

“OVIDIUS” UNIVERSITY OF CONSTANȚA  
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DOCTORAL DOMAIN: THEOLOGY

**DOCTORAL THESIS  
ABSTRACT**

**THE KNOWLEDGE OF GOD  
IN THE THEOLOGICAL WORK  
OF SAINT GREGORY THE THEOLOGIAN**

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**Keywords:** knowledge, Holy Trinity, Saint Gregory the Theologian, pneumatology, Theological Orations, theology, apophatic knowledge, dogma, theological gnoseology, divine koinonia, hypostasis, ousia, person

## Abstract

The main issue we dealt with in this work is to show how man knows God and where his knowledge lies in the experience of Saint Gregory of Nazianzus. This teaching agrees with that of the other Fathers of the Church and is in the spirit of Orthodoxy. He develops his teaching in the fight against Eunomios.<sup>1</sup>

To be able to speak about God we resort to the experience of the Church Fathers, when we do not have our own experience. In this sense, we quote, Father Ioannis Romanidis according to his aloud teaching recorded in the *Empirical Dogmatics*, volume I:

„The knowledge of God can not have other source but the deified man who knows God directly through the empirical way. The experience of these deified people is the foundation of the righteous belief about God. That is the deified man knows God directly, then this deified teaches us about God, and so we acquire the knowledge about God from the deified man.<sup>2</sup>

Patristic gnoseology is different from any other anthropocentric ones. In the patristic tradition, there is a clear distinction between the knowledge of God through the experience of Revelation and the knowledge about God through the belief in the teaching. Thus, Saint Gregory of Nazianzus speaks in the theological *Orations* preached in the chapel of Resurrection, in Constantinople in 380, about theology as the process that took place within him.

For this reason, the Saint Gregory does not present the great doctrinal truths in a complicated and lifeless manner, but very vivid and clear. The five theological *Orations* of Saint Gregory are presented as a theology within the spiritual life, which acts as soon as possible on the life and the being of man. They do not have the appearance of a simple dogmatic canon, less of an apologetic work, but rather of a delightful formulation of spiritual life.<sup>3</sup>

This work was undertaken out from the need felt to value the work of Saint Gregory the Theologian about the knowledge of God.

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<sup>1</sup> Mihai Popescu, *Sfântul Grigorie de Nazianz și învățătura sa*, în BOR, 1904-1905, nr. 10, p. 1136.

<sup>2</sup> Ierótheos, Mitropolitul Nafpaktosului, *Dogmatica empirică a Bisericii Ortodoxe Sobornicești*, după învățăturile prin viu grai ale Părintelui Ioannis Romanides, Volumul I (Dogmă – Morală – Revelație), trad. din limba greacă de Tatiana Petrace, Edit. Doxologia, Iași, 2014, p. 220.

<sup>3</sup> Arhim. Grigore Băbuș, *Cele cinci cuvântări teologice ale Sfântului Grigorie Teologul*, în MO, 1958, nr. 7-8, p. 499.

This research has as a subject of study a theme that has been a concern for me over the time, the subject being included also in my license paper. I think it is an important topic for the Orthodox Church, of interest for the contemporary theology, and very little approached in the Tomitan theology, also.

Secondly, this subject could provide an answer to the current problems of our society, secularized and „milled” by the effects of globalization, a possibility of escape from the marasm of life and a personal achievement by introducing to the healing teachings of the Saint Fathers.

Ultimately, theology is a therapeutical science and is intended preoccupied to heal the man, so that he can come evolve the *image* to the *likeness* of God.

In a secular and secularized society, on the verge of collapse, the reconsideration of the saving teachings of the Church Fathers is a response to the new forms and living conditions. More and more Christians have an interest in Orthodox spirituality, which gives us the re-establishment of our spiritual balance. Therefore, we need, to make known the important personalities of early Christianity, because through the example of their lives and through their teachings, we are able to regain the Christian moral and religious values that are so necessary for the contemporary man.

