing always before him*.[1021] He identifies 'the delight' of the Proverbs with the Son

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[1016] Ibid. 3.5 [Savvidis 310; NPNF² 395]: εἰσιν αὐτὸς καὶ ὁ πατὴρ τῇ ἰδιότητι καὶ οἰκειότητι τῆς φύσεως καὶ τῇ ταυτότητι τῆς μιᾶς θεότητος.

[1017] ὁ δὲ ἀκούων τὰ τοῦ πατρὸς λεγόμενα ἐφ' υἱοῦ ὄψεται καὶ οὕτως τὸν πατέρα ἐν τῷ υἱῷ, θεωρήσει δὲ καὶ τὸν υἱὸν ἐν τῷ πατρί, ὅταν τὰ λεγόμενα ἐφ' υἱοῦ λέγῃ ταῦτα καὶ ἐπὶ πατρός. διὰ τί δὲ τὰ τοῦ πατρὸς ἐφ' υἱοῦ λέγεται ἢ ὅτι ἐξ αὐτοῦ γέννημά ἐστιν ὁ υἱός; διὰ τί δὲ καὶ τὰ τοῦ υἱοῦ ἴδιά ἐστι τοῦ πατρὸς ἢ ὅτι πάλιν τῆς οὐσίας αὐτοῦ ἴδιον γέννημα ὁ υἱός; τῆς δὲ οὐσίας τοῦ πατρὸς ἴδιον ὢν γέννημα ὁ υἱὸς εἰκότως καὶ τὰ τοῦ πατρὸς λέγει ἑαυτοῦ εἶναι.

[1018] *De Decr.* 27 [Opitz 24] (1 time).

[1019] *De Sen. Dion.* 15 [Opitz 57] (2 times), *De Sen. Dion.* 25 [Opitz 65] (2 times).

[1020] *CA* 1.20 [Metzler 130] (4 times); 1.38 [Metzler 147-8] (2 times); 2.56 [Metzler 232-3] (2 time); 2.82 [Metzler 259-60] (15 times).

[1021] ἐγὼ ἤμην, ᾗ προσέχαιρε· καθ' ἡμέραν δὲ εὐφραινόμην ἐν προσώπῳ αὐτοῦ.

arguing that his close relationship with the Father has existed eternally. In *CA* 1.20 [Metzler 130; NPNF² 4:318], he makes the following reasoning: 'The Son himself says, *I was his delight* (προσέχαιρε). When then did the Father not see himself in his own Image? or when had he not delight (προσέχαιρεν), that a man should dare to say, "the Image is out of nothing" and "The Father had no delight (οὐκ ἦν χαίρων ὁ πατήρ) before the Image was originated?"'[1022] Similarly, in *CA* 1.38 [Metzler 147-8; NPNF² 4:328], he writes: 'For if he [Christ] was not, or was indeed, but afterwards was promoted… how in him, were he not perfect, did the Father delight (προσέχαιρεν)? And he, on the other hand, if now promoted, how did he before rejoice in the presence of the Father (ηὐφραίνετο ἐν προσώπῳ πατρός)?'[1023] In both passages, Athanasius argues against the Arian practice of approaching Christ as a created being in contrast to the Father who is the true God. His logic is clear: if the Father is eternal, then he has always delighted his Son, and if the Son has always been 'in the presence of the Father', he cannot be created and imperfect. While, the argument here is largely about the unity of substance, the use of the word 'delight' adds a more intimate aspect to the Father-Son relations. In fact, right after claiming that the Son is the Father's delight, he goes on to speak of how Christ makes us sons to his own Father as a reflection of the Father-Son bond.[1024]

In two other passages χαρά, χαίρω and εὐφρονέω are used along with ἴδιος. In *CA* 2.56 [Metzler 232-3; NPNF² 4:378], Athanasius draws a contrast between that which is proper to creatures and that which is proper to the Logos. He says: 'For because of our need, the Word, though being Creator, endured words which are used of creatures; which are not proper (ἰδίᾳ) to him, as being the Word, but are ours (ἰδίᾳ) who are created in him. And as, since the Father is always, so is his Word, and always being, always says, *I was daily his delight* (προσέχαιρε), *rejoicing* (εὐφραινόμην) *always before him* (ἐν προσώπῳ αὐτοῦ) [Prov. 8:30], and *I am in the Father and the Father in me* [Jn. 14:19]'.[1025] In *CA* 2.82 [Metzler 259], the same

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[1022] ὡς αὐτὸς ὁ υἱὸς λέγει *ἐγὼ ἤμην ᾗ προσέχαιρε.* πότε γοῦν οὐχ ἑώρα ἑαυτὸν ὁ πατὴρ ἐν τῇ ἑαυτοῦ εἰκόνι; ἤ πότε οὐ προσέχαιρεν, ἵνα τολμήσῃ τις εἰπεῖν· 'ἐξ οὐκ ὄντων ἐστὶν' ἡ εἰκὼν καὶ 'οὐκ ἦν χαίρων ὁ πατήρ, πρὶν γένηται ἡ εἰκών.

[1023] εἰ γὰρ οὐκ ἦν ἤ ἦν μέν, ἐβελτιώθη δὲ ὕστερον... πῶς ἐν τούτῳ, εἴ γε μὴ τέλειος ἦν, προσέχαιρεν ὁ πατήρ; καὶ αὐτὸς δέ, εἰ νῦν ἐβελτιώθη, πῶς πρὸ τούτου ηὐφραίνετο ἐν προσώπῳ πατρός;

[1024] *CA* 1.38 [Metzler 147-8; NPNF² 4:328].

[1025] καὶ οὐκ ἔστιν αὐτοῦ, ᾗ λόγος ἐστίν, ἰδία ἡ φωνή, ἀλλ' ἡμῶν τῶν ἐν αὐτῷ κτιζομένων ἰδία φωνὴ τὸ *ἔκτισε.* καὶ ὥσπερ τοῦ πατρὸς ὄντος ἀεὶ ἀεί ἐστι καὶ ὁ τούτου λόγος καὶ ὢν ἀεὶ λέγει·

argument is set forth in a more extended form and with more insight into the nature of fellowship between the Father and Son. Athanasius writes: 'Hence the whole earth is filled with the knowledge of him; for the knowledge of Father through Son and of Son from Father is one and the same, and the Father delights (χαίρει) in him, and in the same joy the Son rejoices (τῇ χαρᾷ ταύτῃ εὐφραίνεται) in the Father, saying, *I was by him, daily his delight, rejoicing (προσέχαιρε) always before him* [Prov. 8:30]. And this again proves that the Son is not foreign (ἀλλότριον), but proper (ἴδιον) to the Father's essence'.[1026] Slightly after, he adds:

> When then was it, when the Father rejoiced not (ἔχαιρεν)? but if he ever rejoiced (ἔχαιρεν), he was ever, in whom he rejoiced (χαίρει). And in whom does the Father rejoice, except as seeing himself in his own (ἰδίᾳ) Image, which is his Word? And though *in sons of men also he had delight* (ηὐφραίνετο)*, on finishing the world*, as it is written in these same Proverbs [8:32], yet this too has a consistent sense. For even thus he had delight (εὐφραίνεται), not because joy (χαρᾶς) was added to him, but again on seeing the works made after his own Image; so that even this rejoicing (χαίρειν) of God is on account of his Image. And how too has the Son delight (εὐφραίνεται), except as seeing himself in the Father? for this is the same as saying, *he who has seen me, has seen the Father* and *I am in the Father and the Father in me* [Jn. 14:10] (*CA* 2.56 [Metzler 259-60; NPNF² 4:378]).[1027]

Several things are noteworthy in these passages. First the words χαρά and χαιρεῖν are used with the same intent as ἴδιος, namely to prove that the Son has the same divine status as the Father. In fact, Athanasius concludes quite explicitly that 'the passage in the Proverbs... proves that the Son is not a creature in nature and essence, but the proper Offspring of the Father, true Wisdom and Word' (*CA* 2.56 [Metzler 259-60; NPNF² 4:378]).[1028] Hence, the Son is seen as one with the Father

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ἐγὼ ἤμην, ᾗ προσέχαιρε· καθ' ἡμέραν δὲ εὐφραινόμην ἐν προσώπῳ αὐτοῦ καὶ ἐγὼ ἐν τῷ πατρὶ καὶ ὁ πατὴρ ἐν ἐμοί.

[1026] ἐπληρώθη γοῦν πᾶσα ἡ γῆ τῆς γνώσεως αὐτοῦ· μία γὰρ γνῶσις πατρὸς δι' υἱοῦ ἐστι κιὰ υἱοῦ παρὰ πατρὸς καὶ χαίρει τούτῳ ὁ πατήρ· καὶ τῇ χαρᾷ ταύτῃ εὐφραίνεται ἐν τῷ πατρὶ ὁ υἱὸς λέγων· ἐγὼ ἤμην, ᾗ προσέχαιρε· καθ' ἡμέραν δὲ ηὐφραινόμην ἐν προσώπῳ αὐτοῦ. ταῦτα δὲ δείκνυσι πάλιν μὴ εἶναι τὸν υἱὸν ἀλλότριον, ἀλλ' ἴδιον τῆς τοῦ πατρὸς οὐσίας.

[1027] πότε οὖν ἦν ὅτε οὐκ ἔχαιρεν ὁ πατήρ; εἰ δὲ ἀεὶ ἔχαιρεν, ἀεὶ ἦν ἐν ᾧ ἔχαιρεν. ἐν τίνι δὲ ὁ πατὴρ χαίρει ἢ βλέπων ἑαυτὸν ἐν τῇ ἰδίᾳ εἰκόνι, ἥτις ἐστὶν ὁ λόγος αὐτοῦ; εἰ δὲ καὶ *ἐν υἱοῖς ἀνθρώπων ηὐφραίνετο τὴν οἰκουμένην συντελέσας*, ὡς ἐν αὐταῖς ταῖς παροιμίαις γέγραπται, ἀλλὰ καὶ τοῦτο τὴν αὐτὴν ἔχει διάνοιαν. εὐφραίνεται γὰρ καὶ οὕτως οὐκ ἐπιγενομένης αὐτῷ χαρᾶς, ἀλλὰ πάλιν βλέπων κατὰ τὴν ἑαυτοῦ εἰκόνα γενόμενα τὰ ἔργα, ὥστε καὶ τὸ οὕτως χαίρειν τὸν θεὸν τῆς εἰκόνος αὐτοῦ τὴν πρόφασιν εἶναι. πῶς δὲ καὶ ὁ υἱὸς εὐφραίνεται ἢ βλέπων ἑαυτὸν ἐν τῷ πατρί; ἴσον γάρ ἐστι καὶ τοῦτο τῷ λέγειν· *ὁ ἐμὲ ἑωρακὼς ἑώρακε τὸν πατέρα καὶ ἐγὼ ἐν τῷ πατρὶ καὶ ὁ πατὴρ ἐν ἐμοί*.

[1028] ἐν ταῖς παροιμίαις ῥητὸν καὶ πάντα τὰ προειρημένα δείκνυσι μὴ εἶναι τῇ φύσει καὶ τῇ οὐσίᾳ κτίσμα τὸν υἱόν, ἀλλ' ἴδιον γέννημα τοῦ πατρός, σοφίαν καὶ λόγον ἀληθινόν.

both in essence (he is 'proper [rather than foreign] to the Father's essence' and 'the proper offspring of the Father') and qualities (he is the true Wisdom and Word). Second, besides the substantial unity, the Father and Son, being one in nature, also share something else. They give and receive joy in a mutual and complete way. The Father is said to delight in the Son and the Son in the Father. They share the same joy between each other: 'the Father delights (χαίρει) in Him, and in the same joy the Son rejoices (τῇ χαρᾷ ταύτῃ εὐφραίνεται) in the Father'. Moreover, the same word that is used to speak of the Father's joy in the Son is also used to speak of his joy towards the created world: *in sons of men also he had delight* (ηὐφραίνετο) which is a reference to Prov. 8:32. Although Athanasius does not dwell much on this link in this particular instance, and is more concerned to stress the divine joy as existing for its own sake (it wasn't added to him after the word was created), it will be a very important element in his description of what we share in God when we are saved and deified. I will consider this in more detail later. More immediately, I would like to move to the topic of God's work of salvation which, in my view, is a significant reflection of Athanasius' doctrine of God.

5.3 The Work of the Son

5.3.1 Partitive Exegesis: God Become Man

In his latter works Athanasius develops a partitive exegesis in order to describe Christ under two aspects of his existence: his eternal coexistence with the Father and his earthly life in a body. Towards that aim, he insists that a proper interpretation of biblical texts needs to take into account (1) the 'time' (καιρόν); (2) the 'person', or 'character' (πρόσωπον); and (3) the 'subject matter' (πρᾶγμα) in order to not miss the true 'sense' (διάνοια) of the Scriptures.[1029] According to this exegetical principle, we can learn who Christ is and why he became incarnate. To illustrate Athanasius' use of this partitive approach and its soteriological significance, I will examine briefly his interpretation of Hebrews 1:1-5, Philippians 2:5-11, and Proverbs 8:22—some of the most debated passages in the controversy[1030]—in relation to 'time', 'person', and subject matter' respectively.

[1029] *CA* 1.54 [Metzler 164].

[1030] Williams, *Arius*, 108-9, suggests that besides Heb. 1:1-4 and Phil. 2:5-11, Arius most likely used Heb. 3:1-2, Acts 2:36, Rom. 8:29, and possibly the Gospel texts of *CA* 3.

(1) The 'time' in Heb. 1:1-4. In *CA* 1.55 [Metzler 165-6], Athanasius gives a comment on Heb. 1:1-4 that says: 'In the past God spoke to our forefathers through the prophets at many times and in various ways, but in these last days he has spoken to us by his Son…. The Son is the radiance of God's glory and the exact representation fof his being, sustaining all things by his powerful word. After he had provided purification for sins, he sat down at the right hand of the Majesty in heaven. So he became as much superior to the angels as the name he has inherited is superior to theirs' (*CA* 1.55 [Metzler 165; NIV]).[1031] Athanasius suggests that a proper interpretation of this passage should take into account the 'time' about which it speaks. We need to ask when God spoke to us by his Son and when he provided purification for sins. A careful look at the text will reveal that God spoke by his Son and made purification of sins not 'before' (πρίν) but 'after' (μετά) the ministry of the prophets. Therefore, the controversial elements in the Hebrews passage that seem to speak of Christ's promotion have to do with the 'time' of his incarnation rather than his eternal existence. To indicate the later aspect, the author of Hebrews speaks of Christ deliberately in the superlative instead of comparing him to the angels. Athanasius explains: 'This is why throughout he uses no comparison, such as 'become greater', or 'more honourable', lest we should think of him and them as one in kind, but 'better' is his word, by way of marking the difference of the Son's nature from things originated. And of this we have proof from divine Scripture' (*CA* 1.55 [Metzler 166; NPNF² 4:338]).[1032] Based on these observations, Athanasius concludes that by distinguishing the time reference, we can affirm both Christ's divine status and his economy of salvation accomplished for the purification of sins.

(2) The 'person' Phil. 2:5-11. Discovering the 'person' plays an important role in Athanasius' interpretation of Phil. 2:5-11. In this text Paul speaks of Christ's humiliation and his following promotion by the Father: 'Being in very nature God, he [Christ] did not consider equality with God something to be grasped, but made himself nothing, taking the very nature of a servant, being made in human likeness. And being found in appearance as a man, he humbled himself and became obedient

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[1031] πολυμερῶς καὶ πολυτρόπως πάλαι ὁ θεὸς λαλήσας τοῖς πατράσιν ἐν τοῖς προφήταις ἐπ᾽ ἐσχάτου τῶν ἡμερῶν τούτων ἐλάλησεν ἡμῖν ἐν υἱῷ.… δι᾽ ἑαυτοῦ καθαρισμὸν τῶν ἁμαρτιῶν ποιησάμενος ἐκάθισεν ἐν δεξιᾷ τῆς μεγαλωσύνης ἐν ὑψηλοῖς, τοσούτῳ κρείττων γενόμενος τῶν ἀγγέλων ὅσῳ διαφορώτερον παρ᾽ αὐτοὺς κεκληρονόμηκεν ὄνομα.

[1032] διὰ τοῦτο γοῦν οὐδὲ τὸ ὅλον συγκριτικῶς εἴρηκε 'μείζων' ἢ 'τιμιώτερος' γενόμενος, ἵνα μὴ ὡς περὶ ὁμογενῶν τούτου κἀκείνων τις λογίσηται, ἀλλὰ 'κρείττων' εἴρηκεν, ἵνα τὸ διαλλάττον τῆς φύσεως τοῦ υἱοῦ πρὸς τὰ γενητὰ γνωρίσῃ.

to death—even death on a cross! Therefore God exalted him to the highest place and gave him the name that is above every name, that at the name of Jesus every knee should bow, in heaven and on earth and under the earth, and every tongue confess that Jesus Christ is Lord, to the glory of God the Father' (*CA* 1.40 [Metzler 149-50; NIV, slightly modified]).[1033] Athanasius complains that Arians use this text to discredit Christ's divinity. They think that the 'person' Paul speaks about is a created being based on the fact that his name was given to him by the Father. This means that there was a time when Christ did not have it, and therefore was not what he later became. Against this, Athanasius argues that Arians do not understand correctly who Paul is speaking when. Seeing the fact that he died and was exalted, they assume that Paul is speaking of a created being. Yet, this is a wrong understanding of the 'person' in the text, because Paul also refers to him as the Son (υἱός). And if the 'person' in question is the Son, then he should always be with the Father and one with him in character (κατὰ τὴν πατρικὴν ἰδιότητα).[1034] Hence, what is spoken of Christ as the one who experienced death and was exalted, relates to his coming in flesh, while as God he never stopped being the Son of his Father. He concludes: 'Therefore, if, even before the world was made, the Son had that glory, and was Lord of glory and the Highest, and descended from heaven, and is ever to be worshipped, it follows that he had not promotion (ἐβελτιώθη) from his descent, but rather himself promoted (ἐβελτίωσεν αὐτὸς) the things which needed promotion (τὰ δεόμενα βελτιώσεως); and if he descended to effect their promotion (βελτιῶσαι), therefore he did not receive in reward (μισθὸν) the name of the Son and God (λέγεσθαι υἱὸς καὶ θεός), but rather he himself has made us sons of the Father (υἱοποίησεν ἡμᾶς τῷ πατρί), and deified (ἐθεοποίησε) men by becoming himself man' (*CA* 1.38 [Metzler 148; 328-9]).[1035] Explaining the same point in a more exegetical manner, he writes: '[The words] 'humbled' and 'exalted' are spoken of his human nature; for where there is humble estate, there too may be exaltation; and

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[1033] *CA* 1.40 [Metzler 152, NPNF² 4:329]: ὃ καὶ ἐν χριστῷ ἰησοῦ, ὃς ἐν μορφῇ θεοῦ ὑπάρχων οὐχ ἁρπαγμὸν ἡγήσατο τὸ εἶναι ἴσα θεῷ, ἀλλ᾽ ἑαυτὸν ἐκένωσε μορφὴν δούλου λαβών, ἐν ὁμοιώματι ἀνθρώπων γενόμενος· καὶ σχήματι εὑρεθεὶς ὡς ἄνθρωπος ἐταπείνωσεν ἑαυτὸν γενόμενος ὑπήκοος μέχρι θανάτου, θανάτου δὲ σταυροῦ. διὸ καὶ ὁ θεὸς αὐτὸν ὑπερύψωσε, καὶ ἐχαρίσατο αὐτῷ ὄνομα τὸ ὑπὲρ πᾶν ὄνομα, ἵνα ἐν τῷ ὀνόματι ἰησοῦ πᾶν γόνυ κάμψῃ ἐπουρανίων καὶ ἐπιγείων καὶ καταχθονίων, καὶ πᾶσα γλῶσσα ἐξομολογήσηται ὅτι κύριος ἰησοῦς χριστὸς εἰς δόξαν θεοῦ πατρός.
[1034] *CA* 1.54 [Metzler 152].
[1035] οὐκοῦν εἰ καὶ πρὸ τοῦ τὸν κόσμον γενέσθαι τὴν δόξαν εἶχεν ὁ υἱὸς καὶ *κυριος τῆς δόξης* ἦν *ὕψιστός* τε ἦν καὶ ἐξ οὐρανοῦ κατέβη καὶ ἀεὶ προσκυνητός ἐστιν, οὐκ ἄρα καταβὰς ἐβελτιώθη, ἀλλὰ μᾶλλον ἐβελτίωσεν αὐτὸς τὰ δεόμενα βελτιώσεως· καὶ εἰ τοῦ βελτιῶσαι χάριν καταβέβηκεν, οὐκ ἄρα μισθὸν ἔσχε τὸ λέγεσθαι υἱὸς καὶ θεός, ἀλλα μᾶλλον αὐτὸς υἱοποίησεν ἡμᾶς τῷ πατρί καὶ ἐθεοποίησε τοὺς ἀνθρώπους γενόμενος αὐτὸς ἄνθρωπος.

if because of his taking flesh 'humbled' is written, it is clear that 'highly exalted' is also said because of it. For of this was man's nature in want, because of the humble estate of the flesh and of death. Since then the Word, being the Image of the Father and immortal, took the form of the servant, and as man underwent for us death in His flesh, that thereby he might offer himself for us through death to the Father; therefore also, as man, he is said because of us and for us to be highly exalted, that as by his death we all died in Christ, so again in the Christ himself we might be highly exalted, being raised from the dead, and ascending into heaven' (*CA* 1.40 [Metzler 152, 330]).[1036] In both passages, Athanasius points out that the 'person' of the Philippians text is the Son of God, while what is said of him concerning salvation is said according to his human aspect. The one who is with the Father in heaven is the same 'person' who comes down in order to die for us and make us like him—sons and gods (by grace).

(3) 'Subject matter' in Proverbs 8:22. A good example of the 'subject matter' for exegesis (which includes a larger task of exploring the context and finding the meaning and reason for what is written) is found in Athanasius' interpretation of Proverbs 8:22: 'The Lord brought (ἔκτισε) me forth as the first of his works, before his deeds of old'.[1037] Representing the most controversial and cited passage in the Arian debate,[1038] it was interpreted by Athanasius' opponents as having to do with Christ's creaturely status. In *De Decr.* 7, 8, 13-15 [Opiz 6-8; 12-3] and *CA* 77-82 [Metzler 254-60], Athanasius reports them saying that Christ's uniqueness, according to this verse, consists of him being created as God's Wisdom (the name used throughout Prov. ch. 8) before anything else was made. Having been created, this Wisdom was used as an instrument by which God made the Universe. In response, Athanasius argues that to understand this passage properly one has to examine the context and go beyond what is explicitly stated. He makes two major observations. In the first place, he suggests that this text is best

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[1036] τὸ *ἐταπείνωσε* καὶ τὸ *ὑπερύψωσεν* ἐπὶ τοῦ ἀνθρωπίνου λέγεται· οὗ γάρ ἐστι τὸ ταπεινόν, τούτου καὶ τὸ ὑψωθῆναι ἄν εἴη· καὶ εἰ διὰ τὴν πρόσληψιν τῆς σαρκὸς τὸ *ἐταπείνωσε* γέγραπται, δῆλόν ἐστιν ὅτι καὶ τὸ *ὑπερύψωσε* δι᾽ αὐτήν ἐστι. τούτου γὰρ ἦν ἐνδεὴς ὁ ἄνθρωπος διὰ τὸ ταπεινὸν τῆς σαρκὸς καὶ τοῦ θανάτου. ἐπεὶ οὖν εἰκὼν ὢν τοῦ πατρὸς καὶ ἀθάνατος ὢν ὁ λόγος *ἔλαβε τὴν τοῦ δούλου μορφὴν* καὶ ὑπέμεινε δι᾽ ἡμᾶς ὡς ἄνθρωπος ἐν τῇ ἑαυτοῦ σαρκὶ τὸν θάνατον, ἵν᾽ οὕτως ἑαυτὸν ὑπὲρ ἡμῶν διὰ τοῦ θανάτου προσενέγκῃ τῷ πατρί, διὰ τοῦτο καὶ ὡς ἄνθρωπος δι᾽ ἡμᾶς καὶ ὑπὲρ ἡμῶν λέγεται ὑπερυψοῦσθαι, ἵν᾽ ὥσπερ τῷ θανάτῳ αὐτοῦ *πάντες ἡμεῖς ἀπεθάνομεν ἐν χριστῷ*, οὕτως ἐν αὐτῷ τῷ χριστῷ πάλιν ἡμεῖς ὑπερυψωθῶμεν ἔκ τε τῶν νεκρῶν ἐγειρόμενοι καὶ εἰς οὐρανοὺς ἀνερχόμενοι.

[1037] κύριος ἔκτισέ με ἀρχὴν ὁδῶν αὐτοῦ εἰς ἔργα αὐτοῦ.

[1038] Clayton, 'Athanasius of Alexandria's Interpretation of Proverbs 8:22-30', 255-93.

comprehended in light of other biblical statements such as Ps. 103:24 [LXX] and Rom. 1:20. The first one says: 'How many are your works, O Lord! In wisdom you made them all; the earth is full of your creatures' (NIV);[1039] and in the second one we read: 'For since the creation of the world God's invisible qualities—his eternal power and divine nature—have been clearly seen, being understood from what has been made, so that men are without excuse (NIV)'.[1040] Taken together, these passages reveal the fact that God's creation is stamped with the image of its Creator, and since Wisdom was instrumental in bringing the Universe about, it is the Wisdom's image in the world that is meant in the Proverbs, not the second person of the Trinity. Athanasius explains: 'Such an impress then of Wisdom being created in us, and being in all the works, with reason does the true and framing Wisdom take to itself what belongs to its own impress, and say, *The Lord created me for his works* [Prov. 8:30]; for what the wisdom in us says, that the Lord himself speaks as if it were his own; and, whereas he is not himself created, being Creator, yet because of the image of him created in the works, he says this as if of himself… And if so, the Word is not a creature in essence; but the wisdom which is in us and so called, is spoken of in this passage in the Proverbs' (*CA* 1.40 [Metzler 255-6; NPNF² 4:390-1).[1041] Accordingly, the world recognizes the Creator from the Wisdom that is impressed in it and through that same Wisdom it comes to know the Father.[1042] In the second place, Athanasius draws christological observations. In doing this, he applies all three elements of exegesis. First, he relates the 'person' (πρόσωπον) of the text to Christ while distinguishing between what is proper to him as God and what is proper to him as man (aspects which Arians conflated to argue that he was a creature). He says: 'And as to the character, it is indeed the Saviour's, but is said of him when he took a body and said, *The Lord created me a beginning of his ways unto his works.* For as it properly belongs to God's Son to be everlasting and in the Father's bosom, so on his becoming man, the words befitted him, *The*

[1039] ὡς ἐμεγαλύνθη τὰ ἔργα σου κύριε, πάντα ἐν σοφίᾳ ἐποίησας· ἐπληρώθη ἡ γῆ τῆς κτίσεώς σου.

[1040] τὰ γὰρ ἀόρατα αὐτοῦ ἀπὸ κτίσεως κόσμου τοῖς ποιήμασιν νοούμενα καθορᾶται, ἥ τε ἀΐδιος αὐτοῦ δίναμις καὶ θειότης, εἰς τὸ εἶναι αὐτοὺς ἀναπολογήτους.

[1041] τοιούτου τοίνυν τύπου τῆς σοφίας κτισθέντος ἐν ἡμῖν τε καὶ ἐν πᾶσι τοῖς ἔργοις ὄντος εἰκότως ἡ ἀληθινὴ καὶ δημιουργὸς σοφία τὰ τοῦ τύπου ἑαυτῆς εἰς ἑαυτὴν ἀναλαμβάνουσά φησι τὸ *κύριος ἔκτισέ με εἰς ἔργα αὐτοῦ.* ἃ γὰρ ἡ ἐν ἡμῖν σοφία εἶπε, ταῦτα αὐτὸς ὁ κύριος ὡς ἴδια λέγει· καὶ οὐκ ἔστι μὲν αὐτὸς κτιζόμενος κτίστης ὤν, διὰ δὲ τὴν ἐν αὐτοῖς τοῖς ἔργοις εἰκόνα κτισθεῖσαν αὐτου ταῦτα αὐτὸς ὡς περὶ ἑαυτοῦ λέγει…. ὥστε οὐκ ἔστι κτίσμα τῇ οὐσίᾳ ὁ λόγος, ἀλλὰ περὶ τῆς ἐν ἡμῖν οὔσης καὶ λεγομένης σοφίας ἐστὶ τὸ ἐν ταῖς παροιμίαις ῥητόν.

[1042] *CA* 1.40 [Metzler 256; NPNF² 4:391].

Lord created me' (*De Decr.* 14 [Opitz 12; NPNF² 4:159]).[1043] Second, he relates Christ's human aspect to the 'time' (καιρὸν) when he became incarnated: 'Now as to the time spoken of, he [the reader] will find for certain that, whereas the Lord always is, at length in fullness of the ages he became man; and whereas he is Son of God, he became Son of man also' (*De Decr.* 14 [Opitz 12; NPNF² 4:159]).[1044] Finally, he points out that the 'reason', or 'need' (χρείαν) why Christ came is for our salvation. He writes: 'And as to the object he will understand, that, wishing to destroy our death, he took on himself a body from the virgin Mary; that by offering this unto the Father a sacrifice for all, he might deliver us all, who *by fear of death were all our life through subject to bondage* [Heb. 2:15]' (*De Decr.* 14 [Opitz 12; NPNF² 4:159]).[1045]

Athanasius' partitive exegesis allows a brief observation on the way he relates divine and human nature in Christ and links both of them to salvation. In all of the above instances his treatment of Scripture is guided by the principle of double account concerning Christ. Athanasius calls this the 'scope and character' (σκοπὸς καὶ χαρακτήρ) of Scripture. In *CA* 3.29 [Savvidis 340; NPNF² 4:409], he specifies this as follows: 'Now the scope and character of Holy Scripture, as we have often said, is this,—it contains a double account of the Saviour; that he was ever God, and is the Son, being the Father's Word and Radiance and Wisdom; and that afterwards for us he took flesh of a virgin, Mary bearer of God, and was made man. And this scope is to be found throughout inspired Scripture, as the Lord himself has said, *Search the Scriptures, for they are they which testify of me* [Jn. 5:39]'.[1046] In his 'Herméneutique de l'exégèse dogmatique d'Athanase', Hermann Sieben suggests that Athanasius' principle of double account should not mean that Scripture is to be approached in the consequential terms as if the Old Testament is

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[1043] τὸ δὲ πρόσωπον τοῦ μὲν σωτῆρός ἐστι, τότε δὲ λέγεται, ὅτε λοιπὸν λαβὼν τὸ σῶμα λέγει. *κύριος ἔκτισέ με ἀρχὴν ὁδῶν αὐτοῦ εἰς ἔργα αὐτοῦ.* ὡς γὰρ υἱῷ θεοῦ ὄντι ἁρμόζει καλῶς τὸ ἀιδίως εἶναι καὶ ἐν κόλποις εἶναι τοῦ πατρός, οὕτως καὶ ἀνθρώπῳ γενομένῳ πρέπουσα φωνὴ τὸ *κύριος ἔκτισέ με.*

[1044] τὸν μὲν οὖν καιρὸν τοῦ ῥητοῦ τούτου εὑρήσει καὶ γνώσεται, ὅτι ἀεὶ ὢν ὁ κύριος ὕστερον ἐπὶ συντελείᾳ τῶν αἰώνων γέγονεν ἄνθρωπος, καὶ υἱὸς ὢν τοῦ θεοῦ γέγονε καὶ υἱὸς ἀνθρώπου.

[1045] τὴν δὲ χρείαν νοήσειεν, ὅτι τὸν ἡμῶν θάνατον καταργῆσαι θέλων ἔλαβεν ἑαυτῷ σῶμα ἐκ τῆς παρθένου μαρίας, ἵνα τοῦτο πρεσενέγκας θυσίαν ὑπὲρ πάντων τῷ πατρὶ *ἀπαλλάξῃ πάντας ἡμᾶς, ὅσοι φόβῳ θανάτου διὰ παντὸς τοῦ ζῆν ἔνοχοι ἦμεν δουλείας.*

[1046] σκοπὸς τοίνυν οὗτος καὶ χαρακτὴρ τῆς γραφῆς, ὡς πολλάκις εἴπομεν, διπλῆν εἶναι τὴν περὶ τοῦ σωτῆρος ἀπαγγελίαν ἐν αὐτῇ, ὅτι τε ἀεὶ θεὸς ἦν καὶ ἔστιν ὁ υἱὸς λόγος ὢν καὶ ἀπαύγασμα καὶ σοφία τοῦ πατρὸς καὶ ὅτι ὕστερον δι' ἡμᾶς σάρκα λαβὼν ἐκ παρθένου τῆς θεοτόκου μαρίας ἄνθρωπος γέγονε. καὶ ἔστι μὲν τοῦτον εὑρεῖν διὰ πάσης τῆς θεοπνεύστου γραφῆς σημαινόμενον, ὡς αὐτὸς ὁ κύριος εἴρηκεν· *ἐρευνᾶτε τὰς γραφάς, ὅτι αὐταί εἰσιν αἱ μαρτυροῦσαι περὶ ἐμοῦ.*

only about Christ' divinity and the New Testament is about his incarnation.[1047] Rather, both the Old and New Testament are equal testimony of one and the same subject to be searched and recognized in them. If the time is to be distinguished it should be done in terms of promise and fulfilment relating both of them to Christ. Sieben's argument agrees with my observations (made previously) regarding Athanasius' epistemological principle of knowing Christ as God from his deeds set forth in his *De Incarnatione*. Whether these are the Logos' works of creation in the Old Testament era,[1048] or his bodily performance of the divine deeds in the New Testament times,[1049] both point to him as God. This suggests that Athanasius' distinction between the divine and human aspects in Christ is best seen as asymmetrical. They are not meant to be approached as two parts of Christ's constitution, elements that make him who he is. (In his *Ep. Epic.* 8 [PG 26:1061c-1064c], Athanasius argues that this approach could lead to a view that Christ's flesh existed independently in heavens before he was born of Mary). Rather, Christ has always been God, and only at some point in time he assumed human nature. The latter is attributed to him as something that he added by becoming man; hence Christ does not depend on it for being who he is, God the Son. In *CA* 3.55 [Savvidis 366-7; NPNF² 4:423, modified], Athanasius stresses this point by saying that 'through these means [such as displaying hunger and tears] he made it known that being divine and impassible, he took passible flesh, yet from his works also proved himself to be the Word of God and subsequently (ὕστερον) become man'.[1050] The word 'subsequently' (ὕστερον) is used here to indicate that Christ is God in the first place and only later he became man for the purpose of salvation. The phrase 'from his works [he] proved himself to be the Word of God' shows that it was the second

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[1047] Sieben, 'Herméneutique de l'exégèse dogmatique d'Athanase', 211-2.

[1048] *De Inc.* 16 [Thomson 173]: 'For the Word spread himself everywhere, above and below and in the depth and in the breadth: above, in creation; below, in the incarnation; in the depth, in hel; in breadth, in the world. Everything is filled with the knowledge of God' (πανταχοῦ γὰρ τοῦ λόγου ἑαυτὸν ἁπλώσαντος, καὶ ἄνω καὶ κάτω καὶ εἰς τὸ βάθος καὶ εἰς τὸ πλάτος' ἄνω μὲν εἰς τὴν κτίσιν, κάτω δὲ εἰς τὴν ἐνανθρώπησιν, εἰς βάθος δὲ εἰς τὸν ἄδην, εἰς πλάτος δὲ εἰς τὸν κόσμον· τὰ πάντα τῆς περὶ θεοῦ γνώσεως πεπλήρωται).

[1049] *De Inc.* 18 [Thomson 177]: 'When therefore the theologians who speak of him say that he ate and drank and was born, know that the body was born as a body and was nourished on suitable food; but God the Word, who was with the body yet orders the universe, also made known through his actions in the body that he himself was not a man but God the Word' (ὅταν τοίνυν ἐσθίοντα καὶ πίνοντα καὶ τικτόμενον αὐτὸν λέγωσιν οἱ περὶ τούτου θεολόγοι, γίνωσκε ὅτι τὸ μὲν σῶμα, ὡς σῶμα, ἐτίκτετο καὶ καταλλήλοις ἐτρέφετο τροφαῖς, αὐτὸς δὲ ὁ συνὼν τῷ σώματι θεὸς λόγος τὰ πάντα διακοσμῶν, καὶ δι' ὧν εἰργάζετο ἐν τῷ σώματι οὐκ ἄνθρωπον ἑαυτόν, ἀλλὰ θεὸν λόγον ἐγνώριζε).

[1050] ἐκ μὲν γὰρ τῶν τοιούτων ἐγνώριζεν, ὅτι θεὸς ὢν ἀπαθὴς σάρκα παθητὴν ἔλαβεν, ἐκ δὲ τῶν ἔργων ἐδείκνυεν ἑαυτὸν λόγον ὄντα τοῦ θεοῦ καὶ ὕστερον γενόμενον ἄνθρωπον λέγων·

person of the Trinity who accomplished these deeds, a motif that is also strongly articulated in his *De Incarnatione*. Athanasius applies this asymmetrical christology for soteriological purposes throughout his later works. Thus, in *Ep. Epic.* 9 [PG 26:1065a; NPNF² 4:573] he affirms that Christ added flesh to himself 'in order that the flesh may rise (ἀναστῇ) again',[1051] and in *CA* 2.70 [Metzler 247; NPNF² 4:386] he states: 'For therefore the union (συναφή) was of this kind, that he might unite (συνάψῃ) what is man by nature (τὸν φύσει ἄνθρωπον) to him who is in the nature of the Godhead, and his salvation and deification (θεοποίησις) might be sure'.[1052] As in the *De Incarnatione*, Athanasius' christology is soteriological; Christ affects salvation in his own body by becoming man. Anatolios puts it by saying that 'the unity of Christ in Athanasius is best represented linguistically not as a substantive but as a verb'.[1053] And Behr remarks that '[t]here is a purpose to the Word's becoming flesh, and this purpose determines how we are to understand the person of Christ'.[1054] This type of christology calls for a more specific discussion of Athanasius' soteriology, and in the context of my focus, it invites a question of why deification is important for Athanasius and how it relates to other images of salvation.

5.3.2 Deification in the Christian Context: Texts and Analysis

Athanasius' technical term for deification is the word group θεοποίησις, θεοποιός, and θεοποιέω. These words occur total of 32 times[1055] in 6 later writings—*De decretis nicaenae Synodi*, *Contra Arianos*, *Epistulae quattuor ad Serapionem*, *Epistula de Synodis*, *Epistula ad Adelphium*, *Epistula ad Maximum*. In addition, Athanasius has 5 quotations and one allusion to Ps. 81:6-7 [LXX] that says '*you are gods and all of you the sons of the Most High* [Ps 81:6-7 LXX]. They occur in 3

[1051] ἵνα ἡ σὰρξ ἀναστῇ.

[1052] διὰ τοῦτο γὰρ τοιαύτη γέγονεν ἡ συναφή, ἵνα τῷ κατὰ φύσιν τῆς θεότητος συνάψῃ τὸν φύσει ἄνθρωπον καὶ βεβαία γένηται ἡ σωτηρία καὶ ἡ θεοποίησις αὐτοῦ.

[1053] Anatolios, *Athanasius: Coherence*, 149.

[1054] Behr, *The Nicene Faith*, 2/1:222.

[1055] The list includes: *De Decr.* 14 [Metzler 12 (twice)]; *CA* 1.9 [Metzler 117-8 (quote from Ps. 81:6 LXX)]; 1.38 [Metzler 148 (once)]; 1.39 [Metzler 149 (three times and two quotes from Ps. 81:6 LXX)]; 1.42 [Metzler 152 (once)]; 1.45 [Metzler 155 (once)]; 2.47 [Metzler 224 (once)]; 2.70 [Metzler 227 (four times)]; 3.19 [Savvidis 329 (quote from Ps. 81:6 LXX)]; 3.23 [Savvidis 333 (once)]; 3.33 [Savvidis 344 (once)]; 3.34 [Savvidis 346 (once)]; 3.38 [Savvidis 349-50 (once)]; 3.39 [Savvidis 351 (once)]; 3.48 [Savvidis 360 (once)]; 3.53 [Savvidis 365 (once)]; *Ep. Ser.* 1.24 [Savvidis 511 (twice)]; *De Syn.* 26 [Opitz 252 (once)]; 51 [Opitz 274 (four times)]; *Ep. Adelph.* 4 [PG 26:1077a (once)]; *Ep. Max.* 2 [PG 26:1088c (once)]; *Ep. Afr.* 7 [Brennecke 333 (allusion to Ps. 81:6 LXX)]. Athanasius also uses deification once in *De Inc.* 54, which I have already discussed in ch. 3.

writings—*Contra Orationes*, *Epistulae quattuor ad Serapionem*, and *Epistula ad Afros episcopos*.[1056] For my purposes, I have made a list of 26 passages (henceforth, I will abbreviate 'passage' as 'pass.') where Athanasius speaks about deification either by using his favourite technical term or by referring to Ps. 81:6-7 [LXX].[1057] I divided them into three categories according to whether they relate deification to Christ's body, to men, or to juridical aspects of salvation. I will consider each group first by citing the relevant passages (where deification terminology is underlined) and then by analyzing them within their respective categories. The only deification passage I have not included is *Ep. Ser.* 1.24 [Savvidis 511]; I will consider it when examining the work of the Holy Spirit.

5.3.2.1 Deification and Christ's Body
5.3.2.1.1 Texts

(1) He was not lessened by the envelopment of the body, but rather deified (ἐθεοποιεῖτο) it and rendered it immortal (*De Decr.* 14 [Metzler 12; NPNF² 4:159]).[1058]

(2) And so too the words *gave him* are not written because of the Word himself; for even before he became man he was worshipped, as we have said, by the angels and the whole creation in virtue of being proper to the Father; but because of us and for us this too is written of him. For as Christ died and was exalted as man, so, as man, is he said to take what, as God, he ever had, that even such a grant of grace might reach to us. For the Word was not impaired in receiving a body, that he should seek to receive a grace, but rather he deified (ἐθεοποίησεν) that which he put on, and more than that, *gave* it graciously to the race of man (*CA* 1.42 [Metzler 152; NPNF² 4:330]).[1059]

(3) And as the Son of Man, he himself is said after the manner of men to receive what proceeds from him, because his body is none other than his, and is a natural recipient of grace, as has been

1056 Athanasius' references to Ps. 81:6 LXX, include: *CA* 1.9 [Metzler 117-8 (one quote)]; 1.39 [Metzler 149 (two quotes)]; 3.19 [Savvidis 329 (one quote)]; *Ep. Ser.* 2.4 [Savvidis 543 (one quote)]; *Ep. Afr.* 7 [Brennecke 333 (allusion to Ps. 81:6 LXX)].

