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## Becoming “*all light, all face, all eye*”. Central Aspects of Macarius’ Theology

### Abstract

First, the uncreated Glory (light, theophany) is involved when Macarie talks about becoming “all Light” (as being a participant to the uncreated light and to the *visio Dei*). Those who receive the divine light are anticipating the resurrection-glory of the Age to Come. What now is for the most part an interior glory, though not exclusively, as in the case of Moses and several of the monastic saints of the Desert, will then, in the eschaton, will be shown forth externally in the transfigured bodies of the saints. But Christ Himself is deifying light. This light is ‘theurgic’ in the sense of



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'divinising'. Macarius states that our mixed human nature, which was assumed by the Lord, has taken its seat on the right hand of the divine majesty in the heavens (Heb. 8:1), being full of glory not only (like Moses) in the face, but in the whole body. Golitzin's reading is very important and he emphasizes Macarius' insistence on the divine nature of light (not a νόημα, but an ὑποστατικόν substantial φῶς). So, Macarian expression of "becoming all light, all face, all eye", is about of the interior presence of the Light of Christ, Who is present in the Saints and poured out exteriorly upon their bodies.

Second, becoming "all face" (theo-christophany) means that Christ is both, the face of God and the face of man. The word *face* is itself sometimes deeply significant for the Greek ascetic fathers, and, sometimes, according to Cassidy there is quite a coincidence of the images of the light and the face. The light that illumines the temple of the mind and body is nothing other than the splendour of the Lord's face. Thus, Christ is the iconic revelation of God; Christ reveals God's face. So it is Christ whose indwelling presence radiates the light that illumines the temple of the mind and of the body as well. Christ, the Glory of the Lord, descending upon the mind, dwelling in it and shedding his light upon it and upon the body of the ascet. When Christ abides in the Christian mind, the face of the Christian emulates the Lord's face in the same way that the Christian's mind and body reflects the divine light. This is also a "highly visual epistemology", which reminds us of about the Evagrius Ponticus, *On Thoughts* 24, where he says that *it is also possible for you 'to form in yourself your Father's face'*. Through true prayer, the monk becomes 'equal to the angels' (Lk 20.36), yearning to 'see the face of the Father who is in heaven' (Mt 18.10). But the macarian first interpretation is preserved in the Hesychast method of prayer (mind within the body), through which we carry the Father's light in the face of Jesus Christ in earthen vessels (2 Corinthians

4:6-7), that is, in our bodies and it is related to the transformation of the body during prayer.

Third the expression becoming “all eye” leads us to the apophaticism (a hidden-revealed dialectic). In *Ennead* I.6.9 Plotinus argues that never did eye see the sun unless it had first become sunlike, and never can the soul have vision of the First Beauty unless itself be beautiful. Ephrem also employs the image of the eye. The inner eye of the mind (*Faith* 53:12), or of the soul (*Faith* 5:18), functions by means of faith, in much the same way that the exterior, physical, eyes functions by means of light. The presence of sin darkens this inner eye by keeping out the light of faith, and so, in order that this inner eye may see properly, it needs to be kept lucid and clear. In a short poem *Hymn Thirty-Seven*, Ephrem compares Eve and Mary to the two inner eyes of the world: one is darkened and cannot see clearly, while the other is luminous and operates perfectly. The term which Ephrem uses to describe Mary’s eye is an important one for Syriac Christianity in general (in particular for Saint Isaac of Nineveh). Her eye is *shaphya*, a Syriac word which according to Sebastian Brock has no single translation equivalent in English, but it includes ‘clear, pure, limpid, lucid, luminous’. Furthermore ‘the Luminous One’ is a title which Ephrem employs a considerable number of times with reference to Christ. Ephrem uses the term *shaphya*, and the accompanying abstract noun *shaphyuta*, ‘luminosity’, closely connected with the optical imagery of the eye concerns the mirror. It is prayer that is the mirror: if this mirror is polished and rightly directed, then it will reflect Christ’s beauty. Such prayer will be indeed theophanic, revealing something of the Godhead and it makes us filled with the beauty of the Lord’s face (*Church* 29:9-10). Kingdom of heaven is depicted, visible to those who have a luminous eye. The vision of the luminous eye of faith needs to be enhanced by praise. The image of becoming ‘all eye’, entirely

subsumed in the vision that consumes and unites, goes back to Plotinus. For me this is a form of expressing the apophatic dimension of the experience of prayer. By employing this apophatic theology (all eye), Macarius send to the purity of spiritual mind. It is what allows the light of the Holy Trinity to shine forth at the time of prayer having become all eye. By this supra-intelligible union with this light, St. Gregory Palamas shows us that the doctrine of divine light is revealing to us the Desert Fathers 'missing (i.e., *hidden/apophatic*) Christology', as the 'missing piece' (sic!) of the current studies on Late Antiquity.

#### Keywords

uncreated light, Christ Face, Ps.-Macarius, Gregory Palamas, apophatic theology

## 1 Introduction: 'All Light' – an experience of the indwelling of the Holy Trinity

The 'shining face' with the *Shekinah* of God and the *merkabah* mysticism is found among the early Desert Fathers (Poemen, 144; Silvanus 2; Antony the Great, *Life* 82 and, also, Pambo 12 and Sisoës 14)<sup>1</sup>, whose radiance was a product of inward open-

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<sup>1</sup> *The Sayings of the Desert Fathers. The Alphabetical Collection*, Translated, with a foreword by Benedicta Ward, SLG, Preface by Metropolitan Anthony of Sourozh, Cistercian Publications 59 (Kalamazoo, Michigan: The Institute of Cistercian Studies, Western Michigan University, 1975), pp. 187, 197, 214-215 and 222; Athanasius Alexandrinus, *Vita Antonii*, PG 26, 837-976 in G.J.M. Bartelink, (ed. and tr.) *Vie d'Antoine. Athanase d'Alexandrie*. Introduction, texte critique, traduction, notes et index, Sources Chrétiennes 400 (Paris: Éditions du Cerf, 1994), pp. 345-349.

ness of the heart, having Christ radiant within themselves. Stelios Ramfos describes the faces of these abbas not as flesh which is transformed but rather as rocks which sometimes allow the beholder to glimpse a radiant light shining through the fissures.<sup>2</sup> For Pseudo-Macarius, the vision of divine glory take place not “out there” but within the soul that God has prepared to become his throne and dwelling - “*wholly light, and holly face, and wholly eye*”<sup>3</sup> (*Hom. I.2*). However, in the later monastic tradition, such apocalyptic visions recede, and ecstasies come to be connected more with the vision of light. The light that St Silouan<sup>4</sup> experienced is a characteristic feature of the hesychastic tradition (enhypostatic light as the uncreated radiance of God, a divine energy accessible to the senses).<sup>5</sup> Thus, the light that shines from the genuine monk is a light that reveals, and it resembles the presence of Christ, and the man’s body is rendered transparent, full of light. To Norman Russell, if God is beyond being, yet paradoxically the goal of the spiritual life is becoming one with Him: “*the union with God which the soul achieves is thus not with his hidden transcendence, but with the perceptible radiance by which he goes out of himself to reveal his presence to us*”<sup>6</sup> . For Staniloae ‘face-to-face’ encounter

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<sup>2</sup> Stelios Ramfos, *Like a Pelican in the Wilderness: Reflections on the Sayings of the Desert Fathers* (Brookline MA: Holy Cross Orthodox Press, 2000) pp. 145-154.

<sup>3</sup> Pseudo-Macarius, *Hom. I, 2* in Pseudo-Macarius, *The Fifty Spiritual Homilies and the Great Letter* [tr. of Collection II and *Great Letter* (PG 34 version)] translated, edited and with an introduction by George A. Maloney, S.J. preface by Kallistos Ware (New York, Mahwah: Paulist Press, 1992), p. 31.

<sup>4</sup> Archimandrite Sophrony of Essex, *We Shall See Him As He Is*, translated by Rosemary Edmonds (Tolleshunt Knights, Essex: Patriarchal and Stavropegic Monastery of St. John the Baptist, 1988), p. 156.

<sup>5</sup> Norman Russell, *Fellow Workers with God: Orthodox Thinking on Theosis* (Crestwood, N.Y.: St Vladimir’s Seminary Press, 2009) pp. 121-123.

<sup>6</sup> Russell, *Fellow Workers with God*, p. 145.

whith God becomes a "mutual interpenetration"<sup>7</sup> or mutual indwelling between God and man. This divine-human communion is described as such: "*Likeness also means a radiation of the presence of God from within man. In those who love one another and are found within a reciprocal interiority, the face of the one is stamped with the features of the other, and these features shine forth actively from within him... the faces of the saints even here on earth have something of the eschatological plane of eternity in their appearance, that plane through which God's features will be fully reflected, and his energies will radiate*".<sup>8</sup>

Therefore, all these insights of the modern scholars have as a prime source the macarian corpus, a crucial moment in the development of Orthodox spirituality, a great synthesis to which all the Byzantine theologians will refer to it ulteriorly. However, in this study, we will follow only the coincidence of the 'face' and 'light' Syrian terms, and its cognate extension, the "shining face" spirituality. The presentation will be made within the context of the 'Face Christology' regarded, in Macarius understanding, as the 'Hypostatic (*substantial*) Light' manifestation of the Christ presence through the light of the Holy Spirit. The main macarian text, from which we will start, is that in which he says that, through the participation in the light of the Holy Spirit, the soul becomes his throne and habitation: "*covered with the ineffable glory of the Spirit, he becomes all light, all face, all eye*" and, thus, there is no part of the soul that is not "*full of*

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<sup>7</sup> Dumitru Stăniloae, *Orthodox Spirituality: A Practical Guide for the Faithful and a Definitive Manual for the Scholar*, Translated from the Romanian by Archimandrite Jerome and Otilia Kloos (South Canaan, Pennsylvania: St. Tikhon's Seminary Press, 2002), p. 304.

<sup>8</sup> Dumitru Stăniloae, *Orthodox Dogmatic Theology: The Experience of God, Vol. 1: Revelation and Knowledge of the Triune God*, foreword by Kallistos Ware; translated and edited by Ioan Ionita and Robert Baranger (Brookline, MA: Holy Cross Orthodox Press, 1998), p. 226.

*the spiritual eyes of light*" (*Hom.* II.1:2).<sup>9</sup> Here, Macarius ignores the mystical darkness (*gnophos*) and develops much on the transforming light of the risen Lord Jesus through his Holy Spirit, which makes Christians into sharers in Christ's Taboric light by the lived experience of the Holy Spirit found it by him to the monks of Syria around Mesopotamia. The fifty homilies begins with the homily on the vision of the prophet Ezekiel (Ez 1:4-2:3). Here we see the covering of the human soul with the beauty and ineffable glory of God's Spirit from within the soul, using the restoration of this inner light. The recovering of this light is the goal to which Macarius wants to lead Christians.<sup>10</sup>

Furthermore, says G. Maloney, Macarius stresses the existential transformation of the total human person, body, soul, and spirit, into the experienced indwelling of the Trinity. Such a spirituality goes beyond human reason. In its apophatic but experien-

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<sup>9</sup> Pseudo-Macarius, *The Fifty Spiritual Homilies and the Great Letter* [tr. of Collection II and *Great Letter* (PG 34 version)] translated, edited and with an introduction by George A. Maloney, S.J. preface by Kallistos Ware (New York, Mahwah: Paulist Press, 1992), p. 31. For the translations history of the manuscripts of the Macarian corpus, see: H. Berthold, *Makarios/Symeon, Reden und Briefe. Die Sammlung I des Vaticanus Graecus 694 (B)*, 2 vols. (GCS 55-6; Berlin 1973) [= I]; H. Dörries, E. Klostermann, and M. Kroeger, *Die 50 Geistlichen Homilien des Makarios* (PTS 4; Berlin 1964) [= II (1-50)]; G. L. Marriott, *Macarii Anecdota: Seven Unpublished Homilies of Macarius* (Harvard Theological Studies 5; Cambridge, Mass. 1918) [= II (51-7)]; V. Desprez, *Pseudo-Macaire: Oeuvres spirituelles, i: Homélie propre à la Collection III* (SC 275; Paris 1980) [= III]; W. Strothmann, *Makarios/Symeon: das arabische Sondergut* (Göttinger Orientforschungen, Series I: Syriaca 11; Wiesbaden 1975) [= TV]; R. Staats, *Makarios-Symeon: Epistola Magna. Eine messalianische Mönchsregel und ihre Umschrift in Gregors von Nyssa 'De Instituto Christiano'* (Göttingen 1984) [= EM]; G. Palmer, P. Sherrard, and K. T. Ware, (tr.) *The Philokalia*, vol. iii (London 1984) [tr. of The 150 Chapters].

<sup>10</sup> George A. Maloney, "Introduction" to Pseudo-Macarius, *The Fifty Spiritual Homilies and the Great Letter*, pp. 11-12.

tial<sup>11</sup> knowledge of the 'heart' and the stress on the conscious awareness of the indwelling Trinity through grace as uncreated energies of love. The apophatic approach in the Macarius' *Homilies* is only apparently neglect. He has, in fact, a strong awareness of God as mystery who is described through the symbolism of fire and light (a decisive influence in Byzantine Hesychasm). Such an affective spirituality sought to integrate body, soul, and spirit in prayer to experience God's indwelling presence in the purified Christian as a transforming light.<sup>12</sup> The experience of light shows that Christ shines his light and lives within the mystic and changes into the light those whom it illuminates. Thus, the hidden God was not completely resolved even with the Incarnation of Christ. The radiant, glorified face of the desert ascetics expresses the man's fulfillment of the image and likeness of God. The Transfiguration of Christ was the model, quite literally, for the transfiguration of the saint, and the Thaboric light was the same as the light that lit the body of the

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<sup>11</sup> In apophatic experience, however, there is a form of knowledge. It has a positive content of knowledge beyond knowledge, an apophatic knowledge, experience and feeling beyond the experience and natural feeling. This „positive content” comes from the fact that the experience of divine light is not a „vacuum,” but the overwhelming feeling of God's presence, an experience of divinity. See, Dumitru Stăniloae, *Orthodox Spirituality: A Practical Guide for the Faithful and a Definitive Manual for the Scholar* (Waymart, PA: St. Tikhon's Seminary Press, 2003) pp. 194, 242-3; Adrian Agachi, *The Neo-Palamite Synthesis of Father Dumitru Stăniloae* (Cambridge Scholars Publishing, 2013), p. 73.

<sup>12</sup> We will see that this Macarian theme is the beginning of the Thaboric light, the goal of the hesychastic mysticism of St. Symeon the New Theologian and St. Gregory Palamas. St. Symeon the New Theologian describes the awareness of the presence of the indwelling Trinity, the experience of grace, the mysticism of the indwelling Spirit and the need for the baptism in the Spirit, along with the mysticism of Jesus Christ as light, all showing a strong Macarian influence. St. Seraphim of Sarov experience of the indwelling Trinity as transforming even the body with its Thaboric light, find it's source in Macarius.



saint from the inside.<sup>13</sup> The idea of the Taboric light, as a luminous vision of God, made perceptible even to the eyes of the body<sup>14</sup>, was to develop in the fourteenth century with the Hesychasts of Mount Athos. Therefore, I can safely say, as we will demonstrate, that Macarius himself conceive the light in this way, not just as a symbol of God's indwelling presence in the more advanced Christian, but as a real presence through this uncreated light, because Macarius' insistence is on the divine and objective nature of the light which appears - not a νόημα, a product of the intellect, but an ὑποστατικόν φῶς "substantial

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<sup>13</sup> Andreas Andreopoulos, *Metamorphosis: The Transfiguration in Byzantine Theology And Iconography* (Crestwood, N.Y.: St. Vladimir's Seminary Press, 2005), p. 244. The contemplative prayer of the ascetics of the desert was sometimes accompanied by the experience of the uncreated light, something we can see as early as pseudo-Makarios in the four century, where the experience of the light was already connected with the Transfiguration of Christ. The Desert Fathers contributed to the developing of a theology of light. It is impressive that virtually all ascetics who had the experience of the uncreated light or were transfigured themselves describe it in very similar ways as Christ's Transfiguration. But it is only in later hesychasm that we are assured convincingly that these experiences were in the body, and that the body somehow participated in them. Within the context of this theology of light, the Eastern Church developed specific strands of the theological thought - apophatic, cataphatic, and hesychastic (Andreopoulos, *Metamorphosis*, p. 89).

<sup>14</sup> Christopher Veniamin, *The Orthodox Understanding of Salvation: 'Theosis' in Scripture and Tradition* (Dalton, PA: Mount Thabor Publishing, 2014), pp. 164-165 (Gregory the Sinaite), p. 176 (Gregory Palamas). Christopher Veniamin analyzes the connection between Palamas, *Hom. 34, Tr. i.3.7* and Macarius, *Hom. V.10*: The light which shone from the face of Moses, now shines in the soul of the saints. Palamas, he says, asserts that the divine Light, not being a sensible, physical light, cannot be seen merely by the physical eyes of the body, but they were enabled by the power of the divine Spirit, to see the vision of the Light of Tabor. They were changed and in this way they saw the change. The divine Light, then, is visible to the physical eyes of the body, and it was actually seen by the eyes of the Apostles at the Transfiguration.

light" (II.183.14-15).<sup>15</sup> We will also analyze the relation between "blue sapphire" of the mind and the uncreated light of the Holy Trinity to Evagrius and the importance of the terms *shaphya*, 'luminous' in Syriac fathers.

## 2 ***Panim* (פָּנִים, paw-neem or paneh), the Hebrew word for "Face" and *Shekinah* (הַשְּׁכִינָה), the "tabernacling Presence" of God. Moses' face embodied the holiness and glory of YHWH**

For the beginning, we want to show that two independent researchers in the biblical studies (N.T. Wright and David H. Wenkel), both make the same connection between the Face-Person (*panim*, פָּנִים) and the Light-Glory (*Shekinah*, הַשְּׁכִינָה) as self-manifestation of God and the human real participation as we have seen on Moses' shining face. So, in the Bible, says N.T. Wright, the idea of God's Presence forms itself into a story. The Creator is present with his human creatures in the original creation, "walking in the garden at the time of the evening breeze" (Gen. 3:8). The theme continues with Jacob, running away into exile, who has a vision of a ladder between heaven and earth, with God standing at the top; Jacob names the place Bethel, the "house of God". God is coming to dwell with his people in the tabernacle in the wilderness, a tabernacle that was designed as a miniature heaven-and-earth, a "little world" in which God and his people would meet. It would be a miniature Eden, where it

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<sup>15</sup> The first to support this is Father Alexander Golitzin, *Mystagogy: A Monastic Reading of Dionysius Areopagita* (Collegeville, MN: Cistercian Publications, Liturgical Press, 2013), p. 31. Golitzin says that Gregory Palamas himself draws the connection between Macarius' light and Dionysius (Golitzin, *Mystagogy*, p. 393).

is possible a direct contact with the holy God himself. The place of meeting, according to Exodus 25:17–22, was the lid (*kappōreth*; in Greek *hilastērion*) of the ark where God would meet with his people. The prophet Nathan, responding to David’s proposal to build God a “house,” declared that God would instead build David a “house”: “YHWH will build you a house..., I will raise up your seed after you, who shall come forth from your body, and I will establish his kingdom. He shall build a house for my name, and I will establish the throne of his kingdom forever. I will be a father to him, and he shall be a son to me (2 Sam. 7:11–14)”. David’s ultimate son will be, in a tantalizingly special yet unspecific sense, God’s own son. The living God will dwell forever among his people, but not in a building; it will be in and as a human being, the ultimate son of David. So, David’s projected “house” turned out to be a human being.<sup>16</sup>

When Solomon built the Temple, the divine Glory did indeed come to dwell in it. The magnificent scene is described in 1 Kings 8, which comments that the priests were unable to stand before the glorious divine Presence (v. 11). This was a sign of the ultimate intention that the divine Glory would fill the whole earth (Ps. 72:19). Indeed, in the later vision of the prophet Isaiah, the angels surrounding the divine Presence sang that the whole earth was already full of his glory (6:3). The destruction of the Temple was only possible, according to Ezekiel, because the glorious divine Presence had finally abandoned it to its fate. Ezekiel provides a graphic description, in chapters 10 and 11, of the divine Glory (whirling wheels and all) leaving the Temple, alighting briefly on the Mount of Olives, and then taking off for an unknown destination. The Glory had departed. However, it is to Ezekiel, toward the end of his book in chapter 43, that we

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<sup>16</sup> N. T. Wright, *The Day the Revolution Began: Reconsidering the Meaning of Jesus’s Crucifixion* (New York: HarperCollins, 2016), pp. 111–114.

owe one of the fullest descriptions of the divine Glory returning to a rebuilt Temple. In Isaiah 40-55 the prophet declares that the Glory of YHWH will be revealed once more and all flesh shall see it because sins have been forgiven.<sup>17</sup> However, in chapters 52 and 53, the most striking of all biblical images about one person suffering and dying on behalf of the many. Notable on the list of what was missing in the Second Temple was the *Shekinah* (the "tabernacling Presence" of God) itself, the glorious divine Presence. In Jesus's day, the hope was alive that the Glory would return at last.

Therefore, to all these questions, stress Wright, the New Testament writers offer an answer that is so unexpected: "*The Word became flesh, and lived among us. We gazed upon his glory, glory like that of the father's only son, full of grace and truth*" (John 1:14). The word for "lived" here is *eskēnosen*, "tabernacled," "pitched his tent." John is saying that in Jesus the new tabernacle, the new Temple, has been built, and the divine Glory has returned at last. The "Word" who was and is God has become flesh. The vehicle of this glory is the "father's only son", coming as a human being and, as Isaiah had promised, unveiling the divine Glory before all the nations.<sup>18</sup>

The Hebrew word for face (פָּנִים) is transliterated as *panim* (paw-NEEM) or *paneh*. In fact, the Hebrew word (פָּנִים, *panim*) can communicate either face or presence: "*The capacity of people to physically reflect the glory of God in their bodies and particularly in the face has received little attention. It is true that the human body reveals God's amazing power. In this sense, the body*

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<sup>17</sup> Ibidem, pp. 114-115.

<sup>18</sup> Ibidem, pp. 116-117. He says that the moment when that Glory is fully unveiled is the moment when Jesus is crucified. Instead, according to the orthodox understanding, this moment is on Tabor as Transfiguration' light and in the resurrection light also.

is part of general revelation and ‘an important form of God’s self-disclosure’. However, what about the human body’s capacity for ‘special’ revelation as God’s radiating glory? The lack of attention to this question is surprising given the vast amount of literature devoted to texts such as the Mount of Transfiguration (Matt. 17:1–9) and Paul’s discussion of Moses’s shining face (2 Cor. 3).<sup>19</sup> Their faces and bodies become vessels of the divine nature. The human body, and especially the face of a person, can communicate one’s relationship with God. The Bible testifies that the face is the “essence of a person.”<sup>20</sup> A Christophany is related to a theophany, and when we read Exodus within the context of the entire Old Testament, the best theological term to describe YHWH’s appearance as a man is “Christophany.”<sup>21</sup> The human body is made in the image of God and was originally designed to embody holiness. We were designed, says Wenkel, to have a face-to-face relationship with God (פנים מִיְנֵפֶלֶא, panim el-panim, πρόσωπον πρὸς πρόσωπον, prosōpon pros prosōpon).<sup>22</sup> So, the ascetics can physically reflect the glory and holiness of God when they meet him face to face, the way the human body can

<sup>19</sup> David H. Wenkel, *Shining Like the Sun. A Biblical Theology of Meeting God Face to Face* (Wooster, OH: Weaver Book Company, 2016), p. 3.

<sup>20</sup> Nonna Vernon Harrison, *God’s Many-Splendored Image: Theological Anthropology for Christian Formation* (Grand Rapids: Baker, 2010), p. 7; and Charles A. Gieschen, *Angelomorphic Christology: Antecedents and Early Evidence* (AGJU 42; Leiden: Brill, 1998), p. 141, n. 59.

<sup>21</sup> D. H. Wenkel, *Shining Like the Sun*, 8. For a critique of this position, see Andrew S. Malone, “The Invisibility of God: A Survey of a Misunderstood Phenomenon,” *EQ* 79, no. 4 (2007): pp. 311–29.