In the Orthodox world, Saint Gregory is known as Saint Gregory of Nazianzus, after the name of the city near which was located the small place Arianzus, where he was actually born, the name under which his father was designated, bishop of Nazianzus, or under the name of Saint Gregory the Theologian, the appellative which was conferred to at the Fourth Ecumenical Council of Chalcedon (451), since Saint Gregory was the first and foremost a theologian of the inner life of the Holy Trinity.

Starting from this appellative, we propose a presentation of the „word about God” or the theology of our Saint. In this sense, we consider that some clarification is needed in relation to the current concerns of theological research that have focused on the style and theology of Saint Gregory of Nazianzus.

Although considered to be the greatest stylist of the patristic age, the academic research has begun to progress in studying the complexity and subtlety of his thinking, only from the mid-twentieth century. There have been works by European and American scholars who have brought new interpretation of this great man, and new translations have been made, which have awakened an increasing attention to his life

and activity.<sup>4</sup>

We were considering to approach this scientific research, relying on the reevaluation of previous research. In the end, I did a well-organized work, written on the most pertinent information that has been given over the time on the subject of knowledge of God.

**The objectives** of the research project are the following:

1. to realize the most detailed presentation of the age, the historical conditions and the theological and patristic personality of Saint Gregory the Theologian, in order to overcome through the richness of information the succinct narratives of the textbooks of Ecclesiastical History and Patrology edited up to now based on books dedicated to the life and work of Saint Gregory, published abroad;

2. to systematize the main doctrinal themes approached by Saint Gregory the Theologian and to highlight the contribution he made to clarify these problems in the conditions of the theological controversies and of the main heresy of his time;

3. to identify of the conception of Saint Gregory of Nazianzus about theology and theologians and the problem of the knowledge of God in his theological work;

4. to highlight the importance and timelessness of the Trinitarian theology of Saint Gregory of Nazianzus along with that of the other Cappadocian Fathers and the one of Saint John Chrysostom.

The proposed theme is not an absolute novelty in the contemporary field of Romanian academic theology. The dogmatic doctrine of the Holy Trinity of Saint Gregory the Theologian falls within the sphere of influence of the fourth century theology, the era of formulation of the Trinitarian and Christological dogmas of the Eastern Orthodox Church. The novelty consists in the approach of this theme from the perspective of the contemporary reevaluation of the finesse of the craft of words.

**The research questions** are:

a. What are the reasons that justify the designation of Saint Gregory the Theologian as a symbol of the theological science?

b. Which is the contribution of Saint Gregory to the explanation of the Nicene, Athanassian Christology?

c. Which is the contribution of Saint Gregory to the formulation of the dogma about consubstantiality of the Holy Spirit with Father and with Son?

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<sup>4</sup> John A. McGuckin, *Sfântul Grigorie de Nazianz. o biografie intelectuală*, trad. Adrian Podaru, Editura Renașterea, Cluj-Napoca, 2013, p. 22. See the following pages.

- d. What are the arguments to consider Gregory the Theologian one of the greatest doctrinal exegets of the Holy Scripture of his time?
- e. Which is the link between the Hellenistic pagan philosophy and the presence of philosophical terminology in the (patristic) writings of Saint Gregory?
- f. What role did Saint Gregory of Nazianzus play in the formulation of the Trinitarian dogma?
- g. In which way the experience of Revelation gives man the theological knowledge of God which is the foundation of the Orthodox theology?
- h. What are the conditions that one who wishes to praise God should fulfill?

**The stake of the research** was that, in the end, to have a well-grounded work to highlight a patristic treasure about the knowledge of God as experience, as well as the genuine and original personality of Saint Gregory the Theologian.

**The first research hypothesis** of this theme is related to the problem of the knowledge of God, the main concern of the Great Cappadocian. The greatest purpose of his theology was to pass on his spiritual childhood from purification to enlightenment.

