

## Religion and Science in Gregory of Nyssa: The Unity of the Creative and Scientific Logos

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### Introduction and Methodological Guidelines

I have chosen to focus on Gregory of Nyssa's († 394ca. CE) approach to science because, among all the religious thinkers I know, he is one of the very best and richest theologians and mystics of all ages<sup>1</sup> and, at the same time, the most interested in science and the one whose attitude to science is the most positive, as I shall endeavour to show. This is why I think that an essay on him can make a particularly significant contribution to the present collection.

Gregory of Nyssa is the youngest of the three so-called Cappadocian Fathers of the Christian Church, the two others being Basil of Caesarea, Gregory's own brother, and Gregory Nazianzen, who for a while was also bishop of Constantinople. All of them lived in the second half of the fourth century CE. Gregory Nyssen was not only one of the most outstanding theologians in Christian Patristics – a direct heir of the great philosopher, theologian and exegete Origen of Alexandria († 255ca CE) –,<sup>2</sup> but he was also deeply interested in science. These two aspects, theology and science, are not opposed to one another in Gregory's thought, but they are very closely interrelated, since both science and theology proceed from the same logos (that is, the same reason).<sup>3</sup>

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<sup>1</sup> See Harrison 1992; Ramelli 2018b.

<sup>2</sup> The writer began a systematic investigation into Gregory's dependence on Origen's thought in all fields during a senior research fellowship at Corpus Christi, Oxford..

<sup>3</sup> The Greek term *logos* means both "reason" and "word".

## **Science and Theology Proceed from the same Logos. The Role of Creationism**

According to Gregory, the logos, in its most perfect form, is Christ, the Logos of God, whose full expression is found in Christian revelation, that is to say, both in the Hebrew and Christian Scripture<sup>4</sup> and, more directly, in the very Person of Jesus Christ regarded as the incarnated Logos. But this is also the same logos that has always illuminated all human intellectual achievements in philosophy and science, even among “pagans,” and even before the coming of Christ-Logos on earth, because it is present in every rational creature or *logikon* as such.

Indeed, Gregory Nyssen’s support of science and philosophy, and of progress in science and philosophy, depends on the assumption that God created human beings and endowed them with the logos, the same Logos that is Christ. In this light, it is clear that Gregory’s promotion of progress in the findings of human rationality rests on a theory of creationism. Consistently with these premises, therefore, to seek a rational justification and explanation – at the level of the philosophical and scientific logos – of doctrines that come from the logos of Scripture (such as the doctrines of the resurrection and of the restoration, as I shall show) is for Gregory an operation that appears not only fully legitimate, and not only historically opportune, but also necessary on a very theoretical plane. In what follows, an analysis of the interconnection of the religious and the scientific discourse in Gregory’s work will be offered in order to buttress this study’s main argument.

## **The Dialogue “On the Soul and the Resurrection” and the Harmony between Science, Philosophy, and Theology**

The work of Gregory’s from which it emerges most clearly that science too, just as philosophy and theology, is grounded in the *logos* – and this is why Gregory is convinced that science and theology *cannot* simply be against one another – is his dialogue *De anima et resurrectione* (*On the Soul and*

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<sup>4</sup> See Ramelli 2008; 2011.

*the Resurrection*).<sup>5</sup> It is a philosophical dialogue modelled on Plato's *Phaedo*<sup>6</sup> and, as a consequence, it is a farewell dialogue, where the role of the dying Socrates is played by Gregory's teacher and venerated sister Macrina, in a highly elaborated rhetorical framework.<sup>7</sup> This dialogue is one of the works of Gregory Nyssen in which philosophy and science come most to the fore and are most closely related to religion.

Gregory intends to demonstrate in this philosophical dialogue that neither science nor philosophy contradict the Christian dogma of the resurrection of the dead. On the contrary, he endeavours to demonstrate that both science and philosophy provide this religious doctrine with a rational foundation. That is why in this dialogue Gregory buttresses his argument with so many scientific examples, which are only apparently extraneous, irrelevant, or merely decorative (as they have appeared to be to some readers<sup>8</sup>).