<sup>22</sup> *Ibidem*, p. 21. In the first instance the people do not “know” (עדי) (what has happened to Moses (32:1). In the second instance Moses does not “know” (עדי) (that his face is shining (34:29). Lord has shown him his glory (34:5–7). His face was radiant (פָּאָרָה בְּנֹרָא) because of his speaking with him” [that is, with the Lord] 34:29). See, on this: Joshua M. Philpot, “Exodus 34:29–35 and Moses’ Shining Face” *Bulletin for Biblical Research* 23, no. 1 (2013): pp. 1–11, here p. 8.

function as a vessel that reflects God's holiness and glory. The human body is capable of being a vessel in which rays of God's glory shine through. Therefore, the people of Israel would see the face (*panim*, פָּנִים) of Moses, that the skin of Moses' face (פְּנֵי פָּנִים, *panim*) was shining. Moreover, Moses would put the veil over his face (פָּנֵי , *panim*) again until he went in to speak with him (Exod. 34:34–35). What Moses' shining face looked like has been debated for some time.<sup>23</sup> The Septuagint translation of Exodus 34:29 uses the vocabulary of glory (δοξάζω, *doxazō*) for the Hebrew verb "to send out rays of light" (קָרַן, *qaran*). So, Wenkel emphasizes that one of the primary focal points that the biblical authors used when referring to the body's ability to communicate holiness is the face.

The word face is itself sometimes profoundly significant for the Greek ascetic fathers.<sup>24</sup> One thinks of the startling and evocative anecdote related in the *Apophthegmata Patrum* about Macarius the Great, which suggests that face-to-face contact provides a kind of solace to those suffering in Hell.<sup>25</sup> Abba Paul the

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<sup>23</sup> Ibidem, pp. 35-37. One of the strongest pieces of evidence for the fact that a face-to-face encounter with God will physically change a person's appearance is the textual unit of Exodus 34:29-32. Moses' face embodied the holiness and glory of YHWH. The glory on Moses' face was not only brilliant, but permanent. See, also: David H. Wenkel, "A New Reading of Anointing with Oil in James 5:14: Finding First-Century Common Ground in Moses' Glorious Face," *HBT* 35 (2013): 174; and Scott J. Hafemann, "The Glory and Veil of Moses in 2 Corinthians 3:7-14," in Gregory K. Beale (ed.), *The Right Doctrine from the Wrong Texts?* (Grand Rapids: Baker, 1994), p. 296.

<sup>24</sup> Augustine Casiday, *Reconstructing the Theology of Evagrius Ponticus: Beyond Heresy* (Cambridge University Press, New York 2013), p. 173.

<sup>25</sup> Abba Macarius the Great, 38: "Abba Macarius said, 'Walking in the desert one day, I found the skull of a dead man, lying on the ground. As I was moving it with my stick, the skull spoke to me. I said to it, 'Who are you?' The skull replied, 'I was high priest of the idols and of the pagans who dwelt in this place; but you are Macarius, the Spirit-bearer. Whene-

Simple was reputed to have the gift of “seeing the state of each man’s soul, just as we see their faces.”<sup>26</sup>

### 3 From *Shekhina* to *shaphyutha* (*shaphya*) or *iqara*. Clothed with light from His presence within them (verbs *šrā* and *mar*) – the Syrian development and legacy of the light vision spirituality

We must, also, to observe the importance of the terms *shaphya*, *shaphyutha*, ‘luminous’, ‘luminosity’ as being the ‘key terms’ in

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*ver you take pity on those who are in torments, and pray for them, they feel a little respite.’ The old man said to him, ‘What is this alleviation, and what is this torment?’ He said to him, ‘As far as the sky is removed from the earth, so great is the fire beneath us; we are ourselves standing in the midst of the fire, from the feet up to the head. It is not possible to see anyone face to face, but the face of one is fixed to the back of another. Yet when you pray for us, each of us can see the other’s face a little. Such is our respite.’”; in *The Sayings of the Desert Fathers. The Alphabetical Collection*, Translated, with a foreword by Benedicta Ward, SLG, Preface by Metropolitan Anthony of Sourozh, Cistercian Publications 59 (Kalamazoo, Michigan: The Institute of Cistercian Studies, Western Michigan University, 1975), pp. 136-137.*

<sup>26</sup> *Abba Paul the Simple*, 1: “Blessed Abba Paul the Simple, the disciple of Abba Anthony, told the Fathers that which follows: One day he went to a monastery to visit it and to make himself useful to the brethren. After the customary conference, the brothers entered the holy church of God to perform the synaxis there, as usual. Blessed Paul looked carefully at each of those who entered the church observing the spiritual disposition with which they went to the synaxis, for he had received the grace from the Lord of seeing the state of each one’s soul, just as we see their faces. When all had entered with sparkling eyes and shining faces, with each one’s angel rejoicing over him, he said, ‘I see one who is black and his whole body is dark; [...]. Shortly after the end of the synaxis, as everyone was coming out, Paul scrutinized each one, wanting to know in what state they were coming away. He saw that man, previously black and gloomy, coming out of the church with a shining face and white body, the demons accompanying him only at a distance, while his holy angel was following close to him, rejoicing greatly over him” (*The Sayings of the Desert Fathers*, pp. 205-206).

the great East Syrian writers on the spiritual life in the seventh and eighth centuries, (Ephrem, John of Apamea and Philoxenus of Mabbugh).<sup>27</sup> There is another phrase connected with the heart which is also worth noticing: 'the soil/land of the heart',<sup>28</sup> found it first in Ephrem's hymns (*Heresies 28:11*), but also among Greek authors, as Hesychius of Sinai.<sup>29</sup> Again, Ephrem frequently employs the verbs 'mix', 'mingle' in order to describe divine activity within creation : "*The Firstborn put on real limbs and was mingled in with humanity: He gave what belongs to Him and took what belongs to us, so that His mingling might give life to our mortal state*" (*Heresies 32:9*).<sup>30</sup> This sort of language was not strictly Christological, but it remained a central way of describing the interaction between human and divine in almost all later Syriac writers on the spiritual life.

The entire purpose of the Incarnation is to reclothe Adam, that is humanity, in this lost 'robe of glory': "*Christ came to find Adam who had gone astray, He came to return him to Eden in the garment of light*" (*Virginity 16:9*).<sup>31</sup> In the Targum tradition, for

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<sup>27</sup> *The Syriac Fathers on Prayer and the Spiritual Life* (translated by Sebastian Brock, Cistercian Studies 101; Kalamazoo, Michigan: Cistercian Publications, 1987), xxviii-xxxi. *Shaphya* is an adjective which is especially used to describe the state of the heart or the mind.

<sup>28</sup> *Martyrius (Sahdona). Œuvres spirituelle. I. Livre de la perfection, I<sup>e</sup> partie* (coll. CSCO, 200/Syr. 86 et 201/Syr. 87, Leuven, 1960, édition du texte syriaque et traduction française par André de Halleux), p. 100.

<sup>29</sup> PG 93, col. 1493C. See further S. Brock, "The spirituality of the heart in Syrian tradition," *The Harp* 1:2/3 (1987), pp.93-115.

<sup>30</sup> Sebastian Brock, *The Luminous Eye. The Spiritual World Vision of Saint Ephrem* (Kalamazoo, Michigan: Cistercian Publications, 1985), p. 156. The concept of "eye of faith" sent to the concept of sight as insight.

<sup>31</sup> For further details, see Sebastian Brock, "Clothing Metaphors as a Means of Theological Expression in Syriac Tradition," in Margot Schmidt (ed.), *Typus, Symbol, Allegorie bei den östlichen Vätern und ihren Parallelen im Mittelalter* (Regensburg: Pustet, 1982) pp. 11-38; Daniel Belnap, "Clothed with Salvation: The Garden, the Veil, Tabitha,



Genesis 3:21 we find not the ‘garments of skin’ (‘wr), but ‘clothing of glory’ (‘wr) (only a single letter’s difference in Hebrew text) because they had been stripped of the glory. This is very close to the Syriac writers usage.<sup>32</sup>

In a remarkable *Hymn 2* on Christ in the river Jordan and in the womb of Mary, Ephrem links these two aspects: Christ’s baptism in ‘the womb’ of the Jordan looks back in time to His conception in Mary’s womb. Both wombs, Mary’s and the Jordan’s, by bearing Christ the Light, are clothed with light from His presence within them;<sup>33</sup> Mary’s womb thus becomes the source

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and Christ” *Studies in the Bible and Antiquity* 4 (2012): pp. 43-69; and Nichifor Tănase, “From ‘Veil’ (*Καταπέτασμα*) Theology to ‘Face’ (*Πρόσωπον*) Christology. Body as a Veil concealing Divine Glory - Direct Experience and Immediate Perception (*Αἴσθησις*) of God,” *Studia Universitatis Babeş-Bolyai Theologia Orthodoxa* 62, no. 2 (2017): 119-182, here pp. 130-139.

<sup>32</sup> S. Brock, *The Luminous Eye*, p. 87.

<sup>33</sup> Hannah Hunt, *Clothed in the Body. Asceticism, the Body and the Spiritual in the Late Antique Era* (Ashgate Studies in Philosophy & theology in Late Antiquity; Farnham-Burlington: Ashgate, 2012) pp. 100-103; 142-157. Like Climacus, Macarius draws on images from the secular world to reinforce his point about the fully aspect of Christ; he draws an analogy between the physical flesh of Jesus and the ‘royal purple’ worn by the emperor to denote his status: “For just as the purple is glorified together with the emperor is not venerated apart from the purple, so the flesh of the Lord is glorified together with the divinity, and Christ is venerated with his flesh”, *Homily 20* (1), Maloney, *Pseudo-Macarius*, p. 150, apud Hunt, *Clothed in the Body*, p. 133. Gregory Palamas is using the same analogy between the physical flesh of Jesus and the ‘royal purple’; see *Saint Gregory Palamas: The Homilies*, ed. and trans. by Christopher Veniamin (Mount Thabor Publishing, 2016) pp. 460-468. But, also, this remind us of Appa Aphou from Pemdje (*Oxyrhynchus*) and his *Kaiserbildargument* (the argument of the image of Emperor). Aphou argues that the human body is the locus of the image of God; on this see: Dmitrij F. Bumazhnov, „Zur Interpretatin der Vita des seligen Aphu von Pemdje”, *Origeniana Octava: Origen and the Alexandrian Tradition* (Leuven University Press, 2003), pp. 987-993; Paul Andrew Patterson, *Visions of Christ: The Anthropomorphite Controversy of 399 CE*, (Mohr Siebeck: Tübingen, 2012) pp. 51-59; Hugo Lundhaug, “The

of her own baptism, the Jordan's womb becomes the fountain-head of Christian baptism: "As the Daystar in the river, the Bright One in the tomb, He shone forth on the mountain top and gave brightness too in the womb; He dazzled as He went up from the river, gave illumination at His ascent. The brightness which Moses put on was wrapped on him from without, whereas the river in which Christ was baptized was clothed in light from within;<sup>34</sup> so too did Mary's body, in which He resided, gleam from within" (Church 36:3-6).<sup>35</sup>

The concept of an eschatological robe of glory is found in the inter-testamental Judaism, and it is familiar to Ephrem also. The parable of the wedding guest in Matthew 22 can also serve to illustrate the tension between the baptismal and eschatological roles of the robe of glory. Thus, in the Paradise Hymns, he

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Body of God and the Corpus of Historiography. The Life of Aphou of Pemdje and the Anthropomorphite Controversy" in Anne Hege Grung, Marianne Bjelland Kartzow și Anna Rebecca Solevåg (eds), *Bodies, Borders, Believers. Ancient Texts and Present Conversations* (Wipf and Stock, 2015) pp. 40-57 and N. Tănase, "Body ('epsoma') and Glory/Light ('peooy'). Apa Aphou and the pre-nicene ascetic Christology" in Daniel Lemeni (ed.), *Dumnezeu - izvorul înțelepciunii : teologie și educație ascetică la Sfinții Părinți* (Astra Museum, Sibiu: 2016) pp. 43-71.

<sup>34</sup> The divine light was seen shining in the faces of the Desert Fathers. We find there the 'missing Christology': "The Apophthegmata says nothing about Christology; it neither touches on nor encourages such theological concerns. Is this silence intentional? It is an intriguing possibility" (Harmless, *Desert Christians*, p. 250).

<sup>35</sup> S. Brock, *The Luminous Eye*, 91-92. The idea is that Mary 'put on the robe of glory', at her second - baptismal - birth, from Christ's presence in her womb. See also, Sebastian Brock, "St Ephrem on Christ as Light in Mary and in the Jordan: Hymni de Ecclesia 36", *Eastern Churches Review*, vol. 7 (1975): pp. 137-144, at 138. Sebastian Brock, *Bride of Light: Hymns on Mary from the Syriac Churches* (Moran Etho 6, Gorgias Press LLC, 2010) pp. 19-22. Ephrem compares the 'small womb of Eve's ear' with the 'new ear' of Mary, who hearing Gabriel's message then carries Jesus in her womb as in *Hymn on the Church* 49 (7).

writes: “Among the saints, none is naked, for they have put on glory; (...) for they have found, through our Lord, the robe that belonged to Adam and Eve” (*Paradise 6:9*).<sup>36</sup>

Ephrem employs the term *shra* ‘reside’ in place of *aggen*<sup>37</sup> alluding to Luke 1:35 and John 1:14. *Shra* is an archaism inherited by them from the very earliest period of Syriac Christianity, based on an oral, rather than a written, Gospel. Thus, he uses the verb *shra*, ‘take up residence, dwell’ for its rich sacral background in Jewish Aramaic. It is this term that Ephrem regularly uses concerning Christ’s presence both in Mary’s womb and in the consecrated Bread and Wine.<sup>38</sup> Such usage is entirely apt when seen against the background of Jewish Aramaic where the verb is employed especially in connection with the Shekhinah, the divine presence, and the *iqara*, divine glory.<sup>39</sup> Therefore, the restoration of Adam’s tripartite nature of his humanity, consisting of intellectual spirit (*tar’itha*), soul (*naphsha*) and body

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<sup>36</sup> S. Brock, *The Luminous Eye*, pp. 96-97.

<sup>37</sup> The term becomes a technical one to denote the activity of the Holy Spirit, among other places at the epiclesis during the Eucharistic Liturgy—yet a further link between Incarnation and Eucharist. As was to happen later with the term *aggen*, so too the term *shra* came to be extended to other salvific events: thus Ephrem uses it both of the action of Christ’s body in the Jordan, and of the Holy Spirit upon the disciples at Pentecost (*Faith 14:12*).

<sup>38</sup> Christ is said to ‘reside’ (*shra*) in Mary’s womb: “In Nisan the Lord of thunder / in His mercy modified His might, / descended and took up residence (*shra*) in / Mary’s womb” (*Resurrection 4:10*) and “Blessed is He who took up residence in the womb / and built there a temple wherein to dwell (John 2:21), / a shrine in which to be, / a garment in which He might shine out.” (*Nativity 3:20*). For the use of this verb in a Eucharistic context we need only return once more to the tenth hymn on Faith: “The Fire of compassion descended / and took up residence (*shra*) in the Bread” (*Faith 10:12*). Just as the Divinity ‘took up residence’ in Mary’s womb, so too does the divine ‘hidden power’ in the Bread and Wine ‘take up residence’ in the communicant.

<sup>39</sup> S. Brock, *The Luminous Eye*, pp. 111-112.

(*gushma*), means that he has become a god (*Hymns on Virginity*, 48:15-18).<sup>40</sup>

Aphrahat, also, uses for "glory" and "radiance" the terms *iqara* and *ziwa*.<sup>41</sup> *Iqara* serves in the Syriac Bible (*Peshitta*) as the rendering of the Hebrew *kabod*, the theophanic term *par excellence* in Hebrew Bible, and the term *ziwa* is denoting the brilliance of the divine Presence (Light of the Shekinah). Evagrius in the *De oratione* also uses *κρᾶσις* to describe the body.<sup>42</sup> In the *Kephalaia gnostica*, he uses some mixing language; the *voŭc* when 'mixed' (Syr. *netmazzag*) with the light of the Trinity will possess the soul like fire possessing a body (2. 29).<sup>43</sup> In Maximus the Confessor, the notion of the vision of the divine light plays a significant role. He describes the state of the intellect when it, being full "illuminated by the divine and infinite light, it

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<sup>40</sup> S. Brock, *The Luminous Eye*, pp. 152-154. The doctrine of *theosis* or divinization, as Ephrem understands it, is just a way of making explicit what it means to become 'children of God', seeing that in the Semitic languages the term *bar*, 'son of', may have the sense of 'sharing in the attributes of' or 'belonging to the category of'.

<sup>41</sup> G. H. Gwilliam, *The Place of the Peshitto Version in the Apparatus Criticus of the Greek New Testament* (Analecta Gorgiana 4, Gorgias Press LLC, 2006). This essay by Gwilliam explores the vital role of the Syriac Peshitta for textual criticism of the New Testament. While maintaining the priority of the Greek, Gwilliam explores connections and disagreements between the Syriac and the traditional text. Fellow of Hertford College and editor of the influential *Oxford Peshito*, Gwilliam along with P. E. Pusey published a standard-setting critical edition of the *Peshitta*.

<sup>42</sup> *Orat.* 68 (col. 1181 B).

<sup>43</sup> Antoine Guillaumont, *Les Six Centuries des "Kephalaia Gnostica" d'Évagre le Pontique. Édition critique de la version syriaque commune et édition d'une nouvelle version syriaque, intégrale, avec une double traduction française*, in *Patrologia Orientalis* 28:1 (Paris: Éditions Brepols, 1958), p. 73.

remains insensible to any created being".<sup>44</sup> The highest state of the intellect is when it finds itself in the light of the Holy Trinity, as Maximos states. Mystical illumination by the divine light takes place during prayer: in this Maximos is close to Evagrius. Having reached this stage of prayer, the intellect becomes totally transfigured by enduring participation in the divine illumination it has become altogether shining brightly. The transfiguration of the intellect is described in Maximos regarding 'mingling': "the intellect is totally mingled (ἐγκραθείς) with the light of the Spirit".<sup>45</sup> This is the Evagrian concept of the mingling between the intellect and the divine light.<sup>46</sup>

The Trinity itself, however, is not 'mixed' (Syr. *mmazgā*) with contemplation (Syr. *te'awriya'*, the cognate of *θεωρία*), for such a connection is a quality confined to created beings (5. 55).<sup>47</sup> The Syriac verb used to translate *οἰκέω*, *ἐνοικέω* and *κατοικέω*, in the Peshitta New Testament is 'mar'. This word does further duty, translating *μῆν* at John 14:10 and 17, and the prepositional phrases *ἐν ὑμῖν* at I Corinthians 6:19 (*τὸ σῶμα ὑμῶν ναὸς τοῦ ἐν ὑμῖν ἁγίου πνεύματός ἐστιν*) and *ἐν αὐτοῖς* at 1 Peter 1:11

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<sup>44</sup> Cf. St. Maximus the Confessor, *The Four Hundred Chapters on Love*, 1.10, in *Philokalia vol 2*. The Complete Text compiled by St Nikodimos of the Holy Mountain and St Makarios of Corinth, translated from the Greek and edited by G. E. H. Palmer, Philip Sherrard and Kallistos Ware (Faber and Faber: London, 1984), pp. 54-55.

<sup>45</sup> St. Maximus the Confessor, *Questiones et dubia* 80. 68-70, in *St. Maximus the Confessor's Questions and Doubts* translated by Despina D. Prassas (Northern Illinois University Press, 2009) pp. 170-171. But there is also a bodily illumination or deification, because, as Adam G. Cooper says, for Maximus, "Deified creation already exists 'wholly deified' as the body of Christ"; cf. Adam G. Cooper, *The Body in St. Maximus the Confessor: Holy Flesh, Wholly Deified* (Oxford University Press, 2005), p. 251.

<sup>46</sup> Hilarion Alfeyev, *St. Symeon the New Theologian and Orthodox Tradition* (Oxford University Press, 2011), p. 230.

<sup>47</sup> A. Guillaumont, *Les Six Centuries des "Kephalaia Gnostica"*, p. 201.

(ἐν αὐτοῖς πνεῦμα Χριστοῦ). When the Lord is asked to come and dwell in someone, the verb used is *mar*. The bodies of the pure are worthy to become clean temples in which the Messiah shall dwell (*ne' mar*), being Filled with the Holy Spirit. Thus, according to Stewart, Early Syriac Literature, like the *Odes of Solomon*, provide two early examples of dwelling images, both using *mar*: "He has caused to dwell in me (*a' mar*, *aph' el*) His immortal life" (*Ode 10*) and "light from Him dwells (*āmar*) in them" (*Ode 32*). Also, the *Acts of Judas Thomas* illustrate the kind of dwelling language which is frequently found in Aphrahat's and Ephrem's writings. In the *Acts*, the verbs *šrā* and *mar* are used to describe the mode of the Spirit's presence with a person or in a sacramental act. The sense of both verbs is 'to abide' or 'to dwell' and *šrā* is used twice with *mar* in mutually reinforcing statements, such as Judas Thomas's prayer 'that the word of Christ may dwell (*tešrē*) in all of you and abide (*te' mar*) with you'. A similar epiclesis is prayed over the baptismal oil. Usually, however, these epicletic formulae use *šrā*, often following *etā*, 'come' so that the prayer is a twofold petition asking that the Spirit, or the Lord's power, come and then remain in the person or sacramental signs.<sup>48</sup>

The theme of the divine light was extensively discussed by the Syriac mystical writers of the seventh and eighth centuries,

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<sup>48</sup> Columba Stewart, *Working the Earth of the Heart. The Messalian Controversy in History, Texts, and Language to AD 431*, (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1991) p. 211. Peter Widdicombe, *The Fatherhood of God from Origen to Athanasius* (Oxford University Press, 2004) pp. 159-233; and for a much more expansive and balanced understanding of the 'monarchy' within the Trinity, see Chrysostom Koutloumousianos, *One and the Three, The: Nature, Person and Triadic Monarchy in the Greek and Irish Patristic Tradition* (James Clarke & Co: Cambridge, 2015) pp. 3-48.

especially by Isaac of Nineveh<sup>49</sup>, Joseph Hazzaya<sup>50</sup>, and John of Dalyatha.<sup>51</sup> In the works of Isaac the Syrian the term ‘light’

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<sup>49</sup> Valentin Vesa, “The Divine Vision in Isaac of Niniveh and the East Syriac Christology”, *Studia Patristica* 92 (2017): pp. 149-164; Antonio Rigo, “De l’apologie à l’évocation de l’expérience mystique. Évagre le Pontique, Isaac le Syrien et Diadoque de Photicé dans les œuvres de Grégoire Palamas (et dans la controverse palamite)”, in Andreas Speer and Philipp Steinkrüger (eds.), *Knotenpunkt Byzanz: Wissensformen und kulturelle Wechselbeziehungen* (Miscellanea Mediaevalia 36; Berlin / Boston: Walter de Gruyter, 2012), pp. 85-108; Antoine Audo, “Isaac of Nineveh, John of Dalyatha and Eastern Spirituality”, *One in Christ: A Catholic Ecumenical Review* 44:2 (2010): pp. 29-48; Paolo Bettolo, “Révélation et visions dans l’œuvre d’Isaac de Ninive: le cadre d’école d’un enseignement spirituel”, in Alain Desreumaux (ed.), *Les mystiques syriaques* (Études syriaques 8. Paris: Geuthner, 2011) pp. 99-119; Brouria Bitton-Ashkelony, “The Limit of the Mind (voûς): Pure Prayer according to Evagrius Ponticus and Isaac of Nineveh”, *Zeitschrift für Antikes Christentum / Journal of Ancient Christianity* 15:2 (2011): pp. 291-321; Sebastian P. Brock, “St. Isaac of Nineveh and Syriac Spirituality”, *Sobornost* 7:2 (1975): pp. 79-89; Sebastian P. Brock, *The Wisdom of Saint Isaac the Syrian* (Fairacres Publications 128; Oxford: SLG Press, 1997); Sebastian P. Brock, “Discerning the Evagrian in the Writings of Isaac of Nineveh: A Preliminary Investigation”, *Adamantius* 15 (2009): pp. 60-72; Gabriel Bunge, “Mar Isaak von Ninive und sein Buch der Gnade”, *Ostkirchliche Studien* 34:1 (1985): pp. 3-22; Gabriel Bunge, “Mar Isaac of Niniveh and his Relevance Nowadays”, *Christian Orient* 7:4 (1986): pp. 193-195; Dmitry F. Bumazhnov, “Wahrheit ist Gott’ Hl. Isaak von Ninive über die Lektüre der Eremiten”, *Zeitschrift für Antikes Christentum / Journal of Ancient Christianity* 19:1 (2015): pp. 149-171; Sabino Chialà, “Trois thèmes majeurs de l’enseignement d’Isaac de Ninive”, *Collectanea Cisterciensia* 69 (2007): pp. 134-154, 321-340; Sabino Chialà, “Evagrio il Pontico negli scritti di Isacco di Ninive”, *Adamantius* 15 (2009): pp. 73-84; Ysabel Andia, “Hésychia et contemplation chez Isaac le Syrien”, *Collectanea Cisterciensia* 53:1-2 (1991): pp. 20-48; Hannah M. Hunt, “‘Praying the Body’: Isaac of Nineveh and John of Apamea on Anthropological Integrity”, *The Harp* 11-12 (1998-1999): pp. 153-158; Nestor Kavvadas, “Theodore of Mopsuestia as a Source of Isaac of Nineveh’s Pneumatology”, *Parole de l’Orient* 35 (2010): pp. 393-405; George Leicester Marriott, “Isaac of Nineveh and the Writings of Macarius of Egypt”, *Journal of Theological Studies* OS 20 [80] (1919): pp. 345-347; Dana Miller, *The Ascetical Homilies of Saint*