**The second hypothesis** of research is that Saint Gregory the Theologian, the great personality of the fourth century, is the one who has theologised and crystallized the doctrines of the Holy Trinity and those of the Christology and Pneumatology. This Saint polished these dogmas in the disputes with the heretic Eunomius and the thesis of the Arians and with the great indefinite party of the “pneumatomachs”, decisively contributing with the other Cappadocians and with Saint John Chrysostom to the formulation of the Trinitarian dogma as a religious philosophy.

The theology of Saint Gregory remains normative in defining intratrinitarian relationships in a period of great theological framing.

**The third hypothesis** of research considers the position that Saint Gregory of Nazianzus took as president of the second ecumenical council from Constantinople (381) reaffirming boldly the consubstantiality of the Holy Spirit and its confession at all costs. Although the synodal bishops accepted a compromise formula in expressing the relationship of the Spirit with the other persons of the Holy Trinity, Saint Gregory of Nazianzus achieved what he intended, but postumously, because his *Orations* came to be accepted in a general way and he is considered “the theological mind” of the council from 381.

**The fourth hypothesis**, in relation to the precedent one, refers to the profoundness of his theological conception that brought him the surname of "the Theologian" after the synod of Chalcedon (451), a title granted before him only to Saint Apostle and Evangelist John, and after him to Saint Simeon the New Theologian. Saint Gregory became the most autographed author after the Holy Scripture of the entire Byzantine manuscript tradition.<sup>5</sup>

### **Methods of work**

The main method with which we started this theoretical perspective was that of documentation, biographic research and analysis. After collecting the existing and available bibliography from the Theology libraries in the country and abroad, we have moved to the thematic systematization of the acquired information.

The longitudinal chronological method was used especially in the first chapters of our scientific approach being used to provide to the reader with some support in making a clear idea of the event that caused the proposed subject.

The fourth method of study was the quantitative one. This method allowed us to gather together a large number of materials that directly or indirectly depict notions about our theme. It is closely related to the comparative method, which allowed us to check the quality of the selected information. In this respect, I presented the common elements, as well as the particular contribution of the other Cappadocians and Saint John Chrysostom at the formulation of Trinitarian dogma.

The transversal temporal method provided the possibility of an objective interpretation of the contouring of triadology in thought and writings of Saint Gregory.

Another method used was the deductive, according to which, starting from the hypothesis expressed and from the obtained and selected information we come to the observation of some new elements related to the researched theme.

We also mention the inductive method by which we thoroughly researched the ones expressed by Saint Gregory the Theologian on the theme of theological gnoseology, trying to conclude these research stages of research.

### **Stages of research**

For the logic of theological discourse, we divided the thesis into four major parts:

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<sup>5</sup> Jean Bernardi, *Grigorie de Nazianz. Teologul și epoca sa (330-390)*, trad. Cristian Pop. Cu o selecție a Poemelor autobiografice în traducerea diac. Ioan I. Ică jr., Edit. Deisis, Sibiu, 2002, p. 386.

**Part I.** General considerations on the theological and patristic personality of Saint Gregory the Theologian; Part II. Theology and theologians according to Saint Gregory the Theologian; Part III. The knowledge of God in the five theological *Orations* of Saint Gregory the Theologian; Part IV. The Importance and the timelessness of Saint Gregory the Theologian's teaching about knowledge of God.

We will continue to mention the working steps after which our research was carried out:

a) Selective bibliography analysis. At this stage it was envisaged the purchase of the selective bibliography and the selection of materials for the chosen theme.

b) Definition of content. After finding out the materials and selecting them, by quality and quantity, we have compiled a table of contents to discuss all the research aspects of the chosen topic.

c) Developing the bibliography on the table of contents. After reading the content, I resumed the bibliographic analysis to counterbalance the volume and quality of each part and chapter in order to avoid in my research confrontation with undesirable situations, if in any chapter there was not enough material for the debate.

