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PHILOSOPHY OF LANGUAGE IN GREEK PATRISTICS

Rev Arseniy (Artyom) Chernikin

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PhD Thesis, University of Durham,
Department of Theology, 2004.

THESIS ABSTRACT

Issues of language are of crucial importance to the doctrinal controversies of Classical Patristics. The Fathers, as well as their opponents, show a sustained philosophical interest in the nature of language, words, name, meaning, changes of meaning of expressions, correctness of name, the purity of language, *etc*. The main attempt of this dissertation is, therefore, to demonstrate that the Patristic view of language was not just an eclectic variant of standard philosophical overviews (Platonic, Stoic, Peripatetic, *etc.*), but a thorough and well-conceived treatment of the matter, that should be recognised as an independent theory of language.

The linguistic expertise of, for example, Clement of Alexandria, Origen, Basil of Caesarea, and Gregory of Nyssa, is inherited from the grammatical, logical, and rhetorical education of their time. But the topics of the discussions and investigations seem to arise naturally and often the question was posed in a substantially new way. The main point is to clarify that: first, in the course of its formation, the Christian theological view of names and language varied, depending on the theological school concerned (*e.g.* the Alexandrian); secondly, the Patristic comprehension of language is strongly rooted (and therefore can only be explained) in the context of the Christian doctrine of man; therefore, the Patristic theory of language is finally defined as a *theological anthropology of language*.

The four dissertational chapters are set out logically and chronologically, each one conceived as (to some extent) an independent study; an attempt is made to approach each of the writers individually. The dissertation begins with a fresher analysis of the *Classical philosophical tradition* (the first chapter). Then, the examination shifts to the writings of the *Apologists*, their *Gnostic* opponents (the second chapter), the theologians of the *Alexandrian School* (the third chapter) and, finally, to the famous doctrinal controversy of the fourth century between the *Cappadocian Fathers* on the one hand, and *Aetius* and *Eunomius* on the other (the fourth chapter).

Κατάμαθε τῆς γλώττης τὴν φύσιν
Basilius, *Homilia in illud: 'Attende tibi ipsi'*, 37; 6.

À ma femme Claire, dont l'amour a inspiré ce travail

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PhD Thesis, University of Durham,
Department of Theology, 2004.

This dissertation is the product of my own work, and the work of others has been properly acknowledged throughout.

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Rev. A. Chernikin
Durham 2004

BIBLIOGRAPHICAL ABBREVIATIONS

ANF Ante-Nicene Fathers (repr. Grand Rapids, Michigan 1950-).

HThR *Harvard Theological Review,* Cambridge, Mass.

J *Gregorii Nysseni opera* (ed. W. Jaeger, Leiden 1960-).

JThS *Journal of Theological Studies,* Oxford.

NHC *The facsimile edition of the Nag Hammadi Codices,* Leiden 1972-.

PG Patrologiae cursus completus. Accurante Jacques-Paul Migne, Series Graeca, Paris 1857-1866; Ind. 1929-1936.

PL Patrologiae cursus completus. Accurante Jacques-Paul Migne, Series Latina, Paris 1841-1864.

NPNF Nicene and Post-Nicene Fathers (repr. Grand Rapids, Michigan 1950-).

RACh *Reallexikon für Antike und Christentum,* Stuttgart 1966-.

RÉG *Revue des Études Grecques,* Paris.

SC *Sources Chrétiennes,* Paris 1941-.

StPt *Studia Partistica* (in Texte und Untersuchungen zur Geschichte der altchristlichen Literatur, Leipzig, Berlin 1882-) ed. K. Aland, F. L. Cross, Berlin 1957-.

StTh *Studia Theologica,* Scandinavian journal of theology, Lund.

SVF *Stoicorum veterum fragmenta,* ed. Jo. von Armin, 4 vols, Stuttgart 1906.

VCh *Vigiliae Christianae*. A review of early Christian life and language, Amsterdam.

ZKG *Zeischrift für Kirchengeschichte,* Stuttgart.

ИЛУ История лингвистических учений, Leningrad 1982-

Introduction

This dissertation is intended to be a contribution to the study of historical philosophy and theology of language in the early Patristic period. As follows from the title, the examination is concerned with Greek sources; the main task of the investigation is to answer the following questions:

- How did the earliest Christian theologians comprehend the phenomenon of language?

- What was the cause of the Patristic concern with this philosophical problem?

- How does the Patristic comprehension of language sit with the Classical philosophical theories traditionally associated with Plato and Aristotle and the non-philosophical ideas of Gnosticism?

- What in the Patristic theory of language was substantially new, in comparison with the other theories of the time?

- What, in the opinion of Christian theologians, is most central and important in their view of the nature of language, in comparison with their opponents?

- What are the most influential agencies that affected the Patristic comprehension of language?

Of course, this is only a preliminary list of the questions to be treated in the dissertation. Amongst the many subordinate tasks of the dissertation is an attempt to demonstrate the context of their speculations, to determine and explain the limits of their interests, and to designate their agenda in general, *i.e.* to outline a number of topics or problems that appeared at the very heart of their discussion, such as the origin of language, the problem of a primordial

tongue, the variety of language (with exegesis of the relevant texts of the Bible), the beliefs related to the number of languages, the nature of words, names and naming as such. In the vast majority of instances we shall deal with *theology* rather than philosophy of language. Therefore, my point will be that the Patristic preoccupation with linguistic matters is inseparable from such questions as: the theological notion of a divine name (or epithet), or to what extent human God-language can designate divine reality. As far as this theological concern turns Christian philosophy of language into a *theology* of language, the final form of the Patristic view of human language appears to have evolved in the sphere of anthropology and thus be attached to biblical narratives. Clearly, philosophical speculations over the matter left their definite imprints; but to what extent did they determine the agenda?

To begin with, in all known ancient myths about the origin of humankind, language is *divinely* given; in its complete, perfect, form it comes from above, given by deities who either invent it for man, or have given their own divine tongue to humans. It is not difficult to realise, therefore, how the notion of divine names was determined by this premise. The Ancient Hebrew story in the Pentateuch about Adam who names the animals in Paradise is, obviously, the sole and unique exception; nevertheless, Christian exegetes sometimes gave diametrically opposite interpretations of *Gen*. 2:19-20, including a concept of the divine origin of words and language.

The philosophical problem of 'divine names' had already appeared in Plato's *Cratylus*[1], but in Christian literature this question was often posed and regarded in a totally different way, not as just an interesting attempt by Socrates to approach the primordial (or divine) language[2], but as a theological theme, which is inseparable from the doctrine of man, Christology (the doctrine of the Logos), and many other related theological themes.

It is already well-known that in the early Patristic tradition as well as in Greek Classical thought, the notion of a science of linguistics as such did not exist: Plato, Aristotle, Epicurus, and the Stoics, whose contribution to the modern science of language is immense, can only with great reserve be called 'linguists'. Clement, Origen, Basil the Great, and Gregory of Nyssa, in spite of their clear interest in what we now call the philosophy of language, *were not linguists either*. The reason was not that the science of that time did not work out a special term to designate the science of language; such a term did not exist, for example, for psychology. The main reason was that linguistic issues appeared inseparable from ontological, epistemological (and in case of the Christian writers) anthropological and Christological questions[3]. As for the Fathers, the problem of language became bound up with a substantially new factor – the theological view of man's nature and human ability to apprehend divine revelation. At the same time, Basil's exclamation in the epigraph of the thesis

---

1 For a more comprehensive picture of the problem *v.* H. Rose, *Divine names in Classical Greece*, *HThR*, vol. li (1958), p. 31ff.

2 *v.* Plato, *Cratylus* 391d, 396a (*Cratylus*, ed. J. Burnet, *Platonis opera*, vol. 1. (Oxford 1900)).

3 Ю. Эдельштейн, *Проблема языка в памятниках патристики'*, *ИЛУ*, p. 160.

points to the fact that the Christian concern with linguistic matters was a significant step forward in the course of the formation of the subject. As far as I know Basil is the first to pose the question about the *nature of language* rather than about names; Basil the Great discoursed on language in the way that the problem is determined nowadays.

In the dissertation I shall suggest that an analysis of the notion of the divine name or epithet substantially clarifies the Patristic comprehension of language. It is what makes it, strictly speaking, *theological* and truly unique, by comparison with the other language theories of the epoch. An attempt will be made to demonstrate that this aspect of the Patristic philosophy of language is as important as the transition from cataphatic theology to the *via negativa*, and it is of crucial importance to examine these two themes, language and the divine name, together.

§ 1. Methodology

Despite the fact that the problem has already received some examination and has been treated generally, *i.e.* in relation to some particular aspects of early Church doctrines, I shall examine the subject by adopting a new approach. This approach takes seriously a number of early Christian writers and their own considerations in relation to the philosophy/theology of language. The main idea is to regard the problem *selectively* or *individually* and thus to reach an *integral* and *comprehensive* picture. In other words, my approach shall examine

the problem systematically, and to do so not by mixing it up with questions of minor importance (as *e.g.* P. Rotta and Y. Edelshtein did), but by an analytical comparison of various Patristic views on language.

Hence I suggest approaching the problem selectively and dealing only with a *limited* number of Christian writers, those who seem to be the most important representatives of the different stages of Christian theology. In looking at each of these writers I shall try to pay as much attention as possible to their *individuality* and *originality*. This methodological approach arises from the fact that this originality of the Patristic writers (who in their turn belonged to different theological traditions) has often been treated in an unsatisfactory way or even completely ignored, either for the sake of well-worn topics like the Platonism (or Aristotelianism) of the Church Fathers, or for the sake of representing the problem in a '*consensus patrum*' form. Moreover, even recent investigations of the Patristic theory of language and some linked issues often seem to overestimate the influence of classical Greek philosophy, or the philosophy of Late Antiquity, at the expense of the originality of the Fathers[4]. Of course, philosophical influence on logic, dialectic, rhetoric, *etc.* has been seriously reconsidered and redefined in modern Patristic scholarship, and it would be an error either to neglect or to argue against the results. What will be

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[4] In his recent research on Basil of Caesarea and his interest in linguistic matters, D. Robertson emphasises in his abstract the idea that '*the philosophical tradition that is rooted in the Stoic dialectical purposes is transformed in the classic Trinitarian controversies of Greek Patristics...*' – *v.* D. Robertson, *Grammar, logic and philosophy of language: the Stoic legacy in fourth century Patristics* PhD thesis unpublished (London 2002), p. 2. In spite of numerous interesting parallels between the Stoic school of thought and the ideas of Basil, D. Robertson seem to follow the settled opinion of the French school, well summarised by B. Sesboüé in his introduction to *SC* 299.

suggested, however, is not to disregard it, but to accentuate what in the Greek Patristic speculations on the nature of language was transformed from philosophy and what was substantially new, *i.e.* what was the real contribution of early Church theology in the history of philosophy of language. Therefore, my main task will be to demonstrate that in the case, for example, of Basil of Caesarea or Gregory of Nyssa, in spite of their indubitable (*e.g.* terminological and philosophical) dependence on the grammarians' schools of the time that followed the way of reconciling the two great doctrines of language of the Classical past, they were nevertheless original, underived, and independent enough to enable us to speak of *a philosophy of language of their own*. Their view of meaning, naming, origin of word and appearance of names, the correlation between name and object, name and its meaning and so on, is no less interesting or original than *e.g.* Plato's *Cratylus* or Aristotle's *De interpretatione.* Furthermore, in some of their conclusions, the Patristic authors of the fourth century truly surpassed both their opponents in the doctrinal disputes, and, what is more, some of the most famous representatives of the Neo-Platonist movement. Ἐν ἑνὶ λόγῳ, Patristic ideas about human language are original and outstanding enough for their time to have significance not only for Patristic scholars, but also for the general history of linguistic theory.

Another aspect of the examination is the construction of an *integral* view of the problem. This brings together the common features of previous monographs on the Patristic vision of language, both old and relatively

modern, that will be discussed below in detail. In order to emphasise the most original ideas of the Fathers, I shall try to avoid an 'optimistic' representation of the problem as a smooth and facile development from some primitive biblical impression of language, to more philosophical and sophisticated concepts. A claim is made that a detailed analysis of Patristic writings shows that their view of the nature of language was not that simple, and the development of the Patristic doctrine of language can be represented so to speak chronologically only with a number of significant reservations. Despite the fact that there is evidence to affirm that the early Christian theological view of human language was specific enough to contrast with the teachings of Late Hellenistic linguistic science, its development was sometimes spasmodic and uneven. To some extent I intend to argue against J. Daniélou's representation of the problem, so influential on further studies of the subject[5]. Thus, for example, the ideas of Irenaeus, whose views on human language and the divine name were formed in the course of controversy with Gnostic, appear substantially different from those of Clement of Alexandria, who in the books of the *Stromaties* systematically appeals to Platonic points of view; to sum up, in the attempt to represent the Classical Patristic view of language, it is important to avoid oversimplification.

---

[5] J. Daniélou, *Eunome l'arien et l'exegèse néoplatonicienne du Cratyle*, *RÉG* 69. (Paris 1956), pp. 412 - 432.

§ 2. Importance of the research

As D. Robertson rightly remarks in his recent thesis, *'with a few notable exceptions (e.g. Augustine), there has been remarkably little research on the massive corpus of Patristic writings on language'*[6]. This lack of studies has had an effect upon the vast majority of monographs on the history of linguistic theories and even on encyclopaedic literature on ancient grammar[7]. As for the history of the ancient philosophy of language and grammatical theory, the situation is similar: *e.g.* R. Robins[8], S. Everson[9], R. Harris and T. Taylor[10], G. Lepschy[11] and many others exclude the Patristic period completely from the agenda, leaving a kind of chronological gap, as if in the fourth-century controversies the treatment of language was insignificant or relatively small. Clearly, this dissertation is not meant to contribute to the study of ancient grammar or grammatical aspects of patristic exegesis[12], because our concern is restricted to the theoretical (*i.e.* both philosophical and theological) treatment of language in early Christian literature.

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[6] D. Robertson, *op.cit.*, p. 4.

[7] *cf.* Ineke Sluiter, *Ancient grammar in context. **Contribution to the study of ancient linguistic thought*** (Amsterdam 1990), pp. 168-171.

[8] R. Robins, *Ancient & Mediaeval grammatical theory in Europe* (London 1951), *A short history of linguistics* (London 1967).

[9] S. Everson, (ed.) *Language* (Cambridge 1994).

[10] R. Harris, & T. Taylor, *Landmarks in linguistic thought* (London, New York 1989).

[11] G. Lepschy, *History of Linguistics* (London, New York 1994).

[12] In a way the problem is examined by German scholars; *v.* for example, the works of Ch. Schäublin, *Untersuchungen zu Methode und Herkunft der antiochenischen Exegese* (Köln, Bonn 1974), and his disciple B. Neuschäfer, *Origenes als Philologe, in* **Schweizerische Beiträge zur Altertumswissenschaft** (Basel 1987).

On the other hand, in modern scholarship the question of a Patristic philosophy of language has not been answered in a satisfactory way. With the exception of Origen, Augustine, Basil of Caesarea and Gregory of Nyssa, there are only a few works that one way or another attempt to scrutinise the subject. One should point out, however, that for Patristic studies our problem is even more important for several reasons. In the first instance, the question of the nature of human language *is central in discerning the nature of theology,* to what extent human words can describe the divine reality, to what extent an expression or comparative parallel is correct[13], why one word fits the profession of faith better that another, *etc.* Whichever Trinitarian or Christological question was the focus of the disputes, it should be noted that the main preoccupation of the Fathers was often not simply with some specific terms, but with language in general. Nevertheless, the question of language was often ignored in monographs on the philosophical ideas of Patristic literature[14] as well as in special investigations relating to apophatic theology[15]. Therefore, the dissertation is conceived as a contribution to the study of the Greek Patristic philosophy of language; for the sake of focus and precision, I shall not address the question of *how exactly* the philosophical attitude to language was reflected elsewhere, for example in Christology, Eschatology *etc.*, except where I find it is too relevant to omit.

---

[13]As, for example, the notorious Gnostic parallel between the Johannine Logos and ὁ λόγος as a word of man's language.
[14] *e.g.* H. Wolfson, *Philosophy of the Church Fathers* (Cambridge, Massachusetts 1956).
[15] *e.g.* R. Mortley, *From word to silence: the way of negation, Christian and Greek,* 2 vols (Bonn 1986).

§ 3. Review of the bibliography

It has already been mentioned that the problem of language in early Christian literature has not yet been satisfactorily examined. There are several limitations that should however be made. The first attempt to regard this question systematically appeared in 1909 with a publication of **P. Rotta**[16]. Oddly enough, amongst Western monographs this rare book still remains the most comprehensive attempt to answer the question of how the phenomenon of human language was regarded in Patristic theology. In spite of the number of disadvantages caused by the condition of Patristic scholarship of the time, and an old-fashioned approach[17], P. Rotta reached correct conclusions[18].

The main idea of his research is to demonstrate that for the Christian writers, the phenomenon of language was to be seen in the context of theological anthropology. For this reason, P. Rotta dedicates an entire chapter to showing how the problem of language is closely linked with the Christian doctrine of the human soul and mind; next, he regards Scholasticism in a similar manner and reaches the same conclusion[19].

One should not criticise P. Rotta's book for some obvious superficialities; its main disadvantage is that the monograph is extremely descriptive. Clearly,

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16 P. Rotta, *La filosofia del linguaggio nella Patristica e nella Scolastica* (Torino 1909).
17 P. Rotta begins with an overview of Pre-Socratic philosophy, gives too much attention to Neo-Platonism, finally dealing with Patristics only in the third chapter, while the following chapters are dedicated to the psychology of Patristics, and the disputes over the *Universals* in Scholasticism.
18 P. Rotta, *op.cit.*, pp. 245-248.
19 P. Rotta, *op.cit.*, pp. 183-244.

his work does not claim to present an exhaustive examination, but just to trace the problem. Thus, he proposed to regard the problem in the form of a number of secondary questions. Consequently, having considered the topic in general[20], he turns to the Patristic exegesis of some relevant passages of the Pentateuch[21], the question of the ultimate number of languages[22], *etc.* Although P. Rotta sometimes oversimplifies the matter and even makes errors, his general comprehension of the problem is remarkable in every respect, and it should be remembered that he was *the first* to pose our question.

Surprisingly, another important investigation of our problem appeared in Soviet Russia in the late seventies of the last century. It is necessary to point out that during the Soviet era almost all kinds of Patristic studies were abandoned, and were only possible under cover of 'Medieval' or 'Byzantine studies'. **Y. Edelshtein** prepared a thesis titled 'The Early Medieval doctrine of language'[23]. In fact, he deals with the Classical Patristic period, and finishes his research with some references to the Byzantine theological literature of the eleventh century. His dissertation can be better described as a substantial

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[20] P. Rotta, *op.cit.*, pp. 67-74.

[21] P. Rotta, *op.cit.*, pp. 76-78.

[22] P. Rotta, *op.cit.*, p. 75.

[23] Ю. Эдельштейн, *Раннесредневековое учение о языке* (Moscow 1976). The dissertation remains unpublished. Nonetheless, Y. Edelshtein published two very valuable articles that are in effect a résumé of his thesis: *'The problem of language in the Patristic writings'* (*Проблема языка в памятниках патристики, ИЛУ*: **Средневековая Европа** (Москва 1986) pp. 157-207; and *'Early Medieval doctrine of origin of language'* (*Раннесредневековое учение о происхождении языка,* **Языкознание в античности** (Москва 1976), p.176ff. It should be mentioned that the former article was prepared by Y. Edelshtein as a chapter for a multi-volume monograph on the history of linguistic doctrines that remains the single work of this kind to deal with the Patristic period (the article of Y. Edelshtein) and with the linguistic interests of the Byzantine theologians (an article of A. Gavrilov, *The linguistic studies of the Byzantines* (in Russian) – *ИЛУ, ibid.*, pp. 109-156.

extension of P. Rotta's third chapter; moreover, Y. Edelshtein applies a similar method of investigation to the massive corpus of Patristic literature. He divides the problem into a number of questions, and thoroughly scrutinises the opinions of the Fathers on concrete questions like the origin of language, the number of languages, the correlation between word and name, its sense, meaning and finally the thinking process. Although Y. Edelshtein appears to depend heavily on P. Rotta's monograph, his work is not without originality and value.

Hence, he examines the problem much more extensively, and touches upon a number of questions that P. Rotta left aside. For example, Y. Edelshtein pays much more attention to the Patristic exegesis of the crucial passages of the Old Testament, and gives special treatment to the problem of the origin of languages in relation to Patristic anthropology and teaching on the creation of man, *etc.* Even though he evidently repeats some mistakes of P. Rotta (they both misinterpret Clement of Alexandria), his investigation should nevertheless be regarded overall as a substantial contribution to the subject. First, he covers a wider range of Patristic writings. Unlike Rotta, who often makes questionable and unconsidered remarks, Y. Edelshtein undertakes a more detailed and systematic examination of the topic.

As for the disadvantages of Y. Edelshtein's monograph, it is necessary to note that they were caused by the aims of his investigation. First of all, his main

aim was to call the attention of Soviet scholars to Patristic studies[24], to attract their interest to the matter as such. At the same time, even a superficial view of his work reveals the conditions under which the investigation took place: in the late seventies of the last century he quotes Greek texts according to the Patrology of Migne and only deals with the Patristic writings that had been translated into Russian by the Russian Orthodox Theological Academies before 1917, and therefore repeats the textual mistakes of those old translations.

There is another sphere of scholarship in which some interesting aspects of our problem have been examined. In the course of the so-called *Imyaslavie*[25] controversy a number of investigations were produced in an attempt to analyse the biblical and Patristic theology of language and name[26]. Although both sides of the controversy turned to the authority of the Fathers, and a number of the articles appeared[27], their relevance to Patristic studies was relatively small. The defenders of *Imyaslavie*, for instance, followed the methodology of the German

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[24] I should mention that in the course of his studies this Jewish scholar turned to Orthodoxy, and became a priest; inevitably, he had to abandon his academic career.
[25] Also known under names *onomatodoxy* or *onomatolareia*.
[26] For complete bibliography *v.* еп. Иларион (Алфеев) *Священная тайна Церкви: введение в историю и проблематику имяславских споров* (St. Petersburg 2002), vol. 2, pp. 216-269.
[27] *cf.* for instance, прот. С. Булгаков, *Смысл учения Григория Нисского об именах* (S. Bulgakov, *Gregory of Nyssa and his doctrine of names*) in **Итоги 12-13**, (Moscow 1913) and the reply of his opponent S. Troitskii – С. Троицкий, *Учение св. Григория Нисского об именах Божиих и имябожники. Ответ С. Н. Булгакову* (S. Troitskii, *The teaching of St. Gregory of Nyssa on the divine names and the onomatolatreia: respond to S. Bulgakov* (St. Petersburg 1914)).

school[28], while their opponents were often influenced by the old-fashion approach inherited from the semi-Scholastic period of Russian theological education.

Nevertheless, this theological movement inspired a number of relevant works of a general character such as, for example, the books of **I. Hausherr**[29] and **H. Alfeyev**[30]. Both works mostly deal with the problem of the name 'Jesus'. The work of I. Hausherr begins with a brief but interesting examination of the problem in the Patristic writings. In the first volume of his research, bishop Hilarion Alfeyev dedicates the first two chapters to the analysis of name-theology in the Bible (first chapter) and in some Patristic traditions (Greek and Syriac) together with some references to the late Byzantine period (second chapter). A common feature of these two works is that owing to the agenda of the investigations, the question of language is touched upon very briefly.

Special attention should be paid to some modern papers that treat the problem of language in relation to a particular Patristic author. **J. Daniélou's**[31] article on the background of the issues of language touched upon in the course

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[28] *e.g.* R. Hirzel, *Der Name. Ein Beitrag zu seiner Geschichte im Altertum und besonders bei den Griechen* (Leipz. 1918); B. Jacob, *Im Namen Gottes. Eine sprachliche und religions geshichtl. Unersuchung z. Alten und Neuen Testament* (Berlin 1903); J. Böhmer, *Das biblische "im Namen". Eine sprachwissenschaftliche Untersuchung über das hebräische beschem und seine griechischen Äquivalente* (Giessen 1898); F. Giesebrecht, *Die alttestamentliche Schätzung des Gottesnamens und ihre religionsgeschichtliche Grundlage* (Königsberg 1901); W. Heimüller, *Im Namen Jesu. Eine sprach- und. Religionsgeschichtliche Untersuchung zum Neuen Testament, speziell zur altchristlichen Taufe* (Götting 1903).

[29] I. Hausherr, *The name of Jesus. The names of Jesus used by early Christians. The development of the 'Jesus prayer' Cistercian Studies* 44 (Kalamazoo, Michigan 1978).

[30] H. Alfeyev, *op.cit.* – *'The Holy Mystery of the Church'* (in Russian).

[31] J. Daniélou, *Eunome l'Arien*, pp. 412-432.

of the Eunomian controversy is still of great value. Mainly focused on Gregory and Eunomius, J. Daniélou's paper deals with numerous issues in both the Patristic comprehension of language and Neo-Platonic theories derived from the doctrines of Proclus and Iamblichus. In the final chapter of the thesis I shall return more specifically to some of J. Daniélou's ideas. What should be pointed out here is the fact that his article has determined further studies of the subject for almost thirty years and strongly influenced, for example, the investigations of Th. Kopecek, R. Mortley, B. Sesboüé, *etc.*

But at present the most satisfactory treatment of the philosophy of language in the Greek Fathers was given by **B. Salmona** in his extensive article on Gregory of Nyssa[32] and by **D. Robertson** in his recent thesis, where he compares Stoic linguistic interests with what appears in Basil of Caesarea. B. Salmina has attempted to examine all the major works of Gregory that deal with language: in his extensive article he sets out the philosophical and ontological implications of Gregory's thought in the context of the opposition between human and divine nature[33]; his scope is impressive. In my section on Gregory's *Contra Eunomium* I rely on the results of his analysis[34].

The work of D. Robertson is of special interest for our purposes as well. The main aim of his thesis is to argue that *'Patristics is relevant to contemporary philosophical concerns, on account of the Patristic preoccupation with linguistic*

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[32] B. Salmona, *Ontologia e logica il tema del linguaggio in Gregorio di Nissa.* in ***Il linguaggio nella patristica: Gregorio di Nissa e Agostino*** (Tilgher, Genova 1995), pp. 9-58.
[33] B. Salmona, *op.cit.*, pp. 10-29.
[34] B. Salmona, *op.cit.*, pp. 29-56.

matters'[35]. His approach to the subject consists mainly of limited investigations of narrow philological issues. He shows how Greek learning was relevant to linguistic concerns in Basil, but as he concentrates on the Stoics, regards Basil in a rather partial way. In the course of my own studies, the research of D. Robertson was of substantial help and interest. He significantly clarifies the question of Basil's philological background. In the first and fourth chapters of his dissertation (entitled 'Proper Names' and 'Language and Thought' respectively) D. Roberson treats Basil too briefly. Nevertheless, a great advantage of his research is that he outlines very persuasive arguments for Stoic influence; his analysis of Basil's 'linguistic' terminology is very precise. He endeavours to show exactly which notions were used by Basil in a strict Stoic sense, and where Basil differs from this grammatical tradition. Obviously, D. Robertson approaches Basil as a classical scholar. Thus, for example, he regards Basil's view of language either *per se* or in the context of the classical tradition (Stoic grammatical science and philological studies of the Neo-Platonist school), while for some unclear reason he deliberately leaves aside the theory of Eunomius[36]. Although in what follows I shall try to give a distinctive treatment of Eunomius' view in order to delineate an exact form of Basil's doctrine of names, some results of D. Robertson's studies should be spelled out here. In his most successful first chapter, 'Proper Names', he concludes his analysis that

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[35] D. Robertson, *op.cit.*, p. 4 (of the *Introduction*).

[36] D. Robertson, *op.cit.*, p. 45 n. 25. Although in his comprehension of Eunomius' doctrine he relies on J. Daniélou and his followers (K. Uthemann and M. Troiano), D. Robertson, has, I think, arrived at a very interesting and correct understanding of Basil the Great.

Basil's view of the nature of proper names differs from what can be found in the Stoic tradition. I have to admit that I am not in a position to estimate adequately D. Robertson's further suggestion that '*Basil is an ancient forerunner of the modern description theory of names*'[37], because of my ignorance of J. Searle, H. Putman, S. Kirpke, *etc*[38]. Frankly speaking, my own interests in the matter were originally inspired by two Russian books entitled 'Philosophy of Name'[39]; but I have to note that in my opinion, despite the fact that both of these Russian philosophers investigated the Eunomian controversy, the final theories of A. Losev and S. Bulgakov posed the question in an absolutely different way from that found in Greek Patristic writers.

Turning back to the work of D. Robertson, I should point out that although in the course of his research he proposed a number of fresh ideas and showed the theory of Basil, as a matter of fact, cannot be reduced to Stoic linguistic speculations, he seems to deal with the subject in a preliminary way. I believe that in the works of the two Cappadocians we come across not only an original teaching (by comparison with the Stoics), but an absolutely new doctrine of language, which has no relations to Plato and Aristotle.

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[37] D. Robertson, *op.cit.*, p. 53.
[38] *cf.* D. Robertson, *op.cit.*, p. 57 n. 55. The scholar expresses his gratitude to a number of modern theorists of the proper name.
[39] А. Лосев, *Философия имени* (*Philosophy of name*) (Moscow 1927), прот. С. Булгаков, *Философия имени* (*Philosophy of name*) (Paris 1953). The latter work of S. Bulgakov was at once his last, and as he used to say, '*the most philosophical*' work that was, unfortunately, not completed. L. Zander undertook a substantial examination of Bulgakov's archive and published it in Russian within ten years of the author's death. French translation of C. Andronikoff, ***S. Boulgakov, La Philosophie du Verbe et du Nom*** (Lausanne 1991).

An interesting discussion was opened by **J. Dillon**'s article on Origen's comprehension of language and divine names[40]. I have found that his main point about the deep Platonic influence on Origen is in every respect correct; in what follows, however, I shall demonstrate that Origen's Platonist position becomes even clearer when the matter is considered in the context of the Alexandrian theological school that in respect to linguistic speculations seemed to follow Philo. At the same time, J. Dillon has ignored a very important aspect of Origen's speculations about the divine name 'Jesus' in relation to martyrdom.

Clearly, this brief overview of the bibliography is not intended to be exhaustive or complete; rather, it is conceived as a small addendum to the work of G. Hewes[41]. There are many instances when our problem one way or another was touched upon in some monographs and articles[42]. But since their concern with the problem was in some sense secondary, for the sake of focus it does not seem reasonable to undertake a special treatment of these works here.

To sum up, the question of human language in Patristic thought has not received an adequate treatment that can satisfy the requirements of modern

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[40] J. Dillon, *The magical power of names in Origen and Later Platonism* in **Origeniana Tertia** (Rome 1985).

[41] *v.* G. Hewes, *Language origins: a bibliography* (The Hague, Paris 1975).

[42] *e.g.* a monograph of V. Nesmelov, *Doctrinal system of Gregory of Nyssa* (in Russian) – В. Несмелов, *Догматическая система св. Григория Нисского* (Kazan 1887), whose pioneering analysis of the 'linguistic' aspects of the controversy between Gregory of Nyssa and Eunomius still remains very valuable. An interesting treatment of the problem can be found in the dissertation of A. Meredith, *Studies in the Contra Eunomius of Gregory of Nyssa* (Oxford, unpublished DPhil. 1972), in the comprehensive monograph of Th. Kopecek, *A history of Neo-Arianism* (Cambridge 1979), and in the research of R. Mortley. One should also mention the works of R. Vaggione, *Eunomius: the extant works* (Oxford 1987) = *Eunomius' apologies* and L. Wickham *Syntagmation of Aetius the Anomean, JThS*, vol. xix, pt. 2, 1968 as well as to the articles of S. Need, *Language, Metaphor, and Chalcedon: a case of theological double vision, HThR* 88:2 1995; R. Williams, *The logic of Arianism, JThS*, vol. xxxiv, pt. 1, 1983.

scholarship. To all appearances, a number of the issues of language were investigated, but there is still room for a systematic examination of the problem in order to fill some gaps and to suggest a clear idea for a better understanding of some allied questions such as the theology of negation, the theology of liturgical symbolism, the doctrine of the 'Jesus prayer', *etc.*

§ 4. Strategy of the research; some important limitations

The dissertation begins with an introductory chapter on the background; it starts with an analysis of two theories of language proposed by Plato and Aristotle. As these issues have already been thoroughly researched, there is need to limit our scope. For the purpose of the work our main concern is not only to analyse the linguistic doctrines of Plato and Aristotle, but also to demonstrate how these two great Classical theories of language were understood in the period of Late Antiquity. After the publications of, for instance, T. Baxter[43], D. Charles[44], M. Larkin[45], and, finally, S. Everson[46], the principal aspects of these two theories of language are ably clarified. But in my examination a special emphasis will be placed upon the comprehension of these two theories of language in Christian literature and in the philosophical schools,

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[43] T. Baxter, *The Cratylus: Plato's critique of naming* (Leiden 1992).
[44] D. Charles, *Aristotle on meaning and essence* (Oxford 2000).
[45] M. Larkin, *Language in the philosophy of Aristotle* (The Hague, Paris 1971).
[46] S. Everson (ed.), *Language* (Cambridge 1994).

which were chronologically close to the Patristic writings. It should be pointed out that the material is regarded descriptively; therefore, such sources as, for example, *In Platonis Cratylum commentaria* of Proclus and *In Aristotelis metaphysica commentaria* of Alexander Aphrodisiensis are regarded for the sake of a relevant comparison that seems to be interesting rather than by way of a detailed analysis, which is, of course, beyond our scope. From Clement of Alexandria and Origen, Patristic speculations on the nature of language and words often refer (sometimes directly) to the works of Plato and Aristotle; but their interpretation of the Classical theories of language is very specific, so it seems essential for the subject to undertake a limited elaboration of these Classical theories.

In like manner I shall give a brief treatment of two important theories of language worked out by the Stoics and the Epicureans. The reason for this is clear: Origen, for example, showed a remarkable competence in these theories; his response to Celsus contained a special accusation of Epicurean and Aristotelian comprehension of names; his own theory, in spite of some noticeable influences of the Stoic school, was mainly based on the *Cratylus*. An interesting treatment of the Epicurean and Stoic theories appears in the controversy between Eunomius and the Cappadocians, when both sides accused each other of using Aristotle's and Epicurean ideas of language, while it is only Basil and Gregory who seem to have *real* knowledge of these theories. In addition, the suggestion to give an overview of the Stoic and Epicurean

theories of names is conditioned by the fact that chronologically these two theories were extremely close to what was finally worked out by Gregory and Basil, and undoubtedly impacted some of their purely scientific considerations about grammatical matters.

The problem of Gnostic comprehension of language is the most sophisticated topic of the subject that, as I believe, must become a theme of an independent and thorough investigation. Taking into account the variety of modern opinions about what constituted Gnosticism, I shall not enter the dispute at all[47]. In relation to our concern, the main problem is caused by the fact that there is no more or less stable view on language and names: in the corpus of the *Nag Hammadi* library the matter appears in a very mythological form, partly influenced by an ancient intuition that names are imprinted by things.

In their second century apologetic writings, Justin and Irenaeus came across somewhat slightly differently: for their Gnostic opponents, names, numbers and sounds became in some measure tools for the cognition of divine realities, while Origen already faced the Gnostic comprehension of names in a totally different way. His theology of martyrdom reflects that in the Gnostic

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[47] My general comprehension of Gnosticism, however, is that it was a mysterious and enigmatic movement; in spite of some reflection and even the use of philosophical notions, Gnosticism was a *non-philosophical* religious trend. The vast majority of their ideas, including their treatment of names and language should not, therefore, be considered as derived from philosophical sources. I believe that any rational attempts to explain Gnostic exegetical and theological ideas is as futile as an allegorical interpretation of new-'messiahs' Syon Mehn Muhn or Syokoh Asakharah between the separation of the ancient Hebrew state and the division between Northern and Southern Korea.

circles of his time the theological apprehension of name 'Jesus' was what he classified as Aristotelism: the name is arbitrarily given, *so it is theologically ridiculous to die for a name in the course of the persecutions*. Therefore, in my dissertation this complicated issue is only touched on. I exemplify some attractive ideas of the Gnostic impression of language and names by looking at the Valentinian school. Marcus' theory of divine names is considered together with Irenaeus' argumentation against the Gnostic *numerical* interpretation of names and theological terms. The analysis of Gnostic writings, and Irenaeus' reports about them is given briefly. An overview of Valentinian ideas is undertaken in order to demonstrate how biblical intuitions of language and divine name reflected upon early Christian literature, while Marcus' mythological interpretation of names and number is regarded, only for the sake of clarity of Irenaeus' points of view. Therefore, instead of discussing the general scholarly suggestions about Gnostic movements, I shall only try to discover to what extent these ideas affected early Christian opinions. Since my main interest will be to represent Irenaeus' refutation of Gnostic teachings, the examination tends to regard Gnostic material in the manner it emerges in Church literature: Gnostics are regarded as religious-philosophical movements that on the one hand endeavoured to adopt some attributes of Christian theology, but in general they differed from Christianity considerably.

In the second chapter of the dissertation the writings of Justin Martyr and Irenaeus of Lyon are analysed. An effort will be made to demonstrate that

in contrast to Irenaeus, whose interest in language is motivated by his dispute with the Gnostics, Justin's remarks about word, its meaning and correctness are of a general philosophical character. In spite of a good acquaintance with Plato, Justin's ideas about word, title and name are totally different from Platonic theory. It seems that Irenaeus showed much more interest in the problem; he poses the question philosophically, and gives remarkable definitions of *how word is produced by the human soul*. Overall, Justin and Irenaeus arrive at the *same* conclusion and propose a *'carnal'* explanation of the mystery of language: it is intriguing that already at this stage of Christian theology the notion of man's language was bound up with anthropology. This section of the second chapter is to shed more light on what will be found in the theory developed by Basil and Gregory. In particular, I shall demonstrate that there are some definite structural parallels between the argumentation of Irenaeus against Marcus, and the arguments set forth by Gregory against Eunomius[48].

The third chapter is devoted to the representatives of the Alexandrian school: Clement of Alexandria and Origen, and some interesting ideas of Eusebius of Caesarea about divine names. The elaboration of the Alexandrian school is of a special relevance for the problem. In the first instance, I shall demonstrate that their acquaintance with secular theories of language was remarkable, but the impact of this philosophy varied. In the section on Clement

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[48] In the opinion of the Rev Prof. A. Louth it is likely that both Basil and Gregory were acquainted with the writings of Irenaeus; nonetheless, I have avoided the discussion of this problem here.

of Alexandria I shall argue that notwithstanding the fact that he argues enthusiastically for the intellectual, cultural and spiritual priority of the 'barbarians' and 'barbarian philosophy' (*i.e.* Hebrews and the Bible) over the Greeks, he shows *a purely Platonic comprehension of language*. Some of his ideas reveal his dependence on Philo, who endeavoured to reconcile Plato's teaching about the name-maker and the Pentateuchal narration on Adam naming the creatures.

Origen's understanding of names was already touched upon by J. Daniélou, H. Crouzel (in his monograph on Origen) and J. Dillon in the above-mentioned article on the magical power of names. Origen is an interesting instance in every respect. His general comprehension of the problem is still close to Clement: his view of language is certainly a variant of φύσις-theory, but unlike Clement, who merely appeals to the *Cratylus*, Origen proposed a much better settled theory. He posed such questions as the existence of a primordial tongue, the further development of human dialects, the adequacy of Greek and Latin name and prayers in comparison with Hebrew, and finally bound up his views on language with eschatological issues. In this section I shall mainly focus on his *Contra Celsum*. Origen was certainly at variance with Philo and Clement; I shall try to show that unlike them, his theory of language was influenced not by Plato, but mainly by Stoic philological science as already pointed out by B. Neuschäfer. Origen's studies of languages strongly reflected his theological views.

The agenda of the fourth chapter on Aetius, Eunomius, Basil of Caesarea and Gregory of Nyssa is determined by the recent monograph of R. Vaggione[49]. In the section dedicated to Aetius I will discuss some ideas of J. Daniélou and R. Mortley that were not touched upon by R. Vaggione. My main point will be that the so called Anomean theory of names emerged in Aetius *Syntagmation* in a determinable form, and Eunomius *did not* modify the doctrine of his master substantially, but just applied force to its exposition. In my reconstruction of Aetius' theory I will question one of the most settled opinions about the comprehension of phoneme; my point will be that in the syllogisms of the *Syntagmation,* Aetius puts forward a very special (or more precisely, strange) linguistic model when name becomes a vehicle of meaning regardless of phoneme; the emphasis is laid on its semantic content. My analysis of the *Syntagmation* will be based on logic. I shall argue that in the *Syntagmation* one can hardly find elements of Neo-Platonic doctrine as J. Daniélou, Th. Kopecek, and R. Mortley supposed. Finally, I point to the fact that Aetius' view of names and human *epinoia* follow from his main methodological standpoint that is based on logical truth. Eunomius' elaboration of the theory was predominantly an attempt to find support in biblical texts. His theory of names is just an elaboration of the *Syntagmation* without a substantial philosophical contribution. In the course of analysis I shall try to examine a number of questions: to what extent Anomean theory is directly derived from Plato's

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[49] R. Vaggione, *Eunomius of Cyzicus.The Nicene revolution* (Oxford 2000).

Cratylus, and what rôle the Anomean theory of naming played in the general way of argumentation. Overall, I shall argue that in the case of the Anomean theory, traditional references to Platonism or Aristotelism should be substantially reconsidered. As a result, I will propose to pay more attention to some definite parallels between the treatment of names in Gnosticism, and Eunomius' explanation of the divine name *agennetos*.

Next, our analysis will shift to Basil the Great and Gregory of Nyssa. Although traditional studies of the *Contra Eunomium* on this account satisfactorily represent the Cappadocian theory that was set off against Eunomius, there are still many questions that remain open; in comparison with Gregory of Nyssa, Basil's *Adversus Eunomium* was overlooked. I will pay special attention to Basil's treatise, and reconsider some of Gregory's themes in order to clarify Gregory's real contribution to the problem, and what was inherited by him from Basil. At the same time, my idea is to organise the material in a more comprehensive way. Basil's view on linguistic issues was often analysed regardless of Eunomius' theory. Ph. Rousseau, for example, in his fourth chapter titled 'Eunomius' begins with a declaration that he has '*tried to avoid turning this account into a treatment of Eunomius himself*'[50]; D. Robertson follows the same way[51]; his remarks about Eunomius' theory are deeply influenced by J. Daniélou. In the dissertation I propose to distinguish Aetius' *Syntagmation* and Eunomius' first *Apology,* and to scrutinise them by comparison with Basil's

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[50] *v.* Ph. Rousseau, *Basil of Caesarea* (Oxford 1994), p. 106 n. 35.
[51] D. Robertson, *op.cit.*, p. 45 n. 25.

Adversus Eunomium; then, I shall turn to the three books of Eunomius' *Apologia Apologiae* and the *Contra Eunomium*, where the Greek Patristic view of human language is perfectly spelled out.

The conclusion of the dissertation summarises all aspects of the Patristic philosophy of language. The central point will be to show that the Fathers of the Church stress an *anthropological* comprehension of the matter. Moreover, the Christian view of the nature of language appears as a relatively new suggestion, so one cannot agree that in the Hellenistic period the Stoics and Epicurus were the last philosophers who paid attention to the philosophical aspects of language, while the linguistic studies that followed were, *par excellence*, dedicated to grammar without any interest in philosophy[52]. Although some of these anthropological motifs were already observed in Classical (*e.g.* Aristotle) and Hellenistic philosophy (*e.g.* Epicurus), the *Patristic comprehension of language treats human agency as a central factor in the origin, formation and development of language*. At the same time, the Patristic theory of language is shown to be foreign to any kind of oversimplification: human tongues remain an important characteristic feature of man's nature, the power of speech is a result of the power of thought. One should speak of language as a mystery, but the enigmatic nature of language is caused by the inscrutability of man's intellectual action. To demonstrate it, I shall give a brief overview of some later opinions about the nature of language in order to illustrate that in the

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[52] As, for example, I. Perelmuter thinks – И. Перельмутер, *Философские школы Эллинизма*, in ***ИЛУ*: Древний мир**, pp. 156-179., *esp*. p. 207.

theological development that followed, the idea of the mystery of language was well grasped.

Chapter I: Classical philosophy on the nature of language

Amongst the many doctrinal and philosophical issues that emerged in the Patristic theology of divine names, there is one which is seen as fundamental and which will, therefore, be specially treated in this section. Whatever the concept of divine names is conceived to be, it inevitably raises the question about *human language,* its origin, nature, *etc.* In the focus of ancient thought it emerged as the question of *names* – the notional units of human speech. It is the theories of *names,* which happened to be an important element of what we now call ancient theories of language developed from Pythagoras[53] to John of Damascus[54]. Inasmuch as this problem always enjoyed significant popularity in classical Greek and later Hellenistic philosophy, an examination of some major Greek theories of language seems to be essential.

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[53] Proclus, *In Platonis Cratylum commentaria,* 16: 1 – 22. (ed. G. Pasquali, *Procli Diadochi in Platonis Cratylum commentaria* (Leipzig 1908) pp. 1-113).
[54] Joannes Damascenus, *Dialectica sive Capita philosophica,* 57 l. *t*1 – 11 (recensio fusior), ed. B. Kotter, *Die Schriften des Johannes von Damaskos,* vol. i in ***Patristische Texte und Studien*** *7* (Berlin 1969), pp. 47-95, 101-142.

This section, therefore, is devoted to an account of the Greek linguistic theories, each of which happened to be touched upon by some theologians of the ancient Church: either by themselves or by their opponents. Another question concerns the nature, origins, and epistemological value of human speech, and it was in the focus of the classic philosophy and the scholarship of the late antiquity. Since the time of Homer and Hesiod, almost all significant philosophers treated these problems. However, in the limits of this chapter it is impossible to give a comprehensive picture of the rise and development of the Greek philosophy of language; moreover, it is the authority of a different discipline called history of linguistics[55]. It seems more reasonable to focus on *several* theories the importance and significance of which is beyond question. This will allow us to identify and accentuate only those hypotheses and teachings, which were the most influential and which were often used and abused in the course of doctrinal controversies and discussions.

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[55] One of the recent bibliographies on the history of linguistics *v.* Baxter, T. ***The Cratylus: Plato's critique of naming*** (Leiden 1992), p. 191ff.

I.1 Plato and his elaboration of the φύσις-theory

Historically, the beginnings of philosophical theories of language are associated with Plato and two linguistic concepts treated in the *Cratylus*[56]. Although this viewpoint *per se* is sufficiently controversial, this dialogue is simultaneously a résumé of all preceding Pre-Socratic speculations on the nature, origin, and theory of language, and in a sense a programme for the concepts that followed. As a matter of fact, the later theories, for example, the conventionalist theory of Aristotle, the theories of the Stoics, Middle and Neo-Platonists views on language, in many respects repeated, followed and developed this original opposition of hypotheses spelled out by Plato. In what follows, I shall try to examine only major antique philosophical concepts of language; our main purpose in this section is to give a *brief* outline of the selected theories. Inevitably, some important methods and contemporary opinions adopted by modern scholars will be omitted. Taking into account our main concern, the focus of our interest here is not on an account of the modern interpretation of Plato's *Cratylus,* but on the understanding of how ancient theories were understood in the epoch of the Fathers and their opponents. Special attention, therefore, will be paid to the later commentaries, such as the

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[56] Thus, *Cratylus* is a traditional reference point in *e.g* R. Robins, *Ancient & Mediaeval grammatical theory in Europe* (London 1951), *A short history of linguistics* (London 1967), and S. Everson (ed.), *Language* (Cambridge 1994).

works of Proclus, which seems to be more helpful in our case, rather than a multitude of modern interpretations and hypotheses.

§ I.1.1 An attempt of dialectical balance

One might ask why Plato devoted a special treatise to the problems of linguistic theory and philosophy of language, and attached a large quantity of naïve 'etymologies', when he was neither rhapsode nor grammarian. Furthermore, why is it that in spite of the fact that the *Cratylus* is the only treatise where the problem of language appears at length, Plato has not managed to spell out his own teaching and left for both ancient and modern readers various possibilities for speculation and interpretation? Evidently, these are difficult questions. In the opinion of a Russian scholar, who seems to reinterpret and define more exactly the suggestion of Proclus[57], the *Cratylus* is an illustration of Plato's enthusiasm for one of the most controversial philosophical issues of all – the interrelation between the human thought process and objective reality:

> '...having postulated the world of Forms, Plato was faced with the great difficulty and partly incoherence of what goes on in the subjective consciousness and thinking of the human being. It seems that Plato wanted to analyse all this mess and confusion. The world of Forms remained everlastingly well-organised... after looking for some kind

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[57] Proclus, *op.cit.*, 1;1 – 2;13; 2;25–3;5.

> of stable formation in the human consciousness, Plato was faced with the problem of name, because some sort of distinctness and some sort of nexus with objective reality is fixed in every name…'[58]

Thus, Plato turned to the problem of names and scrutinised two linguistic theories: the first (ultra-conventionalism) was developed by sophists; the second (ultra-naturalism) was suggested by a representative of the Heraclitean School. Remarkably, neither of these theories was fully shared by Plato himself, although he is traditionally associated with φύσις-theory; as will be illustrated, this point needs to be specified. As is typical of his dialogues, Plato was so involved in critique that instead of putting forward his own theory, he just left many occasional remarks, comments and gibes.

Taken in the context of the general development of Plato's philosophising, the *Cratylus* is strongly associated with the epistemology put forward in the *Theaetetus*[59]: in the latter Plato scrutinises the nature of knowledge and outlines his own concept of cognition, whereas in the former he tries to find the nature of being, to establish a philosophical nexus or dialectical transition from epistemology to ontology. In the *Cratylus* he raises the question of names in human language, whether they are ontological manifestations of things, or mere conventions. Plato gingerly experiments with these complicated issues (this uncertainty might be a reason for the seeming inconsistency) and puts his thoughts into the mouth of Socrates.

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[58] А. Лосев, *Критические замечания к диалогу Кратил* in *Платон* (Moscow 1999), vol. 1. p.830.
[59] А. Лосев, *Очерки античного символизма и мифологии* (Moscow 1993), pp. 410-417.

The participants in the discussion are not random: before meeting Socrates, Plato used to be a disciple of Cratylus and then devoted to him the dialogue[60], which is conceived as a critical examination of the doctrines of both his previous teacher and his opponents. As J. Barnes rightly points out, there are two major problems involved in the discourse: '*the first question concerns the origins of language*', while '*the second concerns the relation between language and the world*'[61]. In the context of what was noticed above, it would be more preferable to consider these issues in reverse order: the latter problem is, in fact, the question of inference from epistemology (given in the *Theaetetus*) to ontology. Compared with the *Theaetetus*, Plato evolves his theory in the reverse direction. His intention is to consider the *ontological* relationship between the nature of things and their verbal manifestation; the problem of the origin of words or – as Greek classical thought preferred to call them – 'names', was merely an attempt to indicate which of the possible concepts worked better for the basic premise.

§ I.1.2 Hermogenes and ultra-conventionalism

The theory proposed by Hermogenes is to a certain extent the least sophisticated, by contrast with the other participants. Thus, he holds the view

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[60] Olympiodorus, *In Platonis Alcibiadem commentarii*, 11, 86f (ed. L. Westerink, *Olympiodorus: Commentary on the first Alcibiades of Plato* (Amsterdam 1956). Aristoteles, *Metaphysica*, 987ª 29f (ed. W. Ross, *Aristotle's metaphysics*, 2 vols (Oxford 1953)).
[61] J. Barnes, *The Presocratic philosophers* (London 1982), p. 466f.

that there is no correlation between name and essence of thing – names are the result of 'convention and agreement' and whatever we decide to give each particular thing *is* its name. Thus, if we give a name to thing **A** and 'agree' that it is its name, it will be a correct one (*e.g.* **A**); further, we are free to give up the name **A** and change it for the name **B** (*cf.* 384d2-6: an example with servants), the name **B** will no be less 'correct' than the previous **A**. In fact, the very notion of *correctness* of names, which plays so significant a rôle in the discourse of both Cratylus and Socrates, emerged as irrelevant for Hermogenes – he prefers to accentuate the legislation:

> '...and (I) cannot come to the conclusion that there is any correctness of names (τις ὀρθότης ὀνόματος) other than convention and agreement (συνθήκη καὶ ὁμολογία). [...] For I think no name belongs to any particular thing by nature (οὐ γὰρ φύσει ἑκάστῳ πεφυκέναι ὄνομα), but only by the habit and custom of those who employed it and who established the usage (ἀλλὰ νόμῳ καὶ ἔθει τῶν ἐθισάντων τε καὶ καλούτων)'.
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> 384d[62]

Obviously, this ultra-conventionism concerning the origins and usage of words is an inference from a major premise, *viz.* absolute linguistic subjectivism, which, apparently, was the most popular theory amongst

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62 Trans. of H. N. Fowler from *Cratylus, Parmenides, Greater Hippias; Lesser Hippias*, **The Loeb classical library**, 167 (Cambridge Mass. 1992).

sophists[63], which Plato indicates by reference to the famous preamble of Protagoras. Reluctantly supported by Hermogenes, the conventional theory of origins of names is presented in an odd and caricatured form. The impression is given that Plato intentionally exaggerates the teaching of his opponents (*i.e.* Democritus and the sophists) and turns it into an easy target for the all-knowing Socrates: if names are arbitrarily attached to things and the 'legislation' is of *totally* subjective matter and *absolutely* irrelevant to things (either εἶδος, εἰκών, or φύσις), every name can be attached to any thing. Socrates destroys this rigmarôle very quickly: absolute convention leads to

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[63] This subjective theory of names can by no means be attached to the real Hermogenes. In fact, Plato puts into his mouth teachings, which in the early days appeared in Greek philosophy (*cf.* J. Gosling, *Plato* (London 1973), p. 200ff). T. Baxter (*The Cratylus: Plato's critique of naming, **Philosophia antique*** (Leiden, New York 1992), p.17) has indicated Hermogenes' diffidence and vacillation as if he is forced to support this nonsensical teaching. Some embryo of this teaching must be seen in Xenophanes of Colophon and his sceptical attitude to the Homeric 'language of the gods' (*v.* fr. B 14: and his denial of φωνή of the gods). Next, his disciple Parmenides followed Xenophanes in many respects (fr. A19); thus, he was also extremely sceptical about human cognitive capacities (B 6). Of special importance is the suggestion of J. Barnes (*loc.cit.*) who argues for Democritus' contribution to the sophists' linguistic theory. It is highly likely that the real adversary of Plato here is Democritus, rather then Hermogenes brother of Kallias (*Theaet.*, 164e7). Moreover, Hermogenes could hardly belong to the sophists (*cf.* Xenophon, *Memorabilia*, IV 8;10 l. 8f.; *Symposium*, 8;3 l.2f). Plato's aversion towards Democritus is well known, but this assumption is based on other reasons. Democritus was famous for his linguistic studies (A 33: some 'philological' works of Democritus, which, unfortunately have not survived: Περὶ ῥυθμῶν καὶ ἁρμονίης, Περὶ ποιήσιος, Περὶ καλλοσύνης ἐπέων, Περὶ εὐφώνων καὶ δυσφώνων γραμμάτων, Περὶ Ὁμήρου ἢ Ὀρθοεπείης καὶ γλωσσέων, Περὶ ἀοιδῆς, Περὶ ῥημάτων, Ὀνομαστικῶν. Περὶ τῶν ἐν Βαβυλῶνι ἱερῶν γραμμάτων, Περὶ καλλοσύνης ἐπέων. Nevertheless, we can partly render his account of language from B 5 and B 26. Undoubtedly, Democritus puts forward a *conventional* theory of language and, long before Aristotle, he proposed four *epicheiremas*; Democritus suggests that initially people started to discern τύποι (A 5 l. 45: *marks, letters, syllables*), gradually they 'established [verbal] symbols of each thing' (τιθέντας σύμβολα περὶ ἑκάστου τῶν ὑποκειμένων), and finally reached articulate speech. Nonetheless, Democritus did not run to extremes with epistemological conclusions; unlike the sophists or the caricatured Hermogenes, he did not hold the teaching about *absolute arbitrariness* of names. His idea of analogy between *atom* and *letter* is also of special importance; Democritus conceived his atoms as small letters, and this had a crucial significance for his ontology – the being is said to be made from the elements (τὰ στοιχεῖα) as a manuscript is made from the letters (τὰ στοιχεῖα) – *v.* Лосев, А. *История античной эстетики: Ранняя классика* (Moscow 1963) p. 271.

absolute inconsistency, when it will be impossible to tell man from horse, because if there is no distinction and everything is conventional – ὁ λόγος ἀληθής and ὁ λόγος ψευδής (385a9ff) are the same.

A commentary on this passage made by Proclus is of interest; he points to the self-contradiction of the third conventionalist epicheirema (on the metathesis of names);

> 'The discourse of Hermogenes (384d) is the following: if there is a metathesis of names, the names exist by convention and are symbols of things; but the former [is correct], therefore the second is also [correct]. But Proclus' discourse is following: if names-symbols of things exist by convention, the metathesis of names is pointless; but the former [is correct], therefore the second is also [correct]. He [Proclus] adds to the first scheme [a following conclusion]: if the metathesis of names exists, therefore, the metathesis of names does not exist.'[64]

As a matter of fact, the naturalist-conventionalist dispute is an inference from a major philosophical problem: whether the essence of a thing (οὐσία) is what it seems to us, or is in some way everlastingly fixed and independent of subjective opinion (386a). Hermogenes argues for the former: inasmuch as essence does not exist objectively, but is just what it seems to man, the name of a thing can by no means be related to essence; therefore, there is no objective regulation (νόμος) for naming.

There is no need here to scrutinise this position thoroughly for one main reason: the view of Hermogenes is sufficiently far from what the real conventional theory was believed to be, and which will be specially treated by

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[64] Proclus, *op.cit.*, 30; 1-9. (my transl.)

Aristotle. Let us leave this viewpoint for a while and turn to the much more important issues touched upon in the dialogue.

§ I.1.3 Naturalist theory of names

A striking feature of Cratylus' discourse is the objectivist φύσις-theory, which has important applications for both ontology and the theory of naming. Proceeding from the Heraclitean doctrine of flux and *esp*. Logos – the objective principle of order in the world – Cratylus understands the nature of things as something unstable in its everlasting coming-to-be. Cratylus differs from Hermogenes in insisting that the substances of things do exist objectively. As Socrates puts it,

> 'it is clear that things have some fixed reality of their own, not in relation to us nor caused by us; they do not vary, swaying one way and another in accordance with our fancy, but exist of themselves in relation to their own reality imposed by nature'[65]
>
> 386d9-e4

Philosophically, Cratylus denied the radical subjectivist doctrine of Hermogenes that essence is nothing but our fantasies. His point is that names are basic features of the existence of things: name in all the complexity of its manifestation is assigned by the nature of things.

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[65] δῆλον δὴ ὅτι αὐτὰ αὑτῶν οὐσίαν ἔχοντά τινα βέβαιόν ἐστι τὰ πράγματα, οὐ πρὸς ἡμᾶς οὐδὲ ὑφ' ἡμῶν ἑλκόμενα ἄνω καὶ κάτω τῷ ἡμετέρῳ φαντάσματι, ἀλλὰ καθ' αὑτὰ πρὸς τὴν αὑτῶν οὐσίαν ἔχοντα ἥπερ πέφυκεν.

> 'Cratylus, whom you see here, Socrates, says that everything has a right name of its own, which comes by nature (φύσει πεφυκυῖαν)'
>
> 383a4f

Again, Plato could not resist caricature, and ascribed absurd remarks to Cratylus. In spite of the radical reformulation of method and task, Socrates mostly shares this naturalistic hypothesis, and devoted great energy to an examination of Hermogenes' theory.

In the first instance, Socrates explores the question of what essence is. He holds that the essence of a thing is wholly objective, independent of what it seems to us, and is τινα βεβαιότητα τῆς οὐσίας – *'some stable foundation of their own'*. Next, Socrates stresses that a thing is ontologically bound up with its essence: we cannot cut or burn a thing without having an account of its nature and the nature of its action:

> 'Then in naming also, if we are to be consistent with our previous conclusions, we cannot follow our own will, but the way and the instrument which the nature of things prescribes must be employed, must they not? And if we pursue this course we shall be successful in our naming, but otherwise we shall fail'
>
> 387d4ff

It is by revealing the fundamental features of Plato's teaching on essence that we can come to understand his numerous *auxiliary ideas*; oddly enough, these auxiliary ideas did not sink into oblivion, but appeared in a slightly transformed but nevertheless recognisable form in the Patristic epoch. Although these issues are not important for understanding the dialogue, there

is a need to give an account of some, such as the idea of *lawgiver*, the notion of the *divine language*, and the class of words which is borrowed by men from this language.

§ I.1.4 The concept of *name-maker*

Inasmuch as naming comes to be according to the law it is only the lawgiver (νομοθέτης; δημιουργός) who was originally the name-maker (ὀνοματουργός). This name-maker viewed and knew the *eidos* of a thing and, accordingly, attached a name (389ff); this is how the question about the origin of the phoneme is solved:

> 'Then, my dear friend, must not the lawgiver also know how to embody in the sounds and syllables that name which is fitted by nature for each object? Must he not make and give all his names with his eye fixed upon the absolute or ideal name, if he is to be an authoritative giver of names? And if different lawgivers do not embody it in the same syllables, we must not forget this ideal name on that account; for different smiths do not embody the form in the same iron…'
>
> 89d4ff

Hence, Plato has solved two problems: the origins of the phonetic aspect of name and the genesis of non-Greek languages. But if a human language was

invented by a man of outstanding intellectual capacities[66] who apprehended the φύσις of things, and incorporated this knowledge in syllables and sound, how is it possible for there to be:

a) *homonymy,* when two different things are designated by one name

b) *synonymy,* when one thing in one language has several names

c) *renaming or metathesis of names,* when *e.g.* Aristocles became Plato (*cf.* the jokes about the name Hermogenes)

d) the *'semantic'* argument: if names are attached by nature, the principium *'monosemantic verb and noun have to be of the same stem' e.g.* φρονήσεως – φρονεῖν must work without fail. But there is no similarly-formed verb for the noun δικαιοσύνης[67].

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[66] Again, this idea does not belong to Plato. In Heraclitean-style philosophy not only linguistic or epistemological intuitions, but also the criterion of truth is said to be a prerogative of the super-intellectual man (*e.g.* driven or enlightened by the *Logos*). Moreover, this concept is sufficiently related to the Homeric epistemology of divinely elected individuals – *v.*, for example, E. Hussey, *The beginning of epistemology: from Homer to Philolaus* in S. Everson (ed.), *Epistemology* (Cambridge, 1990). Proclus (*In Platonis Cratylum commentaria,* 16 l. 1ff) makes interesting mention of Pythagoras, who is bracketed with the proponents of Cratylus. Thus, Pythagoras attributes names to the sphere of the human soul (ψυχή), while intellect (νοῦς) concerns *eidê* and numbers. The soul perpetually imitates intellect and generates names, which are, thereby, imitations of the *eidê* of things (which are in the sphere of intellect). Proclus concludes: 'Actually, Pythagoras said the name-maker (ὀνοματουργός) cannot be arbitrary, but he must have insight with his intellect into the nature of things that exist (τὴν φύσιν τῶν ὄντων). So, names [are given] by nature (φύσει ἄρα τὰ ὀνόματα)'.

[67] In fact, these are four ἐπιχειρήματα of Democritus set against proponents of the φύσις-theory (Proclus, *loc.cit.*);.T. Baxter is right when he argues that there are suggestive parallels between some fragments of Democritus and the *Cratylus* (*ibid.*, p.157). Moreover, the suggestion that Democritus was the main but unspoken opponent of Plato and his dialectical statements to a great extent explains the inner logic and the composition of 391 – 429.

§ I.1.5 Divine language and human language

It is not difficult to see that the major section of the dialogue (the discourse of Socrates on the '*correctness of names*') is *inter alia* an attempt to resolve these four problems. Socrates notices one intriguing aspect of Homeric intuition of language and knowledge, which in scholarly jargon is called the *dionumia* and *mononumia*[68] phenomenon. This problem is associated with a number of passages from the *Iliad*, when the author gives two names for one thing: one is from the divine language, the second is from human language (*dionumia*)[69] or, in the *Odyssey*, one name only, from the divine language (*mononumia*)[70].

There are at least two important issues that should be specially treated here. First, it is a very old idea that language is of divine origin (*cf. deus ex machina*-joke of Socrates 425d6f). Second, it is an old belief that the gods have a language of their own, which is as different from the human language as Greek is different from the barbarian languages. The very notion that human language is the gift of the gods exists in almost all world mythological systems[71] and can by no means be regarded as exclusively Greek. Admittedly, in the Greek

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[68] *v.* J. Clay, *The* ***Planktai*** *and* ***Moly****: divine naming and knowing in Homer*, **Hermes** 100 (1972), p. 131.

[69] See a fuller list of these examples in the M. West, *Theogony comm.* (Oxford 1966) *ad* 831, p. 378ff. It should also be noted that modern scholarship cannot explain this Homeric phenomenon – *cf.* G. Kirk, *The Iliad: a comm.*, vol. 1., p. 94ff (Cambridge 1993).

[70] *v.* a very important and full-length analysis of Proclus on the speech of Socrates (391d-e) concerning divine names: *op.cit.*, 71.