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- Isaac the Syrian* (Boston: The Holy Transfiguration Monastery, 2011); Serafim Seppälä, "The Holy Spirit in Isaac of Nineveh and East Syrian Mysticism", pp. 127-150 in Vincent D. Twomey, Janet E. Rutherford (eds.), *The Holy Spirit in the Fathers of the Church: The Proceedings of the Seventh International Patristic Conference, Maynooth, 2008* (Dublin: Four Courts Press, 2010).
- <sup>50</sup> Sameer Maroki, *Les trois étapes de la vie spirituelle chez les Pères syriaques: Jean le Solitaire, Isaac de Ninive et Joseph Hazzaya. Source, doctrine et influence* (Religions et spiritualité. Paris: L'Harmattan, 2014); Thomas Olickal, *The Three Stages of Spiritual Realization according to Joseph Hazzaya* (Catholic Theological Studies of India 4; Changanassery: HIRS Publications, 2000); Micheline Albert, "La doctrine spirituelle de Joseph Hazzâyâ", in Jean-Christophe Attias (ed.), *De la conversion*, (Patrimoines: Religions du Livre; Paris: Cerf, 1997) pp. 205-215; Pablo Argárate, "The Semantic Domain of Fire in the Writings of Joseph Hazzâyâ", Juan Pedro Monferrer-Sala (ed.), *Eastern Crossroads: Essays on Medieval Christian Legacy* (Gorgias Eastern Christianity Studies 1. Piscataway, NJ: Gorgias Press, 2007) pp. 97-107; Pablo Argárate, "Der Heilige Geist in den Schriften des Joseph Hazzâyâ", in Dietmar W. Winkler (ed.), *Syrische Studien: Beiträge zum 8. Deutschen Syrologie-Symposium in Salzburg 2014* (Orientalia Patristica Oecumenica 10; Wien: LIT Verlag, 2016) pp. 17-32; Pablo Argárate, "Pseudo-Macarius in the Syriac Tradition: Some Topics in his Reception by Joseph Hazzâyâ", in Martin Tamcke, *Makarios/Symeon in östlicher Überlieferung / Macarius/Symeon in Eastern Tradition: Beiträge des VIII. Makarios-Symposiums, Bergvik 2014* (Göttinger Orientforschungen, I. Reihe: Syriaca 49. Wiesbaden: Harrassowitz Verlag, 2016) pp. 49-60; Vittorio Berti, "Le débat sur la vision de Dieu et la condamnation des mystiques par Timothée Ier: la perspective du patriarche", in Alain Desreumaux, *Les mystiques syriaques* (Études syriaques 8. Paris: Geuthner, 2011) pp. 151-176; Gabriel Bunge, *Rabban Jausep Hazzaya. Briefe über das geistliche Leben und verwandte Schriften: Ostsyrische Mystik des 8. Jahrhunderts* (Sophia: Quellen östlicher Theologie 21; Trier: Paulinus-Verlag, 1982).
- <sup>51</sup> The doctrine of the vision of the divine light as expressed by Macarius is very close to similar doctrines of Joseph Hazzaya, especially of John of Dalyatha and Symeon the New Theologian; see Robert Beulay, *L'enseignement spirituel de Jean de Dalyatha, mystique syro-oriental du VIIIe siècle* (Beauchesne, coll. «Théologie historique», 83, Paris, 1990) pp. 386-464, and R. Beulay, *La Lumière sans forme. Introduction à l'étude de la mystique chrétienne syro-orientale* (Chevetogne, 1987), a masterly synthesis of the great Syriac mystical writers of the 7th and



(Greek  $\varphi\tilde{\omega}\varsigma$ , Syriac *nuhrā*) occurs frequently, and the doctrine of the vision of light is generally close to the Evagrian; for instance, he also distinguishes between the two levels of light. There is, on the one hand, the divine light,<sup>52</sup> which is the light of the Holy Trinity.<sup>53</sup> On the other hand, there is the light of the human soul and body,<sup>54</sup> or the intellect.<sup>55</sup> The illumination of

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8th centuries: Evagrius, Isaac of Nineveh, Dadysho Qatraya, Simeon of Taiboutheh (means “of grace” and refers to one of his writings, “Book of Grace”), Sahdona, Abba Isaiah, John of Dalyatha. See, also: Mary Teresa Hansbury, *The Letters of John of Dalyatha* (Texts from Christian Late Antiquity 2; Piscataway, NJ: Gorgias Press, 2006); Nadira Khayyat (ed.), *Jean de Dalyatha. Les Homélie I-XV* (Sources syriaques 2. Antélias, Liban: Centre d’Études et de Recherches Orientales, 2007); Alexander Treiger, “Could Christ’s Humanity See His Divinity? An Eighth-Century Controversy between John of Dalyatha and Timothy I, Catholicos of the Church of the East”, *Journal of the Canadian Society for Syriac Studies* 9 (2009): pp. 3-21; Vittorio Berti, “Le débat sur la vision de Dieu et la condamnation des mystiques par Timothée Ier: la perspective du patriarche”, in Alain Desreumaux (ed.), *Les mystiques syriaques* (Études syriaques 8; Paris: Geuthner, 2011) pp. 151-176.

<sup>52</sup> Isaac the Syrian, *Syr. Hom.* 68, in *Mystic Treatises by Isaac of Nineveh*, Translated from Bedjan’s Syriac Text with an Introduction and Registers by A.J. Wensinck (Verhandelingen Der Koninklijke Akademie van Wetenschappen te Amsterdam Afdeeling Letterkunde, Nieuwe Reeks, Deel XXIII no. 1; Wiesbaden Dr. Martin Sändig oHG., 1969), p. 318: “it is impossible for the soul to participate in truth by contemplation, without receiving divine light”, in *Mystic Treatises by Isaac of Nineveh*, Translated from Bedjan’s Syriac Text with an Introduction and Registers by A.J. Wensinck (Verhandelingen Der Koninklijke Akademie van Wetenschappen te Amsterdam Afdeeling Letterkunde, Nieuwe Reeks, Deel XXIII no. 1; Wiesbaden Dr. Martin Sändig oHG., 1969) p. 318.

<sup>53</sup> Isaac the Syrian, *Syr. Hom.* 22, cf. Wensinck ed. (1969), p. 118: “Prayer namely is steadfastness of mind, which is terminated only by the light of the holy Trinity through ecstasy”.

<sup>54</sup> Isaac the Syrian, *Syr. Hom.* 53. cf. Wensinck ed. (1969), p. 254: “*The light of the soul consists in constant meditation upon the scriptures*”. *Syr. Hom.* 80, cf. Wensinck ed. (1969), p. 377: “*It is clear that he did not vainly persevere in all these things. For we see that not only his inner man became enlightened on account of his delight, by the exalted ray, but also his outward man, which is material and corruptible nature, was*

man by the divine light takes place during prayer<sup>56</sup> or the reading of the Scriptures.<sup>57</sup> It should also be pointed, according to

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*clad with the glory with which all the saints will be clad in the end, on account of the variation which the whole inner nature of men undergoes. Wherefrom do we learn this? Once one of the brethren went to the cell of Aba Arsenius and looked through the window and saw the Father standing who was wholly as burning fire. For this brother who had gone to See the Father, was worthy of this sight: he did not belong to the small but to the great ones".*

- <sup>55</sup> Isaac the Syrian, *Syr. Hom.* 69, cf. Wensinck ed. (1969), p. 323: "the intelligible force that by the light of the mind supports the heart, and by inward testimony stirs in the soul great confidence in God", *Syr. Hom.* 80: "For Mar Athanasius, says in his story on the mirror of the solitaries, that he kept vigils plentifully, so that he passed the main Part of the nights without sleep.... he did not neglect vigils during his whole lifetime, as he did not even when he visited others; as for instance, when he went to see the blessed Father Paul, when they ate their meal [furnished to them] through a bird, and stood in prayer during the whole night. Which of the saints, though possessing all the virtues together, could neglect this duty, and not be rockened to be idle without it? For this is the light of the mind. By it the intellect is elevated and the Spirit concentrated, the mind flies [on high] and gazes at spiritual things and becomes young and illuminated in prayer", cf. Wensinck ed. (1969), p. 375.
- <sup>56</sup> Isaac the Syrian, *Syr. Hom.* 45, cf. Wensinck ed. (1969), p. 218: "A cloud covers the sun: so much talk covers the soul which has begun to be illuminated by contemplative prayer". "Measure and time in discipline illuminate the mind and keep confusion afar. When the mind is upset by disorder, it becomes dark. And when it has become dark, the soul is troubled. Peace comes from order; light is born from peace in the soul" cf. Wensinck ed. (1969), p. 220.
- <sup>57</sup> Isaac the Syrian, *Syr. Hom.* 1, cf. Wensinck ed. (1969), p. 4: "Those who, by grace, are directed in their behaviour towards illumination, perceive constantly as it were an intelligible ray running between the words [of the scriptures]. This ray distinguishes for the mind the simple Speech from those things that are said in spiritual loftiness in order to expand the soul", and "all the practices of mercy bring the soul, immediately, into communion with the unique splendour of the divine glory"; also, *Syr. Hom.* 2, cf. Wensinck ed. (1969), p. 9: "Otherwise 'The Kingdom of God is within you' and 'Thy Kingdom come' (...) which we may call the pro-fusion of light", and "those whose sight is sound and full of light, and

Alfeyev, out that there is closeness between the concept of the divine light in ‘Homily 43’ of the ‘Greek Isaac’ and the ‘Makarian Homilies’: in both texts the light appears as the sun ‘shining from within rather than from outside’ and it ‘transforms man himself into light; it allows him to contemplate the ‘face’ of the Lord’.<sup>58</sup>

#### **4 ‘Holy light’ (*nuhrā qaddīša*) in Evagrius, John of Lycopolis and Cassian the Monk. The evagrian legacy – a kindred light (τό συγγενές φῶς; *Skemmata 2*) and the coincidence of the images of the light and the face**

Apart from the patristic tradition as such, we find many references to the vision or appearance of the divine light in hagiographical literature. In particular, Anthony the Great, before hearing the voice of Christ, ‘saw the ray of light descending unto him’.<sup>59</sup> Another Egyptian ascetic, Paul, three days before his death, tells his listeners: “The light [of God] never forsook my heart; being lightened by it, I needed no sleep, but the desire to

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*who possess Grace as their guide, while their eyes are full of tears”* (p. 11).

<sup>58</sup> H. Alfeyev, *St. Symeon*, pp. 231-232. *Syr. Hom.* 45: “According as a man becomes perfect in his relation to God, will he follow Him closely. In the world of truth, He will show him His face, not however the face of His essence. The more the righteous advance to the vision of Him, the more they see an enigmatic sight, as an image shown in a mirror. There, however, they will See the revelation of truth”, cf. Wensinck ed. (1969), p. 217.

<sup>59</sup> *Vita S. Antoni* 10. 1 cf. “Athanasius’ Life of saint Anthony” in Jonathan Marshall, *Readings in Church History* (Hiram, ME: Hubbard Hill Press, 2009) pp. 71-94, here 74.

see Him always flamed up within me. (...) This intellectual light (*lux mentis*) has never been extinguished in me".<sup>60</sup>

The vision of God as light is the most characteristic component of the mysticism.<sup>61</sup> Evagrius Pontikos, Makarios of Egypt, Maximos the Confessor, Isaac the Syrian and St. Symeon the New Theologian are the authors whose doctrines are close linked to each other. Though they are not developing a theory of the vi-

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<sup>60</sup> Rufinus, *Historia Monachorum in Aegypto*, 10. 8. 11-12, in N. Russell, *The Lives of the Desert Fathers: The Historia Monachorum in Aegypto* (Cistercian Publication 34: London and Mowbray, Kalamazoo, MI, 1981), p. 82; Paul was a contemporary of the great Egyptian ascetics Shenoute, Aphu of Oxyrhynchus, Pshoi of Jeremiah, Apollo of Tetkooh, and Isidore of Scetis, who all lived at the end of the fourth and early in the fifth centuries. On this, see also: A. de Vogüé, *Histoire littéraire du mouvement monastique dans l'antiquité*, 3: *Jérôme, Augustin et Rufin au tournant du siècle (391-405)* (Paris, Cerf, 1996); Andrew Cain, "Rufinus' *Historia monachorum in Aegypto* and the Promulgation of Evagrius' Ascetic", *Vigiliae Christianae*, Volume 71, Issue 3 (2017), pp. 285-314; S. Torallas Tovar, "A New Sahidic Coptic Fragment: *Sortes Sanctorum* or *Apophthegmata Patrum?*", *Journal of Coptic Studies* 17 (2015) pp. 153-164; "On humility" by Paul of Tamma, Edited and translated into Italian in T. Orlandi, *Paolo di Tamma. Opere* (Corpus dei Manoscritti Copti Letterari; Rome: C.I.M., 1988) pp. 126-133; Alin Suciu, "Sitting in the Cell: The Literary Development of an Ascetic Praxis in Paul of Tamma's Writings. With an Edition of Some Hitherto Unknown Fragments of *De Cella*" *The Journal of Theological Studies*, Volume 68, Issue 1, (2017), pp. 141-171; A. Wadi, «La recensione breve della Vita araba di Paolo di Tamma», E. Lucchesi et U. Zanetti (éd.), *Aegyptus christiana: mélanges d'hagiographie égyptienne et orientale dédiés à la mémoire du P. Paul Devos, bollandiste (Cahiers d'Orientalisme, 25)*, Genève, 2004, pp. 195-210; E. Lucchesi, «Trois nouveaux fragments comptes de la vie de Paul de Tamma par Ézéchiél», E. Lucchesi et U. Zanetti (éd.), *Aegyptus christiana*, pp. 211-224; B. Pirone, «Traduzione della Vita di Anbā Paolo di Tamma», *SOC.C* 38 (2005), pp. 73-114 and Dmitriij F. Bumazhnov, "Covenant with God and the Making of the Early Christian Monasticism" *Philologia Classica* 2017, 12(1), pp. 12-22.

<sup>61</sup> The term φῶς ('light'), the verb ὁράω ('to see') is used, but, also other terms are connected with the vision of light (φωτίζω, φωτισμός, ἐλλάμπω, ἐλλαμπις, θέα, θεάομαι, ὀραις).

sion of the divine light, they speak of the same kind of experience of this divine light.

On the question of the nature of the light witnessed in prayer, Evagrius says that, when the intellect acquired the state of grace, then during prayer it will see its own nature like sapphire or the colour of the sky.<sup>62</sup> When the *intellect* reaches such a state, it truly becomes the dwelling-place of God. So, the place of God, therefore, is the rational soul, and his “dwelling place” the luminous intellect’<sup>63</sup>and the luminous intellect is the inner Sinai, the place of God’s self-revelation. This light is, presumably, created, yet it should be noted that Evagrius also speaks of the uncreated light of the Holy Trinity<sup>64</sup> and suggests that these

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<sup>62</sup> *Thoughts* 39, in *Evagrius of Pontus, The Greek Ascetic Corpus*, Translation, Introduction, and Commentary by Robert E. Sinkewicz (Oxford University Press 2003), p. 180. In Scripture this is called the realm of God that was seen by the elders on Mount Sinai. On this theme see A. Guillaumont, “La vision de l’intellect par lui-même dans la mystique évagrienne,” in *Mélanges de l’Université Saint Joseph* 50.1-2 (Beirut: dar el-Machreq, 1984), pp. 255-262; William Harmless, S.J., and Raymond R. Fitzgerald, S.J., “The Sapphire Light of the Mind: The Skemmata of Evagrius Ponticus”, *Theological Studies* 62.3 (2001): pp. 498-529; Gabriel Bunge, *Das Geistgebet. Studien zum Traktat De Oratione des Evagrius Pontikos* (Luther-Verlag: Köln, 1987) ch. 4: ‘Zustand des Intellectes’ and G. Bunge, “The Spiritual Prayer: On the Trinitarian Mysticism of Evagrius of Pontus,” *Monastic Studies* 17 (1986): pp. 191-208, also, G. Bunge, “Évagre le Pontique et les deux Macaire,” *Irénikon* 56 (1983), pp. 215-228; 323-360.

<sup>63</sup> *Skemmata* 25, in J. Muyldermans, “Note additionnelle à Evagriana”, *Le Muséon* 44 (1931), pp. 374-80, here p. 377; Harmless and Fitzgerald, “The Sapphire Light of the Mind: The Skemmata of Evagrius Ponticus”, p. 526.

<sup>64</sup> *KG II*, 29 in Antoine Guillaumont, *Les Six Centuries des ‘Kephalaia Gnostica’ d’Évagre le Pontique* (PO 28; Paris 1958) p. 73; and in Evagrius’s *Kephalaia Gnostika*. A New Translation of the Unreformed Text from the Syriac (Translated with an Introduction and Commentary by Ilaria L. E. Ramelli; SBL Press: Atlanta, 2015), *KG* 2.29. “Just as fire in its power pervades its own body, so will also the intellect in its power pervade the soul, when the whole of it will be mingled with the light of the

lights are in some sense 'cognate'.<sup>65</sup> To Golitzin and Plested these descriptions of the light of the intellect evoke the divine *Shekinah*.<sup>66</sup>

Therefore, the question was that if the light was a created manifestation of the initial luminosity of the intellect or was it rather a supernatural uncreated light of God? According to Evagrius, there is first 'the blessed light of the Holy Trinity' (τὸ μακάριον φῶς τῆς ἁγίας Τριάδος),<sup>67</sup> since 'God is light by His nature' (*b'*

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*Holy Trinity*", Ramelli ed. (2015), 108; *Thoughts* 42 in Sinkewicz ed. (2003), p. 181; *Skemmata* 27 in Muyldermans, "Note additionelle à Evagriana", p. 377 and Harmless and Fitzgerald, "The Sapphire Light of the Mind: The Skemmata of Evagrius Ponticus", p. 526.

<sup>65</sup> *Skemmata* 2 in Muyldermans, "Note additionelle à Evagriana", p. 374 and Harmless and Fitzgerald, "The Sapphire Light of the Mind: The Skemmata of Evagrius Ponticus", p. 521.

<sup>66</sup> M. Plested, *The Macarian Legacy. The Place of Macarius-Symeon in the Eastern Christian Tradition*. Marcus Plested (Oxford University Press, 2004) p. 69, n.146 and Alexander Golitzin, "Heavenly Mysteries: Themes from Apocalyptic Literature in the Macarian Homilies and Selected Other Fourth Century Ascetical Writers", in Robert Daly (ed.), *Apocalyptic Themes in Early Christianity* (Grand Rapids: Baker Academic, 2009), pp. 174-192, here p. 181. Father Golitzin offered valuable assessments of several contours of this uncreated light in Macarius and semitic mysticism. Analyzing on the mysticism of Aphrahat, Evagrius and Macarius, he says: "If interiorized, the vision is yet real and transforming: the light uncreated" (Golitzin, "Heavenly Mysteries", p. 189). See also, Alexander Golitzin, "Recovering the 'Glory of Adam': 'Divine Light' Traditions in the Dead Sea Scrolls and the Christian Ascetical Literature of Fourth-Century Syro-Mesopotamia," in James R. Davila (ed.), *The Dead Sea Scrolls as Background to Postbiblical Judaism and Early Christianity: Papers from an International Conference at St Andrews in 2001* (Leiden: Brill, 2003), pp. 275-308, for the theme of uncreated light in Macarius, in particular pp. 290-291.

<sup>67</sup> *Evagrius of Pontus, The Greek Ascetic Corpus*, Translation, Introduction, and Commentary by Robert E. Sinkewicz (Oxford University Press 2003), *Thoughts*, 42: "The eyes of the soul Demonic thoughts blind the left eye of the soul, which perceives the contemplation of beings; the mental representations that leave an impress and a form on our ruling faculty cloud the right eye, which in the time of prayer contemplates

*itūteh nuhrā (h)ū*).<sup>68</sup> At the same time, there is also the light of the human intellect, its proper radiance (τὸ οἰκεῖον φέγγος τοῦ νοῦ).<sup>69</sup> Between the two lights, divine and human, there is a 'kinship'<sup>70</sup>: as the intellect is created after the image of God, its light is 'related to Him' (ἀύτῳ τὸ συγγενές φῶς).<sup>71</sup> At the time of

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the blessed light of the Holy Trinity; by this eye the bride ravished the heart of the bridegroom himself in the Song of Songs" (S. of 8.4:9); cf. Sinkewicz ed. (2003), p. 181.

<sup>68</sup> Evagrius, *Kephalaia Gnostika* 1.35: "Just as the light, while it allows us to see everything, does not need a light in order to be seen (thanks to it), likewise God, while he makes everything manifest, does not need a light in order to be known in it; for he is Light in his very essence" Ramelli ed. (2015), p. 32.

<sup>69</sup> *Gnost.* 45 [in Évagre le Pontique, *Le gnostique*, ed. A. and C. Guillaumont, SC 356 (1989), p. 178], where Evagrius refers to Basil the Great; cf. *Pract.* 64 [in Évagre le Pontique, *Traité pratique ou Le moine*, ed. A. and C. Guillaumont, ii, SC 171 (1971), pp. 648-649]. Cf. also *Prayer* 74, the light which acts in the intellect: "When the angel of God is present, with a single word he puts an end to every opposing activity within us and moves the light of the mind to an unerring activity" [*De oratione capitula*, PG 79. 1184 B in Sinkewicz ed. (2003), p. 201]. See also Columba Stewart, "Imageless Prayer and the Theological Vision of Evagrius Ponticus," *J ECS* 9 (2001): pp. 173-204.

<sup>70</sup> The mention of the coincidence of Light-Face represent Casiday contribution on Evagrius Theology and, for him, the *kindred light* (τὸ συγγενές φῶς – *Skemmata* 2) is the splendour of the Lord's face. See, Augustine Casiday, *Reconstructing the Theology of Evagrius Ponticus: Beyond Heresy* (Cambridge University Press, 2013), pp. 167-205.

<sup>71</sup> *Skemm.* 1-3: "1. If someone should want to behold the state of his mind, let him deprive himself of all mental representations, and then he shall behold himself resembling sapphire or the colour of heaven (cf. *Exod.* 24: 9-11). It is impossible to accomplish this without impassibility, for he will need God to collaborate with him and breathe into him the connatural light 3. Impassibility is the tranquil state of the rational soul, constituted by gentleness and chastity. 4. The state of the mind is an intelligible height resembling the colour of heaven, to which the light of the Holy Trinity comes in the time of prayer"; cf. Sinkewicz ed. (2003), p. 211. Regarding the problem of the *connatural light*, G. Bunge translates the phrase as like Evagrius intends here the light that is connatural to the mind and which "came into existence simultaneously with the mind" (I

prayer, the intellect in ἀπάθεια is able to contemplate its own initial state of luminosity, becoming 'like light' ('a(y)k nuhā),<sup>72</sup> 'like a star' (ἀσώ τρο-ειδής)<sup>73</sup> and 'somewhat like a sapphire or heavenly colour'.<sup>74</sup> Intellect and soul are transfigured during

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think that Evagrius by *connatural light* refers also to the divine origin of the light). See, on this. G. Bunge, "La montagne intelligible. De la contemplation indirecte a la connaissance immediate de Dieu dans le traite *De oratione* d'Evagre le Pontique", *Studia Monastica*, 42 (2000), p. 12 and n. 59. On the vision of the intellect see A. Guillaumont, "La vision de l'intellect par lui-meme dans la mystique evagrienne", in *Mélanges de l'Université Saint-Joseph* 50 (*Mélanges in memoriam Michel Allardet Paul Muya*) (Beirut: Université Saint-Joseph, 1984), 25 5-62 (*Études* IX. 143-50). *Reflections* 2 is cited under the name of Nilus by Gregory Palamas in the work *To Xene on the Passions and the Virtues*, PG 150. 1081 B8-14.

<sup>72</sup> *Kephalaia Gnostika* 5.15: "The intellect that has been stripped of passions becomes entirely like light, illuminated as it is by the contemplation of beings"; Ramelli ed. (2015), p. 259. In *KG* 1.35 God is described as Light, which illuminates the intellect, and in the *Chapters of the Disciples of Evagrius* 78 the light of the intellect is said to increase in prayer – therefore in a direct relation to God: "when the intellect is progressing in prayer, it will see its own light become more brilliant and shining." Light and prayer are associated by Evagrius also in *On Talking Back* 6.16, where he reports John of Lycopolis's opinion that the mind can be illuminated during prayer only thanks to the grace of God.