1057 In the quoted passages I have underlined every instance where Athanasius uses θεοποίησις, θεοποιός, θεοποιέω, and Ps. 81:6 LXX.

1058 οὐ γὰρ ἠλαττοῦτο τῇ περιβολῇ τοῦ σώματος, ἀλλὰ καὶ μᾶλλον ἐθεοποιεῖτο τοῦτο καὶ ἀθάνατον ἀπετέλει.

1059 καὶ γὰρ καὶ τὸ *ἐχαρίσατο αὐτῷ* οὐ δι᾽ αὐτὸν τὸν λόγον γέγραπται· ἦν γὰρ πάλιν καὶ πρὶν γένηται ἄνθρωπος προσκυνούμενος, ὥσπερ εἴπομεν, ὑπό τε τῶν ἀγγέλων καὶ πάσης τῆς κτίσεως κατὰ τὴν πατρικὴν ἰδιότητα, ἀλλὰ δι᾽ ἡμᾶς καὶ ὑπὲρ ἡμῶν τοῦτο πάλιν περὶ αὐτοῦ εἴρηται. ὥσπερ γὰρ ὡς ἄνθρωπος ὁ 'χριστὸς ἀπέθανε καὶ' ὑπερυψώθη, οὕτως ὡς ἄνθρωπος λέγεται λαμβάνειν, ὅπερ εἶχεν ἀεὶ ὡς θεός, ἵνα εἰς ἡμᾶς φθάσῃ καὶ ἡ τοιαύτη δοθεῖσα χάρις. οὐ γὰρ ἠλαττώθη ὁ λόγος σῶμα λαβών, ἵνα καὶ χάριν ζητήσῃ λαβεῖν, ἀλλὰ μᾶλλον καὶ ἐθεοποίησεν ὅπερ ἐνεδύσατο καὶ πλέον ἐχαρίσατο τῷ γένει τῶν ἀνθρώπων τοῦτο.

said. For be received it as far as bis man's nature was exalted; which exaltation was its being deified (θεοποιεῖσθαι). But such an exaltation the Word himself always had according to the Father's Godhead and perfection, which was his (*CA* 1.45 [Metzler 155; NPNF² 4:330]).[1060]

(4) Whence the truth shows us that the Word is not of things originate, but rather himself their Framer. For therefore did he assume the body originate and human, that having renewed it as its Framer, he might deify (θεοποιήσῃ) it in himself, and thus might introduce us all into the kingdom of heaven after his likeness (*CA* 2.70 [Metzler 227; NPNF² 4:386]).[1061]

(5) Therefore this is plain to everyone, that the flesh indeed is ignorant, but the Word himself, considered as the Word, knows all things even before they come to be. For he did not, when he became man, cease to be God; nor, whereas he is God does he shrink from what is man's; perish the thought; but rather, being God, he has taken to him the flesh, and being in the flesh deifies (ἐθεοποίει) the flesh. For as he asked questions in it, so also in it did he raise the dead; and he showed to all that he who quickens the dead and recalls the soul, much more discerns the secret of all (*CA* 3.38 [Savvidis 349-50; NPNF² 4:414]).[1062]

(6) While the disciples were seeing this, again he asked, 'When shall the end be, and when will you appear?' He said to them more clearly, *It is not for you to know the times or the seasons which the Father has put in his own power* [Acts 1:7]. And he did not then say, 'No, not the Son', as he said before humanly, but, 'It is not for you to know'. For now the flesh had risen and put off its mortality and been deified (θεοποιηθεῖσα); and no longer did it become him to answer after the flesh when he was going into the heavens; but henceforth to teach after a divine manner, 'It is not for you to know times or seasons which the Father hath put in his own power; but you shall receive Power'. And what is that Power of the Father but the Son? for Christ is 'God's Power and God's Wisdom' (*CA* 3.48 [Savvidis 360; NPNF² 4:420]).[1063]

[1060] ὡς δὲ υἱὸς ἀνθρώπου αὐτὸς ἀνθρωπίνως λέγεται τὰ παρ' ἑαυτοῦ δέχεσθαι διὰ τὸ μὴ ἑτέρου, ἀλλ' αὐτοῦ εἶναι τὸ σῶμα τὸ φύσιν ἔχον τοῦ δέχεσθαι τὴν χάριν, καθάπερ εἴρηται. ἐλάμβανε γὰρ κατὰ τὸ ὑψοῦσθαι τὸν ἄνθρωπον. ὕψωσις δὲ ἦν τὸ θεοποιεῖσθαι αὐτόν. αὐτὸς δὲ ὁ λόγος εἶχεν ἀεὶ τοῦτο κατὰ τὴν πατρικὴν ἑαυτοῦ θεότητα καὶ τελειότητα.

[1061] ὅθεν ἡ ἀλήθεια δείκνυσι μὴ εἶναι τῶν γενητῶν τὸν λόγον, ἀλλὰ μᾶλλον τούτων αὐτὸν δημιουργόν· οὕτω γὰρ καὶ προσελάβετο τὸ γενητὸν καὶ ἀνθρώπινον σῶμα, ἵνα τοῦτο ὡς δημιουργὸς ἀνακαινίσας ἐν ἑαυτῷ θεοποιήσῃ καὶ οὕτως εἰς βασιλείαν οὐρανῶν εἰσαγάγῃ πάντας ἡμᾶς καθ' ὁμοιότητα ἐκείνου.

[1062] οὐκοῦν παντί τῳ δῆλόν ἐστιν, ὅτι τῆς μὲν σαρκός ἐστι τὸ ἀγνοεῖν, αὐτὸς δὲ ὁ λόγος, ᾗ λόγος ἐστί, τὰ πάντα καὶ πρὶν γενέσεως γινώσκει. οὐ γὰρ ἐπειδὴ γέγονεν ἄνθρωπος, πέπαυται τοῦ εἶναι θεός, οὐδὲ ἐπειδὴ θεός ἐστι, φεύγει τὸ ἀνθρώπινον—μὴ γένοιτο—, ἀλλὰ μᾶλλον θεὸς ὢν προσελάμβανε τὴν σάρκα καὶ ἐν σαρκὶ ὢν ἐθεοποίει τὴν σάρκα. καὶ γὰρ ὥσπερ ἐν αὐτῇ ἐπυνθάνετο, οὕτως καὶ ἐν αὐτῇ τὸν νεκρὸν ἤγειρε καὶ πᾶσιν ἔδειξεν, ὅτι ὁ νεκροὺς ζωοποιῶν καὶ τὴν ψυχὴν ἀνακαλούμενος πολλῷ μᾶλλον τὰ κρυπτά.

[1063] ὅτε καὶ οἱ μαθηταὶ τοῦτο βλέποντες πάλιν ἠρώτων· 'πότε τὸ τέλος ἔσται, καὶ πότε σὺ παραγίνῃ', εἶπεν αὐτοῖς φανερώτερον· οὐχ ὑμῶν ἐστι γνῶναι χρόνους ἢ καιρούς, οὓς ὁ πατὴρ ἔθετο ἐν τῇ ἰδίᾳ ἐξουσίᾳ. καὶ οὐκ εἶπε τότε 'οὐδὲ ὁ υἱός', ὥσπερ εἶπε πρὸ τούτου ἀνθρωπίνως, ἀλλ'· 'ὑμῶν οὐκ ἔστι γνῶναι'. λοιπὸν γὰρ ἦν ἡ σὰρξ ἀναστᾶσα καὶ ἀποθεμένη τὴν νέκρωσιν καὶ θεοποιηθεῖσα, καὶ οὐκέτι ἔπρεπε σαρκικῶς αὐτὸν ἀποκρίνασθαι ἀνερχόμενον εἰς τοὺς οὐρανούς, ἀλλὰ λοιπὸν θεϊκῶς διδάξαι ὅτι 'οὐχ ὑμῶν ἐστι γνῶναι χρόνους ἢ καιρούς, οὓς ὁ πατὴρ ἔθετο ἐν

(7) Therefore, as we have already said, not Wisdom, as Wisdom, advanced in respect of itself; but the manhood advanced in Wisdom, transcending by degrees human nature, and being deified (θεοποιούμενον), and becoming and appearing to all as the organ of Wisdom for the operation and the shining forth of the Godhead. Wherefore neither said he, 'The Word advanced', but Jesus, by which name the Lord was called when he became man; so that the advance is of the human nature in such wise as we explained above (*CA* 3.53 [Savvidis 365; NPNF² 4:422]).[1064]

(8) Nor again, in saying that the Father of our Lord Jesus Christ is one only God, the only Ingenerate, do we therefore deny that Christ also is God before ages: as the disciples of Paul of Samosata, who say that after the incarnation he was deified (τεθεοποιῆσθαι) by advance, from being made by nature a mere man. For we acknowledge, that though he be subordinate to his Father and God, yet, being before ages begotten of God, he is God perfect according to nature and true, and not first man and then God, but first God and then becoming man for us, and never having been deprived of being (*De Syn*. 26 [Opitz 252; NPNF² 4:463, slightly modified]).[1065]

5.3.2.1.2 Analysis

Asymmetrical Christology. In all of the above passages, the Logos is the subject that assumes the human body and deifies it. The relation is clearly asymmetrical. Christ does not come into existence as a result of the divine and human natures being joined together. Rather, he preexists as God, while his human mode of existence begins when he is born as man. The clearest expression of this idea is in pass. (8), where Athanasius contrasts the Nicene teaching about Christ with the doctrine of Paul of Samosata. While the latter taught that Christ was 'a mere man' who was later deified by the moral advance, orthodox Christians acknowledge that he is 'not first man and then God, but first God and then becoming man for us'. Although being 'subordinate to his Father and God' the Logos is 'yet, being before ages

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τῇ ἰδίᾳ ἐξουσίᾳ, ἀλλὰ λήψεσθε δύναμιν'. τίς δὲ ἡ δύναμις τοῦ πατρὸς ἢ ὁ χριστός; 'χριστὸς' γὰρ 'θεοῦ δύναμις καὶ θεοῦ σοφία'.

[1064] διὰ τοῦτο, ὡς προείπομεν, οὐχ ἡ σοφία, ᾗ σοφία ἐστίν, αὐτὴ καθ' ἑαυτὴν προέκοπτεν, ἀλλὰ τὸ ἀνθρώπινον ἐν τῇ σοφίᾳ προέκοπτεν ὑπεραναβαῖνον κατ' ὀλίγον τὴν ἀνθρωπίνην φύσιν καὶ θεοποιούμενον καὶ ὄργανον αὐτῆς γινόμενον πρὸς τὴν ἐνέργειαν τῆς θεότητος καὶ τὴν ἔκλαμψιν αὐτῆς φαῖνον ἐν πᾶσι. διὸ οὐδὲ εἶπεν· 'ὁ λόγος προέκοπτεν', ἀλλὰ 'ἰησοῦς', ὅπερ ὄνομα γενόμενος ἄνθρωπος ὁ κύριος ἐκλήθη. ὡς εἶναι τῆς ἀνθρωπίνης φύσεως τὴν προκοπὴν οὕτως ὡς ἐν τοῖς ἔμπροσθεν εἴπομεν.

[1065] οὔτε μὴν ἕνα θεὸν μόνον λέγοντες εἶναι τὸν τοῦ κυρίου ἡμῶν ἰησοῦ χριστοῦ πατέρα, τὸν μόνον ἀγέννητον, διὰ τοῦτο ἀρνούμεθα καὶ τὸν χριστὸν θεὸν εἶναι πρὸ αἰώνων, ὁποῖοί εἰσιν οἱ ἀπὸ παύλου τοῦ σαμοσατέως ὕστερον αὐτὸν μετὰ τὴν ἐνανθρώπησιν ἐκ προκοπῆς τεθεοποιῆσθαι λέγοντες τῷ τὴν φύσιν ψιλὸν ἄνθρωπον γεγονέναι. οἴδαμεν γὰρ καὶ αὐτόν, εἰ καὶ ὑποτέτακται τῷ πατρὶ καὶ τῷ θεῷ, ἀλλ' ὅμως πρὸ αἰώνων γεννηθέντα ἐκ τοῦ θεοῦ θεὸν κατὰ φύσιν τέλειον εἶναι καὶ ἀληθῆ καὶ μὴ ἐξ ἀνθρώπων μετὰ ταῦτα θεόν, ἀλλ' ἐκ θεοῦ ἐνανθρωπῆσαι δι' ἡμᾶς, καὶ μηδέποτε ἀπολωλεκότα τὸ εἶναι.

begotten of God, He is God perfect according to nature and true'. In pass. (2) and (3), Athanasius is at pain to explain that before Christ's coming he was worshipped by the angels and the whole creation. Therefore, the Philippians passage where Christ is said to be given 'the name that is above every name' and 'exalted to the highest place' does not speak of his divine identity. Rather, it refers to his incarnated state when he took that which, as God, he always had 'according to the Father's Godhead and perfection'. In pass. (5), Athanasius uses this distinction to explain that according to his flesh, Christ did not know where Lazarus lay (he asked questions that show him to be ignorant), but according to his divinity he knew 'all things even before they come to be'. To dispel the doubt about his divinity, Christ proves himself to be God by raising Lazarus from the dead, 'for He did not, when He became man, cease to be God'.

Divinity and Humanity. Does Christ's body affect his divinity and in what way does he deify his body? Throughout his writings, Athanasius articulates the relation between the human and divine natures in Christ by using the principle of exchange of attributions known as *communicatio idiomatum*. Thus, in *CA* 3.32 [Savvidis 342-3; NPNF² 4:411], he argues that the unity of Christ's person is such that his human and divine qualities and experiences can properly be referred to his other nature and we may speak of 'the suffering of God'. He writes: 'When the flesh suffered, the Word was not external to (οὐκ ἦν ἐκτός) it; and therefore is the passion said to be his (λέγεται καὶ τὸ πάθος): and when he did divinely his Father's works, the flesh was not external (οὐκ ἦν ἔξωθεν) to him, but in the body itself did the Lord do them'.[1066] He continues:

> These things were so done, were so manifested, because he had a body, not in appearance, but in truth; and it became the Lord, in putting on human flesh, to put it on whole with the affections proper (τῶν ἰδίων παθῶν) to it; that, as we say that the body was his own (ἴδιον), so also we may say that the affections of the body were proper to him alone (τὰ τοῦ σώματος πάθη ἴδια μόνον αὐτοῦ λέγηται), though they did not touch him according to his Godhead (μὴ ἥπτετο κατὰ τὴν θεότητα αὐτοῦ). If then the body had been another's, to him too had been the affections attributed (ἐκείνου ἂν λέγοιτο καὶ τὰ πάθη); but if the flesh is the Word's (for 'the Word became flesh'), of necessity then the affections also of the flesh are ascribed (λέγεται τὰ πάθη) to him, whose the flesh is. And to whom the affections are ascribed, such namely as to be condemned, to be

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[1066] ὅθεν τῆς σαρκὸς πασχούσης οὐκ ἦν ἐκτὸς ταύτης ὁ λόγος· διὰ τοῦτο γὰρ αὐτοῦ λέγεται καὶ τὸ πάθος· καὶ θεϊκῶς δὲ ποιοῦντος αὐτοῦ τὰ ἔργα τοῦ πατρὸς οὐκ ἦν ἔξωθεν αὐτοῦ ἡ σάρξ, ἀλλ' ἐν αὐτῷ τῷ σώματι ταῦτα πάλιν ὁ κύριος ἐποίει·

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scourged, to thirst, and the cross, and death, and the other infirmities of the body, of him too is the triumph and the grace. For this cause then, consistently and fittingly such affections are ascribed not to another, but to the Lord; that the grace also may be from him (*CA* 3.32 [Savvidis 343; NPNF² 4:411]).[1067]

Obviously, Athanasius' words here should not be taken to reflect the modern psychological concept of personal experiences. Rather, Athanasius' intention is to distinguish in general between the subject of experiences and that which receives them. A helpful explanation of this point is offered by Anatolios who suggests that '[f]or Athanasius, the interaction of passibility and impassibility in Christ is conceived not so much in terms of feeling and no-feeling, but of activity and passivity—in terms of what is acting upon what, and the distinction between the 'subject' and 'object' within the process of transformation. Thus the unity and distinction in Christ is conceived in terms of the divine working upon the human in order to make the human divine'. [1068] Taking up the same point of activity and passivity, Behr remarks that 'what is at stake for Athanasius is not whether Christ "felt" hunger, fear, and pain, whether he "really experienced" being human as we do, but the relationship between activity and passivity: Is Christ the active agent in this or the passive subject? "Suffering" here is to be understood in terms of "passivity", being acted upon, rather than in terms of "feeling" or "experiencing". In reverse, "impassibility" is not understood as a lack of involvement, or an inability to change; if God is impassible, this means that he is not subject to anything, that he cannot be compelled'.[1069] In this context, Athanasius' passages on the deification of Christ's body reflect his concern to relate the divine subject to the human body in such a way that the former is not detrimented by the latter. From the standpoint of the modern psychology this creates a discomforting question as to whether Christ really experienced the suffering, but as Anatolios and Behr have warned us this question is not legitimate to Athanasius. Seeking both to safeguard

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[1067] ταῦτα δὲ οὕτως ἐγίνετο καὶ ἐδείκνυτο, ὅτι μὴ φαντασίᾳ ἀλλὰ ἀληθῶς ἔχων ἦν σῶμα· ἔπρεπε δὲ τὸν κύριον ἐνδιδυσκόμενον ἀνθρωπίνην σάρκα, ταύτην μετὰ τῶν ἰδίων παθῶν αὐτῆς ὅλην ἐνδύσασθαι, ἵνα ὥσπερ ἴδιον αὐτοῦ λέγομεν εἶναι τὸ σῶμα, οὕτως καὶ τὰ τοῦ σώματος πάθη ἴδια μόνον αὐτοῦ λέγηται, εἰ καὶ μὴ ἥπτετο κατὰ τὴν θεότητα αὐτοῦ. εἰ μὲν οὖν ἑτέρου τὸ σῶμα, ἐκείνου ἂν λέγοιτο καὶ τὰ πάθη· εἰ δὲ τοῦ λόγου ἡ σάρξ—*ὁ γὰρ λόγος σὰρξ ἐγένετο*—, ἀνάγκη καὶ τὰ τῆς σαρκὸς πάθη λέγεσθαι αὐτοῦ, οὗ καὶ ἡ σάρξ ἐστιν. οὗ δὲ λέγεται τὰ πάθη, οἷά ἐστι μάλιστα τὸ κατακριθῆναι, τὸ μαστιγωθῆναι, τὸ διψᾶν καὶ ὁ σταυρὸς καὶ ὁ θάνατος καὶ αἱ ἄλλαι τοῦ σώματος ἀσθένειαι, τούτου καὶ τὸ κατόρθωμα καὶ ἡ χάρις ἐστί. διὰ τοῦτο τοίνυν ἀκολούθως καὶ πρεπόντως οὐκ ἄλλου, ἀλλὰ τοῦ κυρίου λέγεται τὰ τοιαῦτα πάθη, ἵνα καὶ ἡ χάρις παρ' αὐτοῦ.

[1068] Anatolios, *Athanasius: Coherence*, 155.

[1069] Behr, *The Nicene Faith*, 2/1:227.

the divinity and at the same time to affirm the real suffering of the incarnate Logos, he wants that neither be undermined. While the two previously quoted passages from *CA* 3.32 [Savvidis 342-3] are aimed at affirming the reality of Christ's suffering, the deification passages mainly seek to keep his divinity unharmed. Thus, in pass. (1), Athanasius contends that the Logos' divinity did not lessen as a result of his incarnation. Rather, the Logos, being God, 'divinized it and rendered it immortal'. According to pass. (2), (5), (6), and (7), the Logos 'was not impaired in receiving a body' (even though the latter grew in wisdom and advance) and 'did not shrink from what is man's'. Instead, he 'renewed' his body as 'its Framer', 'put off its mortality', deified and raised it in himself. Having deified his body, the Logos used it as his 'organon', or instrument. Hence, his human actions had a salvific effect. In pass. (2), Athanasius writes: 'As Christ died and was exalted as man, so, as man, is He said to take what, as God, he ever had, that even such a grant of grace might reach to us'. He develops this idea much more extensively in the next set of passages.

5.3.2.2 Deification of Men
5.3.2.2.1 Texts

(9) The *Word was made flesh* [Jn. 1:14] in order to offer up this body for all, and that we partaking of his Spirit, might be deified (θεοποιηθῆναι), a gift which we could not otherwise have gained than by his clothing himself in our created body, for hence we derive our name of "men of God" and "men in Christ". But as we, by receiving the Spirit, do not lose our own proper substance, so the Lord, when made man for us, and bearing a body, was no less God (*De Decr*. 14 [Metzler 12; NPNF² 4:159). [1070]

(10) Therefore, if, even before the world was made, the Son had that glory, and was Lord of glory and the Highest, and descended from heaven, and is ever to be worshipped, it follows that he had not promotion from his descent, but rather himself promoted the things which needed promotion; and if he descended to effect their promotion, therefore he did not receive in reward the name of the Son and God, but rather he himself has made us sons of the Father, and deified (ἐθεοποίησε) men by becoming himself man (*CA* 1.38 [Metzler 148; 328-9]).[1071]

[1070] *ὁ γὰρ λόγος σὰρξ ἐγένετο, ἵνα καὶ προσενέγκῃ τοῦτο ὑπὲρ πάντων καὶ ἡμεῖς ἐκ τοῦ πνεύματος αὐτοῦ μεταλαβόντες θεοποιηθῆναι δυνηθῶμεν ἄλλως οὐκ ἂν τούτου τυχόντες, εἰ μὴ τὸ κτιστὸν ἡμῶν αὐτὸς ἐνεδύσατο σῶμα*

[1071] οὐκοῦν εἰ καὶ πρὸ τοῦ τὸν κόσμον γενέσθαι τὴν δόξαν εἶχεν ὁ υἱὸς καὶ *κυριος τῆς δόξης* ἦν *ὕψιστός* τε ἦν καὶ ἐξ οὐρανοῦ κατέβη καὶ ἀεὶ προσκυνητός ἐστιν, οὐκ ἄρα καταβὰς ἐβελτιώθη, ἀλλὰ μᾶλλον ἐβελτίωσεν αὐτὸς τὰ δεόμενα βελτιώσεως· καὶ εἰ τοῦ βελτιῶσαι χάριν καταβέβηκεν, οὐκ ἄρα

(11) Therefore he was not man, and then became God, but he was God, and then became man, and that to deify (θεοποιήσῃ) us. Since, if when he became man, only then he was called Son and God, but before he became man, God called the ancient people sons, and made Moses a god of Pharaoh (and Scripture says of many, *God stands in the congregation of gods* [Ps. 81:1 LXX]), it is plain that he is called Son and God later than they. How then are all things through him, and he before all? or how is he *first-born of the whole creation* [Col. 1:15], if he has others before him who *are called sons and gods*? [Ps. 81:6 LXX] And how is it that those first partakers do not partake of the Word? This opinion is not true; it is a device of our present Judaizers. For how in that case can any at all know God as their Father? for adoption there could not be apart from the real Son, who says, 'No one knows the Father, save the Son, and he to whomsoever the Son will reveal him. And how can there be deifying (θεοποίησις) apart from the Word and before him? yet, says he to their brethren the Jews, *If he called them gods* [Ps 81:6 LXX], unto whom the Word of God came'. And if all that are *called sons and gods* [Ps 81:6 LXX], whether in earth or in heaven, were adopted and deified (ἐθεοποιήθησαν) through the Word, and the Son himself is the Word, it is plain that through him are they all, and he himself before all, or rather he himself only is very Son, and he alone is very God from the very God, not receiving these prerogatives as a reward for his virtue, nor being another beside them, but being all these by nature and according to essence (*CA* 1.39 [Metzler 149; NPNF² 4:329]).[1072]

(12) So, if it is said in the Proverbs *He created* [Prov. 8:30] we must not conceive that the whole Word is in nature a creature, but that he put on the created body and that God created him for our sakes, preparing for him the created body, as it is written, for us, that in him we might be capable of being renewed and deified (θεοποιηθῆναι). What then deceived you, O senseless, to call the Creator a creature? (*CA* 2.47 [Metzler 224; NPNF² 4:374]).[1073]

μισθὸν ἔσχε τὸ λέγεσθαι υἱὸς καὶ θεός, ἀλλὰ μᾶλλον αὐτὸς υἱοποίησεν ἡμᾶς τῷ πατρί καὶ ἐθεοποίησε τοὺς ἀνθρώπους γενόμενος αὐτὸς ἄνθρωπος.

[1072] οὐκ ἄρα ἄνθρωπος ὢν ὕστερον γέγονε θεός, ἀλλὰ θεὸς ὢν ὕστερον γέγονεν ἄνθρωπος, ἵνα μᾶλλον ἡμᾶς θεοποιήσῃ· ἐπεὶ εἰ, ὅτε γέγονεν ἄνθρωπος, τότε υἱὸς καὶ θεὸς ἐλέχθη, πρὸ δὲ τοῦ γένηται ἄνθρωπος, υἱοὺς ἔλεγε τοὺς πάλαι λαοὺς ὁ θεὸς καὶ μωσῆν ἐτίθει θεὸν τοῦ φαραὼ καὶ ἐπὶ πολλῶν ἡ γραφὴ φησιν· θεὸς ἔστη ἐν συναγωγῇ θεῶν, δῆλόν ἐστιν ὡς μεν' αὐτοὺς καὶ υἱὸς καὶ θεὸς οὗτος ἐλέχθη. πῶς οὖν πάντα δι' αὐτοῦ καὶ αὐτός ἐστι πρὸ πάντων ἢ πῶς πρωτότοκος πάσης τῆς κτίσεως ἔχων τοὺς πρὸ αὐτοῦ κληθέντας υἱοὺς καὶ θεούς; πῶς δὲ οἱ μετοχῇ πρῶτοι οὐ μετέχουσι λόγου; οὐκ ἔστιν ἀληθὴς αὕτη ἡ δόξα· παρεξεύρεσίς ἐστι τῶν νῦν ἰουδαϊζόντων. πῶς γὰρ ὅλως δύνανται τινες ἐπιγνῶναι πατέρα τὸν θεόν; οὔτε γὰρ υἱοθεσία γένοιτ' ἂν χωρὶς τοῦ ἀληθινοῦ υἱοῦ λέγοντος αὐτοῦ 'οὐδεὶς ἐπιγινώσκει τὸν πατέρα, εἰ μὴ ὁ υἱὸς καὶ ᾧ ἂν ὁ υἱὸς ἀποκαλύψῃ'. πῶς δὲ καὶ θεοποίησις γένοιτ' ἂν χωρὶς τοῦ λόγου, καὶ πρὸ αὐτοῦ καίτοι λέγοντος αὐτοῦ πρὸς τοὺς ἀδελφοὺς τούτων ἰουδαιους, 'εἰ ἐκείνους θεοὺς εἶπε, πρὸς οὕς ὁ λόγος τοῦ θεοῦ ἐγένετο'; εἰ δὲ πάντες ὅσοι υἱοί τε καὶ θεοὶ ἐκλήθησαν εἴτε ἐπὶ γῆς εἴτε ἐν οὐρανοῖς διὰ τοῦ λόγου υἱοποιήθησαν καὶ ἐθεοποιήθησαν, αὐτὸς δὲ ὁ υἱός ἐστιν ὁ λόγος, δῆλον ὅτι δι' αὐτοῦ μὲν οἱ πάντες, αὐτὸς δὲ πρὸ πάντων, μᾶλλον δὲ μόνος αὐτὸς ἀληθινὸς υἱὸς καὶ μόνος 'ἐκ τοῦ ἀληθινοῦ θεοῦ θωὸς ἀληθινός' ἐστιν, οὐ μισθὸν ἀρετῆς ταῦτα λαβὼν οὐδὲ ἄλλος ὢν παρὰ ταῦτα, ἀλλὰ φύσει κατ' οὐσίαν ὢν ταῦτα. γέννημα γὰρ τῆς τοῦ πατρὸς οὐσίας ὑπάρχει, ὥστε μηδὲ ἀμφιβάλλειν ὅτι καθ' ὁμοιότητα τοῦ ἀτρέπτου πατρὸς ἄτρεπτός ἐστι καὶ ὁ λόγος.

[1073] οὕτως ἐὰν ἀκούωμεν ἐν ταῖς παροιμίαις τὸ ἔκτισεν, οὐ δεῖ κτίσμα τῇ φύσει ὅλον νοεῖν τὸν λόγον, ἀλλ' ὅτι τὸ κτιστὸν ἐνεδύσατο σῶμα καὶ ὑπὲρ ημῶν ἔκτισεν αὐτὸν ὁ θεὸς εἰς ἡμᾶς τὸ

(13) For man had not been deified (ἐθεοποιήθη) if joined to a creature, or unless the Son were very God; nor had man been brought into the Father's presence, unless he had been his natural and true Word who had put on the body…. For therefore the union was of this kind, that he might unite what is man by nature to him who is in the nature of the Godhead, and his salvation and deification (θεοποίησις) might be secure (*CA* 2.70 [Metzler 227; NPNF² 4:386]).[1074]

(14) And this being so, no heretic shall object, 'Wherefore rises the flesh, being by nature mortal? and if it rises, why not hunger too and thirst, and suffer, and remain mortal? for it came from the earth, and how can its natural condition pass from it?' since the flesh is able now to make answer to this so contentious heretic, 'I am from earth, being by nature mortal, but afterwards I have become the Word's flesh', and he 'carried' my affections, though he is without them; and so I became free from them, being no more abandoned to their service because of the Lord who has made me free from them. For if you object to my being rid of that corruption which is by nature, see that you object not to God's Word having taken my form of servitude; for as the Lord, putting on the body, became man, so we men are deified (θεοποιούμεθα) by the Word as being taken to him through his flesh, and henceforward inherit life 'everlasting' (*CA* 3.34 [Savvidis 346; NPNF² 4:412-3]).[1075]

(15) But if that he might redeem mankind, the Word did come among us; and that he might hallow and deify (θεοποιήσῃ) them, the Word became flesh (and for this he did become), who does not see that it follows, that what he says that he received, when he became flesh, that he mentions, not for his own sake, but for the flesh? for to it, in which he was speaking, pertained the gifts given through him from the Father (*CA* 3.39 [Savvidis 351; NPNF² 4:415]).[1076]

(16) So then, the Word glorifies creatures, and after he has deified (θεοποιῶν) them and made them sons of God, he leads them to the Father. But that which joins creatures to the Word cannot

κτιστὸν αὐτῷ 'καταρτίσας', ὡς γέγραπται, 'σῶμα', ἵν' ἐν αὐτῷ ἀνακαινισθῆναι καὶ θεοποιηθῆναι δυνηθῶμεν. τί τοίνυν ὑμᾶς ἠπάτησεν, ὦ ἀνόητοι, εἰπεῖν τὸν κτίστην κτίσμα.

[1074] οὐκ ἂν δὲ πάλιν ἐθεοποιήθη κτίσματι συναφθεὶς ὁ ἄνθρωπος, εἰ μὴ θεὸς ἦν ἀληθινὸς ὁ υἱός· καὶ οὐκ ἂν παρέστη τῷ πατρὶ ὁ ἄνθρωπος, εἰ μὴ φύσει καὶ ἀληθινὸς ἦν αὐτοῦ λόγος ὁ ἐνδυσάμενος τὸ σῶμα.

[1075] τούτου δὲ οὕτως ὄντος οὐκ ἐγκαλέσει τις αἱρετικός· 'διὰ τί ἀνίσταται ἡ σὰρξ φύσει θνητὴ τυγχάνουσα; εἰ δὲ καὶ ἀνίσταται, διὰ τί μὴ πάλιν πεινᾷ καὶ διψᾷ καὶ πάσχει καὶ μένει θνητη; ἐκ γὰρ τῆς γῆς γέγονε, καὶ τὸ κατὰ φύσιν πῶς ἂν ἀπ' αὐτῆς παύσοιτο;' δυναμένης τότε τῆς σαρκὸς ἀποκρίνεσθαι πρὸς τὸν οὕτω φιλόνεικον αἱρετικόν· 'εἰμὶ μὲν ἐκ γῆς κατὰ φύσιν θνητή, ἀλλ' ὕστερον τοῦ λόγου γέγονα σάρξ, καὶ 'αὐτὸς ἐβάσταξέ' μου τὰ πάθη καίτοι ἀπαθὴς ὤν· ἐγὼ δὲ τούτων γέγονα ἐλευθέρα οὐκ ἀφιεμένη δουλεύειν ἔτι τούτοις διὰ τὸν ἐλευθερώσαντά με κύριον ἀπὸ τούτων. εἰ γὰρ ἐγκαλεῖς, ὅτι τῆς κατὰ φύσιν ἀπηλλάγην φθορᾶς, ὅρα μὴ ἐγκαλέσῃς, ὅτι ὁ τοῦ θεοῦ λόγος τὴν ἐμὴν 'τῆς δουλείας ἔλαβε μορφήν'. ὡς γὰρ ὁ κύριος ἐνδυσάμενος τὸ σῶμα γέγονεν ἄνθρωπος, οὕτως ἡμεῖς οἱ ἄνθρωποι παρὰ τοῦ λόγου τε θεοποιούμεθα προσληφθέντες διὰ τῆς σαρκὸς αὐτοῦ καὶ λοιπὸν ζωὴν αἰώνιον κληρονομοῦμεν.

[1076] εἰ δὲ ἵνα λυτρώσηται τὸ γένος τὸ ἀνθρώπινον, ἐπεδήμησεν ὁ λόγος, καὶ ἵνα αὐτοὺς ἁγιάσῃ καὶ θεοποιήσῃ, γέγονεν ὁ λόγος σάρξ—τούτου γὰρ χάριν καὶ γέγονε—, τίνι λοιπὸν οὐκ ἔστι φανερόν, ὅτι ταῦτα ἅπερ εἰληφέναι λέγει, ὅτε γέγονε σάρξ, οὐ δι' ἑαυτόν, ἀλλὰ διὰ τὴν σάρκα λέγει; ἐν ᾗ γὰρ ἦν λέγων, ταύτης ἦν καὶ τὰ διδόμενα χαρίσματα δι' αὐτοῦ παρὰ τοῦ πατρός.

be a creature. And that which makes creatures sons cannot be foreign to the Son. Otherwise another spirit would be needed by which this Spirit could be joined to the Word. But this is absurd. And so, the Spirit is not one of the things that has come into existence, but is proper to the divinity of the Father. In him the Word deifies (θεοποιεῖ) all that has come into existence. And the one in whom creatures are deified (θεοποιεῖται) cannot himself be external to the divinity of the Father (*Ep. Ser.* 1.25 [Savvidis 511; PPS 92-3, slightly modified]).[1077]

(17) And again, if, as we have said before, the Son is not such by participation, but, while all things originated have by participation the grace of God, he is the Father's Wisdom and Word of which all things partake, it follows that he, being the deifying (θεοποιόν) and enlightening power of the Father, in which all things are deified (θεοποιεῖται) and quickened, is not alien in essence from the Father, but coessential. For by partaking of him, we partake of the Father; because that the Word is the Father's own. Whence, if he was himself too from participation, and not from the Father his essential Godhead and Image, he would not deify (ἐθεοποίησε), being deified (θεοποιούμενος) himself. For it is not possible that he, who merely possesses from participation, should impart of that partaking to others, since what he has is not his own, but the Giver's; and what he has received, is barely the grace sufficient for himself (*De Syn.* 51 [Opitz 274; NPNF² 4:477]).[1078]

(18) For he has become Man, that he might deify (θεοποιήσῃ) us in himself, and he has been born of a woman, and begotten of a virgin, in order to transfer to himself our erring generation, and that we may become henceforth a holy race, and *partakers of the divine nature* [2 Pet 1:4], as blessed Peter wrote. And *what the law could not do in that it was weak through the flesh, God sending his own Son in the likeness of sinful flesh, and for sin, condemned sin in the flesh* [Rom. 8:3] (*Ep. Adelph.* 4 [PG 26:1077a; NPNF² 4:576]).[1079]

(19) For the body they beheld was not that of some man, but of God, being in which, even when being crucified, he raised the dead. Accordingly it is no good venture of theirs to say that the

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[1077] ἐν τούτῳ γ' οὖν ὁ λόγος τὴν κτίσιν δοξάζει, θεοποιῶν δὲ καὶ υἱοποιῶν προσάγει τῷ πατρί. τὸ δὲ συνάπτον τῷ λόγῳ τὴν κτίσιν οὐκ ἂν εἴη αὐτὸ τῶν κτισμάτων. καὶ τὸ υἱοποιοῦν δὲ τὴν κτίσιν οὐκ ἂν εἴη ξένον τοῦ υἱοῦ, ἐπεὶ ζητεῖν ἕτερον ἀνάγκη πνεῦμα, ἵνα καὶ τοῦτο ἐν ἐκείνῳ συναφθῇ τῷ λόγῳ. ἀλλ' ἄτοπον τοῦτο. οὐκ ἄρα τῶν γενητῶν ἐστι τὸ πνεῦμα, ἀλλ' ἴδιον τῆς τοῦ πατρὸς θεότητος, ἐν ᾧ καὶ τὰ γενητὰ ὁ λόγος θεοποιεῖ. ἐν ᾧ δὲ θεοποιεῖται ἡ κτίσις, οὐκ ἂν εἴη ἐκτὸς αὐτὸ τῆς τοῦ πατρὸς θεότητος.

[1078] πάλιν τε εἰ, καθὰ προείπομεν, οὐκ ἐκ μετουσίας ἐστὶν ὁ υἱός, ἀλλὰ τὰ μὲν γενητὰ πάντα ἐκ μετουσίας ἔχει τὴν παρὰ θεοῦ χάριν, αὐτὸς δὲ τοῦ πατρὸς σοφία καὶ λόγος ἐστίν, οὗ μετέχει τὰ πάντα, δῆλον ὅτι αὐτὸς ὢν τὸ θεοποιὸν καὶ φωτιστικὸν τοῦ πατρός, ἐν ᾧ τὰ πάντα θεοποιεῖται καὶ ζωοποιεῖται, οὐκ ἀλλοτριοούσιός ἐστι τοῦ πατρός, ἀλλ' ὁμοούσιος. τούτου γὰρ μεταλαμβάνοντες τοῦ πατρὸς μετέχομεν διὰ τὸ τοῦ πατρὸς εἶναι ἴδιον τὸν λόγον. ὅθεν εἰ ἦν ἐκ μετουσίας καὶ αὐτὸς καὶ μὴ ἐξ αὐτοῦ οὐσιώδης θεότης καὶ εἰκὼν τοῦ πατρός, οὐκ ἂν ἐθεοποίησε θεοποιούμενος καὶ αὐτός. οὐ γὰρ οἷόν τε τὸν ἐκ μετουσίας ἔχοντα μεταδιδόναι τῆς μεταλήψεως ἑτέροις, ὅτι μὴ αὐτοῦ ἐστιν ὃ ἔχει, ἀλλὰ τοῦ δεδωκότος, καὶ ὃ ἔλαβε μόγις τὴν ἀρκοῦσαν αὐτῷ χάριν ἔλαβε.

[1079] γέγονε γὰρ ἄνθρωπός, ἵν' ἡμᾶς ἐν ἑαυτῷ θεοποιήσῃ· καὶ γέγονεν ἐκ γυναικὸς, καὶ γεγέννηται ἐκ παρθένου, ἵνα τὴν ἡμῶν πλανηθεῖσαν γέννησιν εἰς ἑαυτὸν μετενέγκη, καὶ γενώμεθα λοιπὸν γένος ἅγιον, καὶ *κοινωνοὶ θείας φύσεως, ὡς ἔγραψεν ὁ μακάριος πέτρος. καὶ τὸ ἀδύνατον δὲ τοῦ νόμου, ἐν ᾧ ἠσθένει διὰ τῆς σαρκός, ὁ θεὸς τὸν ἑαυτοῦ υἱὸν πέμψας ἐν ὁμοιώματι σαρκὸς ἁμαρτίας, καὶ περὶ ἁμαρτίας κατέκρινε τὴν ἁμαρτίαν ἐν τῇ σαρκί.*

Word of God came into a certain holy man; for this was true of each of the prophets and of the other saints, and on that assumption he would clearly be born and die in the case of each one of them. But this is not so, far be the thought. But once for all *at the consummation of the ages* [Heb. 9:26], to put away sin' *the Word was made flesh* [Jn. 1:14] and proceeded forth from Mary the virgin, man after our likeness, as also he said to the Jews, *Wherefore seek ye to kill me, a man that has told you the truth?* [Jn. 8:40]. And we are deified (θεοποιούμεθα) not by partaking of the body of some man, but by receiving the body of the Word himself (*Ep. Max.* 2 [PG 26:1088c; NPNF² 4:578-9]).[1080]

(20) Wherefore he is very God, existing one in essence with the very Father; while other beings, to whom he said, *I said you are gods* [Ps. 81:6 LXX], had this grace from the Father, only by participation of the Word, through the Spirit (*CA* 1.9 [Metzler 117-8; NPNF² 4:311]).[1081]

(21) But if some have been called gods, they are not gods by nature but by participation in the Son. For so he spoke: *if he called them gods to whom the Word of God came* [Jn. 10:35]. Hence, since they are not gods by nature, there comes a time when some of them change and hear him say: *I said: you are gods and all of you the sons of the Most High, but you will die like men* [Ps 81:6-7 LXX]. Such was the one who heard: *You are a human being, and not a god* [Ezek. 28:2]. But the Son is true God, just as the Father is. For the Son is in the Father and the Father in the Son—this is what John wrote this, as has been shown (*Ep. Ser.* 1.25 [Savvidis 543; PPS 110-1]).[1082]

(22) For as, although there be one Son by nature, True and Only-begotten, we too become sons, not as he in nature and truth, but according to the grace of him that calls, and though we are men from the earth, are yet *called gods* [Ps. 81:6 LXX], not as the true God or his Word, but as has pleased God who has given us that grace (*CA* 3.19 [Savvidis 329; NPNF² 4:404]).[1083]

[1080] οὐ γὰρ ἀνθρώπου τινὸς ἦν τὸ βλεπόμενον σῶμα ἀλλὰ θεοῦ, ἐν ᾧ τυγχάνων καὶ ὅτε ἐσταυροῦτο, ἤγειρε νεκρούς. διὸ οὐδὲ καλὸν ἐκεῖνο αὐτῶν τόλμημα τὸ λάβων, ὅτι εἰς ἄνθρωπόν τινα ἅγιον ἐγένετο ὁ θεοῦ λόγος (τοῦτο γὰρ ἐν ἑκάστῳ ἐγένετο τῶν προφητῶν καὶ τῶν ἄλλων ἁγίων), ἵνα μὴ καθ' ἕκαστον γεννώμενος, καὶ πάλιν ἀποθνήσκων φαίνηται. οὐκ ἔτι δὲ οὕτως· μὴ γένοιτο· ἀλλ' ἅπαξ ἐπὶ συντελείᾳ τῶν αἰώνων εἰς ἀθέτησιν τῆς ἁμαρτίας αὐτὸς ὁ λόγος σὰρξ ἐγένετο, καὶ ἐκ μαρίας τῆς παρθένου προῆλθεν ἄνθρωπος καθ' ὁμοίωσιν ἡμετέραν, ὡς καὶ πρὸς ἰουδαίους ἔφη· τί ζητεῖτέ με ἀποκτεῖναι ἄνθρωπον, ὅς τὴν ἀλήθειαν ὑμῖν λελάληκα, οὐκ ἀνθρώπου τέ τινος μετέχοντες, σώματος, ἀλλὰ αὐτοῦ τοῦ λόγου σῶμα λαμβάνοντες, θεοποιούμεθα.