[71] *v.* an old but valuable article of W. Allen, *Ancient ideas on the origin and development of language,* ***Transactions of the Philological society,*** (1948), p. 37.

religion Hermes[72] was the deviser (and interpreter) of language and speech, but what the disputants are observing in the old epic poems is noticeably a later view, or to be more precise, a conglomerate of views. Socrates dismisses the Hermes-myth as naïve, but, nevertheless, poses the question: what does this Homeric view of language mean? What is the philosophical explanation of the distinction between divine and human language? For modern scholarship, the question of the origins of, and reasons for, this belief remain very problematic[73], but the situation over the former question does not seem to be that hopeless. Remarkably, the results of J. Clay's analysis of *mononumia*-phenomenon in the *Odyssey* are in agreement with the main point of Socrates and Proclus[74]. J. Clay thinks that what Homer seems to suggest with his distinction between the language of the gods and the human language is that:

> *'the gods possess a language fuller and richer than the speech of mortals and clearly indicates a sharp boundary between what men and gods can know'*[75].

If fact, it is exactly what Socrates is arguing for, and, simultaneously, it is one of the strongest arguments of Plato that his theory of the correctness of names enjoys the support of Homer. The correctness of names (ὀνόματος ὀρθότης) – the measure of correspondence between phoneme and essence or 'the quality of showing the nature of the things named' (ἥτις ἐνδείξεται οἷόν

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[72] Orphica, *Hymni*, xxv111, 1ff. (ed. W. Quandt, *Orphei hymni* (Berlin 1962)). *cf.* Hermes with his Egyptian counterpart Thoth: Diodorus Siculus, *Bibliotheca historica*, 1. 16.1;1- 17.5;8 (ed. F. Vogel and K. Fischer, *Diodori bibliotheca historica*, 5 vols. (repr. Stuttgart 1964).

[73] M. West, *loc.cit.*

[74] *e.g.* Proclus, *op.cit.*, 71; 165-171.

[75] J. Clay, *op.cit.*, p. 131.

ἐστι τὸ πρᾶγμα 428e2) – is, according to Plato, entirely objective, because there is at least a class of names in human language that is borrowed from the divine language, where word is the result of the perfect knowledge of the gods. There is such a class of names in the human language, which concern the divine:

> 'but we are most likely to find the correct name in the nature of the eternal and absolute (περὶ τὰ ἀεὶ ὄντα καὶ πεφυκότα); for there the names ought to have been given with the greatest care, and perhaps some of them were given by a power more divine (ὑπὸ θειοτέρας δυνάμεως) than that of men'
>
> 397b9ff.

These divine names are totally correct, whereas human names can vary depending on the extent of their 'correctness' and are more or less 'correct'. It should be noted that Plato's hypothesis of the correctness of names has resulted in three important statements. First, whether the name is 'correct' or not by no means depends on its phonetic representation (393bff); rather Plato holds the theory that the correctness of names is conditioned by our comprehension or interpretation of a thing, *i.e.* if a man rightly understands the nature of a thing, he will call it by a better name than one who does not. This 'interpretative' aspect of the notion of correctness is better seen in two passages, which in fact contain the core of Plato's concept of a 'divine name':

> 'for the name of Zeus is exactly like a sentence; we divide it into two parts, and some of us use one part, other the other: for some call him Ζῆνα and others Δία; but the two in combination express the nature of the god (δηλοῖ τὴν φύσιν τοῦ θεοῦ), which is just what we said a name should be able to do'.
>
> 396a2ff

Thus, Plato derives the Greek phoneme 'Zeus' from ζῆν (life) and δ᾽ ὅν (through whom this life was given); but this is what he calls the 'second type of correctness' (δεύτερος τρόπος ὀρθότητος) and the extent of this 'expression of the nature' should not be understood as an absolute epistemological manifestation of essence, because to be more correct:

> '... since of the gods we know nothing, neither of their names, whatever they may be, which they call themselves for it is clear that they use the true names.'
>
> 400d7ff

Plato holds the theory of *two-types-correctness*. The first concerns our knowledge and is to defend human cognitive capacities from agnosticism; the second is given as negation, which saves the notion of divinity from what V. Lossky rightly called 'epistemological optimism'. As can often be observed in Plato, the discourse culminates in epistemology, and what Plato seems to suggest is a dialectical solution of cognisibility and incognasibility[76]. In a word, the principal function of the Platonic divine name – δηλοῖ τὴν φύσιν τοῦ θεοῦ (396a5f) – does not signify absolute cognition. Rather, name is a vocal imitation (μίμημα φωνῇ) of thing, and as with any kind of imitation, it can be realised

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[76] *cf.* Proclus, *op.cit.*, 5: '[What Plato intents to show in the *Cratylus* is that] if it is impossible to unite simultaneously knowledge and lack of knowledge (γνῶσιν καὶ ἄγνοιαν), it is also impossible to unite two types of rhetoric, for one does not know the good (τὰ ἀγαθά), while the other does'.– also *v. op.cit.* 6 – 8. In *In. Crat.*, 7 Proclus also emphasises that Plato intends to give the *dialectical* theory of name, and points out the connection between the *Cratylus* and the theory of dialectic given in the *Parmenides*: 'Likewise in the Parmenides, where Plato, describing the universal dialectic, did not expose it separately but together with the theory of being (ἀλλὰ μετὰ τῆς τῶν ὄντων θεωρίας παρέδωκεν), now he explains the theory of the correctness of names together with the teaching of the nature of things (μετὰ τῆς τῶν πραγμάτων ἐπιστήμης)'.

with different degrees of success. Therefore, this imitation cannot provide us with a perfect knowledge of thing:

> 'It will [...] seem ridiculous that things are made manifest (κατάδηλα γιγνόμενα) through imitation in letters and syllable'
>
> *Ibid.*

The correctness of names is therefore not merely phonetic imitation, and although names imitate things, this imitation is different from what can be found in art (music or painting 423d).

§ I.1.6 Plato's attack on ultra-naturalist theory

Having discussed the theory of name-maker and the Homeric doctrine of the divine and human language, the disputants, *viz*. Cratylus and Socrates reach the very core of the naturalist doctrine. They both agree that all names are to some certain extant imitations (μίμημα) of things, but Cratylus disagrees that there can be a different degree of correctness, so that some names will be true, while others will be untrue:

> 'I think, Socrates, their function is to instruct, and this is the simple truth, that he who knows the names knows also the things named'
>
> 435d4-6

To Cratylus all names are correct on account of their correspondence with the nature of things; those names which are obviously false or abused, are to be classified as 'not names at all'. The name-maker, he considers, was perfect or even divine, and his knowledge of the nature of things was undoubtedly

perfect. Consequently, the words of the language he provided people with are originally perfect, whereas the latest modifications made by men have spoiled this perfection. He formulates from this premise a general method of philosophical investigation; man can only reach the knowledge of things by finding the 'correct name' and considering the nature of any particular thing through this name.

In order to counter these statements, Socrates seems, remarkably, to adopt some value suggestions close to the position of Hermogenes. First, he argues that imitation, which was the basic principle of how the name-maker invented words, on no account designates the *perfect representation of essence*; otherwise, the difference between name and thing would disappear:

> 'Surely, Cratylus, the effect produced by the names upon the things of which they are the names would be ridiculous, if they were to be entirely like them in every respect. For everything would be duplicated, and no one could tell in any case which was the real thing and which the name.'
>
> 433d6-11

Secondly, Plato shows that it is pointless to insist that name can be the source of perfect knowledge of essence; otherwise, what could be the source of knowledge for the lawgiver, if he was a first inventor of speech? As a result, Plato proposes that there is a need to find another criterion of correctness, and that it must be foreign to names. Only this criterion can help us tell the 'correct' name from the 'incorrect'.

§ I.1.7 Philosophy of name as a special case of the general dialectic

If names *per se* cannot be regarded as an adequate source of knowledge, what is such a source? If the lawgiver or name-maker received his knowledge of things by an immediate inference from the things themselves, we should look for the criterion of correctness in the things themselves:

> 'How realities are to be learned or discovered is perhaps too great a question for you or me to determine; but it is worthwhile to have reached even this conclusion, that they are to be learned and sought for, not from names, but much better through themselves than through names'
>
> 439b4-9

In what follows, Plato nonetheless tries to give an answer to this 'great question'. Before scrutinising names in order to reach knowledge of things, he suggests that we formulate what knowledge (ἡ γνῶσις) is. Hence, he attacks the concept of flux that is used in Heraclitean-style theorising, because to adopt the principle of absolute instability in the sphere of epistemology inevitably leads to the negation of any kind of knowledge:

> 'But we cannot even say that there is any knowledge, if all things are changing and nothing remains fixed'
>
> 440a6f.

This answer is a typical Platonic dialectical conundrum[77], which, however, was left unclear. If the knowledge of things must not be derived from names even if they are recognised as images (εἰκών) of things, but from things

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77 А. Лосев, *Очерки*..., p. 416: A. Losev notes the similarity between the dénouement of the *Cratylus* and the *Theaetetus* 181c – 183c – the dialectic of immobility and motion.

themselves, our knowledge to a great extent depends on the *mode of being of things*. What, therefore, is this mode? Plato turns to the notion of the coming-to-be of things and examines the cardinal principle of the Heraclitean School – universal flux. Although Plato conceives all things as everlastingly coming-to-be, he persists in assuming that this coming-to-be is only possible in the presence of something *that is* coming-to-be; this is everlasting stability and immutability. Moreover, there must be an immutable aspect of things that exists whether it is possible for us either to *know* or to *name* them or, which is the same, to cause our comprehension of things in this name; otherwise, how we can name something that is everlastingly passing away?

It has been pointed out that Proclus repeatedly underlines the dialectical intention of the dialogue and its irreducibility to a simple exposition of the language theory. In his opinion, general Platonic dialectic is the key to understanding the *Cratylus*, and as far as can be observed from the fragments that have come down to us, Proclus evolves this idea in the course of the first sixteen chapters. His main concern is to demonstrate that Plato intends to give a dialectical theory of name, and points out the inner dependence between the *Cratylus* and the most fundamental dialectic of ἕν and ἕτερον given in the *Parmenides*:

> '[Proclus says that] likewise in the Parmenides, where Plato, describing the universal dialectic, did not expound it separately but together with the theory of being (ἀλλὰ μετὰ τῆς τῶν ὄντων θεορίας παρέδωκεν), he now explains the theory of the correctness of names together

with the teaching on the nature of things (μετὰ τῆς τῶν πραγμάτων ἐπιστήμης)'[78]

'[Proclus says that] that this dialogue (the *Cratylus*) makes us competent in the [theory] of the correctness of names, and therefore, that one who intends to become a dialectician (τὸν μέλλοντα εἶναι διαλεκτικὸν) has to begin [his studies] from this theory'[79]

One might think that Proclus exaggerates his description of the *Cratylus*. However, the explanation given of Proclus represents an interesting interpretation of the final part of the *Cratylus*, which can be briefly formulated as follows. Things have nonfluid, immutable essences, which Plato calls the αὐτό of things (439c-d); This nonfluid essence remains everlastingly the same, as opposed to the infinite and numerous attributes (features) of things which are undergoing change (440a-e). The immutability of essence is what makes possible our knowledge of things, although it would be a grave error either to exaggerate its magnitude or to be optimistic about it: the dialectic of γνῶσιν and ἄγνοιαν in Proclus *op.cit.*, 5). The conclusion of Proclus therefore, is also dialectical; he argues that the opposition between φύσις-theory and συνθήκη-

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[78] Proclus, *op.cit.*, 7.
[79] *Ibid.*, 6.

theory is an artificial imbalance[80], and suggests the following dialectical solution.

> 'Names which have natural origins have also a share of convention, and names which are conventional have also a partially natural origin; hence one can say that all names are natural and all are conventional, and that some are natural and some are conventional'[81]

What we have to see, therefore, in the *Cratylus*, is an attempt to give a dialectical teaching on names. According to Proclus' interpretation, Plato attempts to distinguish phonetic and semantic strata of names and to balance two opposite theories of language. It was a first step, which fully explains the imperfection of his terminology.

Indeed, there were quite a few writers amongst Christian theologians who were aware of the sophisticated agenda discussed in the *Cratylus*. A traditional association of the φύσις-theory with the name of Plato seems to be determined by the so called the *Seventh letter* – a very simple text where the natural ontological connexion between name and thing is postulated as something that is taken for granted.

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[80] *v.* W. Allen, *op.cit.*, p. 52ff. and his remarks on the similar account of Ammonius, given in his *In Aristotelis librum de interpretatione commentaries*, 28ff. This passage should also be compared with Proclus' teaching on the four types modes of the φύσις-theory of names given in *op.cit.*, 17; 16-23: 'But Socrates states that names exist by nature in to the fourth sense, as being the products of a knowledgeable intellect (ὡς διανοίας μὲν ἐπιστήμονος ἔκγονα) and a soul endowed with imagination (ψυχῆς φανταζομένης) – not [as generations] of a natural physical urge (καὶ οὐχὶ ὀρέξεως φυσικῆς) – and that in the beginning they were, as far as possible, appropriately imposed. And according to the *eidos*, all names are similar and have one meaning, and exist by nature, whereas materially (κατὰ δὲ τὴν ὕλην) they differ from each other and exist by convention (καὶ θέσει ἐστίν). Because eidetically (κατὰ μὲν γὰρ τὸ εἶδος), they correspond to things, whilst materially they differ from each other'.

[81] Proclus, *op.cit.*, 12.

The above-given analysis demonstrates that the original philosophical content of the *Cratylus* is in every respect much more complex in comparison with its depiction in early Christian writings. It seems that as so often when parallels can be traced between theological ideas about human language and the dialogue, there are only a few Christian authors who appear to have good knowledge of its philosophical agenda: Clement, Origen, Eusebius of Caesarea, and Gregory of Nyssa. Later on I shall show this reflection more precisely; at this stage, I have to mention, however, that the way the *Cratylus* was comprehended and interpreted varied dramatically. For Clement of Alexandria, who seems to be the closest follower of Philo, the *Cratylus* is his sole, principle, reliable philosophical source for the treatment of linguistic issues, together with the book of Genesis; in the opinion of Gregory of Nyssa the problem of language that emerges in the dialogue is posed in a totally wrong way! Eusebius clearly distinguished two main theories discussed by the disputants, and agreed with the opinion held by Cratylus himself; Gregory, however, decisively rejects them both: in his view both propositions were nothing but nonsense (ἡ φλυαρία).

As the name of Aristotle was often mentioned in relation to his linguistic views, let us have a look at his ideas.

I.2 Aristotle's θέσις-theory

Aristotle's account of human language, its form and content, cannot be considered as substantially new or independent of other conventional theories that existed long before him. However, the contribution of his scientific investigations in this area is immense in every respect. First, he has undertaken both an elaboration of the conventional theory, and the elimination from it of a number of extremes; second, despite his critical attacks on his master, on the most fundamental points he strongly depended on him. The significance of the proposed theory for ancient scholarship can scarcely be overestimated: suffice to mention that the notorious medieval controversy over universals was stimulated by the translation by Boëthius of the famous Porphyrius' *Isagoge* to the *Categoriae*. As for the Hellenistic era, Aristotelian investigations into logic, rhetoric, and grammar as well as peripatetic philosophy also played a crucial, but significantly different rôle.

Unlike his master, who left a whole treatise on the problem of the interrelationship between names and essences, he *did not* write a special work on this subject. Even though it is not without scholarly controversy, his position can nevertheless be satisfactorily reconstructed from numerous passages. The aim of this section is to examine Aristotle's conventionalist doctrine, as well as certain inferences he made in order to expound his theory of names in the context of his general system. It should be noted that Aristotle's theory of

names has been substantially clarified since a number of thorough investigations have been undertaken from the middle of the twentieth century onwards[82]. In this small section, however, I shall only make a brief sketch of the major philosophical issues.

Inasmuch as the Aristotelian theory of names touches upon his ontology, such an important topic as his fundamental disagreement with Plato cannot be passed over in silence. In particular, I shall argue that the difference in the method of philosophising has had some applications to the formal linguistic position of Aristotle and to some of his grammar works, whereas in the most essential questions like the ontological aspect of his theory, his teaching on τὸ τί ἦν εἶναι of things, a conviction of the adequacy of language, and so forth, he shows signs of a Platonic position; and this is why the Aristotelian τὸ τί ἦν εἶναι later on appreas in such Platonised theologian as Clement. Then, an attempt will be made to demonstrate how this dependence on Plato caused some difficulties for Aristotle, and was profoundly reflected in his theory of names. Finally, I shall make a few remarks about the attitude of some relevant later writers to Aristotle's account of names.

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[82] *e.g.* M. Larkin, *op.cit.*; И. Перельмутер, *Аристотель*, *ИДУ*: **Древний мир**, pp. 156-179; D. Charles, ***Aristotle on meaning and essence*** (Oxford 2000).

§ I.2.1 Aristotle on Platonism.

The question of the relationship between the systems of Plato and Aristotle is a sophisticated one, because any discussion of this issue needs to take some account of both theories, each of which may be reasonably questioned. Nevertheless, a brief examination of the problem in this section is not as arbitrary as one might suppose at first sight; as we shall see shortly, the Aristotelian teaching on names has definite ontological implications. Therefore, it is fitting that our description of his linguistic account ought to proceed from a brief treatment of such a fundamental problem as his disagreement with Plato.

Aristotle's critique of Plato and his theory of Ideas, and later on essences, names *etc.*, can be better understood if we first regard their *methodological* disagreement[83]. By confining his attention to the method of *description*, Aristotle is often too self-confident and incorrect in his criticism of Plato[84], whereas the latter has not left any apologetic works[85].

To begin with, Aristotle's attack on the Platonic theory of Ideas (mainly represented in the thirteenth and fourteenth books of the *Metaphysica*, and in

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[83] А. Лосев, *Критика платонизма у Аристотеля* in *Миф, Число, Сущность* (Moscow 1994). It should be indicated that in this passage I adopt the conceptual accounts given by A. Losev in his work *Aristotle's critique of Platonism*; they are relatively close to what was held later by H. Cherniss, and substantially different from that suggested by G. Owen and recently reconsidered by G. Fine, in her *On Ideas* (Oxford 1993).

[84] *v.* the analysis of their teachings on *Number* (А. Лосев, *ibid.*, p. 541f.) and *Ideas* (Лосев, А. *ibid.*, pp. 541-554) In English scholarship the view that Aristotle purposely misinterprets Plato was held by H. Cherniss in his *Aristotle's Criticism of Plato and Academy* (Baltimore 1944). The question whether Aristotle is a reliable interpreter of Plato is arguable; *v.* an interesting inquiry of this dispute made by D. House, *Did Aristotle understand Plato? v* http://www.mun.ca/animus/1996vol1/house.htm.

[85] G. Owen, however, considered the *Parmenides* as a response of Plato to Aristotle's attack.

the short essay *De ideis,* which has come down to us in substantial fragments from the commentary of Alexander of Aphrodisiensis[86]) seems to represent the most fundamental disagreement between the disciple and his master. Generally, the arguments of Aristotle given in these fragments can be conditionally divided into two groups; the first one attacks the Platonic doctrine of *Ideas* as such, whilst the second concerns *Ideas* in their ontological interplay with things or abstract notions[87]. The following passage is one of the classical examples of Aristotle's contention concerning the Platonic theory of Ideas; he argues that:

> '...it would seem impossible that substance (ἡ οὐσία) and that whose substance it is should exist apart; how, therefore, could the Ideas, being the substances of things, exist apart (ὥστε πῶς ἂν αἱ ἰδέαι οὐσίαι τῶν πραγμάτων οὖσαι χωρὶς)?'
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> *Met.* 1079b 36 – 1080a 2[88]

Then, Aristotle makes reference to the *Phaedo* (probably, to 100a-105c), which, in his view, demonstrates a self-contradiction of the Platonic concept:

> 'In the *Phaedo* the case is stated in this way, that the Forms are causes both of being (τοῦ εἶναι) and of becoming (τοῦ γίγνεσθαι). Yet though the Forms exist, still things do not come into being, unless there is something to originate movement; and many other things come into being (*e.g.* a house or a ring) of which they say there are no Forms. Clearly therefore even the things of which they say there

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[86] Alexander, *In Aristotelis Metaphysica commentaria,* 79.3 – 85.13 (ed. M. Hayduck, *Alexandri Aphrodisiensis in Aristotelis metaphysica commentaria* in ***Commentaria in Aristotelem Graeca 1*** (Berlin 1891): *v.* the text of the *De Ideis* in two recensions published by G. Fine with her own English translation (*op.cit.,* pp. 2 – 19).

[87] А. Лосев, *ibid.,* p. 553f.

[88] Transl. of W. D. Ross *Aristotle's Metaphysics* (Oxford 1928))

> are Forms can both be and come into being owing to such causes as produce the things just mentioned, and not owing to the Forms'.
>
> *Met.* 1082a 2ff

The question of what Aristotle means by these *Ideas* is the key to understanding his attack on Plato. In fact, the Platonic doctrine of *Ideas* is a fundamental constituent of Aristotle's own system; in spite of his seeming critique, he does not refute the very *notion* of *Ideas*. Thus, for example, he speaks about the essences of things and their senses, which by no means depend on accidental qualities; furthermore, such fundamental notion of his philosophy as the the most Divine Thought (ὁ θειότατος νοῦς)[89] is deemed 'the eidos of eidē'[90] and sometimes even – 'the location of *Ideas*'[91]. Aristotle, as is generally agreed, argues that the substance of a thing is inseparable from it:

> Therefore the Forms will be substance. But the same names indicate substance in this and in the ideal world (or what will be the meaning of saying that there is something apart from the particulars – the one over many?).
>
> *Met.* 1079a 28-33.

But it would be a grave error to share this interpretation of the Platonic concept, because the teaching of Plato on the interrelationship between *eidē* and things is represented *dialectically*: *Eidē* participates in things and simultaneously

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[89] *Met.*1074b 15f: Τὰ δὲ περὶ τὸν νοῦν ἔχει τινὰς ἀπορία δοκεῖ μὲν γὰρ εἶναι τῶν φαινομένων θειότατον.
[90] *De anima,* 432a 1-3: καὶ ὁ νοῦς εἶδος εἰδῶν καὶ ἡ αἴσθησις εἶδος αἰσθητῶν. (ed. W. Ross, ***Aristotle,*** *De anima* (Oxford 1961)).
[91] *ibid.,* 429a 27-28: ... καὶ εὖ δὴ οἱ λέγοντες τὴν ψυχὴν εἶναι τόπον εἰδῶν.

does not. As A. Losev points out, the Aristotelian concept of thing, compared with Plato, is manifestly *naturalistic* and imbalanced:

> For Plato thing and Idea are both distinguished and identical; their interplay is conceived as the inference of one notion from another and *vice versa, i.e.* to him thing and Idea are equally dialectical categories. According to Aristotle, however, thing and Idea are also distinguished and identical, but their interplay is conceived as an inference of idea from thing[92].

So, it is fitting that for Aristotelian-style philosophising such dialectical formulas as we have indicated in the *Cratylus* (and can be found in the *Sophista, Timæus,* and *Parmenides* in far better form) should be regarded as foreign, because of the difference in the method of philosophising[93]. Logically, and this is an important postulate of his edifice, Aristotle proceeds from the principle of *bivalence,* and thereby from the theory of the syllogism with its detailed and specifically worked out terminology. Schematically, his reasoning can be illustrated as follows: either *Idea* precedes thing (or notion) and, therefore, is ontologically pre-existent of it (he wrongly ascribes this opinion to Plato), or thing precedes *Idea,* as 'primary' substance precedes 'secondary' substance – *tertium non datur*. As a result of the controversy, which M. Heidegger somewhere neatly called γιγαντομαχία περὶ τῆς οὐσίας, Aristotle has merely misinterpreted the Platonic dialectic of thing and Idea, and ascribed to Plato a number of absurdities (*e.g.* his accusations that the Platonic theory of Ideas is

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92 А. Лосев, *Античный космос и современная наука,* in ***Бытие, Имя, Космос*** (Moscow 1993), p. 468f.

93 *v.* J. Evans, *Aristotle's concept of dialectic* (Cambridge 1977) pp. 17-30.

the synthesis of the Heraclitean concept of flux and Socratic philosophising[94]). This divergence of approaches of the two philosophers, *viz*. dialectical and logical (*apodeictic*) has received a defining value in their theories of name.

§ I.2.2 Aristotelian doctrine of names

As language was one of the many subjects which strongly interested Aristotle, the question of the nature of names is not just one object amongst many of his studies. Also, as was shown by the research of M. Larkin, his interest in language is far from being only *linguistic*; compared with such issues as his theory of signification, philosophical proof, judgement, and types of reasoning, the rôle of his philological inquiries is subsidiary. Unlike Plato, Aristotle argues against the naturalist theory proposed *verbi causa* by Cratylus; he puts forward some interesting considerations about the 'symbolical' nature of human speech. This is from the preamble of the second book of the *Organon*:

> 'Spoken words are the symbols of mental experience and written words are the symbols of spoken words[95]. Just as all men have not the same writing, so all men have not the same speech sounds, but the mental experiences, which these directly symbolise, are the same for all, as also are those things of which our experiences are the images'.

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[94] *Met.*, 1076b 6ff.

[95] Ἔστι μὲν οὖν τὰ ἐν τῇ φωνῇ τῶν ἐν τῇ ψυχῇ παθημάτων σύμβολα, καὶ τὰ γραφόμενα τῶν ἐν τῇ φωνῇ.

De interp. 16a 3ff[96]

With this straightforward account Aristotle is known as a proponent of the conventionalist theory:

> The limitation 'by convention' (τὸ δὲ κατὰ συνθήκην) was introduced because nothing is by nature (φύσει) a noun or name, for it would become only a symbol (ἀλλ᾽ ὅταν γένηται σύμβολον); inarticulate sounds (οἱ ἀγράμματοι ψόφοι), such as those which brutes produce, are significant, yet none of these constitutes a noun[97].
>
> *De interp*. 16a 26ff

Even though the *De Interpretatione* is conceived as an *'apodeictic'* investigation, he has in mind the debate taken up by Plato[98]. W. Allen indicates that Aristotle manifestly refutes some of fundamental statements of the *Cratylus*[99], and notes an interesting parallel between *Crat*. 388b 13f. and *De interp*. 16b 33 – 17a 2:

> SOCRATES: 'A name is, then, an instrument of teaching and separating reality[100]'.
>
> 'But while every sentence has meaning, though <u>not as an instrument of nature</u> but, as we observed, by convention, not all can be called propositions[101]'.

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[96] Transl. of H. Cooke (*De interpretatione*, ed. Minio-Paluello, L. *Aristotelis categoriae et liber de interpretatione* (Oxford 1949), pp. 49-72.
[97] *cf. De sensu et sensibilibus*, 437a 12ff.: ὁ γὰρ λόγος αἴτιός ἐστι τῆς μαθήσεως ἀκουστὸς ὤν, οὐ καθ᾽ αὑτὸν ἀλλὰ κατὰ συμβεβηκός· ἐξ ὀνομάτων γὰρ σύγκειται, τῶν δ᾽ ὀνομάτων ἕκαστον σύμβολόν ἐστιν. (ed. W. Ross, *Aristotle. Parva naturalia* (Oxford 1955).
[98] C. Whitaker, Aristotle's De interpretatione: contradiction and dialectic (Oxford 1996), p. 12.
[99] W. Allen, *op.cit.*, p. 41.
[100] ΣΩ. Ὄνομα ἄρα διδασκαλικόν τί ἐστιν ὄργανον καὶ διακριτικὸν τῆς οὐσίας ὥσπερ κερκὶς ὑφάσματος.
[101] ...ἔστι δὲ λόγος ἅπας μὲν σημαντικός, οὐχ ὡς ὄργανον δέ, ἀλλ᾽ ὥσπερ εἴρηται κατὰ συνθήκην.

Furthermore, almost every new assertion that appears in the beginning of the *De interpretatione* is set off against Platonism: names *per se, id est* while they are regarded separately, cannot be either 'correct' or 'incorrect'; the sense appears when words are set in a sentence[102]. Similarly, he argues against 'etymologies' as a possible way of attaining the truth, and affirms that not one part of a noun (*i.e.* 'letters') has any meaning apart from a word taken as a whole[103]. In the *Ethica Nicomachea* he even compares words with money: both came into being by convention[104], people can easily change (μεταβαλεῖν) the names of things[105]; and Aristotle seems to suggest that this μεταβαλεῖν will not have a profound impact upon our reasoning and discourse.

In the course of his studies on grammar and rhetoric, Aristotle does not show much interest in the crucial problem of the nexus between name and thing, for he has a different agenda: the sphere of his scientific investigation is with phonetics, theory of parts of speech, syntax, *etc.* Even though it is not without serious errors, his remarks on the various phenomena of language are remarkable for his day: he laid the foundations of European linguistics, and suggested avenues for further investigation in grammar. This important section of Aristotle's teaching on language is nowadays thoroughly scrutinised and we

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[102] *De interp.*, 16a 13 – 18.
[103] *De interp.*, 16a 20 – 21.
[104] *Eth. Nic.*, 1133a29: καὶ διὰ τοῦτο τοὔνομα ἔχει νόμισμα, ὅτι οὐ φύσαι ἀλλὰ νόμῳ ἐστι. (ed. I. Bywater, *Aristotelis ethica Nicomachea* (Oxford 1962)).
[105] *Eth. Nic., loc.cit.*, 31.

ought not to deal with it here[106]. Our main concern must be with one intriguing aspect of his account of human speech, which reveals some inconsistency in his *a prima facie* integral concept.

As we have just seen, to him, the naturalist hypothesis is totally wrong and he categorically rejects it; at the same time, Aristotle's own conventionalist position is dissimilar from, and much more sophisticated than, the 'theory' held by Hermogenes and demolished by Socrates, *i.e.* Plato. Hence, for example, excluding some passages of the *Ethica Nicomachea* he did not insist that names of things are *arbitrarily* attached (*cf. Crat.* 385a), or that we could interchange 'the names of man and horse', and so on – it seems unnecessary to adduce all the absurdities uttered by Hermogenes. The faculty of speech plays a central rôle in his epistemology, and this is seen from the fact that he attempts to *attain knowledge of reality through language*[107]. Unlike some occasional remarks of Plato (*e.g.* the *Seventh letter*), Aristotle is convinced of *the absolute adequacy of speech to convey thoughts*: regulations of thought and regulations of logical reasoning are the same. In the treatise *Sophistici elenchi* this issue was specifically elucidated:

> 'No real distinction, such as some people propose, exists between arguments used against word (πρὸς τοὔνομα λόγους) and those used against thought (πρὸς τὴν διάνοιαν); for it is absurd to suppose that some arguments are used against word and others used against thought, and not the same in both cases'

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[106] *v.* for details M. Larkin, *op.cit.*, pp. 25 – 43., R. Robins, *A short history*..., pp. 27 – 36, amongst recent – R. Harris, & T. Taylor, *op.cit.*, pp. 20 – 35 (on the problem of metaphor), G. Lepschy, *op.cit.*, vol. 2, p. 29ff.

[107] M. Larkin, *op.cit.*, p. 11, pp. 34 – 44.

The main idea of his argumentation is that the truth (a positive knowledge of reality) can *in potentia* be attained and proved by philosophical reasoning, if only this reasoning does not break the laws of rational discourse; otherwise, the conclusion will be false. Overall, Aristotle appears so optimistic in this belief that one might compare his enthusiasm to some conclusions of Cratylus.

We may now answer the question of the grounds of the illustrated self-contradiction between his statements from the *De Interpretatione* and the *Ethica Nicomachea* on the one hand, and the accounts given in the *Sophistici elenchi* and the *Metaphysica* on the other. To Aristotle, as many scholars have shown, the main evidence against the naturalist hypothesis is based on the fact that in different languages the same things or notions have different names. This argument was not very strong and several suggestions were proposed (*e.g.* the theory of the gradual corruption of language mentioned in the *Cratylus*[109]). But the reason why he rates this idea so highly is his poor (if at all!) knowledge of 'barbarian' languages. It remains rather bizarre that such a solid, self-confident, and encyclopaedic a brain as Aristotle's, who devoted such great energy to language studies, should have the most superficial acquaintance with foreign

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[108] *Sophistici elenchi,* (ed. W. Ross, *Aristotelis topica et sophistici elenchi* (Oxford 1970): *v.* whole discourse on the refutation of this sophist's trick: *Soph. elench.,* ch. 10 *ad.fin.* English transl of E. S. Forster (***Loeb classical library*** 400 (London 1955)).

[109] *cf.* Proclus, *op.cit.,* 16, 45ff (an argument against the fourth *epicheirema* of Democritus).

languages[110]. Thus, he believed, for example, that the linguistic structure of all languages was the same, whereas the difference is reduced exclusively to the sound structure of names[111] and if one word in Greek has several meanings (*e.g.* Greek ἀρχή), the 'barbarian' analogue was similarly presumed to designate both of them (*e.g.*, 'beginning' and 'sovereignty'). In his opinion, therefore, every nation has invented its own sound for each thing, and each *eidos* has been designated by its own phoneme; this is evidently the foundation for his conventionalism, uttered in the *De Interpretatione*.

These errant conclusions were by no means random errors, and played a crucial rôle in his concept of the epístemological value of rational discourse. In spite of the formal refutation of the natural theory of names in the *De interpretatione*, Aristotle deems logical reasoning to be an instrument for the cognition of essences; for example, he was bold enough to claim that homonyms designate related substances, and a similarity in naming implies a commonality of essences[112]. The fact that the Aristotelian concept of names can hardly fail to recall some naturalist statements proposed in the *Cratylus* has been a difficulty for scholars at all times; one of the commonly held explanations of this puzzle is the supposition that Aristotle altered his views[113],

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110 *cf.* Ammonius, *In Aristotelis librum De interpretatione commentarius*, 36, 1ff, who in treating a similar problem shows the acquaintance with Coptic.

111 Тронский, *И. Проблемы языка в античной науке* (Leningrad 1934), p. 24.

112 *Cat.* 1a 2ff. (*Categoriae*, ed. Minio-Paluello, *Aristotelis categoriae et liber de interpretatione*, (Oxford 1949), pp. 3-45).

113 *v.*, for instance, D. Charles, *'Aristotle on names and their signification'* in S. Everson (ed.) *Language*, p. 37.

but some ancient commentators, as we shall see shortly, were either more radical or very tolerant in their judgements.

Strictly speaking, Aristotle's theory can scarcely be identified as purely conventionalist, which Plato illustrates by the example of Hermogenes, and when words are deemed to *be totally irrelevant to reality*. In order to deduce what Aristotle is referring to here, we may fittingly hark back to the account of his disagreement with Plato *supra*. This specificity of Aristotle's concept of name and its ontological nexus with the essence of things is a result of his basic philosophical premise that uttered logical discourse can perfectly convey or reveal correct and disciplined thinking. This idea also left a deep imprint on his logic, theory of proof. Unlike Plato, he defines dialectic as *a theory of potentially possible or probable inferences,* which by contrast to the theory of syllogisms (a theory of all compulsory inferences), is merely a continuation and development of a general science of proof, which in turn is crowned by rhetoric. As can be frequently observed, grammar, logic, dialectic, and rhetoric are regarded as the links of a chain, none of which is *principally* distinguished.

His logic is based on his theory of being, and this is a basis of the ontological implications of his conventionalist theory of names. To exemplify this dependence, it is interesting to look at his teaching on τὸ τί ἦν εἶναι[114], which has important applications to many of his concepts, including the theory

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[114] This well-known term of Aristotle's for a typical form of answer to a question (*cf.* ὅθεν ἡ ἀρχὴ τῆς κινήσεως, τὸ οὗ ἕνεκα, τὸ τί ἐστι) was quite properly translated into Latin as *quidditas*.

of names. It should be noted that despite the fact that the notion of τὸ τί ἦν εἶναι enjoyed extreme popularity amongst Neo-Platonist and peripatetic commentators, early Christian writers did not often employ it[115]. Aristotle's own definition of τὸ τί ἦν εἶναι is not particularly clear:

> 'And first let us make some linguistic (λογικῶς)[116] remarks about it. The essence of each thing (τὸ τί ἦν εἶναι) is what it is said to be *propter se* (καθ' αὑτό).
>
> *Met.* 1029b 13-14

Thus, τὸ τί ἦν εἶναι of a thing is *what is* said about a thing, it is *an object* of (philosophical) definition, a somewhat semantic stratum, which is distinguished from the thing, taken as a whole:

> 'The formula, therefore, in which the term itself is not present but its meaning is expressed, this is the formula of the essence (τὸ τί ἦν εἶναι) of each thing'
>
> *Met.* 1029b 19-21

Further, τὸ τί ἦν εἶναι, as the semantic totality of a thing is manifested in its name (ὄνομα); this τὸ τί ἦν εἶναι is something without which a thing stops being itself. Elsewhere Aristotle gives a remarkable clarification: he teaches that if we take away τὸ τί ἦν εἶναι of house *from the house*, the building will be

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[115] *cf.* however, those who *ex professo* had to deal with philosophy; *e.g.* Philo Judæus, *Quod deus sit immutailis*, 167.4; Cement Alexandrinus, *Stromaties*, viii, 6:17,4.3; viii, 6:18,2.3; also Joannes Philoponus and τὸ τί ἦν εἶναι in the *De aernitate mundi* (*e.g.* 25;8, 26;8, 32;22, 33;25, 34;4,11).
[116] The translation of the λογικῶς as *'linguistic'* is quite risky; A. Losev argues that the λογικῶς here means neither logical nor rational but *'from the standpoint of sense'* (*ibid.*, p. 536).

turned into 'pile of stones and planking'; in other words, τὸ τί ἦν εἶναι is what definition is to define (*Met*. 1030a 6f).

The most significant problem for him was in modern linguistic terms the polysemanticism of nouns[117]. In order to overcome it, he applied his logical method and reasoned that every name *must have only one real meaning;* the words of our language can have several meanings, but first, they are not equal; secondly, a logical analysis can reveal the most profound one; this is what he is exemplifying in *Met*. 1006a 28ff:

> '...if 'man' has one meaning, let this be 'two-footed animal'; by having one meaning I understand this: if 'man' means ***X***, then if ***A*** is a man ***X*** will be what 'being a man' means for him'.

But as soon as τὸ τί ἦν εἶναι of the name 'man' can be only one, the ultimate and the most fundamental meaning of 'man' is also only one:

> 'For instance, we might say that 'man' has not one meaning but several, one of which would have one definition, *viz.* 'two-footed animal', while there might be also several other definitions if only they were limited in number; for a peculiar name might be assigned to each of the definitions. If, however, they were not limited but one were to say that the word has an infinite number of meanings, obviously reasoning would be impossible; for not to have one meaning is to have no meaning, and if words have no meaning our reasoning with one another, and indeed with ourselves, has been annihilated; for it is impossible to think of anything if we do not think of one thing; but if this is possible, one name might be assigned to this thing'

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[117] This topic is well clarified by I. Perelmuter (И. Перельмутер, *Aristotle*. p. 167), who being a professional linguist, draws interesting parallels between Aristotelian and modern language studies.

One might note that the notion of τὸ τί ἦν εἶναι is much more sophisticated than as appears in our relatively simplified example. Thus, he classifies various semantic modifications of it (τὸ τί ἦν εἶναι and τὸ τί ἐστι), distinguishes it from essence (οὐσία) and matter, equates it with *eidos*, but in our case there is no need to explore it in depth. The point that is much more relevant for our examination is clear: in the most well considered works of his *philosophical* investigations, Aristotle arrives at a number of Platonic conclusions. His idea that a name manifests the unique τὸ τί ἦν εἶναι of a thing and, therefore, that a name must have only one ultimate and basic meaning (and is a foundation and possibility for philosophical reasoning), can hardly fail to recall the teaching on the '*correctness*' of names[118].

We have seen that Plato in the *Cratylus* experiments with two opposite concepts: Socrates refutes both extremists and suggests a possible synthesis. Although Aristotle declares himself a radical conventionalist, a more detailed examination reveals that he was faced with the same difficulties as his master. Armed with dialectic, which in contrast to Aristotle, Plato considered as an ultimate method of philosophical investigation, he could synthesise two extreme theories (as 'does' Socrates in the *Cratylus*). For Aristotle, as Proclus

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[118] Clearly, τὸ τί ἦν εἶναι is just a major aspect of the Aristotelian *name-thought-thing* conception. Two diametrically opposite solutions, are given *verbi gratia* in the *De Interpretatione* (names stand for thoughts) and the *Sophistici elenchi* (names stand for things), respectively. This inconsistency has been heavily debated in both ancient and modern scholarship, and several interpretations have been proposed; a good discussion of modern opinions is found in C. Whitaker (*op.cit.*, pp. 20 – 22), but one might find his attempt to reconcile this contradiction by referring to the ambiguity of the term σύμβολον precarious. (*v. ibid.*, pp. 22 – 25). The supposition of D. Charles that Aristotle in his later works reconsidered some issues seems to be more reliable.

repeatedly points out, dialectic is understood as a craft of dispute[119]; methodologically, he employs logic (which he called *analytics*), which always faces him with one alternative. As a result, he also has to intervene between two theories, but, clearly, he does so less successfully. Perhaps the contradiction that has been noted in his writings is an attempt to work out a balanced doctrine.

§ I.2.3 The self-contradictions in the theory of Aristotle in the light of some ancient interpreters

The thinking of Aristotle was investigated in depth by ancient scholars of all kinds: grammarians, philosophers, and rhetoricians. Andronicus Rhodius, for example, made a study of the order and structure of the *De Interpretatione*. Even though this treatise does not survive, we are told that he pointed out serious contradictions between the teachings on thoughts (νοήματα) given in this work and in the *De Anima*[120], and concluded that one of the works should be recognised as inauthentic.

Proclus, whose numerous remarks on Aristotle deserve special attention, also believed that his main disagreement with Plato lies in the different methods, *viz*. he points out the Aristotelian misinterpretation of dialectic:

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119 Proclus, *op.cit.*, ii, 1 – 5; iii, 1ff; iv *ad.fin.*

120 *Scholia in Aristotelem* (ed. C. Brandis, in *Aristotlelis Opera* (eds. I. Bekker and O. Gigon), iv (Berlin 1961)).

> '[Proclus taught] that the *Cratylus* is a logical and dialectical [treatise], and [it is so] not in the sense of primitive Peripatetic 'dialectical' methods [of analysing] things...'[121]
>
> 'But Peripatetic analytics and its culmination (κεφάλιον) – proof (ἀπόδειξις) – is clear and available for everyone, unless he is completely surrounded by darkness and totally imbued by the waters of Lethe'[122].

In his commentaries on the *Cratylus,* Proclus responds to Aristotle's criticism. Thus, he regards the inconsistency of Aristotle as evidence of his philosophical errors; he specifically refers to the *De Interpretatione* 16a 19ff:

> 'If, according to Aristotle, names are established by invention (θέσει) and they are symbols of things and thoughts (σύμβολα τῶν πραγμάτων καὶ τῶν νοημάνων), he himself should not hold[123] that uttered judgements formed into discourse, ([if we admit] it exists by convention), either correspond to thoughts or this discourse in its significative capacity is neither true nor false. But, being of the substance (οὐσιωδῶς), manifested judgements can be true or false not by convention; therefore, names exist not by convention'[124].

It is intriguing that a similar estimation of the Aristotelian theory of names can be found in some Christian writings. Although one might realise that the following passage is not as distinctive as the professional argumentation of Proclus, the fact that this remark of Socrates Scholasticus on Aristotle's teaching appeared in the context of his narration about Aetius and Eunomius is of special importance: undoubtedly, he implies the Anomean

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121 Proclus, *In Crat.*, ii, 1ff.
122 *ibid.*, ii, 10f.
123 *cf. De interp.*, 17a 2-5.
124 Proclus, *In Crat.*, xlvii, 1–9; *v.* also *ibid.*, xlix.

theory of names. Socrates intends to show the philosophical background of both leaders of Neo-Arianism:

> 'After receiving some very scanty instruction at Alexandria, he departed thence, and arrived at Antioch in Syria, which was his native place, was ordained deacon by Leontins, who was then bishop of that city. Upon this he began to astonish those who conversed with him by the singularity of his discourses. And this he did in dependence on the precepts of Aristotle's *Categories*; there is a book of that name, the scope of which he neither himself perceived, nor had been enlightened on by intercourse with learned persons: so that he was little aware that he was framing fallacious arguments to perplex and deceive himself. For Aristotle had composed this work to exercise the ingenuity of his young disciples, and to confound by subtle arguments the sophists who, affected to deride philosophy. Wherefore the Ephectic academicians, who expound the writings of Plato and Plotinus, censure the vain subtlety which Aristotle has displayed in that book: but Aetius, who never had the advantage of an academical preceptor, adhered to the sophisms of the *Categories*. For this reason he was unable to comprehend how there could be generation without a beginning, and how that which was begotten can be co-eternal with him who begat. In fact, Aetius was a man of so superficial attainments, and so little acquainted with the sacred Scriptures, and so extremely fond of cavilling, a thing which any clown might do, that he had never carefully studied those ancient writers who have interpreted the Christian oracles; wholly rejecting Clemens and Africanus and Origen, men eminent for their information in every department of literature and science'[125]

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[125] Socrates, *Historia ecclesiastica*, ii, 35; *cf.* also 24: 'But those who derived their name from him were subsequently divided into several factions. For first Theophronius, a Cappadocian who had been instructed in the art of disputation by Eunomius, and had acquired a smattering of Aristotle's *Categoriae* and his *De interpretatione*, composed some treatises, which he entitled, '*On the Exercise of the Mind*''. Having, however, drawn down upon himself the reprobation of his own sect, he was ejected as an apostate' (English transl. from *NPNF* ser. ii, vol. ii ed. Ph. Schaff & H. Wace).

Although Socrates in this passage intends to deride the philosophical erudition and competence of Aetius, his witness to common scholarly opinion about Platonic and Aristotelian epistemology is valuable and reliable. As Socrates himself mentions,[126] and as follows from his name *Scholasticus,* he is quite competent to give professional scholarly views. Most probably he expresses an opinion, commonly shared by grammarians and rhetoricians of Constantinople between the end of the fourth and the beginning of the fifth century, *viz.* that Aristotle's works can scarcely satisfy refined scholarly taste, and that his philosophy should be learnt under the supervision of a professional, who can reinterpret and explain what Aristotle really meant. Otherwise, (and this, according to Socrates, happened to the Anomean) the use of Aristotle will result in absurdities and errors.

In order to clarify what this Christian writer means by 'an academical preceptor' and a reliable exegesis of Aristotle, we might briefly examine several passages from Ammonius (*c.* 435 – 517), who left a number of extensive commentaries on Aristotle, and who after a narrow escape from Alexandria to Constantinople[127] (together with his colleague Helladius) used to be a tutor of Socrates Scholasticus.

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[126] *ibid.*, v, 24.
[127] *ibid.*, v, 16.

It is interesting to observe how he industriously attempts to reinterpret some linguistically wrong definitions of Aristotle[128], and in every possible way tries to find an excuse for the subject of his commentaries. His treatment of the notorious naturalist-conventionalist dilemma and a number of problems concerning discrepant expressions of Aristotle is one of the most extensive and simultaneously intricate parts of the treatise. This suggests that to him this dilemma also presented considerable difficulties. Yet Ammonius clearly 'translates' the expressions of the *De Interpretatione* into the terminology of fourth-century scholarship, and he gives a strikingly accurate analysis of Aristotle's arguments[129]. Unfortunately, it is impossible to give his account at length without a special excursus into his philosophical anthropology; in brief, his point is (and he argues that it is what Aristotle conceived) that thoughts (τὰ νοήματα) and things (τὰ πράγματα) exist by nature, whilst vocal sounds or phonemes (αἱ φωναί) and their written equivalents, γράμματα, exist by convention. When, however, he compares the theory of Aristotle to that of Plato, his reasoning runs as follows; first, he distinguishes two types of naturalist theory, and two types of conventionalist theory (34, 20 – 36, 20)[130]:

> 'Some of those who think they are 'by nature' opining that they are products of nature (ὡς φύσεως αὐτὰ οἰόμενοι

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[128] Thus, he 'explains' why Aristotle distinguishes only ὄνομα and ῥῆμα (Ammonius, *op.cit.*, 11,1 – 7), gives patently incomplete teaching on types of sentences (*ibid.*, 16, 1 – 30), *etc.*

[129] *cf. ibid.*, 23, 30 – 31,1.

[130] *cf.* with a more complicated classification of Proclus (*op.cit.*, 17, 1-5), who finds four types of naturalism: '...1) as in organisms – οὐσίαι ὅλαι τε καὶ τὰ μέρη αὐτῶν; 2) as in material substances – ἐνέγειαι καὶ δυνάμεις; 3) 'natural' imitations – shades or mirror-like reflections; and 3) as artificial imitation of a prototype (ἢ ὡς αἱ τεχνηταὶ εἰκόνες ἐοικόνες ἐοικυῖαι τοῖς ἀρχετύποις ἑαυτῶν).

εἶναι δημιουργήματα), as Cratylus the Heraclitean thought when he said that a fitting name had been assigned by [the agency of] nature of each thing, just as we see that a different perceptual sense is also assigned to different perceptibles[131]'

(Transl. D. Blank).

'Others say are 'by nature' since they fit the nature of things named by them... And they too say that name resembles images – not natural ones, but those made by the art of painting, which makes different likenesses of different models and still strives to copy as well as possible the form of each [model], according to which we often analyse [starting] from the names in an attempt to hunt down the natures of the things named by them, and once we have recognised these natures we try to show that the names applied to the things are consonant with the natures'

The conventionalist theory distinguishes those who are of the opinion that names are 'by convention' in an arbitrary way and that it is possible for any man to name any thing as he desires (as, for example Hermogenes in the *Crat.* 384d) from those who believe that names are given by the 'name-giver'. Moreover, he argues that Platonic teaching on the name-maker can be also comprehended in the conventional way:

'...he is the one who has knowledge of the nature of things and states a name appropriate to the nature of each existing thing... It is in this very respect that names are 'by imposition', because not nature, but the inventiveness of a rational soul established them...'

Although this interpretation of Ammonius is far from being cogent, the way he reconciles Plato's and Aristotle's theories of names is crystal clear. He

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131 In Plato's dialogues Cratylus nowhere makes this claim; perhaps Ammonius posits it on the basis of *Met.*, 1010a 11ff.

opines that the second sense of 'by nature' coincides with the second sense of 'by convention', and concludes that Aristotle in the *De interpretatione* is denying nothing but the first sense of 'by nature', which Cratylus was advocating[132].

Initially, the theories of Plato and Aristotle were diametrically opposed, but in the tradition of the Byzantine scholarship of the fourth and fifth centuries both doctrines have received such flexible interpretations that the contradiction between these two authoritative philosophers was emphatically effaced. Therefore, for those who were well acquainted with these avenues of Neo-Platonic interpretation (Socrates Scholasticus is a good example) some self-contradictions of Aristotle as well as his disagreements with the Platonic theory of name were understood in a radically different way.

It should be also emphasised in our conclusion that after Aristotle's investigations the discussion on the interplay between name and the nature of things was far from being closed. From the fourth-century controversy onwards this philosophical problem was continuously scrutinised in the context of linguistic, grammar, dialectic, and mythological studies, and by the time of the early Byzantine epoch it had received a significant elaboration and development, complicated by a number of new approaches and ways of interpretation.

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[132] Ammonius, *op.cit.*, 34, 10 – 37 *ad.fin.*

I.3 The further development of the two classical linguistic theories

In the following section I shall give a brief overview of how philosophical interests in language emerged in the Hellenistic era. Amongst the great philosophical schools that were formed in that period *viz.* the Alexandrian philological tradition, Scepticism, Epicureanism, and Stoic, only the two latter ones showed a sustained interest in the *philosophical* issues of language rather than merely grammatical studies. Let us now focus on these two schools in order to elucidate how the two theories of language of Plato and Aristotle were developed and modified by Stoic and Epicurean philosophers.

§ I.3.1 Stoic philosophy of language in the context

The Stoic interest in language and their contribution to the development of grammatical theory is immense, while their philosophical concern is, by comparison, of much less interest. There is no need here to explore here their pioneer consideration of Greek morphology and syntax; we shall concentrate instead on the philosophical issues.

Despite the fact that their insight into the philosophical issues of language was not particularly remarkable, the Stoic school had an ample influence upon curriculum of the standard education of Hellenistic world. For this reason I shall try to indicate some of the more relevant aspects of Stoic philosophical inquiries. Regrettably, our knowledge of Stoic concerns is very fragmentary; the overwhelming majority of the sources of information are, in

fact, secondary reports (of *e.g.* Diogenes Laertius, Marcus Varro, and Augustine) or some other Greek and Latin grammarians of the later historical period. Therefore, there are still a number of important questions that are hotly disputed amongst modern Classical scholars, who propose some reconstructions of Stoic views on language[133].

Before turning to the subject, several introductory remarks should be made. Language as such was regarded in Stoic philosophy in the context of their *logic*. The term ἡ λογικὴ τέχνη was introduced by Stoics to designate what Aristotle called ἡ ἀναλυτικά. Their comprehension of logic was remarkable: the object of logic was not only judgements, conclusions, deductions and reasoning, but also the *verbal* form of the expression. Strictly speaking, in the Stoic system of thought, language was treated in the context of *logic*, which was a teaching about correct thinking and *dialectic*[134] that, in turn, was a theory of the correct (verbal) expression of thought (ἐπιστήμη τοῦ ὀρθῶς διαλέγεσθαι[135]). Their dialectic consisted of two parts: the teaching about the designator (τὰ σημαίνοντα) and *denotatum* (*i.e.* about what is designated or signified – τὰ σημαινόμενα)[136]. It seems irrelevant in which of these spheres of dialectic they placed the philosophical aspects of language and in which part they placed

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[133] *v.* R. Robins, *Ancient*, p. 25; J. Pinborg, *Classical antiquity: Greece. In Current trends in linguistics*, vol. 13 (*Histioriography of linguistics* (The Hague, Paris 1975), p. 77).
[134] In the system of Stoics, logic was divided into dialectic and rhetoric; clearly, we are concerned in the former, rather than the latter which was merely ἡ ἐπιστήμη τοῦ εὖ λέγειν – *SVF* ii, p.18, fr. 48.
[135] *SVF* ii, p. 18, fr. 48 = Diog. Laert. vii, 42.
[136] H. Steinthal, *Geschichte der Sprachwissenschaft bei den Griechen und Römern*. 2. Aufl., vol. 1. (Berlin 1890), p. 289 – H. Steinthal suggested that this distinction was problematic arguable for Stoics themselves; therefore, it remains unclear for current studies.

grammar[137], the main characteristic feature of Stoicism was that the phenomenon of language was systematically treated in the context of their *epistemology*. The reason for this approach was entirely philosophical; that was the Stoic doctrine of the *universal logos*. The Stoic theory of the *logos* is well known; suffice to mention that they believed that the human *logos* is implicated with the divine logos; the latter was thought to be approachable for those who strive for knowledge through philosophical studies. The supposition that the human intellect (*i.e.* the internal logos – λόγος ἐνδιάθετος) is adequately manifested and represented in λόγος προφορικός, obliged them to believe that their knowledge of the divine (that is, of course, hidden) *can be obtained through the investigation of language* (that is revealed by, for example, verbal manifestation).

§ I.3.2 Ἐτυμολογία in search of the πρῶται φωναί

Clearly, for the Stoics the relationship between phoneme of word and its meaning was of crucial importance – this relation was believed to be natural, so they are traditionally associated with φύσις-theory and Plato. This premise allowed them to assume etymology and etymologising as a central instrument for the cognition of all the constituents of their philosophy, *viz.* ethics, logic,

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[137] *v.* for details some suggestion of J. Pinborg, *op.cit.*, p. 79.

physics (cosmology) including 'theology'[138]. Moreover, the very term ἐτυμολογία was introduced by Chrysippus, whose, books on etymology, as I. Tronskiy presumes, were prototypes of modern etymological dictionaries[139].

Philosophically, the Stoics held a theory of 'primordial words' – πρῶται φωναί - that was often associated with the C*ratylus* and Plato. In order to solve the problems propounded in Plato's dialogues, they distinguished πρῶται φωναί from their later derivatives on the basis of etymological analysis, and attributed the notorious *natural* connection (between word and thing) only to the former. By means of etymologising, Stoics attempted to discover these πρῶται φωναί and thus to recognise clearly the original sense of a notion. Of course, it is still a matter of vague speculation as to how the Stoics comprehended this *natural* relation between phoneme of 'primordial words' and the essence of an object. To illustrate the matter, I propose to look at several examples.

Chrysippus asserts that the centre of human intellectual life, its ἡγεμονικόν, is located in the heart rather than in the head. To reinforce his argument he takes the word 'ἐγώ', and explains that this important word of the Greek language points to the heart itself: while pronouncing the last syllable of the word 'ἐγώ', our chin goes down and points to the heart[140]. Furthermore, the phoneme of the word καρδία, in the opinion of Chrysippus, is close to the

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138 P. Gentinetta, *Zur Sprachbetrachtung bei den Sophisten und in der stoisch-hellenistischen Zeit* (Winterthur 1961), p. 111.
139 И. Тронский, *op.cit.*, p. 27.
140 *SVF* ii, p. 245, fr. 895.

words κράτος and κύριος[141]. Speaking of Zeus, he notices that accusative case of ὁ Ζεύς – τὸν Δία – is close to a Greek preposition διά (that incidentally takes the accusative) and means 'through', 'by aid of', 'because of', *etc.*; consequently, he thinks, it demonstrates that Zeus is a supreme deity, because 'δι᾽ αὐτὸν εἶναι τὰ πάντα'[142].

Origen reports that the Stoics regarded names as bestowed by nature (φύσει); so, the first words being imitations of things, in accordance with which names were formed, and in conformity with which they introduce certain principles of etymology[143]. Augustine, in his *De dialectica* throws more light onto the Stoic understanding of primordial words; he tells us that, in opinion of the Stoics, primordial words and the things they signify affect our perception in a similar manner; Augustine brings to the forefront imitative words[144]:

> They (the Stoics) thought this to be somewhat like a *cunabula verborum* (cradle of words), where the sense of the thing concorded with the sense of the sound, and that the license of naming proceeded from there to the similarity of the things among themselves: *e.g.*, for the sake of the word itself *crux* 'cross' was said (originated), since the harshness of the word itself concords with the pain which the cross brings about, but '*crura*' (limbs) not because of the harshness of pain, but because they, of all the members, are

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[141] *ibid.*, fr. 896.
[142] *ibid.*, fr. 1063.
[143] Origenes, *Contra Celsum* I, 24: ...φύσει, μιμουμένων τῶν πρώτων φωνῶν τὰ πράγματα, καθ᾽ ὧν τὰ ὀνόματα, καθὸ καὶ στοιχεῖά τινα τῆς ἐτυμολογίας εἰσάγουσιν. It remains unclear, however, why Origen, who in this passage outlines his main philosophical view on the relationship between ὄνομα and πράγμα, mentions Aristotle and Epicurus by name, but ascribes φύσει-theory to the Stoics, rather than Plato himself (ed. Borret, *Origène. Contre Celse*, 4 vols. – *SC*, vols 132, 136, 147, 150 (Paris1967-1969)).
[144] A good example of an imitative word is a Greek verb πατάσσω – 'to crash' or βλίτυρι – 'strum, thrum'.

> most similar to the wood of the cross in length and sturdiness[145].
>
> (Trans. of J. Marchand[146])

Hence, Stoics thought that all words in the human language were derived from ancient primordial words of an imitative character. Unlike Plato, who argued for the divine origin of these primordial words, the Stoics believed that the words were introduced by ancestors who were excellent in every respect, including their relationship to the divine logos.

§ I.3.3 The Stoic theory of naming

There is a special interest in their ingenious theory of naming, for which Augustine is our sole source. According to Stoic speculation, there is an ontological connection between name and thing, between names themselves, and between things themselves. Thus, if one thing is related to another, and the former has a primordial name, the latter can also adopt this primordial name with some slight (but recognisable and determinable) phonetic modifications. They assigned three types of ontological connection between categories or notions that can interchange their phonemes; since there is only Augustine's report, the matter is illustrated by the example of Latin words:

- resemblance (*e.g. crus* 'shin' – *crux* 'cross');

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[145] Augustinus, *De dialectica*, vi.
[146] http://ccat.sas.upenn.edu/jod/texts/dialecticatrans.html.

- contiguity (*e.g. orbis* 'circle' – *urbis* 'city');
- contrast (*e.g. bellus* 'nice' – *bellum* 'war')[147].

Overall, this teaching of the Stoics can be described as making minimal progress from Plato and Aristotle. Unlike their purely grammatical investigations, in which they surpassed Aristotle dramatically[148], they were mostly concerned philosophically with the semantic aspect of words rather than anything else. If Plato in the *Cratylus* speaks about etymologies with a great deal of irony, Stoics place etymologising on the most important theoretical footing, but their contribution to what now is call phonetics was relatively small: most of the etymological surveys of the Stoics are fabulous or even ridiculous from the modern point of view. Moreover, distrust in their etymologising was already remarked on by their contemporaries[149].

§ I.3.4 Notional aspect of human speech: Stoic theory of λεκτόν

It must be understood, however, that in spite their obvious sympathies with Platonic φύσις-theory, the Stoics elaborated a number of Aristotelian ideas

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[147] Augustinus, *loc.cit.*
[148] Concerning the Stoic analysis of grammatical categories I rely on the following works: И. Тронский, *Основы стоической грамматики* (*Foundations of the Stoic grammar* – in Russian) in ***Романо-германская филология: сборник статей в честь академика В.Ф. Шишмарева*** (Leningrad 1957); И. Кобів, *Грамматична терминологія стоіков* (*Grammatical theory of Stoics* – in Ukrainian) in **Іноземна філологія** (Kiev 1970), № 8, вип. 20 of ***Питання класичної філології***; В. Каракулаков, *К вопросу о соотнесении частей речи стоиков с их логическими категориями* (*To the question of relationship between parts of speech and logical categories in Stoic thought* – in Russian). in ***Studii Clasice***, 1964, № 6.
[149] *cf.* ironic remarks of Cicero (*De natura deorum*, 3; 63).

about language; moreover, they showed a sustained interest in the theory of signification, and contributed a lot to Aristotelian theory.

Let us now turn back to the notorious Stoic distinction of two aspects of speech as an act (*viz.* σημεῖον and σημαινόμενον) which is the most relevant aspect of their teaching. In relation to the human speech, Stoics developed Aristotelian view that the sounds of human speech *are not just sounds*. Thus, the immediate sound of human speech (ἡ φωνή) was classified as σημαῖον[150]. Unlike sounds produced by inanimate things or by animals, *etc.*, which are merely a percussion of air brought about by natural impulse, the sounds of speech are organised in a unique way. Diogenes of Babylon in his book Περὶ φωνῆς τέχνη described these sounds as φωνὴ ἔναρθρος – articulate sound (of speech). An important characteristic feature of these articulate sounds is that they can be written; human speech, therefore, is now φωνὴ ἐγγράμματος[151]. A combination of these articulate sounds is λέξις; but it remains obscure how they regarded this λέξις in the context of their etymologising. According to Diogenes of Babylon, although ἡ λέξις (if it follows the phonetic regulations of language) is correct, it is not speech (λόγος) yet, because:

> There is a difference between λέξις and λόγος, because λόγος always signifies something (ὁτὶ ὁ λόγος ἀεὶ σημαντικός ἐστι), while λέξις as such remains unclear (λέξις δὲ καὶ ἄσημος), for example the word βλίτυρι; but speech never is (λόγος δὲ οὐδαμῶς)[152].

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150 *SVF* ii, p. 48, fr. 166, line 6.

151 *SVF* iii, p. 213, fr. 20.

152 Because of the terminological apparatus adopted for the English translation, I purposely do not use here the work of R. Hicks.

SVF, iii, p. 213, fr. 20.

I would like to underline that this distinction is remarkable in every respect. Of course, Diogenes Laertius' report is vague, but there is evidence that the Stoics not only distinguished the sounds of human speech from sounds in general, but they also insisted that the meaning of a word that is taken separately is somewhat limited, for it does not act as an alive all-sufficient word of human speech; perfection of meaning can only be achieved in full sentences of discourse:

> There is a difference between pronouncing something and speaking it out; for vocal sounds are uttered, *things* are spoken out, and [it is these things that] are matters of discourse [rather than sounds that are uttered][153].

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153 Diogenes Laertius, *Vitae philosophorum*, vii, 57;8f.: διαφέρει δὲ καὶ τὸ λέγειν τοῦ προφέρεσθαι· προφέρονται μὲν γὰρ αἱ φωναί, λέγεται δὲ τὰ πράγματα, ἃ δὴ καὶ λεκτὰ τυγχάνει. (ed. Long, *Diogenis Laertii vitae philosophorum*, 2 vols. (Oxford 1964)).

