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## THE RESEARCH OF THE ANTHROPOLOGY OF GREGORY OF NYSSA IN HUNGARY

BY JUDIT D. TÓTH

3rd November, 2006 was the first time a habilitation lecture in patristic a theme took place at the University of Debrecen. It showed the problems of the interpretation of Genesis 1,26 by Saint Gregory of Nyssa referring to the content and connection to the concepts of *eicon* and *homoiosis* and their interrelatedness (“*The eicon and homoiosis in the interpretation of Gen 1,26 of Saint Gregory of Nyssa*”). The subject matter of my lecture fitted my research on the anthropology of Gregory of Nyssa, results of which I summarized in a monograph titled “*Body and Soul: Anthropology and Interpretation in the Anthropology of Saint Gregory of Nyssa*”, published in the autumn of 2006. [D. Tóth Judit: *Test és lélek. Antropológia és értelmezés Nüsszai Szent Gergely antropológiájában* (Catena. Monográfiák 8). Budapest: Kairosz Kiadó, 2006, 320 oldal.]

Using hermeneutical and exegetical viewpoints, the purpose of the monograph is to give a brief presentation of the ideas of the Cappadocian Father on man: what he thought about the state, relationship and fate of the human body and soul/mind in his early anthropological works. Concerning its theme, the approach and methods of this work, it supports patristic research prospering and becoming gradually important in Hungary. Making use of results of the relevant scientific literature, the dissertation gives a summary about the ideas of the Church Father on man, to be precise, on the body and soul/mind as he drafted it in connection with creation, death and resurrection in the so called early anthropological works dated between 378/379 and 382 AD. (Although the international research of the works of Gregory of Nyssa is extremely extensive, its results are hardly available for inquirers in Hungary – my book is the first monograph published in Hungarian language about Saint Gregory of Nyssa.)

The work places in the centre the two large anthropological treatises of the Nyssenian bishop (*De hominis opificio*, *De anima et resurrectione*). It analyzes how the Cappadocian Father – using the Christian hermeneutical and exegetical

methods of that period – “fills out” the Scripture’s revelations concerning man with the elements of philosophical tradition. The methods and different text-forms of theological thinking were determined by the strong polemic situations, and these place the problems of *interpretation* in the centre, within which the philosophical tradition becomes determining.

Besides the introduction, my work embraces four parts and an appendix. After a brief introduction of the life and importance of the Cappadocian Father, in the first part entitled “*In the School of Church Fathers*” some general, necessarily simple thoughts open up the work, connected to the anthropological questions that locate the theme, the questions of connection of body and soul into the wider frame.

I analyze the questions of the relationship of body and soul in the second and third parts in detail. In the second part (“*Body and Soul in the Creation*”) I start from the Cappadocian Father’s own anthropological starting point for the research of body and soul, namely, the biblical story of creation: on the basis of Gen 1,26 the *eicon* becomes the anthropological key concept. Gregory of Nyssa’s idea of *eicon* and his ideas shed light on the connection of *eicon* (image) and *homoiosis* (likeness) which show how he fills out and interprets the revelation of the creation of man with other biblical places and on the basis of the philosophical tradition, above all on the basis of Platonism.

Further topics discussed in this part: *physis* (nature) as the content of *eicon*; the *metousia* (participation) as the ontological ground of image of God; “double creation”; double nature of man; classification and hierarchy of beings; the relationship of body, soul, and mind; passions of soul; question of evil and sin.

In the third part of the work (“*Body and soul in the death and the resurrection*”) I discuss how Gregory of Nyssa imagined the fate and the connection of body and soul generally in relation to death and resurrection, and I touch upon the idea of *apocatastasis ton panton* that shows the influence of Origen. I examine the concept of *eidos* that becomes the ground of the identity of man before death and after resurrection, additionally I focus on questions of the resurrected body as *eicon* being realized in future, resurrection as apocatastasis (*restoration*), the universality of restoration (*apocatastasis ton panton*) and the consequence of the idea of double creation in the eschatology of Gregory of Nyssa. The question of evil and sin is found as well in the work but in this case from the perspective of judgement and punishment. Further questions are the eternity or non-perpetuity of punishment, *catharsis* of soul and the state of *apatheia*.

The fourth chapter analyzes the paradigm of the virtuous, philosophical life and longing for the likeness of the divine nature, in *Vita Sanctae Macrinae* with the idea of the *bios philosophicos* in its centre.

I positioned two studies in the Appendix to illustrate the background of the theme of body and soul. These are important for the study and the interpretation of the anthropological questions but placing them in the main text would have broken the coherency of the discussion. The first study ("*Gregory of Nyssa and the pagan philosophical tradition*") gives a brief summary of problems that determine the Cappadocian Father's attitude to the pagan tradition. The second one ("*Hermeneutic and exegesis*") takes into consideration the most important hermeneutical principles and exegetical methods – touching upon the background of the philosophical language – which the Cappadocian Father used in his early anthropological works.

My further research plan is to study the questions of body and soul in the later works of the Cappadocian Father and based on this to show the whole anthropological system of Gregory of Nyssa. In the early work Gregory established his anthropological ideas; the characteristic features of these theses hardly changed later, only the emphases shifted. This becomes the basis of his mysticism too in the works written after the middle of 380 AD. Further studies would be important because can get access to one of the most important theologians' and thinkers' ideas on man in the 4th century.