Starting with the research data, the first chapter of the first part proposes to present the theologian and his age. The subject of the first subchapter is the historical context in which Saint Gregory the Theologian lived. The subject in this horizon tour also took into account the person of the Emperor. The East had more sovereigns who succeeded the throne in the course of the fourth century. At first was Constantine, who died when our hero was about seven years old. At his death the power was divided between his three sons: Constantine II, Constans II and Constant. On November 3, 361 arrives on the throne Julian. Disappeared following a major military expedition against the Persians he is succeeded by Valentinian who will rule with his brother Valens. He was followed by a Spanish Theodosius<sup>6</sup>, who became co-emperor and Augustus of the East on January 19<sup>th</sup>, 379.<sup>7</sup>

Beyond the emperor's person who succeeds we must also capture the aspects of the institution itself. The emperor of the fourth century is a distant monarch who adopts a hieratic and majestic attitude. With the exception, of Julian, a Greek man, the emperors of this era are Latins, military and organizers.<sup>8</sup>

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<sup>6</sup> *Ibidem*, p. 26-27.

<sup>7</sup> John A. McGuckin, *Op. cit.*, p. 345.

<sup>8</sup> Jean Bernardi, *Op. cit.*, p. 27.

With regard to the state of the Eastern Church after the end of the persecution, we will try to outline the great problems that the Church met then. When they come out of the clandestine life and obscurity that have been imposed upon them for many generations, the work that churches knew best might be that the name they assign must be used in plural. We talk about churches rather than church. Here is, of course, the notion of the unique and universal church, but this is more a mysterious concept or reality than a concrete and tangible fact. This plural, but which in our eyes is susceptible to attire two different concepts had only one meaning: then it designated various local Churches grouped around the bishop, never the bodies that were facing.<sup>9</sup>

In terms of the episcopal function we must insist on an essential aspect: the need to preach.<sup>10</sup> When some charismas are missing, this has long been learned in the antiquity rhetoric schools. The main features of the bishop of this century are: he did some higher education, he had to be experienced in managing the properties in his family and in the excercise of local responsibilities. Under these conditions, many of bishops were not baptized. The baptism came before the santification as a bishop. It should that the bishops come from the ranks of the great seniors because he was supposed to be a social protector for all around him.<sup>11</sup>

The vast majority of believers were not baptized. Although some fervent young men make the decision to baptize, most do this in old age, sometimes on the deathbed.<sup>12</sup> Besides the believers baptized or not, in the religious landscape appear and grow the monks.<sup>13</sup> When it happens, rarely, that the bishops to be chosen among the monks, this activity took place on an ascetic austerity ground. Soon appeared the court bishops. They spent most of their time in the emperor's suite at Constantinople. Their lifesyle was similar to the other officials.<sup>14</sup>

Beyond the measures taken by Constantine and his other successors, remains the traditional contrast between pagans and Christians. The word "pagan" has a widely understanding, but it was Christian disparagement of non-Christians. *Paganus* may have meant "hick". If *paganus* was army slang for "civilian", it meant someone who had not enlisted in the service of Christ. In the mid-fourth century the emperor Julian reclaimed

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<sup>9</sup> *Ibidem*, p. 45-46.

<sup>10</sup> *Ibidem*, p. 44.

<sup>11</sup> *Ibidem*, p. 52-54.

<sup>12</sup> *Ibidem*, p. 41.

<sup>13</sup> *Ibidem*, p. 42.