§ I.3.5 Stoic terminology for human thinking process

Now we are in a better position to understand the Stoic concept of λεκτόν – 'sayable'[154], and their use of the terms ἐπίνοια, ἔννοια, ἔννοημα, διάνοια, *etc*. It was observed above that in his philosophical analysis of words, Aristotle distinguished three main agencies: phoneme, human comprehension of an object, and the object itself. The Stoics introduced a fourth category, namely, the semantic aspect of speech, something that is meant (σημαινόμενον), which they called λεκτόν. Ammonius, in his commentaries on the *De interpretatione,* attempts to explain Aristotle's point by comparison with the Stoics. Hence, it the notion of σημαινόμενον that differentiates Aristotle from the Stoics; Aristotle regards things as some rational presentations (τὰ νοήματα):

> Aristotle first uses these lines to teach us what are principally and immediately signified by them (ὑπ᾽ αὐτῶν σημαινόμενα) [*i.e.* by names and words– *sc.* ὑπὸ τῶν φωνῶν], that <these are> thoughts (νοήματα), and through them as intermediates, things, and that one must not invent anything else beside these between the thought and the thing (καὶ οὐδὲν ἕτερον δεῖ παρὰ ταῦτα ἐπινοεῖν μέσον τοῦ τε νοήματος καὶ τοῦ πράγματος), which is what the men of Stoa posited and thought they should call the

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[154] Ammonius, *On Aristotle 'On interpretation' 1-8*, transl. by D. Blank (London 1996), p. 26. I follow D. Blank, who translates this complicated *adjectivum verbale* of λέγω as 'sayable' (this variant seems to be commonly shared in modern scholarship) rather 'verbal expression' – *v.* Diogenes Laertius, *Lives of eminent philosophers* (transl. by R. D. Hicks) in *The Loeb classical library* (London 1981), vol. 2, p. 173. A. Roberts and J. Donaldson translated the category of τὰ λέκτα as 'dicta' – *ANF*, vol. xii, p. 509.

'sayable' (ὅπερ οἱ ἀπὸ τῆς Στοᾶς ὑπτιθέμενοι λεκτὸν ἠξίουν ὀνομάζειν)[155].

(Transl. D. Blank)

Thus, if for Aristotle there were only two spheres that are to be compared to each other (*i.e.* an object and human mind), the Stoics introduced a new category, intermediate between object and subject; A. Losev formulated Stoic λεκτόν as 'a cognitive predicate of speech and thinking process'[156]. This 'sayable' is something that corresponds to some rational presentation[157]; λεκτόν is always complete in itself, while others are defective, because their enunciation is unfinished. Diogenes Laertius clarifies how the Stoics distinguished λεκτόν from a defective 'sayable' (τὸ ἐλλιπὲς λεκτόν): thus, 'Γράφει' is defective for it remains unclear who writes; but 'Γράφει Σωκράτης'[158] is complete and self-sufficing (αὐτοτελῆ). Therefore, under the head of defective expressions Stoics ranged all parts of speech, while under the head of 'complete in themselves' they considered judgements (τὰ ἀξιώματα), syllogisms, questions (τὰ ἐρωτήματα), and inquiries (τὰ πύσματα).

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[155] Ammonius, *In Aristotelis librum De interpretatione commentarius*, 17;20ff. (ed. Busse, in *Commentaria in Aristotelem Graeca*, 4.5 (Berlin 1897), pp. 1-272).
[156] А. Лосев, *Doctrine of verbal objectivity* (λεκτόν) *in Stoic linguistic studies* (in Russian) – *Имя: избранные работы, переводы, беседы, исследования и архивные материалы* (St. Petersburg 1997), p. 344ff.
[157] Diogenes Laertius, vii, 63;6f: Φασὶ δὲ [τὸ] λεκτὸν εἶναι τὸ κατὰ φαντασίαν λογικὴν ὑφιστάμενον.
[158] Perhaps, this classical example reflects the Stoic idea that 'sayable' remains being 'sayable' irrespective of the criterion of truth, for Socrates never wrote.

To sum up, in Stoic dialectic, λεκτόν is an abstract notion; if sounds of speech (as well as objects) are of a material nature[159], 'sayable' is *denotatum* (τὸ σημαινόμενον), therefore, it is immaterial and only emerges in concrete rational discourse. At the same time, the Stoics emphasise its abstract nature; for them it is relatively unimportant whether this 'sayable' is true or wrong – λεκτόν is manifested in both cases; they only made a distinction between deliberate expressions (where λεκτόν is present) and catatonic sound, unconscious raving, incoherent (or abstract) expression, *etc.*, where there is no 'sayable' at all, or it is defective.

A characteristic feature of human beings is the appearance of rational presentations (φαντασίαι λογικαί); 'sayables' correspond to these rational presentations, because λεκτόν is a human thought that is organised in a special way, and is expressed in the course of rational discourse or speech. At the same time, λεκτόν is different from φαντασία λογικά, but has an existence of its own. Although H. Steinthal argues that the Stoics did not work out a clear and satisfactory distinction between language and the thinking process[160], there is evidence to infer that this distinction nevertheless existed. I. Perelmuter, who compares this aspect of Stoic science with Aristotle, pointed out that the former

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159 *SVF* ii, p. 48, fr. 166 = Sextus Emiricus, *Adversus mathematicos*, viii, 11ff: '...amongst these elements (*i.e.* thing, phoneme and λεκτόν) two former are material (δύο μὲν εἶναι σώματα), namely phoneme and object (τὴν φωνὴν καὶ τὸ τυγχάνον); but one of them is immaterial (ἓν δὲ ἀσώματον), *viz.* denotatum (τὸ σημαινόμενον πρᾶγμα) or λεκτόν, that can be either true or wrong'. It should be mentioned that overall, Sextus seems to oversimplify the Stoic concept of λεκτόν, that is why the passage was not analysed in full; however, his report about the immaterial nature of λεκτόν is very relevant.

160 H. Steinthal, *op.cit.*, p. 338.

worked out some methods of distinguishing the thinking process as such from semantic aspects of rational discourse, while Aristotle could not overcome the sphere of phonetics[161].

The Stoics, however, had an elaborate terminological apparatus to apply to the phenomena of the human thinking process in its relation to the power of speech. Thus, the Stoics classified different types of perception: a senseless and irrelevant fantasy (merely φαντασία); an immediate result of (*e.g.* visual) perception of an object (ἔννοια or ἐννόημα). Plutarchus makes an interesting comment on how the Stoics classified these various phenomena; fantasies are appropriate to all kinds of perception, but in the case of human beings and gods these fantasies can become rational concepts (νόημα):

> A rational concept is a perceptible notion that appears in the mind of a rational being. For when a perceptible notion emerges in a rational soul is called ἐννόημα – a rational concept, because it receives its name from the word reason (νοῦς). Therefore, perceptible notions (with semantic substance) are unusual for other beings. Those perceptible notions that appear in our minds and in the mind of gods are notions in general (φαντάσματα); those presentations that appear to irrational animals are mere phantasms (φαντάσματα), but the ones that occur to gods and to us are both presentations in generic kind and specifically mental concepts (ἐννόημα)[162].

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161 И. Перельмутер, *Философские школы Эллинизма*, **ИЛУ**, p. 189f.

162 Plutarchus (pseud.), *Placita philosophorum*, (Stephanus 900, C): ἔστι δ᾽ ἐννόμα φάντασμα διανοίας λογικοῦ ζῴου τὸ γὰρ φάντασμα, ἐπειδὰν λογικῇ προσπίπτῃ ψυχῇ, τότε ἐννόημα καλεῖται, εἰληφὸς τοὔνομα παρὰ τοῦ νοῦ. Διόπερ τοῖς ἀλόγοις ζῴοις ὅσα προσπίπτει φαντάσματα, <φαντάσματα μόνον ἐστίν> ὅσα δὲ καὶ θεοῖς καὶ ἡμῖν γε, ταῦτα [φαντάσματα μόνον ἐστίν· ὅσα δὲ ἡμῖν, ταῦτα] καὶ φαντάσματα κατὰ γένος καὶ ἐννοήματα κατ᾽ εἶδος·.

Thus, φαντάσματα are results of perception; they are not related to the intellectual activity of human reason. But according to Stoic classification, φαντάσματα relate to ἐννοήματα as *genus* to *differentia specifica*[163]. As for λεκτόν, however, it is neither the former, nor the latter, because both of these categories (when taken abstractly) do not contain (and are not) 'sayable' yet; they are merely mental or psychical phenomena, which the Stoics comprehended as some kind of imprint of things in the human mind:

> A notion or object of thought is a presentation to the intellect, which though not really substance nor attribute is quasi-substance or quasi-attribute. Thus, an image of a horse may rise before the mind, although there is no horse present[164].
>
> (transl. R. Hicks)

At the same time, the very nature of perfect (in comparison with defective) λεκτόν is that this 'sayable' is conceived as something that exists only in relation with another λέξις. It should be pointed out, therefore, that for the Stoic philosophy of language it is impossible to operate with abstract categories (as Plato and Aristotle did).

Of course, our treatment of the Stoic 'sayable' is incomplete; suffice to mention that at the next stage the Stoics analysed λεκτόν in its relation to the criterion of truth, and introduced an interesting distinction between ἡ ἀληθεία and τὸ ἀληθές, which differed from each other by essence (οὐσία), organisation

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[163] *i.e.* as τὸ γένος and τὸ εἶδος – *cf.* Diogenes Laertius, vii, 61;4f.
[164] Diogenes Laertius, vii, 61f: Ἔννόημα δέ ἐστι φάντασμα διανοίας, οὔτε τὶ ὂν οὔτε ποιόν, ὡσανεὶ δέ τι ὂν καὶ ὡσανεὶ ποιόν...

(σύστασις), and meaning (δύναμις)[165]; finally, they attempted to describe the mode of existence of λεκτόν by introducing a new category – 'energy' (τὸ ἐνέργημα; ἡ ἐνέργεια)[166]. This dissertation will not focus on these interesting issues of Stoic teaching, but will look instead at their use of the terms διάνοια, ἐπίνοια and others.

There is evidence to show that in Stoic philosophy these expressions were used as synonymic convertible terms in order to designate the human thinking process[167]. The term διάνοια, for example, emerges when there is a need to indicate a transition from sensation on the one hand, to apprehension and thought on the other. Diogenes Laertius quotes an interesting passage from the *Synopsis of philosophers* of Diocles the Magnesian:

> The Stoics agree to put in the forefront the doctrine of presentation and sensation (τὸν περὶ φαντασίας καὶ αἰσθήσεως λόγον), inasmuch as the standard by which the truth of things is tested is generically a presentation (κατὰ γένος φαντασία ἐστί) and again the theory of assent (συγκατάθεσις), and that of apprehension (κατάληψις) and thought (νόησις), which precedes all the rest, cannot be stated apart from presentation. For presentation comes first; then thought (διάνοια), which is capable of expressing itself, puts into the form of a proposition that which the subject receives from a presentation[168].
>
> (transl. R. Hicks)

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[165] *v.* for details Sextus Empiricus, *Pyrrhoniae hypotyposes*, ii; 81ff.
[166] *SVF*, ii, fr. 318; iii, fr. 31 *et alii*.
[167] Inasmuch as these two words are synonyms, I shall analyse only the term διάνοια; *cf.* use of the word ἐπίνοια in Diogenes Laertius, vii, 135.
[168] Diogenes Laertius, vii, 49;1 *ad fin*.

Then, Diogenes explains that the Stoics distinguished φαντασία (process of manifestation) and φάντασμα (outcome of manifestation). Thus the 'outcome of manifestation', is a phenomenon related to the human mind (διάνοια); φάντασμα is similar to our dreams, while φαντασία is the act of imprinting something on the soul (φαντασία δέ ἐστι τύπωσις ἐν ψυχῇ) – of course, this association of 'imprint' was not comprehended literally. By the term διάνοια Stoics designated an intellectual sphere of the human mind that deals with abstract notions:

> According to them some presentations are data of sense and others are not: the former are the impressions conveyed through one or more sense-organs; while the latter, which is not data of sense, are those received through the mind itself, as is the case with incorporeal things and all the other presentations which are received by reason[169].

But this intellectual sphere itself is not an abstract thing; it is in fact διάνοια that produces an articulate sound of human speech[170]; moreover, in the Stoic system a word of human language (λέξις) differed from a logos, because λέξις is merely φωνή ἐγγράμματος, while a logos (a complete statement or sentence) always signifies something, and issues from the mind (φωνὴ σημαντικὴ ἀπὸ διανοίας ἐκπεμπομένη, οἷον Ἡμέρα ἐστί.)[171]. Evidently, in the Stoic thought διάονοια is not only a philosophical category; they also use this

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169 ...οὐκ αἰσθητικαὶ δ᾽ αἱ διὰ τῆς διανοίας καθάπερ τῶν ἀσωμάτων καὶ τῶν ἄλλων τῶν λόγῳ λαμβανομένων. – Diogenes Laertius, vii, 51; 1f.
170 Diogenes Laertius, vii, 55; 5: the notorious 'articulate sound' (ἡ ἔναρθρος φωνή) of human speech is an utterance of reason (ἀπὸ διανοίας ἐκπεμπομένη).
171 *ibid.*, 56; 5f.

notion in their anthropology to specify the intellectual faculty as such. In their division of the soul, they distinguished five senses, the faculty of speech (τὸ φωνητικὸν μόριον), the intellectual faculty (τὸ διανοητικόν), and what they called the generative faculty (τὸ γεννητικόν); by τὸ διανοητικόν they comprehended nothing but διάνοια[172].

To sum up, the Stoics proceeded from the Platonic theory of language that assumes a natural connexion between word and thing, and the premise of parallelism between thought and vocal expression. Overall, Stoic views on the philosophical aspects of language are a good example of how φύσις-theory of language could be developed into a consistent systematic teaching. Of course, their speculations met the same problems that we have already observed in the *Cratylus* and in Aristotelian criticism – φύσις-theory in no sense was developed coherently. In fact the Stoics struggled with some classical arguments[173] that demonstrate the inconsistency of the most central premise that name and thing are related ontologically. For this reason, Chrysippus proposed a special theory[174] that considered a number of semantic irregularities such as ἀνωμαλίαι; from what we know about this interesting solution is that the Stoics could only note these anomalies as an established fact, but they failed to find a satisfactory explanation of the phenomenon. Nevertheless, their progress by

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172 ... καὶ τὸ διανοητικόν, ὅπερ ἐστὶν αὐτὴ ἡ διάνοια, -- Diogenes Laertius, vii, 110; 7.
173 *e.g.* names for Athens and Thebes in the Greek language are plural – Ἀθῆναι, Θῆβαι – while in reality these names signify just only one city. At the same time, words δῆμος, χορός, although singular, signify many people.
174 *SVF* ii, p. 6; ii, p. 45, fr. 151, 152.

comparison with Plato was immense: unlike the disputants of the *Cratylus,* the Stoics seem to be aware that the cause of these anomalies is related not to the phonetic sphere, but to what is now called semantics: in the Stoic theory of anomalies they analysed the variance between thing and grammatical category (rather than merely phoneme).

§ I.3.6 Epicurean ideas about human language

It has been often pointed out by scholars that language did not receive a comprehensive examination in Epicurean philosophy [175]. Nevertheless, there are some fragments which are of interest to our studies. The extreme sensualism of Epicurus exerts an interesting influence upon his vision of language. Unlike, for example, the Stoics, with their sympathy with rationalism, Epicurus rejects rational discourse as an instrument for cognition of the apparent world; rational reasoning (ὁ λογισμός) plays an insignificant rôle in his speculations. Epicurean epistemology is based on perception; any further rational analysis of perception, in his opinion, is the source of delusion and error. His comprehension of the world and human beings is extremely materialistic. Even the human soul he regarded as σῶμα, *i.e.* a material substance:

> We must next take into account the fact that the soul is a body composed of fine particles (ἡ ψυχή σῶμά ἐστι) that are dispersed throughout the entire organism, and that it bears the closest resemblance to breath with a certain

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[175] *cf.* И. Перельмутер, *Школы Эллинизма*, p. 204.

> admixture of heat, being similar in some ways to the one and in some ways to the other. [...] This is all clearly evidenced by the functions and affections of the soul, by the ease of its movements and thought processes (αἱ διανοήσεις), and by the privations that cause our death[176].
>
> (transl. G. Strodach)

Epicurus applies this 'somatic' comprehension to everything that exists, because in his philosophical system there is no essence that is not at the same time τὸ σῶμα; there is only an abstract 'emptiness' (τὸ κενόν) that can be thought of as an 'incorporeal' (ἀσώματον) thing. Thus, he infers:

> Hence those who maintain that the soul is incorporeal are talking nonsense, because it would not be able to act upon or be acted upon if it were of such a nature[177].

Epicurus does not distinguish (like Stoics did) between φαντασία and φάντασμα; for him,

> The mental images (φαντάσματα) of madmen and dream images are reality (ἀληθῆ), since they activate the mind, whereas the nonexistent does not thus activate it (τὸ δὲ μὴ ὂν οὐ κινεῖ).[178]
>
> (transl. G. Strodach)

Epistemologically, all the types of our notions (ἐπίνοιαι) are derived from perceptions, either by actual contact or by analogy, or resemblance, or comparison with some aid from reasoning (ὁ λογισμός); but they are all true.

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[176] Epicurus, *Epistula ad Herodotum*, 63; 1-10. in G. Strodach, *The philosophy of Epicurus: letters, doctrines, and parallel passages from Lucretius; translated with commentary and an introductory essay on ancient materialism* (Northwestern University Press 1963).
[177] Epicurus, *Epistula ad Herodotum*, 67; 6f.
[178] Diogenes Laertius, x, 32; 13f.

According to Diogenes' report, the perception of an object always takes priority over any rational operation with names or words:

> We could not even have named anything without having first leaned of its appearance through the concept. Hence concepts are clear and distinct evidences of truth[179].
>
> (transl. G. Strodach)

In relation to the nature of words, Epicurus decisively refutes the Stoic doctrine of λεκτόν; for him there are only two things that do exist, namely phoneme (that is clearly corporeal) and an object that is designated by the word. Plutarchus subjects this Epicurean point to sharp criticism; he argues that by rejecting the sphere of λεκτόν (τὸ τῶν λεκτῶν γένος), Epicureans thoroughly confused the matter, because λεκτόν is nothing else but the essence of human speech (ἡ οὐσία τῷ λόγῳ). To deny this λεκτόν means to leave only sounds (τὰς φωνὰς) and objects (τὰ τυγχάνοντα) and to consider *denotatum* (σημαινόμενα) as non-existent[180].

Epicurus' seeming opposition to the Stoic philosophy of language was, nevertheless, based on the same fundamental premise, *viz.* the φύσις-theory of language: name and thing are interrelated ontologically; the difference with

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[179] *ibid.*, x. 33; 12f: οὐδ᾽ ἂν ὠνομάσαμέν τι μὴ πρότερον αὐτοῦ κατὰ πρόληψιν τὸν τύπον μαθόντες. ἐναργεῖς οὖν εἰσιν αἱ προλήψεις.

[180] Plutarchus, *Adversus Colotem*, (Stephanus 1119 E; 11f): ταῦτα γὰρ ἅπτεται τῶν κυριωτάτων καὶ μεγίστων ἐν πράγμασιν ἔχοντα τὴν ἀπάτην, οὐ περὶ φωνάς τινας οὐδὲ λεκτῶν σύνταξιν οὐδ᾽ ὀνομάτων συνήθειαν. ὡς εἴ γε καὶ ταῦτα τὸν βίον ἀνατρέπει, τίνες μᾶλλον ὑμῶν πλημμελοῦσι περὶ τὴν διάλεκτον, οἱ τό τῶν λεκτῶν γένος οὐσίαν τῷ λόγῳ παρέχον ἄρδην ἀναιρεῖτε, τὰς φωνὰς καὶ τὰ τυγχάνοντα μόνον ἀπολιπόντες, τὰ δὲ μεταξὺ σημαινόμενα πράγματα δι᾽ ὧν γίγονται μαθήσεις διδασκαλίαι προλήψεις νοήσεις ὁρμαὶ συγκαταθέσεις, τὸ παράπαν οὐδ᾽ εἶναι λέγοντες;.

Plato and the Stoics consists in the comprehension and further interpretation of this ontologism. What is a characteristic feature of the Epicurean approach?

Formally, he argues against the Aristotelian theory of convention:

> Thus, the names of things were not originally created by convention. On the contrary, the various ethnic groups of mankind, on experiencing their own peculiar emotions and sensory impressions, uttered sounds conforming to these various emotions and impressions[181], each in its own way, corresponding to the geographical differences of the groups.

According to Epicurus, there was no kind of primordial language; in his opinion, various human languages emerged simultaneously. The appearance of new words reflected the individual feelings and sense-presentations of primitive people. If in classical Platonism the emphasis is placed on the ontological relationship between phoneme and object, Epicurus brings to the fore anthropological reflection – *cf.* his appeal to the 'geographical differences' that causes diversity of sounds and, consequently, variety of languages. For this reason he even rejects the Platonic theory of ὀνοματουργός as absurd:

> It is foolish to suppose that any one person at that time allotted names to things, and that mankind learned its first words from him. For why should this person have been able to designate things by words, and utter the tongue's divers sounds, when it is assumed that others were unable to do the same?[182]

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[181] ...τὰ ὀνόματα ἐξ ἀρχῆς μὴ θέσει γενέσθαι, ἀλλ᾽ αὐτὰς τὰς φύσει τῶν ἀνθρώπων καθ᾽ ἕκαστα ἔθνη... – Diogenes Laertius, x; 75; 9ff.

[182] *ibid.*

An important feature of Epicurus' speculations about language is a question about his devotion to the φύσις-theory. To all appearances, it was very specific; P. Gentinetta has suggested that Epicurus' naturalist comprehension of words in relation to things is very close to pre-Socratic philosophy[183], and his criticism of the Platonic name-maker-concept is a good example of the fact that his comprehension of naturalism was quite original. One can hardly agree with I. Perelmuter, who thinks that this was just an attempt by Epicurus to reconcile Aristotle and Plato, or to find a kind of synthesis of these two opposite doctrines of language. Some passages from Epicurus' letter to Herodotus are evidence of the fact that Epicurus was concerned with the problem of language origin more systematically. First of all, he speaks about the ontological relation between word and object, but his emphasis is laid on human perception, and therefore it emerges as a more anthropological vision of language: a number of objective agencies influenced the formation of words (phonemes). Epicurus interprets this ontologism as follows: primitive people were in fact forced (ἀναγκασθῆναι) by nature (φύσις), or more concretely, by circumstances themselves (ὑπὸ αὐτῶν τῶν πραγμάτον) to produce their first sounds; and these prehistoric tribes uttered special cries under the impulse of special feelings and the special presentations of sense. Next, Epicurus understands that this view fails to explain the problem of the development of language; therefore, he assumes that at the next stage of the origin of language, human

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[183] P. Gentinetta, *op.cit.*, p. 107. I. Perelmuter, however, emphasises that the Epicurean philosophical standpoint was much better defined – *v.* Perelmuter, *op.cit.*, p. 206.

reason (λογισμός) develops human speech. His teaching on the further development of language by human reason is truly remarkable; the passage is worth quoting in spite of its length:

> Subsequently whole tribes adopted their own special names, in order that their communications might be less ambiguous to each other and more briefly expressed. And as for things not visible (τινὰ δὲ καὶ οὐ συνορώμενα πράγματα), so far as those who were conscious of them tried to introduce any such notion, they put in circulation certain names for them, either sounds which they were instinctively compelled (ἀναγκασθέντας ἀναφωνῆσαι) to utter or which they selected by reason on analogy according to the most general cause there can be for expressing oneself in such a way[184].
>
> (Transl. R. Hicks)

Hence, in the opinion of Epicurus, the ontological connexion was just an impulse that caused the utterance of words; moreover, his comprehension of this ontologism is substantially different from Plato, and as a result his philosophy of language refutes an idea of original 'divine' tongue, or even one primordial tongue. The variety of languages, therefore, is caused by the variety of agencies that had an impact on the perceptions of various prehistoric human tribes (climate, main vital functions, *etc*). At the next stage, however, it was human reason that caused the development of languages; Epicurus notices that not all languages developed in a similar way: some of them are possessed of a better philosophical apparatus to operate with abstract notions (invisible things – οὐ συνορώμενα πράγματα) and to express thoughts with more perfection.

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[184] Diogenes Laertius, x; 76; 1-8.

This phenomenon is caused by the different intellectual capacities of the best representatives of this or that tribe.

Overall, the philosophy of Epicurus, in spite of its simplicity, is in every respect distinguished in comparison with other philosophical trends. It is relatively unimportant that the most interesting of his considerations follow from a sensualist premise. A crucial conclusion of Epicurus is that ultimately he puts the human factor to the fore, and regards human nature as a central agency in the formation of human speech.

Chapter II: Issues of language and names in early Christian theology

Obviously, the problem of name entered early Christian theology mainly through biblical and liturgical texts. These themes have been comprehensively examined in modern biblical theology; some studies of the matter in relation to early Christian texts are given by H. Alfeyev and I. Hausherr. The name of God has already emerged in the corpus of the NT as an important Christological theme. The idea of 'the Name of God' is used to designate the nature of the Son in its relation to the Father[185]; in Paul, however, other motifs are reflected, *viz.* the Name of God designates the personhood of the Son. It has been shown that the Name has some characteristics of appellation – it can be given, published, called upon, *etc.*[186]; at the same time, the Name of God acts as something that does not necessarily imply (or according to some sources totally excludes) an idea of phoneme *i.e. it cannot be specified as a concrete word or noun,* because it is said not to be merely a title or epithet. In other words, since Christ is preached as the Name of the Father, the Name designates a person different from the Father; 'Christ manifests the Name of the Father (*Jn.* 17:6), but this manifestation is his own person'[187]. One must take into consideration that the validity of these two distinctions should reasonably be questioned: since we are dealing here with

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185 *cf.* C. Dodd, *The interpretation of the Fourth Gospel* (Cambridge 1953), p.96.
186 J. Daniélou regarded this aspect of the name-theology as merely *'an allusion to baptism and the invocation (epiclesis)'* (J. Daniélou, *Gospel message and Hellenistic culture* (London 1973), p.150). But taking into account the formative rôle that this archaic theology played in the genesis of liturgy and Creeds, such a limitation seems problematic.
187 J. Daniélou, *Gospel*, p.149.

archaic mythological thinking, which does not necessarily distinguish or even identify these aspects[188].

II.1 Gnostic interest in names

The next important step is to see how these elements of name-theology appeared or were elaborated in the earliest Christian writings. It should be mentioned that in the twentieth century this problem was enthusiastically investigated in the context of 'Jewish Christian' studies[189]. This expression used to be an umbrella term for various doctrinal trends amongst early Church communities of the first two centuries, which, it was suggested, should be technically classified as 'orthodox' Jewish Christianity, 'quasi-orthodox', 'heterodox', *etc.* Although nowadays this terminology is very much subject to dispute, some results of these studies, especially particular source-studies, are still valuable and important.

In this section I intend to make a detailed analysis of the most influential writings of early Christianity, in an effort to determine what particular information concerning our inquiry can be derived from each document. The first source to be considered is the Valentinian *Evangelium Veritatis* (*EV*) from the *Nag Hammadi* Codex, whose discovery in 1945 made revolutionary changes

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[188] For special historical and philosophical research on naming in mythical thinking and the relationship between name and myth, *v* А. Лосев, *Философия имени* (Moscow 1927), *esp.* recently discovered *Миф – развёрнутое магическое имя* in *Имя* (S.Petersburg 1997) and more generally А. Лосев, *Диалектика мифа* (Moscow 1930).

[189] For a general account *v.* for example J. Daniélou, *Gospel*, p.147-163, R. Longenecker, *The Christology of early Jewish Christianity* (London, 1970), pp. 41-46.

in our views of some aspects of early Christian theology, in particular on the Name of God. Another reason for a thorough analysis of this source is the fact that teaching on the Name of God is the central issue of the document, and there are no surviving Christian works in which the topic has received such detailed attention.

I should say in advance that I am aware of how divergent Gnostic systems appear from various documents of *Codex Askewianus, Codex Brucianus, Papyrus Beroliensis 8502, Jung Codex* and from reports made by Justin, Irenaeus, Clement of Alexandria, Origen, Tertullian, Eusebius, Hippolytus, Theodorite, Epiphanius, and Augustine. In this section there is no need to consider this massive corpus of sources in order to suggest a satisfactory classification of all Gnostic theories of names, or divine names. Rather I shall mainly focus on the Valentinian *Gospel of Truth* and its theory of the Father's Name, that in comparison to the other Gnostic wrings has receive the most detailed elaboration; some interesting parallels with other sources will also be drawn.

The *EV* presents a special problem for our inquiry, because several passages from its final section strongly remind us of a number of Christological expressions we have already encountered. This has caused some scholars to believe that the *EV*

> ...contains a Christology of the Name more explicit and more fully developed that any other, while its Gnostic

> character is so little discernible that it provides evidence of a very pure Jewish Christian theology[190].

In what follows I shall claim that despite the fact that the author of this Gnostic homily undoubtedly made use of some early Christian definitions of the Son, a more complex examination of this teaching demonstrates that one should not be so confident about these similarities.

There is a need to explain why such an examination of the Gnostic doctrine is important for our inquiry and why the *EV* in particular seems to be the best example for this purpose. Our interest in the Gnostic mythological teachings can by no means be restricted only to the attack undertaken by *e.g.* Justin or Irenaeus and the resulting appearance of the first systematic expositions of faith in the second century. The problem of the Gnostic movement is much more significant. Suffice to say that the writings of Clement and Origen show a very good acquaintance with Gnostic ideas. The famous Gnostic definition of the relationship between the Father and the Son as being between Unbegotten and Begotten seems to reflect the agenda of the Eunomean controversy. Furthermore, in 367, *i.e.* at the very time when somebody decided to conceal the library in *Nag Hammadi,* Athanasius in his thirty ninth Easter epistle condemns those Christians who *'dare to compile books called mysterious* (τὰ

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190 J. Daniélou, *Gospel,* p. 157. R. Longenecker slavishly follows J. Daniélou and even concludes triumphantly that the Name of Jewish Christianity is the equivalent of the Greek οὐσία – *op.cit.*, p.46.

λεγόμενα ἀπόκρυφα) *and to confuse them with* τῇ θεοπνεύστθῳ γραφῇ[191])'. This epistle was shortly afterwards translated into Coptic by Theodorus, the head of the Pachomian monasteries in High Egypt, and distributed amongst the monks.

§ II.1.1 Valentinian theology of the Divine Name: 'Christology of the Name' or mythology of paradox?

It is not impossible that *EV* was already known to Irenaeus, who reports that the treatise entitled the *Gospel of Truth* was composed in Valentinian circles[192]. The masterpiece of the *EV* was almost certainly written in Greek[193], but the text only survived in Subachmimic and, extremely fragmentarily, in Sahidic dialect. The language of the document is sometimes remarkably Christian; at the same time the general teaching of the *EV*[194] contains many Valentinian ideas, combined with numerous motifs common to many schools of the Gnostic movement[195].

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191 Athanasius, *Epistila festalis* xxxix.

192 Irenaeus, *Adversus hæreses*, lib.iii, 11,9. B. Layton argues for Valentinian authorship – *The Gnostic Scriptures* (London 1987), p. 250 ff; for more specified reasons for Valentinian authorship *v.* J. Helderman, ***A Christian Gnostic Text: The Gospel of Truth, Gnosis and Hermetism: From Antiquity to Modern Times,*** ed. by R. van den Broek and W. Hanegraaf (New York 1997), pp. 53-68.

193 For a Greek retroversion of the text *v.* J.-E. Ménard, *L'Evangile de Vérité: Rétroversion Grecque et Commentaire* (Paris 1962), pp.31-71.

194 for an analysis of the theological system of the *EV v.* H. Jonas, ***Evangelium Veritatis and the Valentinian speculations,*** *StPt* 6, pp.96-111; H. Ringgren, ***The Gospel of Truth and Valentinian Gnosticis,*** *StTh* 18 pp.51-65; H. Attridge *NHC* xxii, pp.71-76.

195 H. Ringgre in his comparative analysis claims that one could hardly determine in which particular school the *EV* was produced (*op.cit.*, p. 65).

The formal organisation of the *EV* is far from being satisfactory or systematic: the major themes are given in the form of paradoxical and metaphorical definitions, while the impression of conceptuality is made by constant vague allusions to a number of different topics. The concept of the Name of the Father[196] is, in contrast to other Gnostic speculations over names, an important element simultaneously employed in the teaching about the Son[197] and soteriology, while in the final section of the document it is presented in an independent form. Before turning to these famous passages about the Name, let us now consider the doctrinal context of the teaching on the Father's Name and the general concept of name.

§ II.1.2 The Father, cosmos and beings

The teaching about the Father is, perhaps, the clearest theme of the treatise. He is perfect, (18.33), he is also kind, sweet, and good. But more often the exposition insists on apophatic definitions of the Father[198]: He is infinite (31.19), he is the absolute that is above all needs or limitations (42.6ff),

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196 The supreme absolute is always called the Father; the word 'God' (pnoute) appeared only once, in 37.33.

197 In fact, the relationship between the Son and Jesus Christ is very unclear. In the *EV* Jesus Christ is only a 'hidden mystery of the Father', who 'enlightened those who were in darkness through oblivion. He enlightened them; he showed (them) a way; and the way is the true which he taught them'. (18.15ff).

198 For an analysis of Gnostic apophatic terminology *v.* S. Laeuchli, *The language of faith: an introduction to the semantic dilemma of the Early Church* (London 1962) p.23f.

incomprehensible, beyond any thought (37.27ff), unbegotten (38.33), and finally *the Father does [not] have a name at all* (38.34) or as is said in the *Allogenes* (47,18; 54.36) the Father is the Unnameable[199].

The question about the relationship between the Father and creation is of special interest; in fact it is given in an integral form of two paradoxes. The totality of the apparent world was within the Father 'and the totality was in need of him'; then, the totality emanated from and was fashioned by the Father, but simultaneously is still within his Godhead (19.1ff). Such ideas as 'need of the totality' and the everlasting presence of the totality within the Father is merely one of many circularities of the *EV* doctrine:

> ...the Father, from whom the beginning came forth, to whom all will return who have come forth from him[200].
>
> 37.35ff

This can be interpreted in the sense that the totality everlastingly proceeds from the Father and everlastingly returns to him. All beings including human beings are his emanations (προβολή); the character of these emanations is described as a father-child relationship:

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[199] The definition of the Father as 'Unnameable' (atonomaze mmo) often appears in Gnostic (and esp. Valentinian) works and is also very frequent in the Nag Hammadi texts: *e.g. I Ap.Jas* 4.20. It should be indicated that in Gnostic writings overall we are not dealing with a concrete and well-conceived apophatic theology. Very frequently the Father or God is initially said to be unnameable (because name is an attribute of created being). But then the Father's name is said to exist in its unrevealable form (*Egypt*. 43.19), his name cannot be uttered (*Egypt*. 40.14) and 'his unrevealable name is inscribed, on the tablet' (*Egypt*. 43.20), it is called an invisible symbol (*Egypt*. 44.1). Finally, however, it is still possible for Gnostic theology to ascribe many names to the Father (or the Mother) that are both masculine and feminine respectively. It is highly likely that these are just *apophatic metaphors*; thus, for example, the aeons can also be unnameable (*Egypt*.54.7), the Spirit is unnameable and uncallable (*Egypt*. 44.11f).

[200] References to the *EV* are from the translation by G. MacRae in *NHC* vol. xxii.

> They have known that they came forth from him like children who are from a grown man.
>
> 27.9ff

Thus, all beings were within the Father; this original condition should not be understood as saying that they did not exist at all or existed as ideas. Rather, they existed *in potentia*: although they did not know the Father, they knew that

> ...they had not yet received form (**ⲙⲟⲣⲫⲏ**) nor yet received a name (**ⲣⲉⲛ**), each one of which the Father begets.
>
> 27.16ff

Thus, the Father willingly brings a being into existence by giving it a form (sometimes the Latin *forma* – **ⲫⲟⲣⲙⲏ**) and name (37.29ff). Inasmuch as the Coptic for 'being' – '**ⲙⲁⲉⲓⲧ**' - can mean both animate and inanimate object, according to the *EV* words (the names of things) are of divine origin[201]. This opinion, according to Clement of Alexandria, was held by Theodotus, who for these purposes adopts the Pythagoreans' teaching about *onomaturgos*[202]; Theodotus affirmed that the Holy Spirit 'imprinted his mind' (τὴν αὐτοῦ διάνοιαν ἐκτυπωσάμενον) with words and expressions.

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[201] *cf.* some similar conclusions of J. Fineman (J. Fineman, *Gnosis and the piety of metaphor: the Gospel of Truth, Rediscovery* (Leiden, 1989), pp. 297-301. In a later variant of the Valentinian teaching, the view on names is the opposite: *cf. Gos.Phil.* 53.25 *ad fin.*

[202] Clemens Alexandrinus, *Eclogæ propheticæ*, 32 *ad fin.*

§ II.1.3 The Word and the Spirit.

The principal emanation of the Father is not the totality, but the Word that comes forth from the *Plērōma, i.e.* the divine world. The Word is also said to be 'in the thought and in the mind of the Father' (16.35ff), but nevertheless it is still at the top of the ontological hierarchy. However, the mode of its manifestation is twofold: it goes forth in the totality as an impression of the Father's will; 'it supports the totality'; simultaneously, the soteriological process of purification and perfection of the true Gnostics by bringing them back to *into* the Father *ontologically modifies* the Word, which in its turn also receives the impression of this totality (23.33ff). In the *EV* the relationship between the incarnation of the Word and Jesus Christ is more than uncertain. The appearance of the Word in the body has caused world catastrophe; the author plays with two different meanings of the term 'Word', he prefers the term **ⲥⲱⲙⲁ** to Johannine **ⲥⲁⲣⲝ** (J.-É. Ménard argues that this is Platonic σῶμα τοῦ κόσμου – *Tim.* 32d[203])

> When the Word appeared, the one that is within the heart of those who utter it – it is not a sound alone but it became a body – a great disturbance took place…
>
> 26.4ff

The *EV* attaches a number of titles to the principal emanation of the Father; to some extent there are no cardinal differences between these

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[203] J.-É. Ménard, *op.cit.*, p.126.

numerous epithets, because they always appear as interchangeable synonyms: the Word of the Father is the Son, the Mouth, the Will, the Truth, the Saviour, *etc.* and the finally – the Name[204]. There is only one epithet, as has been mentioned, that presents a problem *viz.* the name 'Jesus Christ'[205]. In the contrast with another Valentinian work, *The Treatise on the Resurrection*, where Jesus Christ is called the Lord, the Saviour (*Treat.Res.* 43.35), the Son of Man and the Son of God that existed in flesh (ⲥⲁⲣⲝ) (44.13ff), in the *EV* the rôle of Christ's passion, death and the resurrection for the soteriological process is regarded as secondary, or even as a series of random historical events: Jesus Christ merely revealed the Book of living at the cost of his life, because since the Book was written within the Father's incomprehensibility, the one who takes it must be slain (20.1ff).

Much less interest is shown in pneumatology. The rôle of the Holy Spirit is very different from other Gnostic theories[206]; thus, it is not a spirit imprisoned in matter, but the revealed 'bosom of the Father' (24.9ff), 'the Tongue of the Father' (the Word is sometimes called 'the Mouth of the Father') and his revelation to his aeons (26.34ff). More specifically, the Holy Spirit seems to be a mediator between mankind and the Father, and an instrument of the revelatory activity of the Son (34.16)

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[204] *cf. Interp. Know.*, 12.30.
[205] for a different Gnostic view of the name 'Jesus Christ' *v.* Valentinian *Gos.Phil.* 56.5ff; 62.10ff; 64.25ff.
[206] H. Ringgren *op.cit.* p.57.

§ II.1.4 Names of true Gnostics in the book of life

At the next stage, the soteriological process turns into a manifestation of the Book of life. In the *EV*, however, this Book is said to be written in the thought and the mind of the Father; W. Attridge suggests that *'the Book is thus like revealing the Word itself and the totality'*[207]. The concept of the Book as Revelation is bound up with unclear speculations about the names of people (that are written in this Book – 21.26-22.20)[208]. The main idea is that the Father knows the name of a true Gnostic, because he has uttered these names himself; the ignorant person, by contrast, has no name and has no call. This divine utterance of a name, now also said to be written in the Book of life, is a reason for both the existence and perfection of the true Gnostic that is from above (22.4), whereas the miserable ignorant person does not have a name at all.

It is highly likely that in the *EV* we are frequently dealing with an attempt to integrate two different concepts. Thus, there are two different notions of 'name' and 'word' which appear at different stages of the speculation. In the final section about the Father's Name, the author attempts to synthesise them, but does so in a very unsafe way[209]. On the one hand, name and word remain the same as the Greek ὄνομα; in this very sense it is a constituent of human language. The names of beings appeared in the course of

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[207] *NHC*, vol. xxii p.87; *cf.* also 23.1ff.
[208] *cf. Gos.Phil.* 54.6 ad fin.
[209] *cf.* the points of Plotinus and Porphyrius who bring similar accusations against a similar manner of thought in the Gnostics *v. Enneades*, ii. 9, *Vita Plotini*, 16.

creation, or 'emanation of the totality'; beings have been emanated by the Father who has fashioned and named them: name, as has been mentioned, is an attribute of a creature. This is a reason why the speculations about the Son in *EV* are so rich in language associations: the Son is the Word of the Father, the Word is the Truth and the Mouth, the Spirit is the Tongue, whereas the Father as the Supreme Being is above the sphere of naming.

Simultaneously, this comprehension is combined with a completely different intuition of the naming process. For the first time, these motifs emerge in the teaching about the names of true Gnostics; in contrast to the idea that the Father brings forth *all* beings by giving them form and name and that nothing can exist otherwise, the author elaborates a theory that true Gnostics have received a unique and mysterious name (21.26ff). The Father knew these names in advance and has then uttered them. Next, this name is a key instrument in the process of salvation, because it allows a true Gnostic recognise the Father, and these names allow the Father to reveal himself to the elect: one who has knowledge about the Father is one whose name has been uttered; he whose name has not been spoken is ignorant. The speculations about salvation (as salvation from the darkness of ignorance) are given in the following way: the distinction between a name that was uttered by the Father and a Gnostic himself disappears. A revealed or emanated name everlastingly comes back to the Father and thereby brings back to the Father the possessor of this name

(22.12ff)[210]. One should bear in mind that this kind of circularity is a striking feature of the *EV*: it has been observed in cosmology and in the teaching about the emanation of the Word.

This mysterious concept of divinely uttered names is strongly associated with such common Gnostic ideas as the Seed that is inseminated in the soul of a true Gnostic, and yields the fruit of knowledge of the way of salvation. This concept is of special interest to us, because something very similar is to be found in the writings of Eunomius. The author is not concerned with clarity, and does not attempt to resolve the cascades of contradictory definitions; an attempt to clarify this twofold concept of name appears only in the section dedicated to the Father's Name. We are now in a better position to understand the famous passages on the Name of the Father.

§ II.1.5 The Name is the Word and the Son

The section about the Name begins with a similar paradoxical formula; the author makes play of two different senses of the word 'name'; it is necessary to quote the whole passage in spite of its length:

> And they (the things that created) have appeared for the glory and the joy of his name. Now the name of the Father is the Son. It is he (*i.e.* the Father) who first gave a name to the one who came forth from him, who was himself, [10]and he begot him as a son. He gave him his name which

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210 According to another Gnostic hymn (*Disc.8-9* 61.8) the name of the Grace *'is hidden inside of man'*.

belonged to him; he is the one to whom belongs all that exist around him, the Father. He is the name; his is the Son. It is possible for him to be seen. The name, however, is invisible because it alone is the mystery of the invisible which comes to ears that are completely filled with it by him. For indeed, the Father's name is not spoken, but is apparent through a Son.
In this way, then, the name is a great thing...

38.5-24.

The context goes on to elaborate the idea that the Word is the Son, and the Son is now the Name of the Father[211]. In the *EV* the Word and the Name of the Father are interchangeable synonyms; the name 'Jesus Christ' does not seem to be important[212]. Having defined the Son as the Word of the Father (and *vice versa*) the author is forced to explain his doctrine of the Name.

The Father, who is first said not to have any name (the latter term clearly designates title, epithet, word of the spoken language), is now said to have a Name, and this Name is the Son. The second part of the paradox has been hotly discussed by scholars[213]. It is commonly held that the idea of designating the Son as God's Name is related to biblical theology and the personification of the Divine Name. Some similar associations are common for New Testament theology[214] and early Church writings[215]. The Gnostic authors undoubtedly make use of New Testament Christological expressions, but this element is

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[211] *cf. I Ap.Jas* 4.22. The Son is also unnameable, but is said to receive many names and two of them from the Father.
[212] In the Gospel of Thomas, for example, apart from the given name 'Jesus Christ', the Lord has a true name that an ignorant person cannot hear.
[213] *v.* for details and bibliography *NHC*, vol. xxxiii p.117ff.
[214] *e.g. Phil* 2:9-12, *John* 12:28, 17:12, *Heb* 1:4, *Acts* 2:21.
[215] *e.g.* Hermas, *Sim.* 8.10.3, 9.13.2f, 9.14.5f, *I Clem.* 58.1, 60.4, *Did.* 10.2. *cf.* for details the investigation of H. Alfeyev, on whom I rely in relation to this question: *op.cit.*, vol. i, pp. 59-70.

foreign to the author's system, and he is forced to adopt this theme and to provide his audience with further explanations:

> Since the Father is uncreated, it is he alone who has brought him forth for himself as a name, before he set in order the aeons, that the name of the Father as lord should be over their head, which truly is the name, secure in his command (and) in perfect power. For the name is not one of words, and his name is <not> appellations, but it is invisible[216].
>
> 38.34-39.5

To what extent the suggestion that this passage as *'evidence of a very pure Jewish Christian theology'*[217] is correct is relatively unimportant. But what we are facing here is a crucial process into which the author dares to enter. He attempts to explain the archaic name-theology using the language of the period, and does so against the background of other thought forms. The author of the *EV* is keen to adopt the New Testament definition of the Son as the Name of God, but in his use of this term there is a conflict: name in Scripture and name in the Valentinian sense are actually two different words; he now attempts to solve the problem. S. Laeuchli emphasises that *'this desire to establish a certain relation of speech to the world of the New Testament is by no means a peripheral concern'*[218]. But to what extent is this attempt successful?

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[216] transl. from *NHC* v. ii, p.67; *cf.* K. Grobel, *The Gospel of Truth* (New York 1960), p.184: 'For the (concept) of "Name" does not belong to the class of *words*, nor His Name (to that) of appellations'.
[217] J. Daniélou, *Gospel*, p.157.
[218] S. Laeuchli, *op.cit.*, p.21.

The above-quoted passage seems to have an interesting parallel with *EV* 23.1ff, which illuminates the problem from another angle:

> This is the knowledge of the living book which he revealed to the aeons, at the end, as [his letters], reveal that they are not vowels nor are they consonants, so that one might read them and think of something foolish, but they are letters of the truth which they alone speak who know them. Each letter is a complete <thought> like a complete book, since they are letters written by the Unity, the Father having written them for the aeons in order that by means of his letters they should know the Father.
>
> Who, therefore, will be able to utter a name for him, the great name, except him alone to whom the name belongs and the sons of the name in whom rested the name of the Father, (who) in turn themselves rested in his name? Since the Father is unengendered, he alone is the one who begot him for him(self) as a name, before he brought forth the aeons, in order that the name of the Father should be over their head as lord, that is the name in truth, which is firm in his command through perfect power.
>
> 38.25-39.1

To sum up, in the Gnostic literature we come across something substantially different from the standard treatment of the matter. The treatment of name or divine name is taken by the Gnostics in a totally non-philosophical way. The standard questions so characteristic of any scientific discussion are omitted completely. It is highly likely that the original sources for Gnostic speculation about names were inspired by magical practice, biblical name-theology or even the general treatment of name in a mythological world outlook. At the same time, it is evident that the Gnostic authors did not feel obliged to correlate their 'name-theology' with any of the established sources

they were inspired by. From this point of view it becomes clear why Gnostic views of names, as well as their numerical interpretations, varied so dramatically from one school to another, and therefore provoked constant accusations of inconsistency and self-contradiction. We shall return to this issue later on in this section, when considering Irenaeus' preoccupation with the system of Marcus.

II.2 Justin the Martyr

Our special concern is with Justin and his ideas about words of language, together with his comprehension of the divine titles. J. Quasten once wrote: '*Analysing the theology of St. Justin, we must remember that we do not possess a complete and exhaustive description of the Christian faith from his pen*'[219]. At the same time, there is still serious dispute amongst Justin scholars about

a) the principal influences on the agenda and method of his theology

b) the extent to which one should consider Justin an apophatic thinker.

As M. Edwards pointes out, '*it seems for many scholars that there were two Justins*': one, who produced the *Dialogue,* can be truly identified as a biblical theologian, who evolves his doctrine on the basis of allegorical exegesis of the Scriptures; while '*the other Justin*' appears rather as a Christian philosopher, who often '*leaves his Bible at his back*'[220], shows more interest in the rational representation of Christian faith, and claims that Christianity is 'μόνην φιλοσοφίαν ἀσφαλῆ τε καὶ σύμφορον'.

Since P. Widdicombe[221] has recently disputed the point of R. Mortley who claims that '*Justin Martyr is the first Christian thinker to argue in any depth that God can be characterized in negative terms only*'[222] and the proposal of L. Barnard that in

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[219] Quasten, J. *Patrology* (Westminster 1950), vol. i, p. 207.
[220] Edwards,
[221] P. Widdicombe, *Justin Martyr's Apophaticism, StPt.* 26 (2001), p. 313.
[222] Mortley, R. *op.cit.*, vol. 2, p.33.

Justin's mind two concepts of God (Middle Platonic transcendent Supreme Being and the biblical immanent Deity) are unreconciled[223], a number of important problems like the question of revelation through the Son as a formal epistemological topic, and the extent to which Justin is concerned with analogy methodologically, has been reconsidered in a relatively new way.

In relation to our question, the remark of J. Quasten is more than true: perhaps, the absence of the original works of Justin on the one hand, and quite fragmentary[224] and disputable evidence about our issue derived from the works that survived on the other, seems to force some scholars to think that it is a profitless task to look for his account of language and name. In spite of the fact that in the writings of Justin we come across one of the earliest inquiries into the validity of the divine titles that are commonly applied to the Deity, in Justin's scholarship this aspect was mainly treated in the context of his 'apophaticism'[225] or his theology of divine names[226]. Justin's general teaching on the nature of name and language in the monographs dedicated to the history of mediaeval linguistic theories is, with very rare exceptions, traditionally ignored[227].

The need for this kind of analysis is, however, indisputable. Thus, for example, S. Laeuchli, who seems to make a great play of the idea of '*unreconciled*

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[223] L. Barnard, *Justin Martyr: his life and thought* (Cambridge 1967), p.83.
[224] for a discussion of the structure and argumentation consequences of the surviving authentic works of Justin *v.* T. Horner, *Listening to Trypho: uncovering the subtext of Justin's Dialogue* in *StPt.* vol. 36, pp. 249-255.
[225] as, for example, R. Mortley does in his *From Word to Silence*, vol.2, ch.2.
[226] *e.g.* еп. *Иларион* (Алфеев).*op.cit.*, vol. i, pp.61-70.
[227] Only Y. Edelshtein makes a casual remark about Justin's view on the relationship between a subject and its title – *v.* Ю. Эдельштейн, *Проблемы языка*, p.202f.

concepts in Justin mind', in his semantic analysis of Justin's theological terms advances the opinion that *'Justin is the classical instance of the semantic conflict arising from a Christian conversion'*[228] and classifies Justin's theological methods as *'the schizophrenia in this linguistic situation'*[229].

In this section, however, I shall attempt to answer the question as to what Justin really thinks about the words of human language; I shall argue that Justin's general teaching on the words of human language is not isolated from his theology of divine titles, while he already appears to be aware that the mystical theology of the name 'Jesus' should be examined separately as a very special phenomenon of early Church liturgical life, and shows remarkable accuracy there. I shall suggest that although one can scarcely reconstruct his original system in full, it is at least not right to regard his theory of the divine titles as something that emerged unsystematically or 'schizophrenically' from his philosophical background.

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[228] S. Laeuchli, *op.cit.*, p. 178.
[229] *ibid.*, p. 184.

§ II.2.1 Language: word, name, sense, and essence

In the *Dialogue* when Justin speaks about the nature of the Logos[230], he resorts to an analogy between the manner of the Logos' origin and the origin of words[231] that is often ignored by the scholars who analyse Justin's line of argumentation about the status of religious language and his apophaticism. The following paragraph is of special interest:

> But do we not see that this is much the same as takes place within ourselves? For when we put forward any word, we beget a word, not putting it forth by scission, as though the word within us was diminished.
>
> *Dial.* 61.2[232]

The suggestion with which I start my analysis of this section is a simple one: as will be shown, for Justin all titles that describe the divine are without

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[230] I shall purposely leave aside here this central aspect of Justin's system in order to look at it in full later; suffice to say that at the earliest stages of Patristic theology the comprehension of the Son as the divine Logos, as well as the exegesis of *e.g. Gen* 1:3ff (καὶ εἶπεν ὁ θεός γενεθήτω φῶς καὶ ἐγένετο φῶς) takes on a special 'non-linguistic' nature of the Logos and non-verbal character of 'the creation by word'.

[231] There are many similar examples in the literature of the time: Tertullian, *Apologia*, 21; *Prax.*, 8; Lactantius, *Inst. div.*, iv.29.; Irenaeus, however, is already more precise concerning such kinds of parallel – *AH*, ii.13; *cf.* Theophilus Apol. *Ad Autol.*, i.3 and his explanation of the names λόγος, φῶς, φρόνησις, *etc.* Theophilus' account is an interesting instance of how these kinds of analogies are related to the sphere of the cataphatic definitions of the divine. Justin, however, do not seem to use analogy as a systematic method (as will be observed in Clement of Alexandria). Justin seems to attach importance to this comparison between the manner of the Logos' origin on the one hand, and words of human speech and fire on the other. Tatian, who was his disciple, repeats his analogy verbatim – Tatianus, *Oratio ad Græcos*, 5: 'I myself, for instance, talk, and you hear; yet, certainly, I who converse do not become destitute of speech (λόγος) by the transmission of speech, but by the utterance of my voice I endeavour to reduce to order the unarranged matter in your minds. And as the Logos begotten in the beginning, begat in turn our world, having first created for Himself the necessary matter, so also I, in imitation of the Logos, being begotten again, and having become possessed of the truth, am trying to reduce to order the confused matter which is kindred with myself'.

[232] trans. of A. Lukyn Williams from *ANF* vol. i.

fail words of our language; it is, therefore, important first to make clear what Justin really thinks about the words of human language.

The passage, however, is a difficult one; Justin, of course, is far from confusing the Logos and words of human language; his only point here is that the manner of the Son's origin does not 'lessen' the nature of the Father, just as human speech does not somehow 'lessen' or 'exhaust' human reason. The word *logos* in relation to human beings signifies here both the thinking power of man or his reason (ὁ ἐν ἡμῖν λόγος)[233] which produces ideas, and the manifestation of these ideas that are the words of human language (οἱ λόγοι τινές); in fact, Justin passes from one meaning to the other[234]. Although he speaks about the words of human language in their totality, special attention should be paid to his emphasis on pronunciation, *i.e.* on the phonemic manifestation of words. Literally, the phonetic representation (ἡ πρόβασις) of words (οἱ λόγοι τινές) is a result of their genesis (τὸ γέννημα) in the depth of man's reason (ὁ ἐν ἡμῖν λόγος); literally, men beget the words (γεννῶσιν τοὺς λόγους) without any 'quantitative change' of the νοῦς.

Before turning to a more detailed examination of this idea, it seems reasonable to scrutinise some of his other theories. It has been pointed out by Y.

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[233] Or more specifically ὁ νοῦς.(Greek text acc. to ed. of E. J. Goodspeed, in *Die ältesten Apologeten* (Göttingen 1915)).
[234] *cf.* transl. of A. Roberts & J. Donaldson, and their comment *ANF* vol i. n223.

Andia[235] that Justin makes a distinction between ὄνομα θετόν *i.e.* 'a given' or 'proper name' (just as ἴδια ὄνομα amongst the Grammarians) and ὄνομα κοινόν (or πρόσρησις, προσαγόρευμα, κλῆσις, *etc.*); the latter group of terms can be better translated as 'a general notion', 'title', or 'epithet' in the broad sense of the word. In the first instance, Justin would strongly object to any idea of divine language: his line of reasoning is that the gods of the Greek pantheon are nothing but demons, who deceived people, usurped the *title* 'θεός' (*i.e.* a word of human language already in use), and appropriated different proper names according to their desire and choice[236]. Undoubtedly, both ὄνομα θετόν and ὄνομα κοινόν belong to the sphere of human language – they are begotten by reason, but the difference between these two notions is fundamental.

Let us consider now what Justin really thinks about human words. The words of our language designate a subject or, in his elegant philosophical reservation, a class of subjects[237]. For Justin the genesis of words is restricted to the sphere of human nature only because, as has already been mentioned, language for Justin cannot be an original divine invention or a supernatural gift. It is especially interesting that he does not follow the Philonic tradition that attempted to synthesise the Jewish idea of a perfect primordial language (*i.e.*

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[235] *v.* Y. Andia, *Jésus, Seigneur et Christ. Trinité et Christologie chez Irénée de Lyon et Basile de Césarée* in ***Paper at the International encounter of Patrologists of East and West on the Theme 'Christ according to the Greek and Latin Fathers of the First Millennium in Europe'*** (Vienna, 7-10.06.2001).

[236] *Ap.*, 5.

[237] *cf. Dial.*, 42: Such a thing as you may witness in the body: although the members are enumerated as many, all are called *one*, and are a *body*. For, indeed, a commonwealth and a church, though many individuals in number are in fact as one, called and addressed by one appellation (τῇ μιᾷ κλήσει). Here and *infra* trans. of A. Roberts & J. Donaldson (*ANF* vol. 1).

Hebrew) with the Platonic concept of the notorious πρῶται φωναί that were later spoiled. It is indicative as well that in his dispute with Hellenistic-minded opponents, Justin does not show much interest in the phoneme and etymology of words that, as we have seen, was extremely popular in the Hellenistic science that followed Stoic philology[238]: whenever he deals with a foreign word, he merely gives a translation from Hebrew (or Syriac)[239].

In the *First Apology,* Justin accuses Roman prosecutors of prosecuting Christians only on the basis of their title (*i.e.* ὄνομα κοινόν or κλῆσις 'Christians') and endeavours to demonstrate philosophically that this state of affairs contradicts not only the general principles of justice and Roman law, but also logic and common sense. Strictly speaking, this is not an original idea: the reasons for the persecution, and the reason why the name 'Christian' was hated[240] were different and Justin is entirely aware of that. It seems that he undertakes a philosophical treatment of word in its relation to its meaning (ἡ σημασία) to make a smoother rhetorical transition from the *argumentum ad absurdum* (the persecution of Christians on the basis of their title only is ridiculous and absurd) to the *argumentum ad hominem* (the government instead of protecting and looking after them, puts to death its best and most law-

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[238] In contrast, for example, with some Church writers, Justin in his treatment of the word ὁ θεός says that it is 'not a name but incomprehensible knowledge that is implanted in the nature of man' (*Ap.sec.*, 6) does not resort to the Stoic-like etymology of the word: *cf.* Theophilus, *Ad Autolycum,* lib. i, 4;2ff: θεὸς δὲ λέγεται διὰ τὸ τεθεικέναι τὰ πάντα ἐπὶ τῇ ἑαυτοῦ ἀσφαλείᾳ, καὶ διὰ τὸ θέειν· τὸ δὲ θέειν ἐστὶν τὸ τρὲχειν καὶ κινεῖν καὶ ἐνεργεῖν καὶ τρέφειν, καὶ προνοεῖν καὶ κυβερνᾶν καὶ ξωοποιεῖν τὰ πάντα.

[239] *cf.* Justin's explanation of the word 'Satan' – *Dial.*, 103.

[240] *cf.* Theophilus, *Ad Autol.*, lib.i, 1: Theophilus convinces Autolycus that the title 'Christian' is not an outrage.

abiding citizens). His point, however, is that as there is no ontological or natural relationship between a subject and its title, the fact that a thing bears a particular title, or a subject (a class of subjects) appropriates a particular ὄνομα κοινόν, cannot be regarded as a criterion for judgement either juridical or dialectical. To articulate his point in the language of Plato, Justin does not believe that the notorious ὀρθότητά τινα τῶν ὀνομάνων are somehow related to words themselves, and, therefore, the criterion for judgement can be derived neither from a phonetic (etymological) analysis, nor from the ἡ σημασία of a word (Christians) that is uncritically associated with them in the popular mind[241]. Words are determined by man, and are an artefact of human nature, but what is the nature of this determining, a merely Aristotelian κατὰ συνθήκην? I think that it would be a grave error to assume that in the case of Justin's treatment of language one comes across any adoption of Aristotle. To all appearances, Justin goes much further, stressing a very important aspect of word:

> By the mere application of a name, nothing is decided, either good or evil, apart from the actions implied in the name; and indeed, so far at least as one may judge from the name we are accused of, we are most excellent people.
>
> For from a name neither praise nor punishment could reasonably spring, unless something excellent or base in action be proved. And those among yourselves who are accused you do not punish before they are convicted; but in our case you receive the name as proof against us, and this although, so far as the name goes, you ought rather to punish our accusers.

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241 *cf.* his joke in *Ap.*, 4 based on a pun on χριστιανοί and κρηστότατοι.

Certainly, ὄνομα κοινόν cannot be a criterion for judgement; furthermore, the fact that a subject bears no name cannot be of absolute significance. Originally, the ὄνομα κοινόν, being produced by human reason, has its fixed meaning (ἡ σημασία) that is associated with the phoneme, but a title as such can be applied to a subject in a proper and improper way. If, therefore, the ὄνομα κοινόν is applied properly, the ἡ σημασία of a title correctly determines the subject or the group of subjects, and distinguishes it from other subjects or groups; but if it is attached by error the title is misleading and deceptive. What, therefore, can be regarded as a safe criterion for judgement? Answering this question, Justin points out that the criterion for determining whether a subject bears or appropriates a name or title correctly is only related to the sphere of ὁ ἐν ἡμῖν λόνος, *i.e.* to the same organ or agency that begets words.

He exemplifies this idea in full: the title θεός designates an incomprehensible concept of the deity that is supernaturally implanted into the human mind[242], but demons have usurped and appropriated this title; the title 'philosopher' might be applied to the really wise and to those who pretend to be wise; finally, τὸ ὄνομα κοινόν 'χριστιανοί' is appropriated by both true members of the Church and some Gnostics; the former bear this title correctly

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242 It is important to underline that for Justin it is not a word that is somehow imprinted in the human mind, but the concept! Thus what is *prima facie* a small philosophical difference will later be of crucial importance for our final formula of the Christian view on names.

for they *act as Christians by following the teaching of Christ*, while the latter have usurped the title and are called and considered to be Christians by mistake[243]. In order to persuade his opponents Justin recommends them, in the first instance, to look at Christian doctrine (this is why Justin attaches a brief exposition of Christian faith and liturgical practice), and then to make themselves acquainted with his σύνταγμα κατὰ πασῶν τῶν γεγενημένων αἱρέσεων in order to learn more about heretics and to distinguish them from true members of the Church.

Let us now return to Justin's idea that the words of language are begotten by human nature. As a name or word (when it is taken abstractly) cannot be a criterion for judgement, unless one regards the actions by his own ὁ ἐν ἡμῖν λόγος (Justin appeals to τὰ ἔργα, τὰ πράγματα)[244] or to the way of social life – ἡ πολιτεία), it seems that his idea of the genesis of words comes from following a dialectical paradigm: the generation of word is caused by two agencies. First, it is the subject in its manifestation; second, it is human reason. ὁ ἐν ἡμῖν λόγος – or ὁ νοῦς – grasps the subject by dint of perception (δι᾽ αἰσθήσεως ἔλαβεν[245]), comprehends its ἡ σημασία from the coming-to-be of the subject and gives out or begets τὸ ὄνομα κοινόν in accordance with this sense. Unlike in Aristotelian theory, the phoneme of word is not arbitrary or random; its genesis takes place in the sphere of human nature (later on this

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[243] *cf. Dial.*, 35: Gnostics are confessors of Christ in name only (ὀνόματι μόνον), just as pagans inscribe the divine name θεός upon the works of their own hands.
[244] *cf. Dial.*, 103: ...the devil, and by Jesus is addressed as Satan, showing that a compounded name was acquired by him from the deeds which he (the devil) performed.
[245] *Dial.*, 4.

general standpoint will be reinforced by appealing to the corruption of the man's nature) and to some certain extent the phoneme bears imprints of both the subject and human nature.

The passage, unfortunately, is somewhat opaque and one should go through it with care: his use of *præsens* suggests that he speaks about the power of speech; perhaps, Justin does not divorce the generation of word and speaking. Special attention now should be paid to the epistemological implication that he mentions in *Dial.*, 4. Everything that can be grasped by the human senses or, in relation to abstract matters, 'by learning, or by some employment'[246], can be designated by name. Human nature, however, does not have 'such, and so great power of our mind' that it can perceive, cognise, and name the divine unless – Justin's reservation – 'it is instructed by the Holy Spirit'[247].