[1081] διὸ θεός ἐστιν ἀληθινὸς ἀληθινοῦ πατρὸς 'ὁμοούσιος' ὑπάρχων. τὰ δὲ ἄλλα, οἷς εἶπεν· ἐγὼ εἶπα· θεοί ἐστε, μόνον μετοχῇ τοῦ λογοῦ διὰ τοῦ πνεύματος ταύτην ἔχουσι τὴν χάριν παρὰ τοῦ πατρός.

[1082] εἰ δὲ καὶ θεοί τινες ἐκλήθησαν, ἀλλ' οὐ τῇ φύσει, ἀλλὰ τῇ μετουσίᾳ τοῦ υἱοῦ, οὕτω γὰρ καὶ αὐτὸς εἶπεν· 'εἰ ἐκείνους θεοὺς εἶπε, πρὸς οὓς ὁ λόγος τοῦ θεοῦ ἐγένετο', διὸ καὶ μὴ ὄντες τῇ φύσει θεοί, ἔστιν ὅτε τινὲς τρέπονται ἀκούοντες· 'ἐγὼ εἶπα· θεοί ἐστε καὶ υἱοὶ ὑψίστου πάντες· ὑμεῖς δέ, ὡς ἄνθρωποι, ἀποθνήσκετε'. τοιοῦτος ἦν ὁ ἀκούσας· 'σὺ δὲ εἰ ἄνθρωπος καὶ οὐ θεός'. ὁ δὲ υἱὸς θεὸς ἀληθινός ἐστιν, ὡς ὁ πατήρ. ἐν αὐτῷ γάρ ἐστιν καὶ ὁ πατὴρ ἐν τῷ υἱῷ· καὶ ὁ μὲν ἰωάννης ἔγραψεν.

[1083] ὡς γὰρ ἑνὸς ὄντος τοῦ υἱοῦ φύσει καὶ ἀληθινοῦ καὶ μονογενοῦς γινόμεθα καὶ ἡμεῖς υἱοὶ οὐχ ὡς ἐκεῖνος φύσει καὶ ἀληθείᾳ, ἀλλὰ κατὰ χάριν τοῦ καλέσαντος, καὶ ἄνθρωποι τυγχάνοντες ἀπὸ γῆς 'θεοὶ' χρεματίζομεν οὐχ ὡς ὁ ἀληθινὸς θεὸς ἢ ὁ τούτου λόγος, ἀλλ' ὡς ἠθέλησεν ὁ τοῦτο χαρισάμενος θεός.

(23) For we too, albeit <u>we cannot become like God in essence</u>, yet <u>by progress in virtue imitate God</u>, the Lord granting us this grace, in the words, *Be ye merciful as your Father is merciful* [Luke 6:36]. *Be ye perfect as your heavenly Father is perfect* [Mt. 5:48] (*Ep. Afr.* 7 [Brennecke 333; NPNF² 4:492]).[1084]

5.3.2.2.2 Analysis

Christ's Solidarity with mankind. Describing the deification of mankind, Athanasius consistently identifies Christ's humanity with ours. While earlier scholars[1085] tended to explain this type of christology in terms of the Platonic model of universal reality, recent commentators have proposed that a more fruitful way of approaching it is to consider Christ's humanity as having a representative significance. Taking a mediating position, Roldanus suggests that Christ's identification with humanity is best understood in terms of the exchange of properties. Citing *CA* 3.33, he argues that 'qu'Athanase croit à une transmission très rèelle des propriétés entre le Verbe et les hommes. Les propriétés (τὰ ἴδια) de la chair ou du corps, qu'il désigne aussi comme sa faiblesse (ἀσθενεία) et surtout comme sa capacité de souffrir (πάθη) ont été prises en charge par le Verbe lors de son incarnation. Il s'est approprié cette chair dans toutes ses imperfections. En conséquence, ces propriétés, toutes naturelles qu'elles soient, ne continuent plus à dominer l'homme; il en est libéré et participe aux forces naturelles du Verbe: notre corruptibilité, conséquence ultime de la faiblesse naturelle et du péché, est échangée avec ces deux causes contre la vie éternelle'.[1086] Emphasizing the representative aspect of Athanasius' christology, Torrance depicts salvation 'as taking place within the mediatorial life and person of the Incarnate Son. Just as he thought of the *Logos* as internal to the being of God, so he thinks of our salvation as taking place in the inner relations of the Mediator (μεσίτης), and not simply in Christ's external relations with sinners'.[1087] Similarly, Anatolios writes that 'our whole salvation and deification are rooted in our human conditions' being "ascribed" to the Word, for that is what essentially constitutes our

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[1084] καὶ γὰρ καὶ ἡμεῖς καίτοι μὴ δυνάμενοι ὅμοιοι κατ' οὐσίαν τοῦ θεοῦ γενέσθαι, ὅμως ἐξ ἀρετῆς βελτιούμενοι μιμούμεθα τὸν θεὸν χαρισαμένου καὶ τοῦτο τοῦ κυρίου καὶ λέγοντος· γίνεσθε οἰκτίρμονες, ὡς ὁ πατὴρ ὑμῶν οἰκτίρμων ἐστί· καὶ γίνεσθε τέλειοι, ὡς ὁ πατὴρ ὑμῶν ὁ οὐράνιος τέλειός ἐστι.

[1085] e.g. Harnack, *Lehrbuch der Dogmengeschichte*, 3:295-303; Gross, *La Divinisation du Chrétien*, 208-9; Kelly, *Early Christian Doctrines*, 378-9; Norman, 'Deification: The Content of Athanasian Soteriology', 98-100.

[1086] Roldanus, *Le Christ et l'homme dans la Théologie d'Athanase d'Alexandrie*, 181.

[1087] Torrance, *Divine Meaning*, 192-3.

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own being "Worded"'. He also suggests (primarily on the basis of Athanasius' double treatise) that

> [t]he body… seems to represent for Athanasius what most immediately belongs to humanity, as its own, and thus what is primarily to be transcended. The soul is not conceived in the same way—as that which is to be transcended—not because it is naturally superior to the body or more "divine", but simply because the soul is supposed to be the organ which actually effects this self-transcendence. In other words, the soul is conceived more as the subject of self-transcendence because it is evil, but precisely because it is what is "closest to humanity". Surprisingly then, and in a striking departure from a prevailing Platonic identification of humanness with the soul (which is basically the position of Origen), it seems that for Athanasius the "selfness" of being human resides particularly in the body.[1088]

These observations fit well Athanasius' statement in pass. (9), where incarnation itself is considered to have a divinizing effect, 'for as the Lord, putting on the body, became man, so we men are deified by the Word as being taken into him through his flesh'. In pass. (18), Athanasius describes the result of this 'being taken into him' as an act of divinizing transfer of our erring generation to Christ. He says the Logos 'has become man, so that he might deify us in himself, and he has been born of a woman, and begotten of a virgin, in order to transfer to himself our erring generation'. The efficacy of our being in Christ's body is illustrated in pass. (19), where Athanasius contends against those who think that Christ simply 'came into a certain holy man'. In response, he argues that this was true of the prophets and saints, while Christ 'proceeded forth from Mary the virgin, becoming man after our likeness'. Therefore, 'we are deified not by partaking of the body of some man, but by receiving the body of the Word himself'. According to this passage there are two types of participation. Partaking of the body of some man does not do anything because the man is not God, whereas partaking of Christ's body makes us deified because he is God incarnate. In pass. (17), Athanasius calls Christ 'the deifying and enlightening power of the Father', and says that his ability to deify is grounded on the fact that he is one with the Father. If he were not the Father's own, he would himself be in need of deification rather than deifying us all. In pass. (14), Athanasius shows that incarnation is purposive for Christ came in order to offer his body for all. He says: '*the Word was made flesh* in order to offer up this body for all, and that we… might be deified'.

[1088] Anatolios, *Athanasius: Coherence*, 64.

The Fruits of Christ's Deification. Christ's deification of mankind, according to Athanasius, has introduced a dramatic change for humanity. It effected the renewal of our whole being and existence, for 'he took body that in him we might be capable of being renewed and deified' (pass. 12). As a result of deification, we 'have become a holy race' and *partakers of the divine nature* [2 Pet 1:4], and the sin that used to condemn us does this no more (pass. 18 with the reference to Rom. 8:3). Athanasius pairs deification with other words to stress the wide spectrum of changes in men: we are 'saved and deified' (13), 'hollowed and deified' (15), 'quickened and deified' (17), 'enlightened and deified' (17), and 'adopted and deified'. By being deified, we are joined to God (pass 13), 'brought into the Father's presence' (pass. 13), and 'inherit eternal life' (pass. 14). In pass. (11), (16), (21), (22), and (23), deification is said to make us gods and sons by grace. Conceiving of 'gods' and 'sons' as synonyms, Athanasius writes in pass (11): 'If all that are *called sons and gods* [Ps 81:6 LXX], whether in earth or in heaven, were adopted and deified through the Word, and the Son himself is the Word, it is plain that through him are they all, and he himself'. To qualify this characterization, Athanasius draws a contrast between Christ who is the very God and very Son, and humans who are gods and sons on account of being deified and adopted through the Logos. Likewise, in pass. (21), (22), and (23), he describes the human status of being gods and sons as one 'according to grace' and 'participation in Christ', while depicting Christ's status of God and Son as one 'by nature and truth'. He argues that those who put Christ on the same level as other gods and sons (spoken of in Ps. 81:6 LXX) do so like Judaizers who refuse to acknowledge Christ's divinity and his deifying power (pass. 11). Being different from Christ who is the true God and Son, we become like him not 'in essence', but by 'imitating him through virtue' according to the Gospel's call to '*be perfect as your heavenly Father is perfect* [Mt. 5:48]' (pass. 23).

5.3.2.3 Deification, Sin, and Atonement
5.3.2.3.1 Texts

(24) And as we had not been delivered from sin and the curse, unless it had been by nature human flesh, which the Word put on (for we should have had nothing common with what was foreign), so also the man had not been deified (ἐθεοποιήθη), unless the Word who became flesh

had been by nature from the Father and true and proper to him. (*CA* 2.70 [Metzler 227; NPNF² 4:386]).[1089]

(25) 'And when they shall be so perfected', he says, 'then the world knows that you have sent me, for unless I had come and borne this their body, no one of them had been perfected, but one and all had remained corruptible. Work you then in them, O Father, and as you have given to me to bear this, grant to them your Spirit, that they too in it may become one, and may be perfected in me. For their perfecting shows that your Word has sojourned among them; and the world seeing them perfect and full of God, will believe altogether that you have sent me, and I have sojourned here. For whence is this their perfecting, but that I, your Word, having borne their body, and become man, have perfected the work, which you gave me, O Father? And the work is perfected, because men, redeemed from sin, no longer remain dead; but being deified (θεοποιηθέντες), have in each other, by looking at me, the bond of love' (*CA* 3.23 [Savvidis 333; NPNF² 4:406]).[1090]

(26) For if the works of the Word's Godhead had not taken place through the body, man had not been deified (ἐθεοποιήθη); and again, had not the properties of the flesh been ascribed to the Word, man had not been thoroughly delivered from them; but though they had ceased for a little while, as I said before, still sin had remained in him and corruption, as was the case with mankind before him; and for this reason:—Many for instance have been made holy and clean from all sin (*CA* 3.33 [Savvidis 344; NPNF² 4:411]).[1091]

5.3.2.3.2 Analysis

Though not being many, some passages treat specific juridical aspects of salvation as part of deification. In the passages I have considered previously, there were occasional references to the fact that 'Christ died' so that 'grace might reach to us' (2), that the Logos 'put away sin' (pass. 19), and condemned it in his flesh (pass. 18, with reference to Rom. 8:3). The same motifs are contained in pass. (24), (25), and (26) quoted above. The first one relates incarnation and deification directly to

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[1089] καὶ ὥσπερ οὐκ ἂν ἠλευθερώθημεν ἀπὸ τῆς ἁμαρτίας καὶ τῆς κατάρας, εἰ μὴ φύσει σὰρξ ἦν ἀνθρωπίνη, ἣν ἐνεδύσατο ὁ λόγος· οὐδὲν γὰρ κοινὸν ἦν ἡμῖν πρὸς τὸ ἀλλότριον· οὕτως οὐκ ἂν ἐθεοποιήθη ὁ ἄνθρωπος, εἰ μὴ φύσει ἐκ τοῦ πατρὸς καὶ ἀληθινὸς καὶ ἴδιος ἦν αὐτοῦ ὁ λόγος ὁ γενόμενος σάρξ. διὰ τοῦτο γὰρ τοιαύτη γέγονεν ἡ συναφή, ἵνα τῷ κατὰ φύσιν τῆς θεότητος συνάψῃ τὸν φύσει ἄνθρωπον καὶ βεβαία γένηται ἡ σωτηρία καὶ ἡ θεοποίησις αὐτοῦ.

[1090] ἡ γὰρ τούτων τελείωσις δείκνυσιν ἐπιδημίαν γεγενῆσθαι τοῦ σοῦ λόγου· καὶ ὁ κόσμος δὲ βλέπων τούτους τελείους καὶ θεοφορουμένους πιστεύσει πάντως, ὅτι σύ με ἀπέστειλας καὶ ἐπεδήμησα. πόθεν γὰρ τούτοις ἡ τελείωσις, εἰ μὴ ἐγὼ ὁ σὸς λόγος τὸ σῶμα τούτων λαβὼν ἐγενόμην ἄνθρωπος καὶ ἐτελείωσα τὸ ἔργον ὃ δέδωκάς μοι, πάτερ; τετελείωται δὲ τὸ ἔργον, ὅτι λυτρωθέντες ἀπὸ τῆς ἁμαρτίας οἱ ἄνθρωποι οὐκέτι μένουσι νεκροί, ἀλλὰ καὶ θεοποιηθέντες ἔχουσιν ἐν ἡμῖν βλέποντες ἐν ἀλλήλοις τὸν σύνδεσμον τῆς ἀγάπης.

[1091] εἰ γὰρ τὰ τῆς θεότητος τοῦ λόγου ἔργα μὴ διὰ τοῦ σώματος ἐγίνετο, οὐκ ἂν ἐθεοποιήθη ἄνθρωπος. καὶ πάλιν εἰ τὰ ἴδια τῆς σαρκὸς οὐκ ἐλέγετο τοῦ λόγου, οὐκ ἂν ἠλευθερώθη παντελῶς ἀπὸ τούτων ἄνθρωπος· ἀλλ' εἰ ἄρα πρὸς ὀλίγον μὲν ἀνεπαύετο, ὡς προεῖπον, πάλιν δὲ ἔμενεν ἡ ἁμαρτία ἐν αὐτῷ καὶ ἡ φθορά, ὥσπερ ἐπὶ τῶν ἔμπροσθεν ἀνθρώπων γέγονε, καὶ τοῦτο δείκνυται.

the motif of atonement. It says that 'just as we had not been delivered from sin and the curse, unless it had been by nature human flesh, which the Word put on, so also the man had not been deified, unless the Word who became flesh had been by nature from the Father and true and proper to him' (pass. 24). Here Athanasius ties together such themes as incarnation, atonement, deification, and Christ's divinity. Together they make 'salvation and deification secure' (a phrase which I placed into pass. 13, but which belongs to this passage in the original text]). Along the same lines, Athanasius relates incarnation and deification to redemption from sin and death in pass. (25). He approaches these aspects of salvation as part of what he calls 'perfection': 'The work is perfected, because men, redeemed from sin, no longer remain dead, but being deified, have in each other, by looking at me, the bond of love'. He adds that perfection produced in us by Christ includes the gift of the Holy Spirit and incorruption. This deified state of perfection is expected to make an evangelistic impact on the world, for 'the world seeing them perfect and full of God, will believe altogether that you have sent me, and I have sojourned here'. Finally, pass. (26) relates deification to incarnation and 'cleaning from all sin'. Without incarnation man would not be deified, and both 'corruption' and 'sin' would still remain 'if the works of the Word's Godhead had not taken place'.

5.3.2.4 Summary, Questions, and Suggestions

My brief overview of the deification passages shows that Athanasius uses deification in more than one sense. Generally, he can relate it either to Christ's body or to human beings. In both cases, deification is redemptive. With regard to Christ's body it takes place within the life and person of Christ as opposed to an external event. Deification, in this sense, is an exchange of properties: whatever is ours is ascribed to Christ, and whatever is Christ's becomes ours by grace and participation. In this context, Anatolios' suggestion that Athanasius identified the humanness or selfness with the body rather than soul sounds fairly reasonable. If man is a body then salvation needs to include Christ's deification of the flesh. With regard to deification of human beings, Athanasius uses three major ways to describe it—as an ontological transformation of men's being, as a personal relation with God, and as an aspect that goes together with the atonement of humanity. When using deification to depict the transformation of men's being, he links it with the way Christ rendered his body immortal (pass. 25) and free of corruption (pass. 1).

The majority of passages, however, relate the deifying work of God with the relational aspect of salvation and some to the juridical one. With regard to the former, Athanasius ties deification directly to the subject of Christ whose divine intervention bridges the divide between God and fallen humanity. He overcomes this divide in himself on behalf of the whole mankind. To stress the personal nature of the restored relationship with God, Athanasius uses the idea of sonship, drawing a parallel between the only-begotten Son and sons by adoption, grace, and participation in the true Son (pass. 10, 11, 16, 21, 22). Some phrases that reflect this close relation speak of us 'being joined to God' (pass. 25), 'full of God' (pass. 13), 'being brought into the Father's presence', and enjoying 'the bond of love' (pass. 13). Wherever Athanasius uses deification in connection with the juridical aspects of salvation, he refers to Christ's death as being the means for the deliverance from sin, its curse and condemnation (pass. 2, 19, 24, 25, and 26).

At this point, I should note that my observations appear to be unsupportive of those interpretations that present Athanasius' deification in the physical terms emphasizing it over two other aspects of salvation, namely, atonement and personal relationship with God. In view of such interpretations, I would like to consider briefly three questions that touch on the modern concerns and criticism of Athanasius' soteriology: (1) Is incarnation and its deifying effect the only means of salvation for Athanasius? (2) Does salvation happen automatically, or mechanically, without any appropriation on the human part? (3) And is the physical element the overriding one in deification? To begin with the first question, it is quite apparent that Athanasius clearly articulates the importance of Christ's death and the deliverance of sins as indicated in my analysis. I suggest that one of the reasons some scholars tend to overlook this point is because they raise a question which Athanasius did not seek to answer. This question relates to 'how' salvation is accomplished, while the question Athanasius himself asked was 'who' makes salvation possible. A good example of the 'how' expectation is Hanson's often quoted complain that

[o]ne of the curious results of this theology of the incarnation is that it almost does away; with a doctrine of the Atonement. … [H]e [Athanasius] cannot really explain why Christ should have died. When in chapters 19 and following of the *De Incarnatione* he begins to explain the necessity of Christ's death, he can only present a series of puerile reasons unworthy of the rest of

the treatise. The fact is that his doctrine of the incarnation has almost swallowed up any doctrine of the Atonement, has rendered it unnecessary.[1092]

Clearly, Hanson's expectation rests on the question of how one is saved. His assumed answer is by Christ's atoning death on the cross. Hence, he charges Athanasius for spending more time talking about incarnation rather than crucifixion. As a result, he accuses him for rendering atonement an unnecessary doctrine. But is this a fair criticism? I believe it is not. To point out the obvious, Athanasius shows no sign of having to choose between incarnation and crucifixion as if only one is redemptive and the other is not. Instead, he seeks to show that both of them have the saving significance because the subject that comes down as man and then dies on the cross is the true God as opposed to someone promoted to that status or a semi-divine being as in Arius. The 'who' of incarnation and crucifixion for Athanasius is one and the same person Christ Jesus who is coessential and coeternal with God the Father and who also became man. Starting with the 'who' rather than 'how' Athanasius is able to affirm a more embracing approach in which the person of Christ is related to every aspect of salvation—whether it concerns his incarnation or death. In contrast, Hanson's tendency to emphasize atonement over the incarnation of Christ creates an impression that only the former is what matters. No wonder, Kruger complains that such an approach tends to make the cross as all-significant. He writes: 'What is critical [on this model] is that Jesus suffered the legal punishment that was to fall upon us. Once the suffering is over, Jesus himself ceases to be of any real and practical value. His work is done. He is not longer needed in the legal arrangement between God and humanity. Having fixed the legal problem between God and human beings, he, in essence bows out…. This shift from the centrality of Jesus Christ to the centrality of the cross is… the greatest of all disasters'.[1093] Therefore, I suggest that Hansons' criticism is based on the inadequate attempt to read the 'how' question into Athanasius' soteriology that is driven by the concern of 'who' makes salvation possible. From the standpoint of Athanasius' emphasis, incarnation and crucifixion is one work of God that deals with two distinct but interrelated problems of the fallen humanity. This work is aimed at uniting the divine and human in Christ by bringing man back into the original relations with God (a point which I discussed in ch. 3 and will return to it

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[1092] Hanson, *The Search for God*, 450.
[1093] Kruger, *The Great Dance*, 31. Cf. Breck, 'Divine Initiative', 115.

shortly), and to deal with the problem of sin through Christ's atoning death. Instead of approaching incarnation as a mere prerequisite for crucifixion, and crucifixion as a mere consequence of incarnation, Athanasius affirms both as equal means of God's redeeming mission.

Closely related to the first question is another one: does salvation happen automatically, or mechanically, without any appropriation on the human part? Does Athanasius not create an impression that salvation is an event 'whereby mere contact with the divine nature of the Logos suffices to divinize the whole of human nature'?[1094] While this question has been partly addressed above, it still remains unclear in which way humanity is passive and in which way it is active, for Athanasius affirmed both. His model of human passivity is best expressed in the idea of Christ as the giver and recipient of grace. According to the double treatise, human beings were unable to preserve what they were given and turned away from the relationship with God. Therefore, Christ's coming was aimed at making available what humanity lost in a new and more secure way. In his *Contra Arianos*, Athanasius picks up this theme when contrasting man's inherent instability and failure to retain God's gifts with the divine power to do what humans were not able. In *CA* 3.38 [Savvidis 350; Behr 230], he writes:

> For though he had no need, he is still said to have received humanly what he received, so that as it is the Lord who received, and as the gift rests in him, the grace may remain secure (βεβαία ἡ χάρις διαμείνῃ). For when the human being alone receives it, he is liable to lose it again (and this is shown by Adam, for he received and lost). But in order that the grace may not be liable to loss, and may be guarded securely for human beings (βεβαία φυλαχθῇ τοῖς ἀνθρώποις), he himself makes the gift his own (ἰδιοποιεῖται), and so he says that he has received power, as man, which he always had as God.[1095]

Here Christ's role is both to bestow the gift and receive it in himself on behalf of mankind. The latter's passivity is explained by the fact that it is inherently unstable and cannot hold on to what it is given. Therefore, Christ's active role is called by the need to do what humanity cannot accomplish on its own. In this sense, passivity

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[1094] Finch, 'Athanasius on the Deifying Work', 110.

[1095] οὐ γὰρ χρείαν ἔχων ὅμως αὐτὸς ὡς εἰληφὼς λέγεται ἅπερ ἐλάμβανεν ἀνθρωπίνως, ἵνα πάλιν ὡς τοῦ κυρίου λαβόντος καὶ ὡς εἰς αὐτὸν ἀναπαυομένης τῆς δόσεως βεβαία ἡ χάρις διαμείνῃ. ἄνθρωπος μὲν γὰρ μόνος λαμβάνων δυνατὸν ἔχει καὶ τὸ ἀφαιρεθῆναι, καὶ τοῦτο ἐπὶ τοῦ ἀδὰμ ἐδείχθη· λαβὼν γὰρ ἀπώλεσεν. ἵνα δὲ ἀναφαίρετος ἡ χάρις γένηται καὶ βεβαία φυλαχθῇ τοῖς ἀνθρώποις, διὰ τοῦτο αὐτὸς ἰδιοποιεῖται τὴν δόσιν καὶ λέγει ἐξουσίαν εἰληφέναι ὡς ἄνθρωπος, ἣν ἔχει ἀεὶ ὡς θεός.

is a good thing; it is needed because man finds himself fallen and helpless. Moreover, the line between the gift and the giver is so thin that the two are almost identical. Therefore, receiving the gift is much more than just about retaining an impersonal quality; it is about an inner presence of God himself. And in as much as this is so, it implies that salvation is the work of God effecting deification of those whom he indwells. The grace here is not one that impels or enables human beings to attain salvation on their own. Rather, being of divine nature it/God is sufficient in itself for accomplishing what is needed. At the same time, Athanasius' emphasis on Christ's action should not make us think that he did not have a place for the human appropriation of salvation. Athanasius' silence on this point in the deification passages may have several reasons. First, in light of the anti-Arian debates, it is quite natural that Athanasius accentuates the divine action over the way salvation is appropriated by the humans. Were he to emphasize the latter, he would risk losing the attention on Christ's divine ability to save the world. Therefore, he speaks much more about the subject of Christ and his divine work rather than about the way it is to be appropriated. Second, Athanasius' focus on the divine action may have to do with the way he understood the Arian Christ. The latter, according to his reconstruction, is a created being whose promotion to the divine status was a result of his exceptional achievements in the exercise of virtue. In light of such christology, Athanasius' avoidance of stressing the human active role is understandable. To do otherwise would mean to play into the Arian hand which was the last thing he wanted. That being said, Athanasius is far from ignoring the issue of human action and responsibility. In fact, among the deification passages that normally give priority to God's action, there is one (pass. 23) that includes a very clear statement of how we are to become more like God. Quoting two Gospel passages, Athanasius states: 'For albeit we cannot become like God in essence, yet by progress in virtue imitate God, the Lord granting us this grace, in the words, *Be merciful as your Father is merciful* [Luke 6:36]. *Be perfect as your heavenly Father is perfect* [Mt. 5:48]'. If taken in isolation from the rest of the deification passages, this text seems to elevate Christian action over the divine, but when considered in light of other statements on deification, the human action does not look competing. Rather, it can be perceived as a way of appropriating what Christ has already done by giving and receiving the gift of salvation on our behalf. In this regard, we are fortunate to possess Athanasius' biography *Vita Antonii*, where a monk by the name

Antony is presented as a model of the deified person. I will discuss this writing in much detail in my concluding chapter. Another excellent example of how Athanasius envisions Christian life as a response to God's action is his yearly *Epistula festales*. They were sent out to the Alexandrian churches at the beginning of Lent and were aimed at preparing Christians for a proper celebration of Easter. These 31 letters (preserved in full text or in fragments) are written in a much less technical language than Athanasius' polemical writings and integrate the themes of virtue and imitation as part of Christian life.[1096] Thus, contrasting the virtues and vices as food for the soul, he writes in *Ep. fest.* 1.5 [PG 26:1363b]:

> For virtues and vices are the food of the soul, and it can eat either of these two meats, and incline to either of the two, according to its own will. If it is bent toward virtue, it will be nourished by virtues, by righteousness, by temperance, by meekness, by fortitude, as Paul saith; *Being nourished by the word of truth* [1 Tim. 4:6]. Such was the case with our Lord, who said, *My meat is to do the will of my Father which is in heaven* [Jn. 4:34]. But if it is not thus with the soul, and it inclines downwards, it is then nourished by nothing but sin.[1097]

A few lines later, he goes on to identify the food of the soul with Christ by referring to the eucharistic passage in Jn. 6:53: 'And as our Lord and Saviour Jesus Christ, being heavenly bread, is the food of the saints, according to the [statement]: *Except ye eat my flesh, and drink my blood*, so is the devil the food of the impure, and of those who do nothing which is of the light, but work the deeds of darkness' (*Ep. fest.* 1.5 [PG 26:1363b-c]).[1098] What nurtures the Christian, according to these two passages, is Christ' body (representing God's work) and virtue (representing one's exercise of will). Besides eucharist, Athanasius also speaks about baptism. Although rarely referred,[1099] baptism is clearly conceived as that which brings salvation into effect. Its purpose is to join us to the Godhead (ἵνα συναφθῶμεν τῇ

[1096] For a discussion of the dogmatic and practical topics in the *Epistula festales*, see Hunter, 'The Homiletic Festal Letters of Athanasius', 73-100.

[1097] Porro virtutes aeque ac vitia, alimenta cibique animae sunt, ut alterutris illis vescatur, et pro suo placito u utrumlibetlatus declinet. Utroqueversum scilicet pergers potest. Si ad virtutem deflectit, virtute alitur, id est justitia, castitate, abstinentia, fortitudine, veluti Paulus aiebat: *Se verbo veritatis pasci*; sicuti etiam Dominus noster: *Cibus meus est, ut faciam voluntatem Patris mei, qui in coelis est.* Quod si non ad haec, sed ad inferiora illa se inclinaverit anima, nulla alia re pascetur quam peccato.

[1098] Et quemadmodum Dominus noster ac Salvator Jesus Christus panis est coelestis, fitque sanctorum alimonia, ut ipse ait: *Nisi manducaveritis meam carnem, et biberitis meum sanguinem*; sic diabolus fit cibus impurorum atque eorum qui non lucis, sed tenebrarum opera faciunt.

[1099] *De Decr.* 31 [Opitz 27]; *CA* 1.34 [Metzler 210-1]; 2.41-2 [Metzler 217-9]; *Ep. Ser.* 4. 2, 5, 6 [Savvidis 581-2, 583-5, 585-6].

θεότητι)[1100] and make us one with the Son (ἵνα ἑνωθῶμεν τῷ υἱῷ).[1101] Its efficacy is grounded on the fact that we are baptized not into the name of a creature but into the name of the Father, Son, and Holy Spirit. Elaborating on this point, Athanasius asserts:

> For the Arians do not baptize into Father and Son, but into Creator and creature, and into Maker and work. And as a creature is other than the Son, so the baptism, which is supposed to be given by them, is other than the truth, though they pretend to name the name of the Father and the Son, because of the words of Scripture, For not he who simply says, 'O Lord', gives baptism; but he who with the name has also the right faith. On this account therefore our Saviour also did not simply command to baptize, but first says, 'Teach;' then thus: 'Baptize into the name of Father, and Son, and Holy Ghost;' that the right faith might follow upon learning, and together with faith might come the consecration of baptism (*CA* 2.42 [Metzler 219; NPNF² 4:371]).[1102]

Taken together baptism, eucharist, imitation, and the life of virtue are various aspects of Christian living that appropriate Christ's salvation on a personal level. There is however, one other important element that concerns Christian life, and I would like to consider it separately by asking the last of the three questions I have posed: Is the physical element the overriding one in deification? Since Harnack's *Lehrbuch der Dogmengeschichte*, Athanasius has often been described as a Hellenistic thinker with an excessively realistic metaphysic in which the primary fruits of deification are immortality and incorruption. While it is true that Athanasius speaks about the divine qualities (such as immortality, incorruption, and perfection) as part of his soteriological perspective, I believe that a far more prominent aspect of salvation and deification for Athanasius is relational and personal, not physical. In other words, it is not about receiving and retaining the gifts of salvation, but about enjoying the deifying presence of God himself. To revisit Harnack's interpretation of Athanasius' soteriology, I would like to look at a cluster of terms—'participation', 'love', 'joy', and 'sonship'—which Athanasius uses to characterize the deification of human beings. For convenience sake, I made

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[1100] *CA* 2.41 [Metzler 217; NPNF² 4:370].

[1101] Ibid.

[1102] Οὐ γὰρ 'εἰς πατέρα καὶ υἱὸν' διδοασιν οἱ Ἀρειανοί, ἀλλ' εἰς κτίστην καὶ κτίσμα, καὶ εἰς ποιητὴν καὶ ποίημα. ὥσπερ δὲ ἄλλο ἐστὶ κτίσμα παρὰ τὸν υἱόν, οὕτως ἄλλο ἂν εἴη τῆς ἀληθείας τὸ παρ' αὐτῶν νομιζόμενον δίδοσθαι, κἂν τὸ ὄνομα πατρὸς καὶ υἱοῦ διὰ τὸ γεγραμμένον ὀνομάζειν προσποιῶνται. οὐ γὰρ ὁ λέγων ἁπλῶς 'κύριε' οὗτος καὶ δίδωσιν, ἀλλ' ὁ μετὰ τοῦ ὀνόματος καὶ τὴν πίστιν ἔχων ὀρθήν. διὰ τοῦτο γοῦν καὶ ὁ σωτὴρ οὐχ ἁπλῶς ἐνετείλατο βαπτίζειν, ἀλλὰ πρῶτόν φησι 'μαθητεύσατε', εἶθ' οὕτως· 'βαπτίζετε εἰς ὄνομα πατρὸς καὶ υἱοῦ καὶ ἁγίου πνεύματος'. ἵν' ἐκ τῆς μαθήσεως ἡ πίστις ὀρθὴ γένηται καὶ μετὰ πίστεως ἡ τοῦ βαπτίσματος τελείωσις προστεθῇ.

an overview of these terms in Athanasius' major writings and placed them at the end of this work in four Tables.

Athanasius uses interchangeably several word groups for participation: (1) μετουσία, μετοχή, μέτοχος, μετέχω, [1103] (2) μέθεξις, μετάληψις, μεταλαμβάνω, [1104] and (3) κοινωνία, κοινωνέω[1105] (see Table 1). His most substantial discussion of participation with regard to godlikeness (exploring whether it happens according to the essence of God or according to his qualities) is recorded in *De Syn.* 53 [Opitz 276; NPNF² 4:479, slightly modified]:

> For you know yourselves, and no one can dispute it, that Like (ὅμοιον) is not predicated of essence (οὐσιῶν), but of form (σχημάτων), and qualities (ποιοτήτων); for in the case of essences we speak, not of likeness (ὁμοιότης), but of identity (ταυτότης). Man, for instance, is said to be like man, not in essence, but according to form (σχῆμα) and character (χαρακτῆρα); for in essence men are of one nature (τῇ γὰρ οὐσίᾳ ὁμοφυεῖς εἰσι). And again, man is not said to be unlike (ἀνόμοιος) dog, but to be of different nature (ἑτεροφυής). Accordingly, while the former are of one nature (ὁμοφυές) and coessential (ὁμοούσιον), the latter are different (ἑτεροφυὲς καὶ ἑτεροούσιον) in both. Therefore, in speaking of Like (ὅμοιον) according to essence (κατ' οὐσίαν), we mean like by participation (ἐκ μετουσίας); for likeness (ὅμοιον) is a quality (ποιότης), which may attach to essence (οὐσίᾳ), and this would be proper (ἴδιον) to creatures for they, by partaking (ἐκ μετοχῆς), are made like to God (ὁμοιοῦται τῷ θεῷ). For 'when He shall appear', says Scripture, *we shall be like him* [1 Jn. 3:2], like, that is, not in essence (οὐ τῇ οὐσίᾳ) but in sonship (ἀλλὰ τῇ υἱότητι), which we shall partake from him (μεταλαμβάνομεν παρ' αὐτοῦ).[1106]

In the first half of this passage, Athanasius speaks of two kinds of likeness: one according to essence and one according to qualities, form, and character. After illustrating them with several examples, he goes on to affirm in the second part of this passage that our likeness to God is best described in terms of 'participation'. This means that we become like God not by sharing his essence (otherwise, we

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[1103] LSJ 1120-2.

[1104] LSJ 1090, 1113.

[1105] LSJ 969-7.

[1106] οἴδατε γὰρ καὶ ὑμεῖς καὶ οὐδ' ἂν τις ἀμφιβάλλοι ὅτι τὸ ὅμοιον οὐκ ἐπὶ τῶν οὐσιῶν, ἀλλ' ἐπὶ σχημάτων καὶ ποιοτήτων λέγεται ὅμοιον· ἐπὶ γὰρ τῶν οὐσιῶν οὐχ ὁμοιότης, ἀλλὰ ταυτότης ἂν λεχθείη. ἄνθρωπος γοῦν ἀνθρώπῳ ὅμοιος λέγεται οὐ κατὰ τὴν οὐσίαν, ἀλλὰ κατὰ τὸ σχῆμα καὶ καὶ τὸν χαρακτῆρα· τῇ γὰρ οὐσίᾳ ὁμοφυεῖς εἰσι. καὶ πάλιν ἄνθρωπος κυνὶ οὐκ ἀνόμοιος λέγεται, ἀλλ' ἑτεροφυής· οὐκοῦν τὸ μὲν ὁμοφυὲς καὶ ὁμοούσιον, τὸ δὲ ἑτεροφυὲς καὶ ἑτεροούσιον. διὸ καὶ ὁ λέγων ὅμοιον κατ' οὐσίαν ἐκ μετουσίας τοῦτο λέγει ὅμοιον. τὸ γὰρ ὅμοιον ποιότης ἐστίν, ἥτις τῇ οὐσίᾳ προσγένοιτ' ἄν, τοῦτο δὲ τῶν ποιημάτων ἴδιον ἂν εἴη· ταῦτα γὰρ ἐκ μετοχῆς ὁμοιοῦται τῷ θεῷ. 'ὅταν γάρ', φησί, 'φανερωθῇ, ὅμοιοι αὐτῷ ἐσόμεθα' ὅμοιοι δηλονότι οὐ τῇ οὐσίᾳ, ἀλλὰ τῇ υἱότητι, ἧς μεταλαμβάνομεν παρ' αὐτοῦ.

would become identical with God) but by 'participating' in his qualities. Notably, he ends his argument by referring to the quality of sonship that represents one of the four most relational categories in his deification vocabulary. Thus, even in the most technical context where one would expect Athanasius to operate with the abstract qualities of immortality and incorruption, Athanasius chooses to stress sonship as the main quality of our 'participation' in God. Occasionally, he does speak of 'participation' in less personal terms. For example, he cites 2-Pet 2:1-4 (10 times) that speaks of 'participation in the divine nature (θείας κοινωνοὶ φύσεως) for escaping corruption (φθορᾶς) in the world' and encourages developing the godly 'qualities in the increasing measure (πλεονάζοντα)'. In other impersonal contexts (total of 31 times) he applies 'participation' in the sense of our connection with certain spiritual realities, or entities. The list of what we partake in these instances includes the following elements: 'God's gifts',[1107] 'virtue',[1108] 'divine bread',[1109] 'heavenly and spiritual table',[1110] 'immortal food',[1111] 'sustenance',[1112] 'heavenly calling',[1113] Christ's shed blood',[1114] 'God's power',[1115] and his 'grace'.[1116] In the rest of the contexts (total of 71 times), Athanasius uses 'participation' to depict our direct sharing in the trinitarian persons of God. In most of these cases, the participated person is the Father, the Son, or the Holy Spirit. Often, 'participation' involves our sharing in two or three persons of the Godhead. In such cases, Athanasius can say that 'by partaking of the Son, we partake of the Father',[1117] or that we 'participate of the Son in the Spirit',[1118] or that 'by partaking of the Holy Spirit, we are knit into the Godhead'.[1119] Athanasius' discussion of 'participation' in the trinitarian context is best expressed in his *Epistulae quattuor ad Serapionem* (with 28 occurrences). In one particular passage, he summarizes it when speaking of grace, love, and fellowship from 2-Cor 13:13: 'For this grace and gift given in

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[1107] *CA* 4.7 [PG 477ab]: μεταλαβεῖν ἐκ θεοῦ δωρέας.
[1108] Ibid. 7.3 [PG 1391c]: *Virtutem participant.*
[1109] Ibid. 7.6 [PG 1393c]: *Divinum panem participat.*
[1110] Ibid. 7.10 [PG 1396c]: *Coelestis ac spiritalis participes.*
[1111] Ibid. 28.fragm. [PG 1434d]: *Immortalis cibi participes simus.*
[1112] Ibid. 11.14 [PG 1412a]: *Et hilariter seduloque alimoniam hanc participabit.*
[1113] *CA* 1.53 [Metzler 163]: κλήσεως ἐπουρανίου μέτοχοι.
[1114] *Ep. fest.* 6.4 [PG 1385b]: *Participant sanguinis ejus effusionem.*
[1115] *De Inc.* 43.32-3 [Thomson 242]: τὰ πάντα τῆς αὐτοῦ δυνάμεως μεταλαμβάνει.
[1116] *De Syn.* 51 [Opitz 274]: πάντα ἐκ μετουσίας ἔχει τὴν παρὰ θεοῦ χάριν.
[1117] Ibid: τοῦτο γὰρ μεταλαμβάνοντες τοῦ πατρὸς μετέχομεν διὰ τὸ τοῦ πατρὸς εἶναι ἴδιον τὸν λόγον.
[1118] *CA* 1.56 [Metzler 167]: διὰ τὴν μετουσίαν τοῦ υἱοῦ ἐν τῷ πνεύματι.
[1119] Ibid. 3.24 [Savvidis 334]: τῇ δὲ τοῦ πνεύματος μετοχῇ συναπτόμεθα τῇ θεότητι.

the Trinity is given by the Father through the Son in the Holy Spirit. Just as the grace given through the Son is from the Father, so too we cannot have fellowship with the gift except in the Holy Spirit. For it is when we participate in the Spirit that we have the love of the Father and the grace of the Son and fellowship of the Spirit himself'.[1120] In this passage, Athanasius makes it very clear that our participation in God means much more than just enjoying the gifts (love, grace, and fellowship). In fact, he says that 'we cannot have fellowship with the gift except in the Holy Spirit', which means that the gift himself is inseparable from the Giver. Thus, participation is primarily a relational sharing, and only in the secondary sense it means the 'physical' aspect of what we are given.