<sup>73</sup> *Thought* 43; cf. Sinkewicz ed. (2003), p. 182: "Then impassibility of heart will dawn for you and during prayer you shall see your mind shine like a star". See, also, Kallistos Ware, "Nous and Noesis in Plato, Aristotle and Evagrius of Pontus," *Diotima* 13 (1985): pp. 158-163; Gabriel Bunge, "Nach dem Intellekt Leben: Zum sog. 'Intellektualismus' der evagrianischen Spiritualität," in *Simandron, der Wackklopper: Gedenkschrift Gamber* (ed. Wilhelm Nyssen; Köln: Luthé, 1989), pp. 95-109;

<sup>74</sup> *Thought* 39: "When the mind has put off the old self and shall put on the one born of grace (cf. Col. 3: 9-10), then it will see its own state in the time of prayer resembling sapphire or the colour of heaven; 60 this state scripture calls the place of God that was seen by the elders on Mount Sinai (cf. Exod. 24:9-11)"; cf. Sinkewicz ed. (2003), p. 182. When 'the inner man' becomes a 'gnostic' (Syriac *yādō'tānā*, equivalent of the Greek *γνωστικός*), says Evagrius, he contemplates the light of his own beauty



prayer: and the ‘luminous intellect’ (νοῦς φωτοειδής) becomes God’s ‘dwelling place’ (Psalm 75: 2 in *Skemm.* 25). However, Evagrius also speaks of the vision of the trinitarian divine light, in his *Skemmata* (Σκέμματα, ‘Reflections’). Hilarion Alfeyev refers at this two evagrian definitions: 1. The initial state [κατάστασις] of the intellect is somewhat like heavenly colour; also the light of the Holy Trinity is imparted to the intellect in the time of prayer (*Skemm.* 4) and 2. Prayer is the state of the intellect when it becomes totally under the light of the Holy Trinity (ὑπὸ φωτὸς μόνου γινομένη τῆς ἁγίας Τριάδος, in *Skemm.* 27).<sup>75</sup> So, according to Alfeyev, the Evagrian concept of

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(*nuhrā d-šuprā d-napšeh*, ‘the light of the beauty of his soul’); see Hilarion Alfeyev, *St. Symeon the New Theologian and Orthodox Tradition* (Oxford University Press, 2011), pp. 226, 228.

<sup>75</sup> *Skemm.* 27: “Prayer is a state of the mind that arises under the influence of the unique light of the Holy Trinity”; cf. Sinkewicz ed. (2003), p. 214. Seeing God is the true knowledge [γνώσις] of the Holy Trinity (*Praktikos* 2–3). On θέωσις in Evagrius, see Augustine Casiday, “Deification in Origen, Evagrius, and Cassian,” in Perrone, *Origeniana VIII*, 2:995–1001. Ramelli highlights the positive role of matter to Evagrius, and a crucial but overlooked distinction: Evagrius’ “different kinds of bodies”: “Once the body has been elevated to the rank of the soul, then the whole of the soul will return to the rank of intellect: the intellect in its power will pervade the soul, when the whole of it will be mingled with the light of the Trinity (KG 2.29). terminological distinction in the Syriac version of the KG, which heavily bears on the exact interpretation of Evagrius’s notion of corporeality. There are two different words for “body,” one referring to heavy, thick, fleshly, and mortal bodies (*pgr*), which in Syriac also means “corpse”), and the other also including finer, incorruptible, and immortal bodies (*gwšm*); I. Ramelli, “Introductory Essay: Recovering the True Thought of the Origenian Evagrius: a Needed Reassessment of the Influence of Origen and Gregory of Nyssa on Evagrius” in Evagrius, *Kephalaia Gnostika*, lxx. And, further: “This will happen at the eventual restoration and deification. When the intellects receive contemplation, then the whole nature of the bodies will be eliminated, not because they will be destroyed, but because they will be transformed into souls and souls into intellects, so that the contemplation, or θεωρία, concerning them will become immaterial, since bodies themself-

light can be reduced to the following basic ideas: 1. the intellect sees its natural ('created') light in the time of prayer; 2. the intellect sees the light of the Holy Trinity ('uncreated'); 3. it sees the beauty of the soul; 4. it is mingled with the light of the Holy Trinity. The vision of light is considered by Evagrius as a fruit of *ἀπάθεια*, chastity of the intellect, and prayer. He also emphasizes the necessity of God's *συνέργεια* to achieve this vision (*Skemm. 2: Θεοῦ γὰρ χρεία συνεργοῦντος*).<sup>76</sup>

Evagrius in *Antirritikos* (*Ἀντιρρήτικός*) speaks about the experience of the 'holy light' (*nuhrā qaddīša*) which is seen by the 'eyes of the intellect'. For Evagrius, Ammonios, and John of Thivais the experience of the vision of light was common: "*I and the servant of God Ammonios wanted to learn about this light: where is it from. We, therefore, asked Saint John of Thivais whether the nature of the intellect (kyānā d-re'yānā) is radiant and the light proceeds from the intellect itself or something else appears from outside and illumines it. He answered and said: 'Man is unable to distinguish this; however, without the grace of God the intellect cannot be illumined during prayer'*".<sup>77</sup> So, if to Ammonios and Evagrius the nature of this experience is given by the natural light of the intellect, instead to John of Thivais the light has a

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*ves will have become immaterial (KG 2.62). In KG 3.66 Evagrius observes that the first trumpet at the beginning revealed the coming into being of bodies, and likewise the last trumpet at the end of history will reveal the vanishing of bodies, in that these will be subsumed into souls, and souls into intellects, the superior parts or faculties of souls" (Ramelli, "Introductory Essay", lxxiii-lxxiv). Indeed, Evagrius thinks of *apokatastasis* as entailing deification (θέωσις) to the point of downright calling it "the Holy Trinity" in KG 6.75.*

<sup>76</sup> H. Alfeyev, *St. Symeon the New Theologian*, p. 229.

<sup>77</sup> Evagrius Pontikos, *Antirrhētikos*, 6, 16 in Syriac version ed. W. Frankenberg, *Euagrius Pontikos* (Berlin: Weidmann, 1912), p. 525; D. Brakke, trans. *Evagrius of Pontus: Talking Back. Antirrhētikos* (Collegeville, MN: Liturgical Press, 2009), p. 138.

divine origin. By his own admission, 'Evagrius was not entirely certain of the origin of this light'.<sup>78</sup> Where does this formless light come from? Is this a direct vision of God? Alternatively, is this the light of the mind itself? "It was an urgent question for Evagrius,"<sup>79</sup> notes Harmless, so urgent that he and his friend Ammonius journeyed to consult John of Lycopolis, the great "Seer of the Thebaid".<sup>80</sup> So, says Casiday, "*The source of the light that illumines the mind is, therefore, the Holy Trinity... the divine light makes the mind itself to be radiant*".<sup>81</sup> Evagrius not only talks of the illuminated mind as God's habitation, but he also says that '*the mind is the temple of the Holy Trinity*'.<sup>82</sup> In conclusion says Casiday, "*The Trinity, then, illumines the mind by dwelling in it; or, as Evagrius puts it in words echoing John of Lycopolis' response to him, 'there is need for God's collaboration in breathing into it the kindred light (τό συγγενές φῶς)*' (*Skemmata*

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<sup>78</sup> Augustine Casiday, *Reconstructing the Theology of Evagrius Ponticus: Beyond Heresy* (Cambridge University Press, New York 2013), p. 181.

<sup>79</sup> William Harmless, *Desert Christians. An Introduction to the Literature of Early Monasticism* (Oxford University Press, 2004), p. 353.

<sup>80</sup> Paul Peeters, "Une Vie copte de saint Jean de Lycopolis", *Analecta Bollandiana* 54 (1936): pp. 359-381; Mark M. Sheridan, "John of Lykopolis", in G. Gabra and H. Takla (eds.) *Christianity and Monasticism in Middle Egypt: Al-Minya and Asyut* (American University in Cairo Press, Cairo/New York, 2015) pp. 123-132. There is after St. Antony no one whose renown is greater than that of St. John of Lycopolis.

<sup>81</sup> Casiday, *Reconstructing the Theology of Evagrius Ponticus*, p. 182. Thus, Evagrius writes that, after progressing in virtue, 'in prayer you will see your mind like a star [νοῦν ἄστεροειδῆ]' (*Thoughts* 43); in A. Casiday, *Evagrius Ponticus* (Early Church Fathers S.; New York: Routledge, 2006), p. 116. Also, in his *Skemmata*, Evagrius similarly writes that God's 'habitation is the illuminated mind [νοῦς φωτοειδῆς] that has rejected earthly desires' (*Skemmata* 25); in J. Muyldermans, 'Note additionelle à: Evagriana', *Le Muséon* 44 (1931): p. 377; and in Sinkewicz ed. (2003), p. 213.

<sup>82</sup> Evagrius, *Skemmata* 34 in Sinkewicz ed. (2003), p. 214. This recall the Solomon prayer of dedication: "*the Glory of the Lord descended upon the Temple*" (2 Chr. 7:1-3).

2) – that is, the light that originates from the Trinity and, in enlightening the mind, becomes the shared property of God and the creature".<sup>83</sup>

According to Harmless, here we see "the core of Evagrius's theology":<sup>84</sup> an experience, which is epiphanic, sensory-visual (seeing a sapphire or sky-blue light), real and personal, but indirectly (as in a mirror), seeing the uncreated, immaterial light of God. It sounds like Evagrius is describing a sensory experience: seeing a sapphire or sky-blue light.<sup>85</sup> However, "was this a visual experience – at least, an interior one?" Antoine Guillaumont has suggested that "in this description of pure prayer, Evagrius is certainly referring to experience, both real and personal."<sup>86</sup> From these passages, we can piece together Evagrius's basic view. "During pure prayer, the purified mind sees itself, its truest self, its true state. Moreover, the self that it sees is luminous. However, that luminosity which permits it to see itself is the divine light. In seeing itself as luminosity, as light like sapphire or sky blue, the mind discovers its Godlikeness. At the same time, it sees and

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<sup>83</sup> Augustine Casiday, *Reconstructing the Theology of Evagrius Ponticus*, p. 183.

<sup>84</sup> W. Harmless, *Desert Christians*, pp. 353-354. Regarding the encounter of the praying mind with God: "While Evagrius draws on intellectual tools – allegorical interpretation of the Old Testament, psychological analysis of the workings of the mind – he seems to be trying to make sense of his own most intense, most epiphanic experiences of prayer".

<sup>85</sup> This imagery appears in *Skemmata* 2 and 4, *Kephalaia gnostica*, supplement 4 and, also, in *Ep.* 39.

<sup>86</sup> Columba Stewart, "Imageless Prayer and the Theological Vision of Evagrius Ponticus" *Journal of Early Christian Studies* 9/2 (2001): pp. 173-204; Vittorio Berti, "Le débat sur la vision de Dieu et la condamnation des mystiques par Timothée I<sup>er</sup>: la perspective du patriarche" in Alain Desreumaux, *Les mystiques syriaques* (Paris: Geuthner, 2011), pp. 151-178.

*knows by seeing – indirectly, as in a mirror – the uncreated, immaterial light that God is.”*<sup>87</sup>

Evagrius aims to describe how the mind interacts with God through Christ. Explaining why the mental self-image lacks a face, Evagrius wrote: “*Never having contemplated its own countenance [ὄψεως], the mind is incapable of forming it within itself*” (*Thoughts* 25).<sup>88</sup> Casiday elucidates this last Evagrian sentence through another, in which Evagrius considers the Psalmist’s cry at Ps. 79:8 (‘Lord God of powers, convert us and reveal your face, and we shall be saved’). Here, he further specifies where we are to find this face: “*Here he calls Christ “the face” – ‘for he is the icon of the unseen God, the first-born of all creation [Col. 1:15]’.*”<sup>89</sup> Through the exegesis of these two evagrian texts, Casiday reaches some extremely important conclusions and, until now, unique: 1. Christ is the Face of God because He is “the iconic revelation of God; Christ reveals God’s face”; 2. There is a “*coincidence of the images of the light and the face*”; 3. It is Christ whose indwelling presence radiates the light that illumines the temple of the mind; and He mediates between the Trinity and

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<sup>87</sup> Evagrius, *Kephalaia gnostica* 1.35: “God, in his essence, is light” in Syriac version, Édition critique, ed. Antoine Guillaumont, *Les Six Centuries des “Kephalaia gnostica” d’Évagre le Pontique* (PO 28, fasc. 2; Paris: Firmin-Didot, 1958), p. 33; and in Ramelli ed. (2015), p. 32.

<sup>88</sup> Or, as Evagrius puts it in his scholion on Ps. 4:7 (‘The light of your face has been signed upon us, Lord’): “Now the angels continually see the face of God [cf. Matt. 18:10], whereas human beings see *the light of His face*. For *the Face of the Lord* is spiritual contemplation of everything that has come to be on the earth, while *the light of His face* is partial knowledge of these things; since according to the wise woman of Thekoa, David was ‘like an angel of God, seeing everything upon the earth’ [2 Kings/2 Sam. 14:20]”; in Evagrius, *sch.* 6 in Ps. 4:7 (ed. Pitra, *Analecta sacra*, II: 453-4), apud Casiday, *Reconstructing*, p. 184.

<sup>89</sup> Evagrius, *sch.* 4 in Ps. 79:8 (PG 12: 1544), ed. and trans. Géhin, *Évagre le Pontique Scholies aux Proverbes* (SC 340; Les Éditions du Cerf, Paris, 1987).

the creature; 4. "The light that illumines the temple of the mind is nothing other than the splendor of the Lord's face"; 5. The demonic thought precludes contemplating Christ and thereby voids the possibility of "Christ, the Glory of the Lord, descending upon the mind, dwelling in it and shedding his light upon it"; 6. The 'kindred light' of the graced mind is a light that God deigns to share with the created mind. "When Christ abides in the Christian mind, the face of the Christian emulates the Lord's face in the same way that the Christian's mind reflects the divine light." It is important here to observe the bodily or sensory component of the statement (*the face of the Christian*); 7. "Evagrius understands Christ to be the 'face of God and man'"; 8. "Considering how intimately Christ is associated with the 'kindred light' (*Skemmata* 2) in Evagrian theology, it appears that (for Evagrius) the face that is missing from the imperfect image is Christ's own face."<sup>90</sup>

Following Casiday, we highlight that for Evagrius, Christ is, at the same time, the *Face* and the *Light* or the "shining face" divine presence. This has crucial importance for revealing the *Desert Father's* Christology into their '*shining faces*' and '*white bodies*' during prayer. Thus, firstly, Christ is the iconic revelation of God's face, and secondly, there is a coincidence of the light and the face. Desert Father's experiences of divine light show us that '*this light is the splendor of the Lord's face*'. Also, this is a hidden (inward) or apophatic (uncreated) Christology revealed only by the shining light of these ascetic' faces and bodies. Thus, Christ's indwelling presence is that which radiates the light into the mind and afterward upon the body. Christ, the Glory of the Lord, descending upon the mind, heart and body

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<sup>90</sup> A. Casiday, *Reconstructing the Theology of Evagrius Ponticus*, pp. 184-186.

and dwelling holistically in humans and shedding His light upon them.

From five points of view, Casiday appreciates how complex the relationship between Isaac, Cassian, and Evagrius. Besides, the referring to the Transfiguration and the metaphor of ascent, Isaac refers to Christ' 'glory' or 'brightness'. Here, says Casiday, we should detect an allusion to Evagrius light-mysticism, and Cassian, therefore, did advocate 'Evagrius light-mysticism' (Cassian, *conl* 9.31: "the glory of that true light" and 9.25: "it is this prayer that the mind, enlightened by the infusion of that heavenly light").<sup>91</sup> But, in linking this light to Christ, Cassian has subtly modified the position of Evagrius once again, for Evagrius associated this light with the Holy Trinity. Isaac develops his Christocentrism that is already evident in his account of the Transfiguration.<sup>92</sup> The main text is at Cassian, *conl* 10.6.1–3: "*illi soli purissimis oculis diuinitatem ipsius speculantur, qui de humilibus ac terrenis operibus et cogitationibus ascendentes cum illo secedunt in excelso solitudinis monte, qui liber ab omnium terrenarum cogitationum ac perturbationum tumultu et a cunctorum uitiorum permixtione secretus, fide purissima ac uirtutum eminentia sublimatus, gloriam uultus eius et claritatis reuelat imaginem his qui merentur eum mundis animae obtutibus intueri*" ["Those alone behold His divinity with purest eyes, who, ascending from base and earthly works and thoughts, have sat with Him in the highest mountain of solitude, which, free from all earthly thoughts and hidden from the tumult of passions and the contamination of all faults, exalted by the purest faith and eminence of virtues, reveals the glory of His face and the image

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<sup>91</sup> On this, see Owen Chadwick, *John Cassian: A Study in Primitive Monasticism* (Cambridge University Press, 1950), p. 148.

<sup>92</sup> See Victor Codina SJ., *El aspecto cristológico en la espiritualidad de Juan Casiano* (OCA 175. Rome: Pont. Institutum Orientalium Studiorum, 1966) pp. 108-111.

of His glory to those who deserve to gaze upon Him with the pure gaze of the soul."]. We agree with the interpretation that Casiday offers here: "*First, pure eyes see Christ's divinity. To belabour an obvious point, if pure eyes see Christ's divinity, then there is something that they see. Without egregious interpretive acrobatics, there is no way to extrapolate imagelessness, pure and simple, from talk of seeing something. Consequently, there is no basis for attributing to Isaac or to Cassian the doctrine of 'mental iconoclasm' that Elizabeth Clark has attributed to Evagrius. Second, Isaac specifically mentions the face of Christ. In the Evagrian tradition, Christ is Himself the face of God*".<sup>93</sup>

But, there is at Clement where we find a primarily distinction between 'God-in-himself' and 'God-as-revealed-in-his-Son'. This distinction is structurally equivalent to a distinction between God's essence and his energies, which was later to become a dogma in the Eastern church. "*In my opinion, says Henny Fiska Hagg, Clement's innovation and main contribution lies in his coupling apophaticism with the distinction between God's essence and his power(s)*".<sup>94</sup> The transcendent God has, through an act

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<sup>93</sup> Here, A. Casiday quotes from Evagrius, in Ps 79.86 [Scholia in Psalmos in Marie-Josèphe Rondeau, "Le commentaire sur les Psaumes d'Evagre le Pontique" *OCP* 26 (1960): pp. 307-346 (CPG 2455)], cf. A. M. C. Casiday, *Tradition and Theology in St John Cassian* (Oxford University Press, 2007), p. 194. Regarding the 'mental iconoclasm', see Elizabeth Clark, *The Origenist Controversy: The Cultural Construction of an Early Christian Debate* (Princeton, NJ: Princeton University Press, 1992), pp. 4, 75-76 and 84. We must also remember here Athanasius, *Vita Ant.* 10.1-4 (*SC* 400: pp. 162-164), where the light of Christ plays an important role in Anthony's ascetic progress.

<sup>94</sup> Henny Fiskå Hägg, *Clement of Alexandria and the Beginnings of Christian Apophaticism* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2006), pp. 239 and 261. "*On the basis of his uncompromising apophatic attitude in relation to God, the problem was first of all an epistemological one. How was it possible for finite, immanent man to gain knowledge of the infinite and transcendent God? Clement's answer, then, to the epistemological di-*



of grace, disclosed himself in the Son. *By being the Father's face and name, the Son makes the inaccessible nature of God accessible to man: "Logos is the face of God, through whom God is brought to light and made known" (Paedagogus 1.57.2).* The Son who is the face and the name of God, 'the revealer of his character' and 'an image of the invisible God' (Col. 1.15; Clement of Alexandria, *excerpta ex Theodoto* 19.4),<sup>39</sup> is in sum the knowable aspect of the Father. Christ himself is his wisdom and energy (*Stromateis* 6.61.1) – an energy of the Father (*Strom.* 7.7.7). As the power of God, the Son's main function is to reveal the Father, to bring the gift of knowledge to man. This knowledge is himself, the Son. "*He is all reason, all eye, all light from the Father*" (*Strom.* 7.5.5).<sup>95</sup> This last statement will be found later on the Macarian homilist. For him the soul is deemed to be judged worthy to participate in the light of the Holy Spirit by becoming his throne and habitation. Covered with the beauty of ineffable glory of the Spirit, "*becomes all light, all face, all eye*" (*Hom* 1, 2)<sup>96</sup>, because there is no part of the soul that is not full of the spiritual eyes of light. The beauty of the ineffable glory of the light of Christ Light will make the body and the soul completely all light, brilliantly shining. So, the "*kingdom of light and the heavenly Image, Jesus Christ*" (*Hom* 2, 5)<sup>97</sup>, now mystically illu-

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*lemma may best be described as a distinction between God who is unknowable and his Son, or dynamis, who is knowable.*" (Hägg, *Clement of Alexandria*, p. 238).

<sup>95</sup> H. F. Hägg, *Clement of Alexandria*, pp. 227-230. The contrast that Clement so strongly emphasizes - between the unknowable and knowable aspects of God - became essentially a contrast between God and his Son.

<sup>96</sup> Pseudo-Macarius, *The Fifty Spiritual Homilies and The Great Letter*, Translated, Edited and with an Introduction by George A. Maloney, S.J., Preface by Kallistos Ware (New York, Mahwah: Paulist Press, 1992), p. 31.

<sup>97</sup> Pseudo-Macarius, *The Fifty Spiritual Homilies*, p. 37.

mines the soul and holds dominion in the souls of the saints. However, what the soul now stores up within shall then be revealed as a treasure and "displayed externally in the body" (*Hom 5, 8*).<sup>98</sup>

The section of *Conference 10* which follows the story of Sarapion demonstrates that Cassian believed that in prayer one is meant to 'see' God in the glorified Christ. "Pure prayer" is not an escape into anaesthesia or nothingness; it is the awakening of the real (i.e., 'spiritual') senses in the contemplation of the divine nature of Christ. Toward the end of his life, Cassian wrote: "I see the ineffable illumination, I see the unexplainable brilliance, I see the splendor unbearable for human weakness and beyond what mortal eyes can bear, the majesty of God shining in unimag-inable light" (*De Inc. 3.6.3*). In *Conference 10* he had already located this brilliance in the transfigured Christ. Cassian's explicit and accessible Christology, and his use of vivid, experiential language in his descriptions of prayer, says Columba Stew-

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<sup>98</sup> Ibidem, p. 54. The glory of the Holy Spirit "rises up from within, covering and warming the bodies of the saints" (*Hom 5, 9*; Pseudo-Macarius, *The Fifty Spiritual Homilies*, p. 54). This is the glory they interiorly had before, hidden in their souls. For that interior fire, inhabiting our hearts, emerges then and brings about the resurrection of the bodies (*Hom 11, 1*; Pseudo-Macarius, *The Fifty Spiritual Homilies*, p. 66). The Lord, even now, forms an image in the soul which will be manifested exteriorly in the resurrection, "glorifies their bodies interiorly and exteriorly" (*Hom 11, 3*; Pseudo-Macarius, *The Fifty Spiritual Homilies*, p. 67). For as the body of the Lord was glorified when he climbed the mount and was transfigured into the divine glory and into infinite light, so also the bodies of the saints are glorified and shine like lightning. Just as the interior glory of Christ covered his body and shone completely, in the same way also "in the saints the interior power of Christ in them in that day will be poured out exteriorly upon their bodies" (*Hom 15, 38*; Pseudo-Macarius, *The Fifty Spiritual Homilies*, p. 88). Similarly, as "many lamps are lighted from the one", same fire, so also it is necessary that the bodies of the saints, which are members of Christ, become the same which Christ himself is.

art, 'preclude the possibility latent in Evagrius' writings of misunderstanding true prayer to be some sort of intellectualized blankness'.<sup>99</sup>

Therefore, it is important to climb the mountain and then to see Christ transfigured.<sup>100</sup>

In fact, Evagrius followed the Alexandrian tradition in identifying the goal of the Christian life as 'seeing God'.<sup>101</sup> Sarapion,

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<sup>99</sup> Columba Stewart, *Cassian the Monk* (Oxford University Press, 1998), pp. 95-96. On the 'high mountain of solitude' they see the glorified Jesus of the Transfiguration, "coming in the glory of his majesty" and showing the "glory of his face and the image (*imago*) of his splendor" (*Conf.* 10.6.1-3). Beyer in "Die Lichtlehre der Monche des vierzehnten und des vierten Jahrhunderts," pp. 504-507, notes the importance of the Transfiguration in Pseudo-Macarius' writings that includes a visionary experience related to the Transfiguration in II. 8.3 [*Homiliae (Coll. II)*]. Ed. Hermann Dorries, E. Klostermann, and M. Kroeger. *Die 50 geistlichen Homilien des Makarios* (Patristische Texte und Studien 4. Berlin: Walter de Gruyter, 1964), pp. 29-34], and I. 4.9.2 [*Homiliae (Coll. I)*]. Ed. H. Berthold. *Makarios/Symeon: Reden und Briefe. Die Sammlung I des Vaticanus Graecus 694 (B)*, 2 vols. (GCS. Berlin: Akademie Verlag, 1973. vol. i), pp. 50-51]. According to H. Alfeyev, the vision of Christ's face in formless light was described by Symeon the New Theologian also [*Catech.* 36.8, in Syrneon the New Theologian, *Catechetical Discourses*, French trans. Basile Krivocheine. *Symeon le Nouveau Theologien: Catecheses. (Sources chretiennes 96, 104, 113. Paris: Cerf, 1963-65)*, for here SC 113, p. 344].

