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# The *Imago Dei* as an Eschatological Concept in Gregory of Nyssa

**Abstract:** Der Beitrag zeigt, dass für Gregor von Nyssa die „ursprüngliche“ Schöpfung des Menschen nach dem Bild Gottes, wie sie vor allem in *De hominis opificio* dargestellt wird, in der Tat die eschatologische Bestimmung des Menschen ist, die Gott von Ewigkeit her voraussieht, während wir über diese „ursprüngliche“ Schöpfung nur als eine Widerspiegelung unserer am Ende der Zeit verwirklichten Bestimmung spekulieren können.

**Keywords:** Gregory of Nyssa, image of God, human creation, eternity vs. time, protology vs. eschatology

## 1 Introduction

“What is that which was? It is that which will be! And what is that which was done? It is that which will be done (τί τὸ γεγονός αὐτὸ τὸ γενησόμενον καὶ τί τὸ πεπονημένον αὐτὸ τὸ ποιηθισόμενον),” reads one in Eccl 1:9 LXX. When Gregory of Nyssa was commenting on this verse, he confronted a question of the relation between the past and the future. He argues that this relation is not symmetrical: paradoxically, to know the past, one has to look at the future, not vice versa. The latter can provide us with the only epistemic way to the former. To know “what was” (τὸ γενόμενον or ὁ γέγονε), one has to look at “what is to come” (τὸ ἐσόμενον). And the notion of the creation after the image<sup>1</sup> concerns precisely these two realities. Consequently, to know “what came to be in the beginning,” that is, to know what the being after the image is, one should look at human destiny. Thus, the contemplation of the perfect existence of the human being becomes a key to understanding Gen 1:26.<sup>2</sup>

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1 It must be noted straight away that Gregory did not follow Origen (cf. *Princ.* 3.6.1), as many others did, in distinguishing between the image and likeness.

2 Eccl. 1 (GNO V), 295. Here Gregory explains also that human destiny consists in the exaltation of the human being by virtue and describes the path of virtuous life through various “visual” metaphors (e.g., washing away “all stain of the filth of matter,” etc.). Seeing this perfect state, one can already have a glimpse of “what was in the beginning, which indeed will truly come to be, namely,

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But how does the present relate to all of this? Gregory's answer is simple: the being after the image is *nowhere* in the present, and for this reason, the present is rightly referred to in Eccl 1:1 as futility (ματαιότης). The being after the image only "was" and is hoped for, but it is certainly not found in that state of human existence that we know and experience.<sup>3</sup> The notion of the image belongs to the "original" creation and also to the eschatological "return" to that state. But this is clearly not enough to understand the precise nature of the relation between the two, as it is perceived by Gregory. To do this, one has not only to read *Op. hom.* carefully but also to compare it with Gregory's eschatological vision because, according to the principle just mentioned, when one narrates "what was," one actually retells what they see while gazing upon "what is to come." This article demonstrates that the "original" creation, as it is presented in *Op. hom.*, is, in fact, the eschatological human destiny that God foresees and foreknows, while we can speculate of this "original" creation only as a reflection of our destiny realised at the end of time.

The article is divided into four parts. In the first two sections, I examine *Op. hom.* 16 and *Op. hom.* 22, respectively. Then I propose an excursus to Gregory's other writings that support my reading of *Op. hom.* Finally, I point to Gregory's *Tunc et ipse* as a key to a fuller comprehension of *Op. hom.*

## 2 *Op. hom.* 16

In *Op. hom.* 16, Gregory is struggling with a question of how the words of Gen 1:26–27a can be applied to human beings given their present miserable condition in which it is difficult to see any traces of God's image.<sup>4</sup> Interestingly, Gregory does not try to find a reconciliation to this contradiction but, on the contrary, sharply distinguishes between the being after God's image, on the one hand, and the actual human existence, on the other. These are simply *two different things* that should not be confused.<sup>5</sup> Gregory finds evidence for this claim in the text of Scripture itself. In

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what is according to the image and likeness of God (τὸ ἐν τοῖς πρώτοις γενόμενον, ὃ γε ἀληθῶς ἐστὶ γενησόμενον, τὸ κατ' εἰκόνα θεοῦ καὶ ὁμοίωσιν)."