Another way Athanasius stresses the personal nature of human relations with God is by using the conceptual word group of 'love' including ἀγάπη, ἀγαπητός, ἀγαπάω, ἔρως, πόθος, φιλανθρωπία, φιλανθρωπός, φιλανθρωπεύω, φίλος, φιλόχριστος, φίλτατος, *adamo*, *benignitas*, *caritas*, *diligo*, *dilectus*, *deliciae*, *deliciolae*.[1121] I have already noted earlier (with reference to *CA* 3.66 [Savvidis 379-80]) that he uses 'love' to describe the content of the divine relationships in which the Father and Son give and receive love in the mutual and complete way. Here I need to add that occasionally Athanasius links 'love' to Christ in order to depict God's economy of creation and redemption. He often refers to Christ as 'the Father's beloved Son' (ὁ ἀγαπητὸς τοῦ πατρὸς υἱός)[1122] and uses his favourite adjective 'man-loving' (φιλάνθρωπος)[1123] for the depiction of Christ's relation to the world. It is through him that God first creates the world and sustains its existence by his *philanthropia*: 'For by this Offspring the Father made all things, and extended his providence unto all things; by him he exercises his love to man (δι᾽ αὐτοῦ φιλανθρωπεύεται), and thus he and the Father are one' (*De Decr.* 24 [Opitz 16; NPNF² 4:166]).[1124] Out of same *philanthropia* God redeems the world by sending

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[1120] *Ep. Ser.* 130 [Savvidis]: ἡ γὰρ διδομένη χάρις καὶ δωρεὰ ἐν τριάδι δίδοται παρὰ τοῦ πατρὸς δι᾽ υἱοῦ ἐν πνεύματι ἁγίῳ. ὥσπερ γὰρ ἐκ τοῦ πατρός ἐστι δι᾽ υἱοῦ ἡ διδομένη χάρις, οὕτως οὐκ ἂν γένοιτο κοινωνία τῆς δόσεως ἐν ἡμῖν εἰ μὴ ἐν τῷ πνεύματι τῷ ἁγίῳ. τούτου γὰρ μετέχοντες ἔχομεν τοῦ πατρὸς τὴν ἀγάπην καὶ τοῦ υἱοῦ τὴν χάριν καὶ αὐτοῦ τοῦ πνεύματος τὴν κοινωνίαν.

[1121] For the Greek terms, see LSJ 6 (ἀγάπη, ἀγαπητός, ἀγαπάω); LSJ 695 (ἔρως); LSJ 1427 (πόθος); LSJ 1932 (φιλανθρωπία, φιλανθρωπός, φιλανθρωπεύω); LSJ 1939-40 (φίλος); LSJ 1942 (φιλόχριστος, φίλτατος). For the Latin terms, see LeSh 30 (*adamo*); LeSh 232 (*benignitas*), LeSh 431 (*charitas*); LeSh 580 (*diligo*), LeSh 537, 579 (*dilectus*), LeSh 538 (*deliciae*), 538 (*deliciolae*).

[1122] e.g. *De Inc.* 52.2 [Thomson 264]; *De Decr.* 1 [Opitz 10]; *VA* 14.27-8 [SC 174]; *CA* 1.63 [Metzler 174].

[1123] e.g. *CG* 35.1 [Thomson 94]; *CA.* 2.67 [Metzler 244].

[1124] τούτῳ γὰρ τῷ γεννήματι τὰ πάντα πεποίηκεν ὁ πατὴρ καὶ τὴν εἰς πάντα πρόνοιαν ἐκτείνων δι᾽ αὐτοῦ φιλανθρωπεύεται. καὶ οὕτως ἓν αὐτὸς καὶ ὁ πατήρ εἰσιν.

Christ to be born as man: 'And next, because, by this condescension of the Word, the creation too is made a sons through him, that he might be in all respects 'First-born' of it, as has been said, both in creating, and also in being brought for the sake of all into this very world.… Therefore the Word of God, who loves man (ὁ φιλάνθρωπος), puts on him created flesh at the Father's will, that whereas the first man had made it dead through the transgression, he himself might quicken it in the blood of his own body' (*CA* 2.64 [Metzler 241; NPNF² 4:383]).[1125] Rather than being an independent gift, 'love' according to these two passages, is intimately associated with the divine persons for 'by him [the Son] he [the Father] exercises his love to man (δι᾿ αὐτοῦ φιλανθρωπεύεται)'. And just as love makes the Father and Son one, so does it bind us to them when we love God: 'For the love (πόθος) of what is divine and of the things to come possesses it [the soul of the mystic], and willingly it would be wholly joined (συναφθῆναι) with them if it could depart along with them. But if, being men, some fear the vision of the good, those who appear remove their fear by means of love (τῇ ἀγάπῃ)' (*VA* 35 [SC 232; NPNF² 4:205, modified]).[1126] With such an emphasis on love, it is not surprising that Athanasius also makes it the cornerstone of our relationships with others: 'above all, let us love (*diligamus*) God with all our soul, and might, and strength, and our neighbour as ourselves' (*Ep. fest.* 1.11 [PG 26:1366]).[1127] Generally, Athanasius uses 'love' for the description of the relationship between God and man much more than in any other sense (see Table 2). Thus, out of 166 relevant references, only 3 are used to characterize 'love' (ἔρως) between the Greek deities and 20 references to depict God's trinitarian communion, while 143 references are used to portray the loving relationships between God and man, or man and God.

Another lexical range that describes the personal nature of relationships both between the trinitarian persons and between God and man in Athanasius' writings is the conceptual word group of 'delight'. Various words that express the idea of 'delight' include ἀγαλλίασις, ἀγαλλιάζω, εὐφρονέω, εὐφροσύνη, προσχαίρω,

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[1125] καὶ δεύτερον δὲ πάλιν, ὅτι συγκαταβάντος τοῦ λόγου υἱοποιεῖται καὶ αὐτὴ ἡ κτίσις δι᾿ αὐτοῦ, ἵνα καὶ αὐτῆς, καθὰ προείρηται, πρωτότοκος κατὰ πάντα γένηται, ἔν τε τῷ κτίζειν καὶ ἐν τῷ εἰσάγεσθαι ὑπὲρ πάντων εἰς αὐτὴν τὴν οἰκουμένην.... διὰ τοῦτο ὁ φιλάνθρωπος τοῦ θεοῦ λόγος βουλήσει τοῦ πατρὸς ἐνδιδύσκεται τὴν κτισθεῖσαν σάρκα, ἵνα ἣν ἐνέκρωσεν ὁ πρῶτος ἄνθρωπος διὰ τῆς παραβάσεως, ταύτην αὐτὸς ἐν τῷ αἵματι τοῦ ἰδίου σώματος ζωοποιήσῃ καὶ ἐγκαινίσῃ.

[1126] καὶ γὰρ πόθος τῶν θείων καὶ τῶν μελλόντων αὐτῇ ἐπεισέρχεται, καὶ θελήσει πάντως συναφθῆναι τούτοις, εἰ ἀπήρχετο μετ᾿ αὐτῶν. ἐὰν δὲ καί, ὡς ἄνθρωποι, τινές φοβηθῶσιν τὴν τῶν καλῶν ὀπτασίαν, ἀφαιροῦσιν οἱ φαινόμενοι τὸν φόβον παραυτὰ τῇ ἀγάπῃ.

[1127] In primis Deum diligamus tota anima, facultate, ac viribus; deinde proximum nostrum tanquam nos ipsos.

χαρά, χαίρω, *exsultatio*, *gaudium*, *oblectamentum*, and *voluptas*.[1128] These terms could be translated generally as 'delight', 'joy', or 'gladness'. Earlier, I noted that Athanasius uses the words χαρά and χαίρω with the same function as ἴδιος. In doing this, he argues that the Father eternally enjoys (χαίρω) his own (ἴδιος) Son, which proves the coessential relations. While all of these instances (total of 28 times) appear in the strictly polemical context, they are not the only ones where Athanasius applies 'delight' for relations (see Table 3). In fact, the largest number of occurrences (total of 66 times) appears in Athanasius' non-polemical writing *Epistula Festales*, where he articulates his theology in the language of practical Christian living. There are also a number of significant instances (total of 6 times) in the *Vita Antonii*. In the *Epistula Festales* 'delight' is often described as a condition awaiting the Christians in heaven. Thus, in his first festal letter Athanasius writes: 'Then having passed hence, we shall keep a perfect feast with Christ, while we cry out and say, like the saints, *I will pass to the place of the wondrous tabernacle, to the house of God; with the voice of gladness (exsultationis) and thanksgiving, the shouting of those who rejoice* [Ps 42:4 LXX]; whence pain and sorrow and sighing have fled, and upon our heads joy (*gaudium*) and gladness (*exsultationem*) shall have come to us! May we be judged worthy to be partakers in these things' (*Ep. fest.* 1.10 [PG 26:1366b; NPNF² 4:510, slightly modified]).[1129] Along the same lines in the second letter he asserts: 'Let us then add, one after the other, the seven holy weeks of Pentecost, rejoicing (*jubilabimus*) and praising God, that he hath by these things made known to us beforehand, joy (*gaudium*) and rest everlasting, prepared in heaven for us and for those who truly believe in Christ Jesus our Lord (*Ep. fest.* 2.2 [PG 26:1430a; NPNF² 4:548, slightly modified])'.[1130] Encouraging Christians to follow the example of saints (which in this case are the Old Testament heroes), Athanasius claims that 'having imitated the behaviour of the saints, we will enter together into the joy (*gaudium*) of our Lord which is in

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[1128] For the Greek terms, see ἀγαλλίασις (LSJ 5); εὐφρονέω, εὐφροσύνη (LSJ 737); προσχαίρω (LSJ 1531); χαίρω (LSJ 1969); χαρά (LSJ 1976). For the Latin word, see LeSh 705-6 (*exsultatio*); LeSh 803 (*gaudium*); LeSh 1235-6 (*oblectamentum*); LeSh 2013 (*voluptas*).

[1129] Cum autem hinc demigrabimus, plenam cum Christo peragemus solemnitatem, et cum sanctis ita exclamabimus: *Transibo in locum tabernaculi admirabilis, usque ad domum Dei; cum voce exsultationis, et cum laudis praeconio, tanquam illorum qui laetantur;* ubi scilicet fuga doloris, tristitiae et anxietatis: atque ad summum gaudium et exsultationem provecti, cum illis peragere digni erimus.

[1130] Additis posthinc septem continuatim Pentecostes sanctis hebdomadis, jubilabimus Deumque laudabimus, qui per haec nobis in antecessum denotavit gaudium illud requiemque aeternam, paratam in coelo nobis et iis qui vere credunt per Jesum Christum Dominum nostrum.

heaven, which is not transitory, but joy (gaudium) that truly abides' (*Ep. fest.* 2.2 [PG 26:1367b; NPNF² 4:510, slightly modified]).[1131] Elsewhere, Athanasius uses such phrases as 'heavenly delight' (ἡ ἐπουράνια χαρά),[1132] and 'incorruptible joy' (ἡ ἄφθαρτος εὐφροσύνη),[1133] while the Latin fragments, besides having *gaudium* and *exsultatio*, contain such words as *oblectamentum*[1134] and *voluptas*[1135] that give an idea of ultimate pleasure, satisfaction, and enjoyment.[1136] In the *Vita Antonii*, the terminology of 'delight' is used primarily to describe the present state of the deified person. Thus, speaking of the immediate vision of God, Athanasius makes Antony offer the following instruction: 'Whenever, therefore, ye have seen ought and are afraid, if your fear is immediately taken away and in place of it comes joy unspeakable (χαρὰ ἀνεκλάλητος), cheerfulness, courage, renewed strength, calmness of thought and all those I named before boldness and love toward God,— take courage and pray. For joy (χαρὰ) and a settled state of soul show the holiness of him who is present' (*VA* 36.8-14 [SC 400:234; NPNF² 4:206]).[1137] In the same chapter he writes: 'But when it [the vision] comes it comes so quietly and gently that immediately joy (χαρὰν), gladness (ἀγαλλίασιν) and courage arise in the soul. For the Lord who is our joy (χαρά) is with them, and the power of God the Father (*VA* 35.17-21 [SC 400:232-3; NPNF² 4:206]).[1138] In these two passages, the idea of 'joy' is inseparable from God 'who *is* our joy', and having joy shows 'the holiness of him who is present'. No wonder, the deified state of Antony is described as being one of joy in *VA* 67.20-5 [SC 400:312; NPNF² 4:214]: 'So from the joy of his soul (τῆς χαρᾶς τῆς ψυχῆς) he possessed a cheerful countenance, and from his bodily movements could be perceived the condition of his soul, as it is written, *When the heart is merry* (εὐφραινομένης) *the countenance is cheerful* (θάλλει)*, but when it is*

[1131] Ut sanctorum vitam imitantes, in oaeleste illud Domini nostri gaudium simul intremus, haud transitorium, sed firmiter permanens.

[1132] *Ep. fest.* 28 [PG 26:1433b].

[1133] Ibid. 28 [PG 26:1433c].

[1134] e.g. *Ep. fest.* 16 [PG 26:1421d].

[1135] e.g. Ibid. 43. [PG 26:1442a].

[1136] Dvoretskiy, *Latinsko-Russkiy Slovar*, 523, 833.

[1137] ὅταν τοίνυν θεωρήσαντές τινας φοβηθῆτε, ἐὰν μὲν εὐθὺς ὁ φόβος ἀφαιρεθῇ, καὶ ἀντ' ἐκείνου γένηται χαρὰ ἀνεκλάλητος καὶ εὐθυμία καὶ θάρσος καὶ ἀνάκτησις καὶ τῶν λογισμῶν ἀταραξία καὶ τὰ ἄλλα ἄλλα ὅσα προεῖπον, ἀνδρεία τε καὶ ἀγάπη εἰς τὸν θεόν, θαρσεῖτε καὶ εὔχεσθε. ἡ γὰρ χαρὰ καὶ ἡ κατάστασις τῆς ψυχῆς δείκνυσι τοῦ παρόντος τὴν ἁγιότητα.

[1138] ἡσύχως δὲ καὶ πράως γίνεται οὕτως, ὡς εὐθὺς χαρὰν καὶ ἀγαλλίασιν γίνεσθαι καὶ θάρσος τῇ ψυχῇ. ἔστι γὰρ μετ' αὐτῶν ὁ κύριος, ὅς ἐστιν ἡμῶν μὲν χαρά, τοῦ δὲ θεοῦ πατρὸς ἡ δύναμις.

sorrowful it is cast down [Prov. 15:13]'.[1139] Athanasius' use of 'delight' for the description of the divine-human relations could well be suggested by the way this conceptual word group is used in the New Testament. Thus, in Jn. 15:11 (NAS), we see Jesus speaking to his disciples: 'These things I have spoken to you, that my joy (χαρά) may be in you, and that your joy (χαρά) may be made full (πληρωθῇ)'[1140] And Peter says: 'Though you have not seen him, you love (ἀγαπᾶτε) him, and though you do not see him now, but believe in him, you greatly rejoice (ἀγαλλιᾶσθε) with joy inexpressible (χαρᾷ ἀνεκλαλήτῳ) and full of glory (1-Pet. 1:8 NAS).[1141] Both passages suggest that joy is a personal characteristic that describes the present reality Christians have by loving, believing, and being in Christ. According to Paul, joy (along with love) finds its expression in one's life as one of the nine fruits of the Spirit that are to reflect our relations with others: 'But the fruit of the Spirit is love (ἀγάπη), joy (χαρά), peace, patience, kindness, goodness, faithfulness, gentleness and self-control…. If we live by the Spirit, let us also walk by the Spirit. Let us not become boastful, challenging one another, envying one another (Gal. 5:22, 25-6 NAS)'.[1142]

Both 'joy'/'delight' and 'love' terminology clearly show that Athanasius used deification in a distinctly personal sense. His fourth term employed for the same purpose is sonship (υἱός, υἱοθεσία).[1143] While it is very rarely used in his early work *Contra Gentes—De Incarnatione* (only 3 times), it is definitely one of his most preferred way of speaking about the Divine-human relations in the later writings. It occurs a total of 99 times (in addition to 1.828 occurrences for the description of the natural Son), of which most are found in his *Contra Arianos* (see Table 4). Sonship is a beautiful example of how Athanasius' understanding of God—and especially his interpretation of the Nicene ὁμοούσιος—finds its expression in the way he speaks about salvation. It is known that he did not begin to

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[1139] ὡς ἀπὸ τῆς χαρᾶς τῆς ψυχῆς ἱλαρὸν ἔχειν καὶ τὸ πρόσωπον, καὶ ἀπὸ τῶν τοῦ σώματος κινημάτων αἰσθέσθαι καὶ νοεῖν τὴν τῆς ψυχῆς κατάστασιν κατὰ τὸ γεγραμμένον· *καρδίας εὐφραινομένης πρόσωπον θάλλει· ἐν δὲ λύπαις οὔσης σκυθρωπάζει.*

[1140] ταῦτα λελάληκα ὑμῖν ἵνα ἡ χαρὰ ἡ ἐμὴ ἐν ὑμῖν ᾖ καὶ ἡ χαρὰ ὑμῶν πληρωθῇ.

[1141] ὃν οὐκ ἰδόντες ἀγαπᾶτε, εἰς ὃν ἄρτι μὴ ὁρῶντες πιστεύοντες δὲ ἀγαλλιᾶσθε χαρᾷ ἀνεκλαλήτῳ καὶ δεδοξασμένῃ.

[1142] ὁ δὲ καρπὸς τοῦ πνεύματός ἐστιν ἀγάπη χαρὰ εἰρήνη, μακροθυμία χρηστότης ἀγαθωσύνη, πίστις πραΰτης ἐγκράτεια.... εἰζῶμεν πνεύματι, πνεύματι καὶ στοιχῶμεν. μὴ γινώμεθα κενόδοξοι, ἀλλήλους προκαλούμενοι, ἀλλήλοις φθονοῦντες.

[1143] Cf. LSJ 1846-7.

defend the word ὁμοούσιος until about several decades after the Nicene Council,[1144] but when he did so (primarily in such writings as *De Decr.*, *De Syn.*, *Exp. Fid.*, and *Ep. Jov.*), he used the same arguments of correlativity as in his *Contra Arianos*. As a result, the sort of soteriology that we find in Athanasius is one in which the argument about the Son being coessential with the Father is transposed to the idea of human beings becoming gods and sons by grace and adoption. Thus, reiterating his arguments from *CA* 1.34 [Metzler 143-4] (discussed earlier), Athanasius writes that calling God Father (as opposed to the Unoriginate)

alone implies (σημαῖνον) the Son. And 'Unoriginated' (ἀγένητον) is a word of the Greeks who know not the Son: but 'Father' has been acknowledged and vouchsafed by our Lord; for he knowing himself whose Son he was, said, *I in the Father and the Father in me* [Jn. 14:10]; and, *he that has seen me has seen the Father* [Jn. 14:9];' and, *I and the Father are one* [Jn. 10:30], but nowhere is he found to call the Father Unoriginated…. He has bid us be baptized, not in the name of Unoriginate (ἀγενήτου) and Originate (γενητου), not into the name of Uncreated (ἀκτίστου) and Creature (κτίσματος), but into the name of Father, Son, and Holy Spirit, for with such an initiation we too are made sons (υἱοποιούμεθα) verily, and using the name of the Father, we acknowledge from that name the Word in the Father. But if he wills that we should call his own (ἴδιον) Father our Father, we must not on that account measure ourselves with the Son according to nature (κατὰ τὴν φύσιν), for it is because of the Son that the Father is so called by us; for since the Word bore our body and came to be in us, therefore by reason of the Word in us, is God called our Father. For the Spirit of the Word in us names through us his own Father as ours, which is the apostle's meaning when he says, *God has sent forth the Spirit of his Son into your hearts, crying, abba, Father* [Gal. 4:6] (*De Decr.* 31 [Opitz 27; NPNF² 4:171-2]).[1145]

In this passage Athanasius relates a distinctly personal concept of God to salvation as adoption. His way of interpreting ὁμοούσιος as a relational term throughout the

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[1144] For more details on this point, see Sieben, *Die Konzilsidee der Alten Kirche*, 25-67; Gwynn, *Athanasius of Alexandria*, 85-90; Gemeinhardt, *Athanasius Handbuch*, 293-5.

[1145] μόνον σημαῖνον τὸν υἱόν. καὶ τὸ μὲν ἀγένητον παρ' ἑλλήνων εὕρηται τῶν μὴ γινωσκόντων τὸν υἱόν, τὸ δὲ πατὴρ παρὰ τοῦ κυρίου ἡμῶν ἐγνώσθη καὶ κεχάρισται. καὶ γὰρ εἰδὼς αὐτός, τίνος υἱός ἐστιν, ἔλεγεν· *εγὼ ἐν τῷ πατρὶ καὶ ὁ πατὴρ ἐν ἐμοί* , καί· *ὁ ἑωρακὼς ἐμέ, ἑώρακε τὸν πατέρα*, καί· *ἐγὼ καὶ ὁ πατὴρ ἕν ἐσμεν.* καὶ οὐδαμοῦ φαίνεται τὸν πατέρα καλῶν ἀγένητον αὐτός.... ἐκέλευσε γὰρ ἡμᾶς βαπτίζεσθαι οὐκ εἰς ὄνομα ἀγενήτου καὶ γενητοῦ οὐδὲ εἰς ὄνομα ἀκτίστου καὶ κτίσματος, ἀλλ' εἰς ὄνομα πατρὸς καὶ υἱοῦ καὶ ἁγίου πνεύμαματος. οὕτως γὰρ τελειούμενοι υἱοποιούμεθα καὶ ἡμεῖς ἀληθῶς, καὶ τὸ τοῦ πατρὸς δὲ ὄνομα λέγοντες ἐπιγινώσκομεν ἐκ τοῦ ὀνόματος τούτου καὶ τὸν ἐν τῷ πατρὶ λόγον. εἰ δὲ καὶ πατέρα θέλει λέγειν ἡμῶν τὸν ἴδιον ἑαυτοῦ πατέρα, οὐ χρὴ διὰ τοῦτο συνεκτείνειν ἑαυτοὺς τῷ υἱῷ κατὰ τὴν φύσιν. καὶ τοῦτο γὰρ δι' αὐτὸν λέγεται παρ' ἡμῶν. ἐπειδὴ γὰρ τὸ ἡμέτερον ὁ λόγος ἐφόρεσε σῶμα καὶ γέγονεν ἐν ἡμῖν, ἀκολούθως διὰ τὸν ἐν ἡμῖν λόγον καὶ ἡμῶν ὁ θεὸς λέγεται πατήρ. τὸ γὰρ ἐν ἡμῖν πνεῦμα τοῦ λόγου δι' ἡμῶν τὸν ἑαυτοῦ πατέρα ὡς ἡμῶν ὀνομάζει· οὗτος τοῦ ἀποστόλου νοῦς ἐστι λέγονος· *εξαπέστειλεν ὁ θεὸς τὸ πνεῦμα τοῦ υἱοῦ αὐτοῦ εἰς τὰς καρδίας ἡμῶν κρᾶζον· ἀββᾶ ὁ πατήρ.*

same writing has now led him to cast salvation into the terminology that most adequately expresses who God is as Father. Being the Father of the coessential Son, he saves us by bringing us into his own relationship and making us sons and daughters by adoption.[1146] Discussing the link between deification and the fact that the Son is ὁμοούσιος with the Father, Weinandy asserts: 'deification is only effected by being taken into the very divine life of the Trinity. Thus, as the Son is *the Son of the Father* because he is begotten of the Father and so is ontologically one with the Father, so Christian imitate this divine oneness by being taken up into it... Divinization then, for Athanasius, is the sharing fully in the life of the Trinity and it is this sharing in the divine life that throughly transforms the believer into the adopted likeness of the Son'.[1147] To stress the intimacy of this Divine-human relationship Athanasius often speaks of God being 'in us' or 'with us' through his Son or Holy Spirit. In *CA* 3.25 [Savvidis 335; NPNF² 4:407], he asserts: 'As we are sons and gods because of the Word in us, so we shall be in the Son and in the Father, and we shall be accounted to have become one in Son and in Father, because that that Spirit is in us, which is in the Word which is in the Father'.[1148] Here our being gods and sons is fundamentally relational. It is grounded on our connection to the persons of the Trinity, which means that our relationship with God derives from the very relationship he has within himself as Trinity. To qualify this relationship, Athanasius points out in the same chapter that it does not destroy the unity of divine persons, for 'to be "one in Us", does not signify that we are to have identity with Him' (*CA* 3.25 [Savvidis 335; NPNF² 4:407]).[1149] The prominence of relations is evident even in those places where Athanasius is usually charged for casting salvation into the physical terms. Thus, in one particular passage that explores the significance of Christ's body for our salvation, he writes: 'For because of our relationship to his body (τὴν πρὸς τὸ σῶμα αὐτοῦ συγγένειαν) we too have become God's temple (ναὸς θεοῦ), and in consequence are made God's sons (υἱοὶ θεοῦ), so that even in us the Lord is now worshipped, and beholders report, as the apostle says, that God is in them of a truth. As also John says in the

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[1146] On the significance of the adopted sonship before and after Niceae, see Peppard, *The Son of God in the Roman World*, 9-30, 132-71.

[1147] Weinandy, *Athanasius*, 99-100; emphasis mine.

[1148] καὶ ὥσπερ υἱοὶ καὶ θεοὶ διὰ τὸν ἐν ἡμῖν λόγον, οὕτως ἐν τῷ υἱῷ καὶ ἐν τῷ πατρὶ ἐσόμεθα καὶ νομισθησόμεθα ἓν γεγενῆσθαι διὰ τὸ ἐν ἡμῖν εἶναι τὸ πνεῦμα, ὅπερ ἐστὶν ἐν τῷ λόγῳ τῷ ὄντι ἐν τῷ πατρί.

[1149] ʻαὐτοὶ ἐν ἡμῖν ἓν ὦσιν' οὐ τὴν ταυτότητα ἡμᾶς αὐτῷ μέλλοντας ἔχειν σημαίνει.

Gospel, *As many as received him, to them gave he power to become children of God* [Jn. 1:12], and in his Epistle he writes, *By this we know that he abides in us by his Spirit which he has given us* [1-Jn. 3:24] (*CA* 1.43 [Metzler 153; NPNF² 4:331]).[1150] As in most of other cases, our being deified means much more than just receiving a particular gift in the sense of impersonal quality, such as sonship here. It means 'receiving him' (Jn. 1:12) and having him 'abide in us by his Spirit which he has given us'.

This brief overview shows that Athanasius' understanding of deification grows out of his concept of God. The latter, being primarily a relational notion, leads him to emphasize such aspects as 'love', 'delight', and 'sonship', but not as gifts, and even less so as 'physical' qualities. Rather, they are indicative of God's giving us himself in a way that allows us to share by grace what he has within himself by nature. Therefore, any interpretation of Athanasius' soteriology that does not take into account this profoundly relational perspective is not fully reflective of what he taught about God and salvation. His emphasis on the 'who' of salvation leads him to tie both the ontological and juridical qualities of salvation directly to the persons of the Trinity rather than describing them independent of God or using them as pointers of an external event. Athanasius' depiction of Christian life as the present reality of being God's children, sharing in his love, and enjoying the union and fellowship with the Trinity, as well as living the life of virtue and imitation, is the expression of our close relation to God. Having been made gods by grace of participation, we are called to live the godlike life reflecting who we already are.

5.4 The Identity and Deifying Work of the Holy Spirit in the *Epistulae ad Serapionem*

Before I finish this chapter, I would like to discuss briefly the theme that occupied Athanasius in the later years of his career when the issue of the Son's divinity became the issue of whether the Holy Spirit was equally divine with the other persons of the Trinity. Developing his arguments against the heresy of the so-called

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[1150] διὰ γὰρ τὴν πρὸς τὸ σῶμα αὐτοῦ συγγένειαν ναὸς θεοῦ γεγόναμεν καὶ ἡμεῖς καὶ υἱοὶ θεοῦ λοιπὸν πεποιήμεθα, ὥστε καὶ ἐν ἡμῖν ἤδη προσκυνεῖσθαι τὸν κύριον καὶ τοὺς ὁρῶντας ἀπαγγέλλειν, ὡς ὁ ἀπόστολος εἴρηκεν, ὅτι ὄντως ὁ θεὸς ἐν τούτοις ἐστί, καθάπερ καὶ ὁ ἰωάννης ἐν μὲν τῷ εὐαγγελίῳ φησίν· ὅσοι δὲ ἔλαβον αὐτόν, ἔδωκεν αὐτοῖς ἐξουσίαν τέκνα θεοῦ γενέσθαι. ἐν δὲ τῇ ἐπιστολῇ γράφει· ἐν τούτῳ γινώσκομεν ὅτι μένει ἐν ἡμῖν, ἐκ τοῦ πνεύματος αὐτοῦ οὗ ἔδωκεν ἡμῖν.

Tropikoi[1151] who denied the divinity of the Holy Spirit, Athanasius offers a fundamentally trinitarian picture of God and salvation that now includes a major emphasis on the identity and role of the Holy Spirit. Below, I will consider these two aspects summarizing Athanasius' pneumatological doctrine in relation to deification as it is laid down in his *Epistulae ad Serapionem*.

Athanasius approaches the issue of the Holy Spirit's identity in the same way he approached the issue of Christ's divine status, namely, by exploring the language of Scripture: 'Let us examine, one by one, each passage in the Divine Scriptures that speaks about the Holy Spirit. Like good bankers, we need to judge whether the Spirit has anything that is proper to creatures (ἴδιόν τι πρὸς τὰ κτίσματα) or whether he is proper to God (ἴδιον τοῦ θεοῦ ἐστιν). In this manner we will be able to determine whether to call him a creature or something other than creatures and proper to and one of the divinity in the Trinity (ἴδιον δὲ καὶ ἓν τῆς ἐν τριάδι θεότητος)' (*Ep. Ser.* 1.21 [Savvidis 505; PPS 86]).[1152] In the process of examining the biblical testimony, Athanasius develops such arguments (I will distinguish six of them) that are aimed to clarify the identity and the soteriological role of the Holy Spirit. First, he argues that the divinity of the Holy Spirit is indicated in the passage from 1-Cor. 2:11-12, where he is said to be 'of God' (ἐκ τοῦ θεοῦ).[1153] Interpreting this phrase in light of the Nicene use of ὁμοούσιος, he contends that it implies the divine 'kinship' (συγγένεια).[1154] Since God is *He Who Is* (Ex. 3:14), the Spirit's procession from him is of divine nature, and just as the Logos being 'in the Father' does not mean that he is a creature, so does the Spirit's being 'of God' does not mean that he is made. Second, the Scripture (e.g. Rom. 1:4, 1-Cor 6:11, Tit. 3:4-7) describes the Holy Spirit as the 'Spirit of sanctification and renewal' (πνεῦμα ἁγιωσύνης καὶ ἀνακαινώσεως).[1155] Therefore, while sanctifying and renewing others, he cannot himself be among those on whose behalf he exercises these acts. Third, in the same way as the Spirit sanctifies and renews, he also gives life. After citing several passages from Scripture (Rom. 8:11, Acts 3:15,

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[1151] For an excellent study of the *tropikoi* and Athanasius' arguments about the Holy Spirit, see Haykin, *The Spirit of God*, 59-103. Cf. Athanase, *Lettres a Sérapion*, 52-77.

[1152] ἴδωμεν δὲ λοιπὸν καὶ αὐτὰ καθ᾽ ἑαυτὰ τὰ ἐν ταῖς θείαις γραφαῖς περὶ τοῦ πνεύματος τοῦ ἁγίου λεγόμενα καὶ ὡς δόκιμοι τραπεζῖται διακρίνωμεν, εἰ ἴδιόν τι πρὸς τὰ κτίσματα ἔχει τὸ πνεῦμα ἢ ἴδιον τοῦ θεοῦ ἐστιν, ἵνα ἢ κτίσμα αὐτὸ εἴπωμεν ἢ ἄλλο μὲν τῶν κτισμάτων, ἴδιον δὲ καὶ ἓν τῆς ἐν τριάδι θεότητος.

[1153] *Ep. Ser.* 1.22 [Savvidis 506].

[1154] Ibid.

[1155] Ibid. 1.22 [Savvidis 506-7].

Jn. 4:14), Athanasius states: 'But he who does not participate (μετέχον) in life, but is himself participated in (μετεχόμενον) and gives life (ζωοποιοῦν) to creatures: what sort of affinity (συγγένειαν) does he have with things which have come into existence?' (*Ep. Ser.* 1.23 [Savvidis 508; PPS 89])[1156]

Beginning with the fourth point, Athanasius expands his arguments by elaborating on the idea of participation and deification. According to 1-Jn. 2:27, Is. 61:1, and Eph. 1:13, 4:30, the Spirit is an anointing and a seal 'by whom and in whom the Logos anoints (χρίει) and seals (σφραγίζει) all things' (*Ep. Ser.* 1.23 [Savvidis 50; PPS 89]).[1157] Hence, his work of anointing and sealing shows him to be proper (ἴδιον) to the Logos rather than the created things.[1158] Identifying further 'the sealing' with 'participation in the divine nature', Athanasius writes: 'And the seal has the form of Christ who seals (σφραγὶς τὴν μορφὴν χριστοῦ τοῦ σφραγίζοντος ἔχει), and those who are sealed participate in him (ταύτης οἱ σφραγιζόμενοι μετέχουσι), being formed into him (μορφούμενοι κατ' αὐτὴν), as the Apostle says: *My children, with whom I am again in labour until Christ be formed in you!* [Gal. 4:19]. Thus sealed, it is proper (εἰκότως) that we also *become*, as Peter said, *sharers of the divine nature* [2 Pet. 1:4]. And thus all creation partakes (μετέχει) of the Word in the Spirit' (*Ep. Ser.* 1.23 [Savvidis 509-10; PPS 90]).[1159] Immediately after this statement, Athanasius adduces two very significant elements that complete his doctrine of God and deification as presented in his other writings. In the first place, he asserts that our participation in God is made effective through the divine agency of the Holy Spirit who joins us to the Father-Son relations. Thus, contrasting the nature of the Holy Spirit with that of the creatures, he writes: 'If the Holy Spirit were a creature, we would not have participation (μετουσία) in God through him. But if we were joined (συνηπτόμεθα) to a creature, we would become strangers to the divine nature (ἀλλότριοι δὲ τῆς θείας φύσεως), in as much as we did not partake of it (αὐτῆς μετέχοντες) in any way. But as it is, when we are said to be partakers of Christ and partakers of God (μέτοχοι χριστοῦ καὶ μέτοχοι θεοῦ), it

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[1156] τὸ δὲ μὴ μετέχον ζωῆς, ἀλλ' αὐτὸ μετεχόμενον καὶ ζωοποιοῦν τὰ κτίσματα ποίαν ἔχει συγγένειαν πρὸς τὰ γενητὰ;

[1157] ἐν ᾧ χρίει καὶ σφραγίζει ὁ λόγος τὰ πάντα.

[1158] *Ep. Ser.* 1.23 [Savvidis 509; PPS 89].

[1159] ἡ δὲ σφραγὶς τὴν μορφὴν χριστοῦ τοῦ σφραγίζοντος ἔχει καὶ ταύτης οἱ σφραγιζόμενοι μετέχουσι μορφούμενοι κατ' αὐτὴν λέγοντος τοῦ ἀποστόλου· τεκνία μου, οὓς πάλιν ὠδίνω ἄχρις οὗ μορφωθῇ χριστὸς ἐν ὑμῖν. οὕτως δὲ σφραγιζόμενοι εἰκότως καὶ κοινωνοὶ θείας φίσεως γινόμεθα, ὡς εἶπεν ὁ πέτρος, καὶ οὕτως μετέχει πᾶσα ἡ κτίσις τοῦ λόγου ἐν τῷ πνεύματι.

shows that the anointing and the seal (χρῖσμα καὶ ἡ σφραγίς) which is in us does not belong to the nature of things which have been brought into existence, but to the Son, who joins us to the Father (συνάπτοντος ἡμᾶς τῷ πατρί) through the Spirit that is in him' (*Ep. Ser.* 1.23 [Savvidis 510; PPS 90]).[1160] In the second place, he ascribes to the Holy Spirit the deifying power by asserting the following: 'But if, by participation in the Spirit (τῇ τοῦ πνεύματος μετουσίᾳ), we are made *sharers in the divine nature* [2 Pet. 1:4], we should be mad to say that the Spirit has a created nature and not the nature of God. For it is on this account that those in whom he is are deified (θεοποιοῦνται). If he deifies (θεοποιεῖ) men, it is not to be doubted that his nature is of God (ἡ τούτου φύσις θεοῦ ἐστι) (*Ep. Ser.* 1.24 [Savvidis 511; Shapland 126-7, slightly modified]).[1161] According to these two passages, the economy of the Holy Spirit is twofold. He takes part in the work of deification common to all three persons of the Trinity, and he has a very specific role of joining the deified creatures to the relationship God has within himself.[1162]

In his fifth argument about the Holy Spirit, Athanasius dwells on the relational nature of the Spirit's deifying work calling him 'the Spirit of sonship' (πνεῦμα υἱοθεσίας).[1163] More specifically, he writes: 'So then, in the Spirit the Word glorifies creatures, and after he has deified (θεοποιῶν) them and made them sons of God, he leads them to the Father.[1164] But that which joins (συνάπτον) creatures to the Word cannot be a creature. And that which makes creatures sons (υἱοποιοῦν) cannot be foreign (ξένον) to the Son. Otherwise another spirit would be needed by which this Spirit could be joined (συναφθῇ) to the Word. But this is absurd. And so, the Spirit is not one of the things that has come into existence, but is proper to the divinity of the Father (ἴδιον τῆς τοῦ πατρὸς θεότητος). In him the Word deifies

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[1160] κτίσμα δὲ εἰ ἦν τὸ πνεῦμα τὸ ἅγιον, οὐκ ἄν τις ἐν αὐτῷ μετουσία τοῦ υἱοῦ ἐγίνετο ἐν ἡμῖν, ἀλλ᾽ εἰ ἄρα κτίσματι μὲν συνηπτόμεθα, ἀλλότριοι δὲ τῆς θείας φύσεως ἐγινόμεθα ὡς κατὰ μηδὲν αὐτῆς μετέχοντες. νῦν δέ, ὅτε λεγόμεθα μέτοχοι χριστοῦ καὶ μέτοχοι θεοῦ, δείκνυται τὸ ἐν ἡμῖν χρῖσμα καὶ ἡ σφραγὶς μὴ οὖσα τῆς τῶν γενητῶν φύσεως, ἀλλὰ τοῦ υἱοῦ διὰ τοῦ ἐν αὐτῷ συνάπτοντος ἡμᾶς τῷ πατρί.

[1161] εἰ δὲ τῇ τοῦ πνεύματος μετουσίᾳ *γινόμεθα κοινωνοὶ θείας φύσεως*, μαίνοιτ᾽ ἄν τις λέγων τὸ πνεῦμα τῆς κτιστῆς φύσεως καὶ μὴ τῆς τοῦ θεοῦ. διὰ τοῦτο γὰρ καὶ ἐν οἷς γίνεται, οὗτοι θεοποιοῦνται. εἰ δὲ θεοποιεῖ, οὐκ ἀμφίβολον, ὅτι ἡ τούτου φύσις θεοῦ ἐστι.

[1162] On the soteriological role of the Holy Spirit, see Laminski, *Der Heilige Geist als Geist Christ und Geist der Gläubigen*, 155-64.

[1163] *Ep. Ser.* 1.25 [Savvidis 513].

[1164] This particular line in the Armenian text renders the deifying work of the Holy Spirit and the Son in the more instrumental sense with respect to humanity: 'Therefore through him the Word glorifies the creature; by making divine and by sonship he draws it near to the Father' (Ի ձեռն սորա աստ զստացուածն Բանն փառաւորէ. աստուածագործելով եւ որդեգրելով մատուցանէ առ Հայր:), *Ep. Ser.* 1.25 [Geerlings 63; ibid. 165].

(θεοποιεῖ) all that has come into existence. And the one in whom creatures are deified (θεοποιεῖται) cannot himself be external (ἐκτός) to the divinity of the Father' (*Ep. Ser.* 1.25 [Savvidis 511; PPS 92-3, slightly modified]).[1165] According to this passage, the Son and the Spirit can deify the creatures because both are God. Their deifying work makes the deified objects into the sons of the Father by joining them to the source of divinity. Finally, in his sixth argument, Athanasius considers the qualities of the Holy Spirit by identifying his nature as immutable (ἄτρεπτον), unchangeable (ἀναλλοίωτον), unvarying (ἀπαράλλακτον), and incorruptible (ἄφθαρτον).[1166] The way he relates these qualities to the Holy Spirit is the same as when he related the Son's qualities in his other writings. Identifying the Spirit as being from the Father (ἐξ αὐτοῦ τοῦ θεοῦ εἴρηται) and proper (ἴδιος) to the Son, just as the Son is proper (ἴδιος) to the Father, he goes on to describe the Spirit as the Son's image.[1167] In doing this, he argues that just as the Son has the qualities of immutability and unchangeability, so does the Spirit possess them as his perfect image.[1168] In another passage, he depicts the Spirit as being proper (ἴδιος) to the Father, and in virtue of that being immutable, unchangeable, and incorruptible as is the Father.[1169] Elsewhere, Athanasius presents the Holy Spirit within the trinitarin paradigm in which the movement is from the Father to the Son through or in the Holy Spirit. Thus, in *Ep. Ser.* 1.23 [Savvidis 488; PPS 74], he writes: 'For the holy and blessed Trinity (τριάς) is indivisible and united in itself (ἀδιαίρετος καὶ ἡνωμένη πρὸς ἑαυτήν ἐστι). When the Father is mentioned, with him are both his Word and the Spirit who is in the Son. If the Son is named, the Father is in the Son, and the Spirit is not external (ἐκτός) to the Word. For there is one (μία) grace from the Father which is perfected (πληρουμένη) through the Son in the Holy Spirit. And there is one divinity (μία θεότης), and one God who is *over all, and through all, and in all* [Eph. 4:6].... The Spirit is not divided (διῄρητο) from the Son, but is in Christ,

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[1165] ἐν τούτῳ γ' οὖν ὁ λόγος τὴν κτίσιν δοξάζει, θεοποιῶν δὲ καὶ υἱοποιῶν προσάγει τῷ πατρί. τὸ δὲ συνάπτον τῷ λόγῳ τὴν κτίσιν οὐκ ἂν εἴη αὐτὸ τῶν κτισμάτων. καὶ τὸ υἱοποιοῦν δὲ τὴν κτίσιν οὐκ ἂν εἴη ξένον τοῦ υἱοῦ, ἐπεὶ ζητεῖν ἕτερον ἀνάγκη πνεῦμα, ἵνα καὶ τοῦτο ἐν ἐκείνῳ συναφθῇ τῷ λόγῳ. ἀλλ' ἄτοπον τοῦτο. οὐκ ἄρα τῶν γενητῶν ἐστι τὸ πνεῦμα, ἀλλ' ἴδιον τῆς τοῦ πατρὸς θεότητος, ἐν ᾧ καὶ τὰ γενητὰ ὁ λόγος θεοποιεῖ. ἐν ᾧ δὲ θεοποιεῖται ἡ κτίσις, οὐκ ἂν εἴη ἐκτὸς αὐτὸ τῆς τοῦ πατρὸς θεότητος.
[1166] *Ep. Ser.* 1.26 [Savvidis 515].
[1167] Ibid. 1.25 [Savvidis 513] and 1.26 [Savvidis 515].
[1168] Ibid. 1.26 [Savvidis 515].
[1169] Ibid.

as the Son is in the Father'.[1170] Likewise, in *Ep. Ser.* 1.30 [Savvidis 525-6; PPS 100]), he asserts:

> Once again, this is what Paul taught when he wrote a second letter to the Corinthians, saying: *The grace of our Lord Jesus Christ, and the love of God, and the fellowship of the Holy Spirit be with you all* [2-Cor. 13:13]. For this grace and gift given in the Trinity (ἐν τριάδι) is given by the Father through the Son in the Holy Spirit. Just as the grace given through the Son is from the Father, so too we cannot have fellowship with the gift except in the Holy Spirit. For it is when we participate (μετέχοντες) in the Spirit that we have the love of the Father and the grace of the Son and fellowship of the Spirit himself. And so, it is also shown from these considerations that there is one activity of the Trinity (τριάδος ἐνέργεια). The apostle does not mean that the gifts given by each are different and distinct, but that whatever gift is given is given in the Trinity, and that all the gifts are from the one God.[1171]

The fact that the gifts we receive are 'given in the Trinity' and are 'from the one God' makes it again clear that they are not external qualities, and even less so physical. They are a part of the perichoretic relations in which the trinitarian persons penetrate each other, and in the same way by grace they penetrate us. The persons of the the Trinity are one both in nature and activity, and what they give to us—grace, love, and fellowship—is God himself.[1172] As Torrance remarks,

> it is clear that… God himself is the content of his revelation and that the Gift which God bestows upon us in his Grace is identical with himself the Giver of the Gift—the point to which Athanasius gave such attention in his doctrine of 'deification'. The *homoousion* undoubtedly provided the controlling centre of his [Athanasius'] thought, for it gave clear and decisive account of the underlying oneness in Being and Activity between the Incarnate Son and God the

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[1170] ἡ γὰρ ἁγία καὶ μακαρία τριὰς ἀδιαίρετος καὶ ἡνωμένη πρὸς ἑαυτήν ἐστι· καὶ λεγομένου τοῦ πατρὸς σύνεστι καὶ ὁ τούτου λόγος καὶ τὸ ἐν τῷ υἱῷ πνεῦμα. ἂν δὲ καὶ ὁ υἱὸς ὀνομάζηται, ἐν τῷ υἱῷ ἐστιν ὁ πατὴρ καὶ τὸ πνεῦμα οὐκ ἔστιν ἐκτὸς τοῦ λόγου. μία γάρ ἐστιν ἡ ἐκ τοῦ πατρὸς χάρις δι᾽ υἱοῦ ἐν πνεύματι ἁγίῳ πληρουμένη· καὶ μία θεότης ἐστὶ καὶ 'εἷς θεὸς ὁ ἐπὶ πάντων καὶ διὰ πάντων καὶ ἐν πᾶσιν'.... οὐ διῄρητο τοῦ υἱοῦ τὸ πνεῦμα, ἀλλ᾽ ἐν χριστῷ ἦν καὶ αὐτό, ὥσπερ ὁ υἱὸς ἐν τῷ πατρί.