<sup>100</sup> Regarding the Cassian's pneumatology, see, Thomas L. Humphries Jr., *Ascetic Pneumatology from John Cassian to Gregory the Great* (Oxford Early Christian Studies; New York: Oxford University Press, 2013), pp. 1-26. It is the invocation of 'pneumatological doctrines to explain aspects of ascetic systems' that Humphries terms "ascetic pneumatology" (xv). But the real focus is on *filioque* pneumatology during late antique West.

<sup>101</sup> Gabriel Bunge, *Das Geistgebet. Studien zum Traktat De oratione des Evagrius Pontikos*, (Köln: Luthe-Verlag, 1987) pp. 68-73, 78-83, 106-7. Elizabeth A. Clark, *The Origenist Controversy. The Cultural Construction of an Early Christian Debate* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1992), pp. 70-71, suggests that Evagrius never satisfactorily explains just what this light is. What one does see is the light of the mind or even the light of the Trinity. Instead, Bunge notes, "Mystical experience

instead, by his anthropomorphic imagination, could not ascend the mountain to see the divine nature of Christ with the eyes of his heart. For Cassian, the goal of "seeing God" of *Conference 1* means to see Christ (*Conf.* 10.6). Here, as at other key points in his theology of prayer, Cassian anchors his teaching Christologically. Cassian condemns not the desire of the Anthropomorphites to see God but their misunderstanding (Abba Sarapion) of what that means. As Victor Codina demonstrates, Cassian's Christocentric spirituality (seeing and knowing Christ) is the key to understanding his doctrinal vision.<sup>102</sup>

Cassian has without doubt drawn from sources common to the author of the *Liber Graduum*, Pseudo-Macarius and a lot of others. He is a witness to a period that was gradually elaborating doctrines of the Church more precise. However, says Stewart, "although modern scholars have suspected a link between Cassian and the Pseudo-Macarian tradition, efforts to prove the connection by direct literary dependence have failed, and thematic arguments have proven unconvincing".<sup>103</sup> He reminds us of Cassian's descriptions of ecstatic prayer, which can be, in fact, a link between Pseudo-Macarius and Cassian or the "Cassian's greater fidelity to the non-Evagrian desert tradition". Without the exact proof of direct textual dependence, the judgments cannot be final, but says again Stewart, "it is difficult to resist the strong impression that the common ground between Cassian and Diadochus is not only their debt to Evagrius but also their shared

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of self and of God is for [Evagrius] not 'ecstatic' but 'contemplative', or seeing-knowing, in which the accent falls on personal, unmediated encounter with the Seen and Known" (Bunge, *Das Geistgebet*, p. 76).

<sup>102</sup> Victor Codina, *El aspecto cristológico en la espiritualidad de Juan Casiano* (OCA 175, Rome: Pontificium Institutum Orientalium Studiorum, 1966) pp. 89, 184-191.

<sup>103</sup> C. Stewart, *Cassian the Monk*, p. 115.

*interest in religious experience of the kind described by Pseudo-Macarius*".<sup>104</sup>

Others byzantine theologians, as Diadochos of Photiki, Hesychios of Sinai, John Klimakos and Symeon New Theologian, also speak about this vision of the divine light. John Klimakos highlight that the seer of God "*often suddenly becomes full of light and exultant during prayer*".<sup>105</sup> Alluding in this to his own vision of light<sup>106</sup>, Klimakos says that "*the Hesychast is a man who fights*

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<sup>104</sup> Ibidem, p. 122. The divine fire of grace or the Holy Spirit shining out from the human person is a frequent theme in the macarian *Homilies* (I,8.4.5, 33.4.5, 35.1.8, 63.4.5; II 7.1, 9.9, 11.1, 25.9-10, 40.7, 43.1-3; III 26.4.1. Cassian's understanding of "fiery" prayer, or 'pure' and 'higher' prayer has been noted by commentators but little explored. See *Conf.* 3.7.3, 4.2, 4.5, 6.10.2, 9.14-15, 9.25-29, 10.10.12, 10.11.6, 12.12.6, 19.4.1, 19.5.1, 19.6.4-5. So, according to Stewart, the macarian text from II 8.3 reminds us of Cassian's descriptions of ecstatic prayer: "*The light shining in the heart opened the inner, deeper and hidden light*" (quoted by C. Stewart, *Cassian the Monk*, pp. 121-122).

<sup>105</sup> John Climacus, *The Ladder of Divine Ascent*, Translation by Colm Luibheid and Norman Russell, Introduction by Kallistos Ware, Preface by Colm Luibheid (Paulist Pres, SPCK: London, 1982) p. 195: "*the man who considers with sensitivity of heart that he is standing before God will be an immovable pillar in prayer, and none of the demons mentioned above will delude him. The truly obedient monk often becomes suddenly radiant and exultant during his prayers*".

<sup>106</sup> St John of Klimakos confess in the same *Step 27*, that: "I have known hesychasts whose flaming urge for God was limitless. They generated fire by fire, love by love, desire by desire" [Luibheid and Russell eds. (1982), 263]; "those who have become immaterial in a material body... they rise to the realm of the Seraphim" [Luibheid and Russell eds. (1982), p. 264]; "Why is it that there were not as many lights among the holy fathers at Tabennisi as at Scetis? Cope with that question if you can I cannot say why. Or rather, I do not wish to" [Luibheid and Russell eds. (1982), p. 265]; "The first task of stillness is disengagement from every affair good and bad, since concern with the former leads on to the latter. Second is urgent prayer. Third is inviolable activity of the heart... I myself was occupied with the second of these tasks and entered the intermediate stage. A light came to me as I was

to keep his incorporeal self shut up in the house of the body".<sup>107</sup> He says, also, that "the man who perseveres despite any failures will be glorified as a champion by the angels", "Angels are a light for monks, and the monastic life is a light for all men".<sup>108</sup> They will be a light by which to analyze the others, because

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thirsting and I asked there what the Lord was before He took visible form"; in Luibheid and Russell eds. (1982), p. 268.

<sup>107</sup> John Climacus, *The Ladder of Divine Ascent*, 27, p. 262: "hesychast requires no words. He is enlightened by deeds rather than by words... Strange as it may seem, the hesychast is a man who fights to keep his incorporeal self shut up in the house of the body... The cell of a hesychast is the body that surrounds him, and within him is the dwelling place of knowledge". This text of St. John Climacus appears during the 14th century hesychastic dispute, being used by St Gregory Palamas for defending the hesychastic prayer. See, on this, *Triad* I. ii. 6-7: "But today, if what you tell me is true, it seems he has found accomplices who have even composed treatises towards this end, and who seek to persuade men (even those who have embraced the higher life of hesychasm) that it would be better for them to keep the mind *outside* of the body during prayer [Barlaam, *Ep. IV to Ignatius* (ed. Schirò, p. 315)]. They do not even respect the clear and authoritative words of John, who writes in his *Ladder of Divine Ascent*, 'The hesychast is one who seeks to circumscribe the incorporeal in his body.' [*Ladder* XXVI.26 (PG LXXXVIII, 1020A)]. This is exactly the tradition, and our spiritual Fathers have also handed it down to us, and rightly so. For if the hesychast does not circumscribe the mind in his body, how can he make to enter himself the One who has clothed himself in the body, and Who thus penetrates all organised matter, insofar as He is its natural form? For the external aspect and divisibility of matter is not compatible with the essence of the mind, unless matter itself truly begins to live, having acquired a form of life conformable to the union with Christ. You see, brother, how John teaches us that it is enough to examine the matter in a human (let alone a spiritual) manner, to see that it is absolutely necessary to recall or keep the mind within the body, when one determines to be truly in possession of oneself and to be a monk worthy of the name, according to the inner man"; in Gregory Palamas, *The Triads*, Edited with an Introduction by John Meyendorff, translation by Nicholas Gendle, preface by Jaroslav Pelikan (Mahwah, New Jersey: Paulist Press, 1983), p. 45.

<sup>108</sup> John Climacus, *The Ladder of Divine Ascent*, pp. 251, 234.

there is 'the way of rapture', the way of the mind mysteriously and marvelously 'carried into the light of Christ', and the man who 'through illumination has come to possess God within himself' becomes 'a light to all'.<sup>109</sup> According to Diadochos 'the intellect, when it begins to be strongly energized by the divine light, becomes so completely translucent that it sees its own light vividly'.<sup>110</sup> This is again a reminiscence of the Evagrian distinction between the two levels of light. St Symeon suggests a direct link between light ecstasy and deification: "He who has within himself the light of the all-holy Spirit, being unable to bear the sight of it (...). He becomes like a man whose entrails are touched by fire; being scorched with flame, he is not able to bear this burning, and becomes like one in ecstasy[...] shines with greater brilliance. Moreover, when, being totally inflamed, he becomes light, then is accomplished what is said: 'God united with gods and known by them; and this is, probably, to the extent that He is already united with those who are attached to Him, and revealed to those who have known Him'.<sup>111</sup>

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<sup>109</sup> *Ibidem*, pp. 235, 249, 245, 230-231: "For our God is a fire consuming all lusts, all stirrings of passion, all predispositions, and all hardness of heart, both within and without, both visible and spiritual".

<sup>110</sup> St Diadochos of Photiki, "On Spiritual Knowledge and Discrimination One Hundred Texts," *Chapt. 40*, in *The Philokalia: The Complete Text* (Vol. 1), Compiled by St. Nikodemos of the Holy Mountain and St. Makarios of Corinth, translated from the Greek by G. E.H. Palmer, Philip Sherrard, Kallistos Ware (London: Faber & Faber, 1979), p. 266.

<sup>111</sup> Saint Symeon the New Theologian, *The practical and theological chapters*, *Cap. 3. 21*, translation by Paul John McGuckin (Cistercian Publications, 1982) pp. 38-39 and his *Disc. 16*, in Symeon the New Theologian, *The Discourses*, translation by C. J. De Catanzaro (Mahwah, New Jersey: Paulist Press, 1980) pp. 198-204.

## 5 The true nature of the light for Macarius - ‘more inward, deeper and hidden light’ (II 8.3). Πληροφορία as perception which sees the right (divine) light (I 44. 2. 3) – a hypostatic effulgence of the eternal light

According to the Evagrius, during prayer the mind sees its most authentic self, which is luminous, the sapphire light of the mind, that is ‘the place of God’. It also knows by seeing “*the uncreated, immaterial light that God is*”<sup>112</sup>, that comes from the Holy Trinity’s singular light, an experience both real and personal. So personal, that demanding a pilgrimage of eighteen days made it to ask John of Lycopolis, the ‘Seer of Thebaid’, about this experience of divine light.

In this chapter, we will deal with Macarius understanding of the real knowledge (*ἐπίγνωσις*), which is achieved through the visitation and *αἴσθησις* of the Spirit and God’s gift of *νοερὸν φῶς*. Regarding the spiritual senses and the God’s knowledge, Rahner’s belief (following Bousset) that Macarius was influenced by Evagrius Ponticus is improbable.<sup>113</sup> The same issues related to

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<sup>112</sup> William Harmless, *Mystics* (Oxford University Press, 2007), in particular *Chapter 7: ‘Mystic as Desert Calligrapher: Evagrius Ponticus’*, pp. 135-158, here p. 153. Entering into ‘pure prayer’ was signaled by a vision of formless light.

<sup>113</sup> W. Bousset, *Apophthegmata. Studien zur Geschichte des ältesten Monchtums* (Tubingen: Mohr, 1923), p. 319, and Rahner, “Le début d’une doctrine des cinq sens spirituels chez Origène”, *Revue d’ascétique et de mystique*, 13 (1932), pp. 113-145, for here, p. 142. There are chronological difficulties with arguing dependence on Evagrius. Ps.-Macarius cites Proverbs 2:5 [*then you will understand the fear of the Lord and find the knowledge of God* (“τότε συνήσεις φόβον κυρίου καὶ ἐπίγνωσιν θεοῦ εὐρήσεις”)], the biblical source of Origen’s term, only once, and there one finds the standard reading from the Septuagint, *ἐπίγνωσιν θεοῦ εὐρήσεις* (E.M. 7. 2), rather than the Alexandrian reading *αἴσθησιν εὐρήσεις* known to Clement and Origen. Macarius never mentions Origen’s *αἴσθησις θεῖα*.



the nature of light occurs in both. Thus, pure prayer to Evagrius means to be imageless, and formless, and enlightened by the grace of the Divine Spirit: the light of the Trinity itself is how he describes it. Therefore, emphasizes McGuckin, “*God, for Evagrius, is not an object of human knowledge but the form of all knowing, and the imageless state of standing in the divine presence is an initiation that is beyond description*”.<sup>114</sup> To Macarius a soul with discernment, he says, knows the difference between the *νοερὸν φῶς* of God and the false light of Satan immediately, from the *νοερά ἀΐσθησις*, which appear identical to the eye. The richer, more immediate sense that of taste is the analog to the *νοερά ἀΐσθησις*; so, the soul recognizes the source of that light by its own *νοερά ἀΐσθησις* and the *ἐνέργεια*. Regarding *the light emitted by the soul*, Evagrius and Gregory Nazianzen had spoken of a spiritual state where the purified soul could even see its own radiance as it prayed. The idea of luminous metamorphosis came to be a distinctive mark of the “luminous silence” of Byzantine Hesychasm (its origins are found, primarily, in Symeon the New Theologian).

When he describes the way in which grace, as a mother, leads the soul *εἰς ἀΐσθησιν καὶ ἐπίγνωσιν* of the heavenly Father (III 27. 4. 30) any distinction between ‘knowledge’ and ‘experience’, faculty and sensation, disappears. Alternatively, in another example with a reminiscence of Philippians 1 :9, he mentions the true knowledge (*ἐπίγνωσις*) and visitation ( *ἐπίσκεψις*) and *ἀΐσθησις* of the Spirit (I 31.4.3). Also, build upon Philippians 1:9, he writes that we are not to know God in word alone, but to have him in the heart in all *ἀΐσθησις* and *ἐπίγνωσις* (I 5.2.7).<sup>115</sup>

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<sup>114</sup> John Anthony McGuckin, *Standing in God's Holy Fire - The Byzantine Tradition* (Orbis Books, Maryknoll: New York, 2001), p. 43.

<sup>115</sup> The one occasion when *ἀΐσθησις*, *ἐπίγνωσις* and *πληροφορία* (I 29. 2. 8) are joined together appears to be an allusion to Philippians 1:9 [And this is my prayer: that your love may abound more and more in know-

Prioritizing experience over philosophical speculation, both in Macarius and Evagrius we find a pronounced theory of spiritual 'vision'. So, the predominant emphasis here is the concept and experience of such a mystical transfiguration in light, and the important role is taken over by biblical and patristic notion of "heart" as the center of human spiritual awareness of God. Paul speaks of the heart as a cipher of the 'innermost self' which longs for the salvation of God (Rom. 7.22). The heart is destined to become the new Temple of an indwelling holy presence.<sup>116</sup> The heart seeks after God, and this encounter of the creature with God is a vision of the heart. This dynamic understanding of the human being in the face of God remains at the core of all the subsequent East Christian understandings of prayer and the spiritual life.

Macarius treats our inability to see our own soul as a product of the Fall (III 26.4.4). When illumined one will be granted to see the rational nature of the soul (I 39.1.3). On one occasion he even describes the soul as '*shining all round like a bright pearl or precious stone*' (I 5.1) – a description that, in a less explicit way than Evagrius, associates the light of the soul with the divine *Shekinah*. Like Evagrius, he seems to perceive a certain connection between the light of the soul and the divine light; speaking of his own mystical experience, he describes how '*the very light which shines in the heart opened up to a more inward, deeper and hidden light*' (II 8.3). It is this deeper light that he focuses on, rather than the created light of the soul. He stresses

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*ledge and depth of insight* ("καὶ τοῦτο προσεύχομαι ἵνα ἡ ἀγάπη ὑμῶν ἔτι μᾶλλον καὶ μᾶλλον περισσεύῃ ἐν ἐπιγνώσει καὶ πάσῃ αἰσθήσει"). In several passages Macarius uses *αἴσθησις*, to complement *γνώσις*, *ἐπίγνωσις* or *ἀποκάλυψις*.

<sup>116</sup> J. McGuckin, *Standing in God's Holy Fire*, 57-58. Earliest desert abbas as John Klimakos, Diadochus, Makarios and Dorotheos serve as representatives of a larger tradition.

that this deeper light is the very light of the divinity shining within man: *‘The perfect mystery of the Christian faith [...] is the effulgence of celestial light in the revelation and power of the Spirit. [...] The illumination of grace is not merely a revelation on the level of conceptual images. It is the true and hypostatic effulgence of the eternal light in the soul’* (I 58.1.1-2.1).

Plested is aware that Macarius and Evagrius are united in their concentration upon light as opposed to the dimension of the divine darkness focused on by Gregory of Nyssa after Clement and Philo. However, in my opinion, there is an incomplete statement in his assertion about *“the distinction in their [Evagrius and Macarius] respective approaches to the nature of the light perceived in prayer”*.<sup>117</sup> To me, the nature of light in both Evagrius and Macarius is uncreated: as being “the uncreated light of the Holy Trinity” (KG II, 29) for Evagrius and “ὕποστατικὸν φῶς”, the true divine light (I 44. 2. 3) and “fullest and energizing indwelling of the Holy Spirit in a pure heart” (E.M. 13. 15), or the light of the Spirit is shining ‘substantially’ (ὕποστατικῶς) in the soul (I 58. 2. 1-2) to Macarius.<sup>118</sup>

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<sup>117</sup> M. Plested, *The Macarian Legacy*, p. 69.

<sup>118</sup> Gregory of Nyssa in *De oratione dominica* V, 3.260-5 says that, because they share the same energy (ἐνέργεια), Christ and the Spirit surely also possess the same nature (φύσεως). The Son is united with the Father according to nature and the Holy Spirit is not alien to the nature of the Son because of the identity of operations (ἐνέργειαν ταυτότητος) accomplishing the same work of salvation. Also, by his phrase, “Perceiving light (the Son) from light (the Father) in light (the Holy Spirit)” (Or. 31.3), Gregory Nazianzen says that the communion with the Spirit reveals for us the regenerative power of the Son, the true image of the unseen Father. Basil associates illumination strongly with the Spirit, because the Spirit is the beginning of the process of divine self-disclosure: “He does not reveal it to them from outside sources, but leads them to knowledge in himself [ἐν ἑαυτῷ]. *No one knows the Father except the Son* [Matt. 11:27], and *No one can say “Jesus is Lord” except in the Holy Spirit* [1 Cor. 12:3]. Notice that it does not say “through” the Spirit, but “in” the Spirit. It also says, *God is Spirit, and*

Nevertheless, Plested binds two major themes: the apophatic nature of the light and the deification as *christomorphisation*. This joinder of Plested, corroborated with a Cappadocian theol-

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*those who worship him must worship in spirit and truth* [John 4:24], and *In Your light do we see light* [Ps. 36:9], through the illumination of the Holy Spirit, *the true light that enlightens every man that comes into the world* [John 1:9]" (*Spir.* 18.47.1-16). For Athanasius when we are enlightened by the Spirit it is Christ who enlightens us (*Serap.* 1. 19). Therefore, in Cappadocian Fathers the self-giving of the Trinity is articulated through the theology of light and this light is uncreated, because, let us remember, for Cappadocian triadology the unity of nature among the Trinitarian persons is deducible from the unity of operation or activities (*dia tōn energeiōn*). Therefore, the uncreated activity of Holy Spirit is the key to understand the divinity of His Person, but, as we have seen already this uncreated activity is the divine light, which logically is itself uncreated. On this the Mystery of Light (φωταγωγία) or being illuminated by the Trinity, see: Khaled Anatolios, *Retrieving Nicaea: The Development and Meaning of Trinitarian Doctrine* (Grand Rapids: Baker, 2011) pp. 139, 207; J.A. McGuckin, " 'Perceiving Light from Light in Light' (Oration 31.3) The Trinitarian Theology of Saint Gregory the Theologian" *The Greek Orthodox Theological Review*, 39:1 (1994), pp. 11-31; Christopher A. Beeley, *Gregory of Nazianzus on the Trinity and the Knowledge of God. In Your Light We Shall See Light* (Oxford University Press, 2008), pp. 102-120, 154-214. I am currently working on a synthesis between the theology of the divine light in the triadology of the Cappadocian Fathers and the experience in prayer of uncreated light at Evagris and Macarius. Through this I want to explain the "missing Christology" of the Desert Fathers, the Late Antiquity enigma, but deciphered by the visionary experience of the "shining face" (Pambo, Silvan Sisoë) which is an experience of uncreated light. A prenicæan 'Face Christology' and a theology of uncreated light of Trinity are overlapped in this "shining face" transformation. This interpretation may also be a link (Cappadocians-Evagrius-Macarius) between the theology of Desert Fathers and the hesychast theology of Saint Gregory Palamas. Therefore, in both Cappadocians and Palamas, common is the "experience" of uncreated light, not the "concept" of divine energy, an insight that escapes to the Alexis Torrance analysis in his paper on "Precedents for Palamas' Essence-Energies Theology in the Cappadocian Fathers," *Vigiliae Christianae* 63 (2009) pp. 47-70, otherwise a valuable and reference work.

ogy of Light as a ‘*trinitarian mutual glorification*’<sup>119</sup>, would have been enough to grasp the uncreated nature of light both in Evagrius and Macarius (it does not happen to Plested). So, he rightly presumes that, because of the contact between Evagrius and the Cappadocians, “*it should be noted that the motif of light does not in itself preclude an apophatic approach to the knowledge of God*”. Also, he makes the point that Evagrius and Macarius, both also treat deification as the goal of the Christian life. Hence, for Evagrius “when the *nous* will receive essential science, then it also will be called God” (*KG* V.81) and to Macarius, also, “all are changed into divine nature, having become Christs and gods and children of God” (II 34.2).<sup>120</sup>

The vision of God as light means to be transformed in the divine light through illumination by the shining face of Christ. From shining light in the heart to the hidden light (shining from within rather than from outside) signify for Macarius the movement from cataphatic to the apophatic experience of divine light. In his interpretation of Ezekiel 1: 1–2: 1, the question is about the state of the soul when it participates in the divine light: “*For the soul that is counted worthy to participate in the spirit of the Lord’s light and illumined by the beauty of His unspeakable glory (...) becomes all light, all face, all eye (...) Like the sun that is the same all over, without any part behind or imperfect, but is completely all light...and like the fire, or the very light of fire, which is also entirely full of light (...) in the same manner the soul that is*

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<sup>119</sup> Assuming his characterization of the divine Trinity as a “circle” of mutual glorification, Gregory of Nyssa is taken a decisive step further in the conception of divine glory as an immanently intra-trinitarian event. The human glorification of God (*theosis*) is a participation in the mutually self-glorifying being of the Trinity (Anatolios, *Retrieving Nicaea*, p. 210). Christian worship is thus a matter of being included within “the circle” of the mutual glorification of Father, Son, and Spirit.

<sup>120</sup> M. Plested, *The Macarian Legacy*, p. 70, n. 148.

*completely illumined with the unspeakable beauty of the glory of the light of Christ's face and perfectly participates in the Holy Spirit (...) becomes all eye, all light, all face, all glory, all spirit*".<sup>121</sup> Makarios tells us how man participates in the Holy Spirit, and his soul is transformed in the divine light through illumination by the face of Christ. Another important passage from the 'Makararian Homilies' is devoted to the different types<sup>122</sup> of the vision of the divine light: sometimes, Makarios says, the holy cross appeared as a light, and in other times, 'the very light itself shining in the heart opened up an interior, profound and hidden light'.<sup>123</sup>

For the understanding of the true nature of the light, another concept must be emphasized here – i.e., πληροφορία. Thus, to Macarius πληροφορία means the fullness of understanding or perception of the true (divine) light (I 44. 2. 3) and, also the "fullest and energizing indwelling of the Holy Spirit in a pure heart" (E.M. 13. 15).