<sup>3</sup> Eccl. 1 (GNO V), 295–296.

<sup>4</sup> *Op. hom.* 16 (PG 44, 180–181). In this article, the English translation of *Op. hom.* is by W. Moore and H. A. Wilson (from *Nicene and Post-Nicene Fathers*, ser. 2, vol. 5). The translation was altered when it seemed necessary.

<sup>5</sup> Gregory clearly follows Philo when he states (in PG 44, 181) that "which was made after the image is one thing, and that which is now manifested in wretchedness is another" (ἕτερον μὲν τι τὸ κατ' εἰκόνα γενόμενον, ἕτερον δὲ τὸ νῦν ἐν ταλαιπωρίᾳ δεικνύμενον). What Gregory is saying is very close to what Philo wrote in his *De opificio mundi* because there Philo differentiat-

Gen 1:27, there is *first* a statement on the creation after the image (“according to the image of God he made him”) and *afterwards*, there is a “repetition” (ἐπανάληψις) of human creation (“male and female he made them”).<sup>6</sup> In the latter case, it is not a creation in the image and has nothing to do with it.<sup>7</sup> The proof-text that Gregory gives for this distinction is noteworthy; it is a quotation from Gal 3:28: “for in Christ there is neither male nor female.”<sup>8</sup> Consequently, human beings’ creation in the image points to their future existence in Christ. What this means is analysed below, but for now, I concentrate on Gen 1:27a: “And God made the human being (τὸν ἄνθρωπον), according to the image of God he made him.” Gregory reads this verse

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ed between human creation in Gen 1 and that in Gen 2, saying that there is “a vast difference” (διαφορὰ παμμεγέθης) between those two human beings. And he explains why it is so: ὁ μὲν γὰρ διαπλασθεὶς αἰσθητὸς ἤδη μετέχων ποιότητος, ἐκ σώματος καὶ ψυχῆς συνεστώς, ἀνὴρ ἢ γυνή, φύσει θνητός· ὁ δὲ κατὰ τὴν εἰκόνα ἰδέα τις ἢ γένος ἢ σφραγίς, νοητός, ἀσώματος, οὐτ’ ἄρρεν οὔτε θῆλυ, ἀφθαρτος φύσει (*Opif.* 134). “For the human being who has been moulded as sense-perceptible object already participates in quality, consists of body and soul, is either man or woman, and is by nature mortal. The human being after the image is a kind of idea or genus or seal, is perceived by the intellect, incorporeal, neither male nor female (cf. Gen 1:27), and is immortal by nature” (the English translation is by David T. Runia). And earlier in the treatise (*Opif.* 76), Philo made a similar observation, saying that in Gen 1, the human genus (τὸ γένος) is made, “even though the individuals had not yet taken shape” (μήπω τῶν ἐν μέρει μορφὴν λαβόντων). Thus, Gregory borrowed from Philo the distinction between the two creations. But while Philo demarcates a line between Gen 1 and Gen 2, Gregory transfers this line into the verse Gen 1:27 itself.

6 *Op. hom.* 16 (PG 44, 181).

7 Thus, the creation of the human being can be called “twofold,” or “double” (διπλῆ). For an overview of the whole tradition of this concept, see: Ugo Bianchi, ed., *La ‘doppia creazione’ dell’uomo negli Alessandrini, nei Cappadoci e nella gnosi* (Roma: Edizioni dell’Ateneo & Bizzarri, 1978).