[1171] καὶ τοῦτο πάλιν διδάσκων ὁ παῦλος ἔγραφεν αὖθις κορινθίοις καὶ ἐν τῇ δευτέρᾳ ἐπιστολῇ λέγων· ἡ χάρις τοῦ κυρίου ἰησοῦ χριστοῦ καὶ ἡ ἀγάπη τοῦ θεοῦ καὶ ἡ κοινωνία τοῦ ἁγίου πνεύματος μετὰ πάντων ὑμῶν. ἡ γὰρ διδομένη χάρις καὶ δωρεὰ ἐν τριάδι δίδοται παρὰ τοῦ πατρὸς δι᾽ υἱοῦ ἐν πνεύματι ἁγίῳ. ὥσπερ γὰρ ἐκ τοῦ πατρός ἐστι δι᾽ υἱοῦ ἡ διδομένη χάρις, οὕτως οὐκ ἂν γένοιτο κοινωνία τῆς δόσεως ἐν ἡμῖν εἰ μὴ ἐν τῷ πνεύματι τῷ ἁγίῳ. τούτου γὰρ μετέχοντες ἔχομεν τοῦ πατρὸς τὴν ἀγάπην καὶ τοῦ υἱοῦ τὴν χάριν καὶ αὐτοῦ τοῦ πνεύματος τὴν κοινωνίαν. μία ἄρα καὶ ἐκ τούτων ἡ τῆς τριάδος ἐνέργεια δείκνυται. οὐ γὰρ ὡς παρ᾽ ἑκάστου διάφορα καὶ διῃρημένα τὰ διδόμενα σημαίνει ὁ ἀπόστολος, ἀλλ᾽ ὅτι τὰ διδόμενα ἐν τριάδι δίδοται καὶ τὰ πάντα ἐξ ἑνὸς θεοῦ ἐστι.

[1172] On the identification of the Holy Spirit and grace, see Gonnet, 'The Salutary Action of the Holy Spirit as Proof of his Divinity', 510-3. On the Holy Spirit's relation to other persons of the Trinity, see Laminski, *Der Heilige Geist als Geist Christ und Geist der Gläubigen*, 130-6.

Father upon which everything in the Gospel depended. At the same time, however it carried within it the conception of coinherent relations within the one Being of God to which the distinctions in the self-revelation of God in the "saving economy' as Father, son and Holy Spirit pointed, and upon which they were grounded. For Athanasius this coinherence was not merely a linking or intercommunication of the distinctive properties of the three divine Persons but a complete mutual indwelling in which each Person, while remaining what he is by himself as Father, Son, or Holy Spirit, is wholly in the others as the others are wholly in him. Thus within his supreme incarnational perspective, soteriological and ontological factors were always combined in Athanasius' development of the Nicene doctrine of God.[1173]

In a very similar way, Lenka Karfíková writes: 'Dar Ducha znamená přitomnost samého Boga, nebot' podle Janova listu: "Pokud se navzájem milujeme, zůstává v nás Bůh… Že zůstáváme v něm a on v nás, poznáváme podle toho, že nám dal svého Ducha' (1 J 4, 12n). Je-li v nás ovšem Bůh, je v nás i Kristus, který se svým Otcem přichází k člověku, aby si v něm vytvořil příbytek (srov. J 14, 25). Podobně Kristus, který sám je život (J 14, 6), v nás žije (Ga 2, 20), jsme-li oživováni Duchem (Srov. Ř 8, 11). Konečně jako jsou Kristovy činy zároveň činy Otce, který v něm přebývá (J 14, 10n), je i působení Ducha jednáním samého Krista (Ř 15, 17n)'.[1174] This trinitarian theology carried with it a revision of the language of 'being' with respect to God. It was discussed and ratified at the Anteochene Council in 362 and explained in Athanasius' *Tomus ad Antiochenos*.[1175] The agreement reached at the Council encouraged the use of οὐσία and ὑπόστασεις as descriptive of God being one and three. Prestige explains this as follows: 'While hypostasis lays stress on concrete independence, ousia lays it on intrinsic constitution. Hypostasis means "a reality *ad alios*" ousia "a reality *in se*"; the one word denotes God as manifest, the other connotes God as being. Athanasius taught that in God one and the same identical "substance" or object, without any division, substitution, or differentiation of content, is permanently presented in three distinct objective forms'.[1176] Before this distinction was introduced at the Anteochene Council, Athanasius could use οὐσία and ὑπόστασεις as synonyms and employ οὐσία in the

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[1173] Torrance, 'The Doctrine of the Holy Trinity according to St. Athanasius', 397.

[1174] Karfiková, 'ΜΗ ΦΥΣΕΙ, ΑΛΛΑ ΘΕΣΕΙ', 82.

[1175] For a detailed analysis of Athanasius' use of οὐσία and ὑπόστασεις in *Tomus ad Antiochenos*, see Gitton, *La Théologie trinitaire d'Athanase d'Alexandrie*, 375-405. For a specialized study of *Tomus ad Antiochenos*, see Yeum, *Die Synode von Alexandrien (362)*.

[1176] Prestige, *God in Patristic Thought*, xxix. Cf. also 168, 188.

sense of that which is and subsists by itself.[1177] However, this language had to be deepened in light of God's self-revelation to us through the Son and Holy Spirit as inhering in his own eternal Being. Such language had to be reflective of the fact that God reveals himself to us as he is in his inner being. Therefore, to know him as God is to know him as a personal being and to partake of him is to partake of his own inner relations as Trinity. As Torrance expresses it: 'Thus when associated with God's self-revelation in three distinct objective Persons or *hypostaseis* as Father, Son and Holy Spirit, Being or *ousia* signifies the one eternal Being of God in the indivisible reality and fullness of his intrinsic personal relations as the Holy Trinity. Far from being an abstract or general notion, therefore, *ousia* as applied to God had an intensely personal and concrete meaning. This was very evident in his distinctive conception of the intrinsic Word or *enousios logos* in God and intrinsic Activity or *enousios energeia* in God, for God's activity in self-revelation and self-giving through the Son and in the Holy Spirit, is as indivisibly one toward us as is the one *ousia* of the Godhead from which it issues and to which it directs us, while that one *ousia* is disclosed to be as intensely personal it itself as it is in its manifestation to us in the coinherent relatios of the three divine Persons'.[1178] Torrance adds that even though both Athanasius and the Council affirmed God in the order of 'one οὐσία and three ὑπόστασεις', 'it did not rest upon any preconception or definition of the Divine Being, but on the very Being of God as he has named himself "I am who I am". Thus in the Trinity the "One Being" of God does not refer to some impersonal essence, but the "I am" of God, the eternal and living Being which God has of himself".[1179] It is in this context that Athanasius' doctrine of the Holy Spirit fills out and reinforces his teaching about the unity and Trinity of God and is most properly appreciated.

Athanasius' *Epistulae ad Serapionem* is a very important piece of theological reflection on God and salvation that completes his other writings on these topics. It is also a very good place to conclude this chapter and discuss something that made Athanasius to be remembered not only as a theological thinker but also as a distinctly spiritual author. His *Vita Antonii* is the clearest expression of what it means to confess the relational understanding of God and salvation.

[1177] e.g. *CA* 1.11 [Metzler 120-1]; 2.10 [Metzler 186-7]; 3.63 [Savvidis 366-7]; *De Decr*. 22 [Opitz 18-9]; *De Syn*. 35 [Opitz 262]; *Ep. Afr*. 4 [Opitz 328-9]. *Ep. Ser*. 2.5 [Savvidis 544-5].
[1178] Torrance, 'The Doctrine of the Holy Trinity according to St. Athanasius', 401.
[1179] Ibid. 402.

CHAPTER SIX

Athanasius' Spirituality in the *Vita Antonii*

This concluding chapter on the *Vita Antonii* seeks to connect Athanasius' dogmatic thought with issues of practical Christian living which I already probed in the previous chapter. Thus far, I have analized Athanasius' concept of God and his understanding of what it means to be deified, but now I would like to consider how it plays out and is typified in the everyday life of Antony. At first glance, the reader of the *Vita Antonii* may feel that it speaks primarily about a Christian super hero and some scholars have voiced the opinion that this book could not be penned by Athanasius. Nevertheless, a closer look at the way the author of this biography describes Christ and his victory over the Devil, as well as how he applies the relational aspects of deification to Antony, reveals typically Athanasian features. In view of the scholarly debates about the doctrinal and literary homogeneity of the *Vita Antonii*, I will first look at some problematic passages that may seem to conflict with other writings of Athanasius and my interpretation of his thought. After that I will consider scholarly views that recognize this problem as tension and seek to identify different ways of resolving it. Having done that, I will propose that a helpful way to approach the problem of this tension is to ask what kind of understanding Athanasius had of God and salvation. By identifying the Antonian concept of God and salvation—both of which are stamped with the Athanasian personal emphasis—I will endevour to show that the *Vita Antonii* presents a coherent doctrinal teaching, that is consistent with my interpretation of Athanasius' thought.

The bulk of his chapter will be devoted to two major subjects: Christ and salvation. I will first examine Antony's defence of the divinity of Christ against the pagans and Arians. This will be accompanied with observations on parallel ideas from other writings of Athanasius, and I will argue that Antony's christology is convincingly Athanasian. Its emphasis on the divine nature of Christ and his ability to do what is beyond Antony's power controls the heroic story of Antony and forms the cornerstone of ascetic spirituality. Second, I will discuss soteriological topics with an emphasis on deification. I will contend that Athanasian description of salvation in the *Vita Antonii* has a clear christological backing: Christ's incarnation and his death on the cross. Moreover, Athanasius represents Antony as the saved

human being who enjoys God's presence and relationship. This sense of presence and relationship between God and man is intended to demonstrate the constant reality of Antony's deification. The corollary of this argument will be to show that the Athanasian portrait of Antony runs counter the Arian model: it is not about how one becomes saved or attains godly qualities by imitating Christ, but an example of how the saved one can live in virtue of what Christ has already accomplished. Throughout this chapter I will use the Greek version of the *Vita Antonii* without bringing into the discussion Latin, Coptic, Syriac, and Old-Slavonic versions. I will not be concerned with matters of authorship, genre, style, and sources that pervade scholarly literature. Neither will I discuss such issues as monastic organization and episcopal jurisdiction. As important as these topics are, they will be relegated to the periphery of this study in order to give precedence to the main subject: God and deification.

6.1 The Problem of Non-Athanasian Elements in the *Vita Antonii*

A close look at the text of the *Vita Antonii* exposes a number of *topoi* that might create an impression of conflict between this work (given the Athanasian authorship) and other writings of Athanasius. More specifically, we can identify three major themes that seem to run counter to my interpretation of Athanasius. First, Antony's aspiration for perfection and the corresponding emphasis on human striving is noticeably dissimilar from Athanasius' common focus on grace. Second, the description of Christian life in the *Vita Antonii* as a spiritual progress and firm resistence to the Devil strikes a different note than the christologically-driven thought of Athanasius. And, finally, the text of the *Vita Antonii* seems to contain elements of an impersonal description of salvation (such as incorruption and immortality) contrary to Athanasius' emphasis elsewhere on the personal aspects of deification, such as sharing in God's love, delight and adopted sonship. I will briefly summarize these three points below, and then deal with them in the rest of this chapter.

6.1.1 Aspiration for Perfection

The first particular characteristic that stands out once we begin to read the *Vita Antonii* is the monk's vigorous pursuit of perfection. The text of the *Vita Antonii* is replete with passages that link perfection with self-discipline, hard work, and

spiritual exercise. Such instances create an impression that, for Antony, the Christian life has very little to do with God's grace and is focused primarily on the accelerated role of the human being. I will sketch a few of the most telling examples from the *Vita Antonii*.

After several introductory notes, Athanasius informs his readers of some basic facts about Antony that set the tone for the rest of the story, which characterizes him as the ideal monk. In the first three chapters of the *Vita Antonii* we read that Antony was an uneducated Copt raised in a rich Christian home. From his very youth he came to prefer isolation over interaction with his peers. He lived in obedience to his parents, attended church with them, practiced moderation, avoided life's pleasures and refused to be schooled. At the age of 18 or 20 he lost his parents and was left with the weighty responsibilities of taking care of his sister and large lands. A major turn in the life of Antony occurred six months after his parent's death when he was confronted with the Gospel's call for perfection: '*If you would be perfect, go, sell what you possess and give to the poor, and you will have treasure in heaven*' (Mt. 19:21).[1180] Being deeply touched by this call, Antony sold his family farm and goods, distributed most of the proceeds to the poor and made special arrangements for the care of his sister by trusted female nuns. Having renounced all his possessions, he embarked on a solitary life that would increase in intensity throughout the *Vita Antonii* until his death at the age of 105.

Before Antony's fame spreads to the ends of the Roman world and spawns a host of imitators, we see him apprenticed to an old anchorite from a nearby village. There he is described as a prudent bee who seeks to learn and imitate other good men in the vicinity. His desire to achieve perfection becomes so strong that he sets a goal to surpass everyone in the ascetic discipline:

He was sincerely obedient to those men of zeal he visited, and he considered carefully the advantage in zeal and in ascetic living that each held in relation to him. He observed the graciousness of one, the eagerness for prayers in another; he took careful note of one's freedom from anger, and the human concern of another. And he paid attention to one while he lived a watchful life, or one who pursued studies, as also he admired one for patience, and another for fastings and sleeping on the ground. The gentleness of one and the long-suffering of yet another

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[1180] *VA* 2.15-17 [SC 400:132]: εἰ θέλεις τέλειος εἶναι, ὕπαγε, πώλησον πάντα τὰ ὑπάρχοντά σου, καὶ δὸς πτωχοῖς, καὶ δεῦρο ἀκολούθει μοι, καὶ ἕξεις θησαυρὸν ἐν οὐρανοῖς. According to Burton-Christie the Scriptures played the instrumental role in the rise of monasticism, *The Word in the Desert*, 46-7.

he watched closely…. And having been filled in this manner, he returned to his own place of discipline, from that time gathering the attributes of each in himself, and striving to manifest in himself what was best from all (*VA* 4.2-17 [SC 400:138-40; Gregg 32-3]).[1181]

The first part of this passage speaks of particular qualities that Antony sought to achieve. The list includes a number of virtues such as graciousness, patience, and mercy as well as aspects of spiritual disciplines such as control of negative emotions, fasting and sleeping on the ground. Antony's desire to cultivate these qualities has little special in itself; the text even suggests that Antony was by no means the first who initiated the anchorite life.[1182] Yet, the fact that he sought 'to gather the attributes of each in himself, and strove to manifest in himself what was best from all', gives an impression that Antony's concern is above all to achieve perfection. In fact, one of the most frequent terms used to describe the ascetic rigourism of Antony throughout the *Vita Antonii* is ἄσκησις—a term that was used in the area of sports before it passed into the monastic literature.[1183] From the very outset of his spiritual training Antony is described as the one who 'exerted all the desire and all the energy he possessed for the exercise of ascetic discipline' (*VA* 3.22-4 [SC 400:136-8]),[1184] and there are at least three major ways in which Antony's ascetic practices are just as demanding as the athletic urge for perfection in a sportsman.

First, the *ascesis* of Antony involved manual labour for self-support. In *VA* 53.1-3 [SC 400:276], Antony is described as a hard and diligent worker weaving

[1181] αὐτὸς δὲ τοῖς σπουδαίοις πρὸς οὓς ἀπήρχετο, γνησίως ὑπετάσσετο καὶ καθ' ἑαυτὸν ἑκάστου τὸ πλεονέκτημα τῆς σπουδῆς καὶ τῆς ἀσκήσεως κατεμάνθανεν. καὶ τοῦ μὲν τὸ χαρίεν, τοῦ δὲ τὸ πρὸς τὰς εὐχὰς σύντονον ἐθεώρει· καὶ ἄλλου μὲν τὸ ἀόργητον, ἄλλου δὲ τὸ φιλάνθρωπον κατενόει· καὶ τῷ μὲν ἀγρυπνοῦντι, τῷ δὲ φιλολογοῦντι προσεῖχεν· καὶ τὸν μὲν ἐν καρτερίᾳ, τὸν δὲ ἐν νηστείαις καὶ χαμευνίαις ἐθαύμαζεν· καὶ τοῦ μὲν τὴν πραότητα, τοῦ δὲ τὴν μακροθυμίαν παρετηρεῖτο.... καὶ οὕτω πεπληρωμένος ὑπέστρεφεν εἰς τὸν ἴδιον τοῦ ἀσκητηρίου τόπον· λοιπὸν αὐτὸς τὰ παρ' ἑκάστου συνάγων εἰς ἑαυτὸν ἐσπούδαζεν ἐν ἑαυτῷ τὰ πάντα δεικνύναι. καὶ γὰρ πρὸς τοὺς καθ' ἡλικίαν ἴσους οὐκ ἦν φιλόνεικος ἢ μόνον ἵνα μὴ δεύτερος ἐκείνων ἐν τοῖς βελτίοσι φαίνηται.

[1182] The fact that there were other anchorites (σπουδαῖοι in *VA* 4.2 [SC 400:138]) prior to Antony is often used to claim that Antony was not the first monk in Egypt in the first half of the fourth century. See, e.g. Rubenson, 'Asceticism', 647-8. On the term σπουδαῖος, see Wipszysk, 'Les confréries', 511-24. It is also argued that what earned Antony the epithet 'father of monks' was not the ascetic lifestyle as such but either the fact of where he practiced it (namely in the 'great desert') or the wide and early spread of his biography. For the former argument, see e.g. Harmless, *Desert Christians*, 60, and for the latter, see e.g. Goehring, 'The Origins of Monasticism', 239. On the early dissemination of the *Vita Antonii*, see Garritte, 'Le text grec et les versions anciennes de la Vie de saint Antoine', 1-13.

[1183] Goehring, 'Asceticism', 127; Špidlik, *The Spirituality of the Christian East*, 179-182; Guibert, 'Ascèse, Ascétisme', 939-941; Sidorov, *Drevnekhristiansky Asketizm*, 9-25.

[1184] ὅλον δὲ τὸν πόθον καὶ πᾶσαν τὴν σπουδὴν ἔχῃ περὶ τὸν τόνον τῆς ἀσκήσεως.

baskets for barter trade. In *VA* 3.24-6, he cites Paul's dictum from 2-Thess. 3:10 as the biblical basis for hard work: 'He worked with his hands, though, having heard that *he who is idle, let him not eat*. And he spent what he made partly for bread, and partly on those in need' ([SC 400:136-8; Gregg 32]).[1185] Seeking to accustom his body to toil Antony claims that '*when I am weak, then I am strong* [2-Cor. 12:10]'.[1186] Second, Antony is described as practicing an austere diet which includes bread, salt and water. He never eats meat or drinks wine. He eats once a day after sunset and sometimes once in two or even four days during fasting times.[1187] Third, we see him practice watchfulness and unceasing prayer. Antony keeps vigil in prayer, spending whole nights without sleep.[1188] When he does sleep, he uses a rush mat or even the bare ground as his bed.[1189] He is described as constantly weighing his thoughts and praying unceasingly (Cf. 1-Thess. 5:17).[1190] Antony's determination to reach perfection in all these areas of ascetic practice makes other anchorites marvel at his severe lifestyle.[1191]

6.1.2 Ascetic Firmness: Spiritual Progress and Fight with the Devil

Another characteristic that adds to the general impression of conflict between the *Vita Antonii* and other works of Athanasius is the description of Christian life in terms of ascetic firmness with little emphasis on the downward action of Christ that permeates Athanasius' dogmatic writings. Antony's ascetic firmness is represented in two ways: his ongoing progress and the ensuing ability to battle the Devil. I will briefly look at both of these aspects.

One of the first texts that speaks about Christian life as progress is recorded in *VA* 7.39-47 ([SC 400:152-4; Gregg 36-7]). It says: 'And this tenet of his was also truly wonderful, that neither the way of virtue nor separation from the world for its sake ought to be measured in terms of time spent, but by the aspirant's desire and purposefulness. He, indeed, did not hold time passed in his memory, but day by day, as if making a beginning of his asceticism, increased his exertion for advance, saying continually to himself Paul's word about *forgetting what lies behind and*

[1185] εἰργάζετο γοῦν ταῖς χερσίν, ἀκούσας· ὁ δὲ ἀργὸς μηδὲ ἐσθιέτω. καὶ τὸ μὲν εἰς τὸν ἄρτον, τὸ δὲ τοῖς δεομένοις ἀνήλισκεν.

[1186] *VA* 7.36-7 [400:152]: ὅταν ἀσθενῶ, τότε δυνατός εἰμι.

[1187] Ibid. 7.25-7 [400:152].

[1188] Ibid. 7.15-8 [400:150].

[1189] Ibid. 7.31-2 [400:152].

[1190] e.g. Ibid. 3.27 [400:138]; 7.42-7 [400:154].

[1191] Ibid. 7.18-19 [400:150].

straining forward to what lies ahead [Phil. 3:13]'.[1192] Here Christian life of the anchorite is depicted in terms of being set on the path to virtue (τὴν τῆς ἀρετῆς ὁδόν). Such a path seems to always be stuck in the beginning (ὡς ἀρχὴν ἔχων τῆς ἀσκήσεως) and requires immense work on the part of Antony in order to continue it (μείζονα τὸν πόνον εἶχεν εἰς προκοπὴν ἐπιλέγων).[1193] In another text this path is called the journey of virtue[1194] and several times (though implicitly) we see it depicted as upward movement to God.[1195] A passage similar to the one quoted above is found in *VA* 20.1-8 [SC 400:186-8; Gregg 46], where the same metaphor of forward movement is used by Antony with reference to Lot's wife, and Jesus' statement in Luke 9:62: 'Having therefore made a beginning, and set out already on the way of virtue, let us press forward to what lies ahead. And let none turn back as Lot's wife did, especially since the Lord said, *No one who puts his hand to the plow and* turns *back is fit for the Kingdom of heaven*. Now 'turning back' is nothing except feeling regret and once more thinking about things of the world'.[1196] The idea of being set out in the way of virtue (τῆς ὁδοῦ τῆς ἀρετῆς) and striving to attain what is ahead of us (ἐπεκτεινώμεθα μᾶλλον ἵνα φθάσωμεν) without bringing Christ into focus colours Christian life with the priority of human effort rather than the initiative of Christ.

Among other images of Christian life in the *Vita Antonii* we find descriptions of 'advancement' (προκοπή)[1197] and 'perseverance' towards a certain end purpose.[1198] Often such descriptions are directly connected with Antony's ability to confront the Devil. Thus, in one of the many attempts when the Devil sought to hinder Antony's progress, we find the former whispering to the monk about 'the rigour of virtue, and how great the labour is that earns it' (*VA* 5.8-9 [SC

[1192] καὶ ἦν αὐτῷ παράδοξος ὄντως καὶ οὗτος ὁ λογισμός· οὐ γὰρ ἠξίου χρόνῳ μετρεῖν τὴν τῆς ἀρετῆς ὁδόν, οὐδὲ τὴν δι' αὐτὴν ἀναχώρησιν, ἀλλὰ πόθῳ καὶ τη προαιρέσει. αὐτὸς οὖν οὐκ ἐμνημόνευε τοῦ παρελθόντος χρόνου· ἀλλὰ καθ' ἡμέραν, ὡς ἀρχὴν ἔχων τῆς ἀσκήσεως, μείζονα τὸν πόνον εἶχεν εἰς προκοπὴν ἐπιλέγων ἑαυτῷ τὸ τοῦ παύλου ῥητὸν συνεχῶς· τῶν ὄπισθεν ἐπιλανθανόμενος, τοῖς δὲ ἔμπροσθεν ἐπεκτεινόμενος [Phil 3:13].

[1193] Cf. *VA* 16.9-16 [SC 400:178].

[1194] Ibid. 3.19 [SC 400:136].

[1195] Ibid. 22.7-9 [SC 400:196]; 65:4-20 [SC 304-5]. On the idea of upward movement in *Vita Antonii*, see Zecher, *The Symbolics of Death*, 56-86.

[1196] οὐκοῦν ἀρξάμενοι καὶ ἐπιβάντες ἤδη τῆς ὁδοῦ τῆς ἀρετῆς, ἐπεκτεινώμεθα μᾶλλον ἵνα φθάσωμεν. καὶ μηδεὶς εἰς τὰ ὀπίσω στρεφέσθω, ὡς ἡ γυνὴ τοῦ λώτ· μάλιστα ὅτι κύριος εἴρηκεν· οὐδεὶς ἐπιβαλὼν τὴν χεῖρα ἐπ' ἄροτρον καὶ στραφεὶς εἰς τὰ ὀπίσω, εὔθετός ἐστιν εἰς τὴν βασιλείαν τῶν οὐρανῶν. τὸ δὲ στραφῆναι οὐδὲν ἕτερόν ἐστιν ἢ μεταμεληθῆναι καὶ πάλιν κοσμικὰ φρονεῖν.

[1197] e.g. *VA* 7.44 [SC 400:154]; 66.25-6 [400:310].

[1198] e.g. Ibid. 12.10-11 [SC 400:168].

400:142; Gregg 33]).[1199] To this Antony responds by an even greater perseverance in his ascetic call: 'You will not frustrate my purpose by this, Devil' (*VA* 11.16-7 [SC 400:166; Gregg 40]).[1200] What is even more striking is Antony's confidence to fight the Devil with what can be seen as divine means yet with much emphasis on the human ability to exercise them. Thus, being overcome by Antony the Devil finally admits the firmness of Antony's πρόθεσις: 'But the enemy saw his own weakness in the face of Antony's resolve, and saw that he instead was being thrown for a fall by the sturdiness of this contestant, and being overturned by his great faith and falling over Antony's constant prayers' (*VA* 5.13-7 [SC 400:142; Gregg 34]).[1201] Slightly afterwards, we read that the Devil is said to be 'made a buffoon by a mere youth' admitting the following: 'I am he who so frequently troubled you and so many times was overturned by you' (*VA* 6.20-1 [SC 400:148; Gregg 35]).[1202] Surprisingly, the emphasis in these passages is not so much on the victory of God, a theme so prevalent in Athanasius, as on Antony's ability to withstand the Devil.

6.1.3 Elements of Impersonal Description of Salvation

Finally, one other element worth noting in the *Vita Antonii* is the description of salvation. The way it is presented in several passages of the biography looks foreign to my interpretation of Athanasius. The emphasis on such occasions falls more on the idea of sharing in the divine qualities rather than on the personal participation in the relationship with God. In the only place where there is a direct reference to participation in God in the *Vita Antonii* we read that Christ 'enabled mankind to share the divine and spiritual nature' (*VA* 74.16-7 [SC 400:324; Gregg 85]).[1203] Although the term 'share' (κοινωνῆσαι) may have a relational sense, it is hard to determine the precise meaning of participation for Antony based on this text alone. In the two other instances where deification is implied, the main effect of saving transformation has to do more with incorruption, rather than the sharing in God's love as a more prevailing characteristic of Athanasius' thought. Thus, in his speech to the monks on demons and discernment of spirits Antony states: 'When,

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[1199] τέλος τὸ τραχὺ τῆς ἀρετῆς, καὶ ὡς πολὺς αὐτῆς ἐστιν ὁ πόνος.

[1200] οὐκ ἐμποδίσεις ἐν τούτῳ μου τὴν προθυμίαν, διάβολε.

[1201] ὡς δὲ εἶδεν ἑαυτὸν ὁ ἐχθρὸς ἀσθενοῦντα πρὸς τὴν τοῦ ἀντωνίου πρόθεσιν καὶ μᾶλλον ἑαυτὸν καταπαλαιόμενον ὑπὸ τῆς ἐκείνου στερρότητος, ἀνατρεπόμενόν τε τῇ πίστει καὶ πίπτοντα ταῖς συνεχέσιν ἀντωνίου προσευχαῖς.

[1202] ἐγώ εἰμι ὁ πολλάκις σοι ὀχλήσας, τοσαυτάκις δὲ ἀνατραπεὶς παρὰ σοῦ.

[1203] ποιήσῃ τοὺς ἀνθρώπους κοινωνῆσαι θείας καὶ νοερᾶς φύσεως.

therefore… we live in the discipline… we shall reign forever and ever. And even though we have been contestants on earth, we do not receive our inheritance on earth, but we possess the promises in heaven. Putting off the body, then, which is corruptible, we receive it back incorruptible' (*VA* 16.25-8 [SC 400:180; Gregg 43-4]).[1204] Here the main feature of the coming kingdom and the inheritance promised to us in heaven is the incorruption we will receive to replace our corrupted bodies.

In another passage,[1205] Antony offers a list of qualities we are to gain in order to inherit the land of the humble-hearted (ἡ γῆ τῶν πραέων). Some of the specific qualities in this list include 'prudence' (φρόνησις), 'discretion'(σωφροσύνη), 'courage' (ἀνδρεία), 'understanding' (σύνεσις), 'concern for the poor' (φιλοπτωχία), 'freedom from anger'(ἀοργησία), and 'hospitality' (φιλοξενία) (*VA* 17.25-7 [SC 400:182]). After listing them Antony makes the following call to the monks: 'If we possess these qualities, we shall discover them running before, preparing the abode for us there in the land of the meek' (*VA* 17.27-9 [SC 400:182-4; Gregg 45, trans. modified]).[1206] In light of this statement Antony's desire to unite in himself those qualities he observed in other monks at the beginning of his ascetic path ('gathering the attributes of each in himself, and striving to manifest in himself what was best from all', *VA* 4.14-5 [SC 400:140; Gregg 33])[1207] may seem to carry a soteriological significance and create an impression that salvation is only about gaining godly qualities. All these examples may suggest that Antony's vision of Christian life runs counter to some major aspects of Athanasius' thought. At least they create an impression that there is a significant tension between the two.

6.2 Scholarly Approach to the Problem of Tensions

The tension between the *Vita Antonii* and other writings of Athanasius has not escaped the attention of scholars, and there has been a variety of approaches to this issue. Some scholars perceive this tension as evidence for the non-Athanasian nature of the book. Thus, Timothy Barnes detects 'the substantial presence of non-Athanasian elements in the *Life'* and claims that such 'lexical divergences are… the

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[1204] ὅταν τοίνυν… διαμείνωμεν ἐν τῇ ἀσκήσει… αἰῶνας αἰώνων βασιλεύσομεν. καὶ ἐπὶ γῆς ἀγωνισάμενοι, οὐκ ἐν γῇ κληρονομοῦμεν, ἀλλ᾽ ἐν οὐρανοῖς ἔχομεν τὰς ἐπαγγελίας. πάλιν δὲ φθαρτὸν ἀποθέμενοι τὸ σῶμα, ἄφθαρτον ἀπολαμβάνομεν αὐτό.

[1205] *VA* 17.23-29 [SC 400:182].

[1206] ταῦτα κτώμενοι, εὑρήσομεν αὐτὰ πρὸ ἑαυτῶν ἐκεῖ ποιοῦντα ξενίαν ἡμῖν ἐν τῇ γῇ τῶν πραέων.

[1207] αὐτὸς τὰ παρ᾽ ἑκάστου συνάγων εἰς ἑαυτὸν ἐσπούδαζεν ἐν ἑαυτῷ τὰ πάντα δεικνύναι.

most objective and measurable criteria of profound differences of culture and theology between the *Life* and the rest of Athanasius' oeuvre'.[1208] Following René Draguet[1209] and Matin Tetz[1210] (who deny Athanasian authorship of the *Vita Antonii* on other grounds), Barnes suggests that 'it will remain in doubt whether Athanasius should best be described as author, editor or redactor until it is established in detail by further philological and stylistic investigation....' Other scholars, who are more loyal to Athanasian authorship of the *Vita Antonii* and seek to establish a consistency between this work and other writings of Athanasius, prefer to view the tension in less radical ways.

One of the ways to explain this tension is the hypothesis that the *Vita Anonii* testifies to the Origenistic views of Antony and exposes Athanasius' attempt to eliminate or correct them. According to Roldanus, Athanasius departs from Antony whenever the latter approaches him too closely.[1211] He contends that even though Antony's profile is significantly amended by Athanasius, we can still discern the remnants of his original teaching that escaped Athanasius' intent to filter it through his own theology.[1212] Similarly, Vincent Desprez (who relates Antony's Origenism to his *Letters*) believes that Athanasius corrects the Origenistic elements in the *Vita Antonii*,[1213] while István Perczel claims that 'the author of the *Life* knew about the basics of the so-called Origenist teaching of Antony… and had no objections to this doctrine'. [1214] Alternatively, Samuel Rubenson thinks that Origenist traces should not be viewed as 'a direct conflict', but rather as a 'tension between a more Origenist tradition and the new emphases of theology at the time of the Arian controversy'.[1215]

[1208] Barnes, *Early Christian Hagiography*, 166. More specifically, he states: 'The occurance in the *Life* of a common advert like ἄγαν ('too much') and the emphasis on achieving ἀταραξία and avoiding ἀκηδία, neither of which words belongs to Athanasius' normal vocabulary, are hard to explain if Athanasius wrote the *Life* as an original composition', ibid.

[1209] Draguet claimed that our Greek text of the *Vita Antonii* is based on the Syriac translation of a cruder Greek text written not by Athanasius (or someone fluent in Greek) but by a Hellenized Copt who incorporated much of Coptic phraseology and vocabulary into the work. Draguet, *La vie primitive de saint Antoine*, 417-18.

[1210] Tetz argues that the *Vita Antonii* was originally composed by Serapion of Thmuis (who appears in the *Vita Antonii* on two occasions), while Athanasius simply edited his text leaving much of Serapion's original wording unchanged. Tetz, 'Athanasius und die *Vita Antonii*', 1-30.

[1211] Roldanus, 'Origène, Antoine et Athanase', 413.

[1212] Ibid. 414.

[1213] Desprez, 'Saint Antoine', 35-6.

[1214] Perczel, 'Mankinds' Common Intellectual Substance', 206.

[1215] Rubenson, *The Letters of St. Antony*, 136.

For Gregg and Groh the Arian controversy becomes the vantage point from which they view the problem of tension. They acknowledge that 'tensions can be detected between particular actions attributed to Antony and… Athanasian themes'[1216] and suggest considering the problem as 'a clash of two soteriologies [Arian and Nicaean], each with its own understanding of the spiritual progress or sanctification of believers'.[1217] More specifically they write:

> The dramatic profile of the monk (Antony, or any celebrated ascetic) and the way in which he pursues the "way of virtue" were destined to be contestable by two parties within the church which promoted distinctive and opposing schemes of salvation…. The Arian could be relied upon to assert that the holiness of the desert dweller is none other than that progress in moral excellence which imitates Christ, the first among creatures who proved himself through obedience. While capable also of speaking about Jesus' imitability, the orthodox wished to interpret the wilderness discipline by means of concepts harmonious with their teaching of the Logos who descends to dispense power, who lends the divine assistance without which there is no *catharsis* of passions or redemption of the flesh…. The *Vita Antonii* is constructed with a view to counteracting the Arian concept of adopted sonship as a progress in virtue. Antony's story, and through it the pattern of the monastic life, are presented as the natural and legitimate expression of orthodox soteriology, *and of that soteriology alone.*[1218]

Accordingly, Gregg and Groh believe that the *Vita Antonii* was composed for the purpose of combating Arian attempts to recruit the ascetics in support of their cause. It was designed in such a way as to frustrate the Arian claim that Antony was their ally. Athanasius does this by what Gregg and Groh call 'redactional seams'.[1219] They discern such 'seams' in those instances of the *Vita Antonii* where Athanasius ensures that Antony's achievements are made possible by God. In this perspective, the *Vita Antonii* is seen as Athanasius' deliberate way of communicating that 'advance in perfection comes not through striving for equality with Christ but by participation and intervention from above'.[1220] Thus, the whole Antony 'project' for Athanasius 'becomes the subtle one of spying out in the *Life* attempts to rule out possible connections between the monk's life of discipline and the Arian conception of discipleship'.[1221]

[1216] Gregg, *Early Arianism*, 142.
[1217] Ibid. 134.
[1218] Ibid. 134-5, 139.
[1219] Ibid. 142.
[1220] Ibid. 147.
[1221] Ibid. 143.

Among the most common criticism of Gregg and Groh's approach, scholars object to its overtaking of textual evidence about Arius' soteriology,[1222] and they question the methodology of 'redactional seams'. Such 'redactional seams' are sometimes viewed as begging the question of why the referred tensions may not simply be considered as part of the Athanasian account. In this regard, Anatolios contends: 'It is inadmissible that this quite natural supposition should be completely bracketed. Of course, once it is bracketed, then the discovery of "redactional seams" and two antithetical accounts follows not so much from the text as it stands, but rather from the presumption that in fact such tensions do not belong together but stem from two separate and opposite accounts. The actual complexity of the text is thus deconstructed by the invincible circularity of this presumption and the strategy which implements it'.[1223] Anatolios calls the tension a dialectic 'between human striving and divine dispensation of grace', and argues that it is inherent in the Athanasian account of salvation; it does not spring from conflict with Arian soteriology.[1224] For Anatolios, as well as a number of other scholars such as Dörries,[1225] Louth,[1226] Gerhardus Barterlink[1227] and William Harmless,[1228] Athanasius' account of Antony is a consistent description of his own theology.

Taking into account these discussions, I will argue in this chapter that a helpful way to approach the problem of tension is to consider it in light of the doctrine of God and deification. Seen from this perspective, the *Vita Antonii* presents the testimony of the active role of God in Antony's life and the story of how he experienced God's transforming love and intimate presence. As should be clear from the previous chapters, these motifs are at the heart of Athanasius' doctrine of God and salvation. Together they create a fundamentally personal paradigm in which the relation between God, deification, and Christian life is such that the latter elements flow from the former. Approached in this way, the *Vita Antonii* does not have to be a contradictory account; it can be seen as a consistent reflection of the Athanasian themes. With this vision in mind, I will seek to show that Athanasius' story of Antony accords with my interpretation of Athanasius'

[1222] See, ch. 4.
[1223] Anatolios, *Athanasius: The Coherence*, 169.
[1224] Ibid. 172.
[1225] Dörries, 'Die *Vita Antonii*', 359-410.
[1226] Louth, 'St. Athanasius and the Greek *Life of Antony*', 504-9.
[1227] Bartelink, *Vie d'Antoine*, 35.
[1228] Harmless, *Desert Christians*, 122-3.

thought throughout this study. It also corroborates with the arguments of those scholars who view the *Vita Antonii* as a homogenous work consonant with Athanasius' theology. In what follows I will present two major profiles of Antony. I will first look at him as a theologian who exhibits knowledge of God and incarnation, and then will consider him as the model of the deified humanity. In the process, I will attempt to establish a link between God, deification, and Christian living in such a way that the apparent tension will cease to be an issue, and I will treat the problematic passages (mentioned above) as the essential elements of the Athanasian account.

6.3 God, Incarnation, and Deification

The Athanasian narrative begins by informing the readers with a brief note of purpose and recipients. We find that Antony's biography was requested by unnamed 'foreign monks'[1229] and though it is difficult to determine who they were, some scholars suggest they could have been Westerners, 'given both Athanasius' close contacts there and the speed with which the work was translated into Latin'.[1230] Athanasius says that he received their request for certain specifics about Antony, namely who he was before his anchorite career, how he began his ascetic life, and how he died. These issues are amply treated throughout the *Vita Antonii*, but the real reason why Athanasius is said to write it is because he wanted to provide exhortation for his readers: 'Along with marveling at the man, you will want also to emulate his purpose, for Antony's way of life provides monks with a sufficient picture for ascetic practice' (*VA* prooim.15-8 [SC 400:126; Gregg 29]).[1231] This statement suggests that Athanasius seeks to draw 'a portrait of Antony as an ideal to be imitated and as the archetype to measure oneself against'.[1232]

At the same time, because of the variety of themes that we find in the *Vita Antonii*, scholars have been able to discover nearly everything they looked for in

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[1229] This is Harmless' translation of *VA* praef. based on the statement from *Pachomii Vita Prima* (CP 45:366) that refers to it as 'the *Life of the Blesed Antony to the Monks and Brothers in Foreign Parts* who had asked the most holy father Athanasius for it'; Harmless, *Desert Fathers*, 75, n. 49.