For him, πληροφορία most often refers to the experience of achieved perfection. He explains the πληροφορία in the following way: "If you have this treasure in your earthen vessel [then] 'out of the darkness light shall shine', shone in your heart... if Christ made his home in your inner self... you became a temple of God, and his Spirit dwells in you (έν πληροφορία πίστεως)... you received the experience (πειραν) of all these things through the

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<sup>121</sup> Pseudo-Macaire, *Oeuvres spirituelles (Homélie propre à la Collection III)*, ed. V. Desprez, SC 275 (1980), *Hom.* 1. 2 [2]. Cf. also *Hom.*, (III) 22. 3. 1-2, pp. 258-260.

<sup>122</sup> H. Alfeyev, *St. Symeon*, pp. 237, 244.

<sup>123</sup> *Hom.* 8.1-3. The concept of the interior light of heart is close to the Evagrian notion of the light of the intellect. Elsewhere Makarios states that the Invisible One may be seen by worthy souls, who may 'taste His sweetness and enjoy in actual experience the goodness of the light of ineffable enjoyment'; *Hom.* 4. 11.

activity (ἐνεργείας) in [your] heart” (III 28. 2. 2). In *E.M.* 13. 15 he uses Hebrews 10:22 as one of the proof texts for the “fullest and energizing indwelling of the Holy Spirit in a pure heart.” This association of πληροφορία with the full indwelling of God in the human heart or soul is the typical Ps.-Macarian use of this term.<sup>124</sup> Also, he uses πληροφορία as the fullness of understanding or perception (I 38. 2. 9, 50. 2. 2; II 49.1). The word characterizes the extraordinary perception which sees the true (divine) light (I 44. 2. 3), and is itself an object of perception by one with an illumined νοῦς (I 4. 22; II 7. 5).<sup>125</sup> The experience of πληροφορία would indicate acquisition of divine light or grace (II 29. 5).<sup>126</sup>

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<sup>124</sup> C. Stewart, *Working the Earth of the Heart*, p. 107. Colossians 2:2, says Stewart, even though unquoted, may underlie several uses of πληροφορία in the Ps.-Macarian writings: “My goal is that they may be encouraged in heart and united in love, so that they may have the full riches of complete understanding, in order that they may know the mystery of God, namely, Christ” (ἵνα παρακληθῶσιν αἱ καρδία αὐτῶν, συμβιβασθέντες ἐν ἀγάπῃ καὶ εἰς πᾶν πλοῦτος τῆς πληροφορίας τῆς συνέσεως, εἰς ἐπίγνωσιν τοῦ μυστηρίου τοῦ θεοῦ, Χριστοῦ).

<sup>125</sup> According to *Const. App.* 7. 39. 2 which requires that a candidate for baptism be taught “γῶσις concerning the unbegotten God, ἐπίγνωσις concerning the only-begotten Son, and πληροφορία concerning the Holy Spirit”, cf. *Didascalia et Constitutiones Apostolorum*, Ed. F. X. Funk. 2 vols. (Paderborn: F. Schoeningh, 1905), pp. 440. 15-18. Mark the Monk uses πληροφορέω to describe the hidden presence of baptismal grace as working ἐν πάσῃ πληροφορίᾳ καὶ αἰσθήσει (*Opuscula.* 8. 4, in *PG* 65, col. 1108 D), French translation by C.-A. Zirnheld, *Marc Le Moine: Traités spirituels et théologiques* (Spiritualite orientale 41; Abbaye de Bellefontaine, 1985).

<sup>126</sup> Macarius’ application of words from I Thessalonians 1: 5 to describe the gift of the Holy Spirit (II 50. 4) is in line with his favoured use of πληροφορία in descriptions of the indwelling activity of God in the soul or heart. Most often the Holy Spirit is the gift and agent who establishes the recipient in πληροφορία (I 28. 2. 5, 36. 3. 2; II 37. 7; I. 3, 52. 2. 4; *E.M.* 2. 2, 3. 2), and the agents can be Christ, both Christ and the Holy Spirit, or ‘God’ (*E.M.* 13. 16). Cf. Stewart, *Working the Earth of the Heart*, p. 113.

Thereat, Macarius chooses to concentrate upon the light of the descent of Moses in Exodus 34: 29–35, then over the ascent into the divine darkness of Exodus 20:21. It is significant that Macarius links the glory that shone on and from the face of Moses to certain Gregorian themes from 2 Corinthians: the soul as a mirror of God and the theme of *epektasis* (I 21.10, 34.9–12).<sup>127</sup> Thus, says Plested, “This concentration on light rather than darkness does not constitute a fundamental distinction between the apophaticism of Gregory of Nyssa and that of Macarius”.<sup>128</sup>

## **6 The *πεῖρα* of the glory with the ‘eyes of the soul’ (*ψυχικοί ὀφθαλμοί*; I 63. 2. 4). Light and glory (*doxa*) are for Macarius ‘essentially equivalent’ - “full of glory”, the body of Adam shone with uncreated light**

The notion of recovery of the Adam likeness is linked to the discussion about the luminous garment (image, body) of Adam.<sup>129</sup> In the Christian Syrian Writers, the glory of Adam is a

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<sup>127</sup> Macarius develops the idea of the intellect as a mirror in which one can contemplate the form of Christ (II 25.3).

<sup>128</sup> M. Plested, *The Macarian Legacy*, p. 56.

<sup>129</sup> David H. Aron, “Shedding Light on God’s Body in rabbinic Midrashim: Reflection of the Theory of a Luminous Adam” *HTR* 90 (1997): pp. 299–314; S. Brock, “Clothing Metaphors as a Means of Theological Expression in Syriac Tradition,” in M. Schmidt (ed.), *Typus, Symbol, Allegorie bei den östlichen Vätern und ihren Parallelen im Mittelalter* (EB, 4; Regensburg: Friedrich Pustet, 1982), pp. 11–40; A. D. DeConick and J. Fossum, “Stripped before God: A New Interpretation of Logion 37 in the Gospel of Thomas,” *Vigiliae christianae* 45.2 (1991) pp. 123–150; N. A. Dahl and D. Hellholm, “Garment-Metaphors: The Old and the New Human Being,” in A. Yarbro Collins and M. M. Mitchell, *Antiquity and Humanity: Essays on Ancient Religion and Philosophy: Presented to Hans Dieter Betz on His 70th Birthday* (Tübingen: Mohr Siebeck,



recurrent theme. An important macarian text in this: “*But I think that when he saw the glory of Adam on the face of Moses, the enemy was wounded... [for] with Christ it [i.e., the kingdom of Satan] was truly abolished... [Exalted at the right hand, Christ] is full of glory, not only just in his face, like Moses, but through his entire body and being... moreover, from that time true Christians carry in the inner man that [same] glory, and thus within [themselves]... the glory of the Spirit shines perfectly in their souls. Moreover, so, at the Resurrection, death shall also be done away with completely from the very bodies of those are glorified in the [divine] light*” (I.3.13-15, II.5.10-11, 12-14, 47.1). Therefore, here, Macarius links the glory of Adam with 1) the divine splendor in which the first man was clothed in Eden, 2) the glory on Moses’ face (Ex. 34:29-35), 3) the light of the knowledge of God’s glory displayed in the face of Christ (2 Cor. 4:6 and 3:18 “we all, who with unveiled faces contemplate the Lord’s glory, are being transformed into his image with ever-increasing glory), 4) as divine radiance “now” (*apo tou nyn*) present inwardly in the believer, 5) that in the eschaton will shine forth openly from the transfigured body.<sup>130</sup> Adam saw the glory in Paradise (II.45.1), but only in Christ, the glory is recovered and, then, He sends to the faithful the “image of the ineffable light”, the “deiform and living image” (I.27.2).

So, before the fall even the bodies of Adam and Eve shone with light in Paradise, and they were “covered with God’s glory in

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2001), pp. 139-158; April D. DeConick, “The Vision of God or His *Kabod*” in *Seek to See Him: Ascent and Vision Mysticism in the Gospel of Thomas* (Leiden, New York: E.J. Brill, 1996), pp. 99-125.

<sup>130</sup> Alexander Golitzin, “Recovering the ‘Glory of Adam’: ‘Divine Light’ Traditions in the Dead Sea Scrolls and the Christian Ascetical Literature of Fourth-Century Syro-Mesopotamia”, in James R. Davila (ed.), *The Dead Sea Scrolls as Background to Postbiblical Judaism and Early Christianity: Papers from an International Conference at St. Andrews in 2001* (Leiden: Brill, 2003), pp. 275-308, here p. 280.

place of clothing (*endyma*)" (II.12.6-8). The Semitic emphasis in the Old Testament the process of continued growth in interpersonal relations between God and human beings. The emphasis is on *life* in the *light*.<sup>131</sup> To know God is to possess him and to see him, not intellectually, but as a spiritual gift, a mystical vision that transcends all materiality. The human soul, purified and contemplating God, becomes a mirror that reflects God. This is the nature of humanity: to reflect God as in the mirror of our being.

However, after the fall Adam lost his glory and was clothed in darkness and enslaved by the prince of darkness (II 30.7). Satan has covered the soul of man with 'the purple of darkness' (II 2.1). The power of Satan has filled the hearts (III 1.3.3), and the veil of darkness surrounds the heart, preventing the intellect from communing with God' (I 2.3.12-13). This 'veil' prevents the soul from grasping its true nature and from perceiving its Creator (III 26.4.4). The advent of Christ and the gift of baptism bring the man out of subjection to evil, but "Salvation is not a *fiat*, a compulsory recapitulation of Adam; it also requires the co-operation of man".<sup>132</sup> The believer's soul becomes what Adam was intended to be: God's own dwelling-place (*katoikētērion*) or temple (I.18.4). Macarius speaks of the Father as giving his own "vestment" (*stolē*) of the light of glory to the believer's soul (I.22.1, 17 and 26). The robe is "not created

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<sup>131</sup> Michel Spânnéut, *Le stoïcisme des Pères de l'Église: de Clément de Rome à Clément d'Alexandrie* (Paris: Aux éditions du Seuil, 1969) pp. 331-333, (*Logos et pneuma*), pp. 222-225 (Noûs et Aisthèsis), pp. 95-100 and 133-176 (nature de l'âme). The Hellenic influence, especially from Platonism and Stoicism, is characterized in general by the emphasis placed on *light* (Clement of Alexandria, Origen, and Evagrius).

<sup>132</sup> Marcus Plested, *The Macarian Legacy. The Place of Macarius-Symeon in the Eastern Christian Tradition* (Oxford University Press, 2004), pp. 35-36.

thing” (II.6.7), but a “divine light” (I.23.7), protological and eschatological manifestation of glory, renewed by the “clothing with Christ” at Baptism, being possible also a ‘vision’ of this divine light even “now” (*apo tou nyn*).

Light and glory (*doxa*) are for Macarius ‘essentially equivalent’.<sup>133</sup> In *Discourses* 17 and 58 of *Collection* I, the light is neither a metaphor, nor a purely subjective illumination of the intellect, neither is it a product of the latter, a *noēma*, but a “divine and essential light [*theion kai ousiōdēs phōs*]” (I.17.1.3),<sup>134</sup> being “the epiphany of Christ” (II.1.2) by which we “becomes all light, all face and all eye” (II.1.2).

The heart is for Macarius “Christ’s palace” (II.15.33) where the “heavens in the form of light” are hidden, but disclosed to the “inner eye” of the pure heart (III.6.3.5). He affirms visionary experience. It is real, as in the divine light which shines in the soul and it is necessarily mediated to the soul by the sacraments.<sup>135</sup> For Macarius, the recovery of the “Glory of Adam”

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<sup>133</sup> A. Golitzin, “Recovering the ‘Glory of Adam’: ‘Divine Light’ Traditions”, p. 290.

<sup>134</sup> See also, I.58.1.1 (‘heavenly light’), 1.2 (‘light of glory’), 2.1 (‘hypostatic light’). God is ‘foreign’ (*xena*) to our nature (I.18.6.2), but the vision of Christ is within and *doxa* is *noeron phōs* (I.10.3, citing 2 Cor. 3:18) and soul is healed by the “light of His [Christ’s] face” (II:214), Christ the Bridegroom appearing within “in the glory of his light” (III.3.2).

<sup>135</sup> For the macarian words as ‘robe’ (*endyma*), ‘mind’ (*rayānā*), ‘temple’ (*haiklā*), ‘dwelling-place’ (*katoikētērion*), ‘image’ (*tsalmā*), ‘ministry’ (*teshmeshtā*), ‘glory’ (*iqārā* or *shubhā*), ‘radiance’ (*ziwā*) and others (*shekintā*, *rabbūtā*, *dmutā*) see: Sebastian Brock, “Fire from Heaven: from Abel’s sacrifice to the Eucharist. A theme in Syriac Christianity”, *Studia Patristica* 25 (1993), pp. 229-243 and also Sebastian Brock, *Fire from Heaven: Studies in Syriac Theology and Liturgy* (Variorum Collected Studies 863; Ashgate Variorum, Aldershot, 2006) pp. 229-243; G. Quispel, *Makarius, das Thomasevangelium und das Lied von der Perle* (Leiden 1967) and “Macarius and the Diatessaron of Tatian”, in R. H. Fischer (ed.), *A Tribute to Arthur Vööbus* (Chicago 1977), 203-209; A. Baker, “Pseudo-Macarius and the Gospel of Thomas”, VC 18 (1964), pp.

means being assimilated to Christ and the *visio gloriae* in the pure heart is available in this life (*bhān 'ālmā*, literally 'in this age') as the revelation of the light of the face of the glorified Christ. To him, Holy Mary is a type of the Christian, regarding the "birth of Christ in the soul" (III.28.2). This is an ephreman insight, that puts Macarius in the same camp as other Syrians to whom there is a note of the light within, as indicated by Mary.<sup>136</sup>

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215-225; A. Baker, "Syriac and the Scriptural Quotations of Pseudo-Macarius", *JTS* 20 (1969), pp. 133-149; V. Desprez, "Le baptême chez le Pseudo-Macaire," *Ecclesia orans* 5 (1988): pp. 121-155; regarding the biblical perspective of the Baptism in Fire/Spirit, see: Kilian McDonnell, OSB, and George Montague, SM, *Christian Initiation and Baptism in the Holy Spirit* (Liturgical Press, 1991) pp. 268, 339-349; James D. G. Dunn, *Baptism in the Holy Spirit: A Re-examination of the New Testament Teaching on the Gift of the Spirit* (Westminster: John Knox Press, 2010) the most influential books on this topic and has become a classic.

<sup>136</sup> Ephrem in the *Paradis Hymns* mentions Adam's precipitous vision of the Glory. Twice he refers to Moses' feeding on the light of the Glory (*Hymnen de Paradiso* 9:22-24, on Moses and the eschatologically blessed feeding on the light of the Glory - *shubhā*). Ephrem uses the Aramaic term of *shekintā*, for the Presence atop the Paradise Mountain, described in terms of the Temple (*Hymnen de Paradiso* 2.11). but, very important, in another work he draws an interesting comparison between Moses' shining face, Christian Baptism and the Virgin Mary: "The brightness which Moses put on / was wrapped on him from without, whereas the river in which Christ was baptized / put on light from within, and so did Mary's body, in which he resided, / gleam from within" (*Hymns on Paradiso* 90 and *Hymns on the Church* 36.6); cf. S. Brock, "Mary and the Eucharist: An Oriental Perspective", *Sobornost/ECR* 1:2 (1979), pp. 50-59. *Shekintā* remains a terminus technicus for the divine light, presence, and specifically for Christ in Syriac Christian literature for some time after the fourth century (Golitzin, "Recovering the 'Glory of Adam': 'Divine Light' Traditions", p. 304). This relationship between "from without" - "from within" divine light' presence in Macarius/Ephrem, I see it later developed through the relationship between the Transfiguration (Light of Tabor) and the Eucharist ('life-giving' and deified body of Christ); see Andrew Louth,

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“The Eucharist and Hesychasm, with Social Reference to Theophanes III, Metropolitan of Nicaea” in István Perczel, Réka Forrai, György Geréby (eds.), *The Eucharist in Theology and Philosophy. Issues of Doctrinal History in East and West from the Patristic Age to the Reformation* (Leuven: Leuven University Press, 2005) pp. 199-298. To encounter the sacred body of the Lord and to encounter His radiance as uncreated light is the same thing. Very important for the hesychasts, the divine glory of the Transfiguration did not illuminate the body of Christ, like a light shining from outside, but radiated from within (this goes back to John Damascene). The play on words in the Greek *prosopon*, as both person and face, of which Maximos had made also use, is recalled here: the light that shone from the Face of Christ is uncreated, is energy of the Second Person of Trinity, and Christ himself is the true Hypostatic Light (Louth, “The Eucharist and Hesychasm”, p. 202). For his reasoning Father Louth quotes from Gregory Palamas the following text: “*Since the Son of God, in His incomparable love for men, did not only unite His divine hypostasis with our nature, by clothing Himself in a living body and a soul gifted with intelligence... but also united Himself... with the human hypostases themselves, in mingling Himself with each of the faithful by communion with His Holy body, since He becomes one body with us and makes us a temple of the undivided Divinity, for in the very body of Christ dwells the fullness of Godhead bodily, how should He not illuminate those who commune worthily with the divine ray of His body which is within us, lightening their souls, as He illuminated the very bodies of the disciples on Mount Tabor? For, on the day of the Transfiguration, that body, source of the light of grace, was not yet united with our bodies; it illuminated from outside (ἐξωθεν) those who worthily approached it, and sent the illumination into the soul by the intermediary of the physical eyes; but now, since it is mingled with us (ἀνακραθὲν ἡμῖν) and exists in us, it illuminates the soul from within (ἐνδωθεν),”* cf. Tr., III.iii.9, in Gregory Palamas, *The Triads*, edited with an introduction by John Meyendorff, translation by Nicholas Gendle, preface by Jaroslav Pelikan (Paulist Press: New Jersey, 1983) p. 106. The link between hesychasm and the Eucharist might seem problematic and the literature of hesychasm has, nonetheless, to say about the Eucharist, but this link stretched back to the fourth-century Egyptian desert. I have, already, discovered a connection between the eucharistic theology of Apa Aphou of Pemdje and the *Homily* 56 of St. Gregory Palamas; see my studies: “Body (‘epsoma’) and Glory / Light (‘peooy’). Apa Aphou and the Hesychastic-Eucharistic turn of the Anthropomorphic controversy” (in romanian) in D. Lemeni, *Dumnezeu – Izvorul înțelepciunii. Teologie și educație ascetică la Sfinții Părinți* (Sibiu: Astra Mu-

By the indwelling of Father and Son in the *ἔσω ἄνθρωπος* and through the *πεῖρα of the glory*, shared by the body also, we become “children of light”, divinized (*ἀποθεοῦται*). This means becoming ‘one spirit’ with the Lord.

But, if we become children of light, in Macarius it is towards an ever-increasing perception of divine light and “seeing the ineffable beauty of the glory of the light of the face of Christ” or participating in the Spirit of his light “becomes wholly light, and wholly face, and wholly eye” (Coll. II, *Hom.* 1. 2). Thus, about the ontological status of the believer, Macarius says that a saint is a person who has been sanctified in his inner self (κατὰ τὸν ἔσω ἄνθρωπον; Coll. II, *Hom.* 17. 13).<sup>137</sup> The soul cleansed of evil is ready to be ‘mixed’ or ‘mingled’ with the divine Spirit so that they become ‘one Spirit’<sup>138</sup> and the soul is changed into Spirit.<sup>139</sup> This ‘fullness of the Holy Spirit’ (*E.M.* 9. 1) Macarius de-

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seum, 2016) pp. 43-71; and “The aesthetics of apophaticism. Christophanies and the enhypostatic reflection of the divine Light in the luminous countenance of the ascetics” (in romanian) *Studii Teologice* 1 (2016) pp. 83-122.

<sup>137</sup> The author refers to a personal experience of the sign of the cross, ‘which appeared as light and penetrated the inner man’ (Coll. II, *Hom.* 8. 3). See, Norman Russell, *The Doctrine of Deification in the Greek Patristic Tradition* (Oxford University Press Inc., New York, 2004). Russell notes that the theophany of Ezekiel’s vision is linked with that of Christ’s transfiguration, and in a remarkable spiritual exegesis, which perhaps owes something to the Jewish Merkabah tradition, the throne-chariot becomes the human soul which God takes possession of and makes his dwelling (Russell, *Doctrine of Deification*, p. 245).

<sup>138</sup> Macarius emphasizes on growth (*αὔξεις/αύξάνω*) and progress (*προκοπή/προκόπτω*): “in order to come to full growth (*τελείαν αὔξεις*), those begotten by the Holy Spirit, and by him instructed and nurtured, grow into the growth (*αὔξεις τὴν αὔξιν*) of the Lord. (I 18. 5. 6). See, also, I 13. 2. 4, 15. 2. 3; II 18. 10, 9. 12, 46. 3; III 16. 3. 5; 26. 7. 3.

<sup>139</sup> I 63. 4. 2: αἱ ψυχὰι αἱ εἰλικρινῶς πιστεύσασαι καὶ τῷ πνεύματι γεννηθεῖσαι εἰς πνεῦμα μεταβληθήσονται, similarity with John 3:6, τὸ

scribes it regarding restoration, a new creation, and even divinization.<sup>140</sup> The theme of deification brings us back to the theme with which we started, the mutual indwelling of man and God: *'The holy and venerable Trinity dwells in the purified man [...] not as it is in itself - for the Trinity cannot be contained by any created thing - but according to the capacity and receptivity of the one in whom it has been well-pleased'* (I 52.2.6). Neither God's dwelling in man nor man's dwelling in God eradicates the ontological gap between their respective natures. Man's nature is not swallowed up into the Godhead; God remains infinite and inapprehensible. Macarius, says Plested, is struggling to express the "reality of the union of man and God, without compromising their ontological discontinuity".<sup>141</sup>

Also, becoming 'one spirit' with the Lord is to being changed into a 'divine nature' (*θεϊκὴ φύσις*, 2 Pet. 1: 4), another way of describing full communion with God. The Lord comes to dwell in the soul, freeing it from enemies and indwelling sin, filling it with the Holy Spirit.<sup>142</sup> Lord is coming to dwell within one, in all

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*γεγεννημένον ἐκ τοῦ πνεύματος πνεῦμά ἐστιν* ('that which is born of the Spirit is spirit').

<sup>140</sup> C. Stewart, *Working the Earth of the Heart*, 75. Having arrived at the 'measures' (*τὰ μέτρα*) of the first Adam through the power of the Spirit and spiritual rebirth, one is divinized (*ἀποθεοῦται*) and thus becomes greater than Adam was (I 7. 3 = II 26. 2). This point is echoed in other passages which refer to the Christian hope of becoming *κύριοι* (as Adam was *κύριος* of creation) and *θεοί* (a status which Adam was denied). The coming of divine power conferred to the 'pure man' (*τὸν καθαρὸν ἄνθρωπον*) makes one 'greater than oneself' (*γίγνεται ἑαυτοῦ μειζότερος*), and is divinized (*ἀποθεοῦται*) or become a son of God. See Sebastian Brock, *The Luminous Eye. The Spiritual World Vision of Saint Ephrem* (Cistercian Publications: Kalamazoo, Michigan, 1985), p. 18 on this theme in Ephrem's work.

<sup>141</sup> M. Plested, *The Macarian Legacy*, p. 45. The tension produced by this attempt runs throughout the Macarian writings.

<sup>142</sup> C. Stewart, *Working the Earth of the Heart*, pp. 78, 80-81. Ps. Macarius writes, "The Kingdom of Heaven is the philanthropic spirit of Christ,

αἴσθησις and ἐνέργεια of the Spirit (I 30. 5; II 14. 2). This possession of the Holy Spirit, union with Christ, and other spiritual experiences are recognized in confidence or assurance (πληροφορία),<sup>143</sup> feeling or sensation (αἴσθησις)<sup>144</sup> and experience (πεῖρα). These terms are often used in combination, and with other words such as ἐνέργεια and δύναμις. He does not invent these words, but his use of them is thoroughly innovative and makes them key elements of his spiritual vocabulary.<sup>145</sup>

The goal of unceasing prayer is establishing the inner self (ἔσω ἄνθρωπος) in πεῖρα and πληροφορία (I 9. 3. 8; II 1. 12). Here, the πνευματικοί have experience (πεπειραῖσθαι) of heavenly glory, which is felt (αἰσθῆσθαι) in the ἔσω ἄνθρωπος (I 48. 2. 3; II 5. 5). It is about the πεῖρα of the indwelling of Father and Son in the ἔσω ἄνθρωπος which makes one worthy of the Bridegroom (III 28. 2. 3). Therefore, the participants in the heavenly ἄνθρωπος receive knowledge of heavenly mysteries in πεῖρα and αἴσθησις (I 50. 2. 1), and each soul receives πεῖρα of divine energy (I 58. 1. 1). The perception of heavenly mysteries is by πεῖρα, as one sees with the 'eyes of the soul' (ψυχικοί ὀφθαλμοί;

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working (ἐνεργοῦν) and supplying (παρέχον) ἀπάθεια and faith in the soul' (I 38. 2. 6). For him ἀπάθεια is the 'rest [or calm, κατάπαυσις] the fullness of grace' (I 20. 1. 5), sanctification (I 40. 1. 1 and 2. 6).