<sup>14</sup> *Ibidem*, p. 44.

the term Hellene ("Greek") for followers of the traditional religion, on the grounds that true religion was bound up with Greek culture and philosophy. Some modern writers use "polytheist", to designate the term non-Christians, meaning the belief in many gods. Moreover, Greeks and Romans were not, strictly speaking, polytheist, for they believed that the many gods of traditional cult were subordinates of the one god or manifestation of the single power. This position is sometimes called "henotheist", a modern term for belief in one supreme god; it is also called "soft monotheism", belief in one god that allows for lesser divine beings. (Fowden, 1998; Athanassiadi and Frede 1999, reviewed by T. Barnes 2001.)<sup>15</sup>

In the 2<sup>nd</sup> subchapter of chapter 1, we propose to present the theological controversies and the main heresies of the era in which Saint Gregory lived.

It must be emphasized from the beginning that during the fourth century the appearance of the new heresies such as Arianism, Pneumatomahism, and Apollinarism, besides those inherited from the previous centuries (Gnosticism, Marcianism, Montanism, Antitrinitarianism and its modalistic variant, Sabellianism) generated new disputes and conflicts.

To combat these heresies, two ecumenical councils were assembled in the fourth century: the first is reunited at Nicaea in 325 at the call of Emperor Constantine in order to remove the Arian heresy, and the second in Constantinople in 381, at the intervention of the Emperor Theodosius the Great, in order to condemn two heresies of the time: the one supported by Macedonius, bishop of Constantinople, namely pneumatomahism, and that of Apolinarius, bishop of Laodicea, who denies the presence of the rational soul in Christ, being replaced by the Word – the divine Logos.<sup>16</sup>

In the 3<sup>rd</sup> subchapter of chapter 1 we presented aspects related to the person and the work of Saint Gregory.

Saint Gregory was born at Arianzus, near Nazianzus, at 329-330, as son of bishop Gregory – called „The Elder” – who before becoming a Christian was adept of the hypsistarian sect. His mother Nona, a pious Christian, with a rare energy, contributes to the conversion of her husband (325) and earns his son Gregory after insistent prayers towards God. Gregory had a brother Caesar, learned physician and a sister Gorgia. Young Gregory received preliminary education in his parents' house.

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<sup>15</sup> Gillian Clark, *Christian and Roman Society*, Cambridge University Press, New York, 2004, p. 34-35.

<sup>16</sup> Pr. Ion Bria, *Dicționar de teologie ortodoxă, A-Z*, ed. a II-a revizuită și completată, EIB, București, 1994, p. 356.

Then, he studied at the Caesarea in Cappadocia where he met his future friend Saint Basil the Great; after that, he studied at Caesarea in Palestine, rich in the library and memories of Origen, and later at Alexandria, and finally in "the Golden" Athens.<sup>17</sup> After this period of studies in Athens, which lasts from 348 to 358, almost 10 years, he returns to the homeland where he is baptized. According to some authors, the baptism would have happened in Athens.<sup>18</sup> After this important event in his life, he is called by Saint Basile to the monastery he founded on the shore of the Iris in Pontus. This serene life is interrupted by the intervention of Gregory the Elder. His father ordains him as a priest against his will, probably at the Christmas of 361. Following this "tyrannical act", Saint Gregory escapes in Pontus to the Saint Basil, wherefrom he returns, to his father's insistence, next Easter. Now he agrees to help his father in pastoral care. In 371<sup>19</sup> young Gregory is ordained bishop of Sassima by Saint Basil the Great. It is possible that Gregory never set his foot in Sassima as bishop of this city, although he knew it quite well.<sup>20</sup>