§ II.2.2 Justin on divine epithets

Inasmuch as the capacity of human language to define God is limited, this limitation extends to all divine titles without exception. Justin expresses the idea of the transcendence of the Deity by using many negative titles: God is

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[246] *Dial.*, 3: ἐκ μαθήσεως προσγίνονται ἡμῖν ἢ διατριβῆς τινος.
[247] *Dial.*, 4: Ἔστιν οὖν, φησί, τῷ νῷ ἡμῶν τοιαύτη τις καὶ τοσαύτη δύναμις, ἢ μὴ τὸ ὂν δι᾽ αἰσθήσεως ἔλαβεν; ἢ τὸν θεὸν ἀνθρώπου νοῦς ὄψεταί ποτε μὴ ἁγίῳ πνεύματι κεκοσμημένος;

ἀγέννητος, ἀπαθής, ἄῤῥητος, ἄτρεπος, ἀνωνόμαστος, κτλ[248]. His positive characteristics of the Father are traditional, and most of them are taken from the Bible *e.g.* ὁ θεός, ὁ τοῦ πάντου πατρός καὶ δημιουργός, ὁ δεσπότης, ὁ ποιητής, ὁ ἀεὶ ὤν, κτλ[249]. A more recent analysis of Justin's apophatic approach to describing the Father, undertaken by P. Widdicombe, shows that Justin does not give strongly pronounced preferences to any group of titles. Even R. Mortley, who endeavours to represent Justin as the first Christian apophatic theologian, has to admit that he is not concerned with any systematic use of the *via negativa*:

> *Language fails in the effort to describe God the Father, but we do not find in Justin the systematic use of this failure that we find in later Platonism, or the step by step method which we shall see in Clement, and which is already familiar in Middle Platonism*[250].

For Justin, therefore, all the titles are approximately of the same value. Even when he makes an attempt to compare the divine names and to choose the best, he resorts to the title ὁ θεός rather than one of many apophatic definitions like ἀγέννητος or even ἀνωνόμαστος[251].

In his theory of divine names Justin bases himself on the same distinction between proper name and general notion. He often points out that strictly

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[248] P. Widdicombe argues for the Middle Platonist influences here, and in particular points out similar characteristics of the divine transcendence in Alcinous (*Didascalicus*, 10.3ff) – P. Widdicombe, *op.cit.*, p.316.
[249] *v.* for details E. Goodenough, *op.cit.*, pp. 123-138.
[250] Mortley, R. *op.cit.*, vol. 2, p.33.
[251] *Dial.*, 6.

speaking the Supreme Being is namelessness. What kind of namelessness does he mean in the following passage?

> ...He accepts those only who imitate the excellences which reside in Him, temperance, and justice, and philanthropy, and as many virtues as are peculiar to a God who is called by no proper name (τῷ μηδενὶ ὀνόματι θετῷ καλουμένῳ).
>
> *Ap. I*, 10[252].

Very often this assertion concerning the unnameability of the Father was reduced by Justin scholars to the following categorical syllogism:

$$\frac{\text{(every A is B)} \qquad \text{(C is not A)}}{\text{(C is not B)}}$$[253]

Thus, for example, R. Mortley[254] and E. Goodenough[255] suggest that the concept of God's or the Father's namelessness in Justin's theory is related to the ἀγέννητος-principle: God is unbegotten and therefore he is unnameable. P. Widdicombe, however, treats this suggestion more carefully[256]. Although there is a passage in which Justin seems to identify the divine namelessness with this superior principle, nevertheless, he nowhere considers the title ἀγέννητος as a fundamental term. In other words, Justin does not seem to infer the divine namelessness from the premise that he is unbegotten.

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[252] *v.* also *Apol.*, 61.
[253] *i.e.* every generated creature (A) has a name and is nameable (B) the Father (C) is ungenerated (is no B). The Father is unnameable; the Father is not nameable; the Father does not have a name (C is not B).
[254] Mortley, R. *op.cit.*, vol. 2, p. 34.
[255] E. Goodenough, *op.cit.*, p. 130.
[256] P. Widdicombe, *op.cit.*, p. 316f.

What Justin means when he speaks about the namelessness of the Father is any 'given' or proper name – ὄνομα θετόν? God has many titles, but they are all τὰ ὀνόματα κοινά; what, however, he does not have (and, unlike gods and goddesses of the Greek pantheon, cannot have) is <u>ὄνομα θετόν</u>. The famous passage (*Apol.sec.*, 6) should be seen in this context; first, Justin argues that the very fact that the Greek gods have proper names means (*e.g.* ὁ Ποσειδῶν, ὁ Πλούτων, *etc.*) that they cannot be regarded as deities, because the action of naming implies a master who names and a slave who is named; secondly, he demonstrates that, philosophically speaking, the Christian monotheist theologising makes more sense:

> But to the Father of all who is unbegotten there is no name given. For by whatever name He be called, He has as His elder the person who gives Him the name[257].

Nevertheless, for Justin the divine namelessness is much more an independent premise (which is similar to, for instance, ἀπαθής, ἄῤῥητος, ἄτρεπος, *κτλ.*) rather than a formal corollary of his unbegotten nature. The title ἀγέννητος, therefore, is just one of many appellations and has relatively equal value; that is why in his list of the most common epithets for the Father Justin even leaves ἀγέννητος out:

> But these words 'Father', and 'God', and 'Creator', and 'Lord', and 'Master', <u>are not names, but appellations derived from His good deeds and functions</u>[258].

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[257] Ὄνομα δὲ τῷ πάντων πατρὶ θετὸν, ἀγεννήτῳ ὄντι, οὐκ ἔστιν ᾧ γὰρ ἂν καὶ ὀνομά τι προσαγορεύηται, πρεσβύτερον ἔχει τὸν θέμενον τὸ ὄνομα.

loc.cit.

Having considered the titles of the Deity, Justin rejects them, for they all fail to serve as a special proper name for God. In his teaching about divine epithets Justin follows his general dialectic of τὰ ὀνόματα κοινά: all the available and appropriate locutions for God do not refer to himself (as to some extent ὄνομα θετόν could do), but to his deeds, functions, powers or to his activity in relation to the Logos (the Father) or to the creation (the Creator). Moreover, when Justin, as previously stated, examines the most sacred of all divine titles, he chooses the word 'θεός', but still treats it as τὸ ὄνομα κοινόν, which must be an artefact of human nature:

> ...also the appellation 'God' is not a name, but an opinion implanted in the nature of men of a thing that can hardly be explained[259].
>
> *loc.cit.*

The word ὁ θεός is not, therefore, a proper name for God (resembling the Greek ὁ Ποσειδῶν or ὁ Πλούτων), but still τὸ ὄνομα κοινόν that, clearly, has its fixed meaning and, thereby manifests a human concept of the Deity that is supernaturally revealed to man or, following Justin's expression, mystically implanted into human nature (ἡ φύσις). One should note that Justin shows remarkable accuracy here: the idea of God is implanted into human nature (the

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[258] οὐκ ὀνόματά ἐστιν, ἀλλ᾽ ἐκ τῶν εὐποιϊῶν καὶ τῶν ἔργων προσρήσεις. *cf.* Theophilus, *Ad Autol.*, i; 5: τὸν δὲ θεὸν οὐ βούλει σὺ νοεῖθαι διὰ ἔργων καὶ δυνάμεων;

[259] ὃν τρόπον καὶ τὸ θεὸς προσαγόρευμα οὐκ ὄνομά ἐστιν, ἀλλὰ πράγματος δυσεξηγήτου ἔμφυτος τῇ φύσει τῶν ἀνθρώπων δόξα.

revelatory activity of the Logos), but the possession of this concept cannot be considered as totally safe and reliable knowledge of God, due to the corruption of human nature. Human beings can access the true teaching about the divine, and even see God if they are prepared by the Holy Spirit[260], but what God really is remains everlastingly incomprehensible for human beings[261].

In order to understand Justin's account of titles applied to the Logos, it is important to bear in mind that according to his exegesis of the Scriptures, the God of the Old Testament epiphanies who revealed himself to the patriarchs, who spoke to Moses and thereafter established the Covenant with Israel, was the divine person *that is different* (ἕτερος) *from the unbegotten Father* (or the Creator – τὰ πάντα ποιήσαντος θεοῦ) in number (ἀριθμῶ)[262]. For Justin the Lord of Old Testament history is necessarily the Son:

> Therefore neither Abraham, nor Isaac, nor Jacob, nor any other man, saw the Father and ineffable Lord of all, and also of Christ, but [saw] Him who was according to His will His Son, being God, and the Angel because He ministered to His will; whom also it pleased Him to be born man by the Virgin; who also was fire when He conversed with Moses from the bush. Since, unless we thus comprehend the Scriptures, it must follow that the Father and Lord of all had not been in heaven when what Moses wrote took place: 'And the Lord rained upon Sodom fire and brimstone from the Lord out of heaven…'
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> *Dial.*, 127

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[260] *Dial.*, 4: ἢ τὸν θεὸν ἀνθρώπου νοῦς ὄψεταί ποτε μὴ ἁγίῳ πνεύματι κεκοσμημένος;
[261] P. Preobrazhenskiy translates δυσεξήγητος as 'unexplainable' (неизъяснимый) – *Сочиненія св. Іустина Философа и Мученика*, пер. П. Преображенского (Moscow 1892), p.110.
[262] *v. e.g. Dial.*, 56; 86; 129.

Justin's exegetical principles are, of course, beyond our scope[263], but in the course of his controversy against Jewish diaspora-theology he argues against their exegetical methods, and classifies them as entirely unacceptable superstitions. Thus, for example, he emphasises that the name ὁ ὤν is one of the Son's titles[264]; he regards it as blasphemy to state that the God of biblical history is the Creator, or that the Royal psalms are dedicated to King Solomon rather than to the Son. Justin uses many names[265] to speak about the Son: some of them are clearly taken from the Scriptures, while others (such as ἡμέρα, φῶς) may have been in liturgical use in his time. Although he nowhere calls the Logos πολυώνυμος there can no longer be any doubt that in his account of the titles of the Logos Justin follows a Philonic tradition[266]. The epithets he attributes to the Logos are mainly cataphatic; Justin says that the Logos received all these titles from the Father:

> He Himself received from the Father the titles of King, and Christ, and Priest, and Angel, and such like other titles which He bears or did bear.
>
> *Dial.*, 86

The Logos is addressed with these titles because all these appellations designate various activities of the Son in relation to the Father and to creation;

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[263] For a special investigation of this question *v.* W. Shotell, *The biblical exegesis of Justin Martyr* (London 1965).
[264] P. Widdicombe is correct in refuting the suggestion of L. Abramowski that in the baptismal formula (*Ap.*, 61) Justin has in view the divine name Yahweh – P. Widdicombe, *op.cit.*, 314.
[265] For a detailed analysis of the titles Justin applies to the Logos, *v.* E. Goodenough, *op.cit.*, p.168ff.
[266] Philo, *De conf. Ling.*, 146. Drummond argues for a Stoic origin of the term πολυώνυμος *v.* *Philo*, v.1, 88, 2, 206, 270.

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as soon as all these titles are words of human language, the Son *'has received these epithets from the Father'* in the sense that he has received from him the power to act in accordance with the Father's will, and according to different aspects of his activity the Logos appropriates certain titles. These titles, therefore, are not literally of divine origin, but are words of human language, and are used by analogy with some phenomena of the created world. In explaining why the Logos is addressed by particular titles, Justin follows his original logic: the divine epithets for the Son are still τὰ ὀνόματα κοινά. Their significance is relative rather than absolute, because they do not refer to the very nature of the Logos, and one cannot totally comprehend the divine nature of the Son from these names.

> God begat before all creatures a Beginning, [who was] a certain rational power [proceeding] from Himself, who is called by the Holy Spirit[267], now 'the Glory of the Lord', now 'the Son', again 'Wisdom', again 'an Angel', then 'God', and then 'Lord' and 'Logos'; and on another occasion He calls Himself 'Captain', when He appeared in human form to Joshua the son of Nave (Nun). For He can be called by all those names, since He ministers to the Father's will, and since He was begotten of the Father by an act of will.
>
> *Dial.*, 61

Next, he distinguishes those divine names of the Son that are applied by analogy (ἐν παραβοῇ) with some objects of the created world (*e.g.* ἡμέρα, φῶς, λίθος, *etc.*) from the titles which are in fact proper names of Old Testament history (*e.g.* Ἰακώβ, Ἰσραήλ); he classifies the latter group of names as

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[267] Justin, clearly, speaks about the titles attributed in Scripture.

appellations in the figurative sense (ἐν τροπολογίᾳ). This methodological distinction, however, does not affect his general mode of interpretation: as each of the groups of names has meaning (δύναμις)[268] that emphasises various deeds of the Logos, Justin resorts to allegories based on the interpretation of these various meanings. The name 'Israel', for example, is originally one of the titles of the Logos; in Hebrew (as Justin thinks[269]) it means 'a man that overcomes power', because that is what Christ would do when he became man[270]. The method of interpretation applied to the ἐν τροπολογίᾳ-group of titles is similar to what has been observed above in the *Dial.*, 61 when Justin deals with epithets that are applied ἐν παραβολῇ.

Every name has meaning; there are no meaningless words. R. Mortley is incorrect when he says that for Justin the word 'God' does not have any meaning[271]. The word 'Christ' means 'an anointed one'; the proper name 'Jesus' means 'saviour'. In *Ap.sec.* 6. Justin draws a parallel between the word 'θεός' and 'Χριστός'. The word 'θεός' fails to cast light on the divine reality; the title itself merely arises from the impression that is supernaturally implanted into the minds of men and designates the notion of the Deity. Similarly, the word 'Χριστός' has an ordinary meaning ('an anointed one'), but when applied to the Son its meaning (σημασία) becomes unknown or rather, incomprehensible:

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[268] *e.g. Dial.*, 125: ...τίς ἡ δύναμις τοῦ Ἰσραὴλ ὀνόματος.
[269] On Justin's acquaintance with Hebrew *v.* J. Kaye, *Some accounts of the writings and opinions of Justin Martyr* (Cambridge 1829), p. 19.
[270] *loc.cit.*
[271] Mortley, R. *op.cit.*, vol. 2, p.35.

> ...the Word who also was with Him and was begotten before the works when at first He created and arranged all things by Him, is called Christ, in reference to His being anointed and God's ordering all things through Him; this name itself also contains an unknown significance (ἄγνωστον σημασίαν); as also the appellation 'God' is not a name, but an opinion implanted in the nature of men of a thing that can hardly be explained...

In the case of the name 'Jesus', however, we, says Justin, are dealing with a proper name. His idea is that ὄνομα θετόν differs from an ordinary word, so to speak, semantically. A proper name has an etymological meaning ('saviour') *i.e.* the Hebrew meaning of the word itself; simultaneously, it points to the person:

> Ἰησοῦς δὲ καὶ ἀνθρώπου καὶ σωτῆρος ὄνομα καὶ σημασίαν ἔχει.
>
> *Ibid.*

The word 'Jesus', therefore, means that the Lord Jesus Christ is the Saviour and became man. The reason why, in contrast to the Father who does not have a proper name, the Son has the name 'Jesus', that is only related to the act of the incarnation:

> But 'Jesus', His name as man and Saviour, has also significance. For He was made man also, as we before said, having been conceived according to the will of God the Father, for the sake of believing men, and for the destruction of the demons.

Christologically, the name 'Jesus' points to the human nature of the incarnated Logos; and only in this sense is the name 'Jesus' truly the divine name. We are now perhaps in a better position to understand Justin's teaching on the name 'Jesus'.

§ II.2.3 The divine name 'Jesus'

The numerous quotations from the Old Testament that Justin makes in the course of his controversy with Tryphon and his companions contain a great many name-theology Hebraisms. Justin's theological language is definitely influenced by these Semitic expressions: Jacob was *blessed* by one of the Logos' titles; a number of special and important characters of the Scriptures were renamed by God himself (by the Logos); the spiritual life of the Church is inseparable from the unique name 'Jesus'.

According to Justin's interpretation of the Old Testament, the theology of the divine name is the theology of the divine name 'Jesus'; his allegorical constructions for the names of the biblical characters are subordinated to the idea of the mystical manifestation of the divine name 'Jesus' in the history of humankind. His theological view on history, therefore, is based not only on the concept of the manifestation of the Logos, but equally on the mysterious revelation of the name 'Jesus'. Thus, the God who revealed himself to the patriarchs and to Moses is the divine Logos who was to become man; the divine name that according to the book of *Exodus* was announced to Moses was 'Jesus'[272]. God revealed the name 'Jesus' in order to let Israelites enjoy it by offering sacrifices; and now Christians worship the Father through the name

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[272] *Dial.*, 75: 'Moreover, in the book of Exodus we have also perceived that the name of God Himself which, He says, was not revealed to Abraham or to Jacob, was 'Jesus', and was declared mysteriously through Moses'.

'Jesus'[273]. Therefore the Jews, who commonly hold that Moses spoke with an unnameable God, make a grave mistake, and show their absolute ignorance about the matter[274], because they do not distinguish the Father from the Son.

His account of names in general when used for teaching the Father's unnameability is clear, but when Justin advances a theory in the *Dialogue* that the Logos who is equally God has a proper name 'Jesus', he feels a need to discuss this idea explicitly. The reason why, in contrast with the Father who is unnameable, the Son has the proper name 'Jesus' is the fact of the incarnation: everywhere in his writings the Logos is Jesus Christ. This sort of transition can also be traced in the *First Apology*: the name 'Jesus' has the meaning 'saviour', and apart from pointing to the human nature of the incarnated Logos 'of whom every race of men were partakers'[275] it designates his soteriological activity in relation to humankind.

The key to understanding his doctrine of the divine name 'Jesus' is to some extent related to his general distinction between the 'proper name' that points to a person and the 'general notion', 'title' or 'word', that merely designates a subject or group of subjects. For Justin, for example, the biblical custom of renaming makes very important sense in the light of his doctrine of the name 'Jesus'. Having elected Abram the Lord changes his name and the

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[273] *Dial.*, 110; 116.
[274] *Ap.*, 63.
[275] *Ap.*, 46: ... οὗ πᾶν γένος ἀνθρώπων μετέσχε.

name of his wife[276]; next, he changes the name of Jacob and blesses him with the title 'Israel', which in turn is one of the Logos' names[277]; the meaning of all these actions is the following:

> And when it is said that He changed the name of one of the apostles to Peter; and when it is written in the memoirs of Him that this so happened, as well as that He changed the names of other two brothers, the sons of Zebedee, to Boanerges, which means 'sons of thunder'; this was an announcement of the fact that it was He by whom Jacob was called Israel, and Oshea called Jesus (Joshua), under whose name the people who survived of those that came from Egypt were conducted into the land promised to the patriarchs.
>
> *Dial.*, 106

Similar principles of interpretation appear when Justin turns to a number of biblical passages in which the names of the biblical characters are spelled in the text of the *LXX* as Ἰησοῦς[278]. The son of Nave (Nun) was renamed by Moses and received the name 'Jesus' (Joshua) in order to symbolise the eschatological kingdom of Christ (*Dial.*, 113)[279]. The manifestation of the name 'Jesus' takes place long before the incarnation of the Logos. The name 'Jesus', according to Justin, is a mysterious symbol of the divine *oikonomia*[280]. In battle against the Amalekites, the Israelites were under the command of the son of Nave, who was renamed beforehand, receiving the name Ἰησοῦς. Therefore, the name 'Jesus' was mysteriously 'in the forefront of the battle', whereas Moses who

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[276] *Dial.*, 113.
[277] *cf. Dial.*, 106, 125.
[278] for the details of the spelling of these names in the Hebrew text *v.* еп. Иларион (Алфеев), *op.cit.*, vol. 1, p.62f.
[279] *cf. Dial.*, 115.
[280] *cf. Dial.*, 120: ...κατὰ τὴν οἰκονομίαν.

prayed to God, stretching out both hands, symbolised the Cross and imparted the power of the Cross to the Israelite army. Having the divine name 'in the forefront of the battle' and being armed with the power of the Cross, the Israelites defeated the Amalekites:

> For it was not because Moses so prayed that the people were stronger, but because, while one who bore the name of Jesus (Joshua) was in the forefront of the battle, he himself made the sign (τὸ σημεῖον) of the cross.
>
> *Dial.*, 90

> Now this took place in the case of both those holy men and prophets of God that you may perceive how one of them could not bear up both the mysteries (τὰ μυστήρια): I mean, the type of the cross (τὸν τύπον τοῦ σταυροῦτον) and the type of the name (τύπον τῆς τοῦ ὀνόματος ἐπικλήσεως).
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> *Dial.*, 111

The revelation of these two symbols was an action by which God revealed before the proper time the power of the divine name and the power of the Cross, in order to confer grace upon Israel.

Justin's theology of the name 'Jesus' is remarkably close to the New Testament. As H. Alfeyev illustrates, this name, according to Justin, is the focus of the liturgical life of the Church: this name is the source of spiritual enlightenment and divine gifts; in the name of Jesus Christians receive absolution and participate in the Eucharist, they are partakers of his name and thereby are members of his Church *etc*[281]. Moreover, Justin goes on to assume

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[281] Алфеев, *И. op.cit.*, vol. 1, p.68.

that the power of the name 'Jesus' might act irrespective of the man who invokes it:

> For every demon, when exorcised in the name of this very Son of God – who is the First-born of every creature, who became man by the Virgin, who suffered, and was crucified under Pontius Pilate by your nation, who died, who rose from the dead, and ascended into heaven – is overcome and subdued. But though you exorcise any demon in the name of any of those who were amongst you – either kings, or righteous men, or prophets, or patriarchs – it will not be subject to you. But if any of you exorcise it in [the name of] the God of Abraham, and the God of Isaac, and the God of Jacob (Justin clearly means the name 'Jesus'), it will perhaps be subject to you.
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> *Dial.*, 85

To sum up, in the writings of Justin we come across the first distinctively Christian speculation on the nature of language in relation to the theology of some particular divine titles commonly used to describe the Deity. In Justin's teaching about word, meaning, and divine titles we can trace a number of topics that will determine the agenda of subsequent theological discussions. His view of words and their meaning has the *anthropological* aspect of language at its head: man's language is an artefact of human nature. It is significant that such an assumption appeared in a Christian thinker. The universal character of the Christian faith on the one hand, and Christian anthropology on the other, has engendered a substantially new concept of language.

From the time of the Apologists, the Patristic understanding of language became anthropological. We can only guess to what extent Justin developed this idea, but it is not difficult to see that his premises potentially suggest a

whole theory of language. I shall show in the next section that what Justin attempts to demonstrate to his opponents dialectically, is already taken for granted by Ireneaus. In the Latin West another Christian intellectual utters a statement with which linguistic theories will agree only at the end of the eighteenth century: human languages are, of course, extremely different, but the essence of language is always the same:

> The soul is not a boon from heaven to Latins and Greeks alone. Man is the one name belonging to every nation upon earth: there is one soul and many tongues, one spirit and various sounds; every country has its own speech, but the subjects of speech are common to all[282].
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> Tertullianus, *De testimonio animæ*, 6.

As Y. Edelstein indicates, this idea is formulated in the following way: 'every language is a variant of the realisation of the one invariant *i.e.* indivisible human language as a phenomenon'[283]. All words, including divine titles, are generated by human reason; it is a profitless task, therefore, to put forward some of them at the expense of others: to advance, for example, ἀγέννητος or ἀνωνόμαστος at the cost of θεός and *vice versa*. Justin does not do so either, as he does not stress the ineffability of the Father at the expense of the transcendent status of the Logos, neither does he stress the incomprehensibility of the Father at the expense of the Son's or the Holy Spirit's ability to reveal the

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[282] *...propria cuique genti loquela, sed loquelae materia communis*. Russian anonymous translators: '..., but the essence of language is universal (сущность языка всеобща)'.
[283] Ю. Эдельштей, *Проблема языка*, p.178.

true knowledge of God to created humankind[284]. The seeming contradictions in Justin's exposition are caused by the fact that the Christian theology of the period did not have a proper terminological apparatus to distinguish the divine essence from the three hypostases, and to explain the divine unity in the presence of the Father, the Son, and the Holy Spirit; and Justin is a classical instance of that. In his theological epistemology, therefore, he is trying to balance the principle of the divine transcendence and immanence, the divine ineffability and divine revelatory activity, the doctrine of the everlasting generation of the Son by the Father and the Son's divine status. Undoubtedly, Justin faces a number of problems and leaves many things unexplained or even ignored[285].

His theology of divine names and the name 'Jesus' is a good example. He appears to have been unwilling to speculate how the Son who is also called God and whose nature is ineffable and incomprehensible, appropriates the name 'Jesus' (which is in turn a word of human language) and imparts to this unique name the mysterious power to act. He indicates only that the mystery of the divine name 'Jesus' is related to the inconceivable mystery of the incarnation of the Logos; human reason fails to comprehend this mysterious power of the name just as it fails to comprehend the mystery of the incarnation.

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[284] P. Widdicombe, *op.cit.*, p.318 n12, 319.
[285] *cf.* P. Widdicombe, *op.cit.*, p.316 n.12.

II.3 Irenaeus of Lyon and his attack on Gnosticism

The purpose of the next section is to attempt to analyse Irenaeus' concern with the problem of language, and to estimate the rôle that his language-theory played in his controversy with the Gnostics. The argumentation of Irenaeus' against his Gnostic opponents (*Adversus Haeresis – AH,* i-ii) as well as his positive exposition of Church theology (*AH* iii-v) is undoubtedly of a systematic character. His *magnum opus,* apart from being a refutation of Gnostic doctrine, is at the same time the first known attempt to give a comprehensive description of the Christian faith. To all appearances, the *AH* is the work not only of an amazing theologian and apologist, but also an assiduous scholar and talented writer. In Irenaeus' theological system set out in the *AH* and also reflected in the *Epideixis*[286], the relation between theology of language and the fundamental Church doctrine of God is already more systematic and well conceived than in the works of Justin Martyr. It is, therefore, important to analyse his interests in the problem of language in relation to Church theology in general, and thus to demonstrate what kind of rôle it plays in the history of patristic thought.

Taking into consideration the method and purpose of the *AH,* one should bear in mind that in the case of Irenaeus we are not dealing with a private, independent or scientific attempt to answer the question of what human language really is. In his treatment of the problem of language, Irenaeus on the one hand does not go beyond the limits of Tradition, whilst on the other

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[286] Ἐπίδειξις τοῦ ἀποστολικοῦ κηρύγματος.

he claims that his concept *conforms with common sense;* it is important to bear in mind this statement from the beginning: in Irenaeus' opinion, there is no distinction between a scientific treatment of language, and a theological view of its nature and origin. In what follows, I shall try to pay special attention to this interesting stance.

Irenaeus' theory is not conceived as an exposition of his own views and ideas – he never claims to be a pioneer in the field – but he seeks to demonstrate that the Gnostic 'mythology' of name and language is bizarre and ridiculous in every respect, *i.e.* both theologically and rationally. Next, it is the *structure* of his argumentation that reveals the fact that he does not distinguish the Christian comprehension of language as different from the general question of what human language is by its nature. At the same time, there is strong evidence from Irenaeus' treatment of this general question to indicate that Irenaeus and (to a greater extent) his opponents were aware of contemporary philosophical disputes only superficially.

The question of Irenaeus' sources as well as the question of the extent to which his description of Gnostic doctrines is historically irreproachable is complicated. Clearly, Irenaeus was acquainted with and made use of, for instance, some of Justin's ideas and principles[287]; moreover, his rich use of typology strongly suggests dependence on his master. Of course, there were

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[287] G. Armstrong, for example, in his analysis arrives at the conclusion that Irenaeus in his exposition of *Gen.* 3. follows Justin almost literally (*v.* G. Armstrong, *Die Genesisin der Alten Kirche* (Tubingen 1962), p. 89.

other writings of early Church writers at his disposal, but in relation to the problem of language this fact is not of great significance.

At the same time, the situation with Gnostic sources, especially in the light of the discovery of *Nag Hammadi,* remains more uncertain: there is still a suspicion that Irenaeus either purposely or unintentionally distorted some aspects of the Gnostic systems in order to represent them in an even more ridiculous form. Of course, it would be prudent to treat Irenaeus' reports with a good deal of scepticism; but one should bear in mind that *AH,* according to its intention and genre, is neither an encyclopaedia of Gnostic theology, nor it is a piece of critical historical research. Since the difference between, for example, the *Gospel of Truth* and the Marcus theory of language that follows from Irenaeus' reports is too divergent to be satisfactorily reconciled, one can only treat them separately – in this section I shall focus mainly on the latter.

Since this is not the appropriate place to discuss the general philosophical background of Irenaeus and his opponents, or their use of philosophy (or, for instance, rhetoric and literary method[288]), I shall make only a few remarks relevant only to the problem of language. I shall argue in particular that Irenaeus deals with the problem of language easily and independently: his own theory is well conceived from both the philosophical and theological point of view; he shows a remarkable theological competence

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[288] *cf.*, for example, the still valuable article of W. Schoedel, ***Philosophy and Rhetoric in the Adversus Haereses of Irenaeus*** in *VCh* vol. xiii (1959) pp.22-32; although W. Schoedel does not arrive at any notable conclusion, he suggests an interesting and balanced analysis of J. Lawson's and H. Wolfson's treatments of the problem.

and intuition, and his general comprehension of the problem in many respects anticipates many of the issues touched upon in later patristic controversies.

In order to understand Irenaeus' theological argumentation related to the problem of language against numerous variants of the Gnostic doctrines there is no need to describe and analyse all the viewpoints of his opponents; such an analysis will not provide us with anything substantially new. He often repeats that his opponents '*strive to weave ropes of sand*'. In fact, his concern is to refute *the very method* of his Gnostic opponents, their exegetical principles, and arbitrary treatment of *e.g.* divine names and some biblical passages.

It has already been pointed out that the mythological perception of language played a very important rôle in Gnostic doctrine: undoubtedly, they were attracted and therefore made great use of a truly enigmatic aspect of language; their, so to speak, 'mythological epistemology' was in addition based on a specific interpretation or rather impression of language. Some of the most obvious aspects of this impression are related to the Hellenistic background (*e.g.* cosmogony of Marcus – *AH* i,xivff), but that, of course, did not completely exclude some elements and use of biblical theology, as we have already seen in the *Gospel of Truth*.

Moreover, it should be noted that from what we know of surviving Gnostic works and other passages that have come down to us, in this religious movement language *never received a satisfactory philosophical treatment*, and was never approached critically. At the same time, one must note that both sides of

the controversy seem to have a certain acquaintance with the grammatical science of the time: some theories of Gnostics appealed to, for instance, a grammatical distinction between vowels (τὰ φωνήεντα), consonants (τὰ ἄφωνα), and what the grammarians of those days called 'semi-vowels' (τὰ ἡμίφωνα)[289].

Irenaeus pertinently points out that the Gnostic use of apophatic terms is unsystematic and arbitrary: *e.g.* first the pre-existent Aeon is placed 'in the invisible, unnameable and ineffable heights', but later it is called it Προαρχή, Προπάτωρ, Βυθός; finally, the Aeon appears comprehensible by 'spiritual' men, *i.e.* the Gnostics themselves (*cf. AH* I,i:1, i:2, vii;5). Irenaeus does not find any consistent and worked-out idea of divine 'namelessness' and 'ineffability' in their theory, and it was not an easy task for him to introduce his own point of view, because for that he needed some common ground. Intriguingly, the theory of language played a special rôle in solving this problem.

Hence, there is a need to examine those aspects of Gnostic teaching that were scrutinised by Irenaeus, and forced him to delineate his own views of human language against what he himself calls *'a motley garment... a heap of miserable rags'*.

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[289] *i.e.* λ, μ, ν, ρ, σ, ζ, ξ, ψ.

§ II.3.1 Logos, cosmogony, the doctrines of elements and language according to the hypothesis of Marcus.

The hypothesis of Marcus is one of the most striking examples of the Gnostic treatment of language. His teaching seems to be the most logical (if one can call it 'logic') and provides us with distinctive information about the background of the Gnostic use of the notion of language. Marcus' distinction between the words of human language and the divine Word is of special interest to us: at first sight it is unclear. Let us focus on this seeming vagueness. He begins with teaching that suggests that the Word (understood, of course, without reference to the Incarnation) is of a twofold nature. The Word in the system of Marcus is related to the sphere of language, and is the Revelation of the Father:

> When first the unoriginated, inconceivable Father, who is without material substance, and is neither male nor female, willed to bring forth that which is ineffable to Him, and to endow with form that which is invisible, He opened His mouth, and sent forth the Word similar to Himself, who, standing near, showed Him what He Himself was, inasmuch as He had been manifested in the form of that which was invisible.
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> *AH* I, 14:1[290]

The way he adopts some apophatic terms here is illustrative; such unexpected reservations about *'material substance'* or *'neither male nor female'* show that Marcus' utilises this negative terminology in order to link his

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[290] Transl of Alexander Roberts & James Donaldson (*ANF*, vol. 1).

speculations with established traditional language about the divine. Even at first sight one can see that this is merely an apophatic rhetoric rather than apophatic theology. Thus, for example, the Father *needs* to send forth his Logos, which is 'similar' to him, and in this way he *comprehends* what he really is. The main motifs of his cosmogony and the idea of Revelation through the Logos is of course an allusion to the Johannine prologue – later we shall come across his acquaintance with, and use of, the Johannine corpus of the NT. Marcus suggests an interesting explanation of the relationship between the Father and his Logos. According to his theory, the term ὁ λόγος is to be understood in a way we now would call 'linguistically', *i.e.* the λόγος by its nature comes into being in a manner that is similar to a human word. Perhaps the original version of the text was as vague as the Latin translation that we now have[291]. Formally, the Logos is said to be different from the Name, but it is hardly possible to see the difference; rather, it seems that we are dealing with a kind of sleight of hand:

> The enunciation (ἡ ἐκφώνησις) of the Name took place thus: The Father spoke (ἐλάλησε λόγον τὸν πρῶνον τοῦ ὀνόματος αὐτοῦ) the first word of his Name, which was the Beginning, and it was one syllable with four letters (καὶ ἦν ἡ συλλαβὴ αὐτοῦ στοιχείων τεσσάρων).
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> *Ibid*[292].

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[291] Thus, for example, the Latin interpreter believed that the initial word pronounced by the Father was ἀρχή; therefore, he preserved it untranslated (*v.* n. 175).

[292] the texts are from *Adversus haereses* (libri i, ii), ed. W. Harvey, *Sancti Irenaei episcopi Lugdunensis libri quinque adversus haereses*, vol. 1 (Cambridge 1857); liber iii, ed. A. Rousseau and L. Doutreleau, **Irénée de Lyon**, *Contre les hérésies*, livre 3, vol. 2 *SC* 211 (Paris 1974); *Adversus haereses* 5.3-13 (P. Jena), ed. A. Rousseau, L. Doutreleau and C. Mercier, **Irénée de Lyon**. *Contre les hérésies*, livre v, *vol.* 2 *SC* 153 (Paris 1969); *Adversus haereses* 3.9 (P. Ox. 3.405), ed. A. Rousseau and L. Doutreleau, **Irénée de Lyon**, *Contre les hérésies*, livre 3, vol. 2 (Paris 1974).

The pronunciation of the Name was therefore of both a 'cosmogonic' and a 'linguistic' character; ὁ λόγος of the mysterious name of the Father is clearly 'a word' – the Father spoke or pronounced it in the way man pronounces the words of his language. Thus, for example, the distinction between ὁ λόγος (the word) and ἡ συλλαβή ('coocuring acoustic pattern' or merely 'syllable') is also very unclear, and that caused a serious problem for translators[293]; most likely, Marcus himself did not distinguish them. Next, according to him, the λόγος consists of four primordial 'letters' (τὰ στοιχεῖα), and again, the use of the term τὸ στοιχεῖον presents even more difficulties than the interchange of ὁ λόγος and ἡ συλλαβή. Since in Greek τὸ στοιχεῖον has many meanings, from linguistic 'letter', 'sound of speech' or 'pronunciation of a letter' to philosophical 'element', 'foundation', and 'principle', it is difficult to work out what Marcus exactly means here: 'letter', 'sound' or 'element'.

In order to suggest a probable solution to this important problem, I propose to go back a little, and look at the passage in the context of the whole chapter. First, in *AH* I, 14;1 Irenaeus gives an account of Marcus' teaching on the creation[294] from its origin to the last times, literally to when 'the restitution (τὴν ἀποκατάστασιν) of all things will take place, when all things are converted

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[293] For A. Roberts and J. Donaldson these two terms were understood as perfectly interchangeable synonyms: 'He spoke the first word... He added the second, and this also consisted of four letters. Next, He uttered the third...'. P. Preobrazhenskiy (Russ. transl. of 1900) suggest a slightly more precise version; but in spite of the fact that they distinguish ὁ λόγος from ἡ συλλαβή ('syllable'), the general meaning of the clause remains similar to the old version of A. Roberts and J. Donaldson.

[294] Marcus claims that the Tetrad revealed him 'alone the genesis of everything (τὴν τῶν πάντων γένεσιν), which she had not revealed to any gods or men'.

into one letter…'. Second, as has already been noted, Marcus often resorts to terms like 'Name', 'word', 'syllable', *etc.* and clearly does so in order to introduce a foundation for his further speculations about the number of secondary elements (also called 'aeons') and the relationship between their natures and names. Therefore, I assume that in spite of some apparent confusion, Marcus deliberately or rather intuitively makes play with this ambiguity. Therefore, I suggest that in the above quoted passage τὸ στοιχεῖον equally means 'an element' and 'a letter'; Marcus operates with something that we can designate as a 'letter-element'.

With this in mind, let us now look at some interesting issues of Marcus' theory, which Irenaeus lists in *AH* i;14;2-9. To begin with, Marcus everywhere emphasises that not only 'name' or 'word', but also 'sound' and 'letter' possess a twofold nature. On the one hand they act as names, words, sounds, and letters of human language, while on the other they act ontologically, *i.e.* as immediate constituents of both the apparent and invisible world (*i.e.* the Demiurge, the seven heavens, *etc.*):

> Of these elements, the last letter of the last one uttered its voice, and this sound going forth generated its own elements after the image of the [other] elements, by which he affirms, that both the things here below were arranged into the order they occupy, and those that preceded them were called into existence.

According to Marcus, τὸ Πλήρωμα, from which the primordial letter-element 'with its special pronunciation descended to that below', consists of

thirty letters; each of which consists of other letters, 'so that the multitude of letters swells out into infinitude'. Irenaeus reports that these numerous divisions in the system of Marcus were based on the following grammatical interpretation: the letter-element τὸ δέλτα consists of five letters: τὸ δέλτα, τὸ εἶ, τὸ λάμβδα, τὸ ταῦ, and τὸ ἄλφα; these letters are written by other letters, *etc*. But this suggestion, however, fails to elucidate why τὸ Πλήρωμα consists of the thirty letters[295].

The Truth herself consists of the all letters of the Greek alphabet –twenty four in number; each pair of the letters (*e.g.* α+ω, β+ψ, *etc.*) represents a kind of *anthropomorphic* part of its 'body' (τὸ σῶμα). The above-described Gnostic concept of 'letter-element' appears far and wide: having described the Truth anthropomorphically, Marcus adds that this is a form (τὸ σχῆμα) of this element; next, he goes on to say that this element has another name – Ἄνθρωπος. According to the hypothesis of Marcus the anthropomorphic element Ἀλήθεία-Ἄνθρωπος is responsible for the origin of language (clearly Greek, because the Gnostics never mentioned any other language):

> And he calls this element Ἄνθρωπος (Man), and says that is the fountain of all speech (ἡ πηγὴ τοῦ παντὸς λόγου), and the beginning of all sound (ἡ ἀρχὴ πάσης φωνῆς), and the expression of all that is unspeakable, and the mouth of the silent Σιγή.
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> *Ibid.*

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[295] Nevertheless, one should hardly regard Irenaeus' interpretation as totally wrong; presumably, he gives just one example of a rational explanation.

Although the anthropomorphic element in the Gnostic teaching on the origin of language is distinct, there are no grounds to suppose that Marcus considered language as a phenomenon restricted to the nature of man. By contrast, he goes on to speak about the divine origin of language. At the same time, Marcus never distinguishes between language as a general phenomenon, and a concrete language, *e.g.* Greek.

§ II.3.2 Numerical interpretation of names

We are now in a better position to understand the real foundation of the numerical interpretation of names that was so popular amongst Gnostic leaders. Irenaeus lists a huge number of these Gnostic speculations and points out that there is no consensus in interpretation amongst them. Gnostic conclusions concerning the final number of the elements or emanations can vary, depending on the concrete name or a concrete number that happens to be the subject of their speculation. But one way or another they repeatedly turn to the original presumption about the Greek alphabet:

> Thus, then, you have a clear statement of their opinion as to the origin of the supercelestial Jesus. Wherefore, also, the alphabet of the Greeks contains eight Monads, eight Decads, and eight Hecatads, which present the number eight hundred and eighty-eight, that is, *Jesus*, who is formed of all numbers; and on this account He is called *Alpha* and *Omega*, indicating His origin from all.
>
> *AH* 1.15.2.

Interestingly enough, Irenaeus himself did not totally exclude a numerical interpretation of sacred names and numbers found in Scripture. He applied a similar method of exegesis in the eschatological section of the fifth book (*AH*, v, ch. 28ff), where he was concerned with the interpretation of the number of the Beast, *i.e.* 666. First, he draws a parallel between the number 666 and some figures of the Old Testament *e.g.* the age of Noah at the time of the deluge (600), the height of the image set up by Nebuchadnezzar (60 cubits) and its breadth (6 cubits). Second, he discusses some Greek names that are numerically equal to the number of the Beast, *e.g.* Εὐάνθας, Λατείνος, and Τειτάν. At first sight the similarity in method of interpretation is obvious. Nevertheless, unlike his opponents who emphasise that the relationship between names, words and phenomena of the apparent world is ontological, Irenaeus' interpretation is of a speculative character – he never speaks about ontology. He repeatedly indicates that we may expect Antichrist to choose this or that name that fits the number 666, but one should remember that there are plenty of names whose numerical sum is equal to 666 and one, therefore, can only guess rather than know for certain. Irenaeus here is about to define the theological sense of biblical prophecy – a prophecy is given to us to enable us recognise the events *when they will take place*; it is, therefore, plausible and safe not to foretell different names, but to expect the fulfilment of the prophecies.

To sum up, according to Irenaeus' opponents, language is at once an ontological and linguistic phenomenon: the language of their preaching, *i.e.*

Greek, is of divine origin, and for them all aspects of the language manifest, symbolise and reveal the divine. Moreover, language for the Gnostics is far from being *just* a language; it is a reliable source of their knowledge about the divine, it is the true source of their *gnosis*. At the same time, their interest in language as such is relatively small. Gnostics so to speak play with inscrutability of language, but there is no sign that their concern goes further.

§ II.3.3 Irenaeus' theory of language.

Reading through *AH*, one might form the impression that for Irenaeus it was a task of extreme difficulty to find common ground with Gnostic theories in order to establish his own line of argumentation, and to make his point clear for both kinds of readers: those who might possibly sympathise with Gnostic teachings, and neutral readers. How, for instance, could he argue against the Gnostic concept of the silent Σιγή who:

> ...names Him that cannot be named, and expounds the nature of Him that is unspeakable, and searches out Him that is unsearchable, and declares that He whom thou maintainest to be destitute of body and form, opened His mouth and sent forth the Word, as if He were included among organized beings; and that His Word, while like to His Author, and bearing the image of the invisible, nevertheless consisted of thirty elements and four syllables?
>
> *AH* 1.15.5ff

Nevertheless, let us leave aside some important aspects of his doctrine of God, incarnation and salvation, and focus on his thoughts about language. To

begin with, Irenaeus draws a distinction between the words of language (and thereby variety of languages) and the sense of these words. Thus, there are many languages, but under certain circumstances different words manifest the same idea and the same sense. In particular, he appeals to Church theology that in different countries of the world is expressed in different languages, but whose content remains the same, and agrees with Tradition:

> For, although the languages of the world are dissimilar, yet the import of the tradition is one and the same. For the Churches which have been planted in Germany do not believe or hand down anything different, nor do those in Spain, nor those in Gaul, nor those in the East, nor those in Egypt, nor those in Libya, nor those which have been established in the central regions of the world[296].
>
> *AH* i.10.2

In spite of his sarcastic remarks about the barbarian language of the Celts (*v. AH* 1.*intr.*) – to all appearances, it is merely a rhetorical figure – philosophically, Irenaeus admits that *all languages are equal in the sense of their power to manifest meaning*. This point of Irenaeus implies a more important idea: *language is a phenomenon of man's nature and man's nature only*. In the *AH* ii.13 *ad.fin.* Irenaeus' attack on the various anthropomorphic Gnostic issues is based on the elementary dialectic of divine and human: God is one, the divine nature cannot be divided according to the letters of the Greek alphabet, but human beings consist of body and soul. Hence, the divine thought is incommensurably different from the thoughts of man; this is a basic principle of his theological

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[296] Italy or Palestine?

view on human language (and its epistemological value) that is to speak about the divine:

> For He may well and properly be called an Understanding which comprehends all things, but He is not [on that account] like the understanding of men; and He may most properly be termed Light, but He is nothing like that light with which we are acquainted. And so, in all other particulars, the Father of all is in no degree similar to human weakness. He is spoken of in these terms according to love; but in point of greatness, our thoughts regarding Him transcend these expressions.
>
> *AH* ii.13.4.

In the sphere of the human nature, the words of our language (including our language about God) originate from man's soul. Irenaeus describes the process of the origin of words more than once; this description seems to be the most complete and comprehensive:

> The first movement of mind in relation to some objects is call 'notion'. When this continues, strengthens, and possesses the entire soul, it is called 'comprehensive thinking'. In turn, this, when it spends much time on the same object and is so to speak tested, becomes 'acceptance'. This acceptance greatly amplified becomes 'deliberation'. When this deliberation grows and is amplified it becomes 'interior discourse', from which comes the emitted word.
>
> *AH* i.13.2

In Irenaeus' opinion, the human νοῦς reveals or declares its existence by producing words; this generation of words he compares with light: light reveals its source, but does not somehow lessen it. Ὁ νοῦς, similarly, does not lessen itself by any generation of words, but only reveals its presence, because *'an emission is the manifestation of that which is emitted, beyond him who emits it'*.

Next, compared to man's power of thought, our language is a secondary and therefore a *carnal* phenomenon and that is a reason why our speech is divided into sounds (and thereby 'letters' of the alphabet[297]):

> In fact, the tongue of man, being *fleshly*, cannot serve to match the speed of the human mind, which is spiritual, and hence our word is caught within and is produced outside not all at once, as it was conceived, but in parts as the tongue is capable of serving.
>
> *AH* ii.28.4

Moreover, the idea that a word is uttered at the bidding of thought and mind seems to Irenaeus to be commonly shared by all people; this is something that 'all men indeed well understand'. One of Irenaeus' most interesting and at once successful polemical tactics was to make play of the dialectic of divine and human, and to introduce it into his dispute about the nature of language. This line of argumentation, in fact, could make perfect sense even to non-Christian readers. In particular, when he deals with the question of the origin and nature of language, Irenaeus follows the same logic. Man's language is conditioned by the complexity of human nature; therefore, our language *per se* is imperfect, and it affects the manifestation of meaning. In other words, this is a reason for the linguistic phenomenon that we now call polysemy:

> For there is among the Greeks one λόγος which is the principle that thinks, and another which is the instrument by means of which thought is expressed; and [to say] that a

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[297] In the ancient grammatical science there was confusion between what we now call sounds and letters (*cf. Cratylus*): *v.* for detail an article of И. Тронский, *Проблемы языка в античной науке* in the *Античные теории языка и стиля*, ed. by O. Freidenberg (Moscow, Leningrad 1936).

> man sometimes is at rest and silent, while at other times he speaks and is active.
>
> *AH* ii.28.4

God is simple, and therefore language can by no means be an attribute of the divine nature, because in God there is no such distinction between thought and speech:

> But God being all Mind, and all Logos, both speaks exactly what He thinks, and thinks exactly what He speaks. For His thought is Logos, and Logos is Mind, and Mind comprehending all things is the Father Himself.
>
> *AH* ii.28.5

Moreover, Irenaeus emphasises that the Gnostics make a grave mistake when they attach a somewhat supernatural status to language. He insists that even our language about God needs a countless number of apophatic reservations. The Logos, therefore, *cannot be treated as a word* similar to a human word; the generation of the divine Logos and the generation of the Son is one unspeakable phenomenon[298]. But in both cases, the origin of the Logos and the generation of the Son have nothing to do with the ordinary meanings of the terms:

> 'How then was the Son produced by the Father?' – we reply to him, that no man understands that production, or generation, or calling, or revelation, or by whatever name one may describe His generation, which is in fact altogether indescribable.
>
> *AH* ii.28.6

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[298] *cf.* A. Grillmeier, *Christ in Christian tradition* (London 1965), vol.1, 102ff.

The generation of the Logos, therefore, cannot be explained by any parallel with man's language such as the Gnostics make:

> For that a word is uttered at the bidding of thought and mind, all men indeed well understand. Those, therefore, who have excogitated [the theory of] emissions have not discovered anything great, or revealed any abstruse mystery, when they have simply transferred what all understand to the only-begotten Word of God; and while they style Him unspeakable and unnameable, they nevertheless set forth the production and formation of His first generation, as if they themselves had assisted at His birth, thus assimilating Him to the word of mankind formed by emissions.
>
> *Ibid.*

Thus, Irenaeus formulates one of the most important exegetical principles that later on will be developed and extended: that the term 'the divine Logos' should by no means be considered as or even associated with a part of speech. He insists on a decisive rejection of all possible allusions or parallels of that kind.

However, one important reservation should be made. In the fifth section of the Ἐπίδειξις τοῦ ἀποστολικοῦ κηρύγματος unfortunately only preserved in an Armenian translation of app. VII – VIII century[299], there is an debatable passage; according to the German translation, Irenaeus in his explanation of the relationship between the Father, his Logos and the Holy Spirit resorts to an

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[299] *v. Text und Untersuchungen,* XXXI, 1 [3 R. I, 1]: *Des heiligen Irenaeus Schrift zum Erweise des apostolischen Verkündigung.* Εἰς ἐπίδειξιν τοῦ ἀποστολικοῦ κηρύγματος in armenischen Version entdeckt, herausgegeben und ins deutsche übersetzt von Lic. Dr. Karapet Ter-Mêkêrttschian und Lic. Dr. Erwand Ter-Minassiantz. Mit einem Nachwort und Anmerkungen von Adolf Harnack (Leipzig 1907).

analogy with human words and the soul[300]. Ad. Harnack has argued that presumably the passage is spoiled[301]. It should be noted, however, that such an analogy was absolutely impossible for Irenaeus, because, as shown above, it contradicts the very premise of his discourse. It is highly likely, therefore, that the suggestion made by F. Conybear is correct, and the meaning of the clause is 'thus, since the Logos consolidates, and therefore enlivens and brings into existence beings...'[302].

If the above-going considerations are correct, one must admit that in the system of Irenaeus no links can be found between the Logos and man's language. There is no need, therefore, to scrutinise here Irenaeus' Christology and his arguments against Gnostic divisions between the Logos, Christ, and the Saviour[303]; so we can turn to our final issue in attempt to answer the question of what both sides think about divine names, and how Irenaeus' teaching differs from the view of his opponents.

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[300] ...des Leibes Werk ist und die Wesenheit der Emanation verleiht.
[301] Instead of *das Leibes Werk* Ad. Harnack proposes *Fleisch warden lässt*. (*ibid.*)
[302] F.C. Conybeare believed that this section of Armenian translation is not spoiled and proposes the following variant of the possible Greek original version of the text: ἐπειδὴ οὖν ὁ λόγος στερεοῖ, τούτεσι σωματοποιεῖ καὶ οὐσίαν χαρίξεται τῷ ὄντι (or ...τῷ γεγονότι) – F. Conybeare., *The newly recovered Treatise of Irenaeus* (***Expositor***, 1907, July p.35-44). At the same time, his point does not present any problem; he argues that there is no need to translate the Armenian *eloy* as 'emanation', because it is often used as an equivalent of the Greek ὄντος, while the verb σωματοποιέω can also mean 'to enliven'. Furthermore, such an interpretation agrees with a general doctrine of the Logos found in the *Epideixis* – *v.*, for instance, *Epideixis*, 34 on the consolidational, ontological rôle of the divine Logos.
[303] *v.*, for instance, *AH* iii.33.3.

§ II.3.4 The divine name 'Jesus Christ' and the other biblical divine names.

The comprehension of the name 'Jesus Christ' in the form that according to Irenaeus' report should be associated with Marcus' school, can hardly be systematised. In general, the Gnostic account of the name 'Jesus' is based on speculation about numbers, but at the same time some attempts to attach soteriological significance to this name can be traced. As for the former part, Marcus stands by his logic: first, he admits that this name possesses some mysterious power, as do a great number of 'mysterious' names. Second, this mysterious power is only available to those who are dedicated to the numerical interpretation of the name, and are aware of these sacred numbers *i.e.* six (their famous ἐπίσημον), twenty four (Greek alphabet), and 888. Third, Marcus says that the name 'Jesus Christ' has a different phonetic (?) equivalent in the language of semi-divine deities – the so called 'ancient name' – angels, according to this system, were coeval to Christ; the following passage seems to be the one of the best examples:

> When she (the Tetrad) had spoken these things, Ἀλήθεια looked at him, opened her mouth, and uttered a word. That word was a name, and the name was this one which we do know and speak of, *viz.*, Χριστὸν Ἰησοῦν. When she had uttered this name, she at once relapsed into silence. And as Marcus waited in the expectation that she would say something more, the Tetrad again came forward and said, "Thou hast reckoned as contemptible that word which thou hast heard from the mouth of Ἀλήθεια. This which thou knowest and seemest to possess is not an ancient name. For thou possessest the sound of it merely, whilst thou art ignorant of its power. For Ἰησοῦς is a name arithmetically symbolical (ἐπίσημον), consisting of six letters, and is

known by all those that belong to the call. But that which is among the Aeons of the Pleroma consists of many parts (πολυμερὲς), and is of another form (μορφῆς) and shape (τύπου), and is known by those [angels] who are joined in affinity with Him, and whose mightinesses (τὰ μεγέθη) are always present with Him.

AH i.14.4

To what extent therefore was the name 'Jesus' considered as unique and important? Whatever this importance was supposed to be, in the Marcian hierarchy of 'divine' names, 'Jesus Christ' is placed on the third level (*AH* i.15.1); in the sequence of emanations an aeon titled by this name is said to appear at the fifth stage. The mystery of the name 'Jesus Christ' is explained by an arithmetic operation that leads to 888, and this number is finally alluded related to twenty four (Greek alphabet – *AH* i.15.2). On the other hand, they considered the name 'Jesus Christ' in two different combinations: Jesus the Son and Christ the Son (*Ibid.*). In the opinion of Marcus' stalwarts the former symbolised another unapproachable divine name and before the manifestation of its symbol, *i.e.* Ἰησοῦς ὁ υἱὸς,

> …mankind were involved in great ignorance and error. But when this name of six letters was manifested (the person bearing it clothing Himself in flesh, that He might come under the apprehension of man's senses, and having in Himself these six and twenty-four letters), then, becoming acquainted with Him, they ceased from their ignorance, and passed from death unto life, this name serving as their guide (or 'way' – τοῦ ὀνόματος αὐτοῖς ὁδοῦ γεννηθέντος) to the Father of truth.
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> *AH* 1.15.2*ad fin*.

Thus, one should affirm that at the later stage Marcus' school attempted to adopt a slightly modified interpretation of the name 'Jesus' that had more reference to Scripture (mainly Johannine tradition) and the Christian doctrine of the incarnation of the Logos. According to this variant, Marcus' followers considered the name 'Jesus the Son' an enigmatic symbol that revealed to the elect two important numbers, six and twenty four, and thus put an end to ignorance, destroyed death, and led to salvation. But even such an adoption of traditional terms and notions did not allow Marcus to overcome his original name-theology premise:

> He maintains, therefore, that Ἰησοῦς is the name of that man formed by a special dispensation, and that He was formed after the likeness and form of that [heavenly] *Anthropos*, who was about to descend upon Him. After He had received that *Aeon*, He possessed *Anthropos* himself, and Logos himself, and *Pater*, and *Arrhetus*, and *Sige*, and *Aletheia*, and *Ecclesia*, and *Zoe*.
>
> *AH* i.15.3*ad fin*.

Irenaeus in his refutation does not argue with the sophisticated formulation and arithmetic manipulations: he merely reminds the reader that the Greek alphabet was invented by man and did not appear at once, but gradually (*AH* i.14.4); thus he turns the whole discourse of his opponents into nonsense.

But what does Irenaeus think about names and the name of Jesus, and how does he treat a theological notion of the divine name? Irenaeus treats the biblical theology of names with remarkable accuracy. He does not deny that the

various operations with names that can be found in the Bible have a sacred theological sense (*AH* ii.25.1). His point, however, is that the comprehension of these meanings cannot be derived from the names as such by, for instance, arithmetical operations. His standpoint can be formulated as follows: the sacred theological meaning is primary, names and numbers are secondary; therefore, the theological sense cannot be comprehended from names and numbers,

> For system does not spring out of numbers, but numbers from a system; nor does God derive His being from things made, but things made from God. For all things originate from one and the same God.
>
> *AH* ii.25.1

Unlike his opponents, Irenaeus regards the phenomenon of the divine names in the context of the name 'Jesus'. This name in his opinion is in every respect unique, but not because of some enigmatic numbers that it might designate. His understanding of the name 'Jesus' is in the first instance related to the incarnation of the Logos and the soteriological significance of his death and resurrection. Undoubtedly, the name 'Jesus Christ' belongs to the human language, and its meaning is this:

> And he (Jesus Christ) bears a twofold name: in Hebrew it is Messiah Christ, while in our language Jesus the Saviour. These names designate some certain that he has done. Namely, he is called Christ, for the Father has anointed and beautified everything through him…
>
> *Epideixis*, 53

Irenaeus explains another name and attribute of Jesus found in Scripture in a similar manner (*v. Epideixis*, 53-59): names designate his actions. At the same time, he shows a remarkable adherence to the original biblical name-

theology: Christians who believe in Jesus receive divine grace by partaking in the name 'Christ' (*Epideixis*, 61). Nevertheless, our knowledge of the divine is caused by the soteriological activity of the Logos; Irenaeus' theology of the divine names is therefore based on *Christocenticity*. This principle appears in his exegesis of the Old and New Testament passages related to the theology of the divine name *e.g. Rev.* 19:11ff (*AH* iv.20.11), *Eph.* 1:21 (*AH* iv.19.2), *etc.* According to Irenaeus, the name 'Jesus Christ' is the most significant amongst divine names, because:

> The Father confess the name of Jesus Christ, which is throughout all the world glorified in the Church, to be His own, both because it is that of His Son, and because He who thus describes it gave Him for the salvation of men. Since, therefore, the name of the Son belongs to the Father, and since in the omnipotent God the Church makes offerings through Jesus Christ, He says well on both these grounds, 'And in every place incense is offered to My name, and a pure sacrifice' Now John, in the Apocalypse, declares that the 'incense' is 'the prayers of the saints'
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> *AH* iv.17.6

Another divine name found in the Old Testament designates nothing but the Father of all (*AH* ii.35.3 *ad fin.*) – however, Irenaeus' interpretation of these biblical words reveals his poor acquaintance with Hebrew[304]. But nevertheless, it is the name 'Jesus Christ' that causes numerous miracles everywhere in the Christian communities (*AH* ii.32.4-5).

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[304] In *AH* ii.6.2 Irenaeus interestingly remarks that amongst Jews the divine name 'Almighty' was still in use, 'and for this reason do the Jews even now put demons to flight by means of this very adjuration, inasmuch as all beings fear the invocation of Him who created them'.

Chapter III. Alexandrian School

The Alexandrian school is of special interest to our studies. The main characteristic feature of Alexandrian theology is that it was the first time when theological speculations about the nature of language were evolved in the context of the secular linguistic studies of the epoch. Moreover, in the case of Clement and Origen, this influence can be very clearly traced, because their knowledge of Classical and Hellenistic philosophical literature as compared to, for instance, Irenaeus is much more obvious and apparent. As one can infer from the extent and number of Origen's descriptions of the philosophical opinions shared by the scholars of his time, or the references of Clement, often made in the elegant form of 'quotations from memory', quotations sometimes several pages long, both of them approached the subject with a full acquaintance with all the linguistic theories of the era.

In the following section the subject is examined in a way that is conditioned by previous study; thus, in the case of Clement I shall undertake a general overview, because unlike his apophatic theology, his speculations about language have not yet received any satisfactory study. As for Origen, his account of language and divine names has already been scrutinised by J. Dillon, who makes some interesting parallels and explanations. Hence, I suggest revising some relevant passages from Origen in order to argue that some remarks of J. Dillon should be redefined.

III.1 Clement of Alexandria

P. Rotta in his brief analysis of Clement's speculations about human language (and languages) points out that Clement seems to be the first Christian theologian to approach the problem in the context of biblical exegesis[305]. Although Clement does refer to some relevant biblical passages, in his exegesis of Scripture (as it is peculiar to allegorical interpretation) he appears to be endeavouring to adapt it to his own ideas, which in turn come from a different background. At the same time, he does not undertake a detailed analysis of these biblical passages (like, for example, Philo) and in spite of his general point about the priority of the 'barbarians' (*i.e.* the ancient Hebrews) in both culture (philosophy and art) and in Revelation, his practical solution of the problem as well as some of his primary conclusions betray his sympathies with Platonism, which he accepts uncritically[306]. The Platonism of Philo and Clement, as well as the evidence for Clement's dependence on Philo

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[305] P. Rotta, *op.cit.*, p. 75. Y. Edelshtein follows P. Rotta uncritically – *v.*; it should be noticed, however, that this standpoint is very arguable. To assume so means to state that Clement's principal understanding of language was based on the Bible. In what follows, however, I shall argue that although Clement pays some attention to various biblical passages, his general philosophy of language stands on an absolutely different footing.

[306] Amongst earlier studies of this question, one could mention R. Witt, *The Hellenism of Clement of Alexandria*, **Classical Quarterly** (1931), C. Bigg, *The Christian Platonists of Alexandria* (Oxford 1913); for a recent investigation, *v.* E. Osborn, *The Philosophy of Clement of Alexandria* (Cambridge 1957), p. 97ff.

is given extensively. In our particular case, however, one should point out that Philo pays more attention to the exegesis of the relevant biblical passage, while Clement does not seem to be very much interested in it. If Philo's speculations on language appear in the form of comparison, synthesis and an attempt to reconcile the narration of the Pentateuch and (for example) the *Cratylus*; Clement seems to rest upon the latter. This fact calls into question the above-mentioned statement of P. Rotta, and requires a number of reconsiderations that are going to be suggested in this section.

Interestingly enough, Clement appears to be the first Christian theologian who in his treatment of human language mentions Plato's doctrine, and refers specifically to the *Cratylus*[307]. As for his knowledge of Aristotle, he is an even greater exception to Patristic tradition; in the eighth book of the *Stromaties* he employs the term *quidditas* (τὸ τί ἦν εἶναι), which was never used by the prominent representatives of Patristic literature

§ III.1.1 Clement and his general comprehension of names and numbers

It seems that for Clement, etymologising about words and names is normal; on the whole, an educated man would expect to be acquainted with the

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[307] Such a direct reference to Plato's dialogue is extremely rare. Clement mentions the *Cratylus* twice (Clemens, *Stromaties*, i, 21, 143:7; iii, 3, 16:3); next, the dialogue is mentioned only by Gregory of Nyssa – *Contra Eunomium*, ii, 1:404.

craft of etymology. It is relatively unclear to what extent this etymologising is precisely Stoic; most probably, this way of treating words is simply intellectual speculation fashionable at that time[308]. At the same time, his etymologising is of a different nature by comparison with Gnostic speculations about names and number. Clement speaks about their ideas, but for him it is all nothing but signs of ignorance. Evidently, the Gnostic speculations examined in the previous chapter had no connexion with Stoic etymologies. As for Clement, however, his discourse strongly reminds us of the etymological principles worked out by Chrysippus: the name 'Poseidon', according to its original signification means 'a moist substance' (ἡ πόσις); he assumes that the name Ἄρης is derives from ἄρσις (rising up) and ἀναίρεσις (destroying)[309]. The latter suggestion seems to follow one of the three types of the classical Stoic etymological principles, namely 'contiguity'. Clearly, Clement distinguishes the phoneme of a word and its meaning: to name something, or to usurp some titles, does not result in any ontological change in the status of a subject. He makes play with this elementary axiom when he ridicules pagan deifications[310] of great kings and the immortalisation of one's own death[311]. Although Clement stands for the φύσις-theory of language, his own solution to the question of why in spite of the

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[308] *cf.* Clemens Alexandrinus, *Protrepticus*, 2;13.1 *ad.fin.*
[309] Clemens Alexandrinus, *Protrepticus*, 5; 64.
[310] *cf.* Clemens Alexandrinus, *Protrepticus*, 10;97, where Clement gives some anecdotal reports about the deification of Alexander the Great.
[311] *cf.* Clement's joke about Hippo, who ordered the following elegy to be inscribed on his tomb: Ἵππωνος τόδε σῆμα, τὸν ἀθανάτοισι θεοῖσιν ἶσον ἐποίησεν Μοῖρα καταφθίμενον. Clement points out that such an ambition is nothing but ἀνθρωπίνη πλάνη -- Clemens Alexandrinus, *Protrepticus*, 4; 55.1.

ontological connexion between name and thing, this does not work in the case of the usurpation of divine titles is based on an interesting approach and division of languages into two groups.