In fact, the very ground of Gregory's reasoning in *De anima* is scientific and belongs to that "philosophy of nature" which is the progenitor of modern science. The importance of "philosophy of nature" was emphasised by Clement of Alexandria (who calls it φυσιολογία, like Philo and Josephus) and later by Evagrius, who calls it natural contemplation and was influenced by Clement, Origen, and Gregory of Nyssa in addition to Nazianzen. In the Neoplatonic tradition, especially Proclus, a good knower of Origen, in the *prooemium* of his *Commentary on the Timaeus* he aimed at demonstrating that philosophy of nature (φυσιολογία) is a science and deemed the *Timaeus* a hymn to the Demiurge. At the beginning of his commentary, Proclus argues that the theme of the *Timaeus* is a specifically Platonic form of φυσιολογία, which goes beyond the mere study of matter and material causes and beyond the study of form immanent in matter. 'Clearly, φυσιολογία is a kind of See Ramelli 2013b.]f theology [θεολογία], because nature has, to some extent, a divine existence, insofar as it is produced by the gods' (*C.Tim.* 1.217.25–7). The Stoics also identified theology with the study of nature, but within an immanentist framework: the gods are material like

<sup>5</sup> On this see Ramelli 2007; 2018. Ekkehard Mühlberg's long awaited critical edition has appeared in Leiden with Brill in the series, "Gregorii Nysseni Opera," on the basis of the work begun by the late Andreas Spira and has taken into account some of my readings/emendations.

<sup>6</sup> Cf. Apostolopoulos 1986.

<sup>7</sup> Cf. Meissner 1991.

<sup>8</sup> For instance, Apostolopoulos 1986, and Meissner 1991.

the cosmos and are .<sup>9</sup> with nature [[Add note here: See Ramelli 2013b.]]. While the Stoics reduced theology to the level of physics, Proclus, on the contrary, elevates the study of nature to the level of theology, which is transcendent. Gregory, a Christian Platonist, did much the same. Indeed, in order to demonstrate on a rational basis the possibility of the resurrection – which Gregory conceives as the resurrection of the body, to be sure, but also the restoration of the soul and all of its faculties, a theory further developed by his follower Evagrius<sup>10</sup> – Gregory argues that even after death, i.e. after the disaggregation of the elements of the body and their return to their natural places in the cosmos, the soul, which is immaterial and therefore adiatematic (that is, not subject to the extensions and dimensions of space and time, as Macrina forcefully argues at the beginning of *De Anima* against Stoic and Epicurean materialism), remains related to each of them and can rebuild its own body at the resurrection.

### **Physics and Astronomy Reveal the Divine Logos and Medicine Points to the Human Logos**

For instance, Gregory expressly states (*De anima* 25-28)<sup>11</sup> that both physics and astronomy, by showing the stunning harmony that obtains both in heaven and in the elements and parts of the world, contribute to demonstrating the divine rationality (again, God's Logos) that devised and created the universe. This divine rationality, for the Christian philosopher Gregory, is none other than Christ-Logos. Moreover, on the basis of the following equation,

$$\text{macrocosm: God} = \text{microcosm: soul},$$

Macrina demonstrates the existence of the immaterial soul. For, since the soul is invisible and non-sense-perceptible, its existence needs to be argued for. Around this main argument revolve many other examples of scientific disciplines adduced in support of this or that point made by Macrina or Gregory – the main and only speaking characters of the dialogue – in their religious argument.

One prominent example comes from medicine, a science that was associated with both philosophy and religion in the allegorical presentation of philosophy as “medicine of the mind – *animi medicina*, a typical definition of the Roman Stoic Seneca (first century CE) – and in the evangelical

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<sup>9</sup> See Ramelli 2013b.