In 374 his father and his mother died. Afterwards, Saint Gregory retreats to Tecla monastery, to Seleucia, in Isauria. At the insistence of an Orthodox delegation, which came from Constantinople in 378, after the death of Emperor Valens and at the urge of Saint Basil, Saint Gregory went to Constantinople in 379 to regroup and restore the Orthodox Church there. He opened a chapel in the house of a relative, where he liturgised and spoke his tastefully sermons. In this chapel symbolically called the Resurrection (Anastasia), Saint Gregory spoke among other Orations the *Five Theological Orations*, too, that later brought him the name of Theologian, his missionary victory against the Arians – Anomies grew. His missionary success against heretics led to his official establishment as the bishop of the town by the Emperor Theodosius on the 27th of November 380. The 2<sup>nd</sup> Ecumenical Council, held at Constantinople beginning with May 381, confirmed the election of Saint Gregory as bishop of Constantinople. After the death of Meletius, the president of the Council, which happened in meantime, Saint Gregory was called to the presidency of the council. The arrival of late Egyptian and late Macedonian bishops has raised the problem of the canonical election of Saint Gregory. They reproached that he was already Bishop of Sassima. Saint Gregory resigned and, after a speech of farewell to the Church from

<sup>17</sup> Pr. Ioan G. Coman, *Patrologie*, Sfânta Mănăstire Dervent, 2000, p. 120.

<sup>18</sup> Cf. John A. McGuckin, *Op. cit.*, p. 132.

<sup>19</sup> After John A. McGuckin in. 372.

<sup>20</sup> Preot Prof. Dr. Ioan G. Coman, *Op. cit.*, p. 120.

Constantinople, left in June 381 in Cappadocia. He came to Nazianzus, where he ran the episcopate's administration for some time, still vacant, until he found a replacement. He spent the last years of his life at Arianzus, praying, studying, and creating poems. He passed to the eternal life in 389 or 390, at the age of 60 years old.<sup>21</sup>

Chapter II of Part I aims to highlight the contribution of Saint Gregory to the development of patristic literary patrimony.

The literary inheritance of Saint Gregory of Nazianzus is particularly vast. His work, written in prose and lyrics, contains orations, poems and letters.

I. The *Orations*. The 45 *Orations* or speeches are divided by content in:

- dogmatic Orations;
- Great Celebrations Orations;
- obituaries;
- panegyrics or hagiographics;
- occasional Orations.<sup>22</sup>

II. The poetic work of Saint Gregory is large and vast. Saint Gregory wrote 507 poems with a total of about 18,000 verses divided by Maurias in two books: I. Theological poems, in two sections: a) dogmatic (38), b) moral (40); II. Historical poems, in two sections: a) about himself (206), b) about others; many short epigrams (94) and epitaphs (129).<sup>23</sup>

III. The letters of Saint Gregory, very precious in their form and art, are in number of 284.<sup>24</sup>

IV. Saint Gregory's testament written in 381, at Constantinople, provide that the wealth of the author was let on behalf of the Church from Nazianzus, in order to be used for the benefit of the poor.<sup>25</sup>

The third chapter of the first part presents the main doctrinal themes approached by Saint Gregory the Theologian, namely Christology, Pneumatology, Soteriology and Holy Sacraments.

**In part II, Theology and Theologians according Saint Gregory Theologian,**

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<sup>21</sup> *Ibidem*, p. 120-121.

<sup>22</sup> Nechita Runcan, *Istoria literaturii patristice din perioada sinoadelor ecumenice*, vol. I, Edit. Vasiliana '98, Iași, 2009, p. 453.

<sup>23</sup> Preot Prof. Dr. Ioan G. Coman, *Op. cit.*, 122.

<sup>24</sup> *Ibidem*.

<sup>25</sup> *Ibidem*.

chapter I tries to highlight the contribution of Saint Gregory to the clarifying of the doctrinal issues.

In the 1<sup>st</sup> subchapter there are analyzed the premises of his theology.

In the 2<sup>nd</sup> subchapter is presented the theological contemplation of the "theologian *par excellence*".

In subchapter 3 is analyzed the relation of the divine persons and the divinity of the Holy Spirit.

In subchapter 4, Saint Gregory is depicted as a hierarch and guide of the Church.

In subchapter 5, it is emphasized the contribution of Gregory in the fight against Apollinarius concerning the two natures of the Savior.

Chapter II attempts to capture the theologian's face in Saint Gregory of Nazianzus's view.