[1230] Ibid. 69.

[1231] μετὰ τοῦ θαυμάσαι τὸν ἄνθρωπον, θελήσετε καὶ ζηλῶσαι τὴν ἐκείνου πρόθεσιν. ἔστι γὰρ μοναχοῖς ἱκανὸς χαρακτὴρ πρὸς ἄσκησιν ὁ ἀντωνίου βίος.

[1232] Harmless, *Desert Fathers*, 69. Athanasius states that for monks Antony is 'a sufficient model for discipline' (ἱκανὸς χαρακτὴρ πρὸς ἄσκησιν) (*VA* prooim.17-8 [SC 400:126]), and Gregory Nazianzen called it 'a rule of the monastic life in the form of a narrative' (ἐκεῖνος [ἀθανασίος] ἀντωνίου τοῦ θείου βίον συνέγραφε, τοῦ μοναδικοῦ βίου νομοθεσίαν, ἐν πλάσματι διηγήσεως) in *Or.* 21.5). It is also known that Antony's biography inspired even Augustine (*Conf.* 8.14-29).

this work. According to one list, such discoveries include 'the evolution and elaboration of ascetic tendencies already among the apostles, the pattern of staged eremitic withdrawal from society, borrowings from stories of Hellenic greats like Pythagoras, a θεῖος ἀνήρ designed to surpass Apollonius of Tyana, and (in reaction to these last interpretations) a holy man modeled exclusively after the biblical presentations of the prophets, disciples, martyrs, and angels'.[1233] In the following sections I will limit my study of Antony to the doctrine of God and deification, and how both are related to Antony's ascetic ideal.

6.3.1 Antony as a Theologian: God, Christ, and Incarnation

In this section, I will consider two major points where I see Athanasius' concept of God to be most strongly at work in Antony. I will first look at the fact that Antony insists on the divine nature of Christ, dressed in Athanasian apologetic and anti-Arian tone. Second I will discuss the significance of Christ's divinity as it plays out in the way Athanasius depicts the ideal Christian life of Antony. Since much study[1234] has already exposed many of the parallels between the *Vita Antonii* and Athanasius' other writings, I will refer only to those instances that help me to illustrate my own arguments.

6.3.1.1 Apology of Christ's Divinity against the Pagans

One of the images that Athanasius employs in his description of Antony is that of apologist of the Christian faith. Towards the end of the *Vita Antonii* (chs. 72-80 [SC 400:320-40]), Athanasius recounts conversations which Antony held with pagan philosophers, surprising them with his command of the Neoplatonic philosophy and profound arguments about the Logos. Antony's defence of Christ's divinity in this section of the *Vita Antonii* takes place at the Outer Mountain (Pispir), where several wise men ask him for an explanation of his faith in Christ and seek to ridicule his preaching about the cross.[1235] Athanasius reports Antony' reply in the following way:

[1233] Gregg, *Early Arianism*, 133.
[1234] See esp. Louth, 'St. Athanasius and the Greek *Life of Antony*', 504-9, and Bartelink, *Vie d'Antoine*, 36-42.
[1235] *VA* 74.1-6 [SC 400:324].

Antony paused for a moment, at first pitying them in their ignorance, and said (through an interpreter who expertly translated his remarks): "Which is better—to confess a cross, or to attribute acts of adultery and pederasty to those whom you call gods? For that which is stated by us is a signal of courage, and evidence of disdain for death, while your doctrines have to do with incidents of lewdness. Again, which is preferable, to say that the Word of God was not changed, but remaining the same he assumed a human body for the salvation and benefit of mankind—so that sharing in the human birth he might enable mankind to share the divine and spiritual nature—or to make the divine very much like the irrational beings, and on these grounds worship four-footed creatures and reptiles and images of men? For these are the objects of worship for you who are wise! (*VA* 74.6-20 [SC 400:324; Gregg 84-5]).[1236]

In this passage Antony draws two sets of contrasts: one that compares the fact of Christ's courageous death on the cross with the repulsive lewdness of gods who crave pleasure, and the other that sets the unchanging nature of Christ against the non-divine status of pagan subjects of worship. In the context, both sets of contrasts serve to defend the fact that Christ is God and his death is efficacious for salvation of humanity. The idea of the gods' lewdness in the first contrast reminds us of Athanasius' apology laid out in the chapters 8-26 of his treatise *Contra Gentes* where he refutes pagan religion by using the argument from action. In one particular passage Athanasius formulates this argument as follows: 'Now if one were to consider the actions of their so-called gods, to begin from there, he would find that they are not only not gods but that they were the basest of men…. One can hear how Zeus raped Ganymede, and committed secret adulteries, and how he was in fear and trembling lest the walls of Troy be destroyed against his will…. One can see him as the object of plots on the part of the other so-called gods…. One can see him overcome by pleasure, the slave of women and on their account venturing to appear in the form of irrational animals, beasts, and birds…. So is it right to regard as a god one who has committed such great crimes and who is accused of things

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[1236] ὀλίγον ἐπισχὼν ὁ ἀντώνιος καὶ πρῶτον οἰκτείρας αὐτοὺς ἐπὶ τῇ ἀγνωσίᾳ, ἔλεγε δι' ἑρμηνέως, τοῦ καλῶς τὰ ἐκείνου διερμηνεύοντος· τί κάλλιόν ἐστιν, σταυρὸν ὁμολογεῖν ἢ μοιχείας καὶ παιδοφθορίας προσάπτειν τοῖς λεγομένοις παρ' ὑμῖν θεοῖς; τὸ μὲν γὰρ παρ' ἡμῖν λεγόμενον ἀνδρείας ἐστὶ τεκμήριον καὶ καταφρονήσεως θανάτου γνώρισμα, τὰ δὲ ὑμέτερα ἀσελγείας ἐστὶ πάθη. ἔπειτα τί βέλτιόν ἐστιν, λέγειν ὅτι ὁ τοῦ θεοῦ λόγος οὐκ ἐπλανήθη, ἀλλ' ὁ αὐτὸς ὤν, ἐπὶ σωτηρίᾳ καὶ εὐεργεσίᾳ τῶν ἀνθρώπων ἀνείληφε σῶμα ἀνθρώπινον ἵνα, τῇ ἀνθρωπίνῃ γενέσει κοινωνήσας, ποιήσῃ τοὺς ἀνθρώπους κοινωνῆσαι θείας καὶ νοερᾶς φύσεως ἢ ἐν ἀλόγοις ἐξομοιοῦν τὸν θεὸν καὶ διὰ τοῦτο σέβειν τετράποδα καὶ ἑρπετὰ καὶ ἀνθρώπων εἰκόνας; ταῦτα γὰρ ὑμῶν τῶν σοφῶν ἐστι τὰ σεβάσματα.

forbidden even to ordinary men by the common laws of Rome?' (*CG* 11.28-46 [Thomson 32; ibid. 33]).[1237]

We see the same flow of argument in *VA* 75.8-18 [SC 400:328], where Athanasius refers to the shameful deeds of pagan gods such as 'the wanderings of Osiris and Isis, the plots of Typhon, and the flight of Kronos, and the swallowings of children and murder of fathers',[1238] and contrasts them to the actions of Christ who raised the dead, healed the blind and paralized, walked on the sea and made many other signs and wonders.[1239] This contrast leads him to affirm that 'the things Christ has done reveal him to be God, who appeared for the salvation of mankind' (*VA* 75.16-8 [SC 400:328; Gregg 86]).[1240] This particular argument about Christ's divinity reflects Athanasius principle of correspondence between acts and natures formulated in *CG* 16. There he claims that 'acts must correspond to natures, so that the actor is known from his effect, and the action can be known from its nature'.[1241] On this basis, he asserts that the deeds of the so-called gods disprove them from being divine because it is not natural for heavenly beings to act in the way these gods do.[1242] In contrast, Christ's deeds show him to be the true God, and the way Athanasius emphasizes it in his early treatises parallels closely Antony's apologetic statement about Christ's divinity in *VA* 75.16-8 [SC 400:328] quoted above. In *De Inc.* 16.18-21 [Thomson 172; ibid. 173], Athanasius states that 'by means of it [body] he rendered himself visible, remaining in it and completing such works and giving signs as made him known to be no longer a man but God the Word'.[1243] Slightly later, he quotes John 10:37-8, which speaks about the common works of

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[1237] εἰ γάρ τις τῶν παρ' αὐτοῖς λεγομένων θεῶν, ἵνα πρῶτον ἀπὸ τούτων τῶν κάτωθεν ἄρξωμαι, λάβοι τὰς πράξεις, εὑρήσει μὴ μόνον οὐκ εἶναι αὐτούς θεούς, ἀλλὰ καὶ τῶν ἀνθρώπων τοὺς αἰσχίστους γεγονότας. οἷον γάρ, οἷόν ἐστιν ἰδεῖν τοὺς παρὰ ποιηταῖς τοῦ διὸς ἔρωτας, καὶ τὰς ἀσελγείας. οἷόν ἐστιν αὐτὸν ἀκούειν ἁρπάζοντα μὲν τὸν γανυμήδην, καὶ τὰς κλοπιμαίους ἐργαζόμενον μοιχείας, δεδιότα δὲ καὶ δειλιῶντα μὴ παρὰ γνώμην αὐτοῦ τὰ τῶν τρώων ἀπόληται τείχη.... καὶ νικώμενον ὑπὸ ἡδονῶν, δουλεύοντα δὲ γυναιξί, καὶ δι' αὐτὰς ἐν ἀλόγοις ζώοις τετράποσί τε καὶ πτηνοῖς ταῖς φαντασίαις παρακινδυνεύοντα.... ἆρ' οὖν ἄξιον τοῦτον ὑπονοεῖν θεόν, τοσαῦτα δράσαντα, καὶ διαβληθέντα, ἃ μηδὲ οἱ κοινοὶ ῥωμαίων νόμοι καὶ τοὺς ἁπλῶς ἀνθρώπους ἐπιτρέπουσι ποιεῖν;

[1238] *VA* 75.4-6 [SC 400:328; Gregg 85-7]: πλάνας ὀσίριδος καὶ ἴσιδος καὶ ἐπιβουλὰς τυφῶνος καὶ κρόνου φυγὴν καὶ τέκνων καταπόσεις καὶ πατροκτονίας.

[1239] Ibid. 75.10-3 [SC 400:328].

[1240] ἃ πεποίηκεν ὁ χριστός, θεὸν αὐτὸν ἀποδείκνυσιν, ἐπιδημήσαντα ἐπὶ σωτηρίᾳ τῶν ἀνθρώπων.

[1241] *CG* 16.25-7 [Thomson 45, ibid. 46]: κατ' ἀλλήλους γὰρ ταῖς οὐσίαις καὶ τὰς πράξεις εἶναι χρή, ἵνα καὶ ἐκ τῆς ἐνεργείας ὁ πράξας μαρτυρηθῇ, καὶ ἐκ τῆς οὐσίας ἡ πρᾶξις γνωσθῆναι δυνηθῇ. Cf. *CG*. 35.8-14 [Thomson 94-6].

[1242] Ibid. 16.53-7 [Thomson 46].

[1243] ἀλλὰ καὶ ἐμφανῆ ἑαυτὸν διὰ τούτου καθίστη διαμένων ἐν αὐτῷ καὶ τοιαῦτα τελῶν ἔργα καὶ σημεῖα διδούς, ἃ μηκέτι ἄνθρωπον, ἀλλὰ θεὸν λόγον αὐτὸν ἐγνώριζον. Cf. *CG* 35.6-8 [Thomson 94].

the Son and Father as the proof of their unity, and affirms (reiterating *VA* 75.16-8 [SC 400:328] almost verbatim) that 'through his [Christ's] actions in the body it was made known that he himself was not a man but God the Word' (*De Inc.* 18.11-1 [Thomson 176; ibid. 177]).[1244]

Related to this argument of Christ's divinity is the second set of contrasts in *VA* 74.6-20 [SC 400:324]. This contrast sets the unchanging nature of Christ against the non-divine status of pagan subjects of worship. In *VA* 74.13-9 [SC 400:324; Gregg 84-5], this argument is put forth in the form of a question as Antony inquires of the philosophers: 'Again, which is preferable, to say that the Word of God was not changed (οὐκ ἐπλανήθη), but remaining the same (ὁ αὐτὸς ὤν) he assumed a human body for the salvation and benefit of mankind—so that sharing in the human birth he might enable mankind to share the divine and spiritual nature—or to make the divine very much like the irrational beings, and on these grounds worship four-footed creatures and reptiles and images of men?' The closest parallel to this idea of contrast between Christ and pagan deities in the quoted text can be found in Athanasius' apologetic double treatise where certain passages suggest that Christ's unchanging nature implies his unique perfection, and thus proves him to be God, while the corrupted nature of pagan idols discredits them from being truly divine.

In the *Contra Gentes* Athanasius applies this type of argument in several apologetic passages. In one of them he presses the absurdity of worshipping the irrational beings by contending that 'the crocodile which is worshipped by some as a god is regarded with disgust by their neighbours. The lion which is venerated as a god by yet others, their neighbours not only do not venerate, but when they find it they kill it as a wild beast. The fish adored by some is pounded as food by others' (*CG* 23.26-31 [Thomson 62-4; ibid. 63-5]).[1245] In *CG* 12.1-10, 17-9 [Thomson 32-4; ibid. 33-5], he appeals to the heart of the matter by arguing that pagan gods have corrupted nature, and therefore cannot be gods. He asks: 'Who would not condemn their nature and refuse to call them still gods? Hearing that they are mortal and

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[1244] ἐκ τῶν ἔργων ὧν ἐποίει διὰ τοῦ σώματος υἱὸν θεοῦ ἑαυτὸν ἐγνώριζεν. Cf. *CA* 2.21 [Opitz 197-8].

[1245] ὁ γοῦν παρ' ἑτέροις προσκυνούμενος ὡς θεὸς κροκόδειλος, οὗτος παρὰ τοῖς πλησίον βδέλυγμα νομίζεται· καὶ ὁ παρ' ἑτέροις λέων ὡς θεὸς θρησκευόμενος, τοῦτον οἱ ἀστυγείτονες οὐ μόνον οὐ θρησκεύουσιν, ἀλλὰ καὶ εὑρόντες ἀποκτείνουσιν ὡς θηρίον· καὶ ὁ παρ' ἄλλοις ἀνατεθεὶς ἰχθύς, οὗτος ἄλλων ἀλήθεται τροφή.

passible, he will recognize that they are nothing other than men'.[1246] In contrast to these pagan gods whose nature is just as mortal and imperfect as that of human beings, the Christian God, according to Athanasius, is 'by nature invisible and incomprehensible',[1247] 'incorporeal and untouchable';[1248] he 'is all-powerful',[1249] 'self-sufficient and complete in himself'.[1250] Applying this concept of God to Christ, Athanasius affirms that he is 'the incorporeal and incorruptible and immaterial Word of God', and nevertheless 'in his benevolence towards us he condescended to come and be made manifest' (*De Inc.* 8.1-2, 5-6 [Thomson 150; ibid. 151]).[1251] Finally, brining together the idea of unchanging nature of Christ as God and his incarnation, Athanasius explains this paradox as follows:

> At one and the same time—this is the wonder—as man he was living a human life, and as Word he was sustaining the life of the universe, and as Son he was in constant union with the Father. Not even his birth from a virgin, therefore, changed him in any way, nor was he defiled by being in the body. Rather, he sanctified the body by being in it. For his being in everything does not mean that he shares the nature of everything, only that he gives all things their being and sustains them in it (*De Inc.* 17.24-30 [Thomson 174-6; NPNF² 4:45; modified]).[1252]

It seems that *VA* 74.13-9 [SC 400:324] is led by the same concerns that we see in this passage, namely, to postulate the unchanging nature of Christ on the one hand, and to provide an explanation for his incarnation on the other. This observation can be substantiated by the fact that immediately after drawing the contrast between the unchanging nature of Christ and the non-divine status of other gods, Antony goes on to speak of the pagan alternative to incarnation in which the uncreated soul falls into a body and becomes changed. He says: 'How dare you ridicule us for saying that Christ has appeared as a man, when you, separating the soul from heaven, say that it has wandered and fallen from the vault of the heavens into a body? I wish it

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[1246] οὐ καταγνώσεται τῆς φύσεως, καὶ ἀποστραφήσεται μὲν τοῦ λέγειν αὐτοὺς ἔτι εἶναι θεούς, φθαρτοὺς δὲ καὶ παθητοὺς αὐτοὺς ἀκούων, οὐδὲν ἄλλο ἢ ἀνθρώπους αὐτούς.

[1247] *CG* 35.2-3 [Thomson 94]: ἀόρατος καὶ ἀκατάληπτός ἐστι τὴν φύσιν.

[1248] Ibid. 29.2-3 [Thomson 78]: ἀσώματος καὶ ἄψαυστος.

[1249] Ibid. 29.5-6 [Thomson 78]: δυνατὸν αὐτὸν εἶναι κατὰ πάντα.

[1250] Ibid. 28.4-5 [Thomson 76]: αὐτάρκη καὶ πλήρη ἑαυτοῦ.

[1251] ὁ ἀσώματος καὶ ἄφθαρτος καὶ ἄϋλος τοῦ θεοῦ λόγος... παραγίνεται συγκαταβαίνων τῇ εἰς ἡμᾶς αὐτοῦ φιλανθρωπίᾳ καὶ ἐπιφανείᾳ.

[1252] καὶ τὸ θαυμαστὸν τοῦτο ἦν, ὅτι καὶ ὡς ἄνθρωπος ἐπολιτεύετο, καὶ ὡς λόγος τὰ πάντα ἐζωογόνει, καὶ ὡς υἱὸς τῷ πατρὶ συνῆν. ὅθεν οὐδὲ τῆς παρθένου τικτούσης ἔπασχεν αὐτός, οὐδὲ ἐν σώματι ὢν ἐμολύνετο· ἀλλὰ μᾶλλον καὶ τὸ σῶμα ἡγίαζεν· οὐδὲ γὰρ ἐν τοῖς πᾶσιν ὢν, τῶν πάντων μεταλαμβάνει, ἀλλὰ πάντα μᾶλλον ὑπ' αὐτοῦ ζωογονεῖται καὶ τρέφεται.

were only into a human body, and not that it changed and is transformed into four-footed creatures and reptiles!' Slightly after that, he concludes: 'For our part, we know the power and benevolence of providence—that this advent of Christ was not impossible for God…. You, on the other hand… attribute falls to it [the uncreated soul] and circulate myths to the effect that it is changeable' (*VA* 74.20-6, 31-3 [SC 400:324-6; Gregg 85]).[1253] Though not stated explicitly, Antony's aim here is fairly clear—to discredit the idea of the uncreated soul (along with the pagan deities) as unchangeable, and thus to argue that it is not divine. In contrast, Christ's unchanged nature proves him to be God who is capable of accomplishing salvation by 'enabling mankind to share the divine and spiritual nature'[1254] (implications of which are to be discussed later).

In *VA* 76.3-9 [SC 400:328-10], Antony seals his criticism of idol worship by chiding the pagans for admiring creation rather than the Creator on the ground that they idolize the effects of creation (giving them various names such as Hephaestus to fire, Hera to the air, Apollos to the sun, Artemis to the moon and Poseidon to the sea)[1255] instead of recognizing God as their creative source.[1256] He challenges them to argue back, but after seeing their confusion, he suggests that his arguments about Christ are sufficient to hold them from minding anything unworthy against the cross. Finally, he makes an apologetic statement summarizing his main point about Christ as the true God in the way that reminds us of the arguments in Athanasius' early works:[1257]

> We Christians, then, do not possess the mystery in a wisdom of Greek reasonings, but in the power supplied to us by God through Jesus Christ. For evidence that the account is true, see now that although we have not learnt letters, we believe in God, knowing through his works his providence over all things. And for evidence that our faith is effective, see now that we rely on the trust that is in Christ, but you rely upon sophistic word battles. Among you the apparitions of the idols are being abolished, but our faith is spreading everywhere. And you by your syllogisms

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[1253] ὡς δὲ χλευάζειν τολμᾶτε ἡμᾶς, λέγοντας τὸν χριστὸν ἄνθρωπον πεφανερῶσθαι; ὅπου γε ὑμεῖς, ἐκ τοῦ νοῦ τὴν ψυχὴν ὁρίζοντες, φάσκετε πεπλανῆσθαι αὐτὴν καὶ πεπτωκέναι ἀπὸ τῆς ἁψῖδος τῶν οὐρανῶν εἰς σῶμα. καὶ εἴθε εἰς ἀνθρώπινον μόνον, καὶ μὴ εἰς τετράποδα καὶ ἑρπετὰ μεταβαίνειν καὶ μεταπίπτειν.... ὑμεῖς δέ... πτώματα προσάπτετε αὐτῇ καὶ τρεπτὴν αὐτὴν μυθολογεῖτε.

[1254] *VA* 74.16-7 [SC 400:324; Gregg 85].

[1255] Cf. *CG* 9.5-9 [Thomson 22].

[1256] Cf. Ibid. 8.29-32 [Thomson 20-2].

[1257] In particular, Athanasius' argument about the knowledge of Christ spreading in the world (e.g. *De Inc*. 45.9 Thomson 248) and idols being abolished everywhere (e.g. *De Inc*. 20.8-9 [Thomson 182]).

and sophisms do not convert people from Christianity to Hellenism, but we, by teaching faith in Christ, strip you of superstition, since all recognize that Christ is God, and Son of God' (*VA* 78.1-16 [SC 400:332-4; Gregg 87-8]).[1258]

When the oral disputation comes to an end, Antony proves his arguments about Christ's divinity by performing a miracle over the demoniacs.[1259] He challenges the pagan philosophers to effect the needed healing by their syllogisms, or idol summoning, but after seeing their hesitation, he calls on the name of Christ, makes a sign of the cross over the suffering men, and they immediately become cured. The story ends with the statement in which Antony makes sure his opponents know whose power was active in the miracle. He says: 'It is not we who do it, but Christ, who does these things through those who believe in him. You believe too, then, and you will see that what we have is not skill with words, but faith through love that works for Christ' (*VA* 80.21-6 [SC 400:338-10; Gregg 89]).[1260] This is one of the many other examples (yet to be considered) where Antony is shown as someone whose very life becomes the proof for Christ's divinity. The implicit argument is simple: only God can do the miracles of healing and since it is Christ 'who does these things through those who believe in him', he is the true God, and Antony is his faithful servant. Thus, the significance of Christ's divinity is hard to overestimate; it is the very foundation on which the life and deeds of Antony are based.

6.3.1.2 Apology of Christ's Divinity against the Arians

Athanasius' arguments about the divinity of Christ against the pagans are paralleled with a set of other arguments that concern the anti-Arian polemic in the *Vita Antonii*. Here Antony appears both as a vigorous opponent of Arian views and a spokesman for Athanasian theology. He denounces Arianism in apocalyptic terms

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[1258] ἡμεῖς τοίνυν οἱ χριστιανοὶ οὐκ ἐν σοφίᾳ λόγων ἑλληνικῶν ἔχομεν τὸ μυστήριον, ἀλλ᾽ ἐν δυνάμει πίστεως ἐπιχορηγουμένης ἡμῖν διὰ ἰησοῦ χριστοῦ παρὰ τοῦ θεοῦ. καὶ ὅτι ἀληθής ἐστιν ὁ λόγος, ἰδοὺ νῦν, ἡμεῖς μὴ μαθόντες γράμματα, πιστεύομεν εἰς τὸν θεόν, ἐπιγινώσκοντες διὰ τῶν ποιημάτων αὐτου τὴν εἰς πάντα πρόνοιαν. καὶ ὅτι ἐνεργής ἐστιν ἡ πίστις ἡμῶν, ἰδοὺ νῦν ἡμεῖς ἐπερειδόμεθα τῇ πίστει τῇ εἰς τὸν χριστόν, ὑμεῖς δὲ σοφιστικαῖς λογομαχίαις. καὶ τὰ μὲν παρ᾽ ὑμῖν τῶν εἰδώλων φαντάσματα καταργεῖται, ἡ δὲ παρ᾽ ἡμῖν πίστις ἐπεκτείνεται πανταχοῦ. καὶ ὑμεῖς μὲν συλλογιζόμενοι καὶ σοφιζόμενοι οὐ μεταπείθετε ἀπὸ χριστιανῶν εἰς ἑλληνισμόν, ἡμεῖς δὲ τὴν εἰς χριστὸν πίστιν διδάσκοντες, ψιλοῦμεν ὑμῶν τὴν δεισιδαιμονίαν, ἐπιγινωσκόντων πάντων τὸν χριστὸν εἶναι θεὸν καὶ τοῦ θεοῦ υἱόν.
[1259] *VA* 80.9-23 [SC 400:338; Gregg 89].
[1260] οὐκ ἐσμὲν ἡμεῖς οἱ ποιοῦντες, ἀλλ᾽ ὁ χριστός ἐστιν, ὁ διὰ τῶν εἰς αὐτὸν πιστευόντων ταῦτα ποιῶν. πιστεύσατε οὖν καὶ ὑμεῖς. γίνεσθε ὡς ἡμεῖς. καὶ ὄψεσθε, ὅτι οὐ τέχνη λόγων τὰ παρ᾽ ἡμῖν ἐστιν, ἀλλὰ πίστις δι᾽ ἀγάπης τῆς εἰς τὸν χριστὸν ἐνεργουμένη.

as 'the last heresy and the forerunner of the Antichrist' (*VA* 69.6-7 [SC 400:316; Gregg 82]),[1261] which resembles Athanasius' own rhetoric in *Orationes Contra Arianos* and elsewhere. We also see him rejecting Arius' arguments about Christ and repeating Athanasius' own Nicene views that 'the Son of God is not a creature, and that he did not come into existence from nonbeing, but rather that he is eternal Word and Wisdom from the essence of the Father' (*VA* 69.7-9 [SC 400:316; Gregg 82]).[1262] He insists that it is 'sacrilegious to say "there was when he was not" for the Word coexisted with the Father always' (*VA* 69.10-1 [SC 400:316; Gregg 82]).[1263] All of these examples from the *Vita Antonii* give us a terse summary of Athanasian christology even though it is hard to answer affirmatively whether the historical Antony shared the anti-Arian theology of Athanasius.[1264] One thing that makes this supposition plausible is the evidence of independent accounts [1265] of Antony supporting Athanasius through his letters to Constantine. However, what is even more intriguing is Antony's explicit attack on the Arians in one of his seven extant letters to the monks.[1266] There we find a statement that surprisingly differs from the type of arguments that we find in Athanasius:

> As for Arius, who stood up in Alexandria, he spoke strange words about the Only-begotten [Son]: to him who has no beginning, he gave a beginning; to him who is ineffable among men he gave an end, and to the immovable he gave movement. That man has begun a great task, an unhealable wound. If he had known himself, his tongue would not have spoken about what he did not know. It is, however, manifest, that he did not know himself (Antony, *Ep.* 4.17 [Rubenson, 211]).

If this text was written by Antony, then we have an indication that its author clearly opposed Arians and was aware of the major theological issues. He knew that Arius denied such qualities of Christ's divinity as 'no beginning', 'ineffable', and 'immovable'. He also used his own argumentation (a more mystical, philosophical

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[1261] αἵρεσιν ἐσχάτην λέγων εἶναι ταύτην καὶ πρόδρομον τοῦ ἀντιχρίστου. Cf. *CA* 1.1 [Metzler 110]; *De Synod.* 5 [Opitz 234]; *Ad Ep. Aeg. Lib.* 9 [Metzler 49].

[1262] μὴ εἶναι κτίσμα τὸν υἱὸν τοῦ θεοῦ μηδὲ ἐξ οὐκ ὄντων γεγενῆσθαι, ἀλλ' ὅτι ἀΐδιός ἐστι τῆς τοῦ πατρὸς οὐσίας λόγος καὶ σοφία.

[1263] ἀσεβές ἐστι λέγειν· ἦν ὅτε οὐκ ἦν. ἦν γὰρ ἀεὶ ὁ λόγος συναπάρχων τῷ πατρί.

[1264] For the discussion of this issue, see Gregg, *Early Arianism*, 134; Harmless, *Desert Christians*, 96-7, Roldanus, 'Die *Vita Antonii* als Spiegel der Theologie des Athanasius'.

[1265] Sozomen, *HE* 2.31 [FC 73/1:320-2]; Rufinus, *HE* 10.8. It is somewhat confusing, however, when exactly these letters of support were sent. See Bartelink, *Vie d'Antoine*, 340-1, n. 2.

[1266] The case for Antony's authorship of these letters is excellently argued by Rubenson, *The Letters of St. Antony*. On the relation of the letters to the *Vita Antonii*, see ibid. 132-44.

one) to discard Arius' beliefs and according to Rubenson, who convincingly argued for the authenticity of Antony's letters, there is 'no trace of a direct literary influence from Athanasius on the letter'.[1267] In Rubenson's view of this passage, 'most of the Arian ideas reproduced here were mentioned already by Alexander of Alexandria in his encyclical. There is a notable difference between the language of Antony's letter and the words his biographer puts in his mouth in the *Vita Antonii*, arguments closely related to the later stages of the polemic'.[1268] Apart from this, it is problematic to determine the nature of Athanasius' familiarity with Antony.[1269] Although we do have evidence[1270] of Athanasius' constant interaction with the monks, 'nothing in the *Vita Antonii* itself indicates that encounters between the two men were regular or substantial'.[1271] For Gregg and Groh, 'the diversity of the materials which the reader meets in this story of Antony and the distance which seems to stand between the narrator and his hero lend credence to the evidence available from the *Life of Pachomius* which, in reference to the *Vita Antonii*, makes no mention of Athanasius's personal contact with the monk but reports his use of "informed monastic sources"'.[1272] Thus, although it is disputable to what extent the Athanasian Antony is historically genuine and how much of Athanasius' theology the monk actually shared,[1273] for our purposes it will be important to concentrate on the way the *Vita Antonii* captures the truly Athanasian vigor to combat the Arian heresy and defend the divinity of Christ. In this context, we will look at some examples where the subject of Christ's divinity appears to be the most crucial factor in the anti-Arian agenda of the Athanasian Antony.

The most revealing presentation of Antony as a champion of orthodoxy occurs toward the end of the *Vita Antonii*. In ch. 67 [SC 400:310-14], Athanasius describes Antony's character as a churchman by stressing his diligence in observing the rule of the church and loyalty to the ecclesiastical hierarchy.[1274] Politically speaking, this remark makes it obvious that Athanasius wants all monks to be

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[1267] Rubenson, *The Letters of St. Antony*, 44-5.
[1268] Ibid. 45.
[1269] See e.g. the recent study Barnard, 'Did Athanasius know Antony?'
[1270] Perhaps the most important piece of evidence of Athanasius' interaction with the monks is his letters to the monks where he discusses the questions of ascetic life and doctrine. For more details, see Gregg, *Early Arianism*, 135-6.
[1271] Gregg, *Early Arianism*, 137. For the discussion of evidence concerning Athanasius' contacts with the monks and his relationship with Antony, see ibid. 136-7.
[1272] Ibid. 137.
[1273] For the discussion of historicity of Athanasius' Antony, see Harmless, *Desert Fathers*, 93-5.
[1274] *VA* 67.1-8 [SC 400:310].

obedient to the clergy the way Antony, the ideal monk, is. Apparently, in that context Athanasius sought to 'harness the energy of the monastic movement to work for the larger church'[1275] and, as Gregg and Groh believe, counter 'attempts by the Arians to enlist the monks in support of their cause'.[1276] When we come to Antony's orthodox stance in the *Vita Antonii*, we are informed that he refused to have relations with three major groups of heretics: Meletians, Manichees and Arians. While the first two groups are mentioned in the book without any further discussion, Arians are treated with special attention. They are called 'Ario-maniacs' (which is what Athanasius is fond of calling his opponents)[1277] and their teaching is said to be 'worse than serpent's poison',[1278] a comparison also found in other writings of Athanasius.[1279] On one occasion Antony is said to demonstrate his stern position against the Arians by chasing them off his Mountain when they came to speak with him. On another occasion Arians attempted to obtain Antony as their ally by claiming that 'he held the same view as they'.[1280] In response, Antony went to Alexandria and renounced Arianism as heresy. The disputation he had there displays a typically Athanasian style and vocabulary:[1281]

He taught the people that the Son of God is not a creature, and that he did not come into existence from nonbeing, but rather that he is eternal Word and Wisdom from the essence of the Father. 'So', he asserted, 'it is sacrilegious to say "there was when he was not" for the Word coexisted with the Father always. Therefore you are to have no fellowship with the most ungodly Arians, for there is no *fellowship of light with darkness* [2-Cor. 6:14]. You are God-fearing Christians, but they, in saying that the Son and Word of God the Father is a creature, differ in no way from the pagans, who *serve the creature rather than the Creator* [Rom. 1:25]. Be assured that the whole creation itself is angered at them, because they number among the creatures the Creator and Lord of all, in whom all things were made' ([*VA* 69.7-20 [SC 400:310-2; Gregg 82]).[1282]

[1275] Harmless, *Desert Fathers*, 94. For the elements of Athanasius' political motivation in the *Vita Antonii*, see Masters, 'Claiming the Wilderness', 258-61.

[1276] Gregg, *Early Arianism*, 137. Cf. Harmless, *Desert Chrsitians*, 97.

[1277] *VA* 68.11 [SC 400:314] (ἀρειομανιταί). Cf. *CA* 1.4 [Metzler 112]; 2.70 [Metzler 248].

[1278] Ibid. 68.12-3 [SC 400:314]: ὄφεων χείρονας εἶναι τοὺς λόγους αὐτῶν.

[1279] Cf. *CA* 1.1 [Metzler 110], 1.26 [Metzler 136], 1.30 [Metzler 139]; 2.19 [Metzler 196], 2.43 [Metzler 220]; 3.1; *Ep. Aeg. Lib.* 9 [Metzler 49]; *HA* 66 [Opitz 219].

[1280] *VA* 69.1-2 [SC 400:314; Gregg 82]: ὡς ἐκείνου τὰ αὐτῶν φρονοῦντος.

[1281] For similar vocabulary in other works of Athanasius, see e.g. *CA* 1.9 [Metzler 117-8]; *Ep. Aeg. Lib.* 13 [Metzler 53-4].

[1282] ἐδίδασκέ τε τὸν λαὸν μὴ εἶναι κτίσμα τὸν υἱὸν τοῦ θεοῦ μηδὲ ἐξ οὐκ ὄντων γεγενῆσθαι, ἀλλ' ὅτι ἀΐδιός ἐστι τῆς τοῦ πατρὸς οὐσίας λόγος καὶ σοφία. διὸ καὶ ἀσεβές ἐστι λέγειν· ἦν ὅτε οὐκ ἦν. ἦν γὰρ ἀεὶ ὁ λόγος συναπάρχων τῷ πατρί. ὅθεν μηδεμίαν ἔχετε κοινωνίαν πρὸς τοὺς ἀσεβεστάτους ἀρειανούς· οὐδεμία γὰρ κοινωνία φωτὶ πρὸς σκότος. ὑμεῖς μὲν γὰρ εὐσεβοῦντες χριστιανοί ἐστε· ἐκεῖνοι δέ, κτίσμα λέγοντες τὸν ἐκ τοῦ πατρὸς υἱόν, τὸν θεοῦ λόγον, οὐδὲν διαφέρουσιν ἐθνικῶν, *λατρεύοντες τῇ κτίσει παρὰ τὸν κτίσαντα θεόν*. πιστεύετε δέ, ὅτι καὶ αὐτὴ ἡ

Antony's description of Christ in this passage follows by a confirmation of his divinity through the acts of exorcism and healing performed soon after that with the intended emphasis that it was 'the Lord' who did it 'through him' (δὶ αὐτοῦ).[1283] Another sign of Christ's divine performance shown there was the fact that the number of people who became Christians in those few days of Antony's visit was more than the number of converted men in one year.[1284] This should have proven to Arians where God's sympathy stood. Obviously, the flow of the story here is constructed in such a way as to make it absolutely clear that Christ's miraculous deeds speak against the Arians (the argument also used against the Pagans) and show that he is God. Here, Athanasius' own primary interests are made Antony's. The latter is made into an exemplary figure that fights on his biographer's fronts. Dörries calls this the product of a law of transmutation, and writes that 'die Gegenargumente der *Vita Antonii* gegen die Arianer sind die in der antiarianischen Polemik des Athanasius so geläufigen, dass ein Einzelnachweis nicht erforderlich ist'.[1285] Athanasius' rigour to battle the Arian heresy that contends against Christ (τὴν χριστομάχον αἵρεσιν)[1286] is mirrored here not only in Antony's words but also in his actions which, in fact, are the Lord's.

On his coming back to the Inner Mountain (Qulzum) Antony continues his fight against the Arian heresy with the help of two visions. In one[1287] of them he sees two mules attacking the Lord's table within the church and hears the voice predicting the profanation of the altar. Two years later the vision was fulfiled in the 'assault of the Arians' who seized the church, plundered its sacred vessels, and defiled the table. The interpretation of the vision follows with a promise that God will restore the persecuted for their orthodoxy and let them preach openly and freely. Typical of Athanasius' language, Antony admonishes: 'Only do not defile yourselves with the Arians, for that teaching is not from the apostles, but from the demons, and from their father, the Devil; indeed, it is infertile, irrational, and incorrect in understanding, like the senselessness of mules' (*VA* 82.46-51 [SC

κτίσις πᾶσα ἀγανακτεῖ κατ' αὐτῶν, ὅτι τὸν κτίστην καὶ κύριον τοῦ παντός, ἐν ᾧ τὰ πάντα γέγονεν, τοῦτον τοῖς γενητοῖς συναριθμοῦσιν.

[1283] *VA* 70.7-8 [SC 400:318].

[1284] Ibid. 70.11-3 [SC 400:318].

[1285] Dörries, 'Die *Vita Antonii*', 387.

[1286] *VA* 71.2-3 [SC 400:318].

[1287] Ibid. 82.12-51 [SC 400:344-50]. In NPNF² 4:218, n. 16, Newman relates this vision to the event of 356 recoreded in *Ap. de Fuga* 6-7 [Opitz 71-2] and *HA* 55-56 [Opitz 214-5].

400:348-50; Gregg 91]).[1288] Antony's second vision[1289] concerns the military commander Balacius who promoted the Arian party and persecuted orthodox Christians by beating virgins and flogging monks. On receiving a letter from Antony with a warning that he is soon to be visited by the wrath of God, Balacius ignores the monk and even threatens to arrest him. Yet, the prophesy bears its fruits and on the way to capture Antony, the commander is bitten by his horse—'the gentlest of all he trained'—which proves to be fatal three days later.[1290] Concluding this story, Athansius adds the phrase 'all were amazed that what Antony foretold was fulfiled so quickly',[1291] which makes his message clear: God supports Nicenes and withdraws from Arians.

Several other instances where the anti-Arian polemic is mentioned explicitly in the *Vita Antonii* come from the two farewell discourses of Antony. Both speeches reiterate the main lessons to be learnt from the career of Antony as the desert hero. In his first speech[1292] Antony addresses the monks in the Outer Mountain by encouraging them to endure in the ascetic discipline and 'live as though dying daily' (ὡς καθ' ἡμέραν ἀποθνήσκοντας ζῆν).[1293] He tells them to not approach the Meletian schismatics because of their evil and profane reputation, and shun 'any fellowship with the Arians' (μηδὲ κοινωνίαν ἔχειν τινὰ πρὸς τοὺς ἀρειανούς) because of 'their impiety evident to everyone' (ἡ τούτων ἀσέβεια πᾶσιν ἔκδηλός ἐστιν).[1294] The latter's present favour with judges and their fantacizing posture will soon come to an end. The second speech[1295] gives identical advice to the two monks who attended the aged Antony in the Inner Mountain. They are encouraged to pursue their lengthy discipline as if they were making a new beginning and avoid the schismatics and heretics. His parting words again sound the alarm: 'And let there be no fellowship between you and the schismatics, and

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[1288] μόνον μὴ μιάνητε ἑαυτοὺς μετὰ τῶν ἀρειανῶν. οὐκ ἔστι γὰρ τῶν ἀποστόλων αὕτη ἡ διδασκαλία, ἀλλὰ τῶν δαιμόνων καὶ τοῦ πατρὸς αὐτῶν τοῦ διαβόλου, καὶ μᾶλλον ἄλογος καὶ ἄγονος καὶ διανοίας ἐστὶν οὐκ ὀρθῆς, ὡς ἡ τῶν ἡμιόνων ἀλογία. For the idea of Arians being 'irrational', see e.g. *CA* 2.32 [Metzler 209]; *De Dec.* 1.1 [Opitz 1], and for Satan as their father, see e.g. *CA* 1.1 [Metzler 110]; *De Dec* 29 [Opitz 25]; *Ap. de Fuga* 10 [Opitz 75].

[1289] *VA* 86.1-27. For a slightly different version of this story, see *HA* 14 [Opitz 189-90]. Gregg and Groh believe that the difference may be due to the new details that Athanasius received on writing about this incident in his *Vita Antonii*; *Early Arianism*, 156, n. 47.

[1290] *VA* 86.18-9 [SC 400:356].

[1291] Ibid. 86.26-7 [SC 400:358; Gregg 94].

[1292] Ibid. 89.1-28 [SC 400:362-4].

[1293] Ibid. 89.14-5 [SC 400:364; Gregg 95]. On the subject of death in the *Vita Antonii*, see Zecher, *The Symbolics of Death*, 72-86; Cf. Ferderer, 'Uncertain Transformation', 4.

[1294] *VA* 89.19-20 [SC 400:364; Gregg 95].

[1295] Ibid. 91.1-44 [SC 400:366-70].

certainly none with the heretical Arians. For you know how I too have shunned them because of their Christ-battling and heterodox teaching' (*VA* 91.18-22 [SC 400:368; Gregg 97]).[1296] After this farewell speech Antony distributes his clothing (one piece goes to Athanasius and another to Serapion, apparently, as a politically motivated evidence of succession)[1297] and dies having 'kept his fervent commitment to the discipline from his youth to such an advanced age' (*VA* 93.6 [SC 400:372; Gregg 98]).[1298]

6.3.1.3 Christ's Divinity in Action: God Does What Man Cannot Do

The reviewed claims for Christ's divinity in the *Vita Antonii* are not confined to the disputations with the pagans and open denunciations of the Arians. In fact, Antony's most eloquent proof of Christ's divinity comes not in the verbal arguments but in the power of divine deeds. Moreover, the way Athanasius frames miraculous stories in the *Vita Antonii* reflects the main thrust of his theology—especially as we see it in his double treatise and his dogmatic work *Orationes Contra Arianos*—where God is emphatically described as doing what man cannot do. When examining the double treatise in the first chapter of this work, I highlighted four major ways, or perspectives, of salvation according to Athanasius. The first three ways represent the lesser means of re-directing man to God—through the soul, creation, and Scriptures—while the fourth one is the superior and most personal way—the incarnation of Christ, God himself. Athanasius seems to keep the first three ways and the fourth one deliberately in tension in order to make an apologetic claim for why God appeared as man. He points to the corruption of human nature, and argues that man could not restore himself on his own. In fact, the first three ways are the demonstration of the fact that humanity constantly failed to know God through the soul, creation, and Scriptures, while the fourth way is the climax of God's dealing with mankind by which he does what man could not accomplish on his own. Athanasius argues that humanity's restoration into the

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[1296] καὶ μηδεμία ἔστω ὑμῖν κοινωνία πρὸς τοὺς σχισματικοὺς μηδ' ὅλως πρὸς τοὺς αἱρετικοὺς ἀρειανούς. οἴδατε γὰρ πῶς κἀγὼ τούτους ἐξετρεπόμην διὰ τὴν χριστομάχον αὐτῶν καὶ ἑτερόδοξον προαίρεσιν.