<sup>10</sup> Ramelli 2015; 2017. On Gregory's influence on Evagrius see also 2013a.

<sup>11</sup> The edition used for reference is Ramelli 2007.

and Patristic presentation of Christ as a physician of souls as well as of bodies. This feature, not accidentally, is prominent in Origen, the greatest inspirer of Gregory.<sup>12</sup> It is precisely in Christ's healing power that he grounded his doctrine of universal salvation, arguing that no creature is incurable for the one (i.e. Christ-Logos) who created it. The illness of souls is evil; Christ will be able to cure all souls and bring them back to health.<sup>13</sup>

In *De anima* 29C-32C medicine is deployed to confirm the existence of an immaterial and intelligible soul in humans. Macrina's argument runs as follows: in the scientific discipline of medicine, data coming from sense-perception communicate to the physician clues that are crucial to his diagnosis. This means that these data are collected and elaborated by an intelligent faculty, which is the intellectual soul:

Would all this happen if there were no intellectual faculty to assist each of the senses? ... But the truest thing of all is that which is said to have been stated, with reason, by a learned pagan: 'What sees and what hears is the intellect'.

A marginal gloss in Codex A at this point identifies this "learned pagan" with Menander. At any rate, that the intellectual soul enables sense-perception is an Aristotelian and Stoic doctrine that was also shared by Academics – the heirs of Plato – and is found in Philo of Alexandria and in Galen, the physician-philosopher, in early imperial times.<sup>14</sup>

In order to buttress this doctrine, Macrina adduces further scientific examples (*De anima* 32C-33), drawn especially from astronomy. Gregory of Nyssa was highly interested in this science, and even coined some technical terms in this regard. Macrina's use of the astronomical example is again in the service of her argument of the intellectual elaboration of data stemming from sense-perception, which allows for a critical observation of phenomena. Among the astronomical instances adduced by Macrina, there is the observation of the moon, which reveals that its light is not its own, as it

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<sup>12</sup> See especially Fernández 1999; cf. de Bruyn 2008, Ch. 4; Dörnemann 2003, esp. Chs. 5- 9 on Christ as Physician in Patristic authors.

<sup>13</sup> See Ramelli 2013.

<sup>14</sup> On Gregory's reception of Aristotle, also mediated by that of Origen, see Ramelli forthcoming e.

would seem at first glance. Sight is the basis for the discovery of astronomical truths, but it would not enable their discovery per se “if there were not a principle that sees through the eyes”, that is, the intellectual soul.

### **Geometry, Science, and Technology as Bridges to Transcendent Realities**

The same is the case with another scientific discipline: geometry, which, “through sense-perceptible figures, leads us to the realities that transcend sense-perception.” Macrina even suggests that in fact all scientific disciplines illustrate this passage from the sense-perceptible to the intellectual plane. What is more, both science and technology are valued by Macrina and used as arguments to demonstrate the existence of the intellectual soul.

Indeed, immediately afterwards, she and Gregory concentrate on the realisation of automata – burgeoning in the Hellenistic age –, which produced both sounds and movements by means of refined mechanisms. Their construction required science and technology together. Gregory, who works as a contradictor in the economy of the dialogue, where the main speaker is Macrina, raises the objection that, if automata can move and utter sounds without having a soul, then it will be unnecessary to postulate a soul for each being that can move and utter sounds. But Macrina responds that machines also demonstrate the existence of a soul: that of the person who invented them (the scientist) and that of the person who built them (the technician). First the rational soul of the scientist ideates the automaton, and then the rational soul of the technician – with the contribution of matter – builds it up (*De anima* 36A-40).