<sup>143</sup> Lord comes and dwells ἐν πάσῃ δυνάμει καὶ πληροφορίᾳ (I 22. 2. 9). See, Macarius' reference to the μετουσία of the perfect Spirit ἐν πληροφορίᾳ (E.M. 3. 2) and to πληροφορίᾳ through μετουσία of Spirit (E.M. 3. 12);

<sup>144</sup> We must have Christ dwelling in the soul ἐν πάσῃ αἰσθήσει καὶ ἐπιγνώσει καὶ πληροφορίᾳ (I 29. 2. 8); God works in the soul ἐν πάσῃ δυνάμει καὶ αἰσθήσει (I 24. 13); and we have the communion with the Spirit Paraclete in perfection with all αἴσθησις and πληροφορία (I 51. 5; II 10. 2).

<sup>145</sup> C. Stewart, 'Working the Earth of the Heart', p. 96. Sometimes, Macarius uses a phrase such as ἐν πάσῃ πληροφορίᾳ καὶ αἰσθήσει emphasizing a statement about grace or perfection.



I 63. 2. 4). The souls receive now the *πεῖρα* of the glory which will later be shared by the body at the resurrection (I 48. 6. 10; II 5. 11).

In the next chapter, we will look at what is the nature of this *πεῖρα* of the glory, and we will find again an association of the glory-light-Christ. After we have demonstrated that Light and glory (*doxa*) are for Macarius ‘essentially equivalent’, now we will see that the Light is ‘enipostatically’ identified with Christ. The Christ-Light is present within us through the illumination work of the Holy Spirit. This christocentric perspective it also includes the body.

**7 “ὕποστατικὸν φῶς” - the illuminating light (φωτισμὸς φῶς) is Christ shining ‘substantially’ (ὕποστατικῶς) - Stewart’s and Golitzin’s contribution. Christ becomes present in the soul as He was in the Incarnation and, through His presence we are being ‘mixed’, from within (ἐν ὑμῖν), with the light of the Trinity**

Mixing (syr. *netmazzag*) language is used by Macarius to describe the presence of sin, of grace, of Christ, of the Holy Spirit. However, through this metaphor Macarius emphasizes especially how Christ becomes present in the soul as he was in the Incarnation,<sup>146</sup> or how we are ‘mixed’, from within (ἐν ὑμῖν), with the light of the Trinity. Significant here is that while the soul and the Holy Spirit’ light are kindred<sup>147</sup>, the soul and sin

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<sup>146</sup> Charles M. Stang, ‘The Two ‘I’s of Christ: Revisiting the Christological Controversy’ in *Anglican Theological Review* 94, no. 3 (2012): pp. 529-547.

<sup>147</sup> The Holy Spirit, however, is joined to the soul so that they become a *κρᾶσις* in the sublime manner in which God became human, ‘blending’ divinity to humanity. Macarius is drawing an implicit distinction

are not. So, as wine is mixed with water, rendering it drinkable, so divinity has mixed (*κεράσασα*) itself to humanity so that the Lord might 'join to/blend with' his own Spirit all who so desire

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between *κεράννυμι*, meaning 'to blend', and *μίγνυμι* meaning 'to intermingle or to mix'. Only rarely does Macarius use *κεράννυμι*, to describe the presence of sin in the soul; for this he prefers *μίγνυμι* (I 46. 1. 2; II 16. 1). Clement of Alexandria is the first Christian author to use mixing language (*Paed.* 1. 6), see Robin M. Jensen, *Baptismal Imagery in Early Christianity: Ritual, Visual, and Theological Dimensions* (Grand Rapids, MI: Baker Academic, 2012), p. 126. He uses mixing language applied also to the constitution of human beings, to the christological union of two natures, to the sacraments of baptism and eucharist or to the soul in contact with grace, the Spirit, or Christ. Both Gregory of Nyssa and Ps.-Macarius emphasize the soul's achieving union with the divine, and mixing language can provide that emphasis. The words *ἀνακραθῆναι* and *ἀνακρασις* to describe this union are the same ones he favours for descriptions of the Incarnation. Three of Gregory's descriptions of being *ἀνακραθείς* to the Lord come from chapter 37 of the *Oratio catechetica*, which is on the eucharist. Gregory concludes that through the eucharist, the Lord is *ἀνακιρνάμενος* to the bodies of believers. The body experiences union through reception of the Eucharist, the effects of which Gregory describes in the language of divinization, on this, see: Martin Laird, *Gregory of Nyssa and the Grasp of Faith: Union, Knowledge, and Divine Presence* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2004), p. 188. Also, according to Stewart, where Gregory does use *καταμίγνυμι* for the union of Holy Spirit and human nature, in a sermon on the Holy Spirit, he does so in terms of restoration, using the mixing language in a manner reminiscent of anthropological commentary about the composition of human beings. Although throughout his work Gregory emphasizes the soul's union with God, he favours words like *συνάφεια*, *κολλέο*, *συγγενής*, *οἰκεῖος*, and of course *ἔνωσις/ένώω*. All of these are words which describe union without suggesting intermingling or interpenetration. (Stewart, *Working the Earth of the Heart*, pp. 184-185). For an excellent analysis of the Gregory of Nyssa, *On the Holy Spirit, Against the Macedonians*, see Lucian Turcescu, *Gregory of Nyssa and the Concept of Divine Person*, New York: Oxford University Press, 2005, pp. 109-114; on the relation between Pseudo-Macarius and Gregory of Nyssa see: A. Baker, "The Great Letter of Pseudo-Macarius and Gregory of Nyssa", *Studia Monastica* 6 (1964), pp. 381-387 and A. Baker, "Pseudo-Macarius and Gregory of Nyssa", *VC* 20 (1966), pp. 227-234.

(H 52. 6). Also, the miraculous change, *metabolē*, of the Eucharistic elements is real, to be sure, but it is also an image, icon, of both the inner change, within the soul, and of the eschatological transformation of the body.<sup>148</sup>

Also, the association of *αἴσθησις* with knowledge, says Stewart, may hold the key to interpreting the question: Can someone see his own soul through light (I 4. 22; II 7. 5)?: “*For some disregard revelation (ἀποκάλυψιν) and say that vision (ὄρασιν) is through knowledge (γνώσεως) and perception (αἴσθήσεως). There is αἴσθησις, and there is a vision, and there is illumination (φωτισμός). The one who has illumination is greater than the one who has αἴσθησις. For his mind (νοῦς) was enlightened, so that he received a certain greater part than the one who has αἴσθησις since he saw a certain πληροφορία of visions in himself. Except for that revelation is one thing, and illumination another. Revelation is higher because great matters (πράγματα) and mysteries of God are revealed to the soul*” (I 4. 22).<sup>149</sup>

Therefore, ‘enlightenment’ must surely be higher, because *φωτισμός* is the light of Christ or the Spirit, a divine gift, and *ἀποκάλυψις* (revelation) is *φωτισμός* (illumination) invested with especially rich content: the mysteries of God. There is an important distinction here – the contrast between *ἀποκάλυψις* and *αἴσθησις*, then, is between that gift which comes entirely from God and that faculty which resides in the human person and is assisted by grace. For grace comes *ἐν αἴσθησις καὶ*

<sup>148</sup> On the macarian analogy between the Eucharistic transformation and the inner transfiguration of the Christian, see, A. Golitzin, *Et introibo ad altare Dei: The Mystagogy of Dionysius Areopagita and Its Predecessors in the Christian East (Analecta Vlatadon 59; Thessalonica: Patriarchal Institute of Patristic Studies, 1994)*, pp. 379-385.

<sup>149</sup> The *αἴσθησις* in this passage, then, is that associated with *γνώσις*, or *ἐπίγνωσις*, as used in Pauline (or Septuagint) texts to mean ‘awareness’ or ‘insight’; Stewart, *Working the Earth of the Heart*, p. 128.

*ἀποκάλυψις*: in awareness and in revelation (I 31. 1. 7 and I 43. 2). In these texts, *αἴσθησις* is not as much an affirmation of a state or condition as it is a characterization of a continuing process. However, it is not just simple awareness, but feeling (or awareness following the experience), a real feeling or mystical realism. So, for Macarius light and illumination throughout his writings are synonyms for grace or the divine presence, because the light of the Spirit is shining 'substantially' (*ὑποστατικῶς*) in the soul (I 58. 2. 2; cf. 58. 2. 1, *ὑποστατικὸν φῶς*).<sup>150</sup> The significance of *φωτισμός* is brought home by a passage in I 58. 2. 6-3. 4. The soul receives now the *φωτισμός* of the Spirit, and on the day of resurrection, the *φωτισμός* will encompass the body in its co-glorification with the soul.<sup>151</sup>

This christocentric perspective it also includes the body. Thus, Christ the heavenly Bridegroom dwells in the *οἶκος* of the body, and the heavenly and light-filled garments of the Spirit are stored in that house. This gets to be described through the 'fill-

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<sup>150</sup> This illumination is the true knowledge (I 4. 29. 12 (= II 15. 49), 39. 1. 6) being the real presence of the divine in the soul (I 24. 14, 58. 1. 1). The paragraph after the question and answer in I 4. 22 refers to *ἀποκάλυψις* and *φῶς θεϊκόν* (I 4. 23 (= II 7. 6)), which can be identified with *οὐράνιον καὶ θεῖον πῦρ* (II 7. 1; I 4. 18. 2 reads *νοερόν* for *οὐράνιον*), also described as *τὸ ἄυλον καὶ θεῖον πῦρ* (II 25. 9) which cleanses the *vous* and produces the *φωτισμός* of holy souls (II 25. 10).

<sup>151</sup> See, also, H. V. Beyer, "Die Lichtlehre der Monche des vierzehnten und des vierten Jahrhunderts, erortert am Beispiel des Gregorios Sinaites, des Evagrius Pontikos und des Ps.-Makarios/Symeon", *XVI Internationaler Byzantinistenkongress, Akten I:2. Jahrbuch der österreichischen Byzantinistik* 31.1 (1981), pp. 473-512, for here pp. 498-510. On the significance of light in the Macarian texts, Beyer concludes that: "He does not make a clear distinction between *οὐσία* and *ἅγιον πνεῦμα* on the one hand and *χάρις, δύναμις* *ἢ φῶς* on the other part" (Beyer, "Die Lichtlehre", p. 510). But, *χάρις, δύναμις* *ἢ φῶς* represent the same reality of God's presence and the distinction between *οὐσία* and *ἅγιον πνεῦμα* is not so clear in Macarius, because he underlines especially the co-operation, synergy and the mutual indwelling.

ing' language, which is often *associated* with 'dwelling' language.

So, 'being filled with the Spirit' or 'filled with grace' is one of the more characteristic Macarian themes and it frequently occurs in his discussions of perfection and *ἀπάθεια*.<sup>152</sup> The phrase 'filled with the Holy Spirit' is common in Luke-Acts, and has some basis in texts from the Old Testament. Macarian usage lies much closer to the language of the Letters to the Ephesians and Colossians.<sup>153</sup> The notion of the *πλήρωμα* of Christ or God, again characteristic of Ephesians and Colossians,<sup>154</sup> is similarly important in the Macarian writings. Moreover, typically, Macarius develops his own distinctive terms, such as using the superlative form of *πλήρης*, *πληρέστατος*, usually describing the indwelling of the Spirit, and the word *πλήρωσις*.<sup>155</sup> Therefore, being filled with the Spirit associates Christians with the apostles who received the Paraclete,<sup>156</sup> describes the present experience,<sup>157</sup> and characterizes the future resurrection.<sup>158</sup>

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<sup>152</sup> The phrase 'filled with the Holy Spirit' is common in Luke-Acts, and has some basis in texts from the Old Testament. In Exod. 31 :3 and 35:31, where God has filled (LXX *ἐνέπλησα*) Bezalel with a divine spirit of wisdom and other virtues for the work of preparing the sanctuary of the Temple; also Sir. 48:12, Elisha was filled (LXX: *ἐνέπλησθη*) with the spirit of Elijah. Luke uses *πίμπλημι*, *πλήρης*, and *πληρόω*, 260 in various forms (*πίμπλημι*: Luke 1:15, 1:41, 1:67; Acts 2:4, 4:8, 4:31, 9:17, 13:9; *πλήρης*: Luke 4: 1; Acts 6:3, 6:5, 7:55, 11 :24; *πληροῦμαι*: Acts 13:52), and in that order of frequency, whereas Macarius prefers *πληρόω* and *ἐμπίπλημι*.

<sup>153</sup> Ephesians 3: 19, '*may you be filled with the utter fullness of God*', and 5: 18, '*be filled with the Spirit*', and Colossians 1 :9, '*that you be filled with the knowledge of his will*', and 2: 10, '*you are fulfilled in him*'.

<sup>154</sup> *πλήρωμα* of God appears in: Eph. 3:19; Col. 1: 19, 2:9; and *πλήρωμα* of Christ in: John 1:16; Rom. 15:29; Eph. 1:23, 4:13.

<sup>155</sup> C. Stewart, '*Working the Earth of the Heart*', p. 224.

<sup>156</sup> II 27. 17.

<sup>157</sup> I 7. 16. 4 (= II 27. 19), 18. 4. 4, 21. 12, 29. 2. 5, 55. 4. 4, 56. I. 1-4 (= 19. 1-2), 56. 2. 7 (= II 19. 9), 61. 1. 10.

Also, 'Filling' language is often associated with 'dwelling language', says Stewart,<sup>159</sup> as the Spirit comes to fill the dwelling-place of the soul. In these instances, as so often in the Macarian texts, Christ and the Spirit are closely related. Thus, when someone wants to be a *κατοικητήριον* (a dwelling place) of Christ and to be filled with the Holy Spirit (I 56. 1. 1; II 19. 1), then the heavenly Bridegroom dwells in the *οἶκος* of the body, the soul is always filled with spiritual joy (*εὐφροσύνη*). In that house are stored the heavenly and light-filled garments of the Spirit, and there the fragrance of the Holy Spirit is made full (I 29. 2. 5).

The Macarian repertoire of 'filling' imagery contains two distinctive approaches. The first describes the presence of the Spirit in the soul and is a good reminder of the consistently Christocentric perspective of the Macarian texts: "*the fullest indwelling and imperishable energizing comfort (ἐνεργῆς παράκλησις) in them of the Holy Spirit [which] prepares [them] to receive the sufferings of Christ in sweetest πληροφορία and great joy, on account of the coming immortal hope of resurrection*" (E.M. 9. 17).<sup>160</sup> The second approach referring to the Spirit is the expression, 'πλήρωσις of the Spirit': possessing the *πλήρωσις* of the Spirit is associated with release from the passions (E.M. 9. 1 and 13. 1). Macarius also uses the word *πλήρωμα*, a word descriptive of 'Christ' and 'God' in the New Testament, but extended in the Macarian writings to grace<sup>161</sup> and 'the divine Spirit'.<sup>162</sup>

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<sup>158</sup> I 32. I. I (=II 15. 10.).

<sup>159</sup> C. Stewart, *Working the Earth of the Heart*, pp. 225-226.

<sup>160</sup> The grace of the Holy Spirit, having filled the dwelling soul, works (*ποιεῖ*) in the soul the sufferings of the Lord.

<sup>161</sup> I 18. 2. 7, 19. 3. 3, 20. 1. 5, 51. 1. 4 (= II 10.2), 64. 9.

<sup>162</sup> I 40. 3. 5.

This fullness is identified with progress to full stature (as in Ephesians 4: 13) and with filling with divine grace or the Holy Spirit. For Macarius, to come to full measure in the Christian life is to have the fullest *ἐνοίκησις* ('to dwell in'; the Hebrew equivalent words is אָחַב, 'aw-hab', 'aw-habe'), of the Holy Spirit. The Saviour wants those 'still in the flesh' to be worthy of *ἀπάθεια* and to be filled with holiness (I 40. 2. 6), to attain maturity or perfection *ἐν πληροφορία*.

Therefore, Lord is described as freeing the soul from indwelling evil, and filling (*ἐμπιμπλῶν*) one with the Holy Spirit (I 56. 1. 4; II 19. 2). Macarian filling language describes evil and divine presence, being a characteristic of the Semitic anthropology. So, this *fullest* (*πληροφορία*) *energizing* (*ἐνεργής*) *indwelling* (*ἐνοίκησις*) *of the Holy Spirit* (*παράκλησις*) is to be found in Syriac writers as well.<sup>163</sup>

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<sup>163</sup> Metaphors of fullness are common in Syriac literature. The author of the *Liber graduum* frequently employs forms of the verb *mlā*, 'fill', that recall the Ps.-Macarian term *πληροφορία* and other terms based on *πληρόω*. *Mlā* is one of the words used to translate *πληροφορία* / *πληροφορέω* in the Peshitta New Testament; *šūmlāyā*, a noun derived from the shaph'el conjugation of *mlā*, translates *πληροφορία* in Heb. 6: II; in Col. 4: 12 the Greek *πεπληροφορημένοι* becomes *mšamlāyā*, a shaph'el passive participle, and *ἐν πείρα καὶ πληροφορία* becomes *mšamlay šarrīrā'īt*. In Aphrahat's *Demonstration* I, he writes that "When a house [has been built as a] dwelling-place, ...a king does not remain (*šārē*) or dwell (*'āmar*) within it: for a king requires every adornment of a house, so that nothing is lacking in it. ... Thus also a person who is a house and dwelling-place for Christ will see what is good for the service of Christ who dwells in him, and with which accessories he will please him" (vol. I, cols. 9. 12-12. 4); cf. Stewart, 'Working the Earth of the Heart', pp. 228-230.

**8 "Ἐν οὐσίαι καὶ ὑπόστασει - 'Plunged into light and fire, and transformed' (II 15.10). Christ shining forth, the saint becomes "all light", being deified by uncreated light of His Spirit**

The Macarian writings are profoundly Trinitarian and provide a testimony of the divinity of the Holy Spirit into a trinitarian dynamic of salvation. According to Plested, "*Christology is not. However, Macarius' chief concern - he is far more interested in the actual purpose of the Incarnation*".<sup>164</sup> To him, the economy of the Son prepares the way for the economy of the Spirit. Summing this up he uses the following macarian text to declares that the Incarnation 'has restored to mankind the original nature of Adam and also bestowed upon it the heavenly inheritance of the Holy Spirit' (I 61.1.1).<sup>165</sup>

The reminiscences of the language of Christological controversies, used for mystical life, are found in two texts in which appear the expression *ἐκ δύο* natures. First, in a cataphatic approach, he is asserting; 'The ensouled flesh and the Godhead became one thing, even though they are two' (I 10.4.5). Second, in an original metaphorical and theological formulation he ex-

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<sup>164</sup> Marcus Plested, "The Christology of Macarius-Symeon", *Studia Patristica* 37 (2001): pp. 593–596. Plested, *The Macarian Legacy*, p. 43. We agree with Plested's statement only partially because, indeed, Macarie is not concerned with the Christological controversy, but Christology is important to him in terms of reciprocity between the economy of the Son and the Spirit. All that is experienced by Christian spiritual life, is Christ as Light in the uncreated light of the Holy Spirit inhabiting the whole man (intellect and heart, soul and body).

<sup>165</sup> Holy Spirit is often called the 'heavenly mother' (III 27.4.2). Word 'spirit' is in Syriac, as in all Semitic languages, a feminine. On one occasion, speak of the Holy Spirit in masculine terms, as the 'bridegroom' of the soul (III 20.1.2), he thus reminds us of the inadequacy of human categories when speaking of God.



plains: ‘As wool dyed in purple results in one beautiful form (*εἶδος*), even though it comes from two (*ἐκ δύο*) natures and hypostases – and it is no longer possible for the wool to be separated from the dye, nor the dye from the wool – so the flesh with the soul united to the divinity results in one thing, that is to say one hypostasis: the heavenly God worshipped with the flesh” (I 10.4.6).

The passages describing the mutual activity of the Spirit and Christ are amongst the most remarkable of the corpus: “Those who have been found worthy to become children of God, to be born from above in the Spirit and to have Christ shining forth... are steered by grace in spiritual repose within the heart. [...] When the soul attains spiritual perfection, totally purged of all the passions and perfectly united to and mingled with the Spirit, the Paraclete, in ineffable communion, then the soul is itself vouchsafed to become spirit, being commingled with the Spirit. It then becomes all light, all spirit, all joy, all repose, all gladness, all love, all compassion, all goodness, and kindness. It is as though it had been swallowed up in the virtues of the Holy Spirit as a stone in the depths of the sea is surrounded by water. Such people are totally mingled with and embraced by the Spirit, united to the grace of Christ, and assimilated to Christ” (I 13.2.1–4). The soul that becomes the throne of God is ‘all eye, all light, all face, all glory, and all spirit’ (II 1.2).<sup>166</sup> This union does

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<sup>166</sup> The phrase “becoming all eyes” reminds us of the Bessarion; avva Poemen refers himself to one of the greatest monks of Scetis not only in his ascetical practice, but also in a very high form of mystical prayer. At the point of death he is reported to have said, “*The monk ought to be as the Cherubim and the Seraphim: all eye*” (Bessarion 11, PG 65:141D); see, Jeremy Driscoll, *Steps to Spiritual Perfection: Studies on Spiritual Progress in Evagrius Ponticus* (The Newman Press: New York/Mahwah, N.J., 2005), p. 152. The fact that in the apophthegmata he is standing in prayer for fourteen days and, after that, he goes to pay a visit to the greater mystic John of Lycopolis, to consult him about a vision (*Bessa-*

not imply a confusion of natures; the ontological gap always persists: 'The Spirit is not of our nature for we are created, while he is uncreated' (I 50.1.7). A man may be deified, but he does not become identic to the Godhead, although it is truly transformed by the uncreated light. At the resurrection: "*All the members become translucent, all are plunged into light and fire,*

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tion 4), for me, this is a indication that, he goes to great 'seer' John to ask him about the nature of the divine light, appeared to him in that vision during four days of prayer. This clue is given by the same kind of journey made by Evagrius and Ammonius to John of Lycopolis the 'seer' of Thebaide, asking him about the same experience of beholding the divine light in prayer; on this, see, Columba Stewart, O.S.B., "Imageless Prayer and the Theological Vision of Evagrius Ponticus", in Roy Hammerling, *A History of Prayer: The First to the Fifteenth Century* (Brill: Leiden, 2008), pp. 137-166, here p. 157. Antoine Guillaumont, "La vision de l'intellect par lui-même dans la mystique évagrienne", in *Mélanges de l'Université Saint-Joseph* vol. 50, 1 (1984): pp. 253-262, suggests that Evagrius is certainly referring to an experience that was real for him ("Vision de l'intellect", p. 260). Also, he links Evagrius' description of light seen in prayer to the philosophical culture of his day and notes the parallels in the writings of Plotinus (in *Enneads* book 6, he speaks of the light as the constitutive nature of the *nous*). Similar 'all eye' imagery applied to God in Irenaeus of Lyons and Clement of Alexandria: Irenaeus, *AH I* .12.2 (tr. Rousseau A. et al., *Contre les hérésies*, SC 264, p. 184) and II .13.3 (SC 294, pp. 114-116); Clement, *Stromata* VII . 5. 5 (GCS 17, Berlin 1970, p. 7 and VII . 37.6, p. 29) Thus, the ascetic tradition has been transposed the image from the plane of theology to that of the soul. Robert M. Grant, *Irenaeus of Lyons* (Routledge: London and New York, 1997), p. 32, says that Irenaeus too uses nouns, showing that God "*is all Mind, all Spirit, all Mentality, all Thought, all Word, all Hearing, all Eye, all Light, and entirely the source of every good thing—as religious and pious men rightly say of God*" (*Heresies* 2.13.3). He thus appeals to a supposed consensus including Christians and devout pagans like Plato. After Irenaeus this theological opinion enjoyed considerable success. Within a few years Clement of Alexandria, says Grant, states that "*the Son of God is all Mind, all Paternal Light, all Eye,*" and then adds "seeing all, hearing all, knowing all." Later he says that God is "all hearing, all eye" (*Miscellanies* 7.5.5; 737.6).

*and transformed; they are not, as some say, destroyed, they do not become fire, their own nature ceasing to subsist. For Peter remains Peter, and Paul remains Paul, and Philip remains Philip. Each retains his own nature and hypostasis, filled by the Spirit* (II 15.10).