8 *Op. hom.* 16 (PG 44, 181). And a few lines further, Gregory repeats his thesis: Πρῶτον μὲν γὰρ φησιν, ὅτι Ἐποίησεν ὁ Θεὸς κατ’ εἰκόνα τοῦ Θεοῦ τὸν ἄνθρωπον, δεικνὺς διὰ τῶν εἰρημένων, καθὼς φησιν ὁ Ἀπόστολος, ὅτι ἐν τῷ τοιοῦτῳ ἄρρεν καὶ θῆλυ οὐκ ἔστιν. Εἴτα ἐπάγει τῆς ἀνθρωπίνης φύσεως τὰ ἰδιώματα, ὅτι Ἄρρεν καὶ θῆλυ ἐποίησεν αὐτούς. “For he first says that *God made the human being after the image of God*, showing by these words – as the apostle says – that in this being there is neither male nor female. Then he adds the characteristic properties of human nature: *male and female he made them*.” Since here Gregory calls the division into male and female “the characteristic properties of human nature,” human individuals have always been male or female (cf. John Behr, “The Rational Animal: A Rereading of Gregory of Nyssa’s *De hominis opificio*,” *J ECS* 7 (1999): 219–247, 243–244). In *Op. hom.* 16 (PG 44, 185), Gregory considers God’s foreknowledge as the reason for that division, which means that due to divine foreknowledge, human beings are ‘adapted’ to the life which they confront from the very first moment of their existence. One plausible conclusion from this is that according to Gregory’s scheme, in the realm of real becoming (unlike that of ideal becoming), *humans have never existed otherwise at all*. Thus, I would not call the identification of the “second” creation with making the human being’s sensibility nonsense as J. Zachhuber did it (Johannes Zachhuber, *Human Nature in Gregory of Nyssa: Philosophical Background and Theological Significance* [Leiden: Brill, 2000], 171).

as by no means referring to any human individual. He explains that what we see in the text – τὸν ἄνθρωπον – is a common noun, not a proper noun.<sup>9</sup> The term ὁ ἄνθρωπος does not refer to “a man” (ὁ τις) but to “man in general” (ὁ καθόλου).<sup>10</sup> And thus Gregory concludes: “the general name of our nature leads us to a consideration that by divine foreknowledge and power, the whole humanity is included in the first construction.”<sup>11</sup> And since all of this takes place exclusively in God’s *foreknowledge*,<sup>12</sup> it already becomes clear that for us, the “original creation” can only be a *speculative* construct.

What is crucial is that in God’s foreknowledge, the whole of humanity is enclosed as *one single body* with definite limits:<sup>13</sup> “I think that the entire fullness of humanity was included by the God of all, by his power of foreknowledge, as it were in one body.”<sup>14</sup> Elaborating on this, Gregory underlines that according to Gen 1:27a, the image of God is not found in a certain part of humanity – in a single human being like Adam or anyone else – but only in the whole: “for the image is not in part

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9 Right before this, Gregory affirmed that by Gen 1:27 (ἐποίησεν ὁ Θεὸς τὸν ἄνθρωπον), Scripture, in fact, “indicates the whole humanity by the indefinite character of the term (τῷ ἀορίστῳ τῆς σημασίας ἅπαν ἐνδείκνυται τὸ ἀνθρώπινον).” Thus, if the text does not specify who is made, but the general term is used (τὸν ἄνθρωπον, i.e., man/the human being), then “the whole humanity” or “all humankind” is meant here as created according to the image. Gregory, using the Greek Bible, notes that the name “Adam” is not mentioned here. So, it is definitely not a particular individual of whom Gen 1:27 speaks.