What the scientist and the technician do is indeed the same as Christ-Logos-Wisdom did at the very beginning with the creation of the world, as Origen described in his *Commentary on John*:<sup>15</sup>

A house or ship are built on architectonic models, so one can say that the principle of the house or ship consists in the paradigms and *logoi* found in the craftsman. In the same way, I think, all things were made according to the *logoi* of future beings that God had already manifested beforehand in Wisdom. It is necessary to maintain

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<sup>15</sup> *Comm. in Io.* I 19,114-115.

that God founded, so to say, a living Wisdom, and handed it the task of transmitting the structure, forms, and, to my mind, substances too, from the archetypes in it to beings and matter.<sup>16</sup>

God's Wisdom contains all the Forms – *logoi* or paradigms of all creatures. These existed there from eternity, before their creation as substances. But they do not exist *ab aeterno* substantially as creatures. Christ-Logos-Wisdom is the supreme scientist and technician, who first devised the universe and then realised it – at the same time also creating matter, which human scientists and technicians cannot do.<sup>17</sup>

### **“Physics”, Geography, and Painting Technique as a Proof for the Resurrection**

Gregory does not overlook natural science (what the ancients called “physics”) either. In *De anima* 60-61, natural science comes to the fore in the observation of the faculties of vegetables and animals. This helps Macrina in her argument that a human soul also includes inferior faculties (the vegetative, or vital, and the sense-perceptive functions). In this way the human being can really be a microcosm, which synthesises in itself all inferior forms of life. However, the rational soul is proper to the human being alone, and this is why it is in the image of God.

Geographical and cosmological science, too, comes in handy (*De anima* 68B-69) in the discussion of the location of Hades, which in the classical tradition was variously situated under the earth or in the sublunar aerial region. Macrina argues that, on the contrary, Hades is a non-place which means “the passage to a state of invisibility” (privative  $\alpha + *F\iota\delta- > \alpha\iota\delta\eta\varsigma$ , “Hades”).

Macrina extends her attention to chromatic science and pictorial technique as well. The painter, who can mentally compose colours and divide them again, is put in the service of the demonstration of the soul's capacity for recognising the elements of its own body; in this way, the soul will be able to reconstruct its own body at the resurrection (*De anima* 75-76). Thus, science buttresses the

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<sup>16</sup> Ramelli forthcoming.

<sup>17</sup> For the point of the creation of matter on the part of God in Origen see Ramelli 2012-14. An Oxford critical edition and a commentary are in preparation.

rational argument in favour of the possibility of the resurrection, to which the dialogue *On the Soul and the Resurrection* is devoted.

### Psychology and Metallurgic Technique

Psychology too (which for the ancients meant the study of the soul and its components) is utilised by Gregory and Macrina, especially through its study of the emotions. This branch of philosophy was especially developed in Hellenistic moral philosophy – and research is showing more and more that it was reflected already in the New Testament.<sup>18</sup> Gregory pursues the ideal of *apatheia* or liberation from bad emotions, that is, passions (*pathē*) as opposed to good emotions (*eupatheiai*), and here he is claiming that the soul, once purified, will have no passion anymore; it will keep only love, *agapē*, which is without passion (*De anima* 92).

The way in which the Lord purifies souls is illustrated again with an example drawn from science and technology, and in particular metallurgy (*De anima* 100). The context in which Gregory adduces metallurgy in his argument is as follows. The Lord liberates souls from evil; this is his main goal. If souls experience suffering during this purifying process, this is only a collateral effect and not anything that God wants. God does not want to punish the soul with suffering, but to purify it from evil and to receive it back pure, in a process of re-appropriation (*oikeiōsis*)<sup>19</sup> of the soul, which belongs to God and was alienated by evil. Now, the same – Gregory remarks – happens with the purification of gold in fire, a task of metallurgy: gold too melts along with spurious matter, while the latter is burnt away, but precisely in this way it is purified from these scoriae. And the aim of metallurgists in this operation is not to have gold suffer, but to purify it. The very same is the goal of God with all souls: to purify them from evil, completely. If during this process the soul suffers, as is inevitable, this is only a side effect and not God's punishing will. In this specific context, metallurgy works as a helpful analogy to Gregory's argument.