Nevertheless, Clement seems to be extremely interested in the words of language; in his theological speculations he sometimes appeals to the linguistic phenomena of the Greek language. Overall, Clement as a Christian writer is impressive in his acquaintance with contemporary science[312]. He indicates, for example, that Greek word ἄνθρωπος means 'man' in the sense of 'human being' and, therefore, equally designates a man and a woman. He discovers similar things in the word παιδάριον and ἄρνης[313]. The following passage shows well Clement's principal comprehension of etymology and its theological use; first, he teaches that the glory of Christians is the Father of all and the crown of the whole Church is Christ; next, he turns to some etymologies in order to exemplify his idea:

> As roots and plants, so also have flowers their individual properties, some beneficial, some injurious, some also dangerous. The ivy is cooling; nux emits a stupefying effluvium, as the etymology shows. The narcissus is a flower with a heavy odour; the name evinces this, and it induces a torpor (νάρκην) in the nerves. And the effluvia of roses and violets being mildly cool, relieve and prevent

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[312] The theological considerations of Clement are often attached to detailed scientific speculations – *v.* for example *Paedagogus*, ii, 10. Clement speaks about human sexuality (to all appearances, it was one of his favourite topics). He interprets the Old Testament prohibition against eating hares or hyenas, and shows a staggering knowledge of zoology and reproduction in the world of animals – suffice to mention that all these passages were discreetly left in the Latin translation by A. Roberts and J. Donaldson. This suggests that in his speculations on words and their etymologies one should see the highest level of competence.

[313] Clemens Alexandrinus, *Paedagogus*, i, 4, 10:3 (text, ed. H. Marrou, M. Harl, C. Mondésert and C. Matray, ***Clément d'Alexandrie***. *Le pédagogue*, 3 vols. in *SC* 70, 108, 158 (Paris1960-170)).

> headaches. But we who are not only not permitted to drink with others to intoxication, but not even to indulge in much wine, do not need the crocus or the flower of the cypress to lead us to an easy sleep. Many of them also, by their odours, warm the brain, which is naturally cold, volatilizing the effusions of the head. The rose is hence said to have received its name (ῥόδον) because it emits a copious stream (ῥεῦμα) of odour (ὀδωδή).
>
> *Paedagogus*, ii, 8; 71:3[314].

A phoneme, therefore, reflects the form and shape of its subject; etymological analysis can reveal and explain this reflection by finding a correlation between the sounds of the phoneme and the structure of the subject (his example is the rose and the narcissus), its sense (*cf.* his etymology of the word ἔλεος 'mercy' derived from ἔλαιον 'oil'[315]), and an action[316]. Clement follows a similar mode of discourse, when he explains why the divine Logos is to be called 'Instructor' (ὁ παιδαγωγός):

> When, then, the heavenly guide (ὁ οὐράνιος ἡγεμών), the λόγος, was inviting men to salvation, the appellation of *hortatory* was properly applied to Him: his same word was called rousing (the whole from a part). For the whole of piety is hortatory, engendering in the kindred faculty of reason a yearning after true life now and to come. But now, being at once curative and preceptive, following in His own steps, He makes what had been prescribed the subject of persuasion, promising the cure of the passions within us. Let us then designate this Word appropriately by the one

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[314] Transl. of Clemet's works – A. Roberts and J. Donaldson from *ANF*, vol., 2. *Protrepticus*, ed. C. Mondésert, Clément d'Alexandrie, *Le protreptique*, *SC*, 2 (Paris 1949).
[315] Clemens Alexandrinus, *Paedagogus*, ii, 8:62.
[316] In *Paedagogus*, i, 9:82.2 Clement derives a noun ἔλεγχος 'blame' from the imitative verb πλήσσω: Ἔλεγχος γὰρ καὶ ἐπίπληξις, ὥσπερ οὖν καὶ τοὔνομα αἰνίττεται, αὗται πληγαὶ ψυχῆς εἰσι... Obviously, he makes a mistake by confusing etymological pairs: ἐπίπληξις – πλήσσω and ἔλεγχος – λέγω. On the whole, Clement's use of etymology is an individual issue; it seems reasonable to look at it only briefly, because it is of more interest for linguistics.

> name Tutor (Κεκλήσθω δ᾽ἡμῖν ἑνὶ προσφυῶς οὗτος ὀνόματι παιδαγωγός).
>
> *Paedagogus*, i, 1;1.3f.

Clement says relatively little about the name 'Jesus'; the Saviour's name was predicted in the Old Testament (*e.g.* by the name Jesus the son of Nun[317]). In fact, his interest in the mystical interpretation of names and numbers occurring in the Old Testament is minimal. In the sixth book of the *Stromaties*, Clement describes various variants of Gnostic interpretations of names and number, including the name 'Jesus'[318]; nevertheless, Clement's own attitude to these speculations is pessimistic: for him these are only the opinions of people who are ignorant in theology and exegesis, who bring forward their fantasies rather than any professional knowledge of science, or the craft of allegorical interpretation. In his theological system divine titles and epithets are of a different nature.

§ III.1.2 Ὁ παιδαγωγός, ὁ οὐράνιος ἡγεμών or via negativa?

For Clement, 'ὁ παιδαγωγός' is a favourite term to designate the Logos; etymologising about the divine παιδεία and παίδων ἀγωγή (*Paedagogus*, i, 4-6) Clement's chief point is that this divine epithet (that is, of course, one of many)

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317 *Paedagogus*, i, 7:60.3.
318 *Stromaties*, vi, 11;84.3f; 11;89.1f.– *Stromata*, ed. O. Stählin, L. Früchtel and U. Treu, *Clemens Alexandrinus*, vols. 2 in *Die griechischen christlichen Schriftsteller* 52(15),17 (Berlin1960).

determines the relationship between the Logos and people: the Logos leads all people to salvation, without, for instance, distinguishing between men and women (etymologies of the mentioned words like παιδάριον, *etc.* are to exemplify it). In other words, the Logos is to be called 'Tutor' or 'Instructor', because the word 'ὁ παιδαγωγός' expresses the nature of our relationship with the Logos and, therefore, serves for the purpose of theology better than other terms. This particular choice is nothing but a reflection of his theological tastes; Clement does not attach to the term 'ὁ παιδαγωγός' the status of an absolute divine title. The rôle that this term plays in his theology is relatively small. Clement's use of the negative term ἀγέννητος is rare[319]; most probably it is inherited from Philo[320]. The negative theology of Clement has been extensively discussed by Mortley: for example, W. Völker in his monograph on Clement[321] attacks the Alexandrian theologian; he argues that the apophaticisms in *Stromaties* are interpolated and unassimilated in the body of the text; another objection made by him is that Clement's negative theology seems to be inconsistent with his thought as a whole[322]. As for Clement's interpreters, W. Völker claims that they all rest upon an over-simplification of Clement's doctrine and tend to stress either the philosophical or the theological aspects of Clement's thought. E. Osborn strongly disagrees with W. Völker's theory of

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319 *e.g. Protrepticus*, 12: 120.2; *Stromaties* ii, 11:51.5; v, 12:82.3; vi, 7:58.1; vi, 18:165.5.
320 E. Osborn points out that Clement uses certain expressions which Philo also used; in particular he refers to the terms: τὸν ὄντως μόνον ὄντα, τὸ ἀγέννητον – E. Osborn, *op.cit.*, p. 185.
321 W. Völker, *Der wahre Gnostiker nach Clemens Alexandrinus* (Berlin and Leipzig 1952).
322 W. Völker, *op.cit.*, p. 95.

interpolated passages, and attempts to find a balance between the theological and philosophical sides of Clement. There is no need here to enter the discussion that inevitably involves textological arguments and the treatment of the problem in the context of Christian Platonism and mystical theology. An interesting question, however, is to what extent Clement could use cataphatic and apophatic expressions; what criterion is safe for an estimation of the balance of his sympathies between borrowing definitions from pagan philosophy and working out his own terms (like Paedagogus to whom he composed a prayer) as a result of theological reflection upon Christian doctrine, when Clement with inspiration exclaims: 'Καί μου μὴ λάβησθε όμολογοῦντος ἐγνωκέναι τὸν θεόν'[323]. I propose to examine this issue in the context of his general comprehension of language.

The first book of his *magnum opus* – the *Stromaties* – emerges as a detailed criticism of issues touched upon in the *Protrepticus*. As already mentioned, his refutation of various philosophical opinions rests upon the following idea: Greek and Hellenistic culture is secondary to that of the 'barbarians' (*i.e.* Hebrews). A remark of J. Daniélou that the apologetic genre of the *Protrepticus* is just a good example of the missionary technique of the time[324] should be applied to the beginning of the *Stromaties* with even more force. One of Clement's central intellectual tenets in both the *Protrepticus* and in the *Stromaties*

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[323] Clemens Alexandrinus, *Paedagogus*, i, 6:25.
[324] J. Daniélou, *Gospel*, p. 14.

is a classical contrast between Greek culture and 'barbarians' ('and of men all are Greeks and Barbarians'[325]).

> We have also demonstrated Moses to be more ancient, not only than those called poets and wise men among the Greeks, but than the most of their deities.
>
> *Stromaties*, i, 21;107.6

He argues that there is a unique ἡ βάρβαρος φιλοσοφία, and insofar as the 'barbarians' surpass Greeks in science, culture, art, *etc.*, they surpass them to the same extent in knowledge of the divine. I cannot here go into this issue in full; suffice to say that there is evidence to affirm that his general enthusiasm seems slightly ostentatious – as so often for Clement, what he really has for an object differs from what he seems to have *a prima facie*[326]. Nevertheless, this premise significantly reflects upon his comprehension of language.

§ III.1.3 Language and languages

As a matter of fact, the idea that 'barbarians' have priority over the Greeks and, the proposition that 'barbarian' languages are therefore more ancient than Greek dialects was already spelled out in the *Cratylus* that Clement

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[325] Clemens Alexandrinus, *Stromaties*, v, 14:133.8.
[326] It is a characteristic feature of his writings, that contrasts with the general literary canons of Patristics: *cf.* his numerous morbid passages on human sexuality, animal reproduction, some shady manners of Gnostics (his opponents) or chronological reference points like 'the rape of Helen by Theseus' and 'the rape of Helen by Alexander' (*Stromaties*, i, 21). Although it is always attached to allegorical exegesis or moral theology, a strong impression is that Clement likes speaking of these issues. Perhaps, it is his literary method to attract more attention.

knew so well[327]. I think that Clement adapts this logic to his own explanation of the issue. Under the heading 'barbarians' he often includes Old Testament Hebrews; apparently, they are more ancient than the Greeks. The Hebrew language, consequently, is older than the Greek. To this point his discourse is similar to the rabbinic tradition (Philo and Josephus Flavius are good examples of this belief). They hold that the words of the Hebrew language were produced by Adam when he named all the creatures in Paradise before the Fall. As already demonstrated, Philo makes play of the Platonic name-maker and his theory of naming is based on the parallel between the Platonic ὀνοματουργός and Adam[328]. This premise specifies a theory of natural connexion in an interesting way: Adam (being still perfect) produced the primordial language; this language is ancient Hebrew. When the confusion of languages followed, Hebrew remained unaltered and was inherited by Eber and his progeny[329].

Clement shares a theory that was commonly held, that there are seventy-five world languages: Greek historians noted the statement made by Moses that there are only seventy-five nations and languages (*Gen*. 44:27); according to his calculation, however:

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[327] This motif often emerges in the dialogue in a clear and unclear form: Plato, *Cratylus*, 390a, 397d, 409e, 410a, 416a, esp. – 421cd, 425e-426b.
[328] Clement just mentions that Adam named animals in front of his wife, but his concern is with Old Testament prophetic phenomenon – *Stromaties*, i, 21;135.3.
[329] This idea sometimes appeared in Patristic exegesis; Theodoretus, when he was asked ποία γλῶσσα ἀρχαιοτέρα; still points to Hebrew, but he does not seem to accept the idea that Hebrew is the primordial tongue, and in the next section contradicts his previous discourse (*v.* Theodoretus, *Quaestiones in Octateuchum*, quest. 60ff. (ed. N. Fernández Marcos and A. Sáenz-Badillos, *Theodoreti Cyrensis quaestiones in Octateuchum* in ***Textos y Estudios «Cardenal Cisneros»*** 17 (Madrid 1979).

> ...there appear to be seventy-two generic dialects (αἱ γενικαὶ διάλεκτοι), as our Scripture hands down.
>
> *Stromaties*, i, 21; 142.

Next, Clement seems to follow the Platonic suggestion that all contemporary languages are nothing but 'spoiled' variants of the original dialects:

> The rest of the vulgar tongues are formed by the blending of two, or three, or more dialects.
>
> *Ibid.*

Observations should be made on Clement's comprehension of the term 'dialect'. The definition he gives is the following:

> A dialect is a mode of speech which exhibits a character peculiar to a locality (λέξις ἴδιον χαρακτῆρα τόπου ἐμφαίνουσα), or a mode of speech which exhibits a character peculiar or is common to a race (ἢ λέξις ἴδιον ἢ κοινὸν ἔθνους ἐπιφαίνουσα χαρακτῆρα).
>
> *Ibid.*

But detailed analysis of his use of the word 'dialect' (in relation to φωνή and γλῶσσα) shows that most probably Clement took this definition from different sources. In this formula an emphasis is laid on the peculiar character of a nation in relation to its geographic area. As we have seen, this idea appeared in Epicurus, and presumably was popular in the philology of his days. Clement nowhere directly says that Hebrew is the primordial tongue of

the human race. On the contrary, he thinks that there were seventy-two 'generic dialects'.

§ III.1.4 φωνή, διάλεκτος, and γλῶσσα; words imposed by nature and 'generic dialects'

Let us now focus on his use of words to designate the notion of language. His uses φωνή to designate 'tongue' as the speech of a nation; his general use of the words ἡ διάλεκτος and ἡ γλῶττα is standard: Clement attributes αἱ διάλεκτοι to various dialects of one language, for instance, to the five dialects of the Greek language (Attic, Ionic, Doric, Aeolic, and the fifth the Common[330]). On the other hand he recognises numerous 'barbarian' tongues not as dialects, but as self-sufficient languages[331]. It remains unclear, however, why Clement calls Hebrew ἡ Ἑβραίων διάλεκτος[332]; I think that although Clement gives remarkable definitions, in the course of his long speculations he tends to use ἡ διάλεκτος and ἡ φωνή as synonyms. This is, perhaps, why he calls the original seventy-two tongues of the human race 'dialects'.

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330 Clemens Alexandrinus, *Stromaties*, i, 21;142.4.
331 *ibid.*:... ἀπεριλήπτους δὲ οὔσας τὰς βαρβάρων φωνὰς μηδὲ διαλέκτους, ἀλλὰ γλώσσας λέγεσθαι.
332 *e.g. Stromaties*, vi, 15;129.1.

His notion of 'generic dialects' (αἱ γενικαὶ διάλεκτοι) is interesting. From this point, Clement adopts Plato's theory, but in a different way from Philo:

> But the first and generic barbarous dialects have phonemes imposed by nature, since also men confess that prayers uttered in a barbarian tongue are more powerful. And Plato, in the *Cratylus*, when wishing to interpret πῦρ (*fire*), says that it is a barbaric word. He testifies, accordingly, that the Phrygians use this term with a slight deviation (*Cratylus*, 410a)[333].

First of all, Clement shares the theory of natural connexion between (primordial or original) words and things. Undoubtedly, for him Greek is posterior to the Hebrew language[334], but Hebrew was not a primordial tongue – the subject of the clause (αἱ πρῶται καὶ γενικαὶ διάλεκτοι βάρβαροι) is in the plural; so, if my understanding of Clement is correct, he is saying that Hebrew is closer to these generic tongues (compared to Greek), therefore, the ontological correspondence between phoneme and object is better expressed in Hebrew than in Greek. In his belief that prayers uttered in a barbarian tongue are more powerful, Clement follows the same logic caused by the same premise: the natural connexion between name and thing and the gradual aberration of Greek from its original (or generic) dialects.

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[333] Clemens Alexandrinus, *Stromaties*, i, 21:143.6: αἱ δὲ πρῶται καὶ γενικαὶ διάλεκτοι βάρβαροι μέν, φύσει δὲ τὰ ὀνόματα ἔχουσιν, ἐπεὶ καὶ τὰς εὐχὰς ὁμολογοῦσιν οἱ ἄνθρωποι δυνατωτέρας εἶναι τὰς βαρβάρῳ φωνῇ λεγομένας. καὶ Πλάτων δὲ ἐν Κρατύλῳ τὸ πῦρ ἑρμηνεῦσαι βουλόμενος βαρβαρικόν φησιν εἶναι τὸ ὄνομα.

[334] *Stromaties*, vi, 15;130.3:...ῥᾴδιον συνιδεῖν ὅσαις γενεαῖς τῆς Ἑβραίςν φωνῆς αἱ παρ᾽ Ἕλλησι μεταγενέστεραι διάλεκτοι ὑπάρχουσι.

Evidently, Clement used the *Cratylus* as a main source of his doctrine of language. Moreover, his speculations on the nature of speech appear as a unique instance in Patristic tradition. First, there are no signs that Clement entered any dispute with the Gnostic treatment of language, like Irenaeus; his ideas are free of any doctrinal implications. Platonism is his real footing on the question of language. Clement holds Plato's theory without any qualification. Clement gives the impression of being eager to adopt everything that can be adopted from the linguistic ideas of the *Cratylus*:

> Plato attributes a dialect also to the gods, forming this conjecture mainly from dreams and oracles, and especially from demoniacs, who do not speak their own language or dialect (οἳ τὴν αὑτῶν οὐ φθέγγονται φωνὴν οὐδὲ διάλεκτον), but that of the demons who have taken possession of them.
>
> *Stromaties*, i, 21; 143.1f.

The question of demons' (and especially angels') language is a special individual problem. In the vast majority of instances the Fathers argued that language is a characteristic feature of human beings; angels do not have language but communicate non-verbally. Clement, however, assumes that demons speak their own language; he infers it from the Platonic theory of 'divine language'; it is not difficult to apply this idea to angels.

§ III.1.5 Language and logical definitions

The eighth book of the *Stromaties* is conceived as a practical demonstration of how the object of true philosophy and theological inquiry can coincide. One who attempts to discover truth must treat words and definitions skilfully. Methodologically, Clement makes use of Aristotle ἡ ἀναλυτικά and the Stoic ἡ λογιὴ τέχνη; this use is very evident: Clement refers to Aristotelian arguments against the Sophists[335], and repeats the favourite examples and axioms of the Stoics [336]. Furthermore, he is so concerned with logic that his statements sometimes contradict his general speculation about languages. One can easily find a good number of purely Aristotelian ideas that Clement, presumably, inherited from the Stoa: if reasoning is kept within the canons of logic the meaning always exists. He asks, what better or clearer method for the commencement of instruction of this nature can there be than discussion of the term advanced, so distinctly, that all who use the same language may follow it:

> Therefore, if one would treat aright of each question, he cannot carry back the discourse to another more generally admitted fundamental principle that what is admitted to be signified by a term by all of the same nation and language.
>
> *Stromaties*, viii, 2.

In fact, Clement leaves aside his central rhetorical opposition of the 'barbarian' and Greek philosophy and does not introduce a distinction between generic languages and posterior ones. On the contrary, he treats language and

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[335] *Stromaties*, viii, 9; 26.4.
[336] *cf. Stromaties*, viii, 2;31: the imitative word βλίτυρι was a classical Stoic example of 'just a sound that signifies nothing' (ἄσημα) – *e.g.* Chrysippus, *Fragmenta logica et physica*, fr.149:2.

the verbal expression of rational discourse (that should, of course, follow regulations and norms of logic) equally, because his main preoccupation is now with the craft of logic; he expounds classical rules that were already discovered by Aristotle and the Stoics; there is therefore no need to outline them here.

Philosophically, this logic is based on a fundamental principle that considers all languages equally: the regulations of logic work in any linguistic environment and Clement points this out more than once, and his discourse on the whole shows that he takes the principle for granted. My point here is that Clement does not feel that the philosophical foundations of logic that he gives an account of, and his theory that 'generic barbarian dialects' ontologically reflect truth better than, for example, the Greek of the five main dialects of the Greek language (that in his theory are nothing but new derivatives) contradict each other. Therefore, in this section of the *Stromaties*, the account of language and name is the least related to his theological system. Presumably, Clement just summarises the knowledge of logic that he inherited from his secular studies. The following passage is a good example:

> In language (φωνή) there are three things: Names, which are primarily the symbols of conceptions (ὀνόματα σύμβολα ὄντα τῶν νοημάτων), and by consequence also of subjects (τῶν ὑποκειμένων). Second, there are Conceptions, which are the likenesses and impressions of the subjects. Whence in all, the conceptions are the same; in consequence of the same impression being produced by the subjects in all. But the names are not so, on account of the difference of languages. And thirdly, the Subject-matters by which the Conceptions are impressed in us.
>
> *Stromaties*, viii, 8;23.1

His understanding of the Aristotelian τὸ τί ἦν εἶναι is unusual; this 'what it is' of the subject Clement completes by logical analysis *i.e.* by consequent specifying of a genus by various 'differences'. A similar simplification can be observed in his remark on the Stoic 'sayable': for him τὸ λεκτόν is merely a predicate; he says that Stoic 'sayables' and predicates are synonyms:

> ...causes belong to the class of predicates (κατηγορημάτων), or, as others say, of dicta (λεκτῶν) (for Cleanthes and Archedemus call predicates τὰ λέκτα).
>
> *Stromaties*, viii, 9;26.4

It should be pointed out, however, that his general comprehension of logic is predominantly influenced by Aristotle. It is a good question, as to what extent Clement realised that the following reference to Aristotle contradicted his Platonic theory of language:

> Now Aristotle denominates the name of such things as a house, a ship, burning, cutting, an appellative. But the case is allowed to be incorporeal. Therefore that sophism is solved thus: What you say passes through your mouth. Which is true. You name a house. Therefore a house passes through your mouth. Which is false. For we do not speak the house, which is a body, but the case, in which the house is, which is incorporeal.
>
> *Stromaties*, viii, 9; 26.4.

§ III.1.6 Irrational creatures and the power of communication

One of the most intriguing aspects of his philosophy of language is that he was concerned with the phenomenon of communication between irrational creatures. The idea that the power of speech is a principal characteristic of mankind is so crucial for Patristics that it will not be an exaggeration to state that for the Fathers this limitation was the most central premise for a Patristic theory of language.

Posing a question about the nature of animal communication, Clement repeatedly resorts to Plato:

> He (Plato) thinks also that the irrational creatures have dialects (καὶ ἀλόγων ζῴων διαλέκτους εἶναι), which those that belong to the same genus understand[337]. Accordingly, when an elephant falls into the mud and bellows out any other one that is at hand, on seeing what has happened, shortly turns, and brings with him a herd of elephants, and saves the one that has fallen in. It is said also in Libya, that a scorpion, if it does not succeed in stinging a man, goes away and returns with several more; and that, hanging on one to the other like a chain they make in this way the attempt to succeed in their cunning design.
> The irrational creatures do not make use of an obscure intimation, or hint their meaning by assuming a particular attitude, but, as I think, by a dialect of their own. And some others say, that if a fish which has been taken escapes by breaking the line, no fish of the same kind will be caught in the same place that day.
>
> *Stromaties*, i, 21; 143.2f.

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[337] I could not find a direct passage from Plato to which Clement refers. Perhaps, this is why A. Roberts and J. Donaldson left these two references to Plato without specification -- *ANF* vol. ii, n. 290, n.291.

Irrational creatures are said to have ἡ διάλεκτος on their own. Clearly, in the above-going passage his use of the word ἡ διάλεκτος contradicts dramatically what he defined before. Now ἡ διάλεκτος is neither 'a dialect', nor it is the 'power of speech' (a synonym of ἡ φωνή) – in the case of scorpions or fish one can hardly use ἡ φωνή. What Clement really means here is the power of communication that is peculiar to a living soul.

Thus, on the one hand Clement goes on to say that to some extent the power of speech is peculiar to irrational creatures; of course, he does not specify it, and only points to the enigmatic character of the phenomenon. On the other hand, however, in Clement's account of language a problem of animal communication is touched upon. Clement proposition is remarkable: he suggests treating the phenomenon in the context of human speech.

His philosophy of language on the whole is Platonised. Unfortunately, P. Rotta and Y. Edelshtein do not mention it. Some elements of Aristotelism appear only in the sections of secondary importance. It was interesting to observe, however, how English translators of Clement were puzzled by his uncritical adoption of Plato. Translating some passages where Plato's influence was dramatically obvious, the editor commented: 'This assent to Plato's whim, on the part of our author, is suggestive'. But this analysis demonstrates that Clement's theory of language is Platonic, and his 'assents to Plato's whims' are much more than merely 'suggestive'. Clement's Platonism in respect to the nature of language is the most conspicuous example in Patristic theology. Even

Eunomius' theory of naming fails to fit the main issues of the *Cratylus* in the way that Clement's teaching does. To sum up, his account of language and names is, perhaps, the best argument against the 'optimistic' representation of the Patristic theology of language, proposed by Y. Edelshtein.

III.2 Origen and his view on names and language

It has been shown above that a central characteristic feature of speculation about language at the early stage of Alexandrian theology was its deep grounding in the doctrine of Plato. Clement's theological view of language was a good example of a tradition that can be traced from Philo onwards. In the writings of Origen, the attempt to adopt the φύσις-theory of names for the needs of Church theology appears even stronger, but in a radically new form. First of all he evolves an extensive theology of divine names in general and the name 'Jesus' in particular. He shows more originality, and there is evidence to affirm that his use of the φύσις-theory of language is much more systematic and comes from a relatively new background. He overcomes a number of puzzles in this theory and suggests a number of some interesting solutions. Of course, not all of his suggestions appear to be philosophically consistent, but one should remember that this seeming inconsistency in form does not necessarily mean that his view on names is in fact incoherent. Origen himself makes the reservation that he does not aim to represent his views on the nature of names in full:

> And much more besides might be said on the subject of names, against those who think that we ought to be indifferent as to our use of them.
>
> *CCels.* 1, 25:44f[338].

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[338] transl. of A. Roberts & J. Donaldson *ANF*, vol. iv.

And this is correct: some aspects of his theology of language are kept back. Origen's chief claims to originality are related to the fact that his interest in a semi-Platonic doctrine of names is not prompted by his philosophical sympathies; amongst various hypotheses he has chosen the φύσις-theory, because it seemed to agree with the more general premises of his theology. This is why his approach to the issue is more theologically accurate. If for Clement or Philo the *Cratylus* is taken *a priori,* as authoritative and 'correct' scientific doctrine, Origen's choice has a different motivation. His main aim is not to find a synthesis between the biblical narrative about the Tower of Babel and current trends in linguistic teaching, for example. As a matter of fact he enters the discussion because his long-life passion for martyrdom for the name of Jesus Christ was ridiculed by both Gnostics and secular philosophers like Celsus. Whenever he speaks of the nature of names, his central purpose is to explain *why* Christians prefer to die in the course of persecution rather than make a sacrifice (even formally) *to the names* of Zen or Jupiter, why they cannot call the Supreme Deity by the terms that are commonly used by pagans, why martyrdom for the name of Jesus is nothing but the perfecting of the true Christian life.

In what follows, I shall try to demonstrate how Origen adopts the φύσις-theory and how he binds it up with an allegorical interpretation of the Scriptures, and finally how this linguistic position affected his theological system. At this stage I shall examine the suggestion of J. Dillon who seems to

overestimate the significance of the *Cratylus* for Origen: to what extent does Origen depend on the authority of Plato?

Two aspects of Origen's thought such as his use of apophatic definitions and his remarkable theology of divine names and the name 'Jesus' in particular, have already received academic attention; however, a general question about what Origen thinks human language to be has not yet received any satisfactory examination. For the sake of space and for other reasons, it does not seem plausible to focus on the numerous passages where Origen gives extensive and lengthy allegorical explanations. I shall attempt to analyse the very foundation of Origen's view on the nature of language in order to demonstrate *what kind of linguistic theory* is behind his speculations over names and divine epithets. Therefore, in this section I shall mainly focus on the *Contra Celsum* (C*Cels.*), the treatise where Origen approaches the problem of language in the most philosophical way.

To begin with, I shall focus on his theory of language in order to clarify to what extent he accepts the Stoic theory of language, and to what extent he modifies it for his own theological purposes. An examination of his enigmatic beliefs related to magical practice that has already been examined by J. Dillon in his valuable article to which I am indebted, will also be dealt with briefly. I think (and shall try to demonstrate) that this aspect of his doctrine is not of central importance for our problem. Origen's views on the primordial tongue, his attitude to the variety of human tongues are of much more interest, and

provide us with valuable information that substantially clarifies his real purpose and interest in magic. Another important task of this section will be to trace how his linguistic doctrine and philosophy of names affected some other spheres of his system. In conclusion I shall attempt to trace some interesting influences of his ideas on the Church theology of the fourth century.

§ III.2.1 Origen and his comprehension of language: posing of the question

Origen's interest in names and divine names is striking; his theology of names was examined πολυμερῶς καὶ πολυτρόπως in the context of his apophatic theology and doctrine of divine names[339]. The question of his linguistic views is still unclear: the comprehensive monographs of P. Rotta and Y. Edelshtein left Origen almost ignored[340]. What does Origen think of the nature of names?

One of the most exhaustive explanations is given in the *De Oratione,* where he exposes the meaning of '*hallowed be thy name*':

> Now name is a summary designation, indicative of the proper quality of him who is named. For example, there is a proper quality of Paul the Apostle, a quality of the soul in accordance with which his soul is of such and such a kind,

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339 *v.*, for example, R. Hanson, *Allegory and event* (London 1959) pp.205-207; H. Crouzel, *Origène et la "connaisaince mystique"* (Paris 1961), p.253ff; И. Алфеев, , *op.cit.*, v. 1, p. 71ff.; А. Фокин, *Учение Оригена о Логосе и логосах (идеях)*, pp.197-226.

340 P. Rotta refers to the famous *CCels.* 1, 24 just only once – *op.cit.*, p. 83 – and his interest is limited to Origen's opposition to the Epicurean theory of language origin.

> a quality of the mind, in accordance with which it contemplates things of such and such sort, and a quality of his body, in accordance with which it is of such and such sort…
> But in the case of man, when their proper qualities as it were become changed, their names also are rightly changed according to Scripture. For when the quality of Abram was changed he was called 'Abraham'…
>
> But in the case of God, who himself is invariable and ever immutable by nature, the name which is as it were given to him is ever one, the 'He who is' spoken of in Exodus (*Ex.* 3:14), or any other name that conveys the same meaning.
>
> *De Oratione*, 24; 2[341].

His considerations about names, their alteration and the Tetragrammaton are inspired by Scripture is based on ancient Hebrew name-theology. In exegetical works he often reverts to the same logic[342]: the name 'Jesus', which is 'poured chrism'[343], attached to the son of Nun, the name 'Jesus' designates sacraments of the Lord Jesus[344], *etc.* Such examples could be multiplied endlessly from his exegetical homilies, but in fact neither his commentaries on the biblical passages, nor the above-quoted fragment from the *De Oratione,* make clear the philosophical foundation for such an understanding of name.

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[341] Transl. of E. G. Jay, *Origen's treatise on Prayer* (London 1954), p. 154.
[342] For his exegesis of the biblical names *v.* И. Алфеев, *op.cit.*, vol. 1, pp. 70-78.
[343] Origenes, *In canticum canticorum*, 1,4 (*PG* 13, 41 D – 42 A).
[344] Origenes, *In Jesu Nave*, 1, 1 (*PG* 12, 825 A – 825 A)

As H. Alfeyev rightly points out, Origen shows an outstanding competence in all settled theories of language of his era[345]; arguing against the oversimplification of the matter that occurs amongst his opponents (Celsus and, presumably the Gnostics[346]). He clearly means the followers of Aristotle's philosophy of language, who bring the θέσις-theory of names to oversimplified subjectivism (J. Dillon rightly defines Celsus' position as 'aggressive syncretism'[347]) and argues that it is philosophically ridiculous to prefer biblical divine names at the cost of the names of Greek (heathen) religion. In contrast to a tendency to reconcile two opposite classical theories of language, Origen rejects the Aristotelian theory *in toto*. Perhaps the following passage, in spite of its length, is the best to shed light on Origen's own philosophical sympathies concerning the nature of human words and at once to set the agenda for our discussion:

> ...we have to remark that this involves a deep and mysterious subject – that, *viz.*, respecting the nature of names (ὁ περὶ φύσεως ὀνομάτων): it being a question whether, as Aristotle thinks, names were bestowed by arrangement (θέσει εἰσὶ τὰ ὀνόματα), or, as the Stoics hold, by nature; the first words being imitations of things, agreeably to which the names were formed (μιμουμένων τῶν πρώτων φωνῶν τὰ πράγματα), and in conformity with which they introduce certain principles of etymology (στοιχεῖα τινα τῆς ἐτυμολογίας εἰσάγουσιν); or whether, as Epicurus teaches (differing in this from the Stoics), names were given by nature, – the first men having uttered

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345 И. Алфеев, , *loc.cit.*

346 *cf.* Origenes, *Exhortatio ad martyrium*, 46;7f. (ed. P. Koetschau, *Origenes Werke*, vol. 1 in *Die griechischen christlichen Schriftsteller* 2 (Leipzig 1899), pp. 3-47).

347 Dillon, J. *op.cit.*, p. 207. Apart from that, Celsus also seems to hold a sensualist epistemology – *cf. CCels.*, 7; 36.

certain words varying with the circumstances in which they found themselves (φύσει ἐστὶ τὰ ὀνόματα, ἀποῤῥήξάντων τῶν πρώτων ἀνθρώπων τινὰς φωνὰς κατὰ τῶν πραγμάτων).

Contra Celsum, 1,24:7-16[348].

It is obvious that in his comprehension of language Origen is extremely close to the Alexandrian tradition; moreover, his refutation of Aristotle's position repeatedly appears in the *Contra Celsum* (*CCels.*). Thus, he believes that the name of a thing, its phoneme, is bound up with its essence *ontologically*. Although it has already been shown that the character of this *ontological connexion* between name and essence had been always a matter of heated discussion, and it was still debatable amongst Stoics, due to the lack of information it remains unclear to which variant of φύσις-theory Origen refers. Moreover, Origen's hints at his scientific sympathies to the Stoic theory of language are extremely accurate, so that one can find relatively little information about *how* Origen himself understands this ontological connexion. Nevertheless, it is relatively clear that, first, Origen decisively rejects Aristotelian or semi-Aristotelian variants of linguistic theory, because they contradict his views in every respect. Second, his acquaintance with these variants of the φύσις-theory was deep enough; he distinguishes, for example, the φύσις-theory of Stoics from a similar variant given by the Epicurean school

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[348] *Contra Celsum*, ed. M. Borret, Origène. *Contre Celse*, 4 vols, *SC* 132, 136, 147, 150 (Paris 1967-1969).

and refutes the latter[349]. Philo and Clement merely adopted Plato's theory of names, including some secondary aspects of the theory; in other words, the *Cratylus* should be regarded as their main source and foundation for their view on the nature of language and its origin. Even though one can find a number of parallels between Origen's theory and the ideas of Plato, it is noticeable that he still associates the notorious φύσις-theory not with Plato *in personam*, but with Stoic modifications of the theory of language and their etymologies. It is also noticeable that he appears to ignore the *Cratylus* systematically: in several pages below (*viz. CCels.* 1, 25:44 *ad fin.*), when he endeavours to reinforce his point by referring to the authority of Plato, Origen quotes relatively insignificant and uninteresting passages from the *Philebus* that Socrates' 'fear about the names of gods is no small one'[350]. J. Dillon's proposition that the φύσις-theory in this instance originally comes from the *Cratylus* and is just borrowed back from the Stoics[351] is generally correct, but there is a need to specify Origen's attitude to the dialogue. His competence in language matters was outstanding, and it is highly unlikely that Origen was unaware of this dialogue of Plato.

In the first instance, as J. Dillon rightly makes clear in his article, Origen's approach to the problem is more practical than theoretical. His ideas about language and languages appear in reply to the position of the Sceptic-minded

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[349] I believe that his criticism of Epicurus in *CCels.* 1, 24:22 may be regarded as Origen's rejection of Epicurean theory.
[350] Perhaps he quoted by memory; I think here and in *CCels.* 4; 48:22 he means *Philebus.*, 12c1f.
[351] J. Dillon, *op.cit.*, p.207.

philosophical trend based on the *De interpretatione*. It is, in particular, his reply to Celsus, who argued that:

> It makes no difference whether the God who is over all things be called by the name of Zeus, which is current among the Greeks, or by that, e.g., which is in use among the Indians or Egyptians.
>
> *CCels.* 1, 24: 4-7.

§ III.2.2 Apophatic definitions and theology of divine names

It is clear that Celsus' 'pluralism' in relation to the names for the divine is based, as Origen repeatedly points out, on the theory of Aristotle. At the same time, and this represents for Origen an evident difficulty, Celsus attempts to add force to his standpoint by semi-apophatic definitions of the divine. Origen clarifies that the incomprehensibility of God in Church theology relates to human nature – God cannot be perfectly described by human words:

> I make a distinction, and say that if he means the word that is in us (εἰ μὲν λόγῳ τῷ ἐν ἡμῖν) – whether the word conceived in the mind (εἴτε ἐνδιαθέτῳ εἴτε προφορικῷ), or the word that is uttered – I, too, admit that God is not to be reached by word.
>
> *CCels.*, 6; 65:7ff.

His next distinction is interesting. The statement that 'God cannot be reached by any word' is different from 'God cannot be designated by name

(οὐκ ὀνομαστός)'. The former means that God is invisible (ἀόρατος), incomprehensible, 'difficult to see' (δυσθεώρητος) for human intellect (νοῦς) and heart (καρδία); therefore, He is unapproachable by human words (λόγος); but human word/thought (λόγος) is different from the divine Logos (!). He goes on to say that the statement about the 'unnameable deity', however, requires to be taken with a distinction as well:

> If he means, indeed, that there is no word or sign (ἐν λέξεσι καὶ σημαινομένοις) that can represent the attributes of God (δύναται παραστῆσαι τὰς ἰδιότητας τοῦ θεοῦ), the statement is true.
>
> *Ibid.*

And on a similar basis, he adds there are many qualities which cannot be indicated by words, and one cannot distinguish and set forth in words the peculiar qualities of each individual thing (*Ibid.*):

> But if you take the phrase to mean that it is possible to represent by words something of God's attributes, in order to lead the hearer by the hand, as it were, and so enable him to comprehend something of God, so far as attainable by human nature, then there is no absurdity in saying that 'He *can* be described by name'.
>
> *Ibid.*

Thus, Origen distinguishes Greek theological epithets for the divine from proper (Hebrew) names that Scripture attaches to God. This issue receives a thorough examination when Origen turns to the problem of divine names. At this stage, his line of argumentation against Aristotelism is based on practical observations – he believes that his appeals to linguistic realities will make more

sense than philosophising περὶ οὐσίας. He proposes an interesting category – the efficacy of magical formulae amongst heathen nations and the veneration of divine names amongst Christians – and gives his own explanation of these phenomena. He says that magical practice is not utterly incoherent, as some philosophers suppose, but:

> ...as those skilled in it prove, a consistent system, having words which are known to exceedingly few.
>
> *CCels.* 1, 24:22f.

In his opinion, the efficacy of magical practice is based on the fact that *all the names and words of human languages are given by nature*. What kind of languages are the subject of his examination?

§ III.2.3 The problem of primordial language: Hebrew is ἡ θεία διάλεκτος

The problem of the variety of human languages always depends on how one comprehends the original (primordial) tongue. In the fifth book of *CCels* Origen turns back to the problem of language, but in another kind of context. His concern is now with his doctrine of angels and the historical division of human nations, and therefore languages. His speculations are strongly reminiscent of the well-known premise of Clement, who opposed 'Greek science' to 'Barbarian revelation'; Origen similarly turns this idea into an

opposition of Hebrew and 'other' languages. Thus, he argues against the views of Greek and Egyptian historians on the origin of humankind, refers to *Gen.* 11:1-9 and points out that it is neither the struggle of Greek gods, nor the 'division of the so-called Egyptian homes' that caused the variety of nations and their tongues. Originally, humankind consisted of one nation who spoke one language; God confounded the language of all the earth, because of the sin against him, and there followed the confusion of languages, when the 'division of the earth' took place[352]. His association of sin and corruption with the notion of division brightly reminds us of a Neo-Platonic opposition of the superior 'one' and the inferior 'many'; it is, therefore, clear why he calls the original language of human race 'divine' or, according to H. Chadwick's translation, 'sacred':

> All the people upon the earth are to be regarded as having used one divine language (μιᾷ τινι διαλέκτῳ θείᾳ χρώμενοι), and so long as they lived harmoniously (συμφωνοῦσι πρὸς ἀλλήλους) together were preserved in the use of this divine language (ἐν τῇ θείᾳ διαλέκτῳ).
>
> *CCels.* 5;30f.

This transition of humankind from unity to multiplicity, from the possession of one language to many, from being one nation to many nations, came to pass, in his opinion, gradually. Initially, they remained without moving from the Orient (*CCels.*, 5;30:6 – 'ἀπὸ τῶν ἀνατολῶν')[353]; but as soon as they

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[352] *CCels.*, 5; 29.
[353] *cf.* J. Daniélou, *Origen* (London 1955), p. 229 and his comment on the comprehension of this term in Patristic theology.

wanted to acquire material things (τὰ τῆς ὕλης συναγαγεῖν θέλοντες) – Origen allegorically interprets the bricks of the Tower and alludes to the concept of multiplicity – the people were not *'imbued with the sentiments of the 'light'* (τὰ τοῦ φωτὸς), *and of the 'reflection' of the eternal light* (καὶ τοῦ ἀπὸ «φωτὸς ἀϊδίου»)' any longer.

The builders paid their penalty, and God confounded the original sacral language that they used to speak. How does Origen comprehend this ἡ θεία διάλκτος? He believes that this language is Hebrew; furthermore, in his opinion, the biblical patriarchs had preserved this sacral language:

> Now, in the next place, if any one has the capacity, let him understand that in what assumes the form of history, and which contains some things that are literally true, while yet it conveys a deeper meaning, those who preserved their original language continued (τοὺς τὴν ἐξ ἀρχῆς διάλεκτον τετηρηκότας), by reason of their not having migrated from the east, in possession of the east, and of their eastern language (μένοντας ἐν τῇ ἀνατολῇ καὶ τῇ ἀνατολικῇ διαλέκτῳ). And let him notice, that these alone became the portion of the Lord, and His people who were called Jacob, and Israel the cord of His inheritance; and these alone were governed by a ruler who did not receive those who were placed under him for the purpose of punishment, as was the case with the others.
>
> *CCels.* 5; 31:1ff.

His treatment of biblical Hebrew is both astonishing and perilous: in *CCels.* 3, 6-7 he calls Hebrew 'a gift from heaven' (θεοδώρητον διάλεκτον) and adds that the letters of the Hebrew alphabet were invented and first employed by Moses while composing the Pentateuch. This attitude to Hebrew is not something substantially new amongst Alexandrian theologians, but unlike

Clement he does not seem to attach an absolute epistemological status to Hebrew; moreover, as we have observed in *CCels.* 6; 65-69 this presumption is entirely foreign to him: even this sacral language has limitations.

The most interesting aspect of his position for our purposes is his statement that there is no *epistemological* distinction between the primordial divine tongue and modern languages; *the ontological connexion between phoneme and essence of thing exists in all languages equally*:

> If, then, we shall be able to establish, in reference to the preceding statement, the nature of powerful names, some of which are used by the learned amongst the Egyptians, or by the Magi among the Persians, and by the Indian philosophers called Brahmans, or by the Samanaeans, and others in different countries (καθ᾽ ἕκαστον τῶν ἐθνῶν);
>
> *CCels.* 1, 24:16ff.

Origen's concern with the problem of the origin of languages and their variety is striking. We now come across one of the most intriguing aspects of Origen's view on the nature of human language. Hebrew was called a ἡ θεοδώρητος or even θεία dialect; at the same time, Origen definitely thinks of all languages of the human race as equal, because the 'mechanism' of the designation in all languages is the same. How does he understand the problem of the variety of human languages and why, (to develop his reasoning) is Hebrew to some extent equal to the other languages?

Turing back to Origen's conjecture about the transition of humankind from *the Orient, i.e.* from unity to multiplicity, one of the basic presuppositions

of his exegesis of *Gen.* 11:1-9, *Deut.* 32:8-9, and *Wisd.* 1:4, is that the rôle of angels in the distribution of nations is of central importance. After prolix allegories about bricks, stones, clay and bitumen (thus, he allegorically interprets the different degrees of the builders' complicity in the sin – 'in proportion to the greater or less departure from the Orient which had taken place among them'), he says:

> ...and they (*i.e.* the builders) were conducted by those angels, who imprinted on each his native language, to the different parts of the earth according to their deserts[354]: some, for example, to a region of burning heat, others to a country which chastises its inhabitants by its cold; others, again, to a land exceedingly difficult of cultivation, others to one less so in degree; while a fifth were brought into a land filled with wild beasts, and a sixth to a country comparatively free of these.
>
> *CCels.*, 5;30:25ff.

The texts of Origen are not rich in linguistic terms[355]: he treats both Hebrew and the 'derivatives' that appeared after the Confusion as *dialects*. Although it is not made explicit, Origen is close to some ideas of Epicurus about the impact of climate upon the variety of human tongues[356]. Nonetheless, he emphasises that in the course of the confusion it was also a supernatural factor – angels – that to some extent conditioned the peculiar features of the various human languages. But let us now return to his premise that names in all

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354 ...ὑπὸ τῶν ἀγγέλων ἀγέσθωσαν ἕκαστος τῶν ἐμποιησάντων τὴν οἰκείαν ἑαυτοῖς διάλεκτον ἐπὶ τὰ μέρη τῆς γῆς κατὰ τὴν ἑαυτῶν ἀξίαν...

355 This issue was partly examined by H. Crouzel, in the context of Origen's terms for 'mystery' and 'symbolisation': *op.cit.*, pp. 25-46, 211-235.

356 His superficial remark that ancient spells were appropriated by the 'authors of languages' (τοῖς πατράσι τῶν διαλέκτον), also reminds us of Epicurean ideas.

languages are ontologically connected with their objects, because Origen has more to add to the theory of names.

§ III.2.5 Power of name: the notion of proper names in magic spells and in the Christian prayers

At *CCels.* 5, 45 he returns to the issue discussed at 1, 24; once more he attacks Celsus' Aristotelianism[357], and maintains that:

> For the languages which are prevalent among men do not derive their origin from men (οὐδὲ γὰρ ἀπὸ ἀνθρώπων τὴν ἀρχὴν ἔχουσιν αἱ ἐν ἀνθρώποις διάλεκτοι), as is evident to those who are able to ascertain the nature of the charms which are appropriated by the inventors of the languages (τοῖς πατράσι τῶν διαλέκτων) differently, according to the various tongues, and to the varying pronunciations of the names...
>
> *CCels.* 5; 45:8ff.

To make his point, Origen draws the reader's attention to the semantics of proper names. When magical formulae, which in a certain language were possessed of a natural power, were translated into another, they were no longer

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[357] *CCels.*, 5; 45:1ff.: As Celsus, however, is of the opinion that it matters nothing whether the highest being be called Jupiter, or Zen, or Adonai, or Sabaoth, or Ammoun (as the Egyptians term him), or Pappaeus (as the Scythians entitle him), let us discuss the point for a little... And now we maintain that the nature of names (ἡ τῶν ὀνομάτων φύσις) is not, as Aristotle supposes, an enactment of those who impose them (οὐ θεμένων εἰσὶ νόμοι).

able to accomplish what they did before when uttered in their native tongues (ἐν ταῖς οἰκείαις φωναῖς):

> ...if we were to translate the name of one who was called from his birth by a certain appellation in the Greek language into the Egyptian or Roman, or any other tongue, we could not make him do or suffer the same things which he would have done or suffered under the appellation first bestowed upon him. Nay, even if we translated into the Greek language the name of an individual who had been originally invoked in the Roman tongue, we could not produce the result which the incantation professed itself capable of accomplishing had it preserved the name first conferred upon him.
>
> *CCels.*, 5; 45:16ff.

He asks, therefore, if these statements are true when spoken of the names of *men*, what are we to think of those which are transferred, for any cause whatever, to the *Deity*? In relation to the Deity, Origen adopts the same logic. The Bible uses a certain number of names for God. Amongst other names, God is called 'the God of Abraham', 'the God of Isaac', and 'the God of Jacob'. The names of Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob have particular meanings in Hebrew. If one translates these into Greek, and addresses God as '*the God of the chosen father of the echo*' or '*the God of laughter*' or '*the God of him who strikes with the heel*', the mention of the name is attended with no result on the same basis. In other words, man's prayer *will have no effect*. The phoneme (φωνή, φθόγγος), therefore, is according to Origen of crucial significance, when addressed to the true God:

> And we may say the same also of the pronunciation of 'Sabaoth' (περὶ τῆς Σαβαωθ φωνῆς), a word which is

> frequently employed in incantations (ἐπῳδῶν); for if we translate the term into 'Lord of hosts', or 'Lord of armies', or 'Almighty' (different acceptation of it having been proposed by the interpreters), we shall accomplish nothing (οὐδὲν ποιήσομεν); whereas if we retain the original pronunciation (ἐν τοῖς ἰδίοις φθόγγοις), we shall, as those who are skilled in such matters maintain, produce some effect. And the same observation holds good of Adonai. If, then, neither 'Sabaoth' nor 'Adonai', when rendered into what appears to be their meaning in the Greek tongue, can accomplish anything, how much less would be the result among those who regard it as a matter of indifference whether the highest being be called 'Jupiter', or 'Zen', or 'Adonai', or 'Sabaoth'!
>
> *CCels.* 5, 45.

Despite the fact that Origen insists in the use of Hebrew names for Christian prayer (instead of their Greek or Latin equivalents), he does not go on to say that human prayer as such will have more effect if it is offered up in Hebrew. One should notice that his concern about divine names in *CCels.* is limited; he simply endeavours to explain why God should be addressed as 'Adonai' or 'Sabaoth', and why such names as 'Jupiter' or 'Zen' are absolutely inappropriate, as being the names of demons, who usurped these Greek names in order to enjoy being worshipped as deities. We have already observed that there is no epistemological discrimination of 'other' human languages. Philosophically, Origen admits that the names of these languages also have real power that appears, however, under different circumstances. According to his theology, the inestimable advantage of Hebrew divine names is related to the fact that originally the ancient Jews preserved a *true concept* of God and unlike other nations, who were deluded by demons and had in use some names that

misled them[358], employed concrete divine names to designate and invoke the true God of all.

> ...then we say that the name Sabaoth, and Adonai, and the other names treated with so much reverence among the Hebrews, are not applicable to any ordinary created things, but belong to a secret theology (ἐπί τινος θεολογίας ἀποῤῥήτου) which refers to the Framer of all things. These names, accordingly, when pronounced with that attendant train of circumstances which is appropriate to their nature, are possessed of great power (διὸ καὶ δύναται ταῦτα τὰ ὀνόματα);
>
> *CCels.* 1, 24:25ff

It is indicative that Origen comprehends language in a way traditional in Alexandrian theology; he attempts to make maximal theological use of φύσις-theory; he rightly argues that the divine name that came down to us through Revelation cannot be interchanged with Greek or the Latin 'Zen' and 'Jupiter'. But when he tries to give a theological explanation for why these names should remain in Hebrew, he reveals some inconsistency that, in turn, goes back to his premise that Hebrew is the primordial tongue. He tries to find a balance, he attempts to defend the idea that Greek and Latin translations of 'Adonai' and 'Sabaoth' fail to represent the original power, and at the same time he argues that all languages are equal. He is so keen on the phenomenon of power contained in a name that such problems as the rôle of human intellect in

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[358] Other names, he adds, current in Egyptian or Persian (and so on in every individual nation) are efficacious against certain demons, they also have corresponding power over other evil spirits: 'And thus it will be found that, of the various demons upon the earth, to whom different localities have been assigned, each one bears a name appropriate to the several dialects of place and country' – *CCels.* 1, 24.

relation to the nature of language remain almost untouched. Nevertheless, there are several aspects of his 'linguistic theology' that may represent his originality in full.

§ III.2.6 Christological and eschatological implications

The eighth book of *CCels.* gives us important information about the next stage of the 'linguistic' controversy between Origen and Celsus. The impression is given that Celsus replied to Origen's earlier hypothesis and pointed out new 'absurdities' of his theology of divine names. His additional accusation against the Christian liturgical use of divine names (in his language 'barbarian' names, *i.e.* in Hebrew) was an interesting one. If one considers Hebrew as the perfect primordial and therefore *sacral* language, and only Hebrew epithets for the Deity (such as Adonai and Sabaoth) have supernatural power, logically he has to admit that human prayer in, for example, Greek or Latin appears to be totally inefficient. Origen quotes Celsus:

> 'If', says he, 'they who are addressed are called upon by barbarous names, they will have power, but no longer will they have any if they are addressed in Greek or Latin'[359].
>
> *CCels.*, 8; 37:3f.

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[359] ἐὰν μὲν βαρβάρως αὐτοὺς ὀνομάζῃ τις, δύμανιν ἔξουσιν, ἐὰν δὲ ἑλληνικῶς ἢ ῥωμαϊκῶς, οὐκέτι.

Such an argument could not shake Origen's convictions; first of all, his teaching about the sacral quality of the Hebrew language contained a number of limitations and reservations: all languages are equal, in all human languages names are connected with essence by nature (ontologically), and therefore in all languages proper names have power, depending on which tongue is in use. Hebrew is sacral and 'divinely given', but this special status of the Jewish tongue is not caused by its phonetic structure; nor is it caused by the fact that in Hebrew the ontological connexion between name and essence is generally 'better'. It has been observed that his concern was primarily to explain that the Hebrew 'Adonai' and 'Sabaoth' are sacral names (in comparison with Zen and Jupiter), but this sanctity is based on the *true concept* of God that the ancient patriarchs inherited after the Confusion. If at the former stage of the dispute Origen's intention was to explain and to defend biblical divine names, now his main aim is to defend the idea that Christian prayers are effective in all languages:

> Any one will be convinced that this is a false charge which Celsus brings against us, when he considers that Christians in prayer do not even use the precise names which divine Scripture applies to God; but the Greeks use Greek names, the Romans Latin names, and every one prays and sings praises to God as he best can, in his mother tongue (κατὰ τὴν ἑαυτοῦ διαλέκτον). For the Lord of all the languages (ὁ πάσης διαλέκτου κύριος) of the earth hears those who pray to Him in each different tongue (ὡς μιᾶς φωνῆς), hearing, if I may so say, but one voice, expressing itself in different dialects (τῆς κατὰ τὰ σημαινόμενα ἀκούων, δηλουμένης ἐκ τῶν ποικίλων διαλέκτων). For the Most High is not as one of those who select one language,

> Barbarian or Greek, knowing nothing of any other, and caring nothing for those who speak in other tongues.
>
> *Ibid.*

I suggest that this passage is of crucial importance in understanding Origen' theology of language. It is clear that his various ideas and speculations about magic practice and the power of names usurped by demons are to some extent insignificant and relative. These considerations might be shared or refuted, but as soon as one admits that heathen names for gods are inappropriate for the Christian profession of faith, the teaching about a sacral original tongue fades into the background. Man's sin turned the human race from linguistic unity to a multiplicity of tongues; the divine *oikonomia* of salvation is to restore the original unity. For this reason, Origen points out that Celsus forgets that Christians, who pronounce their prayers in different languages, address God through Jesus[360]. This is an interesting Christological implication: the problem of multiplicity of languages discovers its solution in the divine Redeemer.

Another illustrative aspect of his view of the problem is that Origen understands the variety of tongues as abnormal, inferior; it follows from such things as injustice, vain speech, and deceit. Therefore the current variety of languages is temporary and transient, and the Word shall prevail over the entire rational creature, and change (μεταποιῆσαι) every soul into His own

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[360] *CCels.*, 8; 37:1f.: Εἶτ᾽ ἐπιλαθόμενος ὅτι Χριστιανοῖς λαλεῖ, τοῖς μόνοις τῷ θεῷ διὰ τοῦ Ἰησοῦ εὐχομένοις...

perfection (εἰς τὴν ἑαυτοῦ τελειότητα)[361]. He refers to the notion of the 'pure tongue' (γλῶσσα εἰς γενεὰν αὐτῆς) in the book of Zephaniah (3:7-13 LXX)[362] and links it with *Gen.* 11:1-7:

> ...'When the whole earth is destroyed, there will be turned upon the peoples a language according to their race' as things were before the confusion of tongues (ἀνάλογον τοῖς πρὸ τῆς συγχύσεως πράγμασι·). Let them (*i.e.* Celsus and others) also carefully consider the promise, that all shall call upon the name of the Lord, and serve Him with one consent;
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> *CCels.* 8; 72:48ff.

Doomsday will bring the restoration of human nature. This central event, in his opinion, will have a twofold effect on the linguistic situation. In the first instance, it will have a general and mysterious impact upon the corrupted nature of the human tongue: there will no longer be 'any injustice, or vain speech, or a deceitful tongue'. At the same time, this restoration will turn people from the mutual misunderstanding that is caused by a variety of languages to their original unity:

> And thus much it seemed needful for me to say briefly, and without entering into elaborate details, in answer to the remark of Celsus, that he considered any agreement between the inhabitants of Asia, Europe, and Libya, as well Greeks as Barbarians, was impossible. And perhaps such a result would indeed be impossible to those who are still in the body, but not to those who are released from it.
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> *CCels.*, 8; 72:57ff.

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[361] *CCels.*, 8; 72:13.

[362] *v.* Sir L. Ch. Lee Brenton, *The Septuagint version of the Old Testament* (London 1844); his Engl. trasl. of LXX, Zeph. 3:9: 'For then will I turn to the peoples a tongue for her generation, that all may call on the name of the Lord, to serve him under one yoke'.

Of course, one can guess what Origen means by this eschatological restoration of languages; it is highly likely that he would associate this eschatological 'pure tongue' with Hebrew. His presumption, however, that this new tongue will be free from the number of imperfections which cause sins in man's speech lead us to think that this guess might be a reasonable one.

To summarise the various aspects of his views on language, one should notice that Origen approaches the problem in a radically different manner from Clement. He still depends on the Hellenistic science of the time, but unlike his predecessor, who merely included ideas from the *Cratylus* in his extensive *Stromaties,* Origen attempts to work out a new Christian comprehension of names and language. Another question is to what extent this attempt is successful. Origen strays from Plato; even though his use of the Stoic variant of the φύσει-theory is unquestionable, he evolves and modifies their teaching; but one should classify his linguistic theory as a 'Christian' variant of the Stoic doctrine of language. This is why one of the most striking features of his approach is that a link between the phenomenon of language and the human power of thinking and speech did not receive a satisfactory treatment in his writings.

This kind of solution is typical of Alexandrian theology, but there is no evidence of his influence upon later thought. If Origen employs a Platonised theory of language with exclusive accuracy and with a number of limitations, some later theologians turned back to a primitive oversimplification of the

matter. One could find a great number of examples; but let us briefly look at this tendency in Eusebius of Caesarea and Severianus Gabalensis who was already mentioned above.

In the opinion of Eusebius, Adam and Moses were name-makers in the sense of Plato's ὀνοματουργός, they named creatures, being inspired 'by the divine power' (ὑπὸ θειοτέρας δυνάμεως) and attached correct names according to their nature (κατὰ φύσιν). Next, in his exposition of the matter he turns everything upside-down, including Plato's doctrine: Adam and Moses invented all names in accordance with their nature, Plato borrowed his doctrine from Moses; furthermore, in his exegesis of the *Genesis* Eusebius repeatedly refers to and quotes from the *Cratylus,* and even attributes to Plato a number of absolutely irrelevant oversimplifications[363].

Severianus Gabalensis represents the apogee of such oversimplification.

His interpretation of *Gen.* 2:19-20 is that:

> God has determined all these names in advance; His intention, however, was to demonstrate that Adam is in agreement with His divine will.
>
> *PG* 56, 480-481

After the Fall he forgot the 'correct' language of paradise; the modern tongues of the human race, therefore, are nothing but the result of the inevitable spoiling of the original language.

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[363] Eusebius, *Praeparatio evangelica,* 11, 6, 1ff. (ed. K. Mras, *Eusebius Werke, Band* 8, *Die Praeparatio evangelica* in *Die griechischen christlichen Schriftsteller* 43.1 & 43.2. (Berlin1954-1956).

Y. Edelshtein remarks that the methodology of Severianus is extremely simple, and his exegetical ideas often coincide with Eunomius[364]. But even amongst orthodox writers of the fourth century such a primitive approach to the problem becomes very frequent. Origen, therefore, appears to be the first and the last more or less successful attempt of employing the φύσει-theory of language, and none of the attempts that followed seem to reflect his achievements.

Let us now turn to another theological attempt to adopt the φύσει-theory of language.

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[364] Ю. Эдельштейн, *Раннесредневековое учение*, p. 191.

Chapter IV: The Eunomean Controversy and the Cappadocian view of language.

> ...Eunomius advances by the device of this terrible dilemma a double-edged refutation...
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> Gregory of Nyssa, *CE*, 1; 34.

In the following chapter our main concern will be to outline an initial form of the Anomean theory in relation to linguistic matters, *i.e.* a form that faced the attack of Basil. This theological theme belongs to a more general problem, which has already been investigated. These numerous studies, however, have arrived at (sometimes) opposite conclusions; so now it seems much easier to pose the question than to answer it. After the recent monograph of R. Vaggione and his extensive and profitable contributions to the editing of Eunomius' extant works, we now appear to be much better informed about the personality of the Anomean leaders, as well as his *Apologies;* nevertheless, in modern scholarship the question about the very core of Eunomius and Aetius' thought is still a matter of dispute, and as a result there are diametrically opposed theories about their philosophical background. Although in my treatment of the Anomean leaders I do not intend to examine the entire theological system, especially their conclusions, some of the most immediate questions will be touched upon.

The main problem of the historical and theological analysis of the Anomean theory of names is related to the following inquiry; Ph. Rousseau is

right, Eunomius (and, of course, his master) was '*a predominantly philosophical thinker and writer*'[365], but the modern view of their philosophical background varies dramatically[366]. The numerous attempts to discover the very core of this intellectual controversy still lack a settled opinion about the philosophical linguistic implications of both sides, Eunomius and his Cappadocian opponents. Although it is impossible here to discuss the problem in full, I shall give a brief overview (that opens this section) and make several digressions in the course of my examination.

IV.1 Aetius and Eunomius: a critical examination of their 'philosophy'

A prima facie confusion and lack of clarity is caused by the sources themselves; Basil accused Eunomius with a use\misuse of Chrysippus' syllogism[367], and emphasised that their main method was based on the *Categoriae* of Aristotle[368]. Gregory of Nyssa, who repeated Basil's accusations, apart from various philosophical influences, pointed to the dependence of the Anomean theory of names on the *Cratylus* of Plato[369] – this classical passage was often taken to point to Eunomius' use of the dialogue, and in what follows I am

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[365] Rousseau, Ph. *Basil of Caesarea*, (Oxford, *et.al.* 1994), p. 106.
[366] This problem is often noted, *v.*, for example, M. Anastos and his brief overview of the bibliography in, *Basil's KATA EYNOMIOY, Basil of Caesarea: Christian, humanist, ascetic*, vol. i, p. 118ff.
[367] Basilius, *Adversus Eunomium*, i, 5:43f. (*SC*, 299 (Paris 1982)).
[368] *ibid.*,i, 9:8f (*SC*, 299 p. 200).
[369] Gregorius Nyssenus, *Contra Eunomium*, ii, 1;404.1f.

going to examine this issue critically. Simultaneously, Eunomius in his reply to Basil accuses him in almost exactly the same terms; moreover, in his early work, whether rhetorically or not, he shows a distrust of philosophy insofar as it is 'far removed from Christianity'[370]. In his reply to the first theological attack he says that Basil substitutes 'the doctrine of the Church' for pagan philosophy (τῇ ἔξωθεν φιλοσοφίᾳ) and destroys divine providence and, therefore, calls him atheist[371] – the exact accusation against, or better to say, offensive nickname of, his master Aetius – more specifically, he assumes that Basil in his view of language follows Epicurus and Aristotle[372]; as J. Daniélou pointed out, and we observed in the previous chapter, this is *verbatim et literatim* the accusation made by Origen against Celsus.

Even at the latest stage of the controversy, when Eunomius evidently turned to more advanced reading of philosophical and exegetical works in order to find more serious rational justifications for his theory of names, the central theological formulae remained the same. The eclectic feature of the Anomean philosophical background seemed to be evident for neutral *i.e.* non-controversial sources, which unanimously pointed to the purely logical character of the Anomean doctrine and his obvious ignorance of the Tradition and the Scriptures. A report of Nemesius of Emessa about Eunomius'

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370 *Liber.Apol.*, 19.6. (ed. Vaggione, R. *Eunomius' apologies*).
371 *CE*, J. i, 282, 196; 3f. (*Contra Eunomium*, ed. W. Jaeger, *Gregorii Nysseni opera*, vols. 1, 2 (Leiden 1960).
372 *CE*, J. i, 410-411.

anthropological ideas appears to be both illustrative and trustworthy, because Nemesius does not speak about linguistic and serious doctrinal issues:

> Eunomius, in accordance with Plato and Aristotle, defined the soul as a bodiless essence created in a body (οὐσίαν ἀσώματον ἐν σώματι κτιζομένον), agreeing thereby with both Plato and Aristotle; for though 'bodiless essence' came from Plato, 'created in a body' was the teaching of Aristotle. And yet, for all his acuteness, Eunomius could not see that the things he was trying to reconcile were incompatible[373].
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> *De natura hominis*, 2;446ff

However, the question is whether this acquaintance with philosophical literature was inherited from Aetius or did he turn to advanced studies much later? This is not a speculative inquiry as one might suppose at first sight. In a number of cases, Eunomius' theory of names and general estimation of his philosophical background takes onto account only the last three books of *Apologia apologiae*, and turns both Aetius and Eunomius into something they were not. At the same time, such a representation of the theological content of the *Apologies* make difficulties for a clearer comprehension of Basil, who argued against first the *Apology*, where, for instance, the Anomean theory on names is only outlined.