In the first subchapter it is presented the conception of Saint Gregory of Nazianzus about theology and theologians. In subchapter 2 of chapter II we talked about the apophatic knowledge of God.

In chapter III, The philosophical terminology of Hellenistic billing and its adaptation for the rendering of the Christian teaching, I raised the problem of the presence of philosophical terminology in the patristic writings and in Saint Gregory's writings.

In **Part III** we look into the problem of the knowledge of God in the *Five Theological Orations* of Saint Gregory of Nazianzus.

The first Oration is titled *Early Speaking to the Eunomians* and is a preface to the following four Orations. The first Oration advances three problems:

- the abuse of reason and the failure of the power of reason when it becomes sophistic;
- the issue on the Christian theologians;
- the issue of the themes to be approached by the Christian theologian.<sup>26</sup>

The 2<sup>nd</sup> Oration is entitled *About Theologians* and starts with a summary of the first Oration. The second Oration begins "after I have thoroughly cleaned the theologian on the way". It is the word about God and deity in general.<sup>27</sup>

The second Oration expresses the idea of our inability to encompass the Unseen.

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<sup>26</sup> Anton I. Adămuț, *Literatură și Filosofie Creștină, sec. I-VIII*, vol. I, *Cuvânt înainte* de Gheorghe Vlăduțescu, Edit. Fides, Iași, 1997, p. 263-264.

<sup>27</sup> *Ibidem*, p. 265.

Saint Gregory proposed to show the only way that leads to God. Knowledge about God is limited to the “first floating” limit, in Gregory’s own words. Impeded by “օօպա”, the natural revelation remains open, that is “the second floating”, which is the contemplation of the world in terms of order and causability.<sup>28</sup>

The 3<sup>rd</sup> Oration is entitled *About the Son*, and it is centered on defending the deity of the Son. It contains 21 chapters grouped in two parts: chapters 1-17 and chapters: 18-21.<sup>29</sup> In the first part, Gregory speaks about the deity of the Son and the whole christological doctrine is developed extensively, arguing step by step to all the objections of the eunomians, exhausting all their points of support.<sup>30</sup>

In Part III, Saint Gregory of Nazianzus, showing a deep knowledge of the Holy Scripture, enumerates very richly quotes in the Holy Scripture from the Old and New Testament, that show the divinity of the Son and the Father.<sup>31</sup>

The 4<sup>th</sup> Oration entitled *About the Son*, is a continuation of the third Oration. What does it follow? To further demonstrate the deity of the Son against the objections that containing names and humble situations about the Son, things that can not be said about God. The Oration contains 21 chapters, too, and shares similar ideas with the third one: Part I (Chapters 1-17) and Part II (Chapters 18-21)<sup>32</sup> Part I presents the ten Scriptural objections brought by the Eunomians against the divinity of the Son and the answers to these objections. Part II deals with God’s names in general (Chapters 17-20) and the names of Son, especially, with scriptural documentation (Chapters 20-21).<sup>33</sup>

The 5<sup>th</sup> Theological Oration entitled *About the Holy Spirit* begins with the words: “So was our word about the Son (...) But what can you say about the Holy Spirit? Where from do you bring us a strange God, unpresent in the Scriptures?” Therefore, the fifth Oration is dedicated to the defence of the divinity of the Spirit and is directed against the pneumatomahs. More moderate than the Arians, they admitted the deity of the Son, but not that of the Spirit, considered an absent God in the Scriptures, and therefore a simple innovation. The Oration comprises 33 chapters and has a double character: a special one (the defence of the divinity of the Spirit) and another (precise formulations of the deity of the divine hypostases and the most precise and the briefest

<sup>28</sup> Pr. Ilie I. Brătan, *Sfântul Grigorie de Nazianz dascăl ortodox*, în MO, 1976, nr. 7-8, p. 522.

<sup>29</sup> Anton I. Adămuț, *Op. cit.*, p. 267.