<sup>18</sup> See, e.g., Wasserman 2007; Fiore 2007; Malherbe 2008; Neumann 2009; Ramelli 2009; 2010; 2011a; Philo's notion of the death of the soul, Ramelli 2014; forthcoming a.

<sup>19</sup> On the (mainly Stoic) doctrine of *oikeiōsis* see, for instance, Striker 1983; Blundell 1990; Inwood 1996; Reydams-Schils 2002; Brennan 2005: 154-68; Ramelli 2009a. On the Christian adaptation of this philosophical doctrine by Origen and Gregory of Nyssa see Ramelli 2014b. A detailed monograph, relying on a quarter of a century of research, is in preparation.



### **Agricultural Technique: The Tradition of God as Farmer in the Service of Restoration**

To better illustrate the souls' purification and their consequent eventual restoration or apokatastasis,<sup>20</sup> toward the end of the dialogue Gregory has recourse to another applied science: agricultural technique, from *De anima* 152D to the end of the dialogue. In the rest of the dialogue, too, agriculture appears repeatedly, even just in similitudes, such as that of *De anima* 124, where the development of the wheat seed is assimilated to the development of the faculties of the soul, which are declared to be parallel to the development of the body.

In the final section, Macrina elaborates at length on 1 Cor 15:35ff., where Paul used the agricultural metaphor of the seed that dies in the earth but rises again in an ear.<sup>21</sup> She explains this process in detail, scientifically (*De anima* 155-156). And she concludes that agriculture should “teach that it is foolish to try to imagine the excellence of divine power by evaluating it on the basis of human measure”. The body of the ear is formed from the seed by the divine power, and it is neither completely identical nor completely different from the seed. In the same way, the divine power will reconstitute the dead body: the risen body will be the same as the earthly body, but it will also have magnificent characteristics that the earthly body did not have: incorruptibility, power, glory, spirituality, perfection, *apatheia*.<sup>22</sup>

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<sup>20</sup> This is a major doctrine in Patristic thought, pertaining to eschatology or the “last things” in the world to come: see Ramelli 2013; 2019.

<sup>21</sup> “But someone will ask, ‘How are the dead raised? With what kind of body do they come?’ 36 You foolish man! What you sow does not come to life unless it dies. 37 And what you sow is not the body which is to be, but a bare kernel, perhaps of wheat or of some other grain. 38 But God gives it a body as he has chosen, and to each kind of seed its own body. 39 For not all flesh is alike, but there is one kind for men, another for animals, another for birds, and another for fish. 40 There are celestial bodies and there are terrestrial bodies; but the glory of the celestial is one, and the glory of the terrestrial is another. 41 There is one glory of the sun, and another glory of the moon, and another glory of the stars; for star differs from star in glory. 42 So is it with the resurrection of the dead. What is sown is perishable, what is raised is imperishable. 43 It is sown in dishonour, it is raised in glory. It is sown in weakness, it is raised in power. 44 It is sown a physical body, it is raised a spiritual body. If there is a physical body, there is also a spiritual body. 45 Thus it is written, ‘The first man Adam became a living being’; the last Adam became a life-giving spirit. 46 But it is not the spiritual which is first but the physical, and then the spiritual. 47 The first man was from the earth, a man of dust; the second man is from heaven. 48 As was the man of dust, so are those who are of the dust; and as is the man of heaven, so are those who are of heaven. 49 Just as we have borne the image of the man of dust, we shall also bear the image of the man of heaven. 50 I tell you this, brethren: flesh and blood cannot inherit the kingdom of God, nor does the perishable inherit the imperishable” (transl. Revised Standard Version).

<sup>22</sup> On Gregory’s notion of the various bodies, see Ramelli forthcoming d; for derivations from Origen, 2018a; in antiquity and Patristics, forthcoming f.