> The uncertainty of the sources about Eunomius' philosophical background caused a noticeable difficulty for scholars from the beginning. In the nineteenth century the general comprehension of Eunomius' background including his theory of names (as well as the position of their opponents) varied

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[373] transl. of R. Vaggione, *Eunomius of Cyzicus*, p. 119. *cf.* also Gregory (*CE*, J ii, p. 227, 33:8) who also draws a parallel between Eunomius' doctrine of soul and the *Phaedr.* 245C.

dramatically. Ritter, for example, tried to find a balance between Eunomius' Aristotelism and Platonism, but argued for the latter, and determined Platonism as a much more influential agency[374]. Baur, on the other hand, argued that Eunomius' view was purely Aristotelian, while Basil and Gregory of Nyssa based their argumentation on Platonic philosophical ideas[375]. Rupp suggested that the similarity between the well-known Aristotelian term τὸ πρῶτον κοινοῦν ἀκίνητον, and the Anomean ἀγέννητος, is enough to estimate Eunomius' philosophical background as Aristotelian[376]. Thus, the Anomean theory of knowledge remained unclear: to what extent did Eunomius attach his 'perfect' cognition of the divine essence in the name 'unbegotten' to the present life[377] or to the future life (as Ritter believed)? A Russian scholar, V. Nesmelov, in his monograph on Gregory of Nyssa attempted to avoid this classification[378]; although his own attempt to elucidate the matter was not convincing[379], some results of his analysis make one think of the eclectic character of Anomean philosophical sympathies. A similar point of view was proposed by S. Troitskiy[380], who followed V. Nesmelov.

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374 H. Ritter, *Geschichte der christlichen Philosophie* (Hamburg 1836-1850), vol. vii, pp. 65-79.

375 von F. F. Baur, *Vorlesungen über die christliche/ Dogmengeschichte, herausgegeben* (Leipzig 1865-1867) b. i, Abt. ii, p. 106.

376 Julius Rupp, *Gregor's, des Bischofs von Nyssa, Leben und Meinungen* (Leipzig 1834), p. 136ff.

377 *v.* von J. Kuhn, *Katholische Dogmatik* (Tübingen 1859-1862), vol. ii, p. 379. J. Kuhn argued for the Aristotelism of Eunomius; *v.* also G. F. Böhringer, *Die Kirche Christi und ihre Zeugen* (Zürich 1842-1858), i, Abt. ii, p. 193f.; von D. Thomasius, *Die Dogmengeschichte der alten Kirche* (Erlangen 1874).

378 В. Несмелов, *Догматическая система св. Григория Нисского* (Kazan 1887), p. 132 n.2.

379 V. Nesmelov draws a parallel between Basil's teaching and Kantian *Ding au Sich* (*op.cit.*, p. 133).

380 С. Троицкий, *Учение св. Григория Нисского об именах Божиих* (S. Petersbourg 1914) p.1n1, p. 47ff.

In twentieth century Patristic scholarship, in spite of a number of impressive investigations of the Neo-Arian movement and the notorious controversy over divine names, the very question of the philosophical foundations of Eunomius and Aetius seems to be far from any satisfactory definition. J. Daniélou determined the philosophical environment of Eunomius as no less than a Neo-Platonic system, whereas Basil and Gregory, in his opinion, based their teaching on the grammatical science of the time, but appear to be Neo-Platonic thinkers as well[381]. In contrast to the German science of the nineteenth century, J. Daniélou in his article proposed to elucidate the matter in a radically new way; in fact, he was the first to indicate parallels between Eunomius' φύσις-theory of names with similar ideas that we already observed in Clement of Alexandria and Origen[382], and he discussed the possible influence of the theories of Epicurus, Stoics and Neo-Platonic tradition on the disputants[383] on both sides. But his results and suppositions are often very uncertain or not adequately exemplified: one allusion to the notion of *epinoia* in Iamblichus' (?) *Theurgia or the Egyptian mysteries* (vii, 4) does not prove his theory[384]. Despite the fact that a number of his suggestions are interesting, his attempts to generalise the subject by introducing pairs of epithets (mysticism

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[381] J. Daniélou, *Eunome l'Arien*, pp.412-432; *v.* his conclusion on p. 431.
[382] *ibid.*, pp. 422-424.
[383] *ibid.*, pp. 424-428.
[384] J. Daniélou draws a parallel between Eunomius' *epinoia* as the source of human misleading and *epinoia* in the letter presumed to be by Iamblichus. This parallel, however, is impossible for a number of reasons; in the first instance the treatise begins with the rejection of philosophical methods in the cognition of the divine. The Sceptic attitude to human *epinoia* is caused by something absolutely different from Eunomius – *cf.* philosophical analysis of the work in А. Лосев, *История античной эстетики: последние века*, vol. vii, part i (Moscow 1988), pp. 245-275.

and scientific character) are confusing; the following passage is a good example of the lack of clarity and of doubt:

> 'As we can see from the dispute with Gregory, Eunomius' use of the *Cratylus* is clear. The concept of Eunomius is a mystical one, and it is remarkable that it is Gregory who accuses Eunomius of dependence on Plato... But this kind of accusation is obviously a polemical tag. As a matter of fact, the theory of language that Steinthal[385] defines as 'sophistical' it is exactly what Eunomius himself attributes to Basil, and also points out that Basil depends on Aristotle and Epicurus. But in fact, a real theory of Gregory and Basil is what a common teaching of the grammarians was and what we can now call scientific theory of language[386].

However, his idea of designating the Anomean theory of language as 'mystical' (on the basis of the premise that all names are bound up with essence 'by nature' (φύσει), *i.e.* ontologically and therefore 'mystically') and the Cappadocian theory as 'scientific' (as if Basil and Gregory merely employed a commonly shared theory of grammarians) does not elucidate the subject, it remains unclear (as I shall show below). Whose 'grammatical theory' does he consider them to have in common? His proposition that the Anomean system is just a variant of the Neo-Platonic doctrine, and that Eunomius' theory of language is presumably based on a Neo-Platonic interpretation of the *Cratylus* strongly influenced further investigations of the matter.

In another paper J. Daniélou arrived at the more 'remarkable' conclusion that the controversy between Eunomius and the Cappadocian Fathers was a

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[385] J. Daniélou refers to von H. Steinthal, *Geschichte der Sprachwissenschaft bei den Griechen und Römern* (Berlin 1890), p. 332f.
[386] *ibid.*, p. 416.

reflection of the philosophical dispute between the Neo-Platonic schools led by Iamblichus and Ammonius Sakkas[387]. J. Daniélou rated highly the relationship between Aetius and young Prince and later Emperor Julian, who was himself a disciple of Iamblichus. But whether it is enough to state that 'historically, the connexion between Eunomius and the disciples of Iamblichus, which finally had impacted the doctrine of Proclus, was very possible'[388]? J. Daniélou's main claim, however, was far from indicating this historical parallel; he argued that that Eunomius' teaching on the nature of language reflects the transition from Middle and early Neo-Platonic concepts of name to what was later proposed by Proclus in his commentaries on the *Cratylus,* and maintained that this connexion needs to be found. This standpoint has opened further avenues for modern understanding of the subject[389].

In the seventies, Th. Kopecek in his *History of Neo-Arianism* proposed that Aetius' theory of theological language was a development of the Christian Middle Platonic position present in Justin and Clement'[390] and maintained that this is 'undeniable'. In the course of his extensive studies, Th. Kopecek paid special attention to the appearance of the term ἀγέννητος in the Patristic and philosophical literature of the second and third century and in Middle Platonic

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[387] J. Daniélou, *Grégoire de Nysse et le néo-platonisme de l'École d'Athènes, RÉG* 80 (1967), p. 400f.
[388] J. Daniélou, *ibid,* p. 428.
[389] *e.g.* M. S. Troiano, *I Cappodoci e la question dell' origine dei nomi nella polemica contro Eunomio'* in ***Vetera Christianorum*** 17 (1980), pp. 313-346. K. H. Uthemann, *Die Spracher der Theologie nach Eunomius von Cyzicus, ZKG* 104 (1993), pp. 143-175. As D. Roberson points out, both works follow J. Daniélou (Roberson, *op.cit.,* p. 45 n. 25).
[390] Th. Kopecek, *A history of Neo-Arianism,* p. 272. For his arguments that Eunomius' theory of names is based on Middle Platonic theory of language v. the fourth chapter of his monograph.

philosophical literature (finally he discovered it in Albinius and argued for his influence[391]). Although Th. Kopecek indicates that for Justin, Clement, Origen, or Albinus the term ἀγέννητος was just an epithet to describe the divine, while in the *Syntagmation* it emerges as a special name of God, his assumption that the main premise of Anomean theory of names was derived from Middle Platonic philosophy was quite unwarranted. He seems to confound two issues: the theological use of the negative term ἀγέννητος as such does not necessarily imply or determine a stable solution to the problem of language. One might also question to what extent his attempt to infer Aetius' ἀγέννητος θεός from the Middle Platonic doctrine of the 'first principle'[392] is appropriate. I have decided to leave Th. Kopecek's theory to one side in respect to the question of the origin of the title 'unbegotten'[393], and to follow L. Wickham, who stands for the purely Christian import of the term[394].

R. Mortley enthusiastically adopted the idea of J. Daniélou, and attempted to delineate more precisely the way of 'transition'. In his studies of

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391 Th. Kopecek, *op.cit.*, p. 271.
392 Th. Kopecek refers to Albinus, *Epitome doctrinae Platonicae sive* Διδασκαλικός, 10; 4:1ff.
393 In the text I use both terms 'unbegotten' and 'ingenerate' as interchangeable synonyms for *agennetos*.
394 L. Wickham, *The Syntagmation of Aetius the Anomean*, *JThS* (October 1968), vol. xix, pt. 2., p. 537.

the *via negativa*[395] Mortley suggests understanding Eunomius' and Aetius' doctrine in the light of what he calls the 'lost generation' of Neo-Platonists, *viz.* Syrianus, Dexippus, and Alexander of Aphrodisias, who 'lie behind Proclus and probably behind Aetius and Eunomius as well'[396]. His line of argument is very complex, but I would like to give an example. First, he indicates a number of verbal parallelisms (*e.g.* οὐσίας ἐστὶ δηλωτικόν – *Synt.* 16[397] and Deixippus' οὐσίαν δηλώση[398]); second, he draws a parallel between the function of 'unbegotten' in the Anomean system and their remarks about privation, negation, essence definition and the problem of the epistemological value of apophatic terms in Neo-Platonic philosophy[399]. Overall, his interpretation of the problem exceeded the scheme of J. Daniélou: Basil and Gregory systematically misunderstood and misinterpreted their opponents; the main concern of Aetius and Eunomius was to bring forward their advanced Neo-Platonic doctrine of language based on the negative term 'unbegotten' taken from 'mystical Aristotelianism', 'Aristotelian Neo-Platonism', *etc.* His ultimate purpose was to

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[395] For the sake of space, it seems hardly relevant to discuss it here in full. However, I think that the term 'dark insinuations' (*cf.* R. Vaggione, *Eunomius of Cyzicus*, p. 17) that is often applied to Patristic reports about Aetius and Eunomius is to be treated as much more accurate. Of course, Basil in his *Adversus Eunomius* employed ψεύστης, ἀμαθής, ὑβριστής, εἴρων, βλάσφημος, *etc.* (*cf.* SC 299, *AE*, i;1:49) too much (as Gregory does at the second stage of the dispute), but nevertheless, they both paid attention to the content of the dispute. It is therefore remarkable that Gregory purposely omits the story (reported more thoroughly by Theodore of Mopsuestia – *v.* Vaggione, R. *Fragments* 421f.) that in Constantinople Eunomius was caught in a compromising situation with his pupils and dismissed – (*v.* Vaggione, R. *Eunomius of Cyzicus*, p. 9). Although it is possible to accuse Theodore of 'dark insinuations' (*cf.* Vaggione, *ibid.*), I do not agree that Gregory's interpretation of Eunomius' doctrine is a systematic misunderstanding and misinterpretation as R. Mortley does.

[396] R. Mortley, *op.cit.*, vol. ii, p. 135.

[397] text and transl. of L. Wickham, *ibid.*

[398] R. Mortley, *op.cit.*, p. 130f.

[399] R. Mortley, *op.cit.*, p. 135.

demonstrate that Eunomius and Aetius 'were much more Platonists than those who often pass for Platonist Christians, such as the Cappadocians, or Origen, or to some extent Augustine'[400]. His interpretation of the philosophical content of the controversy is fascinating, but also totally unconvincing. He associates Aetius' opponents whom he refers to as 'temporists' (χρονῖται)[401] with a group of secular philosophers: 'Eunomius and Aetius were defending themselves against certain Neo-Platonists' and argues that this is a reason why Basil and Gregory were 'unaware of some issues, and seemed to wonder why they are having to deal with it'[402]. I do not intent to criticise his entire analysis, because his main interest in the eighth chapter of the *From Word to Silence* is with the use of apophatic definitions in Christian theology. Nonetheless, in his approach to the matter he deviates dramatically from the real agenda of the Anomean controversy.

Of course, in this brief overview I do not claim to mention all the opinions that appeared after Daniélou's article; nor in the limits of this work can I represent all the reasons why I do not accept these Neo-Platonic theories for the Anomean theology of names. First of all, that would require a thorough examination of the issues that would lead us far away from the subject. I also think that one could hardly do so after the fresh and well balanced examination of Aetius and Eunomius' philosophical background given us by R. Vaggione.

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[400] R. Mortley, *op.cit.*, p. 128.
[401] *Syntagm.*, preamble, l.11.
[402] R. Mortley, *op.cit.*, p. 131ff.

The general comprehension of the problem proposed by R. Vaggione in the course of his studies that began in 1976 with his dissertation[403] was not always the same; in his publication of Eunomius' extant works he seemed to follow the way of J. Daniélou and was looking for Neo-Platonic influence whenever Eunomius bound up logic and reality[404]; he suggests too critical an approach to the surviving texts of Eunomius, and maintained that we could hardly reconstruct his theory on the basis of the extant works. But in the recent monograph on Eunomius he arrives at a critical revision of his idea; even the question of Eunomius' dependence on the *Cratylus* was put in the following terms:

> 'According to Gregory of Nyssa, Eunomius' theory of actually came from Plato's *Cratylus*. This may or may not have been true as a matter of fact, but in more general terms it was certainly correct...'[405].

Methodologically, one can reasonably argue that he takes an overly critical approach to Eunomius' theology, based on the condition of the writings that have survived. In particular he assumes that what we have does not allow us to elucidate Eunomius' thought satisfactorily; we can only guess at the

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[403] R. Vaggione, *Aspects of faith in the Eunomian Controversy*. Unpublished D.Phill. (Oxford 1976).
[404] R. Vaggione, *Eunomius' apologies*, p. 45 n. 4: Vaggione argues that Eunomius used Neo-Platonist comprehension of ontology as 'the projected shadow of logic' (he refers to the exposition of Proclus made by E. R. Dodds).
[405] R. Vaggione, *Eunomius of Cyzicus* (Oxford 2000), p. 239 n. 260.

content of his letters that are told 'surpass his other works by far'[406] and his seven volumes of *Commentary on Romans*. Vaggione concluded:

> We can gauge the extent of our loss if we think how different our appreciation of the Cappadocians would be if time had preserved to us only their dogmatic treatises and we had lost all of their exegetical, ascetical, and mystical works[407].

True, Eunomius' writings have not come down to us in a bad condition. But the main reason for that could hardly be explained by Arcadius' decree of 398, which ordered all Eunomius' works to be burnt as R. Vaggione argues[408]. As M. Bulgakov in his *Master and Margaret* says, 'manuscripts cannot be burnt', applied to historical theology, manuscripts (or at least their editions) that are of outstanding interesting and significance almost always survive – there is evidence to affirm that Arcadius' decree was not effective at all: we are told that Eunomius' writings survived and remained available in Constantinople up to the ninth century. At the same time, the reports of, for example, Socrates and Photius, who read Eunomius' letters and exegetical works force us to believe that vanished works of Eunomius would not shed more light upon the matter.

In what follows, I am going to examine the theme of names as it appears in two early works of the Anomean leaders. In the first instance, I propose to revise Aetius' *Syntagmation,* and to demonstrate that this source of information

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[406] Philost. *HE* x.6. However, R. Vaggione refers to Photius (*Cod*. 138, Henry ii, 107.17–108.21), who read forty of these letters and claimed that Eunomius was ignorant of the laws of epistolary style – R. Vaggione, *Eunomius' apologies*, p. xvi.
[407] R. Vaggione, *loc.cit.*
[408] *ibid.*, p. xv.

give us clear evidence that such an important aspect of Eunomius' thought as an objectivist theory of names, specific comprehension of *epinoia,* and epistemological rôle of the formal logical operations was already in existence. Next, I am going to pose a question about the real place of the theory of names in the context of the theological agenda; in particular, I shall try to show more precisely that the linguistic intuitions that had already appeared in the *Syntagmation* were merely repeated by Eunomius in his first *Apology* without any significant philosophical contribution. At the earlier stage of the dispute his intention was only to exemplify the theory of name and *epinoia;* we shall see to what extent he succeeded in doing so. In the later stage of the controversy Eunomius definitely undertook a more advanced examination of the matter in an attempt to find some philosophical support in Plato and Philo; biblical exegesis also played a special rôle in the *Apology for Apology* that I shall focus on after an exposition of the main accusations of Basil. But in this section, I shall concentrate on the initial writings of Aetius and Eunomius; it seems interesting to pose the question about his dependence on Plato's *Cratylus*. Finally, my point will be that as can be observed in the *Syntagmation* and the first *Apology,* the Anomean doctrine of names was not, strictly speaking, a *philosophical* inference from their general premises about Divine ingeneracy.

IV.1.1 Philosophical background: the *Syntagmation* of Aetius.

L. Wickham has rightly suggested that external sources do not indicate any independent contribution by Eunomius, nor any difference of view between him and Aetius[409]. The teaching about the nature of names together with a very specific treatment of the human *epinoia* already appears in the *Syntagmation* of Aetius. Let us scrutinise the *Syntagmation* more thoroughly in the light of what we are told about Aetius' philosophical background.

R. Vaggione trusts Philostorgius' report (*HE* 3.15) about Aetius' early interest in logic; undoubtedly, Aetius' studies involved reading Aristotle's *Categoriae* (presumably) along with standard commentators[410]. But in the curriculum of the time Aristotle's treatise on elementary logic was not an advanced subject (as Vaggione thinks), but rather an intermediate one that was only to exercise students and therefore serve as a kind of introduction. At the next stage, students turned to further philosophical studies that normally consisted of the interpretation of philosophical, rather than logical or rhetorical, works; Socrates specifies Plato and Plotinus[411].

A problem appears when one attempts to interpret the syllogisms of Aetius. After the classical article of J. Daniélou, the presumption that both Basil and Gregory systematically misunderstand (and therefore misinterpret) their opponents became fashionable. Amongst various reports about Aetius'

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[409] L. Wickham, *op.cit.*, p. 537.
[410] Vaggione, *Eunomius of Cyzicus*, p. 16.
[411] *v.* Socrates, *HE*, 3;35.

philosophical background, several remarks of Socrates Scholasticus are helpful[412]. First of all he points out that the very foundation of Aetius' theory is determined by an unsatisfactory acquaintance with the craft of rational discourse. The following remark is of special interest:

> ...he was unable to comprehend how there could be generation without a beginning (πῶς ἐστὶν ἀγέννητος γέννησις), and how that which was begotten can be co-eternal with him who begat (καὶ ὅπως τὸ γεννώμενον συκαΐδιόν ἐστι τῷ γεννήσαντι).
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> *Socrates, HE,* ii, 35.

It is indicative that for Socrates, whose own education was excellent[413], Aetius is an uninteresting figure in the story. His elementary ignorance disgusts Socrates; but Socrates' possession of information is in every respect impressive: after eighty years after Aetius' death he could state in a very resolute and decided manner what Aetius had not read and not read. Thus, he is absolutely sure that Aetius did not read Clement, Africanus, and Origen, and had a very poor knowledge of both tradition and the Scriptures[414]! His point is that Aetius' method of rational discourse is nothing but logic; as Socrates says, in the course of standard education, this subject was opposed by (ἀντέθηκεν) and followed by a further discipline, dialectics. In the sphere of dialectics, he says, it is

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[412] *v.* ch. 1 and above, where the passage is quoted in full length.

[413] *v.* Socrates, *HE,* v.16.

[414] *cf.* with a assumption of J. Daniélou that Anomean theory of language was influenced by Origen or Clement, *op.cit.*, p. 424; furthermore, Socrates reports that Aetius' knowledge of the Bible was very poor. Even his style reflects some kind of arrogance to Aetius' ignorance – *HE,* ii, 35: Ἐπιστολάς τε συνεκάττυε πρὸς τὸν βασιλέα Κωνστάντιον' – literally: 'But he scribbled useless scraps of paper to the emperor Constantius...'.

possible to determine generation without beginning – perhaps, his own comprehension of the matter is marked by a Neo-Platonic dialectic that roughly speaking, goes back to the *Parmenides*; his immediate reference to Plato may be a good indication of this.

In my opinion, if the final variant of Eunomius' doctrine were entirely Neo-Platonic (as J. Daniélou and R. Mortley maintained) that would have been obvious to Socrates, and would have been at least observable in the *Syntagmation*. So was Aetius was really close to the circles of Iamblichus' disciples, and did he derive anything from these contacts?

Let us reconstruct the scheme of Aetius' logic in order to garner insight into the real foundation and origin of his doctrine, and the theological method he used throughout these syllogisms. Aetius' initial intention was to represent his teaching in the form of very simple 'philosophical' monotheism based on the premise that the Deity is superior to all causes (κρείττων πάσης αἰτίας – *Synt.* 2), and therefore nothing can be prior to God, who is ingenerated.

The question about the origin of Aetius' interest in theology is clear; his ecclesiastical career began in about 340 with successful public disputations in Antioch and Alexandria[415]; his targets were Gnostics and Manichaeans; finally, as Philostorgius tell us, Aetius made his name through a celebrated debating victory over the Manichaean leader Aphthonius at Alexandria[416]. Perhaps his special theological sympathy to the antithesis of 'unbegotten – begotten' can be

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[415] R. Vaggione, *Eunomius of Cyzicus*, p. 24.
[416] Philostorgius, *HE*, 3.15.

better explained by this preoccupation: amongst numerous suitable terms, 'unbegotten' appears to be the closest to the generally accepted and conventional God-language about the Father and the Son. At any rate, the term 'unbegotten' emerges in the *Syntagmation* as the self-evident way of describing the Deity; any question of the use of other terms is already completely excluded:

> If the ingenerate Deity is superior to all causes, he must for that reason be superior to origination; if he is superior to all causes clearly that includes origination, for he neither received existence from another nature nor conferred it on himself.
>
> *Synt.*, 2

The main postulate of the Anomean doctrine is manifest: Aetius (and then Eunomius) does not distinguish 'person' from 'essence' when dealing with immaterial beings. R. Vaggione argues that the problem lies in Eunomius' inability to distinguish between these two notions[417]; this distinction was never accepted by Eunomius, but was this just because of his 'inability' or his philosophical position?

Evidently, the philosophical method of the *Syntagmation* is grounded on the basic axioms of elementary logic – the principle of determination, which is the third law of thought. If **A** is not **B**, what makes it possible to distinguish them from each other? Formal logic takes for granted that both **A** and **B** can be determined. If at least **A** is undeterminable, it means that **A** is indistinguishable

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[417] *v.* article R. Vaggione, Οὐχ ὡς ἐν τῶν γεννημάτων. Some aspects of dogmatic formulae in the Arian Controversy *StPt*, vol. xvii (1982), p. 185.

from any **non-A** and, consequently, **A** is indistinguishable from **B**, and, one might say, runs into **B**. Therefore, it appears that there is no **A** and **B**. Logic takes **A** and **B** to designate two different entities; a philosophical question about how **A** can designate an entity is beyond its scope; the sphere of logic is restricted to a definition of the relationship between **A** and **B**, and based on the immediate categories of the human thinking process that operates with principles of identity and contradiction. On the basis that Aetius postulates that every essence (οὐσία, φύσις or ὑπόστασις[418]) is different from one another, and therefore, if the Deity causes itself, it must be foreign to origination, the majority of his deductive syllogisms appear to be perfectly clear.

The articles of the *Syntagmation* are, logically speaking, lemmatic inferences, complex syllogisms (opened with εἰ...) – produced in accordance with simple and complex variants of *modus ponens* and *modus tollens* (depending on the functional rôle of the minor premise, *etc.*). Aetius seems to understand that lemmatic correctness depends on the correctness of conditional assertions in assumption and completeness of term of division in the minor premise. Although the latter aspect of lemma was an object of discrepancy (the question whether the term 'Deity' excludes the Son or includes him), and led the controversy away from the sphere of pure logic; but the real disagreement of both sides was deeper than that. There are many objections that can equally be

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[418] It is established fact that these three terms were used by Aetius and Eunomius as equivalents in any case. *cf.* L. Wickham, *op.cit.*, p. 552; however, R. Vaggione (*Eunomius' apologies*, p. 165) appeared to exclude the term φύσις from this list.

applied to the content of the *Syntagmation*: Aetius does not distinguish 'person' from 'essence', the completeness of term of division in the minor premise is arguable (as Basil with Gregory will point out), *etc*. But are we dealing here with a logical error or deliberate presumption?

I believe that Aetius understands very well almost all the logical regulations for lemma (he in fact operates with dilemmas and trilemmas). What he does not understand is the philosophical diversity between logical truth (formal criterion of truth) and a factual/virtual truth criterion. For example, a syllogism might be incorrect formally (because of a mistake in one of the premises or even all of them), but nevertheless have a correct corollary:

one premise is incorrect	both premises are incorrect
All athletes are good soldiers. Some people are not athletes. Therefore, some people are not good soldiers.	Lions are herbivorous animals. Cows are lions. Therefore, cows are herbivorous animals.

At the same time, deductive reasoning can be formally correct, but be inconsistent virtually:

All volcanoes are mountains.
All geysers are volcanoes.
Therefore, all geysers are mountains[419].

The conclusion is formally correct, but factually wrong: geysers are not mountains.

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[419] I took all examples from my Russian seminary text book on logic (Г. Челпанов, *Учебник логики* (Moscow 1994)).

With this in mind, the general scope of the *Syntagmation* and the foundation of Eunomius' further teaching become more easily comprehensible. His main train of thought is grounded on the formal criterion of truth; from this standpoint they are correct; moreover, one can easily multiply the syllogisms of the *Syntagmation*. I therefore suppose that the hundreds of Aetius' syllogisms that have not come down to us, would not have shed any more light on his logic: the main assumption would still have been the same. This supposition is not a risky one, as we shall see below from the first work of his disciple: the first Apology does not clarify, but merely repeats those articles of the *Syntagmation* that derive from the sphere of logic.

Conceived for popular use, the dilemmas of the *Syntagmation* have an interesting form: premise and assumption determine the only possible 'conclusion', which the reader can make; Gregory will point out that Eunomius is using the same method of argumentation. For Aetius and Eunomius the criterion of truth was precisely in the correct construction of the dilemma or trilemma.

Up to this point of his reasoning, Aetius does not go beyond the sphere of logic; articles 3, 5-8 merely repeat the same logical operation. Moreover, Aetius clearly understands that these operations *per se* do not yet prove his main point – the refutation of the 'homoousion' and 'homoiousion' doctrine. The transition from pure logic to philosophy appears when Aetius attempts to employ a new notion of a hierarchical structure of beings:

> If the Deity remains everlastingly (ἀτελευτήτως) in ingenerate nature, and the offspring is everlastingly offspring, then the perverse doctrine of the 'homoousion' and 'homoiousion' will be demolished; an incomparability in essence (τὸ ἐν οὐσίᾳ ἀσύγκριτον) is established when each nature abides unceasingly in the proper rank of its nature.
>
> *Synt.* 4.

What he is doing now is not just a logical distinguishing of **A**, **B** and **C** from each other, but a postulation of the notions that in logic *per se* remain undefined; logically, **A** can cause **B** and **C**, or **A** and **B** cause **C**, or **A** includes **B** and excludes **C**, and so on (in accordance with denotation). Obviously, his main aim is to bring forward the notion of 'wholly other', so Aetius suggests or rather postulates a hierarchical structure of **A**, **B**, and **C**, but while doing so, he understands that he next has to determine the denotation of **A**, **B** and **C**. Thus, **A** is said to be 'unbegotten', **A** begets **B**, so **B** is 'begotten' and **B** creates **C**. This determination immediately faces the problem of the term 'unbegotten', and more particularly the question of what one does when **A** is called 'unbegotten' or, in other words, what in fact one does when one calls something to be something?

Aetius solves this problem by introducing a special philosophical agency – naming is in no way an abstract logical operation, but a revealing of essence.

The twelfth article of the *Syntagmation* is now of special interest:

> If ingeneracy does not represent the substance of the Deity (εἰ μὴ τὸ ἀγεννήτον τὴν ὑπόστασιν τοῦ θεοῦ παρίστησιν), but the incomparable name is of human imagining (ἀλλ᾽ ἐπινοίας ἐστὶν ἀνθρωπίνης τὸ

> ἀσύγκριτον ὄνομα), the Deity is grateful to those who thought the name up, since through the concept of ingeneracy he has a transcendence of name which he does not bear in essence.

In spite of the ironic character of the dilemma, Aetius' idea is clear; R. Mortley rightly interprets the core of it: *'either God's essence causes the name, or the name causes his essence'*[420]. Evidently, Aetius argues for the former, and in order to reinforce his point he immediately adds:

> If external observation ascribes ingeneracy to the Deity, the observers are superior to the observed, having furnished him with a title superior to his nature.
>
> *Synt.* 13.

This article of the *Syntagmation* was a particular problem for L. Wickham, whose interpretation of the *Synt.* 13 is that Aetius rejects the supposition that 'ingeneracy' might be a non-essential relational property[421]. But, philosophically speaking, this is not an argument, because with this in mind *every* epithet (negative or positive) would equally fit the train of thought of the *Synt.* 13. What Aetius says is far from being a logical inference: the name 'ingeneracy' possesses ontological power, and this power is present ontologically, it does not come from human intellectual reasoning, but from the divine essence itself[422].

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[420] R. Mortley, *op.cit.*, vol. 2, p. 134.
[421] finally, L. Wickham argues against the conclusion of J. Daniélou – L. Wickham, *op.cit.*, p. 558, *esp.* n.1; *cf.* – *'Eunomius is a representative of Late Hellenism, who is not interested in science and the apparent world, who is looking for a sacral vision of the universe, borrowed from Oriental religions and became a steady defender of this tradition'* – J. Daniélou, *Eunome l'Arien*, p. 432.
[422] *cf.* with the interpretation of R. Mortley, which up to this point is very well defined, *loc.cit.*

Aetius next tries to define the term 'ingeneracy' by excluding it from the class of privations, abstractions of conditions and non-entity designations[423]; Eunomius repeated this operation in exactly the same way in *Lib.Apol.* 8.7ff. This is a very grave and wise idea which, however can be briefly dealt with: God is unbegotten, but he is not such by way of privation (κατὰ στέρησιν), because privatives are privatives with respect to the inherent properties of something, then they are secondary to their positives. 'But birth has never been an inherent property of God!'. This clearly demonstrates the extent of Aetius' knowledge of the apophatic principles of definitions. I think that to seek for apophatic theology here is like the search for the philosopher's stone in the 'Harry Potter' film. Our main interest is with his use of the term *epinoia*.

Aetius assumes *a priori* that the names of language belong to two classes: some of the names are said to be of human invention (τὰ κατ᾽ ἐπινοίαν λεγόμενα); they do not signify reality. We shall see in Eunomius a complete 'philosophy' of this class of names. Another class of names that, according to Aetius, includes the term 'ingeneracy' is not of *epinoia,* and ontologically comes from an entity determined by itself – R. Mortley does not clarify this important distinction, although it seems crucial for understanding Eunomius' theory of

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[423] *v.* R. Mortley, *op.cit.*, vol. 2, pp.130-134; he provides a discussion of Aetius' comprehension of negation, privation for defining essence.

names[424]. With this in mind, it is not difficult to reconstruct Aetius' train of thought: some names are imprinted by essences, other names are invented by people and do not represent any epistemological value; if so, and if the only way for cognition of things is to find an appropriate name (which is the one for each essence), then one who has found the name has at once cognised or grasped its essence. The way of cognition is the way of exclusion of the words κατ' ἐπινοίαν until we arrive at the final correct name. Having succeeded in doing so, we reach the meaning which is imprinted in our mind by the essence of the subject of cognition. Therefore, the notorious formula that one can know the Deity in a similar manner as God knows himself appears to be understandable in a radically new form. At first sight it is, of course, monstrous, but in fact it reveals the very core of Anomean thought.

It is illustrative that Aetius nowhere speaks of phoneme. This aspect of his teaching is often ignored by scholars. It should be pointed out that in the search for a 'natural' or 'correct' name, neither Aetius nor Eunomius resort to something as obvious as an etymological analysis of the phoneme, which is an inseparable part of any known φύσις-theory of language. Why? I think because their approach to the problem is totally different from the standard φύσις-theory agenda when one deals with the primary aspect of the word – its sound.

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[424] The problem is not only (as R. Mortley thinks) that Eunomius' comprehension of human *epinoia* was that *'words which emanate from this after-the-event conceptualization are clearly after-the-event words, and therefore to be dismissed as trivial'* – *op.cit.*, vol. 2, p. 151 – but that by introducing the distinction between words 'from *epinoia*' and words 'κατὰ φύσιν' Aetius and Eunomius suggested a philosophical escape from a number of classical puzzles that appear immediately if one accepts φύσις-theory.

In Aetius' speculations, words are vehicles of meaning; unless they are from *epinoia,* they reveal the sense of essence not by means of sounds, but by means of their semantic content. From this point of view all that exists is considered to be subordinated to the laws of thought, and correctness in reasoning is reflected in fact. Undoubtedly, the theory of Aetius is objectivism based on a specific linguistic theory, but to what extent does he endeavour to explain himself? The most unclear aspect of his theory is of course his comprehension of *epinoia* and the systematic oblivion of the phoneme. L. Wickham noted that in relation to *epinoia,* Aetius and Eunomius 'broke with the Arians over the use of this term'[425]. However, there is no indication that Aetius is in fact aware of it.

This linguistic theory is reflected in the *Syntagmation* in a very limited and even unexpected form. First of all, Aetius never uses traditional designations for the subject; he does not speak of a κατὰ φύσει connexion. If Aetius was aware of the theoretical disputes about the natural or conventional relationship between name and essence, than why, instead of employing the settled terminology, does he introduce his own? Instead of saying that the name *agennetos* reveals the divine essence in a sense κατὰ φύσει, and the sound of *agennetos* reflects and reveals the essence, he formulates it as τὸ ἀγέννητον οὐσίας ἐστὶ δηλωτικόν – the name 'ingeneracy' is revelatory of essence'[426]. The reason might be that in Aetius' opinion it is not the sound that serves as the

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[425] L. Wickham, *op.cit.*, p. 558: 'For Origen, Arius, Basil and Gregory ἐπίνοια was a legitimate means of expressing the inexpressible richness of God'.
[426] *Synt.* 16.

revelatory agency. Was he merely ignorant of the scientific discussion of the matter, or was there something substantially different and new from what one would expect? The text of the *Syntagmation* does not make this clear, but the sixteenth syllogism contains an interesting hint:

> If ingeneracy is revelatory of essence, it is reasonable for it to be contrasted with the offspring's essence. If 'ingeneracy' has no meaning *a fortiori*, 'offspring' reveals nothing. How could non-entities be contrasted? If, again, the word 'ingenerate' contrasted with the word 'generated', silence following the utterance of the words, the Christian hope turn to begin and stop; it is based on magnificent language but not on what the natures really are, which is the intended meaning of the names (ἐν διαφόρῳ προφορᾷ κειμένην, ἀλλ᾽ οὐκ ἐν φύσεσιν οὕτως ἐχούσαις ὡς ἡ τῶν ὀνομάτων βούλεται σημασία).

L. Wickham in his commentary on this article suggests that for Aetius, language has been given by God, not merely the innate concepts but the sounds (φωναί) which express them[427]; his reference to *CE* ii, 546 (J i, p. 386), however, does not, prove this supposition. I think that Aetius' comprehension of *epinoia* is a key to understanding his linguistic theory and the further elaboration of this name-theology made by Eunomius.

We are now in a better position to reformulate the question about the Anomean system, and to suggest a fresh view of their linguistic theory. Speaking about name or word, Aetius' and Eunomius' emphasis is laid, not on the phoneme, but on the meaning and sense, and even, presumably, on the

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[427] L. Wickham, *op.cit.*, p. 560 and *esp.* n. 1: this mistake caused another significant error, when L. Wickham draws a parallel between the Anomean theory of language and the medieval nominalist theory of Anselm.

silence. In their linguistic theory the sounds of human speech are everlastingly secondary matters, while the semantic content imprinted by essence is prior and dominates over the phoneme. The words from *epinoia* are to be excluded: they are empty phonetically and semantically. The words, which are said not to be from *epinoia,* allow us to operate with a true and pure sense of essence. If a name or a word is apprehended as a vehicle of meaning not by means of the phoneme, but by means of the logical or semantic senses that they reflect, and these senses are free from imperfection of any kind, then this allows us to cognise objects and to go back to the essences. The reason that makes this cognition possible is not related to an assumption that the sense is attached to the phoneme, and can be revealed by etymological analysis. It would be an error to assume that Aetius was so simple as not to observe that the phoneme can vary in Greek declension and is different in every language. What he perhaps means is that in spite of phonetic variations, the meaning remains the same, as it remains the same in the course of logical operations, in spite of Greek declensions. But in the *Syntagmation* he does not speak about the phoneme of *agennetos,* he speaks about its meaning, which dominates over the meanings of other words that are from *epinoia* and therefore false when applied to God. Thus, it would be an error to suppose that Aetius deifies the sound of the word *agennetos,* what he deifies is the sense of this word that, in his view, reveals the divine essence.

There is only one answer to the question of why Aetius could assume this; it is related to the laws of thought. In his opinion, what we now call the laws of thought are not the regulations that our thinking process follows. For Aetius and Eunomius these regulations have universal or ontological significance. Thus, the laws of thought appear to be the laws of the apparent world and even the sphere of the divine.

How this philosophical presumption works in the sphere of simple notions like 'horse', or 'man', we shall see in Eunomius' later works. The *Syntagmation* gives us only a few examples, 'ingenerated' and 'generated'. Thus, Aetius takes the name *agennetos*; then, he neglects its phoneme and leaves it aside. We are not yet told by him how the meaning of *agennetos* is embodied in the phoneme of this word. Next, he draws our attention to the meaning of this word; in his opinion it means 'ingeneracy'; the meaning reveals the essence of the Deity, because (it is one of Aetius' most interesting ideas) the Deity cannot be generate and that is so. If logical truth has ontological status, and what is correct in our thinking process is at once correct ontologically and in the sphere of the divine, by the name *agennetos* we comprehend the divine essence in the same way as God comprehends his own essence himself, because our thinking process follows the regulations, which are the same for both God and man. To develop Aetius' point of view, there are no other regulations for the power of thinking.

What can this philosophy mean? It means that the laws of thought appear not in man's mind, because man came into existence by the divine power and will. The laws of thought existed everlastingly, from eternity in the divine mind. And as word is not a sound, but meaning or sense, language coexisted with the divine nature. Although at this stage it is only a guess, this guess demonstrates that even a preliminary observation of the above described axioms do not allow analytical reasoning to follow another way.

If my interpretation of Aetius is correct, the most enigmatic aspect of the controversy becomes clearer. The theological model of Aetius emerges as an extremely attractive one for popular mind; Eunomius truly dedicated his career and life to the defence of the doctrine that allows us to state that one who admits the Anomean doctrine of the Son, and assumes that God can be perfectly comprehended in the name *agennetos*. But let us now look at the immediate reflection of these ideas in the first book of Eunomius.

IV.1.2 Eunomius' *Liber Apologeticus*.

In order not to jump to premature conclusions in treating linguistic issues in Eunomius' early work, one should bear in mind that the Anomean doctrine was in the first instance a theological teaching rather than a philosophical treatise, even though a preoccupation with logic and such themes

as the relationship between time and eternity and language and reality are apparent[428]. Eunomius did not merely inherit the teaching of Aetius together with his doctrine of names. True, in the first *Apology* he does not go beyond a philosophical agenda, and is preoccupied with the *doctrinal* purposes and *polemical* tasks of the *Syntagmation;* therefore, his ideas as they emerge in the treatise are almost inseparable and indistinguishable from the work of his master. Eunomius' optimism in the sphere of epistemology causes linguistic objectivism. It is not just a random philosophical position that under some circumstances could be different. The very core of the Anomean doctrine, and at the same time its popularity, was not in *'enthusiasm and epistemological optimist'* position in relation to names and the Deity. Rather, their optimist thinking was rooted in a broad-gauge interpretation of Christianity: both Basil and Gregory complained that Eunomius attracts people, because according to his interpretation of the Church doctrine, the ultimate sense of the Christian religion is to know God by venerating him with the name *agennetos*[429]. So, when Eunomius argues against the homoousion and homoiousion Creeds, for him it is not just a philosophical dispute about name and essence; he is defending something much more valuable for him and his followers – the very foundation of his faith, when salvation is thought to be a rational acceptance of the title

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[428] Ph. Rousseau, *op.cit.*, p. 106.

[429] It is evident from the sources that moral theology was one of the controversial issues.

agennetos theos. This is why in Eunomius' opinion 'to seem or to be Christian'[430] is the same, on the condition that one accepts the proposed Creed (*Lib.Apol.*, 5).

Eunomius' attitude to the phoneme of name in his first *Apology* is as unclear and inconsistent as his master's: the general treatment of such a theme as the relationship between language and reality does not go beyond the limits traced in the *Syntagmation*. Just as we have seen in Aetius' work, his emphasis is always laid on the semantic content of notion, while the form (phoneme) is often left aside. His various expressions about the sounds of human speech or the sounds of words are strongly influenced by his rhetoric, so I think that in the first *Apology* his linguistic interests are still quite limited. He is in fact repeating the general postulates of the *Syntagmation* without any substantial further contribution. For example, in the following passage Eunomius employs the concept of *epinoia* exactly as it appears in *Synt*. 12:

> When we say 'Unbegotten', then we do not imagine that we ought to honour God only in name, in conformity with human invention (κατ᾽ ἐπίνοιαν ἀνθρωπίνην); rather, in conformity with reality (κατ᾽ ἀλήθειαν), we ought to repay him the debt which above all other is most due God: the acknowledgement that he is what he is.
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> *Lib.Apol.* 8.1f[431].

The name *agennetos* is opposed to the other divine names on the basis of the distinction made by Aetius. The following text is illustrative; Eunomius clearly

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[430] Eunomius, *Liber apologeticus*, 6.2: τὸ δοκεῖν ἢ τὸ εἶναι χριστιανοῖς...
[431] Vaggione, R. *Eunomius' apologies*, p.41f.

evolves the doctrinal content of the *Syntagmation* in a more comprehensive, lengthy and popular manner:

> Expressions based on invention have their existence in name and utterance only, and by their nature are dissolved along with the sounds [which make them up]; but God, whether these sounds are silent, sounding, or have even come into existence, and before anything was created, both was and is unbegotten.
>
> *Lib.Apol.* 8.3-8

There are two themes that are to be taken into account. Firstly, invented, and therefore false and imperfect divine titles, which have their existence only in pronunciation, disappear together with the utterance; but one could equally remark that the name *agennetos* disappears with pronunciation – it appears that he does not see this point, or at any rate, he does not clarify it. In respect to *epinoia,* Eunomius takes this notion to designate a fake and incorrect supposition; it is always the source of mistake in logical reasoning. *Epinoia* leads us away from true meaning, and causes error in the course of ascension to the true sense of subject.

If we follow Aetius' logic, and take into account his accentuation of significance in name, the second clause of the above example means that the human mind has operated with a 'true' name, which meaning has been ontologically imprinted in the sense of the word *agennetos*. Once again, the phoneme is almost totally neglected at the cost of the semantic sphere. In this case, what Eunomius goes on to say is that word or name does exist regardless of its phonetic manifestation. There is only one condition that brings name into

being, the actual existence of the object. As soon as the latter comes in to being, name as its sense emerges almost automatically.

Of course, this formula is legitimate for what one might call the first class of names of human language, *viz.* those that are not produced by means of *epinoia*. The second group of names are said to be meaningless in every respect, *i.e.* their sound disappears, whereas no meaning is touched upon. But as for the first group of names, every word designates only one essence:

> We call the Son 'offspring', therefore, in accordance with the teaching of the Scriptures. We do not understand his essence to be one thing and the meaning of the word (τὸ σημαινόμενον) which designates it to be something else. Rather, we take it that his substance is the very same as that which is signified by his name, granted that the designation applies properly to the essence.
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> *Lib. Apol.*, 12.6-10

The syllogisms of the *Syntagmation* give us a clear idea of *how* Aetius and then Eunomius were looking for a proper designation of an essence. In his first *Apology* Eunomius is not yet concerned with the issue of name in the full sense; at least his preoccupation does not go beyond the scope of the *Syntagmation*. His interest in the issue of names evolves over the name *agennetos,* in that he attempts to explain why this term should be preferred over other divine epithets in the Bible. His train of thought is as follows; he excludes the names 'Father' and 'Son', because of the analogy of begetting among humans; similarly, he dismisses the name 'Maker' as imperfect, because it presupposes matter for the production of the things made. Although the following passages

are, predominantly, figures of speech, the rhetorical opposition made between 'verbal expression' and 'meaning' is always in favour of the latter:

> But if they reject this and pay no attention to the verbal expression of the words, holding rather to the meaning appropriate to God…
>
> *Lib.Apol.* 16.6f.

> …we need not try to… conform meanings to words exactly or try to distinguish those of different expression, but must rather direct our attention to the concepts…
>
> *Lib.Apol.* 18.5f.

A characteristic feature of the first *Apology* is that as we have just observed in the *Syntagmation,* apart from the terms 'begotten' and 'unbegotten', Eunomius does not provide us with clear examples of names that are supposed to be of non-*epinoic* origin. His formula that if things have different essences, they, should accordingly, bear different names, emerges repeatedly, as well as appeals to obey logical reasoning, but even following his sole attempt to explain what he really means by a distinction between two classes of words is more than difficult:

> What well-disposed person would not acknowledge that there are some words which have only their sound and utterance in common but not at all their signification (κατὰ τὴν σημασίαν)? For instance 'eye' is used of both human beings and God, but in the case of the one it signifies a certain bodily member while in the case of the other it means sometimes God's care and protection of the righteous, sometimes his knowledge of events. On the other hand, the majority of words [referring to God] are different in their verbal expression but have the same meaning (τὰ δὲ πολλὰ κατὰ τὴν ἐκφώνησιν κεχωρισμένα τὴν αὐτὴν ἔχει σημασίαν), as for instance, 'I AM', and 'only true God'.

Liber.Apol., 16.9-17.3

A striking feature of Eunomius' first *Apology* is that philosophical issues receive rather poor treatment in it. In fact, Eunomius has repeated the fundamental principles of his master's work by framing them in almost the same order, and representing them in a literary rather than syllogistic form. Turning back to the argumentation of J. Daniélou and R. Mortley, it seems plausible to inquire about such an ambiguous appearance of philosophical issues at the early formational stage of Anomean doctrine, *i.e.* in the *Syntagmation* and the first *Apology*. Dealing with Eunomius' theological agenda at this stage, I would like to draw the reader's attention to the fact that before entering serious dispute, the Anomean doctrine of names is extremely primitive. As a matter of fact, there is no *theory* as yet, but something like an alloy of incomplete and inconsistent ideas; furthermore, there is not even a verbal parallel that could be evident for the use of Plato or some significant Christian works. The teaching on *agennetos theos* and the syllogisms based on the premise that nothing is prior to God and that he is ingenerate are, clearly, derived from his master; it is not yet enough, however, to take it for a 'Neo-Platonist schema' or even 'original doctrine'[432]. If in the *Syntagmation*, due to its compact syllogistic character, some references to *epinoia* and the ontological correlation between essence and name permit us to expect a settled view, the first *Apology* is rather frustrating. If, as J. Daniélou and R. Mortley thought,

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[432] *cf.* R. Mortley, *op.cit.*, vol. 2, p. 147, who quotes J. Daniélou, *Eunome l'Arien*, p. 428.

there is Platonic philosophy, one should notice that in the first *Apology* there is no obvious sign of it; R. Vaggione's textual apparatus for the *Liber Apologeticus* points to several verbal parallels to Plato, but two of them belong to a Greek proverb, and the last one refers to Eunomius' speculation on time, which 'is a certain motion of the stars'[433]. This is simply not enough. In the light of our analysis of the *Syntagmation* and the first *Apology*, R. Mortley's keenness to represent Aetius and Eunomius as thinkers who were much more Platonist than, for example, Origen is not well grounded[434]: there are neither verbal parallels nor even any plausible semblance in ideas. Apart from unclear hints about meaning that is prior to phoneme, and the imperfection of the words of *epinoia*, we have found no evidence that Plato was ever read by Aetius and, presumably, by Eunomius (at least at the stage of the composition of the first *Apology*).

Our next question is about the possible dependence of Eunomius on Origen. R. Vaggione's reference to Origen's *De oratione* is even less well founded[435] – it is highly questionable whether Eunomius had read anything by Origen at the stage of writing his first book. J. Daniélou assumed that Eunomius' use of *epinoia* is influenced by Origen[436]; in any case, in the first Apology we came across an extremely primitive and incomprehensible use of

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[433] *Liber.Apol.* 10.6, *v.* R. Vaggione, *Eunomius' apologies*, p. 44. Overall, R. Vaggione's apparatus contains many totally irrelevant references.
[434] *v.* R. Mortley, *op.cit.*, vol. 2, p. 128.
[435] R. Vaggione, *Eunomius' apologies*, p. 195. The references he makes are not in fact persuasive that Eunomius really made use of Origen.
[436] J. Daniélou, *Eunome l'Arien*, p. 418: *'This is the theory of epinoia held by Origen, and Eunomius strongly depends on it; it is another interesting argument that Arianism had its roots in Origen'*.

this term: we are told that the implication of this notion is that both Aetius and Eunomius divide the words of language into two classes. Theoretically it is an interesting and new claim, but practically they do not seem to have anything more to say apart from just two words.

The last theme that should be mentioned to some extent anticipates the agenda of the next section. However, I raise this problem here, because it deals with something that *is not present*, as I believe, in the *Syntagmation* and the first *Apology*. The concept of names that are still words even if not pronounced, 'silent' words that will later on speak of the pre-existent creation of humankind is an interesting theme of Neo-Platonic philosophy. Presumably, this theme comes from Socrates' τὸ δαίμονιον[437] who spoke from above. Undoubtedly, this δαίμονιον spoke 'soundlessly', but it was nonetheless a *voice*[438]. Further, the concept of non-verbal voices, meanings, and communication, appears in Plotinus[439] and in the previously-mentioned *De mysteriis* of Iamblichus[440], and finally appears in Proclus' *In Cratyl. comm.* 35;24-26; 36; 23-37. Nevertheless, in my opinion the Neo-Platonic agenda of the above-mentioned passages is very different from Aetius and Eunomius; so it seems inconceivable to apply Daniélou's hypothesis to the matter.

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[437] *cf.* Plato, *Apologia Socratis*, 31d, 40a-c.
[438] *e.g.* Plutarchus in his *De genio Socratis* holds that this voice was soundless, he excluded any verbal expressions (φωνή) from it – (*Steph.* 582b 8).
[439] Plotinus, *Enneades*, iv 3, 18, 13ff.
[440] Iamblichus, *De mysteriis*, vii 5ff. It is, however, astonishing that J. Daniélou left out this parallel.

IV.2 Basil of Caesarea and his *Adversus Eunomium*

> As it were in a market of dreams, or assembly of the dead drunk, where people neither attend nor understand the matter, you promulgate your laws with great courage, supposing that instead of all arguments, your 'I have told you' is enough.
>
> *Adversus Eunomium*, ii, 9; 7-10.

The Anomean theology of the unbegotten Deity provoked an impressive response from the Christian writers of the epoch. In the list of R. Vaggione there are eight Patristic works, all said to be titled *Contra Eunomium*[441]. But even this imposing list of names does not in fact fully reflect the adverse reaction against Eunomius' works. It would not be an exaggeration to state that in the course of the controversy Eunomius' opponents produced an entire library; as is shown by the investigation of R. Vaggione, who presented a comprehensive picture of what he has named *'the Nicene revolution'*, the Patristic works titled *Contra Eunomium* are just the tip of the iceberg. Obviously, the reason for this remarkable reaction should be related to the extreme initial popularity of Anomean theology, and some kind of notable simplicity of the doctrine for the popular mind, but the traditional explanation, that Eunomius' position was very persuasive in terms of both philosophy and theology, should be reconsidered. The problem of language happened to appear in the context of the Eunomean controversy in the most remarkable manner. The reaction of the

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[441] R. Vaggione, *Eunomius' apologies*, p. xiii: Apollinarius, Basil, Didymus, Diodore of Tarsus, Gregory, Theodore of Mopsuestia, Theodoret of Cyrus, and Sophronius.

Nicenes followed different courses. The fourth and fifth books attached to Basil's work provide us with an interesting method of argumentation: the response of (presumably) Didymus the Blind consists of numerous lemmatic syllogisms (in the manner of the *Syntagmation*) that demonstrate the Son to be consubstantial with the Father.

Basil of Caesarea, who now will be the focus of our examination, followed a totally different way; presumably, unlike Didymus, he felt that syllogistic argument was not a secure route to take. Basil of Caesarea, and his *Against Eunomius,* is undoubtedly one of the most important works that appeared amongst the Nicenes in response to Eunomius. Anticipating the critical edition and French translation of the text[442], M. Anastos in June 1979 pointed out that this important treatise of Basil had *'never been published in a critical edition or translated into any modern language. Nor had it been widely discussed or criticized'*[443]. In his own article, M. Anastos has rendered the content of Basil's work very carefully, and his contribution to the study of this somewhat neglected work is immense, but the text still awaits an English translation.

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[442] *SC* vols. 299 and 305 that appeared in 1981 and 1983.

[443] Anastos, M. *op.cit.*, p. 67. To be more precise, Basil's *Adversus Eunomium* was translated into Russian by the students and tutors of the Moscow Theological Academy. This translation was published in Moscow in 1846, together with other works of Basil published by Migne; in 1911 the revised translation was published by P. Soikin. Of course, the treatise received numerous studies in nineteenth century Russia. Taking into account our remit, I cannot give a complete bibliography here; as for the subject of my thesis, Basil's work was analysed in the studies of Y. Edelshtein, and in the article written by a professor of the St. Petersburg Theological Academy, S. Troitskiy (1878-1972) – for more details *v.* Ириней (Середний), *Жизнь и труды профессора С.В. Троицкого,* БТ № 12 (Moscow 1974) pp. 217-219.

Basil's concern with the Anomean movement is impressive, and goes far beyond his *Adversus Eunomium*, where his philosophical preoccupation appears to be rather limited; but this seeming limitation becomes clear in the light of his short works that are going to be dealt with below. His controversy with the Anomeans was reflected in a number of his other works, where the treatment of linguistic and philosophical issues appears much more clear and distinctive in comparison with *AE;* moreover, some of his early works allow us to assume that his interest in the problem was much wider than just a practical need to refute Eunomius.

Compared to the early books of Gregory's *Contra Eunomium,* whose primary criticism was much more restrained and concrete, Basil attacks his opponent in every possible way: he is irritated by the title of Eunomius' work, its style, structure, rhetorical figures, *etc*. He scoffs at Eunomius' expectation that his *Apology* will become the common property of Christian people, but a theme that received the most scathing criticism was Eunomius' method of argumentation itself. In the first book of his brother, who took pains to reply to the further *Apologies,* Gregory assumes that Eunomius makes errors unintentionally; he still thinks he can persuade him with theological and philosophical considerations. Basil's criticism is not at all tolerant: his intention is to represent Eunomius as a 'liar, ignoramus, swearer, and blasphemer'[444] and in speaking so, Basil often departs from the central themes. In fact both books,

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[444] *AE*. i, 1;49

viz. Adversus Eunomium and *Liber Apologeticus* are of the same genre; in some sense Basil's work fits better the apologetic style, whereas the first *Apology* is merely a general argumentation against 'inconsistent' and abstract *homoousion* and *homoiousion* followers. Nevertheless, in the work of Basil one can scarcely find any sign of a misunderstanding of Eunomius, as is often assumed; in spite of numerous offensive and insulting epithets, presumably caused by another defeat of orthodoxy in Constantinople[445], Basil makes his case with remarkable lucidity. Let us now go through those aspects of his criticism that are relevant to linguistic issues.

§ IV.2.1 The theme of 'mundane wisdom'

In Basil's reply to Eunomius' *First Apology*, the theme of logical discourse receives an interesting treatment. I think that it partly reveals the controversial questions posed in the previous section, namely Eunomius' philosophical background in general, and relation to linguistic matter in particular. Taking into account Basil's extreme polemical preoccupation, it is illustrative that he really cannot find anything worth accusing Eunomius of, but the use of 'secular wisdom' (τοῦ κόσμου σοφίας). Apart from a general remark about the

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[445] *AE.*, i, 70ff.

syllogisms of Aristotle and Chrysippus, which, in Basil's opinion are totally useless for the exposition of 'generacy' and 'ingeneracy'[446], the *only* more or less determinable parallel that he finds in his opponent's theologising, and indicates in *AE* (and other anti-Eunomean) works, is related to Aristotle's idea mentioned in the second book of the *Categories,* that in the course of definition, a possession (ἕξις) takes precedence of the privation (στέρησις). As has already been observed, both Aetius and Eunomius proposed the totally ridiculous statement that the term 'unbegotten' is in no way an alpha-privative epithet, but an absolute divine epithet. Basil objects only to the latter, and refers to the *Categories* rhetorically, *i.e.* without criticising Aristotle himself. His real purpose is not to argue about the logical rôle of substantives in terms of privation-possession; moreover, he does not even find anything wrong with Aristotle's remark, and later on argues that the name 'unbegotten' is indeed a privation[447]. All that he is willing to say is just a presentation of Eunomius' doctrine as taken 'not in accordance with the teaching of Spirit, but from wisdom of the 'princes of our epoch' (ἐκ τῆς σοφίας τῶν ἀρχόντων τοῦ αἰῶνος τούτου)'[448]. In a sense we now see what was already pointed out by Socrates: Eunomius' knowledge of philosophical matters was really inadequate. His use of the syllogistic method does not yet mean that he had read, for example, Aristotle himself when he composed his first *Apology*.

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[446] *AE*, i, 5; 43f.
[447] *AE*, i, 9.
[448] *AE*, i, 9; 12f.

There is another important theme that should be taken onto consideration as well. Among numerous offensive labels, Basil brings forward one that demonstrates his comprehension of the matter in a remarkable way; moreover, this comment is a witty aphorism similar to Theodoretus' ironic remark that Eunomius turned theology into 'technology'. In the last section of the first book, Basil compares Eunomian doctrine with both pagan religion and Judaism; in *AE*, i, 27 this idea is slightly unclear, but in his twenty forth homily the same theme appears in an interesting form. In Basil's opinion, Sabellius is as diametrically opposed to Anomean doctrine as heathen theologising is opposed to Judaism. Remarkably, it is the Sabellian heresy that is identified by Basil as pure pagan theology, while the Anomean variant of the monotheist doctrine of the one ingenerate Deity is in his opinion a transition to *Judaism*:

> For those (Sabellians) who at once state the Only-begotten [Son] to be God's work and creature, but then worship Him and theologise about him, and venerate the 'creature' rather than the Creator, introduce Hellenism; while the others (Anomeans), having rejected God from God and having assumed the Son to be so in word (καὶ ὀνόματι μὲν ὁμολογοῦντες Υἱὸν), refute his [divine] existence in deed, and truly recommence Judaism (ἔργῳ δὲ καὶ ἀληθείᾳ τὴν ὕπαρξιν ἀθετοῦντες, τὸν Ἰουδαϊσμὸν πάλιν ἀνανεοῦνται)[449].

This passage is of special interest in respect to J. Daniélou's idea of regarding Eunomius as a Neo-Platonist thinker. Basil does not see any sign of philosophy here; for him Anomean monotheism is not a variant of a Hellenistic

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[449] Basilius, *Contra Sabellianos et Arium et Anomoeos*, *PG* 31, 600, l.47ff. (My transl.).

concept of the Supreme Deity, but a Judaic theological position. Of course, it does not necessarily mean that Eunomius really had any knowledge of the rabbinic tradition, and in fact Basil does not really mean this. Even at the stage of composing his *Apology for the Apology* his use of Philo, as I shall show below, is not significant at all. R. Mortley, however, argued for Eunomius' dependence on Philo; so we shall turn back to this assumption in the next section.

§ IV.2.2 Value of logical truth and the sphere of its application

Undoubtedly, Eunomius' syllogistic method of argumentation represented the main difficulty for Basil: to refute the method philosophically in front of unprepared listeners was scarcely possible; as with Eunomius, his preoccupation was to make his view explicit to the popular mind. In the context of the entire work, Basil's remark about Chrysippus' logic appears slightly insincere[450]: in his use of the Stoic logical craft and purely scientific knowledge (the nature of time, mechanism of human eyesight, thinking process, *etc.*), Basil excels his opponent. His general position in relation to Aetius' dilemmas is the following: Basil does not intend to refute the method as such by a direct

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[450] as well as his over-modest remark: 'If some people call these words privations, it is irrelevant to us. We do not know scientific definitions (τεχνολογίας λέξεων) and do not seek after them' – *AE*, i, 9; 29-31.

accusation of inconsistency[451], but he points out that in spite of its formal correctness, the syllogistic construction fails to define the truth factually. Thus, Basil rejects the formal truth criterion as an ultimate epistemological method His only response to the logical train of thought is that in spite of the formal correctness of the dilemmas, the statement that the Son is 'wholly other' to the Father *is simply not true*. What does he suggest the factual truth criterion to be? Basil calls it ὁ κανών, ὁ γνώμων and τὸ ἀσφαλὲς κριτήριον[452]; his frequent '*this is not so*' in respect to Eunomius' doctrine of the Son is normally followed by numerous references to the Bible, which is obviously an external factor to the sphere of logic.

Unlike his master, who seemed to be totally uninterested in the historical doctrine of the Church, Eunomius felt a need to adopt some traditional and comprehensive forms for the exposition of faith. In *AE* i, 4 Basil reasonably asks: why did Eunomius makes use of an old Creed (presumably, of Cappadocian origin[453]) if his position is purely rationalist, since the doctrinal content of the short baptismal formula is neutral and totally irrelevant to the dispute, because it says nothing about the nature of the Son[454]? Basil's remark is fascinating: in *AE* i, 5 he demonstrates that though his opponent calls the profession κανών, this rule of faith on account of its uncertainty in his opinion 'requires to be

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[451] In *AE*, i, 8, however, Basil attempts to do so; he points to the logical distinction between relative names and absolute names – *cf.* I. Hausherr, *The name of Jesus*, p. 29; his brief summary of Basil's view on names is in fact unsatisfactory and incomplete.
[452] *AE*, i, 4; 75f.
[453] *v.* brief discussion in *SC* 305, p. 240 n 1.
[454] *AE*, i, 4.

explained more precisely'[455]; nevertheless, for this specification Eunomius employs the classical syllogisms of his master Aetius.

In order to exemplify Basil's own treatment of the truth criteria, let us look at one of his homilies. The *Contra Sabellianos et Arium et Anomoeos* is in fact a summary of the *AE*, and reveals the structure of Basil's train of thought in a more comprehensive form. The structure of the *Hom.* 24 (PG 31, 600-617) goes as follows: *Hom.* 24 600, 24-601, 12 defines the doctrine of the Sabellians and the Anomeans; *Hom.* 24 601, 13-604, 41 is an outline of the biblical Christological passages (*John* 1:1, *Ps.* 119:89, *John* 14:2, 14:7, 10:30, 16:28, 8:16, 8:17-18, *Col.* 1:15, *John* 5:18, *Phil.* 2:6); in *Hom.* 24 604, 42-609, 8 Basil turns to the divinity of the Holy Spirit and refutes charges of dualism, tritheism and polytheism; the next passage (*Hom.* 24 609, 8-617, 16) contains sixteen biblical quotations about the Holy Spirit, and only one appeal to common sense (Basil repeats *AE* i, 12; 29-13;24).