[1297] Scholars have correctly noted that Antony's distribution of clothes in combination with a number of other politically pregnant texts such as *VA* 67.1-8 and 68.1-14, makes it possible to suggest that 'Athanasius puts words into Anthony's mouth in order to have him confirm his own theological position', Geest, 'Athanasius as Mystagogue', 205. Cf. Frazier, 'L' Antoine d'Athanase', 227-56.

[1298] ἐκ νεωτέρου μέχρι τῆς τοσαύτης ἡλικίας ἴσην τηρήσας τὴν προθυμίαν.

perfect condition of communion with God which it lost after the fall (and to which it was not able to aspire on its own) is possible only by virtue of who Christ is— God and Saviour of the world. Seen in this way, Christ's divine ability to redeem humanity in the most personal way becomes the crucial point for how God brings man back into relationship with himself.

Similarly, when analyzing Athanasius' anti-Arian work *Orationes Contra Arianos*, I pointed out that his emphasis on the divinity of Christ is in direct opposition to Arius' belief that Christ is a lesser being than God the Father. In this way, specific views of Christ in Athanasius and Arius affected their respective descriptions of what Christ could and could not do. The impersonal understanding of God as the transcendent monad and of Christ as his semi-divine mediator in Arius' thought led Athanasius to argue that such Christ was incapable of exerting salvation. In contrast, the description of God as a community of equally divine persons and of Christ as the incarnate God allowed Alexander and Athanasius to affirm that the second person of the Trinity accomplished what man himself could never do. In *CA* 2.70 [Metzler 247; NPNF 4:386], Athanasius states: 'For man had not been deified… unless the Son were very God; nor had man been brought into the Father's presence, unless He had been His natural and true Word who had put on the body'.[1299] And then slightly later, he adds: 'yea, the Word was by nature very God, though Ario-maniacs rave; and in that flesh has come to pass the beginnings of our new creation'.[1300] Here Christ's divinity is again the crucial point for making available what man lost and could not regain with his own resources. It is this emphasis on the divine nature of Christ and his ability to do what is beyond Antony's power that seems to control the heroic story of Antony and form the cornerstone of ascetic spirituality.[1301]

[1299] οὐκ ἂν δὲ πάλιν ἐθεοποιήθη κτίσματι συναφθεὶς ὁ ἄνθρωπος, εἰ μὴ θεὸς ἦν ἀληθινὸς ὁ υἱός· καὶ οὐκ ἂν παρέστη τῷ πατρὶ ὁ ἄνθρωπος, εἰ μὴ φύσει καὶ ἀληθινὸς ἦν αὐτοῦ λόγος ὁ ἐνδυσάμενος τὸ σῶμα;

[1300] [Metzler 247; NPNF 387, modified]: ἦν γὰρ καὶ φύσει καὶ ἀληθινὸς θεὸς ὁ λόγος, κἂν μαίνωνται οἱ ἀρειομανῖται· καὶ ἐν ἐκείνῃ γέγονεν ἡμῶν ἡ ἀρχὴ τῆς καινῆς κτίσεως.

[1301] The link between Athanasius' theology (and esp. his christology) and spirituality has been recognized even by those scholars who made an attempt to study his spirituality as a separate topic. See e.g. Ng, *The Spirituality of Athanasius*, 43; Kannengiesser, *Early Christian Spirituality*, 12-3; Kolbet, 'Athanasius', 90-7; Weinandy, 'Athanasius' Letter to Marcellinus', 275-279. Two particular writings of Athanasius that scholars find helpful for reconstructing his spirituality are *Epistula ad Marcellinum* and *Epistulae Festales*. With regard to the former, see esp. *Ep. Mar.* 10-3 [PG 19b-25b] and 30-2 [PG 41c-43d]. With regard to the latter, see sect. 5.3.2.4, where I discuss the concept of 'delight' as a content of relationships between God and man.

Before we turn to the specific texts that illustrate this point it is important for our purpose to briefly mention another issue. Since the publication of Dörries' 'Die *Vita Antonii* als Geschichtsquelle', scholars have actively discussed the differences between two images of Antony: one in the *Vita Antonii* and another in the *Apophthegmata Patrum*. It has been noticed that the former image is endowed with distinctly Athanasian charisma and represents the ideal Antony. The latter image— reconstructed from the thirty-eight sayings attributed to Antony in the *Apophthegmata Patrum*—projects 'a more human and vulnerable' Antony 'who passes on a pithy wisdom'.[1302] Thus, in the often-quoted passage of Antonian *Apophthegmata* we read:

> When the holy abba Antony lived in the desert he was afflicted with boredom, and attacked by many sinful thoughts. He said to God: 'Lord, I want to be saved but these thoughts don't leave me any peace. What shall I do? How can I be saved?' A little later, when he got up to go out, Antony saw a man like himself sitting and working, getting up now and then from his work to pray. It was an angel of the Lord sent to correct and reassure him. He heard the angel saying to him, 'Do this and you will be saved'. At these words, Antony was filled with joy and courage. He did this, and he was saved (*AP* 1 [SC 387:336; Ward, 1-2])[1303]

This text is only one of the many examples that add to the general impression shared by scholars that most of the sayings of *Apophthegmata Patrum* are not concerned with the monastic ideal to be pursued and contemplated by others. Rather they 'emerge directly from the rough-and-tumble life of early monasticism…. They give practical, earthly and specific advice on how to live'.[1304] They 'provide a

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[1302] Harmless, *Desert Christians*, 109. For an excellent discussion of the Antony image in the *Apophthegmata*, see Rubenson, *The Letters*, 152-62. Cf. Dörries, 'Die *Vita Antonii*', 198-218. For the relation of the *Vita Antonii* to *Apophthegmata*, see Burton-Christie, *The Word in the Desert*, 90-2; On the critical work of the text and different collections of *Apophthegmata*, see Bousset, *Apophthegmata*; Guy, *Recherches sur la tradition grecque des Apophthegmata*.

[1303] ὁ ἅγιος ἀββᾶ ἀντώνιος, καθεζόμενός ποτε ἐν τῇ ἐρήμῳ, ἐν ἀκηδίᾳ γέγονε καὶ πολλῇ σκοτώσει λογισμῶν. καὶ ἔλεγε πρὸς τὸν θεόν· κύριε, θέλω σωθῆναι καὶ οὐκ ἐῶσί με οἱ λογισμοί· τί ποιήσω ἐν τῇ θλίψει μου; πῶς σωθῶ; καὶ μικρὸν διαναστὰς ἐπὶ τὰ ἔξω θεωρεῖ τινα ὁ ἀντώνιος ὡς ἑαυτὸν καθεζόμενον καὶ ἐργαζόμενον, εἶτα ἀνιστάμενον ἀπὸ τοῦ ἔργου καὶ προσευχόμενον καὶ πάλιν καθεζόμενον καὶ τὴν σειρὰν ἐργαζόμενον, εἶτα πάλιν εἰς προσευχὴν ἀνιστάμενον· ἦν δὲ ἄγγελος κυρίου ἀποσταλεὶς πρὸς διόρθωσιν καὶ ἀσφάλειαν ἀντωνίου. καὶ ἤκουσε τοῦ ἀγγέλου λέγοντος· οὕτως ποίει καὶ σώζῃ. ὁ δὲ τοῦτο ἀκούσας πολλὴν χαρὰν ἔσχε καὶ θάρσος, καὶ οὕτως ποιῶν ἐσώζετο. The Greek *Apophthegmata* used here focuses on Egyptian monks, while its compilers are claimed to live in Israel rather than Egypt according to the current consensus of scholars. Cf. Citty 'Books of the Old Men', 16–17; ibid., *The Desert a City*, 67–68; Regnault, 'Les Apophtegmes', 73–83.

[1304] Burton-Christie, *The Word in the Desert*, 94.

glimpse of a more "primitive" Antony'.[1305] In contrast, the *Vita Antonii* depicts the perfect monk of bravest character who goes out to tame the wilderness and fight the demons, pagans and heretics. He is never agonized by doubt or indecision; instead he is driven and resolute. By taking up his residence in the desert fort he encroaches on the Devil's home base, causing him to burst in complaining: 'Get away from what is ours! What do you have to do with the desert?' (*VA* 13.5-6 [SC 400:170; Gregg 41).[1306] At the end of Antony's career the desert transforms into a city full of monks which becomes a cosmological victory over the Devil—offencive Antony makes him lose ground and turns him into a homeless outcast. In *VA* 41.13-5 [SC 400:246; Gregg 62], we read: 'I no longer have a place—no weapon, no city. There are Christians everywhere, and even the desert has filled with monks'.[1307] Such an image of Antony may easily create a false impression that his superhuman ability to transcend the limits of human nature and conquer the uttermost geographical extremes[1308] overshadows God's grace and involvement.

Surprisingly, it is in these very situations—where Antony goes beyond the limits of cultivated *polis* to fight the Devil and perform miraculous deeds—that we see Athanasius' special care to emphasize who is ultimately in control and capable of doing what Antony cannot do. Thus, after the words just quoted above, we read the monks' response to the Devil: 'Marveling then at the grace of the Lord, I said to him: "… Christ in his coming reduced you to weakness, and after throwing you down he left you defenceless"' (*VA* 41.16-7, 19-20 [SC 400:246-8; Gregg 62]).[1309] Here it is not Antony but Christ himself who accomplishes the defeat. In fact, the motif of Antony's dependence on the grace of God and his benevolence permeates the *Vita Antonii* so comprehensively that some scholars see it as the main difference between Athanasius' *Vita* and pagan *Vitas*. Thus, for Paul van Geest the difference has to do with two radically dissimilar concepts of the hero: Christian and pagan. Contrasting the two, he contends: 'The pagan hero is deified because he is humanly perfect, full of ethical and political virtues. He is his own cause and goal in this process of deification. Anthony, Athansius' hero, in contrast, becomes the

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[1305] Gregg, *Early Arianism*, 131. Cf. Dörries, 'Die *Vita Antonii*', 376.

[1306] ἀπόστα τῶν ἡμετέρων. τί σοὶ καὶ τῇ ἐρήμῳ;

[1307] οὐκέτι τόπον ἔχω, οὐ βέλος, οὐ πόλιν. πανταχοῦ χριστιανοὶ γεγόνασιν· λοιπὸν καὶ ἡ ἔρημος πεπλήρωται μοναχῶν. Cf. *VA* 14.30-3 [SC 400:174].

[1308] See a very insightful study on the notion of space in the *Vita Antonii* in Endsjø, *Primordial Landscapes*, esp. 17-25.

[1309] τότε θαυμάσας ἐγὼ τοῦ κυρίου τὴν χάριν, εἶπον πρὸς αὐτόν... ὁ γὰρ χριστὸς ἐλθὼν ἀσθενῆ σε πεποίηκε καὶ καταβαλὼν ἐγύμνωσεν.

instrument of the κύριος; he becomes a man of God, who—unlike the ancient hero—is completely dependent on God's grace'.[1310] Similarly, Quasten writes that 'there cannot be any doubt that the classical model of the hero's *Vita…* served as an inspiration for Athanasius. But it remains his great achievement that he recasted these inherited expressions of popular ideals in the Christian mold and disclosed the same heroism in the imitator of Christ aided by the power of grace. Thus, he created a new type of biography that was to serve as a model for all subsequent Greek and Latin hagiography'.[1311] To illustrate this point, I would like to examine a number of striking instances in the *Vita Antonii* where Athanasius appears to be sensitive to what man can and cannot do, interpreting certain actions of the desert hero as the deeds of Christ, God himself.

Throughout the *Vita Antonii* Athanasius repeatedly affirms that Christ's coming overthrew the Devil and made him powerless. Thus, we read that although the Devil issues threats, he 'is fallen… and able to do nothing',[1312] a phrase Athanasius uses with staggering frequency.[1313] Similarly, in *VA* 33.4-5 [SC 400:224], demons are rendered impotent and their villainy is cut and reduced by the Lord. Moreover, not only does God hold demons powerless, but he also has given us the prerogative of fighting them through the means that define our new status and relation to him: faith, virtuous life, prayer, etc.[1314] In his speech to the monks on demons and discernment of spirits, Antony says:

> For a great weapon against them [demons] is a just life and trust in God. They are afraid of the ascetics… for their fasting, the vigils, the prayers, the meekness and gentleness… and most of all for their devotion to Christ. It is for this reason that they do all they do—in order not to have those monks trampling them underfoot. For they know the grace that has been given to the faithful for combat against them by the Saviour, in his saying, *Behold, I have given you authority*

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to tread upon serpents and scorpions, and over all the power of the enemy [Luke 10:19] (*VA* 30.4-5, 9-14 [SC 400:218-20; Gregg 54]).[1315]

By sharing in Christ's victory over the Devil, Christians receive the grace of overcoming him just as Christ did. Eventually, this fight against the Devil is not about the supernatural monk, and not even about the spiritual weapons in his disposition, but about God who brings the defeat in the first place. Athanasius expresses this idea with what I would call statements of contrast. I have identified ten explicit instances (eight of which I will discuss here and the other two—*VA* 5.39-43 [400:144-6] and 7.1-6 [SC 400:150]—in sect. 6.3.2.1), where Christ's ability to make something happen is immeasurably stronger than that of Antony. Two of such instances appear in the context of what is known as Antony's speech to the monks on demons and discernment of spirits. In the first text Antony shares his experience of successfully resisting the demons in the wilderness. He declares: 'But I was not the one who stopped them and nullified their actions—it was the Lord, who says, *I saw Satan fall like lightning from heaven* [Luke 10:18] (*VA* 40.19-21 [SC 400:244])'.[1316] Having made this claim, Antony goes on to encourage his disciples by assuring that there is no need to 'fear the Devil and the apparitions of his demons' any more.[1317] In fact, Christ's power is so effective that even his name[1318] and the sign of the cross[1319] are used by Antony to drive away the demons. In the second text Antony admits that not everyone is able to banish demons and calls his disciples to learn well the discipline of exorcism. Even then, however, they are not to boast about expelling demons or marveling at those who do cast them out 'for the performance of signs does not belong to us—this is the Saviour's work' (*VA* 38.11-2 [SC 400:238; Gregg 60]).[1320]

Another good example of contrast occurs in the set of four passages where Antony performs healing by the divine power of Christ. In *VA* 56 [SC 400:286-8],

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[1315] μέγα γὰρ ὅπλον ἐστὶ κατ' αὐτῶν βίος ὀρθὸς καὶ ἡ πρὸς θεὸν πίστις. φοβοῦνται γοῦν τῶν ἀσκητῶν τὴν νηστείαν, τὴν ἀγρυπνίαν, τὰς εὐχάς, τὸ πρᾶον, τὸ ἥσυχον... καὶ προηγουμένως τὴν εἰς τὸν χριστὸν εὐσέβειαν. διὰ τοῦτο γὰρ καὶ πάντα ποιοῦσιν, ἵνα μὴ ἔχωσι τοὺς πατοῦντας αὐτούς. ἴσασι γὰρ τὴν κατ' αὐτῶν δοθεῖσαν χάριν τοῖς πιστοῖς παρὰ τοῦ σωτῆρος, λέγοντος αὐτοῦ· ἰδοὺ δέδωκα ὑμῖν ἐξουσίαν πατεῖν ἐπάνω ὄφεων καὶ σκορπίων, καὶ ἐπὶ πᾶσαν τὴν δύναμιν τοῦ ἐχθροῦ.

[1316] οὐκ ἐγώ δέ ἤμην ὁ παύων ἐκείνους καὶ καταργῶν, ἀλλ' ὁ κύριος ἦν, ὁ λέγων· ἐθεώρουν τὸν σατανᾶν ὡς ἀστραπὴν πεσόντα.

[1317] μηδὲ φοβεῖσθαι τοῦ διαβόλοου καὶ τῶν δαιμόνων αὐτοῦ τὰς φαντασίας.

[1318] e.g. *VA* 78.17 [SC 400:334]; 38.14 [SC 400:238]; 84.2 [SC 400:352].

[1319] e.g. Ibid. 13.18 [SC 400:170]; 23.17 [SC 400:198]; 35.8 [SC 400:230].

[1320] τὸ δὲ ἐκβάλλειν δαίμονας, τοῦ δεδωκότος σωτηρός ἐστιν ἡ χάρις.

Antony is described as a man of prayer and sympathy for the suffering. In this context, he is said to remind them 'that healing belonged neither to him nor to men at all, but only to God who acts whenever he wishes and for whomever he wills', and again 'not to give thanks to Antony, but to God alone'.[1321] On one occasion, a young woman with defective eye-sight and paralysed body was brought to Antony by her parents. Having heard the testimonies of healing at Antony's place, they travelled a long distance to plead for his help. His response to them leaves no doubt that Antony attributed the power of healing to Christ alone and shunned any self-honour. He proclaims: 'Go away, and you will find that she has been healed…. For this good deed is not mine, that she should come to me, a pitiable man; rather, her healing is from the Saviour who works his mercy everywhere for those who call on him'.[1322] At that very moment God performed a miracle and the girl was healed. In two other situations with healing we find similar statements of contrast. In one of them Antony says: 'It is not we who do it, but Christ, who does these things through those who believe in him' (*VA* 80.21-3 [SC 400:338; Gregg 89]).[1323] In another text Athanasius makes the following deduction: 'Antony did, in fact, heal without issuing commands, but by praying and calling on the name of Christ, so it was clear to all that it was not he who did this, but the Lord bringing his benevolence to effect through Antony and curing those who were afflicted (*VA* 84.1-5 [SC 400:352; Gregg 92])'.[1324]

Finally, two more statements of contrast are found in the context of certain miraculous actions that God makes through Antony. In *VA* 59 [SC 400:292-4] he receives revelation in prayer about two brothers who ran out of water while making their way through the desert to visit Antony. By that time one of them already died, while the other was saved when Antony sent two monks with a jar of water to help him. Tackling the question of why God did not send his revelation while both brothers were still alive, Athanasius explains: 'surely the judgment of death was not

[1321] τοὺς δὲ πάσχοντας παρεκάλει μακροθυμεῖν καὶ εἰδέναι, ὅτι οὔτε αὐτοῦ οὔθ' ὅλως ἀνθρώπων ἐστὶν ἡ θεραπεία, ἀλλὰ μόνου τοῦ θεοῦ τοῦ ποιοῦντος, ὅτε θέλει, καὶ οἷς βούλεται'; 'μὴ ἀντωνίῳ εὐχαριστεῖν, ἀλλὰ μόνῳ τῷ κυρίῳ'.

[1322] ὑπάγετε, καὶ εὑρήσετε αὐτήν… τεθεραπευμένην. οὐ γὰρ ἐμόν ἐστι τοῦτο κατόρθωμα, ἵνα καὶ πρὸς ἐμέ τὸν οἰκτρὸν ἄνθρωπον ἔλθῃ· ἀλλὰ τοῦ σωτῆρός ἐστιν ἡ θεραπεία, τοῦ ποιοῦντος ἐν παντὶ τόπῳ τὸ ἔλεος αὐτοῦ τοῖς ἐπικαλουμένοις αὐτόν.

[1323] οὐκ ἐσμὲν ἡμεῖς οἱ ποιοῦντες, ἀλλ' ὁ χριστός ἐστιν, ὁ διὰ τῶν εἰς αὐτὸν πιστευόντων ταῦτα ποιῶν.

[1324] οὐ προστάττων γοῦν ἐθεράπευεν ὁ ἀντώνιος, ἀλλ' εὐχόμενος καὶ τὸν χριστὸν ὀνομάζων, ὡς πᾶσι φανερὸν γενέσθαι, ὅτι οὐκ ἦν αὐτὸς ὁ ποιῶν, ἀλλ' ὁ κύριος ἦν, ὁ δι' ἀντωνίου φιλανθρωπευόμενος καὶ θεραπεύων τοὺς πάσχοντας.

from Antony, but from God, who both passed judgment on the one, and sent the vision concerning the other' (*VA* 59.15-8 [SC 400:292; Gregg 75]).[1325] In *VA* 62 Antony is said to have many other visions about who would come to visit him, predicting their specific needs, days or even months in advance. This gift of prediction is then framed with Athanasius' usual corrective: 'And even though he said and saw such things, he asked that no one marvel at him on this account, but rather that they marvel at the Lord, for he has shown favour to us in the measure of our capactity for knowing him' (*VA* 62.7-11 [SC 400:300; Gregg 77]).[1326]

In all of the above statements Antony's actions are emphatically contrasted to the actions of God: Lord and Saviour (in the first two), God, Saviour, Christ and Lord (in the next four) and God and Lord (in the last two). Such observation lends strong support that Antony operated with the typically Athanasian concept of Christ as God who can do what is beyond human power. Not only did he defend Christ's divinity in the disputations with the pagans and Arians, but he also demonstrated it in action by expelling demons and performing miracles in his name and with his divine power. In doing so, he reiterated Athanasian theology in the form of the narrative and confirmed that ascetic discipline with its emphasis on perseverance and progress makes sense only if Christ is God and can do what man cannot. It is this concept of God that affects the way Athanasius describes salvation in the *Vita Antonii*, and I will discuss it below.

6.3.2 Antony and the Saving Act of God

The concept of salvation in the *Vita Antonii* is best understood against the christological background which I have considered thus far. Athanasian christology with its emphasis on the divinity of Christ forms the core not only of Antony's apologetic arguments, but also of the main soteriological themes in the *Vita Antonii*. In both cases, Christ's divinity is seen most strongly in the way he acts either on behalf of Antony, or humanity as a whole. Christ's initiative of salvation is directly connected with his ability to do what humanity cannot and is ultimately aimed at restoring the relationshiop with God which it lost after the fall. Although Athanasian biography is concerned primarily with the reality of Christ in Antony's

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[1325] οὐ γὰρ ἦν ἀντωνίου τὸ τοῦ θανάτου κρῖμα, ἀλλὰ τοῦ θεοῦ, τοῦ καὶ περὶ ἐκείνου κρίναντος καὶ περὶ τούτου δείξαντος καὶ ἀποκαλύψαντος.

[1326] τοιαῦτα δὲ βλέπων καὶ λέγων, ἠξίου μηδένα θαυμάζειν αὐτὸν ἐν τούτοις, ἀλλὰ μᾶλλον θαυμάζειν τὸν κύριον, ὅτι ἀνθρώποις ἡμῖν οὖσιν ἐχαρίσατο κατὰ δύναμιν γινώσκειν αὐτόν.

spiritual life, and rarely speaks of salvation as a separate theme, we can still trace a number of important soteriological aspects from the texts that mention the subject of redemption and God's victory over the Devil. In what follows, I will first examine these soteriological statements that speak of salvation either directly or indirectly, and then I will discuss those texts that reveal the idea of deification by describing Antony as the exemplar of personal relationship with God.

6.3.2.1 Redemption

In his apologetic disputation with the pagan philosophers Antony claims that 'Christ is no longer a man, but God… the things Christ has done reveal him to be God, who appeared for the salvation of mankind' (*VA* 75.16-8 [SC 400:328; Gregg 86]).[1327] Here Antony proclaims several things. He argues that Christ is God by reiterating the Athanasian argument[1328] that natures become known from acts, and he also claims that it is Christ (as God) who accomplishes salvation. He also makes it clear that the whole of mankind is in need of salvation, and it takes God to fulfil this need. We can identify at least four statements in the *Vita Antonii* that develop this soteriological insight. The first two statements relate redemption to the incarnation of Christ. The first and clearest statement is found in *VA* 74.6-20 [SC 400:324] which I mentioned earlier. It declares the incarnation of Christ by stating that 'he assumed a human body' (ἀνείληφε σῶμα ἀνθρώπινον) and 'shared in the human birth' (τῇ ἀνθρωπίνῃ γενέσει κοινωνήσας). It also affirms that Christ came 'for the salvation and benefit of mankind' (ἐπὶ σωτηρίᾳ καὶ εὐεργεσίᾳ τῶν ἀνθρώπων) which Antony casts in the ontological terms: humanity can 'become partakers of the divine and spiritual nature' (ποιήσῃ τοὺς ἀνθρώπους κοινωνῆσαι θείας καὶ νοερᾶς φύσεως). In this context, Antony argues that incarnation did not affect Christ's divine nature, and claims that it is through his coming that we can recognize God's special power and *philanthropia*. He says: 'Our faith declares the coming of Christ, which took place for the salvation of mankind, but you [pagans] are deceived in your belief. For our part, we know the power and benevolence of providence—that this advent of Christ was not impossible for God'.[1329] Here Christ's coming for the

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[1327] ἃ πεποίηκεν ὁ χριστός, θεὸν αὐτὸν ἀποδείκνυσιν, ἐπιδημήσαντα ἐπὶ σωτηρίᾳ τῶν ἀνθρώπων.

[1328] See *CG* 16 [Thomson 42-6].

[1329] ἡ μὲν γὰρ ἡμετέρα πίστις ἐπὶ σωτηρίᾳ τῶν ἀνθρώπων τὴν τοῦ χριστοῦ παρουσίαν λέγει, ὑμεῖς δὲ πλάνας ἀγεννήτου ψυχῆς ἐξηγεῖσθε. καὶ ἡμεῖς μὲν τὸ δυνατὸν καὶ φιλάνθρωπον τῆς προνοίας φρονοῦμεν, ὅτι καὶ τοῦτο οὐκ ἀδύνατον ἦν τῷ θεῷ.

salvation of mankind is the fulfilment of God's providential care, while the fact that incarnation 'was not impossible for God' points to the *divine* action in the salvific *oikonomia*.

In the second statement Antony is described as undergoing sexual temptations. We read that the Devil attempted to entice him with the softness of pleasure, but the Lord's coworking with Antony and 'the grace of God' helped the monk to overcome the temptation. The whole passage reads as follows: 'Working with Antony was the Lord, who bore flesh for us, and gave to the body the victory over the Devil, so that each of those who truly struggle can say, It is not I, but the grace of God which is in me' (*VA* 5.39-43 [SC 400:144-6; Gregg 34]).[1330] Although this is not a direct soteriological statement, the phrase 'the Lord, who bore flesh for us, and gave to the body the victory over the Devil' does sound as one of Athanasius' dominant soteriological themes.[1331] In *De Inc.* 22.11-5, 18-21 [Thomson 188; ibid. 189], we find a more expanded assertion where incarnation is explained in relation to the body and death: 'it was not his [Christ's] own death but that of men that the Saviour came to fulfil. There he did not lay aside the body by his own death—for he had none since he was life—but he accepted the death imposed by men in order to destroy it completely when it came to his own body…. The trophy of his victory over death was… [people's] assurance that he had erased corruption and hence that their bodies would be incorruptible'.[1332] In both of the above passages Christ's incarnation becomes the basis for the new reality: humanity is no longer under the power of corrupted body or the Devil who tempts it by 'the softness of pleasure'. To emphasize this idea Athanasius points out throughout the *Vita Antonii* that Antony is able to resist the Devil on the ground that he is 'the servant of Christ' himself, and therefore no longer belongs to the previous master.[1333] The passage from the *Vita Antonii* is also one of contrast—it is the

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[1330] συνήργει γὰρ ὁ κύριος αὐτῷ, ὁ σάρκα δι' ἡμᾶς φορέσας καὶ τῷ σώματι δοὺς τὴν κατὰ τοῦ διαβόλου *νίκην*, ὥστε τῶν οὕτως ἀγωνιζομένων ἕκαστον λέγειν· *οὐκ ἐγὼ δέ, ἀλλ' ἡ χάρις τοῦ θεοῦ ἡ σὺν ἐμοί.*

[1331] Cf. *De Inc.* 22 [Thomson 189-90]; 25 [Thomson 195-6]; 27 [Thomson198-200]; 50 [Thomson 258-60]; 52 [[Thomson 264].

[1332] οὐ τὸν ἑαυτοῦ θάνατον ἀλλὰ τὸν τῶν ἀνθρώπων ἦλθε τελειῶσαι ὁ σωτήρ· ὅθεν οὐκ ἰδίῳ θανάτῳ, οὐκ εἶχε γὰρ ζωὴ ὤν, ἀπετίθετο τὸ σῶμα· ἀλλὰ τὸν παρὰ τῶν ἀνθρώπων ἐδέχετο, ἵνα καὶ τοῦτον ἐν τῷ ἑαυτοῦ σώματι προσελθόντα τέλεον ἐξαφανίσῃ... τοῦτο γὰρ ἦν κατὰ τοῦ θανάτου τρόπαιον ταύτην... πιστώσασθαι τὴν παρ' αὐτοῦ γενομένην τῆς φθορᾶς ἀπάλειψιν, καὶ λοιπὸν τὴν τῶν σωμάτων ἀφθαρσίαν.

[1333] e.g. *VA* 18.2-3 [SC 400:184]; 52.13-4 [SC 400:276]; 53.8 [SC 400:278].

'grace of God' within Antony (and within 'each of those who truly struggle') and not his own power, that helps him to overcome the temptation.

Two other soteriological statements in the *Vita Antonii* relate salvation directly to the death of Christ in the flesh. The first one is another example of the radical contrast between Antony's human frailty and Christ's divine ability to overthrow the Devil. The passage in *VA* 7.1-6 [SC 400:150], recounts Antony's fight with the Devil, who disguised himself first as a beguiling seductive temptress and then as a black boy representing 'the spirit of lust'. While it may seem that Antony is fighting the Devil by his own labours, the episode concludes with a remark that points to Christ as Saviour: 'This was Antony's first contest against the Devil—or, rather, this was in Antony the success of the Saviour who *condemned sin in the flesh, in order that the just requirement of the law might be fulfiled in us, who walk not according to the flesh but according to the Spirit* [Rom. 8:3-4]' (*VA* 7.1-6 [SC 400:150; Gregg 35]).[1334] Similar to other instances of contrast, it is Christ as God who does what human Antony cannot. The idea of Christ's co-working with Antony is contrasted with the model in which Antony would achieve the victory on his own. Moreover, insofar as the contrast is designed to point to Christ's divinity, the redemption—characterized here as the condemnation of sin in flesh and fulfilment of the just requirement of the law—is the work of God himself. It is the same God who helps Antony to live victoriously who redeems him for that type of living in the first place. To put it differently, Christ's action is not just a temporary favour for Christian living, but that which sets this living to a beginning.

Another passage that relates salvation to the death of Christ in the flesh is *VA* 14.24-9 [SC 400:174]. The passage is preceded with Antony's appearance before the monks after spending twenty years of isolated living at the Outer Mountain. Coming forth from the removed fortress door, Antony's first action was to urge everyone 'to prefer nothing in the world above the love of Christ' and 'to keep in mind the future goods and the affection in which we are helped by God, *who did not spare his own Son, but gave him up for us all* [Rom. 8:32]' [Gregg 42].[1335] Here the idea of Christ's love, future goods, and the affection in which we

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[1334] τοῦτο πρῶτον ἆθλον ἀντωνίου γέγονε κατὰ τοῦ διαβόλου· μᾶλλον δὲ τοῦ σωτῆρος καὶ τοῦτο γέγονεν ἐν ἀντωνίῳ τὸ κατόρθωμα, τοῦ τὴν ἁμαρτίαν κατακρίναντος ἐν τῇ σαρκί, ἵνα τὸ δικαίωμα τοῦ νόμου πληρωθῇ ἐν ἡμῖν, τοῖς μὴ κατὰ σάρκα περιπατοῦσιν, ἀλλὰ κατὰ πνεῦμα.

[1335] μηδὲν τῶν ἐν τῷ κόσμῳ προκρίνειν τῆς εἰς χριστὸν ἀγάπης... μνημονεύων περὶ τῶν μελλόντων ἀγαθῶν καὶ τῆς εἰς ἡμᾶς γενομένης τοῦ θεοῦ φιλανθρωπίας, ὃς οὐκ ἐφείσατο τοῦ ἰδίου υἱοῦ, ἀλλ' ὑπὲρ ἡμῶν πάντων παρέδωκεν αὐτόν.

are held by God is supported by the biblical quotation from Romans 8:32, where Paul argues that Christ's death *graciously gives us all things* (τὰ πάντα ἡμῖν χαρίσεται). Though the passage is not one of contrast, its emphasis on what God accomplished through Christ makes the benefits of his redeeming work unmistakenly clear. It implies that the significance of Christ's death is immense: God's mercy is secure, and we are given something we did not possess before. Athanasius communicates the effect of Antony's urge by adding that it 'persuaded many to take up the solitary life' to the extent that 'the desert was made a city by monks' [Gregg 42-3].[1336]

6.3.2.2 Christ's Victory over the Devil

Clearly, the most dramatic way Athanasius expresses soteriological ideas in the *Vita Antonii* is by describing Christ's victory over the Devil. Thus, in *VA* 24.23-30 [SC 400:202] we find a famous image of the Devil who becomes 'drawn in with a hook by the Saviour'. Athanasius' graphic depiction of this event captures some of the most arresting effects of Christ's victory:

> Like a serpent he [the Devil] was drawn in with a hook by the Saviour, and like a beast of burden he received a halter around the snout, and like a runaway he was bound by a ring from his nostrils, and his lips were pierced by an iron clasp. He was also bound by the Lord like a sparrow, to receive our mockery. And, like scorpions and snakes, he and his fellow demons have been put in a position to be trampled underfoot by us Christians (*VA* 24.23-30 [SC 400:202; Gregg 49]).[1337]

Such phrases as 'he received a halter', 'was bound by the Lord', and 'pierced' make it clear that Christ's mission of saving the world included his victory over the Devil. The outcome of this victory is the fact that humanity is no longer under his control, or power. The quoted passage continues with the remark that 'the evidence of this [victory] is that we now conduct our lives in opposition to him [Devil]' (*VA* 24.31-2 [SC 400:204; Gregg 49]).[1338] Slightly after that, Antony adds: 'it is not necessary to fear them [demons], for by the grace of Christ all their pursuits come to nothing'

[1336] ἔπεισε πολλοὺς αἱρήσασθαι τὸν μονήρη βίον... καὶ ἡ ἔρημος ἐπολίσθη μοναχῶν.

[1337] ὡς μὲν δράκων εἱλκύσθη τῷ ἀγκίστρῳ παρὰ τοῦ σωτῆρος, ὡς δὲ κτῆνος φορβαίαν ἔλαβε περὶ τὰς ῥῖνας, ὡς δὲ δραπέτης κρίκῳ δέδεται τοὺς μυκτῆρας καὶ ψελλίῳ τετρύπηται τὰ χείλη. καὶ δέδεται μὲν παρὰ τοῦ κυρίου ὡς στρουθίον εἰς τὸ καταπαίζεσθαι παρ' ἡμῶν· τέθεινται δὲ αὐτός τε καὶ οἱ σὺν αὐτῷ δαίμονες ὡς σκορπίοι καὶ ὄφεις εἰς τὸ καταπατεῖσθαι παρ' ἡμῶν τῶν χριστιανῶν.

[1338] καὶ τούτου γνώρισμα, τὸ νῦν ἡμᾶς πολιτεύεσθαι κατ' αὐτοῦ.

(*VA* 24.44-6 [SC 400:204; Gregg 50]).[1339] Here Christ's grace is described as the action that renders a devastating effect on the demoniac power.

Several times in the *Vita Antonii* God's victory over the Devil is related directly to the incarnation of Christ. Thus, professing the victorious effect of Christ's coming, Antony responds to the Devil: 'For Christ in his coming reduced you to weakness, and after throwing you down, he left you defenceless' (*VA* 41.19-20 [SC 400:246-8; Gregg 62]).[1340] In another passage we read that 'the Lord came… and brought to nothing… the demons themselves',[1341] he 'descended and made an example of their audacity and madness'[1342] to the effect that even 'the Devil himself confesses that he is able to do nothing'.[1343] There are also at least two references in the *Vita Antonii* where God's victory over the demons is described in light of the cross, or crucifixion of Christ. In the first text we read that 'they [demons] are terrified by the sign of the Lord's cross, because in it the Saviour, stripping their armour, made an example of them' (*VA* 35.8-10 [SC 400:230; Gregg 57]).[1344] In another passage the same idea is prefixed with the statement that 'Christ is God, and Son of God', and we read that by 'calling on the name of Christ crucified, [Christians] chase away all the demons you [pagans] fear as gods. And where the sign of the cross occurs, magic is weakened and sorcery has no effect' (*VA* 78.15-21 [SC 400:334; Gregg 88]).[1345] Athanasius' use of soteriological terminology such as Christ's grace, his incarnation, and cross in the above instances makes it clear that Christ's mission of saving the world included the victory over the Devil.

Of course, the fact that Christ won the victory over the Devil does not mean that the latter stopped his harmful activity. In fact, his attempts to lure believers to sin are made a special subject of discussion in Antony's longest speech in *VA* 16-43 [SC 400:176-252]. Warning his disciples about the danger of succumbing to the

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[1339] ὅθεν οὐδὲ οὕτω φοβεῖσθαι τούτους προσήκει· πάντα γὰρ αὐτῶν διὰ τὴν τοῦ κυρίου χάριν εἰς οὐδέν ἐστι τὰ ἐπιτηδεύματα.

[1340] ὁ γὰρ χριστὸς ἐλθὼν ἀσθενῆ σε πεποίηκε καὶ καταβαλὼν ἐγύμνωσεν.

[1341] *VA* 33.3-5 [SC 400:224]: ἦλθε... ὁ κύριος... αὐτῶν τοὺς δαίμονας καταργήσας.

[1342] Ibid. 39.28-9 [SC 400:242; Gregg 61]: τὸν κύριον, τὸν καθελόντα καὶ παραδειγματίσαντα τὴν τόλμαν καὶ τὴν μανίαν αὐτῶν.

[1343] Ibid. 42.1-2 [SC 400:248; Gregg 62]: αὐτὸς ὁ διάβολος ὁμολογεῖ μηδὲν δύνασθαι.

[1344] πάνυ φοβοῦνται τὸ σημεῖον τοῦ κυριακοῦ σταυροῦ, ἐπειδήπερ ἐν αὐτῷ τούτους ἀπεκδυσάμενος, παρεδειγμάτισεν ὁ σωτήρ.

[1345] τὸν χριστὸν εἶναι θεὸν καὶ τοῦ θεοῦ υἱόν... ἡμεῖς δέ, ὀνομάζοντες τὸν ἐσταυρωμένον χριστόν, πάντας διώκομεν δαίμονας, οὓς ὑμεῖς φοβεῖσθε ὡς θεούς. καὶ ἔνθα τὸ σημεῖον τοῦ σταυροῦ γίνεται, ἀσθενεῖ μὲν μαγεία, οὐκ ἐνεργεῖ δὲ φαρμακεία.

Devil, Antony speaks about various ways of resisting him and encourages everyone to rely on Christ's power. He claims that 'the Lord… [is] our fellow worker for the conquest of the Devil',[1346] he is 'the power of God the Father'[1347] that accompanies Christians. Among the weapons against the demons—such as fasting, vigils, prayers, and humility—it is the 'devotion to Christ'[1348] that makes believers victorious along with 'the grace that has been given to the faithful for combat against them [demons] by the Saviour', who said: *Behold, I have given you authority to tread upon serpents and scorpions, and over all the power of the enemy* [Luke 10:19]' (*VA* 30.9-14 [SC 400:220; Gregg 54]).[1349]

The above instances in the *Vita Antonii* reinforce the fact that Athanasius sought to portray ascetic discipline in light of God's saving action through Christ. Antony's understanding of God is such that Christian living flows from, and is grounded on, the gracious condescension of Christ. Thus, for Roldanus 'c'est toute la vie ascétique qui est devenu possible par l'incarnation du Christ', but also 'la vraie stature d'ascèse est réalisée par Christ'.[1350] Similarly, Pettersen states that Antony's achievements all participate in Christ's universal achievement since 'God and God alone, can destroy corruption and give life, and can unravel demonic deceits and lead each into all righteousness'.[1351] And according to Jonathan Zecher, 'Antony's life, his achievements and his career, are contoured on the identity of Christ, who represents end and means, the one whom Antony serves and the strength by which Antony labours. This decentering process—relativizing the ostensible subject, Antony, against another, Christ—makes *VA* a curious sort of biography, if it is one at all'.[1352] More to the point, Antony's achievements in his combat with the Devil and exemplary progress in virtue is not what makes him saved, for salvation is already accomplished. To assert otherwise is to deny what Antony held so dearly, namely, that Christ is God sent for our redemption. Reflecting on this idea in the *Vita Antonii*, Anatolios speaks of 'the principle that the Christian's activity in holiness derives from the prior activity and victory of

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[1346] *VA* 34.5-6 [SC 400:228; Gregg 57]: συνεργὸς ἡμιν εἰς τὴν κατὰ τοῦ διαβόλου νίκην ὁ κύριος γένηται.

[1347] Ibid. 35.20-1 [SC 400:232; Gregg 58]: θεοῦ πατρὸς ἡ δύναμις.

[1348] τὴν εἰς τὸν χριστὸν εὐσέβειαν.

[1349] δοθεῖσαν χάριν τοῖς πιστοῖς παρὰ τοῦ σωτῆρος, λέγοντος αὐτοῦ· ἰδοὺ δέδωκα ὑμῖν ἐξουσίαν πατεῖν ἐπάνω ὄφεων καὶ σκορπίων, καὶ ἐπὶ πᾶσαν τὴν δύναμιν τοῦ ἐχθροῦ.

[1350] Roldanus, *Le Christ et l'homme*, 316.

[1351] Pettersen, *Athanasius*, 96.

[1352] Zecher, *The Symbolics of Death*, 57.

Christ'.[1353] For him 'the dialectic between human activity and divine activity leads to a logic in which a self-reflection on human activity leads to an assurance that this activity is grounded and secured by divine activity. So Antony consoles his fellow monks by saying that, despite the flamboyant antics of the Devil, they should not be intimidated, for "he was also bound by the Lord like a sparrow, to receive our mockery"'.[1354] To this he adds:

> Throughout Antony's illustrious career and progress in holiness, it is the Lord, the Incarnate Word, who is ὁ ποιῶν. Antony is really simply the receptacle of the power of the Word. At the same time, however, Antony is not deprived of all subjectivity, in the sense of being an agent who actualizes himself in a certain activity. There is an activity that properly belongs to Antony as a human being; it is prayer, and the *ascesis* that derives from prayer. Prayer is here understood as spiritual receptivity, an invocation of and openness to the power of the Lord, the inner form of prayer being 'that the Lord may be our fellow worker'. However, insofar as Antony is presented as someone who strives in prayer and insofar as prayer is described as properly belonging to Antony as a human subject, we can see Antony's prayer as a credible model of active receptivity. Antony may then be seen as the human model in which the relation between God and creation achieves an idea of perfection.[1355]

[1353] Anatolios, *Athanasius: The Coherence*, 181.