And, since in the beginning God created the crops and not the seeds, which were later produced by the crops, the object of our hope is nothing but what was in the beginning ... every beatitude that will bloom for us thanks to the resurrection will be *a return to the original state of grace*. For we too were ear, in a way, in the beginning ... the first ear was the first human being, Adam ... In the resurrection we shall be born again in our original beauty, and instead of that first ear we shall become the infinite myriads of the crops.<sup>23</sup>

Agriculture serves Macrina's demonstration not only of the resurrection, but also of universal restoration or apokatastasis of all rational creatures to God, the supreme Good.<sup>24</sup> God is a farmer – as he was already styled by Philo in his *On Agriculture* and *On Planting* (*De agricultura, De plantatione*) – and takes care of all of his plants, including damaged ones (which symbolise sinners, damaged by the evil one). In the case of the latter, God will extirpate dandelion and thorny shrubs, that is, evil, from souls, in order to purify them and have them grow and prosper in the Good:

Life spent in virtue will differ from that spent in vice in the following respect: those who in the present life have cultivated themselves by means of virtue will immediately grow up in the form of a perfect ear. But those whose faculty inside their psychic seed during the present life, due to vice, has proven a vain kernel, so to say, damaged by wind – as experts in agriculture say that the so-called hard seeds are – well, in the same way these too, even though they are *born again by virtue of the resurrection, will still need to be cured a great deal by the Farmer*, that they may one day – albeit with difficulty, in the opportune times, because in fact they have not got this capacity per se – grow again into the form of the ear, and *become what we were before falling onto earth*.

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<sup>23</sup> The same agricultural metaphor in reference to the resurrection and restoration will be used by Evagrius of Pontus, a follower of Origen and Gregory of Nyssa, when he models his discourse on 1 Cor 15 in his *Chapters on Knowledge* (*Kephalaia Gnostika*) 2,25: “Just as this body is called the seed of the future ear, so will also this aeon be called seed of the one that will come after it” (see also *ibid.* 1,24). This metaphor refers to resurrection, but for Evagrius, just as for Origen and for Gregory of Nyssa, “resurrection” does not simply mean the resurrection of the body, but also the restoration of the soul. Evagrius lists three types of resurrection, all of which are a kind of apokatastasis or restoration to the original and perfect state: the resurrection of the body, which is the passage from a corruptible to an incorruptible body; that of the soul, which is the passage from a passible to an impassible soul, and that of the spirit or intellect, which is the passage from ignorance to true knowledge (*KG* 5,19.22.25). A new edition, with revisions of Guillaumont's one, with English translation and commentary, of Evagrius's *Kephalaia Gnostika* is Ramelli 2015. On the conception of beginning and end in Neoplatonism and the Origenian tradition, see 2014b.

<sup>24</sup> See Ramelli 2007a.

*And this therapy, applied by the One who presides over the products of the earth, is the extirpation of the darnel plants and the thorny shrubs that had grown up together with the good seed. Indeed, all the force that should feed the root had passed over to a spurious fruit; this is why the genuine seed had remained without nourishment and without the possibility of developing, suffocated as it was by the plant that had germinated *against nature*. Thus, after all spurious and extraneous material has been pulled out, separated from the edible and nourishing fruit, and has disappeared, when *the fire has consumed the part that was against nature*, then the nature of these, too, will turn out to be well fed, and will grow until it will bear fruit, *thanks to God's care, finally recovering, after long periods of time, the common form conferred by God from the beginning ...**

Therefore, after *the purification and disappearance of passions thanks to the appropriate loving care, those defects will be replaced* by each of the respective realities that are conceived in a positive sense: *incorruptibility, life, power, honour, grace, glory*, and every other similar prerogative that we conjecture can be contemplated both in the Godhead itself and in its image, which is human nature.<sup>25</sup>

(*De anima* 157-160)

Apokatastasis will pass through the resurrection and purification of every human being and will be the full recovery of the “image of God”, as Gregory posits in his “theology of the image”. This is the perspective with which the whole dialogue ends.