<sup>30</sup> Pr. Ilie I. Brătan, *Op. cit.*, p. 523.

<sup>31</sup> Arhim. Grigore Băbuș, *Op. cit.*, p. 494.

<sup>32</sup> Anton I. Adămuț, *Op. cit.*, p. 271.

<sup>33</sup> Sf. Grigorie de Nazianz, *Cuvântări teologice (cinci cuvântări despre Dumnezeu)*, trad. din limba greacă, cuvânt înainte și note de Gheorghe Tilea, din *Cuvânt înainte*, Edit. Herald, București, 2008, p. 17.

definition of the Holy Trinity). In fact, being the last Oration, it was natural that it, to include a recapitulation of the dogma of the Trinity.<sup>34</sup>

**Part IV** of the research, The Importance and the timelessness of Saint Gregory the Theologian's teaching about the knowledge of God is structured in three chapters. The first is entitled The Influence of Saint Gregory's Trinitarian theology on the subsequent Christian thinking and treats the teaching about the knowledge of God at the other Cappadocian Fathers and at Saint John Chrysostom. In the second subchapter we aim to highlight The Contribution of the Cappadocian Fathers to the formulation of the Trinitarian dogma and its fruits for Christian dogma. In the last subchapter I approached the theme relating to the actuality of the theological thinking of the Three Hierarchs at the beginning of the third millennium.

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<sup>34</sup> Anton I. Adămut, *Op. cit.*, p. 274-275.

## CONCLUSIONS

In this work I emphasized the role that Saint Gregory had in the patristic gnoseology. We can say that Saint Gregory of Nazianzus has rightly acquired the surname of “the Theologian” *par excellence* of the Ecumenical Orthodoxy, because he is not only a theologian of God’s vision, but a theologian of a Theology who has in the very center the *theoptia* (that is, the sight of God), experienced before him by the Profets and Apostles.

The great Cappadocian hierarch establishes first the relations between the persons of the Holy Trinity and the specifics of each of them: the Father, the Son and the Holy Spirit have in common their being, their uncreation and divinity. The Son and the Holy Spirit share the fact that they are from the Father.<sup>35</sup>

The Cappadocian Fathers understood the Trinity in terms of a divine monarchy. In this monarchy, the Father is the source and cause of the existence of the Son and of the Holy Spirit and He is recognized as the divine monarch. In the exclusive role of Father – as source and cause – is that divine persons remain distinct.<sup>36</sup>

The Godhead remains a monarchy in which Father is the *arché*. The Person of Father is that which constitutes the Godhead in its uniqueness and communion. Thus, *ousia* is the common reference point of the Godhead’s communion, without being understood as the collective substance.<sup>37</sup>

The divine *koinōnia* is expressed by the irreducibility of each *hypostasis* to the *ousia*. The controlling concept of the particular in the term of *hypostasis* allows the concept of differentiated Godhead to be brought to a further stage of refinement. The irreducibility of the two terms in the Cappadocian’s understanding brings clarity to the ontological restatement of *ousia* in terms of *koinōnia*.<sup>38</sup>

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<sup>35</sup> Răzvan Fibișan, *Contribuția Triadologică a Sfântului Grigorie de Nazianz*, în AB, 2014, nr. 7-9, p. 89.

<sup>36</sup> Nigel Rostock, *Two Different Gods or Two Types of Unity? A Critical Response to Zizioulas’ Presentation of ‘The Father as Cause’ with Reference to the Cappadocian Fathers and Augustine*, în „New Blackfriars”, vol. 91, nr. 1033 (2010), published by Wiley, p. 325.

<sup>37</sup> Paul M. Collins, *Trinitarian Theology, West and East, Karl Barth, the Cappadocian Fathers and John Zizioulas*, Oxford University Press, New York, 2001, p. 165.

<sup>38</sup> *Ibidem*.

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