A parallel between Macarius and the Cappadocians is the view that while God is unknowable in himself, he is yet revealed *ad extra* in his operations. Macarius stresses that it is possible for a man to know the hidden things of God and not as God is in himself (III 22.2.2). What we may know is that which God grants us to know (III 22.2.1, citing 1 Cor. 2: 12–13) and God may reveal both himself and the nature of the soul (III 18.1.1–2). The Cappadocians work within the same basic schema. Basil puts it that God is both hidden and revealed,<sup>167</sup> inaccessible in his essence, but knowable in his energies or operations (*Ep.* 234) and also for Gregory of Nyssa, God “is invisible by nature, but becomes visible in his energies” (*On the Beatitudes* 6). Thus, says Plested “the apophaticism of the Cappadocians and of Macarius is balanced by their acute sense of the revelation of God *ad extra*”.<sup>168</sup> This revelation *ad extra* of God is for Macarius the “glory”, the “radiance” or the “light”. Just as the Moses received the image of the glory of Adam when his countenance was glorified, so too with Abba Pambo, that his face shone like lightning, applied as well to Abba Silvanus and Abba Sisoës.<sup>169</sup> Their faces are cov-

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<sup>167</sup> On using the relationship between hidden and revealed in order to elucidate the Christology of the Fathers of Desert, see my study: ‘Shining Face’ as Hidden and Revealed Christology, *Studia Universitatis Babeş-Bolyai Theologia Orthodoxa Journal* (UBBTO) 62, no. 1 (2017): pp. 187-216.

<sup>168</sup> M. Plested, *The Macarian Legacy*, pp. 56-57. Macarius is appropriating a feature of Cappadocian apophatic theology against the Messalians statements as the possibility of the bodily vision of God.

<sup>169</sup> *Pambo* 12, PG 65:327A (197); *Sisoë* 14, PG 65:396BC (215); *Silvanus* 12, PG 65:412C (224).

ered with Christ radiance, by receiving His glorious divine light. So, the Christ place is both in heaven and within the Christian saint, fully present in all its fire and light. Aphrahat, Macarius and Evagrius arrive at the same result: heaven and the divine presence are accessible within the illumined heart of the transfigured man, the transformation is expressed regarding fire and light, and the saint is an embodiment of His Lord. Therefore, theophany is indeed Christophany, and the robe of Glory is identified with Christ, because "with Christ, everything is within" (III.8.1). By the appearance (*epiphany*) of Christ, the soul made worthy of fellowship with the Spirit of His Light "becomes all light, all face, all eye" (II.1.2). So, says Golitzin, here "Macarius gives to the prophet full credit: Ezekiel did see what he saw".<sup>170</sup> It is the soul, "inner man" or the "hart", that God intended to be the true bearer of His Presence, the *locus* of divine revelation.<sup>171</sup> He repeatedly insists that the direct encounter with God is open to us "right now" (*apo tou nyn* – I.33.3.6.; I.34.1; I.50.2.3), "with all perception and assurance" (*en pasei aisthesei kai plerophoriai*), underlining by this the reality of the experience (*peira*) that he is holding out, meaning the transformation in divine light or fire. However, aside from the interiority note, it is important to emphasize here, the christological

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<sup>170</sup> Alexander Golitzin, "Heavenly Mysteries. Themes from Apocalyptic Literature in the Macarian Homilies and Selected Other Fourth-Century Ascetical Writers" in Robert J. Daly, SJ (ed.), *Apocalyptic Thought in Early Christianity* (Grand Rapids, Michigan: Baker Academic, 2009), p. 188. Here he links Aphrahat and the *Sefer Hekhalot*. Also, he underlines that the very greatest of the angels, Metatron, is called the "Prince of the Presence" (*Sar haPanim*, lit. "Prince of the Face"), p. 183.

<sup>171</sup> See Alexander Golitzin, "A Testimony to Christianity as Transfiguration: The Macarian Homilies and Orthodox Spirituality", in S. T. Kimbrough (ed.), *Orthodox and Wesleyan Spirituality* (Crestwood, NY:2002) pp. 129-156.

resonance, i.e., the human being as called to be the revelation of Christ. We may now understand and to the answer to the question regarding the nature of the light of transfiguration, and the glory of Adam reflected in Moses' face, as being uncreated, so that “*the soul might be enabled to live and to perceive in divinity, and become a partaker or immortal glory*” (II.4.9). This light of illumination is not a *noēma*, a product of our intellect, but it is “a divine light, shining essentially and substantially (*en ousiai kai hypostasei*) in the heart of faithful... divine and essential (*ousiōdes*) light which are that which appears and shines in soul more than the light of the sun” (I.17.1.3). If on the face of Moses is seen in the glory of Adam, Christ “*is full of glory, not only just in his face, like Moses, but through his entire body and being*” (I.3.13-15) and the same glory of the Spirit shines perfectly in the souls and the bodies of the saints who are glorified in that light. This is also the presence of its radiance (*kebod YHWH*) in human beings on the shining face spirituality.

The Byzantine theologian St. Gregory Palamas also uses Macarian writings. He says that ‘before the transgression Adam too participated in this divine illumination and radiance, and as he was truly clothed in a garment of glory he was not naked’,<sup>172</sup> but now our nature has been ‘stripped of this divine illumination (τῆς θείας ἐλλάμψεως) and Radiance (λαμπρότητος) as a result of the transgression’.<sup>173</sup>

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<sup>172</sup> Saint Gregory Palamas, *The One Hundred and Fifty Chapters*, A Critical Edition, Translation and Study by Robert E. Sinkewicz, C.S.B. (Pontifical Institute of Mediaeval Studies: Toronto, 1988), *Cap.* 67, pp. 160-161 (a similarity with Macarius II.12.6-8): ‘Ταύτης τῆς θείας ἐλλάμψεως τε καὶ λαμπρότητος καὶ ὁ Ἀδὰμ μέτοχος ὑπάρχων πρὸ τῆς παραβάσεως, ὡς ὄντως στολὴν ἠμφιεσμένος δόξης, οὐχ ὑπῆρχε γυμνός’.

<sup>173</sup> G. Palamas, *The One Hundred and Fifty Chapters*, Sinkewicz (1988), *Cap.* 66p. 161 (a similarity with Macarius II 30.7).

Like for Macarius, Palamas also accepts that Light and glory (*doxa*) are 'essentially equivalent',<sup>174</sup> but he goes further, saying that this light and glory are the uncreated energies of God's being. Moreover, he is trying to prove this through appeal, as we shall see, to the macarian phrase '*en ousiai kai hypostasei*' (I.17.1.3) – 'a divine light, shining essentially and substantially', emphasizing that this "*ὑποστατικὸν φῶς*" - is Christ shining 'substantially' (*ὑποστατικῶς*). These statements appear in the following texts about the Holy Spirit sanctifying power, the essence/energy distinction, the participation to the divine light and when he describes Christ as the hypostatic Light.

Therefore, in *Cap* 92, he says that God's activities are 'natural and essential energies' (*φυσικαὶ καὶ οὐσιώδεις ἐνέργειαι*) and links this statement to that of the participation to 'the supernatural and most divine Light' (*τῷ ὑπερφυσεῖ καὶ θειοτάτῳ φωτὶ*).<sup>175</sup> Further on, he calls the Holy Spirit' energy or power 'the enhypostatic reality' in this regard quoting from St. Basil the Great who says that "The Holy Spirit is a sanctifying power

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<sup>174</sup> A. Golitzin, "Recovering the 'Glory of Adam': 'Divine Light' Traditions", p. 290.

<sup>175</sup> G. Palamas, *The One Hundred and Fifty Chapters*, Sinkewicz (1988), *Cap* 92, pp. 191-193: 'Just as the sun, in that without diminution it bestows a measure of warmth and light upon those who participate, possesses these activities as natural and essential energies (*οὐσιώδεις ἐνέργειας*), so too the divine communications, in that without diminution they inhere in the one who bestows participation, are natural and essential energies of God, and therefore are also uncreated (*οὕτω καὶ αἱ θεῖαι μεταδόσεις ἀμειώτως ἐνοῦσαι τῷ μεταδιδόντι φυσικαὶ καὶ οὐσιώδεις ἐνέργειαι εἰσιν αὐτοῦ, τοιγαροῦν καὶ ἄκτιστοι*). ...those who set their path towards the supernatural and most divine Light (*τῷ ὑπερφυσεῖ καὶ θειοτάτῳ φωτὶ*) participate purely in divinizing grace (*θεοποιοῦ χάριτος*) and are thereby united with God'.

which is substantial, real and enhypostatic (ἐνούσιος, ἐνυπαρκτός, ἐνυπόστατος)” (Ps. Basil, *Adv. Eun.* 5).<sup>176</sup>

Thus, according to the Byzantine Hesychast theologian, God possesses both an uncreated substance and energy (καὶ οὐσίαν καὶ ἐνέργειαν ἀκτιστον)<sup>177</sup> and these energies are ‘around the nature, not the nature itself’ (Gr. Naz., *Or.* 42.15: ὅτι μὴ φύσις, ἀλλὰ περὶ τὴν φύσιν)<sup>178</sup> because this ‘energy is the efficient and

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<sup>176</sup> G. Palamas, *The One Hundred and Fifty Chapters*, Sinkewicz (1988), Cap. 122pp. 224-225: ‘Not solely the Only-Begotten of God but also the Holy Spirit is called energy and power by the saints, just as they possesses the same powers and energies in exactly the same way as the Father, since according to the great Dionysius God is called power ‘in that he possesses beforehand in himself, and transcends, every power’ (Pseudo-Dionysius, *DN* 8.2, PG 3:889D). And so the Holy Spirit possesses each of these two as understood or expressed together with him whenever the enhypostatic reality is called an energy or power, just as Basil, who is great in every way, says, “The Holy Spirit is a sanctifying power which is substantial, real and enhypostatic (ἐνούσιος, ἐνυπαρκτός, ἐνυπόστατος)” (Ps. Basil, *Adversus Eunomium* 5, PG 29:713B). Also in his treatises on the Holy Spirit he demonstrated that not all the energies derived from the Spirit are enhypostatic (*Ibid.*, PG 29:772C and 689C: ἐκ τοῦ πνεύματος πάσας ἐνεργείας οὐκ ἐνυπόστατους ὑπάρχειν); and thereby he in turn clearly distinguished these from creatures, for there are realities derived from the Spirit which are enhypostatic, namely, creatures, because God made created substances’.

<sup>177</sup> G. Palamas, *The One Hundred and Fifty Chapters*, Sinkewicz (1988), Cap. 123, pp. 226-227.

<sup>178</sup> G. Palamas, *The One Hundred and Fifty Chapters*, Sinkewicz (1988), Cap. 124, p. 227 ‘For these are around the nature, not the nature itself’ (Gregory Nazianzen, *Or.* 42.15, PG 36:476A: ὅτι μὴ φύσις, ἀλλὰ περὶ τὴν φύσιν). What, therefore, shall we say? Because the beginning and that which is without beginning are not the nature but around the nature, will someone say these are created, unless he should be mad? But if these are uncreated and belong to God’s nature, is God on this account composite?; also, he, further, in Cap. 126, reinforces that the energy ‘is not separate but is distinct from the substance of God because it is from the substance (τῆς οὐσίας τοῦ θεοῦ ἐνέργειαν, ὡς ἐξ ἐκείνης οὐσαν), though it is participated by creatures’, in Palamas, *The One Hundred and Fifty Chapters*, Sinkewicz (1988), p. 231.

essential motion of nature'.<sup>179</sup> In this sense, believes Palamas, St. John Damascene demonstrates that this 'natural and essential energy' (*φυσικὴν καὶ οὐσιώδη*) of God is 'uncreated' (*ἄκτιστον*).<sup>180</sup>

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<sup>179</sup> St. John Damascene, highlights Palamas, 'described this energy as a motion of God. How then could God's motion not be uncreated? The godly Damascene wrote on this question in his fifty-ninth chapter, he says, 'Energy is the efficient and essential motion of nature. The capacity for energy is possessed by the nature from which the energy proceeds. The product of energy is that which is effected by the energy. And the agent of energy is the person, or hypostasis, which uses the energy' (κίνησιν θεοῦ ταύτην εἶπεν εἶναι τὴν ἐνέργειαν. πῶς οὖν οὐκ ἄκτιστος ἡ τοῦ θεοῦ κίνησις; περὶ ἧς καὶ Δαμασκηνὸς ὁ θεοφόρος ἐν πεντηκοστῷ ἐνάτῳ κεφαλαίῳ γράφων · ἐνέργεια μὲν ἐστὶ, φησὶν, ἡ δραστικὴ καὶ οὐσιώδης τῆς φύσεως κίνησις · ἐνεργητικὸν δὲ ἡ φύσις, ἐξ ἧς ἡ ἐνέργεια πρόεισιν · ἐνέργημα δὲ τὸ τῆς ἐνεργείας ἀποτέλεσμα · ἐνεργῶν δὲ ὁ κεκρημένος τῇ ἐνεργείᾳ, ἦτοι ἡ ὑπόστασις); cf. John Damascene, *Expositio fidei* 59.7-10, ed. Kotter (PTS 12), cf. *Cap.* 129, in Palamas, *The One Hundred and Fifty Chapters*, Sinkewicz (1988), pp. 233-235.

<sup>180</sup> John Damascene says, somewhere else, that 'He appeared to the disciples in His splendour; He is indeed the true light, the radiance of glory' (*Hom. in Transfig.* 12-13, PG XCIV, 564C-565A). Therefore, to Damascene it is not Christ who is changed into something new in the Transfiguration, but the disciples. According to St Gregory Palamas, also, 'Energy is the efficient and essential motion of nature (ἐνέργειά ἐστὶν ἡ δραστικὴ καὶ οὐσιώδης τῆς φύσεως κίνησις, apud John Damascene, *Expositio fidei* 59 J-&, ed. Kotter, pre 12), 'an energy, namely, the natural and essential energy itself of God (τὴν φυσικὴν καὶ οὐσιώδη τοῦ θεοῦ ἐνέργειαν), which the holy Damascene demonstrated to be uncreated (ἄκτιστον)', cf. *Cap.* 131, in Palamas, *The One Hundred and Fifty Chapters*, Sinkewicz (1988), pp. 235-237; 'There is one energy of the three divine hypostases (Τῶν τριῶν θείων υποστάσεων οὐ μία ὡς ὁμοία ἡ ἐνέργεια)', *Cap.* 138, in Palamas, *The One Hundred and Fifty Chapters*, Sinkewicz (1988), pp. 242-244; 'God's energy is uncreated and coeternal with God, according to the theologians' (τοῦ θεοῦ ἐνέργεια ἄκτιστός ἐστι καὶ συναΐδιος θεῷ κατὰ τοὺς θεολόγους), *Cap.* 140, in Palamas, *The One Hundred and Fifty Chapters*, Sinkewicz (1988), pp. 244-245.



The macarian phrase *'en ousiai kai hypostasei'* helps Palamas to equate: *divine light – glory – uncreated energy*; in order to describe the Lord's indwelling in human soul, mind, heart, and body. This is for Palamas the experience of God's uncreated light, a mystical realism of the divine-human communion. So, in *Triade* II.iii.28 he says that *'the Lord dwells in men in different and varied ways according to the worthiness and way of life of those who seek Him. He appears in one way to an active man, in another to a contemplative, in another again to the man of vision, and in yet different ways to the zealous or to those already divinized. There are numerous differences in the divine vision itself: Among the prophets, some have seen God in a dream, others when awake using enigmas and mirrors, but to Moses, He appeared 'face-to-face, and not in enigmas'* (Num. 12:8).<sup>181</sup>

However, when you hear of the vision of God face-to-face, says Palamas, this recall the testimony of Maximus: 'Deification is an enhypostatic and direct illumination which has no beginning'.<sup>182</sup>

After he explains that 'the uncreated deification' is, actually, *'the enhypostatic illumination'*<sup>183</sup>, he uses the macarian term of *'ὑποστατικὸν φῶς'*, to show that the light (φωτισμός) is Christ, shining 'substantially' (*ὑποστατικῶς*) within all human person: *'He Himself is deifying light'*.<sup>184</sup> Also, 'He possesses the eternal light in Himself, made visible (albeit in a mysterious way) to the pure in heart today just as in the Age to Come'<sup>185</sup> and 'this hy-

<sup>181</sup> Cf. *Triade* II.iii.28, pp. 83-84; see *Triade* II.iii.59.

<sup>182</sup> Maximus, *Ad Thalys*. 61, PG XC, 636C; also *Scholion* 16, *ibid.* 644C; cf p. 84.

<sup>183</sup> *Triade* II.iii.29, p. 84 'But you should not consider that God allows Himself to be seen in His superessential essence, but according to His deifying gift and energy, the grace of adoption, the uncreated deification, the enhypostatic illumination'.

<sup>184</sup> *Triade* III.i.16, p. 77.

<sup>185</sup> *Triade* II.iii.66, p. 68.

postatic<sup>186</sup> light, seen spiritually<sup>187</sup> by the saints, they know by experience to exist, as they tell us, and to exist not symbolically only'.<sup>188</sup> This light is not the essence of God, says Gregory, but '*it transforms the body, and communicates its own splendour to it when, miraculously, the light which deifies the body becomes accessible to the bodily eyes.*<sup>189</sup> Thus indeed did the great Arsenius appear when engaged in hesychastic combat;<sup>190</sup> similarly Stephen, while being stoned,<sup>191</sup> and Moses, when he descended from the mountain<sup>192</sup> Sometimes the light 'speaks' clearly, as it were with ineffable words, to him who contemplates it. Such was the case with Paul'.<sup>193</sup> Also, 'It is 'enhypostatic', not because it possesses a hypostasis of its own, but because the Spirit 'sends it out

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<sup>186</sup> 'Hypostatic' in the sense of a concrete, objective reality, not something imagined by the subjective mind. The use of the word here is not to be confused with hypostasis *qua* one of the Persons in the Trinity. The uncreated light or energy of God does not constitute a fourth hypostasis in God (*quartum quid*), as Latin critics have sometimes suggested.

<sup>187</sup> The divine light is really seen, but only by the spiritually transfigured eyes of the saints.

<sup>188</sup> Triade II.iii.8 p. 57.

<sup>189</sup> The visible transfiguration of the saint's body (a prefiguration of the glorification of the resurrected body at the Last Day) is quite frequently attested in early monastic sources (e.g. *Apoph. Patrum*, Joseph of Panephrisis, 7; Silvanus, 12 ('his face and body shining like an angel'); Arsenius, 27 (the old man appeared 'entirely like a flame').

<sup>190</sup> On the hesychastic master Arsenius, *vid.* the eulogy by St. Theodore Studites, Orat. XII, PG XCIX, 860B, and J. Hausherr, *L'hésychasme...* in *Orientalia Christiana Periodica* XII (1956) pp. 25-27.

<sup>191</sup> Acts 6:15 ('his face was like the face of an angel'). In fact, this was during his trial, not during his execution.

<sup>192</sup> Ex. 34:29 ('the skin of his face shone because he had been talking with God').

<sup>193</sup> Tr. II.iii.9; 2 Cor. 12:4 ('he heard things ineffable'); p. 57. Triade III.i.17 p. 77. So it is obvious and clearly demonstrated that this light is neither an independent reality, nor something alien to the divinity. Having reached this point in our treatise, we must now explain why the saints call this deifying grace and divine light 'enhypostatic'.

into the hypostasis of another'<sup>194</sup>, in which it is indeed contemplated. It is then properly called 'enhypostatic', in that it is not contemplated by itself, nor in essence, but in hypostasis'.<sup>195</sup> We can now see how this great synthesis of spirituality represented by the theology of uncreated light of Gregory Palamas is inspired in its beginnings by the macarian homilist, himself testifying to this fact when he immediately says in Tr. III.i.10: 'The inspired Symeon Metaphrastes has composed, on the basis on the first book of Macarius the Great, treatises divided into chapters

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<sup>194</sup> Ps. Basil, *C. Eunom.* V, PG XXIX, 772B.

<sup>195</sup> Triade III.i.9 p. 71 This divine light cannot be contemplated as a hypostasis, that is, as an independent reality, since strictly speaking it has no essence. It can be contemplated only *in* a hypostasis, i.e., in a personal *locus*. Here Palamas has in mind the deified saints who by grace show forth in their whole persons the light that transforms them. But the energies are also 'enhypostatic' in respect of the Person (*hypostasis*) of Christ. The light of Thabor does not reveal the divine essence, but the second Person of the Trinity. As well as meaning 'what exists in another hypostasis', *enhypostatic* can also mean 'what really exists', that which is genuine or authentic, e.g., of our *real* adoption as sons by the grace of the Holy Spirit (Tr. III.i.27). The first sense of the word goes back to the christology of Leontius of Byzantium, the second to Mark the Monk. On this, see: John J. Lynch, 'Leontius of Byzantium: A Cyrillian Christology', *Theological Studies* 36/3 (1975), pp. 455-471; R. Cross, 'Individual Natures in the Christology of Leontius of Byzantium', *Journal of Early Christian Studies* 10/2 (2002): pp. 245-265; J. Zachhuber, 'Individuality and the theological debate about "hypostasis"' in A. Torrance and J. Zachhuber (eds), *Individuality in Late Antiquity* (Farnham, Ashgate: London, 2014) pp. 91-110; David Beecher Evans, *Leontius of Byzantium. An Origenist Christology* (Dumbarton Oaks Studies, XIII, Washington DC, 1970); Matthias Gockel, 'A Dubious Christological Formula? Leontius of Byzantium and the Anhypostasis-Enhypostasis Theory', *The Journal of Theological Studies*, 51(2) pp. 515-532; Benjamin Gleede, *The Development of the Term ἐνυπόστατος from Origen to John of Damascus* (Vigiliae Christianae, Supplements, Volume: 113; Boston, Leiden: Brill, 2012) pp. 43-188.

on the subject of this light and glory'.<sup>196</sup> I think that Palamas interprets Leontius of Byzantium's *ἐνυπόστατος* through Macarius' uncreated light theology, leading further the maximian synthesis of the 'enhypostatic illumination'. Therefore, St Gregory indeed used at different times the phrase of becoming 'all light, all face, all eye', to make the same emphasis on holistic anthropology of the indwelling Light of Christ poured out upon saints bodies, and the same 'Face-Light Christology' (my idea) as the divine radiance "now" (ἀπό τοῦ νῦν) present inwardly in the believer. The Syrian background of Palamas' speculation about Adam is evident. The Hesychast idea of the light-like sensitive nature of man shows clear similarities with this early Syrian understanding of the luminous reflection of God's Glory.

## 9 Conclusion: The illuminating light (φωτισμός φῶς) is Christ (ὑποστατικὸν φῶς)

The hidden *Kabod* is revealed through its light, which makes human becoming 'entirely' luminous. This luminous metamorphosis of the visionaries is an illumination that comes from inside. In 2 *Enoch* from which we learn that the Lord created Adam after His face. This is the luminous image of God's glory according to which Adam was created. In the Macarian homilies, Moses' shining countenance and the luminosity of Adam's prelapsarian *tselem* serve as metaphors for the transformational vision. However, also, one can also encounter a third paradigm of luminous transformation, a new metaphor of the transformational vision - Christ's Body of Light. So also the bodies of

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<sup>196</sup> Triade III.i.10, p. 71. Excerpts from the Macarian writings have circulated under the names of various mediaeval writers, including Symeon Metaphrastes (*the tenth century*).

the saints are glorified and shine like lightning. Just as the interior glory of Christ covered his body and shone completely, in the same way also in the saints the interior power of Christ in them in the day will be poured out exteriorly upon their bodies.<sup>197</sup>

However, the bodies of visionaries are not simply covered externally with the divine light but are 'lightened', as many lamps are lighted from the one, same fire, so also it is necessary that the bodies of the saints, which are members of Christ, become the same which Christ himself is.<sup>198</sup> He is the Glory after which a visionary is transformed. Second, He is also the visionary himself, whose face is transformed. In the Macarian writings, Christ's interior glory is poured out upon his external body, making it luminous. For as the body of the Lord was glorified when he climbed the mount and was transfigured into the divine glory and into infinite light, so also the bodies of the saints are glorified and shine like lightning. Just as the interior glory of Christ covered his body and shone completely, in the same way also in the saints the interior power of Christ in them in the day will be poured out exteriorly upon their bodies.<sup>199</sup>

Like Evagrius, too, Macarius is also an advocate of the *visio dei luminis*, which is not a mere product of the intellect, a *noema*, but divine and uncreated: 'a divine light, shining essentially and substantially (en ousia kai hypostasei).<sup>200</sup>

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<sup>197</sup> Cf. Triade II.15.38.

<sup>198</sup> Ibidem.

<sup>199</sup> Ibidem.

<sup>200</sup> Cf. Triade I.xvii.1.3.