The assimilation of the soul to a plant and of God to a farmer had deep roots in Philo of Alexandria, as I have mentioned, but also has a closer antecedent in Origen of Alexandria, who was no less known to Gregory than Philo. Origen, in his *Commentary on the Song of Songs* (*Comm. in Cant.* 4,1,10) observed:

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<sup>25</sup> On these last lines see commentary in Ramelli 2007. Translations are always mine, unless otherwise stated.

*In ecclesia diversae arbores singulae quaeque animae credentium intelliguntur, de quibus dicitur: “Omnis arbor quam non plantavit Pater meus caelestis eradicabitur” ... et in unaquaque anima diversae virtutes et efficaciae eius diversae arbores intelliguntur.*

The various plants symbolise each and every soul of the believers in the Church. Of these it is said: “Every plant that my Father in heaven has not planted will be eradicated”. ...Also, the various plants can be understood as the different faculties and powers of each soul.

Here in Origen’s passage the problem is the same as in Gregory’s: bad plants must absolutely be eliminated, and God will indeed eradicate them. These are what is evil in a soul, what God did not create in it – since God is not the creator of evil (as Origen insisted upon in his theodicy).<sup>26</sup>

### **A Multiplicity of References to Science and Technology and their Rationale**

But Gregory’s dialogue *On the Soul and the Resurrection* teems with examples drawn from science and technology even in less solemn and glorious passages. For instance, at the beginning (*De anima* 13) Gregory objects to Macrina’s serenity before the death of their common brother Basil and before her own imminent death, by citing several sciences and disciplines, such as medicine, architecture, and agriculture, that aim at contrasting physical death, implying that this death is the most horrible thing possible, to be avoided by all means. Macrina, however, replies that physical death is of no account at all, and will be annulled by the resurrection. And the whole of her demonstration is conducted precisely on the basis of philosophy and science, in a synergy of *logos* – the same Logos who is Christ and inspires the whole dialogue.

Thus, just to offer one last example among many others that I could adduce, in *De anima* 41D the optical science helps Macrina’s demonstration of the correspondence between the soul and God, both similar because both the soul and God are of intellectual nature. The core of Macrina’s argument is that any fragment of crystal, however small, can reflect the whole solar disc; likewise, human souls reflect God, being in God’s image.

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<sup>26</sup> See, for example, Ramelli 2008; 2019a; forthcoming c.

Gregory has recourse to many sciences and technologies, not only in similitudes, metaphors, and examples, but also – what is certainly more – as direct argumentative supports in the demonstration of the intelligible nature of the soul and its immortality, the rational possibility of the resurrection, and the final universal restoration. In this way, the philosophical and scientific *logos* serves and confirms the truths of Christian faith and shows that they are compatible with reason. This is the main goal of Gregory's whole dialogue.

### **Conclusion: The Unity of the Scientific and Theological Logos the Creator**

Gregory has a deep and authentic interest in scientific knowledge and also a good competence in some sciences. Although he is not a scientist, he is a theologian who uses science and philosophy so that the Christian doctrine of the resurrection (and, for him, also of the restoration) may not only remain an object of faith but can also be justified at the level of the philosophical and scientific *logos*.

The *logos*, which is Christ, has expressed itself in Scripture and became incarnate in Jesus, but it has also been always present in each rational being, especially in those who have exerted their *logos* to the highest degree, such as philosophers and scientists, even among “pagans”. This human *logos* is a gift from God, who created all human beings endowed with rationality. This is why seeking a rational explanation – on the plane of the philosophical and scientific *logos* – of a doctrine revealed by the *logos* of Scripture is not only legitimate, but also necessary from Gregory of Nyssa's point of view.

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