10 *Op. hom.* 16 (PG 44, 185). I would not agree with the conclusion that Zachhuber makes regarding this point in his article on Gregory’s view of universals. According to his interpretation, the “potential” human creation in Gen. 1:27 is, in fact, “the creation of Adam” but “as the progenitor of all humanity” and “not as such-and-such an individual” (Johannes Zachhuber, “Once Again: Gregory of Nyssa on Universals,” *JTS* 56 (2005): 75–98, 96–97). This position is even more rigorous than his earlier one. In his monograph, he only denied that, according to *Op. hom.* 16, God created just a “notion” of the human being (Zachhuber, *Human Nature*, 156–157). This latter interpretation was, in fact, R. Hübner’s position and is, to a certain extent, close to my reading of Gregory (cf. Reinhard M. Hübner, *Die Einheit des Leibes Christi bei Gregor von Nyssa: Untersuchungen zum Ursprung der ‘Physischen’ Erlösungslehre* (Leiden: Brill, 1974), 72–75). Still, my view differs from that of Hübner: in my opinion, the first human creation is God’s knowledge of the sum of *concrete* individuals rather than the creation of a “second substance” in Aristotelian terminology.

11 *Op. hom.* 16 (PG 44, 185): τῇ καθολικῇ τῆς φύσεως κλήσει τοιοῦτόν τι ὑπονοεῖν ἐναγόμεθα, ὅτι τῇ θεΐᾳ προγνώσει τε καὶ δυνάμει πᾶσα ἡ ἀνθρωπότης ἐν τῇ πρώτῃ κατασκευῇ περιεῖληπται.

12 As P. Bouteneff correctly puts it, this creation of the human being is, for Gregory, “the humanity conceived by God,” whereas “the temporal stage, where humans come into being,” is referred to by the creation of male and female (Peter Bouteneff, *Beginnings: Ancient Christian Readings of the Biblical Creation Narratives*, Grand Rapids: Baker Academic, 2008, 159).

13 Everything that exists has “a certain end/limit and measure” (τι πέρας καὶ μέτρον).

14 *Op. hom.* 16 (PG 44, 185): οἶμαι καθάπερ ἐν ἐνὶ σώματι ὅλον τὸ τῆς ἀνθρωπότητος πλήρωμα τῇ προγγνωστικῇ δυνάμει παρὰ τοῦ Θεοῦ τῶν ὅλων περισχεθῆναι.

of our nature, [...] but this power extends equally to the whole race.”<sup>15</sup> Gregory concludes with a clear indication that what he is saying points at the συντέλεια. In particular, he emphasises the common identity of both the “eschatological” and “protological” human being and thus the oneness of the image: “The human being that was shown at the first construction of the world and the one that will be at the consummation of the universe are alike: they equally bear in themselves the divine image.”<sup>16</sup> So, the protological human being (who is only “shown” in Gen 1) and the eschatological human being (now *made* at “the consummation”) equally possess God’s image. But since the first one is “created” only in God’s knowledge of what is to come, then, for us, the first is a matter of speculation that “reflects” the second.<sup>17</sup> And it is noteworthy that in both cases (whether as God’s foreknowledge or as the final realisation), the whole humanity (τὸ πᾶν) is named “one human being (εἷς ἄνθρωπος).”<sup>18</sup>

Gregory’s following discussion shows even more directly that there is only one real creation after the image, and this creation is a future event, “something expected” (τὸ προσδοκώμενον). What will occur at the consummation “exists” only as a *potential* reality: “to the power of God nothing is either past or future, but even what is expected is held equally with what is present by the all-embracing energy.”<sup>19</sup> And then Gregory underlines that humanity considered as the single image of God must include no less than *all human beings*: “our whole nature, then, extending from the first to the last, is, so to say, one image of him who is.”<sup>20</sup> So, on

15 *Op. hom.* 16 (PG 44, 185): Οὐ γὰρ ἐν μέρει τῆς φύσεως ἡ εἰκὼν, [...] ἀλλ’ ἐφ’ ἅπαν τὸ γένος ἐπίσης ἡ τοιαύτη δίδκει δύναμις.

16 *Op. hom.* 16 (PG 44, 185): Ὁμοίως ἔχει ὁ τε τῇ πρώτῃ τοῦ κόσμου κατασκευῇ συναναδειχθεὶς ἄνθρωπος, καὶ ὁ κατὰ τὴν τοῦ παντὸς συντέλειαν γενησόμενος, ἐπίσης ἐφ’ ἑαυτῶν φέρουσι τὴν θείαν εἰκόνα.