Thus, the sphere of logical truth is limited; a syllogistic argument *per se* does not prove the matter. As far as syllogistic deduction appears to disagree with the Scriptures and Tradition (ἡ εὐσεβὴς τῶν Πατέρων παράδοσις[456]), formal correctness loses its value completely, and turns into nonsense. The following passage is perhaps the best to demonstrate his view:

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[455] *AE*, i, 5; 4-6: Διὰ τοῦτο τὴν αὐτὴν καὶ κανόνα λέγει καὶ προθήκης φησὶν ἀκριβεστέρας δεῖσθαι.
[456] *ibid.*

> But, as for me, I neither invent new sayings, nor do I disregard [the] value [of logical correctness in general][457]. But I cry and lament over those who dare to call him (the Holy Spirit) 'creature', because by their scant sophism and false corollary they pitch themselves into a chasm. For they say: 'As far as our mind grasps these three, and amongst things that exist, there is nothing which cannot be subdivided [in the following three groups]; hence everything is either unbegotten or begotten or created. [The Holy Spirit] is neither first, nor it is the second; consequently, it is the third'. This '*consequently*' makes you guilty of eternal damnation. Have you scrutinised everything?... Have you grasped everything by your intellect?... Do you know what is under the ground? Do you know what is in the depth [of the sea]? What a demonic vainglory! '*I know the number of the sands and measure of the sea*' (allusion to Herodotus 1;47)[458].

Indeed, there is nothing remarkable about the distinction between the formal and the factual truth criteria that Basil seems to be introducing here. Moreover, this is an elementary principle of rational discourse, and it must be clear to anyone who is acquainted with, for example, Plato's criticism of sophists and their verbal puzzles, which are based either on a correct dilemma that contradicts reality, or on an incorrect dilemma. A general assumption that logical truth is of no particular significance to Basil appears to be intellectually devastating, as well it might to us. Perhaps one can argue that such a representation of Eunomius is an oversimplification of the matter; I think, however, that Eunomius' premise is merely a poor variant on a much more

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[457] The phrase 'οὕτω μὲν οὖν οὔτε καινοτομῶ ῥήματα, οὐτὲ ἀθετῶ τὴν ἀξίαν' is very unclear. I think that in the latter clause 'and I do not disregard the value of new sayings' in the context of the whole passage should be attributed to logical correctness in general. Basil could not mean that he does not disregard the lemma that follow, because it is exactly what he does.

[458] Basilius, *Homily* 24 (*Contra Sabelianos et Arium et Anomoeos* – *PG* 31, 612).

general position that can be easily traced in the history of philosophy. Presumably, from Basil's standpoint the Cartesian philosophical preamble *cogito ergo sum* would be similarly monstrous.

As observed in the previous section, Aetius and Eunomius' comprehension of *epinoia* is clear; what is unclear is the way it works when applied to ordinary words. If it is the most unsuccessful treatment of the notion in the history of Greek thought[459], and the initial account of *epinoia* that appeared in the *Syntagmation* and the first *Apology* is not yet philosophy, Eunomius' examples of non-*epinoic* words are just 'unbegotten' and 'begotten'; perhaps 'creature' is nothing but a theoretical oversight, caused by his passionate desire to set up the *agennetos theos* theory. Of course, Aetius' view on *epinoia* is determined by his comprehension of logical truth and its absolute value for cognition, but initially neither Aetius, nor Eunomius spoke about cognition as such; they spoke only about the cognition of the Father, Son and Holy Spirit by means of three proposed terms.

For Basil there is no philosophy yet. His estimation of Eunomius' understanding of the term *epinoia* is that his opponent makes a distinction between so-called *epinoic* and non-*epinoic* words, in order to facilitate his exposition of the 'Unbegotten Deity'[460]. Refutation of the Anomean view on *epinoia* was easy for Basil; let us now turn to his own comprehension of *epinoia*.

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[459] A. Owen, ἐπινοέω, ἐπίνοι and allied words, *JThS* 35 (1934), p. 375.
[460] *AE*, i, 5;131ff.

§ IV.2.3 Basil on human *epinoia* and thinking process

The concept of *epinoia* in Basil and Eunomius is crucial for an understanding of their disagreement. E. Owen rightly concluded that the term is not a technical philosophical or theological term as such[461]; rather, *epinoia* is more likely a trivial notion, which covers so many aspects of thought that it can hardly be translated as a technical 'abstract concept' or 'analytical thinking', though both these meanings are included in the notion. In fact, Basil and Gregory made *epinoia* a notion of anthropological theology.

By the notion of *epinoia* Basil and Eunomius both mean the human factor. The basis of their disagreement is twofold, and related to the discrepancy in their comprehension of the thinking process. First of all, in Eunomius' view, *epinoia* is regarded as secondary to his non-*epinoic* words, which he employs in his lemmas, and which later on he will have to defend by developing this standpoint.

As to the second class of human words, *epinoia* causes them as an afterthought and at once introduces inevitable errors. It would be a mistake to assert that for Eunomius the thinking process as such is the source of these errors, because it contradicts his method in general. Rather, for him *epinoia* is human inventiveness rather than analytical thinking; so, it is inventiveness that causes a kind of arbitrary concept of a thing and as a result, error. Basil,

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[461] A. Owen, *op.cit.*, p. 376.

however, argues for the philosophical uniqueness of *epinoia;* it is the phenomenon of human nature that allows us to grasp things and designate them by words. Therefore, the key to Basil's view on *epinoia* is related to his comprehension of the human thinking process.

It seems that Basil was interested in this issue as well as in the nature of eyesight regardless of his polemical preoccupations. For him these two questions are entirely enigmatic, so he supposes that a complete comprehension of their nature will be reached only in our afterlife[462].

> Even in respect to movements of our mind (τὰ τοῦ νοῦ κινήματα) who can answer exactly: does our soul (ψύχή) produce them by creation or by generation (πότερον κτίζειν ἢ γεννᾶν πέφυκεν)?
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> *AE*, iii, 6;22f.

His general view on the nature of thinking is better explained in the *Homilia in illud: 'Attende tibi ipsi'*[463]:

> For our physical actions (τοῦ σώματος πράξεις) require time (χρόνου), good occasion, efforts, assistants and another help; but movements of reason (τῆς διανοίας κινήσεις) do not take place in time (ἄχρονως ἐνεργοῦνται), they follow without physical impediments and efforts, and any time (καιρὸν) is suitable for them.
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> *Hom.* 3 (319) 24; 14ff.

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[462] Unfortunately, it is irrelevant here to make any examination of Basil's opinion about human eyesight. *AE*, iii, 6;5-24 reflects that this theme was an interest of his; in fact, Basil expresses his deep dissatisfaction with both classical Greek views on the matter – *cf. SC* 305 p. 168 n. 1.
[463] ed. S. Rudberg, *L'homélie de Basile de Césarée sur le mot 'observe-toi toi-même'* (Stockholm: Almqvist & Wiksell, 1962), p. 23-37.

He distinguishes the 'movements of reason' from their result – a 'complete concept' (νόημα or διάνοια); the nature of our thought is said to be unknown to us; in Basil's opinion, however, τὰ τοῦ νοῦ κινήματα have their existence in time (χρόνος), but thoughts (διάνοια, ἔννοια) being at some stage bound up with movements of reason, are finally of a different modus of coming-to-be and exist in αἰών[464] rather than in χρόνος:

> ...Certainly, this process is not exact in likeness due to the interposition of time (διὰ τὴν τοῦ χρόνου παράτασιν). And it is more suitable to say that the nature of what is thought subsists together with the movements of the mind, apart from time (ἀχρόνως)[465].
>
> *AE*, ii, 16;42ff.

The nature of the human thinking process is immaterial, because thoughts are produced by our soul (ἡ ψυχὴ τὰς ἐννοίας ἐργάζεται). It is the power of thinking that differentiates human beings from animals[466], whose behaviour is determined by instinct (ἀφορμή), and who turn from harm to good by impulses of their nature (ἐκ φύσεως). Human behaviour is determined *par excellence* by our intellect, which is an intellectual part of our soul.

In point of fact, Basil now speaks about human personhood; his attempt to answer this philosophical question is that our body just belongs to us – *we* are

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[464] For details about the distinction between in αἰών, χρόνος and Divine eternity *v.* B. Otis, *Gregory of Nyssa and the Cappadocian concept of time*, *StPt* 14 (1976), pp. 327-357.
[465] transl. of D. Robertson, *op.cit.*, p. 136.
[466] *cf.* D. Robertson, *op.cit.*, p. 116-123 for a fuller account of the idea in the context of Stoic philosophy.

not our body; we are surrounded by arts and sciences, which are caused by our intellectual activity, but they are not what *we really are*. Rather,

> *We are our soul and mind* (ἡμεῖς μὲν οὖν ἐσμεν ἡ ψυχὴ καὶ ὁ νοῦς), because we are made in the image of the Creator.
>
> *Hom.* 3, 26;17

Visible objects are observed and cognised by our eyesight; this action as such is enigmatic and incomprehensible[467]. But invisible things can be comprehended by our 'spiritual' eyes or, as Basil says, by the eye of our soul (τὸ τῆς ψυχῆς ὄμμα):

> ...by the intellectual power of our soul (τῇ νοερᾷ τῆς ψυχῆς δύναμει) we can be plunged into contemplation of incorporeal things (ἐπιβάλλειν τῇ θεωρίᾳ τῶν ἀσωμάτων).
>
> *Hom.* 3, 25;22f.

Thus, Basil excludes the category of time (χρόνος and, for that reason, 'occasion' – καίρος) from διάνοια and ἔννοια and somehow places them in αἰών. It should be noted that the application of the term 'timelessly' is not a particularly correct translation of his ἀχρόνως; strictly speaking, what we now mean by absolute timelessness Basil attaches exclusively to the Deity. Αἰών is not an absolutely timeless and spaceless realm; it is just another mode of time

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[467] *cf. Hom.* 3, 25; 20ff.

and space: in αἰών there is no past or future; everything is only in the present[468]. The rapidity of human thought is caused by two factors; first, it is in a sense of timeless (ἀχρόνως) nature; second, its attachment to αἰών in terms of the space continuum. In other words, human διάνοια appears to be beyond the category of space (in the sense of our apparent world of the three-dimensional space) as well:

> Sometime an arrogant man, falsely chaste and bragging about his piety... goes by his thought (ἀπέδραμε τῇ διανοίᾳ) back to the place of sin (πρὸς τὸν τῆς ἁμαρτίας τόπον) in an invisible movement of his heart (ἐν τῷ ἀφανεῖ τῆς καρδίας κινήματι)[469].

The notion of *epinoia*, according to Basil, is not just the inventiveness of human nature; it is not, and cannot be, just a verbal result of our thinking. Rather, *epinoia* is a special phase of the human thinking process that *can* immediately follow our perception (and there are two ways to go by) or *cannot*. Might *or* might not His main disagreement with Eunomius' treatment of *epinoia*

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[468] This problem is too complex to be treated here in full; clearly, my concern is limited by Basil's view of the nature of thought. The Greek philosophical apparatus, undoubtedly allowed for a distinction between various types of time and space and for the conception of a time that is always present *cf.* Plotinus, *Enn.* vi, 7;2-3. B. Sesboüé undertakes a brief examination in *SC* 299, pp. 86-89; however, his suggestion that Eunomius followed Aristotle's *Physica* in his view of the nature of time has little force. Eunomius' definition of χρόνος as *' a certain motion of the stars'* (*Ap.* 10;6f) was evidently just a personal view that has no connexion with Plato, Aristotle or the Stoics. It is illustrative that for Basil, who knows the Stoic treatment of διάστημα and αἰών (*SC* 299, p. 89), the remark about the stars is nothing but the rigmarole of a narrow-minded man (*v. AE*, i, 21). For a general analysis of the problem *v.* А. *Лосев, Античный космос и современная наука* (Moscow 1927; repr. 1993) – *'Greek cosmos and the modern science', eps.* ch. 14 ***'Category of value, time, space, and gravity'***, pp. 225-228, 480-484; for bibliography *v. SC* 299, pp. 86-89.

[469] *Hom.* 3, 24; 17ff. The rest of the passage is as follows: in his fantasy, the man has committed a sin that remains invisible to the people who praise him for his apparent virtues. This sin of the heart will be still invisible until doomsday, *i.e.* until the termination of χρόνος and the beginning of ἀιών.

is this: Basil contends that *epinoia* cannot mean an arbitrary idea that causes a word, and then disappears with the pronunciation:

> Does the term (*epinoia*) mean absolutely nothing and is merely a sound, which just escapes one's lips in vain?
>
> *AE*, i, 6;2f.

If so, Basil replies, this is not ἐπίνοια, but παράνοια and nonsense. The real source of error, falsehood and being misled is in our mind, *i.e.* in a wrong *epinoia*[470]; but even a mistaken opinion does not disappear when it is being uttered. Basil says that even though our sayings have been spelled out, a misleading, wrong opinion does not cease to exist. He sneers at Eunomius' statements and says that if, as his opponent thinks, the disappearance of the uttered *epinoic* words means the immediate disappearance of wrong opinions (φαντάσματα),

> It would have been plausible to utter a lie, if the very nature of the lie disappears together with its utterance.
>
> *AE*, 1,6;16f.

In his treatment of human *epinoia,* Basil adopts the distinction made in *Hom*. 3:

in the sphere of soul there is a rational and intellectual agency (τὸ λογικόν καὶ νοερὸν τῆς ψυχῆς) and an unconscious or instinctive agency (τὸ παθητικόν τε καὶ ἄλογον): in the course of spiritual life Christians have to subordinate the

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[470] I shall return to the negative aspect of *epinoia* mentioned by Basil in his first *De jejunio*.

latter to the former[471]. *Epinoia* belongs to the intellectual part of the soul (νοερὸν τῆς ψυχῆς); therefore, it mostly deals with what comes from just 'sense perception', and does so analytically. At the same time, however, *epinoia* is responsible for the imaginative functions of the intellect, and therefore potential inventiveness. The latter aspect is, clearly, what Eunomius thinks *epinoia* to be, and that alone. Basil argues that although *epinoia* causes the appearance of artistic or poetic imagery, and, for example, although mythological images such as centaurs and chimeras do not exist independently (they are τὰ ἀνυπόστατα παντελῶς[472]), they, nevertheless, exist κατ᾽ ἐπίνοιαν and do not cease to exist with the verbal utterance of their names. Furthermore, Basil adds, this aspect of the function of *epinoia* is not at all routine, but exceptional. He accuses Eunomius of making great play of the exception, whereas the main aspect of *epinoia* is left aside:

> Having neglected all these important things – whether by ignorance or evil intent [one can guess] – he suggested to us gave us his philosophising about *epinoia* only in relation to those matters which are of the imagination (περὶ τῆς τῶν ἀνυπάρκτων ἐπινοίας μόνης ἡμῖν ἐφιλοσόφησε·).
>
> *AE*, i, 6; 34ff.

But even in this case, Basil remarks, the functioning of *epinoia* takes place in a different way from Eunomius' understanding – one cannot say that

> '...*epinoia* means nothing, even a false thing, and therefore is always a senseless word (παντελῶς ἄσημον εἶναι τὸ

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[471] *Hom.* 3, 36;6ff.
[472] *AE*, i, 6;29.

> ὄνομα) that only exists in pronunciation (ἐν μόνῃ τῇ ἐκφωνήσει τὴν ὑπόστασιν ἔχειν).
>
> *Ibid.*

because the treatment of mythic images is not the main preoccupation of *epinoia*. What in fact Eunomius does is simply to take one insignificant aspect of *epinoia* and misinterpret it. In my opinion, there is no sign in the *First Apology* that Eunomius realises what his statement about the simultaneous disappearance of phoneme and *epinoia* means philosophically, but Basil's main argument is not even with that. He points to the fact that the central function of *epinoia* is analytical thinking that can or cannot – depending on the maturity of one's intellect – follow the preliminary perception of an object, either abstract or concrete.

> However, it is wrong to apply the name '*epinoia*' exclusively to vain matters or to something that does not exist on its own (*i.e.* not in our imagination – ἀνυποστάτων φαντασιῶν), because, in the first instance, by *epinoia* we mean a more detailed and precise (λεπτοτέρον καὶ ἀκριβεστέραν) analysis of what comes from perception.
>
> *AE*, i, 6;39f.

In general, his understanding of *epinoia* as an analytical option of the intellect is well exemplified in *AE* i, 6: at first sight one might assume an object to be simple and homogeneous; but human thought (λόγος) by *epinoia* realises that it is complex and distinguishes colour, form, material resistance

(ἀντιτυπίαν), size, *etc*[473]. Everybody knows what grain is; but in the course of analysis we may attach various titles to it: grain can be καρπόν, σπέρμα, τροφήν, and further, καρπὸν μὲν ὡς τέλος τῆς παρελθούσης γεωργίας, σπέρμα δὲ ὡς ἀρχὴν τῆς μελλούσης, τροφὴν δὲ ὡς κατάλληλον εἰς προσθήκην τῷ τοῦ προσφερομένου σώματι, κτλ.

> Each of these predicates is considered by *epinoia* (κατ' ἐπίνοιαν θεωρεῖται), but at the same time does not disappear with verbal utterance (καὶ τῷ ψόφῳ τῆς γλώσσης οὐ συναπέρχεται·). *Rather, these notions remain in the soul of one who was thinking*[474].
>
> *AE*, i; 49-54.

On a similar basis, in the Scriptures Jesus Christ is called or calls himself by numerous names; the reason for this is not because the Son has many names (οὐ πολυώνυμός τις ὤν) *per se*: each name signifies something different. In the course of naming the subject (τὸ ὑποκείμενον) remains the one (ἓν ὢν) and of one, simple and non-complex essence (καὶ μία οὐσία καὶ ἁπλῆ καὶ ἀσύνθετος)[475],

> He himself (*i.e.* the Son) takes these various names in accordance with different actions, and in accordance with different relations to the objects of his actions[476].
>
> *AE*, i, 7;15f.

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[473] *AE* i, 6;25-29.
[474] ἀλλὰ τῇ ψυχῇ τοῦ νενοηκότος ἐνίδρυται τὰ νοήματα.
[475] *cf.* I. Hausherr, *op.cit.*, p. 30.
[476] Κατὰ γὰρ τὴν τῶν ἐνεργειῶν διαφορὰν καὶ τὴν πρὸς τὰ εὐεργετούμενα σχέσιν διάφορα ἑαυτῷ καὶ τὰ ὀνόματα τίθεται.

In the writings of Gregory we shall observe the idea of how names are applied κατ' ἐνεργειῶν διαφοράν in full. Basil, however, seems to have much more to say about human *epinoia*, as he remarks in *AE* i, 7;2. In fact, there is another aspect of *epinoia* which should be briefly mentioned here, as Basil himself treated it. In the *De jejunio (hom. 1)*, he says that human *epinoia* was first put in action by original sin; such things as wine-drinking, the slaughter of cattle, *etc.* were invented by humans after the Fall. Originally, when Adam and Eve lived in paradise, there their mind (νοῦς) was free from what was later on invented by their progeny by *epinoia*[477].

§ IV.2.4 The nature of language: the communicative function of speech.

What is the nature of human language and how do words come into existence? These questions are answered by Basil in one of his non-controversial works. Let us look at his homily *'Take heed to thyself'*, which is brief, but rich in philosophical issues[478]. I suggest that this sermon reflects an entire theory of language usually associated with Gregory of Nyssa; intriguingly, the most

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[477] *PG* 31, 168;14ff: Ἀλλὰ καὶ ἡ ἐν παραδείσῳ διαγωγὴ νηστείας ἐστὶν εἰκών, οὐ μόνον καθότι τοῖς ἀγγέλοις ὁμοδίαιτος ὢν ὁ ἄνθρωπος, διὰ τῆς ὀλιγαρκίας τὴν πρὸς αὐτοὺς ὁμοίωσιν κατώρθου, ἀλλ' ὅτι καὶ ὅσα ὕστερον ἡ ἐπίνοια τῶν ἀνθρώπων ἐξεῦρεν, οὔπω τοῖς ἐν τῷ παραδείσῳ διαιτωμένοις ἐπενόητο οὔπω οἰνοποσίαι, οὔπω ζωοθυσίαι, οὐχ ὅσα τὸν νοῦν ἐπιθολοῖ τὸν ἀνθρώπινον.

[478] *Deut.* 15, 9; in *LXX* only the verse opens with 'Πρόσεχε σεαυτῷ'. *Hom* 3.

important issues are given here in a very laconic form; each definition is remarkably short and lucid.

One of the most outstanding features of the sermon is that Basil puts forward a scheme of language, a scheme that is entirely anthropological. He proceeds from the assumption that man has a communicative nature; therefore, human beings need to reveal their wills and sincere wishes to one another. For this reason God provided us with the power of communication:

> God, our creator, has given the use of reason (λόγου τὴν χρῆσιν δέδωκεν ἡμῖν), in order that we might reveal the deliberations of our hearts to one another, and each person might impart something to his or her companion by virtue of what is common to human nature, as if speaking forth the deliberations from some inner chambers, from the hidden regions of the heart[479].

To communicate, however, does not necessarily mean *to speak*. *Hom.* 3, 23;5-6 is of special interest for the inquiry into the priority of the thinking process over speech. The power of speech is thought to be a secondary phenomenon caused by the *carnal* nature of humankind:

> If we were living with an open soul (γυμνῇ τῇ ψυχῇ), we would have been able to understand each other just by thoughts (ἀπὸ τῶν νοημάτων)[480]. But since the soul, hidden under the veil of the flesh, produces thoughts (ἡ ψυχὴ τὰς ἐννοίας ἐργάζεται), it requires verbs and names (ῥημάτων δεῖται καὶ ὀνομάτων) with a view to making public the things stored in its depths. So then whenever our thinking takes to itself a semantic vocal sound, as if being conveyed by speech as a kind of ferry, crossing through the air, it arrives from the speaker to the hearer.

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[479] transl. of this passage is taken from D. Robertson, *op.cit.*, p. 126.
[480] my transl. of 23;5-6; the rest of the passage is taken from *ibid.*, 126-127.

Hom, 3, 23;5ff.

The rest of the homily elucidates further Gregory's train of thought in full: Basil speaks of arts and crafts invented by human intellect (32;22-34;6), he likens the anatomical structure of the human body to the phonetic character of the human language (36;8-37*ad.fin.*) and exclaims: 'Κατέμαθε τῆς γλώττης τὴν φύσιν'; this slogan will be taken up with enthusiasm by later Byzantine scholars[481]. The distinction made by Basil here between thought and spoken word is our particular concern. D. Robertson's explanation of the text is as follows: '*There is no notion here of inner speech conceived as a silent monologue or debate, for the soul is just preoccupied with private thoughts*'; also, he makes an interesting comparison here with the Stoic idea that '*Providence endows humans with a distinctive nature which is equipped for rational inner thought and its expression through speech*'[482]. I suggest, however, that what Basil really means here is a theological theme of the non-verbal communication of angels, rather than a philosophical problem of inner and outer speech. Although, as shown below, he still calls angelic communication *a language*, we now come across the most enigmatic aspect of the Cappadocian linguistic theory. Language is determined by our carnal nature, its phonetic character is caused by our anatomical structure, while thoughts are immaterial, or one might say have a 'τὸ τοῦ αἰῶνος' existence. Nonetheless, whether νοήματα, ἔννοιαι, φαντασίαι, κτλ.

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[481] *cf.* Meletius, *De natura hominis*, 80; 17.

[482] D. Robertson, *op.cit.*, p. 127. D. Robertson then draws a parallel between Basil and the treatment of the matter in the modern philosophy of language – *loc.cit.*, n.40.

are expressed by ῥημάτων καὶ ὀνομάτων or not, *i.e.* whether inner thinking is uttered or not, at least in the case of human beings, a silent monologue or inner speech requires a concrete tongue (*e.g.* Greek, Latin, Coptic *etc.*) rather than *just language* as such.

Basil's remark is not adequately informative, so we cannot go further in treating this question safely. The solution might be found in Basil's premise about the communicative nature of humankind that causes the appearance of language, his view of human nature before the Fall, his comprehension of angelic entities, the distinction between the movements of reason and complete thoughts, *etc*. So, it seems reasonable to leave this problem open. Nevertheless, for further investigation of the matter one should pay special attention to the basic premise of the communicative nature of human beings: speech is a necessity for sharing inner thoughts with another. Thus we approach the last important aspect of Basil's view of speech: the generation of words.

§ IV.2.5 The Divine Logos and the human word: epistemological implications

We will now turn to one of Basil's polemical passages that is in fact a more comprehensive variant of some of his ideas found in *AE*. Basil believes that the Johannine prologue is the strongest biblical argument against both the syllogistic and the quasi-linguistic argumentation of Eunomius; for this reason

he dedicated an independent exegetical homily to the scrutiny of *John*. 1:1-2. His method is striking: he takes each word of the clause 'ἐν ἀρχῇ ἦν ὁ λόγος' one by one, and sequentially excludes all possible human implications or associations. 'ἀρχὴ σοφίας' in *Prov*. 9:10 or *Ps*. 111:10 is different from the Johannine 'ἐν ἀρχῇ':

> This 'beginning' is different... For it is not bound up with anything, nor it is subordinated; moreover, it does not appear in relation to anything...
>
> *Hom*. 16 (PG 31, 476;4ff)

This ἀρχή is an insurmountable point of human intellectual search, it is the ultimate and everlasting limit of discourse; our attempts to overcome this limit are doomed to failure (*Ibid*. 476; 9-18). Similarly, 'ἦν' takes the matter out of time or hierarchical sequences of any kind (*Ibid*. 476; 22 – Basil opposes this 'ἦν' to the classical Arian 'Ἦν ποτε, ὅτε οὐκ ἦν'). Finally he arrives at the notion of Logos; the passage represents some difficulties, because Basil juggles with numerous meanings of the Greek word *logos* – word, thought, and expressed word, language, speech and the Divine Word, *etc*.:

> Does your mind seek to know, who was in the beginning? 'The *Logos'*, he says. What kind of *logos*? The language of men (ὁ ἄνθρώπινος λόγος;)? Or rather the speech of angels (ὁ τῶν ἀγγέλων λόγος;)? For in fact, the Apostle has indicated to us that the angels speak in their own tongue (ἰδίαν ἐχόντων γλῶσσαν)... But also there are two meanings of *'logos'* which can be distinguished. For one sense of the term means the *logos* which is expressed by means of vocal sounds, the speech which dissipates in the air after being uttered; and another sense of the term means the speech which is inward, located in our hearts, the speech which is involved in thought. And there is another,

> the expertise that is employed in the arts. Observe the senses of the term carefully, that the homonymy of the word does not mislead you[483]. For how could a human *logos* be *'in the beginning'*, if man received his existence much later? Animals preceded man, cattle preceded man, and all reptiles, all of whom inhabit land and sea, the birds of the air, stars, sun, moon, grass, plants, earth, sea, sky. Therefore, it was not a human *logos* that *'was in the beginning'*; nor it was the *logos* of angels, because every creature is posterior to the ages (κατωτέρα τῶν αἰώνων εστὶ) and received its coming-to-be (τὴν ἀρχὴν τοῦ εἶναι λαβοῦσα) from the Creator. But even our inner *logos* (ὁ δὲ ἐν καρδίᾳ λόγος) of thing is still posterior to the thing itself.
>
> *Hom.* 16 (476;4-477;19)

Having excluded all the possible wrong implications and associations of the term *logos,* Basil puts forward his own interpretation of the Johannine prologue; he insists on only one possible understanding of the *Logos* which is only appropriate to the divine (θεοπρέπως): it is an absolutely non-linguistic understanding of the *logos*:

> On what account does John use the term *logos*? In order that it might be made plain, that he issues from the mind. Why *logos*? Because he was generated without passion. Why *logos*? Because he is the image of the one who generated him, making known the one who generated as a whole in himself, being no partition from him, although he exists in his own perfection[484].
>
> *Ibid.*

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[483] transl. of D. Robertson, *op.cit.*, p. 132.
[484] transl. of D. Robertson, *loc.cit.*

The Son is titled the *Logos* regardless of our human *logos*; the reason why it was so called is to demonstrate the unique mode of the everlasting generation of the Son by the Father:

> He uses the term '*Logos*', in order that he might set the passionless generation of the Father before you, and speak theologically to you of the perfect reality of the Son, and through these things indicate to you the timeless union of the Son with the Father[485].

The final formula of the human word appears in Basil as follows: man's word is perfect in every respect and in every language; he even goes on to *compare* this perfection with the Logos[486]. We have already seen above his association of word with ferry in *Hom.* 3, 23;5ff.; now he argues that whatever man thinks, his verbal expression reflects the matter *adequately*:

> So also our *logos* represents our thought as a whole. That which we conceive in the heart, we express in speech, and that which is spoken is the image of the thought in the heart. For from the outflow of the heart, *logos* is brought forth, and our heart is like a source, while speech when spoken forth is like a stream, which flows from this source. So great is the outflow, so much also is that which is referred back to the origin; and of what is hidden, so great also is that which appears in the open... In fact our speech is the offspring of the mind, begotten without passion, for it is not severed, nor is it divided, nor is it effluent [*'effluent' is sewage! I am sure that is not what you mean*]; rather, the mind as a whole remains in its own nature, emitting speech which is whole and complete. And the *logos* which issues outwards contains in itself the meaning in its entirety of the mind which generates it[487].

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[485] transl. of D. Robertson.
[486] *Hom.* 16 (*PG* 31, 477;32f)
[487] transl. of D. Robertson.

Hom. 16 (PG 31, 477;34ff)

This comprehension of words has nothing to do with Plato and Aristotle. Perhaps Basil's epistemology of his view of essence is a good example of that. His well-known example that the names of Peter, Paul or anybody else are different, while οὐσία δὲ πάντων μία[488] has been discussed by scholars often enough, so I deliberately omit it here[489]. The reason for this is twofold: first, it is clearly the most unsuccessful exposition of the term οὐσία, only suited for the popular mind in order to demonstrate that one essence does not necessarily presuppose one person and therefore name. Second, it is to some extent contradictory of what Basil really thinks the essence of things, human nature and rationality to be.

We have already encountered his view of the cognition of things by means of perception and by means of rational analysis. *AE* i, 12-13 in spite of it obvious extreme polemical preoccupation, seems to be a good example of Basil's own view on cognition; the passage opens as follows:

> 'On the whole, what pride and what vanity to assume that the very essence of God of all has been revealed!'

In fact he intentionally leaves aside Eunomius' non-*epinoic* concept of unbegotten (logical truth), and focuses on the statement about cognition of the

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[488] *v. AE* ii, 4.

[489] To all appearances, Basil borrowed this example from the classical treatment of proper names in Stoic grammatical studies: for a compact outline of the arguments *v.* B. Sesboüé in *SC*, 299, pp. 76-83; the question received a very thorough analysis in D. Robertson, *op.cit.*, pp. 34-57.

Deity as such (the factual criterion). Thus, he asks Eunomius *how* he has reached such knowledge: if he did so by means of a common sense notion, *i.e.* natural revelation (ἐκ τῆς κοινῆς ἐννοίας), Basil remarks that in this case we are told that He exists rather than *what* He is[490]. If Eunomius maintains that he obtained this knowledge from divine revelation (ἐκ τῆς διδασκαλίας τοῦ Πνεύματος), Basil's question is which of the prophets or apostles revealed this knowledge to him, and where is it in the Bible?

Once again, Basil leaves aside the philosophical question about the value of logical truth; he now attacks Eunomius' conclusion. His argument is ingenious: he suggests focusing on much less complicated subjects than the divine essence:

> I would gladly ask them about the earth which they stand upon and which they are made of: what would they say about it? What would tell us its essence (οὐσία) to be?... Therefore, what is the essence of the earth, and what is the way for cognition of it (ποῖος τρόπος τῆς καταλήψεως;)?

If it is ridiculous to assume that one can comprehend the essence of the earth by means of perception, Basil suggests examining the very method of Eunomius, *i.e.* cognition by means of name:

> Thus, no option is left but to assume that the essence is revealed by word (τῷ λόγῳ φάσκειν αὐτοὺς τὴν οὐσίαν αὐτῆς εὑρηκέναι[491]); so, by which sort of word? Where it is

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[490] *AE*, i, 12;9: Ἀλλ᾽ αὕτη τὸ εἶναι τὸν Θεόν, οὐ τὸ τί εἶναι ἡμῖν ὑποβάλλει.

[491] In *AE*, i, 12-13 the use of ὁ λόγος is easily confused. The French translation gives 'la Parôle', which in fact does not fit the context: Eunomius could only mean the cognition in word that Basil is arguing against here – *cf. SC* 299, p. 217; the reservation made on *ibid.*, p. 214, n.1 in respect to *AE*, i, 12; 44-48 is not convincing.

> in the Scriptures, or who amongst the saints has passed it to us?

Philosophically, Basil provokes his opponent into discussing much more sophisticated matters than amateurish lemmatic puzzles: since Eunomius spoke of essence, Basil confronts him with the most complex problem of philosophy *in corpore*: what is the essence of *e.g.* the earth? In my opinion, this is a special section of the *AE*; what is even more intriguing is the way Basil solves the problem himself. Our perception provides us with knowledge of qualities or attributes, because what we perceive in the earth by means of our five senses is: colour, or volume, lightness or heaviness, *etc*. But none of these qualities in any way represent the essence of it, which is plain even to simple people. Taking into account his distinction between the two ways of cognition, his philosophical concern is easily restored: the notion (*logos*) tells us nothing about the essence; the number of qualities[492] can be easily multiplied *ad infinitum*, and therefore fail to bring us to the cognition of the thing, or its essence. It should be mentioned that this is a kind of 'external' argument that demonstrates that 'we do not know the nature of the earth that we trample on'[493]; similarly, we do not know what is inside us – *i.e.* 'internal' argument – *v. AE*, iii, 6;5-24 about the nature of the thinking process and eyesight. In both cases, Basil ties this 'true knowledge' to divine revelation. In the case of, for example, eyesight, he expects to comprehend its nature in the afterlife. As for the nature of the earth,

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[492] *cf. SC*, p. 216 n.1.
[493] *AE*, i, 13;22f.

he does something exactly the same: we are not told about the essence of the earth:

> He (Moses) who narrated told us of the creation only taught us that 'In the beginning God made the heaven and the earth. But the earth was unsightly and unsettled, and darkness was over the deep, and the Spirit of God moved over the water' (*Gen* 1:1-2). He assumed it was sufficient to say *Who* has created and settled the earth; as for [the question] of what was its essence, he did not take pains to narrate, for the matter is vain and idle for the audience.

Therefore, the essence of the earth is strictly speaking incognisable. It would be an error, however, to suppose that his position is close to philosophical agnosticism; Basil is far from that. I think that the last remark of the above quotation points to soteriology as well as to the question of the extent to which we can know things in this life[494].

§ IV.2.6 Appearance of new agenda

In the writings of Irenaeus we have already come across the idea that man's language reflects the carnal nature of human beings, and its limitations for expressing our thought (*AH* 2.28.4). Intriguingly, Basil's view of language

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[494] The question about what one, nevertheless, knows about a thing brings us back to Basil's preamble about the communicative nature of humankind. Due to the lack of information, any attempt here to reconstruct his view is hardly plausible. An attempt, however, has already been made by A. Losev, who adopts a very similar view in his А. Ф. *Лосев*, *Философия имени* (Moscow 1927), and *Самое само* and *Вещь и имя* (the dates of composition are unknown, first published in 1993, Moscow in *'Бытие, Имя, Космос'*.

takes exactly the same line. In his writings this idea becomes a focal point, and receives a thorough treatment. In fact, his preoccupation with linguistic issues is a fundamental one. It is plain that Basil's view of language has no relationship with the standard language theories of the time: compared to Plato or Aristotle the problem is posed in a totally different way. Name is not connected to essence ontologically, for many reasons; first of all it is said to be posterior to thought. Nor is it established by convention – Basil's metaphorical example of the ferry demonstrates that well enough. So, both theories are unacceptable for Basil.

In his detailed analysis of Stoic influences upon Basil's thought, D. Robertson arrived at a similar conclusion: the supposition that Basil is working with standard ideas about the relationship of speech to thought represented in the philosophical traditions known to him are incorrect[495]. It seems, however, that the problem D. Robertson is pointing to is more significant than he assumes. The results of his analysis are impressive; in fact in the final part of his dissertation he concludes that *'Basil's view of language and thought borrows nothing from the Peripatetic tradition, and any Stoic echoes are rather faint'*[496]. Nevertheless, I think that Basil's comprehension of the nature of language including a number of questions that appear immediately (such as, for instance, human rationality) can scarcely be explained as 'Stoicising Christianity' even 'in

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[495] D. Robertson, *op.cit.*, p. 133.
[496] D. Robertson, *op.cit.*, p. 138.

a very weak sense' (D. Robertson[497]). As can be observed from our analysis of Origen, Basil's point of view differs dramatically not only from Origen[498], but from the Alexandrian tradition that adopted the agenda of the *Cratylus*. Our initial presumption about classical Greek and Patristic interests in linguistics are still correct in respect of Basil; at the same time, one should note that Basil seems to be the first thinker who with his 'κατάμαθε τῆς γλώττης τὴν φύσιν' reformulated the question in a remarkable way. His acquaintance with Stoic philosophical and grammatical studies is beyond doubt, but none of the theories appear to determine Basil's own thought. It should also be taken into account that his view cannot be classified as a 'biblical view of language'. In fact it is Gregory who adopts Basil's theory for the exegesis of Biblical texts. As for Basil, he says in *AE*, i. 13 that *there is no doctrine of language in the Scriptures*. This statement, taken in the context of various attempts to deduce a 'correct' theory of language from the book of Genesis seems to be remarkable; his theory is not even based on a philosophical exegesis of, for example, *Gen.* 2:19-20, such as Clement and Origen made after Philo. Rather, his theory is based on something substantially new: a theological view of human nature in relation to the divine *oikonomia* of salvation. Furthermore, in the writings of Basil this agency is clearly the most influential one: it appears in all philosophical (*e.g.* the problem of rationality, the relationship between thought and uttered word) and purely scientific (*e.g.* the nature of thinking process and eyesight) questions. As we

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[497] D. Robertson, *op.cit.*, p. 130.
[498] as D. Robertson suggested – *op.cit.*, p. 130.

shall see in the next section, Gregory of Nyssa has demonstrated how this theory solves secondary questions, such as the problem of primordial tongue, variety of languages, exegesis of *Gen.* 2: 19-20, *etc.*

To what extent was it the Eunomean controversy that encouraged both Basil and Gregory to go this way? This question should, I think, be examined separately, because it requires more precise historical analysis. At first sight, however, it seems that the dispute with Eunomius had relatively small significance, at least for Basil. There is evidence to affirm that Basil's interests in such fascinating questions as the human thinking process, the nature of time, and eyesight, are wider and went far beyond the controversy.

IV.3 Eunomius' response to Basil: the *Apologia Apologiae.*

Eunomius' reply to Basil's criticism of his theory of names reflects an original analysis of linguistic issues in comparison with what we have seen of his first treatise, where the matter was merely mentioned. Nonetheless, even though the three books of the *Apologia Apologiae* (*AA*) were conceived to clarify his philosophical apparatus, it is evident that in the course of composing the *AA*, Eunomius found no difficulty in modifying and reformulating his initial doctrinal position. Thus, for instance, in his earlier writings he developed a

view that it is the unbegotten Father, who has created all things (and, therefore, names), whereas in the final form of his teaching, when the discourse took a more moderate turn, Eunomius reformulated his position as follows: the divine creative activity is associated with the Son.

> 'We affirm that the Son is not only existent, and above all existent things (οὐ μόνον ὄντα καὶ ὑπὲρ πάντα τὰ ὄντα), but we also call Him Lord and God, the Maker of every being, sensible and intelligible'.
>
> *CE* iii, 9;47-48 (J ii, p. 281)[499]

If now the Son is said to bring all things into existence, the divine providence (πρόνοια) is therefore 'entrusted' (ἐπιτέτραπται) by the Unbegotten Father to the only-begotten:

> '...in the creation of existent things He (the Son) has been entrusted by the Father with the construction of all things visible and invisible, and with the providential care over all that comes into being, inasmuch as the power allotted to Him from above is sufficient for the production of those things which have been constructed'
>
> *Ibid.*

Nevertheless, these changes, *a prima facie* considerable, did not dramatically affect his linguistic theory. In other words, it is unimportant for Eunomius and his theory who should be assumed as the creator of all things (and therefore of their names), *i.e.* the Father or the Son; his view of the nature of language remains the same.

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[499] *NPNF*, ser. ii, vol. v., English transl. of *CE* – William Moore & Henry Austin Wilson. The text of *Contra Eunomium*, ed. W. Jaeger, *Gregorii Nysseni opera* (Leiden, 1960).

One should bear in mind, however, that in spite of a seeming elaboration of the linguistic issues, the main preoccupation of Eunomius' *AA* was still to insist on two main statements, *viz.* that a difference in names designates a difference in essence, and that the name 'unbegotten' is a unique and absolute divine name. Theologically, Eunomius' theory of names, in spite of its novelty, was not a unique argument for the Christological problem: the Arian theology of the Son was evolved and defended regardless of the philosophical treatment of language before and after the appearance of the *Apologies*; furthermore, his polemical ideas did not overstep the limits of his church party. On the contrary, as shown in the third chapter, the φύσις-theory of names (*e.g.* Clement or Origen – especially in the light of his the latter's decisive refutation of the Aristotelian and Epicurean θέσις-hypothesis) did not necessarily presuppose an Arianist conclusion about the nature of the Logos. In other words, general theological argumentation for or against the divine status of the Son was held regardless of linguistic theories.

As our concern is now with Eunomius' theory of names, which emerged in more or less comprehensive form in the books of his *AA*, let us examine his claim that the adoption of the φύσις-theory inevitably presupposes a generate/created nature of the Son. As has already been pointed out, Eunomius' view on language at first sight reminds us of a number of Platonist elements, *i.e.* on the basis of some expressions and terms it can even be classified as a φύσις-hypothesis. At the same time, it would be an error to suppose that in the case of

Eunomius one is merely dealing with philosophical speculations inspired by the *Cratylus,* or based on a philosophical school such as the Stoa that was closed to the standard Platonist linguistic position. In this section I shall attempt to demonstrate that in spite of the seeming closeness of some expressions, including a direct accusation of Gregory, there are no secure and definite parallels between the standard linguistic theories of the time and Eunomius' treatment of language. So then, what was his theory of language all about?

§ IV.3.1 Eunomius' theory of names and the origin of language

The theory of Plato was to some extent based on a number of anthropomorphist suppositions (the gods' language, an original superhuman name-giver, the distinction between correct and incorrect names, *etc.*); in Eunomius' theory, we come across something that seems to be the same. God or the Son create things together with their names, Adam in his original perfection has guessed at and discovered these original correct (non-*epinoic*) names as distinct from *epinoic* and, therefore, misleading words 'that disappear with pronunciation'. These apparent similarities made Gregory of Nyssa (and the majority of modern scholars) suppose that the real source of Eunomius' theory is Plato's *Cratylus* (?) the *Seven letter* (?). But does Eunomius really employ the ideas of Plato? Gregory himself was not fully confident about that; at least, his arguments are hardly persuasive. The following classical passage from his

Contra Eunomium, often taken as a proof that Eunomius merely adopted Plato's view, can appear in a different light:

> Having perchance fallen in with Plato's *Cratylus*, or hearing from some one who had met with it, by reason, I suppose, of his own poverty of ideas, he attached that nonsense patchwise to his own, acting like those who get their bread by begging.
>
> *CE* ii, 404;13ff (J i, 344).

As a matter of fact, this guess is based on only one terminological similarity between ταῖς φύσεσι, κατὰ φύσιν and Cratylus' φύσις-theory of names. Moreover, Gregory is really eager to represent Eunomius as one who turns secular philosophy (*e.g.* Plato's theory) into 'a doctrine of the Church'[500]; this similarity still seems to be unconvincing.

So, to what extent is Gregory's accusation of Platonism relevant? Of course, for Gregory, as well as for us today, Eunomius' position emerges as ridiculous anthropomorphism:

> Now his (*i.e.* Eunomius') whole treatise is an ambitious attempt to show that God speaks after the manner of men...
>
> `*CE* ii, 343, 1ff (J i, p. 326)

But to give him his due, Eunomius often insisted on the exclusion of anthropomorphic ideas from the doctrine of the Supreme Deity such as the

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[500] *cf. CE* iii 8; 17f (J ii, p.217) where Gregory points to a verbal quotation made by Eunomius from Philo, *Legum allegoriarum*, iii, 175; in *CE* iii 33;8-34;10 (J ii, p.227) he accuses Eunomius of misuse of the *Phaedrus*, 245c. In neither case, however, is there any sign of anything significant: although Gregory presumes that his opponent is influenced by later Judaic tradition (*CE* iii, 8;26f J ii, p. 217), it seems that he merely develops an old idea of Basil's; Eunomius' ὁ θεός κρατεῖ τῆς ἰδίας δυνάμεως is just one of many unclear and primitive theological expressions – *CE* iii, 7,9;6f J ii, p. 218).

generation of the Son, which even in his *First Apology* was said to be foreign to anything human[501]. Moreover, his central arguments for the absolute and sole divinity of the Father were based on the fact that the Son is 'only-begotten'. Overall, Gregory's accusations of anthropomorphism are based on a philosophical analysis of Eunomius' theory, while Eunomius himself either did not see or did not believe that his expressions led inevitably to an anthropomorphist position. But strictly speaking, Eunomius' original/general theological premises are far from anthropomorphism in the classical sense of the term[502]; such a characteristic element of classical anthropomorphist doctrine as biblical theology is one the weakest aspects of Eunomius' theory. However, what allowed Gregory to make these accusations?

Eunomius' hypothesis of language allowed him to assume a very special, mysterious status of words; therefore, when he portrayed God as using names before the existence of man, there was nothing *anthropomorphic* about this – at least in his view - *because words are said to be of supernatural and therefore inhuman origin*. Although Gregory repeatedly emphasises that if the Creator of all things has provided them with suitable names, this position inevitably leads to an anthropomorphist doctrine, Eunomius' theory evolves in a diametrically opposite way: the ontological appearance of non-*epinoic* words takes priority over the creation of man; therefore, it is not Eunomius' anthropomorphic God

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501 *v.*, for example, his 'theology' of the names 'Father' and 'Son' given in *Liber Apol.*, 16-17 (R. Vaggione, *Eunomius' apologies*, pp. 52-57)

502 *cf.* G. van der Leew, *Anthropomorphismus RACh* 1 446-450, C. von Schönborn, *L'icône du Crist* (Fribourg 1976).

who speaks after the manner of man, but divine Providence, which in the course of creation first brings into existence all things together with their names:

> 'Before the creation of man God named germ, and herb, and grass, and seed, and tree, and the like, when by the word of His power He brought them severally into being'.
>
> *CE* ii, 197:20ff (J i, p.282)

Therefore, Eunomius believes (and this is one of his unfounded arguments) that

> 'A law of our nature,' he replies, 'teaches us that, in naming realities, the dignity of the names depends on the objects themselves and not on the will of those who employ them (οὐκ ἐν τῇ τῶν ὀνομαζόντων ἐξουσίᾳ κεῖσθαι τὴν τῶν ὀνομάτων ἀξίαν)'[503].
>
> *CE*, ii, 545 (J i, p. 385)

If so, in Eunomius' opinion the phonemes of non-*epinoic* words have been designed or determined and consequently attached to the created objects by the Son. Next, he argues that one (*i.e.* Basil) who disagrees with this position denies divine Providence and falls into atheism. Piety forces us to consider a φύσις-connexion between the original (non-*epinoic*) phoneme and an object:

> 'a holy thing, and most closely connected with the designs of Providence, that their sounds should be imposed upon realities from a source above us'[504]

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[503] transl. is slightly modified.
[504] *CE* ii, 546;5f (J i, p. 386): ὅσιόν φησιν εἶναι καὶ τῷ τῆς προνοίας νόμῳ προσφυέστατον ἄνωθεν ἐπικεῖσθαι τοῖς πράγμασι τὰς φωνάς. *ibid.*: '...as Eunomius says...it is certainly an unholy thing, and an unfitting thing, that these names should have been fitted to the things that are by any here below'.

Eunomius' explanation of how this theory works is no less than a culmination of his linguistic hypothesis, and at once allows us to define the extent of his learning. He says that all names lie in human nature like 'seeds':

> 'But the universal Guardian,' he says, 'thought it right to engraft these names in our minds by a law of His creation'[505].
>
> *Ibid.*

For the sake of space, it does not seem reasonable to summarise here Gregory's refutation of this view; one of his central arguments is that Eunomius' theory simply does not work when examined in a standard philosophical way (the variety of tongues, invention of new words, change of names in the Bible *et alia*).

It is indicative that Eunomius' speculations are still limited by a confined list of divine epithets (unbegotten, *etc.*); in his *AA* Eunomius' hypothesis is formulated as φύσις-theory, but the lack of *real* examples on the one hand, and purely 'theological' argumentation on the other, does not allow us *to identify his doctrine as philosophy*; so, what is his theory of names all about?

We now come across one of the most audacious suggestions of the dissertation. In what follows I shall argue that the real background to Eunomius' speculations about the nature of language and names has many features in common with what has already been observed in Gnostic writings, *viz.* a mythic, non-philosophical and (if one can say so) mystical perception of

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[505] *CE* ii, 548;18f (J i, p. 386): Ἀλλ᾽ ὁ πάντων κηδεμών, φησί, δημιουργίας νόμῳ ταῖς ἡμετέραις ἐγκατασπεῖραι ψυχαῖς ἐδικαίωσε.

language. Taking into account the complexity and novelty of this suggestion, it seems plausible to scrutinise more thoroughly some aspects of Eunomius' theological system as it appears in Gregory's quotations. Let us now analyse Eunomius' preoccupation with biblical texts in order to inquire to what extent his interpretations follow exegetical tradition.

§ IV.3.2 Eunomius' interpretation of biblical texts

In contrast to the *First Apology,* the three books of the *AA* contain much more biblical quotation, but the lack of erudition on the one hand and ignorance of the traditional exegesis on the other is striking. As we can guess from the numerous passages of the *CE*[506], Eunomius' suggestion was that in *Gen.* 1:19-20 Adam gave names to the creatures in conformity with what was already in his mind in the form of 'seeds'. Y. Edelshtein rightly pointed out that:

> *'For Eunomius, Adam as name-giver stands out against the background of entire human history; the depths of divine wisdom revealed to him are unapproachable for ordinary human beings. Therefore, the appearance of names is a phenomenon of hoary antiquity, because it is caused by the perfect condition of Adam, who lived in paradise, rather than the conditions of human nature determined by the Fall'*[507].

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[506] *e.g. CE* ii, 547-549 (J i, p. 386ff).
[507] Ю. Эдельштейн, *Проблемы языка,* p. 192.

Nevertheless, Y. Edelshtein makes an error when he tries to represent Eunomius' theory of names as in some measure held in common with Arianism[508].

Being extremely enthusiastic about rhetorical figures, Eunomius commits elementary errors of biblical theology, which make us assume that his knowledge of the Scriptures was less than satisfactory; the following accusation of Gregory is pertinent:

> 'Now if', says he, 'one of the Apostles or Prophets could be shown to have used these names of Christ, the falsehood would have something for its encouragement'. To what industrious study of the word of God on the part of our opponent do not these words bear testimony! 'None of the Prophets or Apostles has spoken of our Lord as Bread, or a Stone, or a Fountain, or an Axe, or Light, or a Shepherd'!
>
> *CE* ii, 347 (J i, p. 327)

It is obvious that at the stage of composing *AA*, Eunomius was merely ignorant of the titles applied to Christ in the corpus of the New Testament. In relation to his philosophical preoccupation the situation is somewhat similar.

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[508] *ibid.* In particular, Y. Edelstein's main mistake is that he does not see a substantial difference between Eunomius' theory of names and purely Platonic approach to the problem given by Eusebius and some other writers who followed Alexandrian tradition (Clement and Origen). As a matter of fact, in adopting of φύσις-theory there was nothing specifically Arianist.

§ IV.3.3 Eunomius' linguistic views and classical philosophical theories.

To begin with, the most dramatic aspect of Eunomius' discourse is that in spite of a smooth rhetorical style, Eunomius sounds very unclear for a philosophically prepared disputant or reader; furthermore, he was a theologian difficult to understand in the negative sense of the word. Thus, he often speaks of irrelevant matters, so that, for instance, Gregory often inquires what this or that speculation is about:

> 'What this newly-imported dictum of his has to do with his preceding argument, neither we nor any one else amongst reflecting people are able to understand'[509].

Eunomius' acquaintance with the philosophical agenda amounted to nothing more than a knowledge of names and some terms. In the exposition of his theory of names Eunomius never explains himself by means of standard philosophical terms. Analysing his expressions, one can discover that the only term employed by Eunomius to designate the relationship between name and object is ταῖς φύσεσι[510] or προσφυῶς[511]. He enjoys employing various philosophical and scientific terms like three-dimensional space, classical categories, and traditional logical notions, *et alia,* but apart from the

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[509] These remarks are extremely frequent in both Basil and Gregory's writings; *cf.* 'I would not, however, have mentioned this at all, if it had not placed a necessity upon me of proving our author's weakness both in thought and expression. As for all the passages from the inspired writings which he drags in, though quite unconnected with his object, formulating thereby a difference of immortality in angels and in men, I do not know what he has in his eye, or what he hopes to prove by them, and I pass them by' – *CE* ii, 590 (J i, p. 398).
[510] *CE* ii, 408;4 (J i, p. 345).
[511] *CE* ii 409; 23 (J i, p.345).

undisputable claim that all these should be excluded from the concept of Deity, his point is difficult to grasp. In his *CE* Gregory comes across the same problem as Basil: he quotes his opponent and recounts Eunomius' view of the nature of names, but he cannot really identify what kind of philosophical background is behind the speculations of his opponent. One of the clearest axioms of the *AA* is that name is related to object naturally; or in his own words, τὸ προσφυὲς ὄνομα[512].

Interestingly, in reply to Basil's attack Eunomius appears to repeat an accusation of Origen made against Celsus, that his opponent follows Aristotle and Epicurus[513]. But it does not really mean that he himself knowingly defends Plato's theory, as Origen seemed to do. Mutual accusations of the use of Aristotle[514] appear only in relation to the doctrine of Providence *i.e. regardless of his linguistic theory*!

His knowledge of Epicurus[515] could only provoke the derision of Gregory – ὢ πῶς ἐνόησε τὸν Ἐπίκουρον[516]. I think that it is impossible to trace any secure connection between Eunomius' theory of names and the various secular philosophical schools of the time. First of all, his theory of names that

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[512] *CE* ii 407;3 (J i, p.345).
[513] R. Vaggione, *Eunomius' apologies*, p. 108.
[514] R. Vaggione, *loc.cit.*; *CE* ii 411;4ff (J i, p.346).
[515] R. Vaggione, *loc.cit.*; presumably, what Eunomius could only mean is Epicurean idea of human power to develop primordial dialects of original language – *cf. Epist. to Herodotus* § 43-44.
[516] *CE* ii, 410;29 (J i, p. 345). Eunomius point is clear: he believed that Basil's idea that human soul has power to embody thoughts into words is derived from Epicurean theory.

appears in *AA* ii[517] is grounded on quasi-theological considerations: words existed before the creation of human beings because, first, the Scriptures portray God as speaking; second, because this linguistic position and this position only, in his opinion, does not contradict divine Providence[518].

Next, his general knowledge of philosophical science is surprisingly poor; although he often employs the word 'essence', the impression is that he does not understand its meaning: how can an essence be perfectly cognised by rational discourse? Gregory spent numerous pages in defining the matter for his opponent, and in demonstrating that Eunomius' expressions about the term 'essence' do not stand up to elementary analytical thinking. Eunomius appears to be unable to operate with material (*e.g.* body), immaterial (*e.g.* soul) and abstract (*e.g.* fear) entities; for this reason Gregory reproaches his epistemological optimism with basic philosophical inquiries. Hence, he repeats the ideas already spelled out by Basil, and presents them in a more comprehensive form. First, Eunomius in spite of his logical studies does not always clearly distinguish *nature* (φύσις) from *differentia specifica* (γνωρίσμα)[519]; second, his epistemology does not work in the sphere of material, immaterial, and abstract entities. Gregory poses a question about the nature of emotions: whether, for example, fear or passion has substance, or is unsubstantial, and

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[517] R. Vaggione, *Eunomius' apologies*, pp. 108-115.

[518] R. Vaggione, *ibid.*, p. 106.

[519] *cf. CE* ii, 104-105 (J i, p. 257): the term 'unbegotten' cannot *per se* designate essence, because it is an attribute.

what the mode of their existence is in the human soul[520]? For Gregory it is evident that his opponent is ignorant of analytical thinking; moreover, he even takes pains to teach Eunomius elementary dialectic:

> For if any one has made a mental analysis of that which is seen in its component parts, and, having stripped the object of its qualities, has attempted to consider it by itself, I fail to see what will have been left for investigation. For when you take from a body its colour, its shape, its degree of resistance, its weight, its quantity, its position, its forces, active or passive, its relation to other objects, what remains, that can still be called a body, we can neither see of ourselves, nor are we taught by Scripture. But how can he who is ignorant of himself take knowledge of anything that is above himself? And if a man is familiarized with such ignorance of himself, is he not plainly taught by the very fact not to be astonished at any of the mysteries that are without?
>
> *CE* ii, 115ff (J i, p. 259f)

Eunomius' speculations appear very bizarre whenever he comes across philosophical matters; at the same time, there is a strong impression that he simply did not understand Basil's philosophical argumentation (an example with the word 'grain', definition of '*epinoia*', *etc.*). Moreover, the problem of time and aeon is very illustrative. Eunomius' original view of time as caused by the 'motion of the stars' was rebutted by Basil on the basis of *Gen.* 1:14-15: stars came into existence after the creation of grass, herbs, and trees; how then stars

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[520] *CE* ii, 112ff (J i, p.259): 'For if these have an independent subsistence, then, as I have said, there is comprehended in ourselves not one soul, but a collection of souls, each of them occupying its distinct position as a particular and individual soul. But if we must suppose these to be a kind of emotion without subsistence, how can that which has no essential existence exercise lordship over us, having reduced us as it were to slave under whichsoever of these things may have happened to prevail? And if the soul is something that thought only can grasp, how can that which is manifold and composite be contemplated as such, when such an object ought to be contemplated by itself, independently of these bodily qualities?'

can cause time? The impression is that Eunomius did not have anything to say in reply, and tries his strength in the sphere of the much more complex problem of *aeon*. His expressions about the theological problem of '*aeons*' demonstrate that he simply does not comprehend Basil's distinction between ordinary time, the intermediate aeon, and the absolute timelessness of God, and accuses Basil in somewhat incredible makes no sense whatever[521]:

> Moreover, he says that we divide the ages (τοὺς αἰῶνας) into two parts, as if he had not read the words he quoted, or as if he were addressing those who had forgotten his own previous statements.
>
> *Ibid.*

His own treatment of *aeon* is polemical rather than philosophical. First, there is no connexion with standard concepts (*e.g.* with Plato or Aristotle[522]); secondly, as Gregory points out, Eunomius is clearly unaware of the biblical use of the word[523]. Instead of a definition, Eunomius bring forth a lemma in favour of the name *agennetos*:

> For if (says he) you say that they (*i.e. aeons*) are eternal, you will be Greeks, and Valentinians, and uninstructed: and if you say that they are generate, you will no longer be able to ascribe ungeneracy to God.
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> *CE* ii, 464;7ff (J i, p. 362)

The list of examples of Eunomius' treatment of philosophical notions that reveal his amateurish knowledge of the matter can be multiplied. In

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[521] *v. CE* ii, 455;19ff (J i, p. 359): παρὰ τῶν αἰώνων προξενεῖ Βασίλειος κατὰ πάντων τῶν γεννητῶν τῷ θεῷ τὰ πρεσβεῖα.
[522] *cf. e.g. Timaeus* 37d, 38a, *De cealo* I, 279a, 25-27; *Met.* Λ, 1072b, 29ff.
[523] *CE* ii, 460-463 (J i, p. 361).

relation to linguistic matters, the most evident and cogent argument is that of Gregory of Nyssa, who opens his criticism with an outline of the classical puzzles spelled out in the *Cratylus*. The reason why Gregory could apply such a simple remark as variety of tongues means that Eunomius' idea of the natural ontological connexion between name and essence was very far from standard Platonic theory; furthermore, it makes us think that Eunomius could hardly read Plato's dialogue. At any rate, his possession of information about the agenda of the *Cratylus* is as poor as his knowledge of the Epicurean theory. Otherwise, how could such an elementary argument as the following have been made against him?

> For we call it οὐρανός, the Hebrew calls it *samaeim*, the Roman *coelum*, other names are given to it by the Syrian, the Mede, the Cappadocian, the African, the Scythian, the Thracian the Egyptian: nor would it be easy to enumerate the multiplicity of names which are applied to Heaven and other objects by the different nations that employ them. Which of these, then, tell me, is the appropriate word wherein the great wisdom of God is manifested?
>
> *CE* ii 406;27ff (J i, p. 344)

Gregory could call Eunomius' theory of names 'solemn and profound philosophy' only ironically: his doctrine of names was in no way a 'philosophy', and this is why his theory represents a substantial difficulty for modern scholars. Intriguingly, Eunomius' view of names and language emerges in the *AA* not in a scientific form: his narration is far from an elementary critical analysis and in this sense has nothing to do with the standard agenda. Rather,

he gives an account of his theory in the form of short speculative statements and claims that it is something commonly shared amongst Christians. It would be an error, however, to consider his teaching as something crucially important for his theology. One should bear in mind that the theory of names is given in response to Basil's attack on the name 'unbegotten'. The real purpose of the *AA* was therefore an attempt to argue for the uniqueness of names in general, and thereby for the uniqueness of the term *agennetos* in particular. Perhaps, Eunomius realised the lack of prospects for this theory, and avoids the discussion in his last *Ekthesis*.

§ IV.3.4 A theory of names or a pre-philosophical mythology of language?

To sum up these numerous and incoherent utterances about names, let us now outline what we do know about Eunomius' view. Leaving aside meaningless definitions of divine names and qualities like

> 'Being incorruptible without beginning, He is ungenerate without end, being so called absolutely, and independently of aught beside Himself'
>
> *CE* ii, 537;10f (J i, p. 383)

I would like to draw attention to the most crucial idea of his theory. First of all the names are considered to be imprinted in the human mind in the form of mysterious 'seeds'. The names, therefore, pre-existed the creation of Adam, who is thought to be a passive reproducer of the determined sounds. Next, as

shown above, Eunomius separated all the words of human language into two groups. In the *AA* he proceeds from the premise that all the non-*epinoic* words of human language are given by God in the act of creation *ex nihilo*:

> But by these, says he, as by laws publicly promulgated, it is shown that God made names (nouns) exactly suited to the nature of the things which they represent (τὸ τὸν θεὸν ταῖς φύσεσι πρεπούσας καὶ καταλλήλους ποιεῖσθαι τὰς κλήσεις).
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> *CE* ii, 408;12 J i, p. 345.

Therefore, one who denies this premise at once should reject the dogma of creation *ex nihilo* – what Eunomius means here is nothing but the phonetic appearance of a word:

> Eunomius, however, adds to his previous statement that the beginnings of creation testify to the fact that names (τὰς φωνὰς) were given by God to the things which He created; but I think that it would be superfluous to repeat what I have already sufficiently set forth as the result of my investigations;
>
> *CE* ii 443 (J i p. 356)

According to the reconstruction of R. Vaggione, as a case in point Eunomius referred to, but rejected, the commonly held view that ancient poets gradually enriched human speech with new words. Similarly, if the saints are not said by the Scriptures to have invented new words, one should admit that the appearance of words was inseparable from their creation; otherwise, how was God able to *communicate* with his servants?

> But, says he, since God condescends to commune with His servants, we may consequently suppose that from the very

> beginning He enacted words appropriate to things (ἐξ ἀρχῆς τὰς προσφυεῖς τῷ πράγματι τεθεῖσθαι προσηγορίας).
>
> *CE* ii, 417;6-10 (J i, p. 348)

Taking into account his attitude to pagan philosophy, which was in every respect negative, one should note that Eunomius' approach to the matter is from the beginning an amateur attempt to define the nature of names. The conclusive distinction proposed by J. Daniélou about 'scientific' (Gregory and Basil) and 'mystical' (Aetius and Eunomius) merely fails to explain the matter. In the first instance, in Eunomius' theory one can see an eclectic synthesis of an unambiguously mythological perception of names (when the lack of exactness is added to the notion of Providence) and a purely rationalist comprehension of the general theological agenda:

> 'But we, in agreement with holy and blessed men; affirm that the mystery of godliness (εὐσεβείας μυστήριον) does not consist in venerable names, nor in the distinctive character of customs and sacramental tokens (ἐθῶν καὶ μυστικῶν συμβόλων), but in exactness of doctrine (δογμάτων ἀκριβείᾳ)'
>
> *CE* iii, 8, 54;20ff (J ii, p. 284)

Secondly, the position of Basil and Gregory is often for a much more mystical treatment of divine names and the mysteries of the Church. My suggestion is that the distinction 'scientific' – 'mysterious' is inadequate because in the case of Eunomius we seem to be dealing with a much more complex hypothetical construction.

Gregory often states that in Eunomius' circles the firm belief that the divine essence is grasped and cognised in the name *agennetos* was in fact set off against the traditional liturgical practice of veneration of the divine name[524]. This unaccountable contradiction of Eunomius' theology should be taken into consideration more seriously for the general analysis of his doctrine. But due to the limitation of our agenda here, it should be pointed out that his theory of names is attached to the first, *viz.* non-rationalist sphere of his discourse, and therefore, should be treated here accordingly.

What has been found in Eunomius' theory of names has almost nothing to deal with standard philosophical views on the nature of names, which Eunomius appears to be totally unaware of. It is astonishing that in Eunomius' teaching on the nature of names, the main arguments strongly remind us of the treatment of language in the Gnostic schools. Just as in the Gnostic works the question about the nature of language is posed regardless of elementary philosophical inquiries: the variety of tongues, different phonemes for the same things, the problem of synonymy, *etc*. Similarly, he eliminates language as a phenomenon; his speculations revolve around names or to be more precise phonemes, but once again regardless of so crucial a fact as the variety of phonemes in different tongues.