[1354] Ibid. 180. The problem of relating human and divine action in the *Vita Antonii* deserves a separate discussion for which there is no space in the present study. This concerns a number of the so-called Origenistic passages containing the phrase τό νοερόν τῆς ψυχῆς (or its forms) in *VA* 5.30 [SC 400:144]; 20.19 [SC 400:188]; 45.7 [SC 400:256], and 74.17 [SC 400:324]. Related to this terminology is the idea that salvation is within human reach, which seems to contradict the prominent role of Christ in the biography. Although scholars disagree on how to handle this problem, the general tendency is to avoid claiming inconsistency. For some this terminology indicates that Athanasius was not the author of the *Vita Antonii* (e.g. Barnes, *Early Christian Hagiography*, 166). Others simply suggest that this phrase has a connection with Antony rather than Athanasius (e.g. Desprez, 'Saint Antoine', 238:35). Still others are led to suppose that it points to the fact that Athanasius was sympathetic to Origenism (Perczel, 'Mankinds' Common Intellectual Substance', 209). According to my search of νοερός and νοερόν in the *Thesaurus Linguae Graecae* database, I was able to identify 39 occurences listed under the name of Athanasius and only 6 of them belonged to the genuine writings of Athanasius, while 5 of these 6 were found in the *Vita Antonii*. This may suggest (though far from conclusively) that the term could indeed belong to Antony rather than Athanasius, while in the context of the latter's theology (and especially Athanasian emphasis on christology throughout the *Vita Antonii*) the term came to lose its functional Origenistic meaning. This idea resounds with Rubenson's suggestion that the term should not be taken to mean 'a direct conflict, with the Christological passages' but rather a 'tension between a more authentic Origenist tradition and the new emphases of theology at the time of the Arian controversy' (Rubenson, *Letters*, 136). See also Anatolios' argument against assuming that Origenistic elements necessarily lead to the interpretation in which Antony's actions are primary. For Anatolios 'the motif of Christ's "co-working" with Antony is introduced, in a context that makes clear that such co-working is nevertheless an asymmetrical relationship in which Antony's work derives from that of Christ'; ibid., *Athanasius: The Coherence*, 181.

[1355] Anatolios, *Athanasius: The Coherence*, 187-8.

The Athanasian Antony is clearly the model for others to imitate. Yet, it is also clear that he is not the model of the Arian Christ—a redeemer who himself needs to be redeemed—but of Christ who does what humanity cannot. In this sense, Gregg and Groh make a reasonable remark when suggesting that Antony's battle against the Devil 'might have fallen upon the monk's purposefulness and upon God's disposition to bestow favour as a reward for ascetic performance'.[1356] However, in their understanding, the way Athanasius depicts Antony in relation to Christ and his saving work makes it clear that he is 'an example of how, according to orthodox teaching, the Christian is saved and sanctified'.[1357] They conclude: 'The ideas [of having God's favour as a reward for ascetic performance] were not impossible for Athanasius to hold (he too, like Alexandrian ascetical theorists before him, embraces the Pauline injunction to "press on toward the goal for the prize" [Phil. 3:14]), but unless qualified—that is, connected with the concept of descending grace—these ideas were too permissive of an Arian understanding of the monk's progress in virtue after the model of the "advancing" Christ'.[1358] Antony's understanding of salvation is indissolubly bound with the way he perceived and explained Christ as God. In the next section, I will discuss what I consider to be the peculiarly Athanasian portrait of the saved Antony, the exemplar of personal relationship with God.

6.3.2.3 Antony as the Exemplar of Deification

Scholars have noted that not only does Antony articulate Athanasius' theology of deification, but he himself becomes an emblem for it.[1359] Athanasius portrays Antony according to the way a human being should look both in his body and soul after being recreated in the image and likeness of God and restored back into relationship with him. We see that Antony's body is renewed by Christ, who, as we noted earlier, 'bore flesh for us and gave to the body victory over the Devil' (*VA* 5.40-1 [SC 400:144-6]). During his stint in the tomb, Antony at first suffered a bad beating from the Devil, but by the time he left, after the vision of light, 'he was so strengthened that he felt that his body contained more might than before' (*VA*

[1356] Gregg, *Early Arianism*, 146.
[1357] Ibid.
[1358] Ibid.
[1359] Harmless, *Desert Fathers*, 90.

10.15-7 [SC 400:164; Gregg 39]).[1360] Even more striking is Antony's robust form of body which he displays when emerging from the desert fortress, 'neither fat from lack of exercise, nor emaciated from fasting and combat with demons' (*VA* 14.10-2 [SC 400:172; Gregg 42]).[1361] Despite twenty years of asceticism 'his body had maintained his former condition',[1362] and even towards the end of his life, Antony's 'face had a great and marvelous grace, and this spiritual favour he had from the Saviour'.[1363] Amazingly, at the age of 105, Antony still 'possessed eyes undimmed and sound, and he saw clearly. He lost none of his teeth—they simply had been worn to the gums because of the old man's great age. He also retained health in his feet and hands, and generally he seemed brighter and of more energetic strength than those who make use of baths and a variety of foods and clothing' (*VA* 93.10-7 [SC 400:374; Gregg 98]).[1364]

Noteworthy is also Antony's renewal of soul. On several occasions his renewed soul is said to be the primary sign of his inner perfection that could even be recognized from his renewed physical stature. In *VA* 67.17-23 [SC 400:312; Gregg 81] we read: 'It was not his physical dimensions that distinguished him from the rest, but the stability of character and the purity of the soul. His soul being free of confusion, he held his outer senses also undisturbed, so that from the soul's joy his face was cheerful as well, and from the movements of the body it was possible to sense and perceive the stable condition of the soul'.[1365] Soon afterwards, Athanasius adds that Antony 'was never troubled, his soul being calm, and he never looked gloomy, his mind being joyous' (*VA* 67.31-3 [SC 400:312-3; Gregg 81]).[1366] Having emerged from the desert fortress, Antony not only displayed amazing physical fitness, but also 'the state of his soul was one of purity, not constricted by

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[1360] καὶ τοσοῦτον ἴσχυσεν ὡς αἰσθέσθαι αὐτόν, ὅτι πλείονα δύναμιν ἔσχεν ἐν τῷ σώματι μᾶλλον ἧς εἶχεν.

[1361] μήτε πιανθὲν ὡς ἀγύμναστον, μήτε ἰσχνωθὲν ὡς ἀπὸ νηστειῶν καὶ μάχης δαιμόνων.

[1362] *VA* 14.10 [SC 400:172; Gregg 42]: τό τε σῶμα τὴν αὐτὴν ἕξιν ἔχον.

[1363] Ibid. 67.11-3 [SC 400:312; Gregg 81]: καὶ μὴν καὶ τὸ πρόσωπον αὐτοῦ χάριν εἶχε πολλήν. καὶ παράδοξον εἶχε δὲ καὶ τοῦτο τὸ χάρισμα παρὰ τοῦ σωτῆρος.

[1364] τοὺς ὀφθαλμοὺς ἀσινεῖς καὶ ὁλοκλήρους εἶχεν, βλέπων καλῶς, καὶ τῶν ὀδόντων οὐδὲ εἷς ἐξέπεσεν αὐτοῦ· μόνον δὲ ὑπὸ τὰ οὖλα τετριμμένοι γεγόνασι διὰ τὴν πολλὴν ἡλικίαν τοῦ γέροντος. καὶ τοῖς ποσὶ δὲ καὶ ταῖς χερσὶν ὑγιὴς διέμεινεν, καὶ ὅλως πάντων τῶν ποικίλῃ τροφῇ καὶ λουτροῖς καὶ διαφόροις ἐνδύμασι χρωμένων φαιδρότερος μᾶλλον αὐτὸς ἐφαίνετο καὶ πρὸς ἰσχὺν προθυμότερος.

[1365] οὐχ ὕψει δέ, οὐδὲ τῷ πλάτει διέφερε τῶν ἄλλων, ἀλλὰ τῇ τῶν ἠθῶν καταστάσει καὶ τῇ τῆς ψυχῆς καθαρότητι. ἀθορύβου γὰρ οὔσης τῆς ψυχῆς, ἀταράχους εἶχε καὶ τὰς ἔξωθεν αἰσθήσεις· ὡς ἀπὸ τῆς χαρᾶς τῆς ψυχῆς ἱλαρὸν ἔχειν καὶ τὸ πρόσωπον, καὶ ἀπὸ τῶν τοῦ σώματος κινημάτων αἰσθέσθαι καὶ νοεῖν τὴν τῆς ψυχῆς κατάστασιν.

[1366] πότε γὰρ ἐταράττετο γαληνιώσης αὐτοῦ τῆς ψυχῆς, ἢ πότε σκυθρωπὸς ἐγίνετο χαιρούσης αὐτοῦ τῆς διανοίας.

grief, nor relaxed by pleasure, nor affected by either laughter or dejection' (*VA* 14.13-6 [SC 400:172-4; Gregg 42]).[1367] Despite the crowds who approached him at the fortress, Antony 'maintained utter equilibrium, like one guided by reason and steadfast in that which accords with nature' (*VA* 14.18-9 [SC 400:174; Gregg 42]).[1368] This particular episode points to Athanasian christology and relates closely to the idea of deification: becoming like Christ himself. According to Harmless,

> Here the "reason", the *logos*, that guides Antony, is not the philosopher's *logos*. For Athanasius, the Logos is a person, Christ… who was in the beginning with God and was God…. It is the same Christ the Logos who infuses the universe with its good order, its balance and harmony, and who deifies human beings, making them like himself. For Athanasius, becoming like Christ the Logos included taking on the calm unchanging passionlessness of God.[1369]

One of the passages from Athanaius' *Orationes Contra Arianos* that comes very close to this idea of deification in the *Vita Antonii*, states: 'The Logos is by nature free of passion. But because of the flesh which Christ put on, certain things [like being born, hungering, thirsting, weeping, and sleeping] are ascribed to him, since they are proper to the flesh, and the body itself is proper to the Saviour. And he himself, being passionless by nature, remains as he is, not harmed by these affections. But human beings themselves—because their passions are changed into passionlessness and done away with in the Impassible [Christ]—become passionless and free of these experiences for eternity' (*CA* 3.34 [Savvidis 345-6; Harmless, *Desert Fathers*, 91]).[1370] It follows that since Christ is impassible, human beings who are deified by him in virtue of their re-connection to God come to share by grace what Christ is by nature. In this sense, Antony's ascetic model is not the means for achieving deification, but the testimony of what one already has, namely the state of restored perfection which humanity lost after the fall.

One way Athanasius expresses this idea in the *Vita Antonii* is by speaking about the kingdom of God as that which opens up a new dimension of life for

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[1367] τῆς δὲ ψυχῆς πάλιν καθαρὸν τὸ ἦθος. οὔτε γὰρ ὡς ὑπὸ ἀνίας συνεσταλμένη ἦν, οὔτε ὑφ' ἡδονῆς διακεχυμένη οὔτε ὑπὸ γέλωτος ἢ κατηφείας συνεχομένη.

[1368] ἀλλ' ὅλος ἦν ἴσος, ὡς ὑπὸ τοῦ λόγου κυβερνώμενος καὶ ἐν τῷ κατὰ φύσιν ἑστώς.

[1369] Harmless, *Desert Fathers*, 90-1.

[1370] ὡς τὴν φύσιν αὐτὸς ὁ λόγος ἀπαθής ἐστι, καὶ ὅμως δι' ἣν ἐνεδύσατο σάρκα, λέγεται περὶ αὐτοῦ ταῦτα, ἐπειδὴ τῆς μὲν σαρκὸς ἴδια ταῦτα, τοῦ δὲ σωτῆρος ἴδιον αὐτὸ τὸ σῶμα. καὶ αὐτὸς μὲν ἀπαθὴς τὴν φύσιν, ὡς ἔστι, διαμένει, μὴ βλαπτόμενος ἀπὸ τούτων, ἀλλὰ μᾶλλον ἐξαφανίζων καὶ ἀπολλύων αὐτά· οἱ δὲ ἄνθρωποι, ὡς εἰς τὸν ἀπαθῆ μεταβάντων αὐτῶν τῶν παθῶν καὶ ἀπηλειμμένων, ἀπαθεῖς καὶ ἐλεύθεροι τούτων λοιπὸν καὶ αὐτοὶ εἰς τοὺς αἰῶνας γίγνονται.

Christians. Thus, contrasting the Christians to the wise Greeks in his speech to the monks, Antony claims: 'Now the Greeks leave home and traverse the sea in order to gain an education, but there is no need for us to go abroad on account of the Kingdom of heaven, nor to cross the sea for virtue. For the Lord has told us before, *the Kingdom of God is within you* [Luke 17:21]' (*VA* 20.12-7 [SC 400:188; Gregg 46]).[1371] Slightly afterwards, he clarifies it by stating the following: 'Thus the matter is not difficult. If we abide as we have been made, we are in a state of virtue, but if we think of ignoble things we shall be accounted evil. If, therefore, this thing [virtue] had to be acquired from without, it would be difficult in reality; but if it is in us, let us keep ourselves from foul thoughts. And as we have received the soul as a deposit, let us preserve it for the Lord, that he may recognize his work as being the same as he made it' (*VA* 20.28-36 [SC 400:190-2; NPNF² 4:201]).[1372] In this passage, Antony claims that to be in the state of virtue (which is the same as to possess the kingdom of God) means to abide in the original state in which we were created. In other words, by having God inaugurate his kingdom into us, we are brought back to the same state which we once lost. Therefore, Antony calls his disciples to not set their minds on evil things (for it is foreign to the created state of humanity) but to practice what is consistent with their new position as they anticipate the coming of Christ who will recognize in them his own work 'as being the same as he made it'.[1373]

Zecher considers this idea of restored perfection in Antony to be the most characteristic feature of Athanasian interpretation of asceticism. It makes the *Vita Antonii* uniquely distinct from other monastic writings such as *Apophthegmata Patrum* where 'initial movement, daily struggle, and the means of progress are more pressing concerns than idealized sanctity'.[1374] In contrast, the Athanasian Antony is θεῖος ἀνήρ: 'a perfected holy man in which Athanasius emphasizes his

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[1371] ἕλληνες μὲν οὖν ἀποδημοῦσι καὶ θάλασσαν περῶσιν, ἵνα γράμματα μάθωσιν, ἡμεῖς δὲ οὐ χρείαν ἔχομεν οὔτε ἀποδημίας διὰ τὴν βασιλείαν τῶν οὐρανῶν οὔτε περᾶσαι θάλατταν διὰ τὴν ἀρετήν. φθάσας γὰρ εἶπεν ὁ κύριος· ἡ *βασιλεία τῶν οὐρανῶν ἐντὸς ὑμῶν ἐστιν.*

[1372] οὐκοῦν οὐκ ἔστι δυσχερὲς τὸ πρᾶγμα. ἐὰν γὰρ μείνωμεν ὡς γεγόναμεν, ἐν τῇ ἀρετῇ ἐσμεν· ἐὰν δὲ λογιζώμεθα τὰ φαῦλα, ὡς κακοὶ κρινόμεθα. εἰ μὲν οὖν ἔξωθεν ἦν ποριστέον τὸ πρᾶγμα, δυσχερὲς ὄντως ἦν· εἰ δὲ ἐν ἡμῖν ἐστι, φυλάξωμεν ἑαυτοὺς ἀπὸ λογισμῶν ῥυπαρῶν, καὶ ὡς παραθήκην λαβόντες, τηρήσωμεν τῷ κυρίῳ τὴν ψυχὴν ἵν' αὐτὸς ἐπιγνῷ τὸ ποίημα αὐτοῦ, οὕτως οὖσαν τὴν ψυχὴν ὥσπερ πεποίηκεν αὐτήν.

[1373] Cf. Harmless, *Desert Fathers*, 93, who writes that 'Athanasius portrays Antony as the "natural" man, humankind as it would have been had there been no fall. It is no accident that when Antony retires to the Inner Mountain, he creates a miniature Eden, planting a garden and getting the wild beasts to obey him'.

[1374] Zecher, *The Symbolics of Death*, 57.

"Adamic", even "deified" life-style'. [1375] Similarly, Harmless remarks that 'Athanasius presents Antony as a many-sided ideal', while 'in other literature of the desert, Antony appears in other guises'. [1376] Harmless ties the idea of restored perfection in Antony directly to Christ's saving action that connects humanity back to the life of God. More specifically, he explains: 'Christ as God recreated us from inside, renewing that which is vulnerable to death—the body—and recharging it with divine life, that it not corrupt, die, and drift back into the nothingness from which it was made'. [1377] On a similar note, Anatolios writes that Antony is 'representative of the new mode of internality that obtains between God and creation through the incarnation. Antony is the one in whom the Incarnate Word manifests his victory over sin and corruption'. [1378] Likewise, Rubenson contends that 'the Christian, represented by Antony, is in essence already restored; what must be conquered is something external'. [1379] And Popov remarks that 'even a quick glance at the *Life of Antony* makes it easy to recognize that Athanasius sought to present the monk as the realization of his own religious ideal, he wanted to describe him as the man who has already achived the possible measure of deification while still living on this earth'. [1380]

In this sense, Christ's renovation of Antony is reflective of the perfected humanity whose renewal makes it to be like God. More importantly, however, is the fact that Athanasian idea of deification in the *Vita Antonii* is not only about the impersonal qualities that deified Antony possesses (their importance lies in reflecting the ontological aspect of deification)[1381] but more personally about the sort of relationship he enjoys with the living God throughout the biography. Thus, for Geest, Antony is the example of 'the realization that the human being lives in a certain time and space *coram Deo*'. In his view, 'he [Antony] endeavours to anchor his existence in a personal relationship with God and discovers that, being created in the image of God, he has been made for communion with Christ, the communion

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[1375] Ibid. 57.

[1376] Harmless, *Desert Christians*, 108. Cf. Brakke, *Athanasius and the Politics of Asceticism*, 242, who argues that *VA* is a remarkable portrait of the 'ideal Athanasian human being'.

[1377] Harmless, *Desert Christians*, 90.

[1378] Anatolios, *Athanasius: The Coherence*, 193.

[1379] Rubenson, *Letters*, 137.

[1380] Popov, *Trudy po Patrologii*, 98: 'Даже при поверхностном знакомстве с "Жизнью Антония" нетрудно видеть, что в лице этого подвижника св. Афанасий видел осуществление своего религиозного идеала, человека, достигшего уже здесь, на земле, возможной для твари меры обожения'.

[1381] See sect. 3.3.4, where I discuss the difference between the ontological and relational aspects of deification.

in which humanity encounters God'.[1382] Similarly, Rubenson remarks that essential to the *Vita Antonii* is 'the presence of Christ in the Christian'[1383] while for Zecher, the story of Antony is, in fact, the story of 'awe-inspiring yet paradigmatic relationship to Christ'.[1384] Even a quick glance at the *Vita Antonii* would confirm that Antony is fully immersed in the fellowship with God constantly seeking to be in the divine presence. In *VA* 7.47-8, 51-4 [SC 400:154; Gregg 37] we read that Antony recalls 'the passage in which Elijah the prophet says, *the Lord… lives, before whom I stand* [3-Kings 17:1; 18:15 LXX] and being mindful of it, he endeavors 'each day to present himself as the sort of person ready to appear before God—that is, pure of heart and prepared to obey his will'.[1385] Here Antony's relationship with God appears as a continous reality and he himself illustrates it towards the end of the *Vita Antonii* by declaring that just as fish perish without water so does the ascetic life loose its meaning without monks remaining in the fellowship with God back at their cells.[1386] Paradoxically, Antony's yearning to isolate himself from others has the sole and most important purpose of becoming hidden in the presence of God himself.

A major constituent of God's presence with Antony are the visions ascribed to him throughout the *Vita Antonii* (esp. chs. 58-66 [SC 400:288-310]). The intensity of Antony's visions was such that Athanasius was led to call him θεοδίδακτος for his unique closeness with God and ability to receive knowledge from above.[1387] On one occasion, Antony felt 'as if he were being led through the air by certain beings' (*VA* 65.8 [SC 400:304; Gregg 79]).[1388] The story goes on by reporting that he saw some horrifying figures who stood in the air intending to block his way. Interestingly, when he was asked by them to give an account of his life from the time of his birth, 'Antony's guides prevented it, saying to them, 'The Lord has wiped clean the items dating from his birth, but from the time he became a

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[1382] Geest, 'Athanasius as Mystagogue', 201.

[1383] Rubenson, *Letters*, 138.

[1384] Zecher, *The Symbolics of Death*, 57.

[1385] τῆς φωνῆς τοῦ προφήτου ἡλίου λέγοντος· ζῇ κύριος, ᾧ παρέστην ἐνώπιον αὐτοῦ… καθ᾽ ἡμέραν ἐσπούδαζεν ἑαυτὸν τῷ θεῷ παριστάνειν τοιοῦτον οἷον χρὴ φαίνεσθαι τῷ θεῷ, καθαρὸν τῇ καρδίᾳ καὶ ἕτοιμον ὑπακούειν τῷ βουλήματι αὐτοῦ.

[1386] *VA* 85.7-12 [SC 400:354].

[1387] Ibid. 66.4-5 [SC 400:308]. This text is sometimes used as an argument that Athanasius' reference to Antony's illiteracy in *VA* 1.7 (where he is described as refusing to learn γράμματα). It should not be taken to mean that he could not read or write, but rather that he 'did not want to be infected with ideas and moral that were opposed to the Christia faith'; Geest, 'Athanasius as Mystagogue', 205.

[1388] ὡς εἰς τὸν ἀέρα ὁδηγούμενον ὑπό τινων.

monk, and devoted himself to God, you can take an account' (*VA* 65.13-6 [SC 400:304-6; Gregg 79]).[1389] After not being able to prove anything against Antony, 'the passage opened before him free and unobstructed' (*VA* 65.17-8 [SC 400:306; Gregg 79]).[1390] Here several things are noteworthy. First, the idea of demons inhabiting the atmosphere and blocking the soul's path to God shows that Athanasius entertains a familiar theme of ancient demonology that demons are creatures of the air.[1391] Second, Antony's vision is reminiscent of a similar text in Athanathius where Christ is described as 'stretching out his hands upon the cross', with the effect that 'He overthrew the prince of the power of the air and made the way clear for us into the heavens' (*Ep. Adelph.* 7 [PG 26:1081b; NPNF² 4:577]).[1392] In both cases, Christ makes the way to God free in the air. In the former, it is Christ's cleansing of Antony's sins, and in the latter, it is his death on the cross. Third, the whole story presupposes Antony's access to God and foretaste of the life in heaven. Athanasius compares this experience in Antony's life with that of Paul who *was caught up to the third heaven* [2-Cor. 12:2][1393] and heard *things that cannot be told* [2-Cor. 12:4].[1394] Undoubtedly, the comparison is intended to prove the rarity of such experience as well as to show that Antony was a perfect exemplar of deification: he was the mystagogue (μεμυσταγωγημένος) and God-bearer (θεοφορούμενος).[1395] His living connection to God, rendered possible by Christ's saving deeds, is what makes him a new creature and the perfect model for others.

Another way Athanasius describes Antony as the exemplar of personal relationship with God is by using the images of love and communion. The words ἀγάπη and ἀγαπᾶν in various forms occur sixteen times throughout the *Vita Antonii* and in most cases they describe Antony's love to God or other people.[1396] He is said

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[1389] ἐκώλυον οἱ τὸν ἀντώνιον ὁδηγοῦντες, λέγοντες ἐκείνοις· τὰ μὲν τῆς γενέσεως ὁ κύριος ἀπήλειψεν· ἐξ οὗ δὲ γέγονε μοναχὸς καὶ ἐπηγγείλατο τῷ θεῷ, ἐξέστω λόγον ποιῆσαι.

[1390] ἐλευθέρα γέγονεν αὐτῷ καὶ ἀκώλυτος ἡ ὁδός.

[1391] Cf. Plato, *Epin.* 984e, Origen, *De Princ.* 2.11.6 [SC 252:406-10].

[1392] τάς χεῖρας ἐκτείνας ἐπὶ τοῦ σταυροῦ, τὸν μὲν ἄρχοντα τῆς ἐξουσίας τοῦ ἀέρος... κατέβαλε, τὴν δὲ ὁδὸν ἡμῖν ἐν τοῖς οὐρανοῖς καθαρὰν ἐποίει. Cf. also *De Inc.* 25.12-35.

[1393] ἕως τρίτου οὐρανοῦ.

[1394] ἄρρητα ῥήματα ἃ οὐκ ἐξὸν ἀνθρώπῳ λαλῆσαι.

[1395] *VA* 14.7 [SC 400:172].

[1396] With the help of Bartelink's index of Greek terminology (*Vie d'Antoine*, 391) I have found that the terms ἀγάπη and ἀγαπᾶν (in various forms) appear 7 times in relation to God (*VA* 9.7 [SC 400:158]; 14.25 [SC 400:174]; 35.28 [SC 400:232, implicitly]; 36.12 [SC 400:234]; 40.17 [SC 400:244]; 80.25 [SC 400:340]; 85.16 [SC 400:354]), 4 times in relation to people (4.1 [SC 400:138], 4.12 [SC 400:140]; 39.7 [SC 400:240]; 44.11 [SC 400:254]), 3 times in relation to specific things such as the monk's cell and the virtue of moderation (50.2 [SC 400:268]; 84.24 [SC 400:354]; 87.20 [SC 400:360]), and 1 time it is listed together with other virtues (17.26 [SC 400:182]).

to be 'loved by God' (ἀγαπώμενος ὑπὸ τοῦ θεοῦ),[1397] and he encouraged all the monks who came to him with the same message: 'to have faith in the Lord and love to him',[1398] which is similar to his other admonition about 'faith that works for Christ through love'.[1399] In *VA* 14.25 [SC 400:174], he is described as 'urging everyone to prefer nothing in the world above the love of Christ',[1400] and in 9.7 [SC 400:158] and 40.17 [SC 400:244], he refers to Paul's epigram in Romans 8:35, declaring that 'nothing will separate me from the love of Christ'.[1401] 'The love of God' for Antony is what ultimately drives out all fear transforming the monk with 'unspeakable joy and cheerfulness' (χαρὰ ἀνεκλάλητος καὶ εὐθυμία),[1402] and helps Christians to recognize their connection to the divine realities.[1403] Two times in the *Vita Antonii* the monk is called θεοφιλής,[1404] and quite often his relations with others are hailed to be modeled after his love of God who treats his children as the caring Father.[1405] The motif of love is connected with another personal theme in the *Vita Antonii*, which is communion with God and saints. In his farewell speech (as well as other places[1406] in the biography), Antony gives a strict instruction to abstain from any fellowship (κοινωνία) with the Arians or Meletians.[1407] In contrast, he exhorts: 'Rather, strive always to be bound to each other as allies, first of all to the Lord, and then to the saints, so that after death *they may receive you into the eternal habitations* [Luke 16:9] as friends and companions' (*VA* 91.22-6 [Gregg 92, modified]).[1408] Here, the idea of Christian community has a distinctly personal sense and is reserved only for those who are united to Christ. Making a specific comment on this text, Zecher writes: The ascetic community strives to enact

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[1397] *VA* 85.16 [SC 400:354].

[1398] Ibid. 55.5-6 [SC 400:282]: πιστεύειν εἰς τὸν κύριον καὶ ἀγαπᾶν αὐτόν.

[1399] Ibid. 80.25-6 [SC 400:340]: πίστις δι' ἀγάπης τῆς εἰς τὸν χριστὸν ἐνεργουμένη.

[1400] μηδὲν τῶν ἐν τῷ κόσμῳ προκρίνειν τῆς εἰς χριστὸν ἀγάπης.

[1401] οὐδέν με 'χωρίσει ἀπὸ τῆς ἀγάπης τοῦ χριστοῦ'.

[1402] *VA* 36.12 [SC 400:234]. On the terminology of 'joy', or 'delight' in Athanasius' description of the relational aspect of God and salvation, see sect. 5.3.2.4.

[1403] Ibid. 35.24-33 [SC 400:232].

[1404] Ibid. 4.21 [SC 400:140]; 93.20 [SC 400:374].

[1405] e.g. Ibid. 15.11 [SC 400:176]; 50.12 [SC 400:270]; 54.24 [SC 400:280].

[1406] e.g. Ibid. 68.2-3 [SC 400:314]; 69.12-3 [SC 400:316]; 89.17-8 [SC 400:364]; 91.19-20 [SC 400:368].

[1407] Ibid. 91.18-20 [SC 400:368].

[1408] σπουδάζετε δὲ μᾶλλον καὶ ὑμεῖς ἀεὶ συνάπτειν ἑαυτούς, προηγουμένως μὲν τῷ κυρίῳ, ἔπειτα δὲ τοῖς ἁγίοις, ἵνα μετὰ θάνατον ὑμᾶς *εἰς τὰς αἰωνίους σκηνάς*, ὡς φίλους καὶ γνωρίμους, δέξωνται.

proleptically the eschatological community of heaven. The monks strive to live now as saints and the friends of saints and, especially, as participants in Christ'.[1409]

From my earlier discussions of Athanasius' thought, it should be apparent that such an idea of personal communion is not unusual for Athanasius. However, in the *Vita Antonii* personal relationship with God becomes the spiritual realization of what Athanasius has written about deification in his dogmatic writings. Antonian spirituality of personal communion with God and saints (a term which in his vocabulary is generally reserved for biblical heroes)[1410] suggests that the previously quoted passage where Christ's incarnation is said to 'enable mankind to share the divine and spiritual nature (κοινωνῆσαι θείας καὶ νοερᾶς φύσεως)'[1411] is best understood in the personal sense. It is God's initiative of incarnation that makes human beings participants of the divine *koinonia* as they come to share by grace what God is by nature. Were the Antonian God the Arian monad with Christ as his semi-divine mediator, the idea of direct communion with God would be one of contradiction, while the only way of deification would be to strive to become like God in his qualities. But since it is Christ who accomplishes salvation—and he is equally divine with the Father sharing by nature the communion within the Godhead—the deification of man derives from the divine action and has a deeply personal meaning. What was an impossibility for the Devil, namely, his desire to become like God (νομίσας ὅμοιος γενέσθαι θεῷ),[1412] becomes the open reality for those to whom it is granted by grace.

Athanasian emphasis on the communion with God in the *Vita Antonii* also suggests that his biography is far from propagating social apathy; rather its focus is on a different type of relationship than that of society.[1413] This relationship is based on the daily experience of God's love and intimate communion with him. In the *Vita Antonii* such relationship transforms the way monks treat each other and those around them. And in Antony's case it even causes the transformation of the animal world. In the *Vita Antonii*, we see Antony crossing unharmed the canal of Arsinoë, known as Crocodilopolis for its large number of crocodiles (*VA* 15.1-11 [SC

[1409] Zecher, *The Symbolics of Death*, 79.
[1410] Anatolios, *Athanasius*, 30.
[1411] *VA* 74.17 [SC 400:324].
[1412] Ibid. 5.36-7 [SC 400:144].
[1413] For the discussion on the monastic relation to society, see Brown, 'The Rise and Function', 83; ibid., *The Body and Society*, 222-6; Judge, 'Forth-Century Monasticism', 613-20; Rubenson, *Letters*, 118-9.

400:176]). He gently speaks to the beast in the wilderness and commands the whole shoal to leave the place (*VA* 50.26-34 [SC 400:272]). He makes peace with wild animals and reptiles (*VA* 51.21-2), and when necessary he prays and all creeping things flee (*VA* 12.14-15 [SC 400:168]). For Bartelink this is another sign of Antony's perfection that reflects a new reality for him: 'Une autre preuve que le saint a atteint un haut degré de perfection et a rétabli en soi l'état paradisiaque auquel l'homme aspire, est son pouvoir sur les animaux sauvages. Les bêtes féroces vivant en paix avec le saint sont devenues un motif obligé des écrits hagiographiques'.[1414]

In summary, the idea of deification in the *Vita Antonii* acquires a typically Athanasian sense of what the deified life looks like. It presents human beings restored back to relationship with God, who makes them free from sin and the power of the Devil through the saving act of Christ—his incarnation and death on the cross. Antony's connection to the very life of God produces godly qualities and renders him like God: it arrests fleshly corruption and effects the transformation of the perishable by the imperishable nature of the Godhead. With the exception of one instance (where θεοποιέω is used in the pagan sense),[1415] the *Vita Antonii* does not contain the technical terminology of deification. Neither does it mention the word 'adoption' as its most personal correlate. Yet the way it depicts Antony leaves no doubt that both deification and sonship are clearly at work in his monastic living. Athanasius embodies his theology in space and time by portraying Antony as the perfect model of what it means for a human being to be saved and deified. He describes salvation as the work of God who does what humanity cannot accomplish. Antony's insistence on the divinity of Christ and his ability to do what is possible only for God becomes the ultimate ground of redemption which, in turn, propels the Christian life. Seen from this perspective, the Athanasian Antony is a beautiful model of how the saved one can live in virtue of what Christ has done. When reading too quickly, one may think that the *Vita Antonii* speaks of a Christian

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[1414] Bartelink, *Vie d'Antoine*, 57.

[1415] *VA* 76.11 [SC 400:330; Gregg 86]: 'Nevertheless it is fitting for you to go only so far as to admire, not to deify, the things created, lest you render the honour due the maker to the things made' (εἰ γάρ, ὅτι καλὴ ἡ κτίσις, τοιαῦτα συνεθήκατε, ἀλλ' ἔδει μέχρι τοῦ θαυμάσαι ὑμᾶς γενέσθαι καὶ μὴ θεοποιῆσαι τὰ ποιήματα, ἵνα μὴ τὴν τοῦ δημιουργοῦ τιμὴν τοῖς γενητοῖς παρέχητε). Athanasius' use of θεοποιέω in this passage parallels closely with the analogous use of this word in his *Contra Gentes* (see sect. 3.2.2). In both cases, it relates to the description of pagan deification of created things in contrast to honouring the Creator.

super hero. Yet, I hope that the present study has helped to reveal that it is not about Antony, or his strenuous fight with the Devil, but about Christ and his victory that Athanasius is concerned with in this biography. It is true that Antony's spirituality emphasizes confidence and firmness before the machinations of the Devil. However, the basis for Antony's brave deeds is that the battle has already been won by Christ, and he is the one who enables Antony to live the life of victory and virtue. Seen in this way, Athanasius' portrait of the ideal Antony ceases to be one of tension and becomes one in which the understanding of God, deification, and Christian living are linked in a consistent way as one flows from the other.

CONCLUSION

In the Introduction, I referred to three specific questions that were to guide my research as a whole. As I conclude this study, I would like to return to them by summarizing some major points of Athanasius' doctrine of God and deification. My first guiding question has concerned the 'who' of salvation (having to do with the second person of the Trinity), and I have argued that our answer to this depends to a large degree on how we interpret the Nicene term *homoousios*. If we understand this term to mean the generic unity, then we are most likely to begin with the essence of God and relate the trinitarian persons by showing how they derive from it. Athanasius' way of interpreting the *homoousios* is sharply different. He understood it to have a primarily relational and personal meaning rather than abstract. Therefore, he explains it not in terms of how the Father and the Son (and the Holy Spirit) are one essence, or how one God/essence can have three persons, but how the Son is equal to and *homoousios* with the one God/the Father. Seen in this light, the question of 'who' accomplishes salvation is tied specifically to the incarnation of the Son rather than implying that any of the trinitarian persons within the divine essence could just as well be incarnated (a topic entertained from the time of Peter Lombard onwards).[1416] Furthermore, if the Son is coessential with the Father then at least two other points become clear. First, it takes God to save humanity, and second it was precisely because of our inability to save ourselves that Christ became man.

This leads me to the second guiding question: what kind of salvation does God make? The answer to this question depends to a large extent on what we think is the major problem of the fallen humanity and who deals with it. If the major problem of humanity is sin, then salvation needs to carry a juridical solution. In this case, what is important is the right standing before the just God who otherwise judges sin and exercises condemnation. If the major problem of humanity is corruption and immortality, then salvation should be of transformational nature, and the most common way to explain it has been by interpreting Athanasius' view of incarnation in light of the physical theory of redemption. Both juridical and physical aspects of salvation are valid elements of Athanasius' soteriology. However, as I have tried to show, Athanasius' primary aspect of salvation is distinctly relational

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[1416] Peter Lombard, *Libri IV Sententiarum* 3.1.2.

and personal. Why is this so? Because for him God is a relational being, and rather than giving us gifts in the form of impersonal qualities, he gives us himself as a person. Therefore, the kind of fellowship, love, and delight that he has within himself by nature, he also gives to us by grace. Hence, by being disconnected from God as a result of fall, we also lose these particular benefits and become corrupted and sinful. Seen in this light, human problem according to Athanasius is neither *just* sin or corruption, nor *primarily* sin or corruption. It is primarily a relational problem, and therefore both incarnation and death are ultimately aimed at redeeming us not only *from something* (sin and corruption) but more importantly *for Someone*. Arius was never able to claim this because his concept of God was far from being relational in the same sense that Athanasius' was. By excluding the Son and Holy Spirit from the Trinity, he deprived God/the Father from the direct involvement, and thereby implied a kind of salvation in which the divine qualities rather than relations were the cornerstone of deification.

Finally, my third guiding question has concerned the fruits of deification and how Athanasius relates them to each other. While it has been traditionally claimed that Athanasius' concept of deification is primarily physical, I have argued that it clearly includes all three aspects: relational, ontological/physical, and juridical. Moreover, I have shown that Athanasius' way of relating these aspects by stressing the subject that effects all three of them is a helpful corrective to those models that tend to emphasize one over the other two. In such models incarnation and crucifixion often compete for being the major means of how God saves humanity. In contrast, Athanasius acknowledged both in one breath and showed no sign of choosing between incarnation and crucifixion as if only one were redemptive and the other was not. Rather, he sought to show that both of them have the saving significance because the subject that came down as man and died on the cross is the true God (according to Athanasius' asymetrical christology) as opposed to someone promoted to that status or a semi-divine being as in Arius. Thus, instead of approaching incarnation as a mere prerequisite for crucifixion, and crucifixion as a mere consequence of incarnation, Athanasius affirmed both as equal means of God's redeeming work. Seen from this perspective, God's dealing with the broken relationships and corruption through the incarnation, and his resolution of the problem of sin through atonement, are different, but interrelated, aspects of how God restores humanity to its original state. To affirm this was important for

Athanasius, but not quite enough, for he wanted to be sure that ultimately all these aspects make sense when we affirm that God is Trinity and our salvation is a personal union with him.

TABLES

Table 1. Participation in Athanasius' Writings: μετουσία, μέτοχος, μετοχή, μετέχω, μέθεξις, μετάλημψις, μεταλαμβάνω, κοινωνία, κοινωνέω, *participatio*, *participo*

Athanasius' Work	Human Participation in the Trinitarian Persons	Human Participation in Things, Ideas, and Spiritual Entities	Human Participation in the Qualities of the Divine Nature	Begetting as the Son's Participation in the Father	Participation as an Inapplicable Category with Regard to God
CG—De Inc.	8	0	1	0	2
Ap. Sec.	0	1	0	0	0
VA	0	0	1	0	0
Ep. Aeg. Lib.	0	0	0	0	2
CA	25	8	3	5	24
Ep. Ser.	28	4	3	0	4
De Syn.	5	4	1	0	9
Ep. Afr.	1	2	0	0	1
Ep. fest.	4	14	1	0	0
Total:	**71**	**31**	**10**	**6**	**42**

Table 2. Love in Athanasius Writings: ἀγάπη, ἀγαπητός, ἀγαπάω, ἔρως, πόθος, φιλανθρωπία, φιλανθρωπός, φιλανθρώπως, φιλανθρωπεύω, φίλος, φιλόχριστος, φίλτατος, *adamo, benignitas, caritas, diligo, dilectus, deliciae, deliciolae*

Athanasius' Work	Love as the Description of Divine Relations	Love as the Description of the Divine-Human & Human-Divine Relations	Love between Pagan Deities	Irrelevant References
CG—De Inc.	1	17	3	4
Ep. Enc.	0	0	0	4
Ap. Sec.	0	3	0	68
De Decr.	1	4	0	4
De Sen. Dion.	1	0	0	2
VA	0	13	0	17
Ep. Aeg. Lib.	2	4	0	3
Ap. Const.	0	1	0	8
Ap. de Fuga	0	3	0	1
HA	0	3	0	5
CA	13	42	0	16
Ep. Ser.	1	8	0	9
De Syn.	1	2	0	3
Ep. fest.	0	43	0	68
Total:	**20**	**143**	**3**	**347**

Table 3. Delight, Joy, and Gladness in Athanasius' Writings: χαρά, χαίρων, προσχαίρω, εὐφρονέω, εὐφροσύνη, ἀγαλλίασις, *exsultatio, gaudium, oblectamentum, voluptas*[1417]

Athanasius' Work	Delight as the Description of Divine Relations	Delight as the Description of the Divine-Human & Human-Divine Relations	Irrelevant References
CG—De Inc.	0	1	0
Ep. Enc.	0	0	3
Ap. Sec.	0	0	31
De Decr.	1	0	3
De Sen. Dion.	4	0	0
VA	0	6	3
Ep. Aeg. Lib.	0	0	1
Ap. Const.	0	0	5
Ap. de Fuga	0	0	6
HA	0	1	13
CA	23	1	2
Ep. Ser.	0	2	2
De Syn.	0	0	1
Tom. Ant.	0	0	3
Ep. fest.	0	66	48
Total:	**28**	**77**	**121**

[1417] The Table does not include the Syriac fragments of the *Epistulae festales*.

Table 4. Sonship in Athanasius' Writings: υἱός, υἱοθεσία

Athanasius' Work	Natural Son	Sons & Daughters by Adoption	Irrelevant References
CG—De Inc.	28	3	5
Ep. Enc.	2	0	0
Ap. Sec.	6	1	4
De Decr.	152	13	14
De Sen. Dion.	67	1	1
VA	7	0	4
Ep. Aeg. Lib.	27	2	1
Ap. Const.	5	0	2
Ap. de Fuga	2	0	5
HA	5	1	1
CA	852	61	64
Ep. Ser.	376	13	23
De Syn.	221	4	3
Tom. Ant.	16	0	1
Ep. Afr.	36	0	0
Ep. Epic.	17	0	0
Ep. Adelph.	7	0	1
Ep. Max.	2	0	1
Total:	**1828**	**99**	**216**

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