17 This point is probably underlined also by Gregory’s choice of the participles: συναναδειχθεὶς and γενησόμενος (i.e., shown *versus* made).

18 *Op. hom.* 16 (PG 44, 185).

19 *Op. hom.* 16 (PG 44, 185): τῇ δυνάμει τοῦ Θεοῦ οὔτε τι παρώχηκεν, οὔτε μέλλει, ἀλλὰ καὶ τὸ προσδοκώμενον ἐπίσης τῷ παρόντι τῇ περιεκτικῇ τοῦ παντὸς ἐνεργείᾳ περικρατεῖται. For a concise overview of what, in Gregory’s cosmology, the potential creation is (as opposed to the actual one), see: Paul M. Blowers, *Drama of the Divine Economy: Creator and Creation in Early Christian Theology and Piety* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2012), 146–153.

20 *Op. hom.* 16 (PG 44, 185): Πᾶσα τοίνυν ἡ φύσις ἡ ἀπὸ τῶν πρώτων μέχρι τῶν ἐσχάτων δῆκουσα, μία τις τοῦ ὄντος ἐστὶν εἰκὼν. With regard to the theme of “πᾶσα ἡ φύσις” in *Op. hom.* 16, M. Alexandre makes the following comment: “*Le registre christologique lui-même [...] n’est pas totalement absent de ce même chapitre*” (Monique Alexandre, “Protologie et eschatologie chez Gregoire de Nysse,” in *Arché e Telos: l’antropologia di Origene e di Gregorio di Nissa: analisi storico-religiosa*, ed. Ugo Bianchi (Milano: Università Cattolica del Sacro Cuore, 1981): 122–169, 132–133). But I would rather say: *il est évidemment present*. And this Christological framework is even more explicit in *Op. hom.* 22.

the empirical level, humanity cannot become the image of God until history reaches its end. In other words, before that ultimate moment, the creation after the image remains for us only a speculation, and it “exists” only for God in the form of foreknowledge (and, of course, it “existed” in this way even before humanity came into actual being at all). Thus, the main conclusion from this is that the protological human being exists only *potentially*, that is to say, as God’s idea, but the making of the human being (that includes all human beings) coincides “temporally” with the consummation of the world.

### 3 *Op. hom. 22*

In *Op. hom. 22*, Gregory addresses the issue of the long duration (παράτασις) of time that lies between us and our desirable destiny. While Gregory started *Op. hom. 16* with a question of a distant contemplator of the human being, he begins this chapter with a much more *personal* one, a question of a sort of existential crisis.<sup>21</sup> Since our life is “extended to some determinate times,” the “transition” that we await and hope for cannot happen to us “at once.” Gregory again turns to Gen 1:26 to solve the issue and makes the following comment on this verse: “The *image of God*, which we behold in universal humanity, had its consummation then; but Adam was not made yet.”<sup>22</sup> Gregory clarifies once more that there is a difference between creation in the image and making a human individual. The image, i.e., the fullness of humanity, can be said to be already realised in accordance with the biblical text, though realised only as God’s idea. “Adam was not made yet” is a clear indication that the first human individual did not exist when the image was already there. At this point, there is *no human being* in actual existence at all, let alone the actual fullness of humanity.<sup>23</sup> As Gregory explains further, “Adam” means in Hebrew “the thing formed from earth” (τὸ γήϊνον πλάσμα), and at this point, there was certainly no such thing.<sup>24</sup>

21 *Op. hom. 22* (PG 44, 204): Τίς οὗτος ὁ λόγος ἐστὶ, καθ’ ὃν οὐκ εὐθὺς ἐπὶ τὸ ποθούμενον ἡ τοῦ λυπηροῦ βίου μετὰστασις γίνεται, ἀλλ’ εἰς χρόνους τινὰς ὠρισμένους ἡ βαρεῖα καὶ σωματώδης αὕτη παραταθεῖσα ζωῇ, ἀναμένει τὸ πέρας τῆς τοῦ παντός συμπληρώσεως. “What is this principle, according to which the transition of our painful life into that which is desired does not take place at once, but this heavy and corporeal life – extended to some determinate times – waits for the end of the consummation of the universe?”