We already discussed the remark of J. Daniélou about the relations between Aetius and the philosophical school of Iamblichus (Julian the

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Apostate). However, Aetius and Eunomius' involvement in Gnostic circles is much better indicated by the sources. In addition, there are many more theoretical parallels between Eunomius' teaching on names and the Gnostic mythic perception of language. The systematic neglect of variety of tongues, which we can only note rather than explain, is a common feature to both the Eunomius and Gnostic schools. Similarly, the typical rationalist pathos that led some early Gnostic authors to docetism, and later on considered martyrdom for the name 'Jesus' as a theological absurdity (which Origen argued against) can be still traced in Eunomius' treatment of liturgical rites and the sacraments. Another claim that in the teaching of Eunomius one can trace distinct Gnostic influence is related to the very scheme of argumentation given by Basil and spelled out by Gregory of Nyssa. Before turning to the last part of this chapter, I would like to draw attention to the following facts. Gregory of Nyssa presents a very coherent, well-conceived theory of language, whose main concern is to rebut his opponent; but the very structure of his arguments strongly reminds one of Irenaeus and his anti-Gnostic chapters. Let us not focus on the response of Gregory.

IV.4 Gregory of Nyssa: elaboration of Basil's theory

ἃ δὲ ἡμεῖς ὑπολαμβάνομεν περὶ τῆς τῶν ὀνομάνων χρήσεως, ἐν τοῖς κατόπιν εἰρήκαμεν, ὅτι τῶν πραγμάτων ἐχόντων ὡς ἔχει φύσεως τὰς ἑρμηνευτικὰς τῶν ὄντων φωνὰς ἡ <ἐν>τεθεῖσα παρὰ τοῦ θεοῦ τῇ φύσει ἡμῶν λογικὴ δύναμις εὕρατο.

CE ii, 395;28ff (J i, p. 341-342)

Gregory of Nyssa and the doctrine of language that emerges in his writings has already been examined by modern scholarship; the most thorough examination of the subject is by B. Salmona in his *Ontologia e logic il tema del linguaggio in Gregorio di Nissa*. It has already been mentioned in the 'Introduction' that in spite of a remarkable and thorough examination, B. Salmona represents Gregory's linguistic teaching as an independent theory of his own, *i.e.* with no relation to Basil. I attempted above to reconstruct the extent of Basil's interest in linguistic matters; as for Gregory and his *magnum opus* the *Contra Eunomium,* one should bear in mind that Gregory's main aim was to defend Basil's *Adversus Eunomium* rather than to put forward a new theory of his own (as often presupposed by scholars). Even when the discussion shifts to relatively new topics (*e.g.* the problem of an original tongue), Gregory's argumentation appears as an integral part, or rather an inference from, Basil's numerous drafts. Although B. Salmona in his analysis covers almost all the works of Gregory of Nyssa that have relevance to linguistic issues, the question

of the origin of the theory as well as its significance and outstanding novelty for the time seems to be left open.

In this section I shall focus on the material found in the various books of the *CE,* because one of my concerns will be to sketch the extent of his dependence on the ideas of Basil. We already observed that in a general way Eunomius' teaching was already shown to be, philosophically speaking, a very dissatisfactory theory. Here I shall outline Gregory's theory with minimal references to his opponent; the main reason for doing so is that in his *CE* Gregory of Nyssa has demonstrated an interesting and rare tactic: he not only argues against the premises that have already been put forward for discussion, but often scrutinises Eunomius' expressions in order to guess beforehand, and refute in advance, all possible quasi-philosophical conclusions and references to the Scriptures, which he anticipates might be used in support. It is likely that this tactic comes from his use of rhetoric, and the ploy of disarming an opponent by being always one step ahead. In a passage opening with 'perhaps, our new Demosthenes will appeal to '*And God said, Let there be light*' or '*In the beginning was the Word*' or 'we could have said much more about so profound a subject, but unfortunately our concern is to refute this nonsense, however...', Gregory often shifts from the dispute to a positive investigation of the subject. In fact, this passage reveals his enormous contribution to the theory of language, which I suggest could be defined as the Cappadocian theory.

There are two initial premises with which Gregory of Nyssa begins. First of all, a view of human speech as a distinctive feature of man's nature[525]:

> If, then, the creation is of a later date than its Creator, and man is the latest in the scale of creation, and if speech is a distinctive characteristic of man (ἴδιον δὲ τοῦ ἀνθρώπου ὁ λόγος), and verbs and nouns are the component elements of speech, and 'ungeneracy' is a noun...
>
> *CE* ii, 164 (J i, p. 272)

The second postulate is of special significance. A word as such is nothing but an exclusive phenomenon of human existence and presence. We have already encountered Basil's speculation as to what kind of communication people would have if they were not corporeal; Gregory repeats this idea, and even enlarges the principle: in his thought, *any* possible philosophical or mythological deviation from an anthropological view of words, either into the sphere of a 'correct divine language' (Plato's *Cratylus*) or to the pre-mundane, pre-cosmic names, or such a vexed point of the Eunomean controversy as non-*epinoic* words assigned by Providence, is nothing but ἢ γραώδης μῦθος ἢ κραιπαλώντων ὄνειρος[526]. Words, and therefore language, exist for one reason

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[525] Y. Edelshtein (*Проблемы языка*, p. 163f) considered this Patristic theme merely as an adoption of a Classical philosophical (Stoic) idea, which in its turn belongs to more general view on the hierarchy of beings (material things, plants, animals, humans, *etc.*). The latter couple of relates to each other as following: on comparison to animals, human distinctive characteristic is speech. It seems, however, that these relatively similar conclusions come from different background; for Christian theology this structural ascension appears to be based on the first chapter of the *Genesis*, which portrays God to create man *after* plants and animals and in accordance with his image and likeness (the idea of human personhood is always emphasised – *cf.* Greg. Nyss., *De opificio hominis*, 8; Nemesius, *De natura hominis*, 1).

[526] 'an old wives' fib or a dream of not sober' – *CE* ii, 290;8 (J, i p. 312).

and one reason only, that otherwise human beings cannot share their thoughts with each other:

> But if it were in any way possible by some other means to lay bare the movements of thought (τὰ τῆς διανοίας κινήματα), abandoning the formal instrumentality of words, we should converse with one another more lucidly and clearly, revealing by the mere action of thought the essential nature of the things which are under consideration. But now, by reason of our inability to do so, we have given things their special names, calling one 'heaven', another 'earth', and so on, and as each is related to each, and acts or suffers, we have marked them by distinctive names, so that our thoughts in regard to them may not remain uncommunicated and unknown.
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> *CE* ii, 391;19 (J i, p. 340)

§ IV.4.1 Word as an exclusively human artefact

Normal human speech consists of words; nouns, verbs, *etc.* are supposed to be articles of speech. Gregory is very clear about the distinction between inarticulate thinking (which has not yet become inner speech) and ordinary speech that has been uttered. But whichever word is taken for analysis, regardless of what the word (name) designates, regardless of the manner in which it is manifested (uttered or written), regardless of which tongue or dialect it belongs to, *etc.* it is necessarily and unconditionally a human artefact, rather than something that comes from above. There are no words of any other kind or, put differently, there are otherwise no words at all, words are impossible.

Gregory's view of words is complex; nevertheless, the distinction between thought and utterance, inner word and outer word, spoken word and written word, *etc.* is defined with remarkable philosophical lucidity and precision. Perhaps, on the basis of 2 *Cor.* 3:6 (*'for the written code kills'*)[527] Gregory considers the phoneme as a primary mode of manifestation and the graphical appearance of word as a secondary one, but this classification is not very significant for him[528]. Thus, a word is in the first instance something phonetically given in its perfect and complete form; but there are some conditions for a word to be uttered phonetically. All of them belong to the complexity of our nature; bodily factors are of special significance:

> For our speech is uttered by the organs of speech, the windpipe, the tongue, the teeth, and the mouth, the inhalation of air from without and the breath from within working together to produce the utterance. For the windpipe, fitting into the throat like a flute, emits a sound from below; and the roof of the mouth, by reason of the void space above extending to the nostrils, like some musical instrument, gives volume from above to the voice. And the cheeks, too, are aids to speech, contracting and expanding in accordance with their structural arrangement, or propelling the voice through a narrow passage by various movements of the tongue, which it effects now with one part of itself, now with another, giving hardness or softness to the sound which passes over it by contact with the teeth or with the palate. Again, the service of the lips contributes not a little to the result, affecting the voice by

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[527] *cf. CE* ii, 199;6 J i, p. 283.

[528] In general, for Gregory of Nyssa spoken and written words are roughly speaking similar, because they are embodied into 'material' (sounds or graphical symbols).

> the variety of their distinctive movements, and helping to shape the words as they are uttered.
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> *CE* ii, 200;13ff (J i, p. 283)[529]

To sum up his numerous remarks about the appearance of words, we can outline the following essential conditions. First, there must be two human beings, a speaker and a hearer. As they are both intellectual creatures, one can share his thoughts (the main purpose of speech) with the other by means of *material* phenomena, either by means of sounds, or by means of writing. Each mode of expression in its turn requires conditions of the natural world determined by the space-time continuum, *e.g.* in the case of sounds one needs air, time, three-dimensional space and so on. It should be, perhaps, noted that Basil's main point still obtains: the sole purpose of language is the function of communication. What Gregory does, however, is to make a philosophical generalisation: the expression of thoughts linguistically (*i.e.* by means of uttered or written speech) is a sole, perfect, and self-sufficient way. Apart from that, he remarks, under certain conditions one can express thoughts even by glance or gesticulation; the glance or gesture in this case imitates ordinary verbal expressions:

> Rather let us say, that as we indicate to the deaf what we want them to do, by gestures and signs, not because we have no voice of our own, but because a verbal

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[529] The criticism of Eunomius' 'words without sound, and declaration without language, and announcement without voice' is omitted for being rather uninteresting.

> communication would be utterly useless to those who cannot hear.
>
> *CE* ii, 242;2ff (J i, p. 297)

But according to his philosophy, this way of communication is not yet 'language'; it is only a reflection or imitation of language, its existence is determined by the presence of the original 'masterpiece':

> But just as we cannot call a man deaf who converses with a deaf man by means of signs, – his only way of hearing, – so we must not suppose speech in God because of His employing it by way of accommodation in addressing man.
>
> *CE* ii, 421 (J i, p. 349)

Being man's artefact, language reflects complex human nature in full; therefore, the limitations of man's nature inevitably emerge in linguistic phenomena. This theme is an interesting instance of how Gregory's theory differs from standard secular philosophical science. Language is not conceived as descending in a line from the divine tongue to human dialects and, consequently to animals, plants, *etc.* Strictly speaking, celestial entities communicate without language at all, because they exist in *aeon* and they share their thoughts in silence[530]. The sounds uttered by some (terrestrial) animals, as

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[530] *cf. CE* ii, 390;15ff (J i, p. 340): ...'nor can the incorporeal nature of supramundane powers name God by voice and tongue. For, in the case of immaterial intellectual nature, the mental energy is speech which has no need of material instruments of communication. For even in the case of human beings, we should have no need of using words and names if we could otherwise inform each other of our pure mental feelings and impulses. But (as things are), inasmuch as the thoughts which arise in us are incapable of being so revealed, because our nature is encumbered with its fleshly surrounding, we are obliged to express to each other what goes on in our minds by giving things their respective names, as signs of their meaning'– *v.ad.fin.*. In fact, Gregory merely repeats Basil's ideas.

well as verbal exposure of man to them are not language, even though one can use human words to direct cattle:

> For we ourselves are accustomed to direct brute beasts by clucking and whistling and the like, and yet this, by which we reach their ears, is not our language, but we use our natural speech in talking to one another, while, in regard to cattle, some suitable noise or sound accompanied with gesture is sufficient for all purposes of communication.
>
> *Ibid*[531].

Although some animals, which are gifted with a 'more perfect soul'[532], can express their psychic movements by means of sounds, they are still considered to be dumb (ἄλογοι) without exception, because an animal is not a human person (made *ad imaginem et similitudinem* of the Creator), it cannot *understand* the meaning of words by definition, it is directed by human word just as it can be directed by a whip. Inasmuch as an animal does not comprehend words, our words appear to be empty sounds that only affect and stimulate its acquired instincts. Human sounds can be repeated by some birds, such as starlings, ravens, or parrots; nevertheless, it is a simulation of speech; just as a 'dancing' monkey or a bear 'dressed as a judge' can be trained to *simulate* human behaviour[533].

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[531] For summary of Patristic view on animal communication, *v.* Edelshtein, Y. *Проблемы языка.* p. 176f.

[532] *cf.* Basilius, *Homiliae in hexaemeron*, 8;1 (ed. S. Giet, *Basile de Césarée Homélies sur l'hexaéméron*, SC 26 (Paris 1968).

[533] *cf.* his story about a monkey seen in the Alexandrian circus (*Ad Armonium*, 1); a very similar passages with interesting story about a 'smart and crooked-beak parrot' – *Greg. Naz.*, *Praecepta ad virgines* (*PG* 37, 627: 11ff); birds do not speak, they just filch (κλέπτουσιν) our sounds so amazingly that 'a parrot can even trick our ear'.

The example of the parrot is especially interesting; for the Cappadocian Fathers a topic such as the articulation of human speech (in comparison with the inarticulate noises of animals) was bound up with the concept of '*majestic dignity*' (τὸ τῆς βασιλείας ἀξίωμα) of man, whose bodily form was designed by the Creator 'to release' man's acoustic organs to generate articulate sounds of speech[534]. Later on in this section we shall return to this theme while treating his exegesis of *Gen* 2:19-20 and his most notorious theological formula that:

> ...neither did Adam make the animals, nor did God name them, but the creation was the work of God, and the naming of the things created was the work of man.
>
> *CE* ii, 412;17f (J i, p. 346)

However, it appears clear that the linguistic position of Gregory differs from Plato and all the variants of the φύσις-theory. At the same time, it would be an error to assume, as scholars often have, that Gregory merely followed the Aristotelian position; the following passage might appear Aristotelian:

> Wherefore all things that exist substantially are from God; but, for our guidance, all things that exist are provided with names to indicate them. And if any one say that such names were imposed by the arbitrary usage of mankind, he will be guilty of no offence against the scheme of Divine Providence (ταῦτα δὲ κατὰ τὸ ἀρέσκον ταῖς τῶν ἀνθρώπων συνηθείαις γίνεσθαί τις εἰπὼν οὐδὲν εἰς τὸν τῆς προνοίας πλημμελήσει λόγον.). For we do not say that the nature of things was of human invention, but only their names.
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> *CE* ii, 283; 26ff (J i, p. 309)

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[534] *v.* Greg.Nyss., *De opificio hominis*, 1-11.

However, the extent of his disagreement with Aristotle in the context of Gregory's comprehension of the human thinking process appears even more marked.

§ IV.4.2 Language and the thinking process: the words καθάπερ σήμαντρά τινα and ὥσπερ σκιαὶ τῶν πραγμάτων

The roots of his account of the human thinking process in relation to language can only be understood in the context of the Basil's ***Homilia in illud: 'Attende tibi ipsi'***: the philosophical inquiry into the nature of thoughts is faced with an insoluble problem, *viz.* how thoughts come in to existence in our soul, which is of a twofold nature (*i.e.* it is split between *aeon* and *time*)? How can one distinguish *'movements of thought'* from a formed perfect *idea,* which is said to exist in time? This epistemological distinction appears in *CE* in an interesting way. First, Gregory rejects Eunomius' concept of words-as-seeds imprinted or implanted in the human mind[535]; our knowledge of things comes neither from these *'seeds'*, nor from words themselves, because in this case our cognition of the natural world would have been similar to language study, and the God of the Bible would have been portrayed as a tutor who taught Adam and Eve grammar. The absurdity of this position appears immediately if one follows it logically: if, epistemologically, knowledge come from words, it would have

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[535] *CE* ii, 392ff (J i, p.340ff).

been absolutely impossible for man to know something unless he studied in the manner one learns Hebrew, Greek or Latin words. Strictly speaking, insists Gregory, our cognition of things is realised regardless of words, because it can come from faculties – *i.e.* visual perception, *etc.*; ultimately, however, the matter is concerned with the phenomenon of human rationality as a divine gift:

> But we maintain that He Who made all things in His wisdom, and Who moulded this living rational creature, by the simple fact of His implanting reason in his nature, endowed him with all his rational faculties[536].

Inasmuch as the governing factor of cognition exists inside us rather than outside (as for example words), theoretically we do not need words to acquire the knowledge of things, because each of us already has what Gregory calls, the *'domestic criterion'*[537].

Nevertheless, it would be wrong to assume that Gregory underestimates the epistemological rôle of words, and argues for their absolute irrelevance. On the contrary, his comprehension of the human thinking process is doubly impressive; he employs one of the principle dialectical axioms that before any kind of operation with something one should distinguish this 'something' from something else, or what Plato would call the 'one' and ' the other' (τό τε ἓν καὶ

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[536] *CE* ii, 400;7f (J i, p. 343): ἡμεῖς δέ φαμεν ὅτι ὁ τὰ πάντα ἐν σοφίᾳ ποιήσας καὶ τὸ λογικὸν τοῦτο πλάσμα ζῳοπλαστήσας μόνῳ τῷ ἐφεῖναι τῇ φύσει τὸν λόγον πᾶσαν τὴν δύναμιν τὴν λογικὴν ἐναπέθετο.

[537] *CE* ii, 401;19f (J i, p. 343): οἴκοθεν ἔχοντες ἑκαστου τῶν κατ᾽ αἴσθησιν ἐγγινομένων ἡμῖν τὸ κριτήριον·

τἄλλα)[538]. The epistemological function of words that the human intellect forces them to have is simply to distinguish one notion from another (ultimately, to distinguish τό ἕν from τἄλλα); this process takes place as follows:

> And so, again, we maintain that the intellectual faculty, made as it was originally by God, acts thenceforward by itself when it looks out upon realities, and that there be no confusion in its knowledge, affixes some verbal note to each several thing as a stamp to indicate its meaning[539].

In the opinion of Gregory of Nyssa this is exactly what the biblical text of *Gen.* 2:19-20 tells us about the naming of animals. Gregory's accusation is that his opponent bases his arguments only on syllogisms, whereas for Basil, and for Gregory himself, the real criterion is that the teaching of the Scriptures; this is not so, however. Although, this remark makes some sense in the context of the early stage of the controversy (in relation to the *Syntagmation* and the *First Apology*), the details of the latter stage of the dispute (the *AA* and the *CE* ii) testify to something totally different. It seems that Eunomius had more appeals in his polemical arsenal to the authority of the Bible than Gregory of Nyssa[540]. We have already observed that Eunomius' attitude to the secular philosophical treatment of language was worse than negative; his knowledge of it was

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[538] *v. e.g. Parm.*, 135d-166c.

[539] *CE* ii, 401;20f (J i, p.343): οὕτω φαμὲν καὶ τὴν διανοητικὴν τῆς ψυχῆς δύναμιν τοιαύτην παρὰ τοῦ θεοῦ γενομένην ἀφ᾽ ἑαυτῆς τὸ λοιπὸν κινεῖσθαι καὶ πρὸς τὰ πράγματα βλέπειν καὶ ὡς ἂν μηδεμίαν σύγχυσιν ἡ γνῶσις πάθοι, καθάπερ σήμαντρά τινα τὰς διὰ τῶν φωνῶν ἐπισημειώσεις ἑκάστῳ τῶν πραγμάτων ἐπιβάλλειν.

[540] Exegesis of the biblical texts, touched upon in the course of the Eunomean controversy received a good and through treatment in one of the chapters of A. Meredith's thesis; so it is hardly reasonable to examine the texts over again here. A few general remarks should, however, be made.

similarly superficial. With the exception of schoolboyish lemmas and syllogisms, he predominantly relied on the *literal*[541] interpretation of biblical passages such as 'καὶ εἶπεν ὁ θεός', 'καὶ ἐκάλεσεν ὁ θεὸς' κτλ. Clearly, it was easy for Gregory to refute Eunomius' purely anthropomorphist interpretations in the sense that the Supreme Deity cannot be portrayed as speaking like a man; similarly, the discussion of *John* 1:1 is of no interest.

The exegesis of *Gen.* 2:19-20, however, is an interesting case: Gregory shows a much more philosophical approach than his opponent. In *CE* ii, 402 (J i, p. 343) he gives his own theological version of *Gen.* 2:19-20, *viz.* Adam in paradise affixes verbal utterances to each different animal as a stamp to indicate its meaning. The text of *Gen.* 2:19-20 was obviously hotly disputed by both sides. We can now learn from the reconstruction of Eunomius' texts that he argued for something that provoked Gregory of Nyssa to accuse him of following Plato, and the *Cratylus* in particular. The extent of Eunomius' knowledge of Plato's dialogue has already been discussed: it is highly unlikely that Eunomius was actually influenced by the Platonic theory of language to a determinable extent. He could probably insist on two things: the *divine* origin of his non-*epinoic* words, and a φύσις-nexus between ὄνομα and οὐσία. The core of the disagreement is intriguing: although it is impossible to determine whether Eunomius actually follows the Philonic exegesis of *Gen.* 2:19-20, his train of thought still reminds us of the Alexandrian classical variant, which was

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[541] Taking onto account his Alexandrian background, this fact is especially unexpected.

observed (of course, in a much more sophisticated form) in Clement, Eusebius and some other authors. What Gregory of Nyssa does is something diametrically opposed, perhaps deliberately[542] rejecting the Alexandrian traditional interpretation of *Gen.* 2:19-20. The exegesis he puts against Eunomius is remarkable and surprising in every respect. There is no connexion between the primordial, perfect nature of Adam and the 'natural correctness' of names he gave to the animals. Rather, Adam names animals just as bath-house attendants name their newly invented tools; his power to name animals is equal to our power to name things – any sacral implications are, in fact, removed. Ultimately, Adam appears to be neither the real 'inventor' of language, nor is he identified with Plato's superhuman ὀνοματουργός; nor he is represented as one who has grasped and comprehended the sense of the objects that he was naming.

There is a strong impression that *Gen.* 2:19-20 did not play a very insignificant rôle for Gregory. He just reinterprets the text so that it could fit the hypothesis of language he holds, and easily casts aside the commonly held interpretation of this biblical passage; his exegesis of *Gen.* 2:19-20 is just one of

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[542] *cf.* his general distrust and disagreement with Philo *CE* iii, 7:8-9 (J ii, p. 217).

many examples of the new method which appears everywhere in *CE*[543]. Although the question of his exegetical methodology seems to be sufficiently clear, it would be an error to suppose that the application of this new method was limited only to the sphere of biblical exegesis.

Let us, turn back, however to Gregory's view of the human thinking process. First of all, Gregory makes a distinction between the sphere of thinking and the sphere of its verbal utterance. His main point is that Eunomius confounds these two spheres; all his 'ontological' applications, therefore, are determined by this confusion. Human ideas exist only between two intellects, whereas their verbal utterances are of secondary significance. Otherwise (*i.e.* without an audience), words are nothing but rending the air:

> For we do not keep undissolved, like those who make pots or bricks, what we utter with our voice in the mould of the speech which we form once for all with our lips, but as soon as one speech has been sent forth by our voice, what we have said ceases to exist.
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> *CE* ii, 44;1ff (J i, p. 239)

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[543] *cf.* for instance his interpretation of *Ps* 109:1 in *CE* ii, 394;16ff (J i, p. 341): 'But supramundane and immaterial nature being free and independent of bodily envelopment, requires no words or names either for itself or for that which is above it, but whatever utterance on the part of such intellectual nature is recorded in Holy Writ is given for the sake of the hearers, who would be unable otherwise to learn what is to be set forth, if it were not communicated to them by voice and word. And if David in the Spirit speaks of something being said *'by the Lord to the Lord'*, it is David himself who is the speaker, being unable otherwise to make known to us the teaching of what is meant except by interpreting by voice and word his own knowledge of the mysteries given him by Divine inspiration'.

Just as for our own thinking process formed words are distinguishable 'stamps' (σήμαντρα), they are vehicles of meaning for our audience. Only materialised in sound (or written symbol) can a mental concept reach a hearer.

> ...even if without speech we describe in writing our mental conceptions (τὰς τῆς ψυχῆς ἐννοίας), it is not as though the substantial objects of our thoughts (τὰ μὲν ὑφεστῶτα τῶν νοημάτων) will acquire their significance from the letters, while the non-substantial will have no part in what the letters express. For whatever comes into our mind, whether intellectually existing, or otherwise, it is possible for us at our discretion to store away in writing. And the voice and letters are of equal value for the expression of thought, for we communicate what we think by the latter as well as by the former...For in the case of all speech uttered by means of sound, the passage of the breath indeed which conveys the voice is towards its kindred element, but the sense of the words spoken is engraved by hearing on the memory of the hearer's soul, whether it be true or false.
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> *CE* ii, 46;16-49;1 (J i, p. 239f)

Consequently, words do not exist 'ontologically' beyond human communication, or independently of the human thinking process. Furthermore, there is no philosophical reason for Eunomius' classification of words by their origin (*epinoic* or non-*epinoic*) – every single word, whether significant or meaningless, is always the result of our differential thinking process; they merely reflect our ideas, both correct and incorrect.

Gregory's epistemological view is entirely based on the two axioms spelled out very clearly by Basil. The sphere of human cognitive function has a number of limitations; thus, any knowledge of something is always relative. The first class of limitations are, as one might say, of an external character;

according to Basil the Great and Gregory of Nyssa, when we maintain that we know what is, *e.g.* the sun, it simply means that we first know something about the object, and are able to tell it from anything else, *e.g.* the moon or the earth. Moreover, in the course of the observation (incidentally, visual perception) and rational analysis we can increase and specify our 'knowledge' of the sun; the way to perfection of our knowledge is endless and perpetual. In other words, we shall never exhaust the problem, and we shall never reach final and ultimate knowledge of the essence of the sun, at least in this life[544]:

> But, boasting as they do that they know these things, let them first tell us about the things of inferior nature; what they think of the body of the heavens, of the machinery which conveys the stars in their eternal courses, or of the sphere in which they move; for, however far speculation may proceed, when it comes to the uncertain and incomprehensible it must stop.
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> *CE* ii, 72ff (J i, p. 248)

Similarly, (and this is, so to speak, an internal limitation) one cannot claim absolute knowledge of the sun or expect to reach it, because we are also ignorant of the nature of our thinking process, or of nature, or of eyesight, *etc.*, that our soul is responsible for[545]:

> For who is there who has arrived at a comprehension of his own soul? Who is acquainted with its very essence,

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[544] *CE* ii, 67-71 *ad.fin.* (J ii, pp. 245-248).

[545] Due to the polemical context this epistemology was basically to argue against Eunomius' absolute cognition of the Supreme Deity in the name *agennetos*. In the limits of this section I cannot discuss more thoroughly all major philosophical inferences that follow from the Cappadocian theory of the relative cognition of an object; suffice it to say that this is an outstanding and unique theory which stands out against the philosophical background of the time – *cf.* an interesting treatment of *is*-copula ('*isness*') and its unknowability in *CE* ii, 57-64 (J ii, pp. 181-184), given by R. Mortley, *op.cit.*, vol. 2, p. 180f.

whether it is material or immaterial, whether it is purely incorporeal, or whether it exhibits anything of a corporeal character; how it comes into being, how it is composed, whence it enters into the body, how it departs from it, or what means it possesses to unite it to the nature of the body; how, being intangible and without form, it is kept within its own sphere, what difference exists among its powers, how one and the same soul, in its eager curiosity to know the things which are unseen, soars above the highest heavens, and again, dragged down by the weight of the body, falls back on material passions, anger and fear, pain and pleasure, pity and cruelty, hope and memory, cowardice and audacity, friendship and hatred, and all the contraries that are produced in the faculties of the soul? Observing which things, who has not fancied that he has a sort of populace of souls crowded together in himself, each of the aforesaid passions differing widely from the rest, and, where it prevails, holding lordship over them all, so that even the rational faculty falls under and is subject to the predominating power of such forces, and contributes its own co-operation to such impulses, as to a despotic lord?

CE ii, 107ff (J i, p. 258)[546]

We have already come across these epistemological settings in the writings of Basil; Gregory simply repeats them word for word. Overall, however, both Basil and Gregory were far from setting a semi-agnostic view-point against their over-optimistic opponent. What they both suggested was in fact a very special theory of knowledge, based on the general axiom of relative cognition. How, then, does Gregory understand the human τὸ λογικόν or capacity of knowledge (τὸ ἐπιστήμης δεκτινόν)?

Turning back to his philosophical paradigm[547], the very essence (οὐσία) of a (let us say for more clarity) *material,* concrete thing is assumed to be

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[546] *v. ad CE* ii, 118 (J i, pp. 258-260).

unknowable and unapproachable (ἄφραστος); we are in effect operating with 'works' (αἱ ἐνέργειαι) which are posterior to the essence[548]. Thus, man grasps something by means of his senses and then enters an *understanding* of the object having learned – the above-mentioned limitations of our thinking should be born in mind – the sense of the thing from its energies. Only after having grasped it can man really name something, *i.e.* produce a phoneme. It turns out, therefore, that the name as phoneme (ὄνομα) is neither primary (as Eunomius contends for his non-*epinoic* words in general and for *agennetos* in particular), nor is it even a secondary vehicle of meaning, but tertiary in relation to its epistemological validity. Hence, name is nothing more than just a shadow:

> ...are we not clearly taught that the words which represent things are of later origin than the things themselves, and that the words which are framed to express the operations of things are reflections of the things themselves (ὥσπερ σκιαὶ τῶν πραγμάτων εἰσὶν αἱ φωναί)?
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> *CE* ii, 150;11f (J i, p. 269)

Moreover, full-fledged, ordinary words designate, symbolise or express energies, which are, philosophically speaking caused by the essence; but names do not reveal or express the essence itself:

> Now what do these words tell us? Do they indicate operations, or nature? No one will say that they indicate aught but His operations[549].

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[547] *CE*, ii, 149;28ff (J i, p. 268f).
[548] because οὐσία is, obviously, prior to the energies – *CE*, ii, 150;2 (J i, p. 269): εἰ δὲ προϋφέστηκε τῶν ἐνεργειῶν ἡ οὐσία...
[549] *CE* ii, 151;20f (J i, p. 269): ταῦτα τοίνυν τί λέγουσιν; ἐνεργείας ἔχειν τὴν σημασίαν ἢ φύσεως; οὐκ ἄν τις ἄλλο τι παρὰ τὴν ἐνέγειαν εἴποι.

This paradigm emerges again, when the theme of divine titles is touched upon; our concern is now with the mechanism of producing words.

The words of our speech are said to be invented neither by God, nor by a mysterious name-maker, whatever the understanding of this ὀνοματουργός can be. At the same time, it is impossible for nouns and verbs to be determined by the Aristotelian convention (formerly in hoary antiquity), because an ordinary human being is *hic et nunc* name-giver and name-inventor. He speaks, borrows, adopts, invents and under some circumstances forgets his ὀνόματα; in a word, he acts freely, just as one who has power over the articles of his speech – this is a central point for Gregory. Nonetheless, he also admits that we cannot interchange names for 'horse' and 'man'; however, the reason for this is neither the ontological nexus, nor the force of habit or ancient convention, but the human inner intellectual regulations designated by both sides of the controversy as *epinoia*.

§ IV.4.3 *Epinoia* and its linguistic application

Compared to Basil's treatment of the notion, Gregory of Nyssa does not say anything new about *epinoia*; however, he sheds more light on the term and its validity for the discourse. Hence, Gregory assumes that although we are

dealing with an important phenomenon of the human power of 'inventiveness', the title as such is rather arbitrary, even insufficient[550]. Though on the whole he follows Basil's construction of *epinoia,* it is relatively unimportant for Gregory whether one denotes it as *epinoia* or by some other term, because the question remains: where did this 'inventiveness' come from, how does it work, and what is the sphere of its application? Indeed, his main concern is to demonstrate that it is *epinoia* that is responsible for generating and using all the words of our language without exception. *Epinoia,* is therefore in his opinion nothing but human creativity, based on intelligence, taken in its various manifestations. Gregory rejects Eunomius' classification of words as *epinoic* and non-*epinoic,* simply by questioning the philosophical reasons for doing so; perhaps, it was the easiest issue of the controversy to be refuted. Nevertheless, the theme of *epinoia* received a much more interesting examination than might appear at first sight.

For Eunomius everything that is κατ᾽ ἐπίνοιαν matters is always bad[551], but *epinoic* names are always good. First – and in this he agrees with

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[550] I believe that under different circumstances both Basil and Gregory would have employed much more appropriate terminological apparatus rather than unintelligible and abstruse *epinoia*.

[551] *cf. CE* ii, 179 (J i, p. 276): 'After thus reducing the force of the term '*epinoia*' to its lowest value, our clever friend will allow it, you see, no further extension. He says that it is without sense and meaning, that it fancies the unnatural, either contracting or extending the limits of nature, or putting heterogeneous notions together, or juggling with strange and monstrous combinations'.

Eunomius[552] – it is an entirely human feature; second, and this is the very point of his disagreement with Eunomius, *epinoia* is an umbrella term that designates the sphere of human intellectuality. This power is divinely given to man; therefore, regardless of whether one uses or abuses it, *epinoia* as a function remains the same:

> But why encumber our argument by multiplying instances? As in the above-mentioned cases no one would deny that he who has learned to practise an art for right purposes can also abuse it for wrong ones, so we say that the faculty of thought and conception was implanted by God in human nature for good, but, with those who abuse it as an instrument of discovery, it frequently becomes the handmaid of pernicious inventions. But although it is thus possible for this faculty to give a plausible shape to what is false and unreal, it is none the less competent to investigate what actually and in very truth subsists, and its ability for the one must in fairness be regarded as an evidence of its ability for the other.
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> For that one who proposes to himself to terrify or charm an audience should have plenty of conceptions to effect such a purpose, and should display to the spectators many-handed, many-headed, or fire-breathing monsters, or men enfolded in the coils of serpents, or that he should seem to increase their stature, or enlarge their natural proportions to a ridiculous extent, or that he should describe men metamorphosed into fountains and trees and birds, a kind of narrative which is not without its attraction for such as take pleasure in things of that sort; - all this, I say, is the clearest of demonstrations that it is possible to arrive at higher knowledge also by means of this inventive faculty.
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> *CE* ii, 189; 15ff (J i, p. 279)

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[552] *CE* ii, 187; 26f (J i, p. 278f): 'Nor do I deny the objection made by our adversaries, that lying wonders also are fabricated by this faculty. For their contention as to this makes for our own side in the argument. For we too assert that the science of opposites is the same, whether beneficial or the reverse; *e. g.* in the case of the arts of healing and navigation, and so on'.

This direct relationship between *epinoia* on the one hand and the development of arts and scientific knowledge on the other can be multiplied. What is really intriguing here is that the reason why 'it is impossible to interchange the names for horse and man' is related to this very connexion. Roughly speaking, *epinoia* causes the generation/invention of words; moreover, Gregory argues for a wide range of its functioning – *epinoia* in its totality is responsible for all the scientific advances of human civilisation:

> What, then, was the origin of our higher branches of learning, of geometry, arithmetic, the logical and physical sciences, of the inventions of mechanical art, of the marvels of measuring time by the brazen dial and the water-clock? What, again, of ontology, of the science of ideas, in short of all intellectual speculation as applied to great and sublime objects? What of agriculture, of navigation, and of the other pursuits of human life? How comes the sea to be a highway for man? How are things of the air brought into the service of things of the earth, wild things tamed, objects of terror brought into subjection, animals stronger than ourselves made obedient to the rein? Have not all these benefits to human life been achieved by conception? For, according to my account of it, conception is the method by which we discover things that are unknown, going on to further discoveries by means of what adjoins to and follows from our first perception with regard to the thing studied. For when we have formed some idea of what we seek to know, by adapting what follows to the first result of our discoveries we gradually conduct our inquiry to the end of our proposed research.
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> *CE* ii, 181;7ff (J i, p. 277)

Clearly, this theory of *epinoia* was already observed in Basil; Gregory merely spells it out and gives examples of it. Thus, if *epinoia* is said to be the cause of the articles of our speech just as it is of human learning, the discourse

arrives at the idea of man's creativity, and consequently Gregory's brilliant formula '***neither did Adam make the animals, nor did God name them***'.

Inasmuch as man is not in the full sense of the word *a creator*, his creativity is based on adoption and the use of already created things. For this reason, man's creativity and inventiveness is limited and restricted by, for example, the 'laws of nature'. *Epinoic* functioning, then, is to *discover* these objective regulations and employ them on various scientific projects. It is now relatively unimportant whether we use our learning for good or bad, for our benefit or for our harm – at any rate, *epinoia* functions in accordance with a determined formula.

If the generation of words is similar to the development of all branches of learning, the classical puzzle about names for *horse* and *man* is solved by Gregory's theory in a very simple way: the reason why one cannot interchange names for horse and man is twofold. That is because the names 'horse' and 'man' were not originally absolutely arbitrary attachments. Rather, their origin was determined by the chain **essence–energies–human perception–*epinoia*–appearance of name**, which is in turn an equation with two unknown quantities (the incognisable essence and unknown mechanism of the human thinking process). But since once this chain gave the name 'horse', and another time it gave the name 'man', these names cannot be interchanged by request. It would, however, be wrong to believe that this chain always works properly:

> In this, though it is often possible to have achieved the task in both ways, when thought does not fail to hit the mark,

and utterance interprets a notion with the appropriate word, yet it may happen that we may fail even in both, or in one at least of the two, when either the faculty of comprehension or the capacity to interpret is carried beyond the proper mark. There being, then, two factors by which every term is made a correct term, mental exactitude and verbal utterance, the result which commands approval in both ways will certainly be the preferable[553].

What is truly remarkable about this Cappadocian theory of language is its broad sphere of applications for *e.g.* further philosophical and theological inquiries and biblical exegesis. *Epinoia* is the greatest divine gift implanted into human nature that discovers the instrumentality of all things and provides knowledge for our service and benefit. From this perspective one can easily reconstruct numerous further solutions, including the difference between naming an abstract and a concrete entity:

> But then the whole world of realities is divided into two parts; that is, into the intelligible and the sensible (τε τὸ νοητὸν καὶ αἰσθητόν). With regard to sensible phenomena, knowledge, on account of the perception of them being so near at hand, is open for all to acquire; the judgment of the senses gives occasion to no doubt about the subject before them. Differences in colour, and differences in all the other qualities which we judge by means of the sense of hearing, or smell, or touch, or taste, can be known and named by all possessing our common humanity; and so it is with all the other things which appear to be more obvious to our apprehension, the things, that is, pertaining to the age in which we live, designed for political and moral ends. But in the contemplation of the intelligible world, on account of that world transcending the grasp of the senses, we move, some in one way, some in another, around the object of our search; and then, according to the idea arising in each of us about it, we announce the result as best we can, striving to

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[553] *CE* ii, 574; 29 (J i, 393f).

> get as near as possible to the full meaning of the thing thought about through the medium of expressive phrases.
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> *CE* ii, 572; 17ff (J i, p. 393)

If naming is in the power of man, we are in a position to name a new-born child; this does not mean that we fully comprehend its nature (because we do not even possess a complete knowledge of ourselves), rather, we name something or somebody in order to distinguish it from the 'other', and thereafter to operate with it, and this comes from our *epinoia*. Otherwise, asks Gregory, why did the venerable Moses receive an Egyptian name for Pharaoh's daughter? Why were the Old Testament patriarchs named by their mothers[554]?

Next, Gregory goes on to say that divine names and titles are of the same nature. This linguistic hypothesis turns Eunomius' speculations over the name *agennetos* into dust. If we are unable to cognise the essence of the simple material things that we name, how can we claim to cognise the divine nature in name, whatsoever valuable, unique or supreme it is? Whatever word we use to designate or invoke God is still of our *epinoia*, and still subordinated to the above-given chain:

> For God is not an expression, neither has He His essence in voice or utterance. But God is of Himself what also He is believed to be, but He is named, by those who call upon Him, not what He is essentially (for the nature of Him Who alone is unspeakable – ἄφραστος), but He receives His

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[554] *CE* ii, 284-288 *ad.fin.* (J i, p. 310f).

> appellations from what are believed to be His operations in regard to our life.
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> *CE* ii, 148;24ff (J i, p. 268)

When we speak of God and call Him θεός, we consider Him as overlooking and surveying all things (θεάομαι). As elsewhere, His essence (οὐσία) is prior to His energies; man can grasp and comprehend these energies by his senses and then express the result of this relative comprehension in words 'as we are best able':

> For if we stay to interpret any of the attributes of God till we understand them, and we understand them only by what His works teach us, and if His power precedes its exercise, and depends on the will of God, while His will resides in the spontaneity of the Divine nature, are we not clearly taught that the words which represent things are of later origin than the things themselves, and that the words which are framed to express the operations of things are reflections of the things themselves?
>
> *Ibid.*

It is in this sense and this sense only that one should interpret various allegorical expressions of the Scriptures, where God is, for example, said to teach man or to speak like a man[555]. According to his interpretation of the biblical texts, when God speaks from above (*e.g.* in the events of Epiphany or

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[555] *v. e.g. CE* ii, 184; 3f (J i, p. 278): 'And in saying this I am supported by Job's teaching, where he represents God as answering His servant by the tempest and the clouds, saying both other things meet for Him to say, and that it is He Who has set man over the arts, and given to woman her skill in weaving and embroidery (*Job* 38:36). Now that He did not teach us such things by some visible operation, Himself presiding over the work, as we may see in matters of bodily teaching, no one would gainsay whose nature is not altogether animal and brutish. But still it has been said that our first knowledge of such arts is from Him, and, if such is the case, surely He Who endowed our nature with such a faculty of conceiving and finding out the objects of our investigation was Himself our Guide to the arts'.

Transfiguration), this should be understood in the sense that God condescended to weak human nature, and therefore, acted in accordance with what that nature is designed for:

> Now that voice (ἡ φωνή) was fashioned by God, suitably to the understanding of the hearers, in airy substance (ἐν τῷ ἀεγίῳ σώματι), and adapted to the language of the day (τότε τῶν φθεγγομένων συνήθειαν γενομένη).
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> *CE* ii, 249; 29f (J i, p. 299)

Nevertheless, Gregory's linguistic preoccupations were far from being limited by purely theological implications. To all appearances he was one of the later Patristic writers, whose acquaintance with the treatment of language in secular science was truly excellent. Gregory understood that in order to give an exhaustive and comprehensive picture of linguistic theory, one needs to answer a number of the classical questions posed by the standard theories of language; the problem of proper names[556] was just a minor example. In the course of his investigations Gregory often makes reference to the classical linguistic puzzles, which, as we have already observed, were touched upon by Clement and Origen. What we find in the *CE* is something radically different in comparison to the Alexandrian school. Let us focus on two major problems.

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[556] *cf.* Socrates' joke about the name 'Hermogenes' in relation to one of his disputants.

§ IV.4.4 Primordial language and variety of tongues

Seemingly, Eunomius' theory does not stand up to the critical question about a primordial tongue in the sense that the term *agennetos* comes from Greek, (rather than from 'sacred' Hebrew), and is not an 'original' language; an argument Irenaeus used elsewhere against Marcus. Nevertheless, Gregory prefers a more radical examination of the problem. We are not told whether Eunomius (ever) distinguished the notion of a primordial tongue from the variety of modern languages; similarly we are not told whether he ever touched upon the question of Hebrew and Hebrew names. Just as in Gnostic literature, Eunomius easily speaks of Greek words and language, and makes no attempt to explain why the term *agennetos* was Greek and not, for instance, ancient Hebrew.

Like Clement and Origen, Gregory of Nyssa naturally depends on the Bible. However, the extent of this dependence seems to be equally limited (or rather, minimal: Both the Alexandrian theologians and Gregory of Nyssa employed only a few unambiguous premises, which one cannot ignore. Further philosophical elaboration of the matter as well as the conclusion, seriously differs from the Alexandrian theological proposition. If Clement and Origen fashioned biblical material into a Platonist hypothesis of language, methodologically, Gregory of Nyssa does exactly the same, but in favour of the new Cappadocian theory of language. He admits that from the time of Adam and Eve to the Confusion of tongues people spoke one language. This

primordial language, according to Gregory was in no way 'perfect' or 'correct' or 'better' (as the Alexandrians assumed) compared with modern languages; rather, it was a standard ordinary tongue without anything supernatural or extraordinary, because it was produced, developed and used by the first humans (Gregory does not make play of the original perfection of Adam's nature). Furthermore, he thinks that *the primordial dialect could not be Hebrew*:

> But some who have carefully studied the Scriptures tell us that the Hebrew tongue is not even ancient like the others, but that along with other miracles this miracle was wrought on behalf of the Israelites, that after the Exodus from Egypt, the language was hastily improvised for the use of the nation. And there is a passage in the Prophet which confirms this. For he says, *'when he came out of the land of Egypt he heard a strange language'* (*Ps* 80:6). If, then, Moses was a Hebrew, and the language of the Hebrews was subsequent to the others, Moses, I say, who was born some thousands of years after the Creation of the world, and who relates the words of God in his own language – does he not clearly teach us that he does not attribute to God such a language of human fashion, but that he speaks as he does because it was impossible to express his meaning otherwise than in human language, though the words he uses have some Divine and profound significance?
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> *CE* ii, 256;7ff (J i, p. 301)

In Gregory's opinion, it is not only the βάθος of stupidity to assume that the Supreme God prefers speaking some particular tongue (*e.g.* Hebrew); it is equally a grave theological error to believe that His word might be addressed to the people in language that is different from their own, because the words of

Revelation would then fail to reach the audience they are addressed to, which would have meant that the very purpose of Revelation was invalidated[557]:

> For to suppose that God used the Hebrew tongue, when there was no one to hear and understand such a language, methinks no reasonable being will consent. We read in the *Acts* (2:6) that the Divine power divided itself into many languages for this purpose, that no one of alien tongue might lose his share of the benefit. But if God spoke in human language before the Creation, whom was He to benefit by using it?
>
> *Ibid.*

There are several comments to make on this. First, Gregory's concept dramatically disproves the hypothesis of Clement and Origen. In fact, it turns out that the validity of a name does not depend on its relationship to the primordial tongue (*i.e.* Hebrew, as was commonly thought by the Alexandrian theologians); any name is equally valid when used in its appropriate linguistic environment, *viz.* by one nation. Gregory goes on to say that divine names and epithets should be regarded as absolutely equal in terms of their objective validity – just as the words for 'sky' sound different in 'Greek, Latin, Syriac, Mede, Cappadocian, African, Scythian, Thracian, Egyptian or Hebrew', the title 'God' (as well as other divine names) can also vary depending on the dialect of a nation[558]:

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[557] This explains his wide use of the allegorical interpretation of those numerous biblical texts that portray God as naming stars, *etc.* which are of no significance for our analysis.

[558] This conclusion, however, does not appear to contradict the standard Christian view on the translation of some venerable *proper* names into other languages. For a fuller discussion J. Dillon's article.

> And there is this one sure piece of evidence in our favour, that the Divine Being is not named alike by all, but that each interprets his idea as he thinks best.
>
> *CE* ii, 397; 13f (J i, p. 342)

Overall, Gregory's scientific guesswork in relation to the problem of primordial tongue is doubly impressive. Indeed, on the basis of *Gen.* 11:1 Gregory proceeds from the principle of the original monolingual situation. It should be pointed out that Gregory of Nyssa has proposed something that became a commonly shared scientific view only in the latter part of the nineteenth century. Linguistic theories, from the beginning of the Middle Ages until their radical reconsideration in the nineteenth century, considered Hebrew to be the primordial tongue. Only in the nineteenth century (!!) were all attempts to derive modern languages from Hebrew recognised as hopeless. But this is exactly what the fourth-century theologian pointed out, without the benefit of any scientific analysis, or comparative linguistic studies. It is still hotly disputed by modern linguists whether all languages derive from one original archetype, or whether there were several 'lingual areas'. Although on the basis of *Gen.* 11:1 Gregory proceeds from the idea that originally people spoke one dialect, according to his general theory it does not mean that all modern languages could really be derived from this original dialect: we are not

told about the original tongue of Adam and Eve[559]. Moreover, we can only guess whether this original tongue was somehow preserved and survived after the Confusion. In fact, it is absolutely unimportant for his theory of language, because man (under certain circumstances[560]) generates words and adopts them for his speech *hic et nunc*.

Another comparison with modern linguistic science seems to be relevant. If all languages in their variety originally come from one ancient common archetypical masterpiece, to what extent, if at all, it is possible to trace it? Gregory of Nyssa provides us with interesting ideas about it when his concern shifts to the problem of variety of tongues and exegesis of *Gen.* 1:11-19. The Cappadocian hypothesis of language inevitably leads to a substantially new view on the variety of tongues, and thereby to the new theological comprehension of the *Gen.* 11:1-9 and *Acts.* 2:2-12, *etc.* With the exception of

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[559] *cf. CE*, ii, 254; 18f (J i, p. 300): 'For from the beginning, as long as all men had the same language, we see from Holy Scripture that men received no teaching of God's words, nor, when men were separated into various differences of language, did a Divine enactment prescribe how each man should talk. But God, willing that men should speak different languages, gave human nature full liberty to formulate arbitrary sounds, so as to render their meaning more intelligible'.

[560] Y. Edelshtein, in his *Раннесредневековые учения*, p. 178 identifies an interesting problem; he argues that some Patristic writers (Basil, Gregory, Augustine and Jerome) on the basis of the distinction between 'to have potentially' (δυνάμει) and 'to be factually' (ἐνεργείᾳ) – (Y. Edelshtein refers to Jerome, *PL* 23, 502 b) make the supposition that the power of speech is implanted into human nature *in potentia*: *'Thus, the power of speech is inherent to every man in potential, but if one has never heard human speech before, he never speaks'*. Indeed, the question which is touched upon is intriguing: the matter is concerned with one of the most dreadful linguistic experiments in the history of linguistics reported by Herodotus (ii, 2); a similar experiment was undertaken in India (*v.* W. Allen, *op.cit.*, p. 46). Psammetichus and his experimental results (which are in fact misinterpreted by Y. Edelshtein: Psammetichus found the first uttered word 'βεκός' to be the Phrygian for beard) were discussed and reinterpreted by grammarians (*e.g.* Suda, *Lexicon*, *v.* entry for βεκεσέληνε 229;1ff), but I have found no sign of interest in the story amongst Greek Christian authors, nor in the question of why a child who has never heard human speech is unable to speak. It is not difficult, however, to imagine how the Cappadocian theory could work out the problem, but it would be too speculative to discuss it here.

Epicurean philosophising (Epicurus assumed that the different tongues of mankind were something liable to further development), it was commonly held that the number of human tongues is fixed. As we have already observed, Clement even could speculate about an ultimate number of languages (the amount varied between seventy two and seventy four); for Gregory of Nyssa the very standpoint adopted by the Alexandrian School is totally misleading and wrong, it is all '*trifling and mere Jewish folly, far removed from the grandeur of Christian simplicity*'. Things came into existence by the divine will, while names are produced and used by humankind; he thinks that the variety of tongues is one of the best arguments against φύσις-theory. His general assumption that all languages are equal in their power to express our thoughts is in fact a philosophical refutation of the Platonist 'way-out'-hypothesis of 'spoiled' modern tongues. Let us exemplify how his formula '***neither did Adam make the animals, nor did God name them***' works:

> For as the natures of the elements, which are the work of the Creator, appear alike to all, and there is no difference to human sense in men's experience of fire, or air, or water, but the nature of each is one and unchanging, working in the same way, and suffering no modification from the differences of those who partake of it, so also the imposition of names, if applied to things by God, would have been the same for all. But, in point of fact, while the nature of things as constituted by God remains the same, the names which denote them are divided by so many differences of language, that it were no easy task even to calculate their number.
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> *CE* ii, 251;20f (J i, p. 299f)

Thus, Gregory poses the question about an ultimate number of human languages (nations) in a way entirely different from the historical science of his time[561]. His interpretation of *Gen.* 11:4-11 totally conflicts with that held by Philo or Clement. His main point is that it was not a 'divinely given' language or 'sacral Hebrew', or whatever enigmatic language we have already observed in the Christian literature that was confounded by God at Babel; rather, it was a primordial tongue that was absolutely and unconditionally of human origin. God did not design and provide humankind with more tongues, but confused the primordial dialect that they already had:

> And if any one cites the confusion of tongues that took place at the building of the tower as contradicting what I have said, not even there is God spoken of as creating men's languages, but as confounding the existing one, that all might not hear all. For when all lived together and were not as yet divided by various differences of race, the aggregate of men dwelt together with one language among them; but when by the Divine will it was decreed that all the earth should be replenished by mankind, then, their community of tongue being broken up, men were dispersed in various directions and adopted this and that form of speech and language, possessing a certain bond of union in similarity of tongue, not indeed disagreeing from others in their knowledge of things, but differing in the character of their names. For a stone or a stick does not seem one thing to one man and another to another, but the different peoples call them by different names. So that our position remains unshaken, that human language is the invention of the human mind or understanding.
>
> *Ibid.*

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[561] For Gregory Nazianzen the idea of a fixed number of human tongues was already totally foreign; some languages already exist, while other languages are to come – Gregorius Nazianzenus, *Contra Julianem Imperatorem* 1 (orat. 4): ἀκούσατε, λαοὶ, φυλαὶ, γλῶσσαι, πᾶν γένος ἀνθρώπων, καὶ ἡλικία πᾶσα, ὅσοι τε νῦν ἐστε, καὶ ὅσοι γενήσεθε...(*PG* 35; 532a).

To summarise his various opinions and expressions, it should be emphasised that in the case of Gregory of Nyssa we are dealing with a new, complete, and independent theory of language. To what extent did it depend on the standard secular theories of the time? Apparently, hardly at all: Gregory of Nyssa merely directs his efforts toward the standard agenda and attempts to answer the question which normally appeared in the course of the controversy between adherents of φύσις and θέσις theories. At the same time, he shows a sustained interest in the biblical material; although the latter is determined by the Eunomean controversy, his exegetical preoccupation should not be overestimated. What is truly outstanding about his writings is that he does not follow the exegetical tradition of his time, but proposed a substantially new exegesis of the relevant biblical passages, based on and inferred from the theory καθ᾽ αὑτήν.

The standard view that Gregory followed the doctrine of the Scriptures or theology of the Church, while his opponents were guided by Plato's *Cratylus* or a 'Neoplatonized form of Aristotelianism'[562] fails to define and explain the matter. Analysis of his theory demonstrates that for Gregory of Nyssa the relevant biblical passages were not the premise or referent condition. Moreover, the rôle of the exegesis of these passages in the general context of argumentation is relatively small, compared to fundamental theological and

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[562] *cf.* R. Mortley, *op.cit.*, vol. 2, p. 132; *v.* also his tenth chapter on the Eunomean controversy, whose content follows from the title: *'Theology versus philosophy'*.

philosophical considerations about nature of language in relation to the Supreme Deity, humankind and the apparent world.

A critical examination of the *CE* and Gregory's numerous references to Basil's works make us think his main preoccupation was to develop, exemplify and fulfil the ideas of his brother. Above all, Gregory's confidence is amazing: he easily rejected and refuted a number of the most fundamental linguistic postulates of his time, and never claims to be suggesting anything new. What he is doing, in his opinion, is simply defending the correct teaching of his great mentor. The hypothesis of language found in the *CE* arises from the more general purely philosophical model often labelled 'the Cappadocian synthesis'. The appearance of such notions as ἡ οὐσία, αἱ ἐνέργειαι in the most crucial philosophical formula-chain for word-appearance seems to be only *la partie visible de l'iceberg* in comparison to the philosophical meaning of Basil's two premises, of the principle incognisability of the human thinking process and the incognisability of every single essence.

Conclusion

The Christian theological comprehension of language is extremely prominent and stands out against the various ancient mythological intuitions of language. Broadly speaking, all known ancient speculation treated language as an incomprehensible enigma, and this is why mythological thinking always considered the human power of speech as a divine product; regardless of its numerous manifestations, human language was believed to be a human borrowing from deity or deities. The Biblical narration about Adam naming the animals is a unique exception; and from what we know, one cannot find a parallel idea in the mythological material or trace a secure origin of this idea.

Though this uniqueness *per se* is intriguing, clearly, in the book of *Genesis* *there is still no philosophy of language*. In the course of the investigation of the Greek Patristic literature even this *a prima facie* obvious concept received diverse interpretations, which appear sometimes to be diametrically opposed. Thus it would be an error to represent the formation of the Christian theological view on language as a confrontation between 'Athens and Jerusalem' or, more specifically, between Greek philosophy and information derived from the Pentateuch. The truth is more profound.

§ 1. Negative results of the research

The agenda of secular linguistic science with the two major language doctrines designated in the thesis as φύσις and θέσις-theories as well as further attempts to find a balance between them has affected Christian speculations about language. The extent of this influence, however, does not appear to be as determining as was commonly agreed amongst some scholars; nor does it seem to exceed the influence of the information derived from the Bible. Indeed, the most prominent Patristic writers, *viz.* the Alexandrian and the Cappadocian Fathers, were aware of this agenda. They elaborated their theories of language and in the course of this elaboration they tried to experiment with the major questions, which secular linguistic science asked in relation to language. Similarly, they took into account numerous biblical passages and proposed corresponding exegetical solutions. Overall, however, the comprehensive picture of the Christian view on language appeared to be irreducible either to traditional linguistic theories, or to the teaching derived from the Bible. From what we have observed, there is only one exception, which can and should be determined as a balance or rather synthesis of 'Athens and Jerusalem', of philosophical theory and biblical intuition. The theory of language proposed by Clement and Origen was based on Plato and his φύσις-theory. Of course, as was shown in the third chapter, in spite of some minor disagreements and dissimilarities both Alexandrian theologians made great use of the *Cratylus*. Their comprehension of *Gen*. 2:19-20 and other texts in the sense that Adam was

a Platonic name-maker, and that Hebrew was 'primordial', 'perfect', 'the most ancient', 'correct', 'sacral', original tongue of humankind, falls splendidly into the pattern of the Alexandrian tradition, which comes from rabbinic speculations to Joseph Flavius and Philo. Nevertheless, this theological line reached a deadlock.

§ 2. Positive results of the research

The writings of Justin and Irenaeus provide us with evidence that when Christian theology shifted from a biblical concern with name, divine names, and name-theology and turned to the question of the nature of language, it was Christian anthropology that determined both the agenda and the line of investigation. As for the agenda, it immediately became limited, and these limits were of human nature. Justin and Irenaeus were the first to bind up the question of language and the corporeal human complexity. Therefore, human speech was said to bear such constituent characteristics of man's nature as soul and body. In spite of some lack of clarity about the course of word-appearance, both Justin and Irenaeus insisted that language in its apparent manifestation *i.e.* concrete articulated speech is *'carnal'*. Although in the works of Apologists one cannot find polished dialectical paradigms of inner and outer aspects of speech, the major aspects of the language theory were already touched upon and

defined with surprising almost prophetical pragmatism. Broadly speaking, Justin and Irenaeus came across the problem which became quite fundamental in further Patristic speculations about language: how to explain numerous biblical expressions that come from the ancient Hebrew name-theology? The problem of the Logos of the Johannine prologue was the first instance to focus on. Thus, Irenaeus' formula that the Logos must in no way be treated as a word of human language anticipated the theological investigations of the subject found in Basil of Caesarea and Gregory of Nyssa.

Analysis of the Cappadocian theory of language leaves no doubt that Basil and Gregory worked out a substantially new linguistic theory. This theory is based on the Christian theological view of man (who consists of a material body and an immaterial soul) and considers all the complexity of the human power of speech as derived from complexity of the human nature. All the philosophical premises as well as a preliminary outline are given by Basil the Great. Gregory of Nyssa entirely followed this way and fulfilled it. While doing so, both Basil and Gregory took into consideration the vast majority of 'linguistic' puzzles brought forward by the Classical philosophical grammatical investigations of language. Gregory of Nyssa has exemplified how his theory solves these problems. As a matter of fact, his well known formulae (*e.g.* ***'neither did Adam make the animals, nor did God name them'***, *etc.*) as well as his general exegetical approach is related to the Cappadocian theological system. Simple references to the Bible fail to explain the matter. Therefore, the

Cappadocian linguistic theory should be regarded as inferred from the main postulates of the theological system such as: the concept of the Supreme Deity, cosmology, ontology, complexity and the incomprehensibility of the human soul, the thinking process that originates inner speech, 'movements of soul' that are crystallised into notions, the anatomical structure of the human body, the embodiment of the 'movements of soul' into verbal utterances. This theory allowed the Fathers to determine a consistent view of the general linguistic problems (primordial tongue, variety of languages, *etc.*) in a way so satisfactory that it substantially exceeded the standard known theories of their time. A further aspect of the Cappadocian hypothesis was that it was conceived and realised as an integral part of a whole theological system. One of their most significant contributions was bringing to the forefront the phenomenon of *human personhood* and the integration of this principle into a linguistic hypothesis. The significance of this development must not be underestimated. In fact, this approach allowed them to overcome the traditional philosophical and grammatical perception of word as a dead entry in a lexicon, and to regard it as a living word of real human speech. The best example of this revolutionary transition from a somewhat static perception of language to a dynamic one is Gregory's principal idea of man as name-giver *hic et nunc*. Were they were really influenced or inspired by the writings of Justin and Irenaeus? This interesting question requires an independent and thorough textual analysis, but regardless of the final answer, one cannot underestimate the originality of the

Cappadocian theory of language for both Patristic theology and the history of linguistics. This is the primary result of the research.

The secondary results of the investigation are these. Theological interest in the problem of language was not caused by the hot disputes held in the secular grammatical and philosophical circles of the time. The main agency that stimulated Patristic writers to treat the matter was the controversy with the Gnostics. Although an attempt has been made to demonstrate that Gnostic speculation over names and words was non-philosophical, the question of general Gnostic methodology as well as the real origin of their name-theology still remains open for discussion, because ultimately it depends on what one means by the term 'philosophy'. Nevertheless, the Gnostic movements left determinable imprints upon almost all Greek Patristic writers who were preoccupied with the problem of language. Though the theologians of the Alexandrian School were shown to be the most consistent followers of Plato's *Cratylus,* such a central figure as Origen originally elaborated and modified the φύσις-theory of name in order to set it against the Gnostic view on martyrdom for the name of Jesus Christ.

Similarly, in the course of analysis, the suggestion was made of reconsidering the traditional view of Aetius and Eunomius as consistent stalwarts of Plato's hypothesis of names. Their philosophical background mainly consisted of Aristotelian logic, and their competence does not overcome the agenda of the *Categories*. This is, however, not enough to categorise them as

Peripatetic philosophers. At the same time, some expressions about the 'natural' nexus between name and word are shown to be too insufficient and even scanty to argue for a more or less satisfactory dependence on Platonism. As a result, an attempt was made to withdraw such definitions as of Eunomius' theory as a 'Neoplatonized form of Aristotelianism' or an 'Aristotelian form of Neoplatonism', *etc.* A critical examination has shown that just as in the speculations of Gnostics, in Eunomius' writings one finds no proper theory, which corresponds to a common standard, *i.e.* attempts to answer a number of practical philosophical and grammatical questions. On the one hand, we found no sign that Eunomius ever tried to show how his theory considered, for example, Hebrew and Greek, why the Greek name *agennetos* is the supreme divine name that pre-existed the creation of the apparent world, how his theory about pre-existed phonemes and sounds imprinted by divine Providence should be comprehended in the different linguistic environment? On the other hand, his teaching about names as *seeds* implanted in human souls was more strongly reminiscent of Gnostic name-speculation than any known philosophical theory of the time.

§ 3. Christian theological view on language

Gregory of Nyssa spelled out the very mechanism of word-appearance in the form of the following chain:

Essence⇨energies⇨human perception⇨*epinoia*⇨appearance of name

This is to some extent an equation with two unknown (underland) quantities, in that both Basil and Gregory assumed essence of thing and human thinking process as incognisable phenomena. Thus, this formula works from left to right (when man generates a word to designate an object) and from right to left (when he is a hearer).

Therefore, human speech appears to be similar to a subterranean river that emerges from the earth, flows and goes back underground. At some points this river seems to us to be just an ordinary stream; nevertheless, we are still unaware of where it comes from, and where it goes to. Again, all that we can know and learn about language - the preoccupation of, for instance, grammarians - is just a limited brief extent of the phenomenon. In doing so, one is doomed to reach a stage that ends the investigation: *e.g.* how the movements of our soul produce fixed and formed ideas; how, in spite of thorough studies, the essence of thing remains incognisable, *et multa alia*. Basil the Great believed this knowledge would only be found in the afterlife.

However, why is the Cappadocian linguistic hypothesis presumed to be *the* Patristic theory? In the course of our analysis we have observed that some Christian theologians adopted classical theories of language, but only in the case of the Cappadocian theologians can we speak about a new ecclesiastical view on language. Moreover, the theory of Basil the Great is a unique breakthrough, and if I am not mistaken the Christian preoccupations with

language that followed never exceeded both his linguistic theory and his general philosophical premise.

As for the latter, *i.e.* as for his intriguing answer to the greatest philosophical question about the nature of the human thinking process, the issue has yet to receive a proper analysis. In fact it has neither been properly studied nor critically scrutinised, nor applied to the main 'dogmas' of modern 'philosophical theology'; but this is the very point or inquiry with which I would rather finish this thesis.

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