22 *Op. hom. 22* (PG 44, 204): Ἡ μὲν οὖν εἰκὼν τοῦ Θεοῦ, ἡ ἐν πάσῃ τῇ ἀνθρωπίνῃ φύσει θεωρουμένη, τὸ τέλος ἔσχεν. Ὁ δὲ Ἀδὰμ οὐπω ἐγένετο.

23 *Op. hom. 22* (PG 44, 204).

24 This is the strongest evidence against Zachhuber’s late position. Moreover, Gregory then referred to 1 Cor 15:47 in support of his idea that no human being from earth could exist at that point.

Gregory continues commenting on Gen 1:27a: “The human being, then, was made after the image, that is the universal nature, the godlike thing; not part of the whole, but the whole fullness of the nature was made all at once by the omnipotent Wisdom.”<sup>25</sup> Thus, Gregory again insists that “not part of the whole” (that is, a particular human being) is indicated in Gen 1:27a, but neither an abstract nature of humanity is meant (as “ἡ καθόλου φύσις” could be understood). Rather it is “the *fullness* of nature” (τὸ τῆς φύσεως πλήρωμα) that is an object of creation in the image. This fullness can only be the eschatological sum of all particular human beings. But within the protological framework of Gen 1, one can speak about making or creating this fullness in nowhere else but again in the *knowledge* of God. And to prove this point, Gregory finds evidence in Scriptural texts about God’s knowing things in advance.<sup>26</sup> The texts that Gregory cites (Ps 94/95:4 and Dan 13:42) reaffirm that he is speaking here not of the things brought into actual existence within time but of God’s knowledge of things *before* their existence. This is, in fact, the making of the human being after the image when not a part of humanity (οὐχὶ μέρος τοῦ ὅλου), that is, a concrete individual, is concerned but the sum (ὅσον κατ’ ἀριθμὸν) of all individuals. After making this point, Gregory turns to the idea of “mingling” human beings’ creation in the image with their, so to say, gendering, denoted in the second half of Gen 1:27.<sup>27</sup> But clearly, in *Op. hom.*, there is no description of the two stages of human creation.<sup>28</sup> If the making after the image refers to God’s vision of us, in which he also “perceived” (κατενόησεν) human “inclination” to evil, then the “mingling” of the human being with gender must refer to the *actual* bringing into exist-

25 *Op. hom.* 22 (PG 44, 204): Γέγονεν οὖν κατ’ εἰκόνα ὁ ἄνθρωπος, ἡ καθόλου φύσις, τὸ θεοείκελον χρῆμα. Γέγονε δὲ τῇ παντοδυνάμῳ σοφίᾳ οὐχὶ μέρος τοῦ ὅλου, ἀλλ’ ἅπαν ἀθρόως τὸ τῆς φύσεως πλήρωμα.

26 *Op. hom.* 22 (PG 44, 204–205): Εἶδεν ὁ πάντων τῶν περάτων περιδεδραγμένος, καθὼς φησιν ἡ Γραφή, ἡ λέγουσα, Ἐν τῇ χειρὶ αὐτοῦ τὰ πέρατα τῆς γῆς· εἶδεν ὁ εἰδὼς τὰ πάντα καὶ πρὶν γενέσεως αὐτῶν, ἐμπεριλαθὼν τῇ γνώσει ὅσον κατ’ ἀριθμὸν ἐν τοῖς καθ’ ἕκαστον ἔσται τὸ ἀνθρώπινον. “He saw who grasps all the ends as the Scripture tells us, which says that *in His hand are all the corners of the earth* (Ps 94/95:4), he saw *who knows all things* even before *they come to be* (Dan 13:42), comprehending in his knowledge, how great in sum humanity will be in its individuals.”

27 *Op. hom.* 22 (PG 44, 205): Ἐπεὶ δὲ κατενόησεν ἐν τῷ πλάσματι ἡμῶν τὴν πρὸς τὸ χεῖρον ῥοπήν, καὶ ὅτι τῆς πρὸς τοὺς ἀγγέλους ὁμοτιμίας ἐκουσίως ἀπορρύνει, τὴν πρὸς τὸ ταπεινὸν κοινωνίαν προσοικειώσεται· διὰ ταῦτα κατέμιξε τι καὶ τοῦ ἀλόγου τῇ ἰδίᾳ εἰκόνι. “But as he perceived in our formation an inclination towards the worse and that it would acquire a fellowship with what is low because of its voluntary fall from equality with the angel, for this reason, he also mingled something from the irrational with his own image.”

28 Although J. Behr argued in favour of this, what I would not agree with, in his position, is that Gregory means two aspects of one creation in which the human being is simultaneously made after the image, on the one hand, and made a sexed/gendered creature, on the other. Cf. Behr, “The Rational Animal,” 233–245.



ence the first individual human being made of *dust*.<sup>29</sup> The former happens not in time and space, but the latter does, as it is an event in the *history* of the world. From this event, human history starts, which is a gradual way to the fullness of humanity through the long duration (παράτασις) of time, which Gregory mentioned earlier.

Gregory says more about God's "sexing" the human being: "transferring to the human being the special attribute of the irrational formation, he bestowed increase upon our race not according to the lofty character of our creation."<sup>30</sup> This is an important point for Gregory since, in humanity's path to its fullness, procreation and, consequently, sexuality plays a central role.<sup>31</sup> Because of his foreknowledge of human beings' inclination to evil, God created them – now in real existence – with an "animal" element associated here with sexuality and located them in time. As Gregory puts it, time is "proportional" (σύμμετρος) to human creation (κατασκευή). In other words, time is a frame in which the project of human creation is realised, and both time and the completion of human creation presuppose the existence of each other.<sup>32</sup> When time is no longer there, humanity will participate in the

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<sup>29</sup> In this case, one can indeed call making male and female "a separate act," as Zachhuber did (Zachhuber, *Human Nature*, 171), but in a slightly different sense from what he meant. Also, in this way, not only sin but also death is foreseen so that, as H. U. von Balthasar shows it, the question "Would Adam have been immortal, if...?" is absurd (Hans Urs von Balthasar, *Presence and Thought: Essay on the Religious Philosophy of Gregory of Nyssa*, trans. Mark Sebanc (San Francisco: Ignatius Press, 1995), 72).

<sup>30</sup> *Op. hom.* 22 (PG 44, 205): ἀλλὰ τῆς ἀλόγου κατασκευῆς ἐπὶ τὸν ἄνθρωπον μετενεγκὼν τὸ ἰδίωμα, οὐ κατὰ τὸ ὑψηλὸν τῆς κτίσεως ἡμῶν τὸν πλεονασμὸν τῷ γένει χαρίζεται.

<sup>31</sup> *Op. hom.* 22 (PG 44, 205): Τοῦτου τοίνυν προκατανοηθέντος διὰ τῆς προγνωστικῆς ἐνεργείας πληρώματος τῶν ἀνθρώπων, διὰ τῆς ζωωδεστέρας γενέσεως ἐπὶ τὴν ζωὴν μέλλοντος παριέναι, ὁ τάξει τινὶ καὶ εἰρμῷ διακυβερνῶν τὰ πάντα Θεὸς, ἐπειδὴ ὅλως τὸ τοιοῦτον τῇ ἀνθρωπότητι τῆς γεννήσεως εἶδος ἀναγκαῖον ἐποίησεν ἢ πρὸς τὸ ταπεινὸν τῆς φύσεως ἡμῶν ἐπὶκλίσας, ἣν εἶδε πρὶν γενέσθαι ὁ ἐπίσης τῷ ἐνεστῶτι τὸ μέλλον βλέπων, διὰ τοῦτο καὶ τὸν σύμμετρον τῇ κατασκευῇ τῶν ἀνθρώπων χρόνον προκατενόησεν. "Now, seeing that this fullness of human beings pre-conceived by the operation of foreknowledge will come into life by means of the animal generation, God who governs all things in a certain order and sequence – since the inclination of our nature to what is low (which he who beholds the future equally with the present saw before it existed) made such form of generation absolutely necessary for mankind – therefore foreknew also the time proportional to the creation of human beings."

<sup>32</sup> Then Gregory elaborates further on his conclusion on what time is actually for: ὥστε τῇ παρόδῳ τῶν περιορισθεῖσων ψυχῶν συναπαρτισθῆναι τὴν τοῦ χρόνου παράτασιν, καὶ τότε στῆναι τὴν ρωδὴ τοῦ χρόνου κίνησιν, ὅταν μηκέτι φύηται δι' αὐτοῦ τὸ ἀνθρώπινον τελεσθεῖσις δὲ τῆς τῶν ἀνθρώπων γενέσεως, τῷ τέλει ταύτης συγκαταλήξαι τὸν χρόνον, καὶ οὕτω τὴν τοῦ παντός ἀναστοιχείωσιν γενέσθαι. "So that the duration of time should correspond with the entrance of the pre-determined souls, and that the flux and motion of time should stop when humanity is no longer produced by it; and that when the genesis of human beings is completed, time should cease together with this completion, and then should be the restoration of the universe" (*Op. hom.* 22 [PG 44, 205]). This pas-



cosmic change “from the corruptible and earthly to the impassable and eternal.” But for now, time is what makes it possible for humanity to grow in order to finally enter into eternal life by transcending this time itself at the resurrection. Moreover, human beings’ creation as growth into its fullness is the only rationale for why there is at all such a dimension of creation as time. For Gregory, 1 Cor 15:51–52 indicates the point when time stops, which is not just the last moment of time but rather the absolute *absence* of linear time as such or even the consummation of all time and thus its restoration. Gregory’s following discussion of these Pauline verses makes clear that the resurrection follows immediately or even coincides with the point when humanity reaches its *pleroma*.<sup>33</sup> But to see what precisely this *pleroma* is, one should turn to Gregory’s *Tunc et ipse*.<sup>34</sup>

#### 4 *Apol. Hex. and Cant.*

Before I proceed to the final part, in which *Tunc et ipse* is analysed, it seems necessary to provide additional evidence of my reading of the first creation in *Op. hom.* This section draws some parallels to Gregory’s other works (namely, *Apol. Hex.* and *Cant.*), where he addresses the problem of double creation. To understand more accurately what Gregory means in *Op. hom.*, one has to look primarily at Gregory’s cosmological picture in *Apol. Hex.*<sup>35</sup> Commenting on Gen 1:1, he says that what was meant in this verse by “heaven and earth” is actually the whole creation (πάντα τὰ ὄντα) that was made “all at once” (ἀθρόως). Gregory claims that both Greek translations of *bereshith* are complementary to each other: Aquila’s ἐν κεφαλαίῳ points to the creation as being “in sum” (τὸ συλλήβδην); and the Septuagint version, to the cre-

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sage is indeed pregnant and can tell us much about Gregory’s views of history, time and the final restoration (or more precisely, it identifies human beings’ place within these categories).

<sup>33</sup> *Op. hom.* 22 (PG 44, 205–208).

<sup>34</sup> Thus, what I believe to be missing from some brilliant studies of the human *pleroma* in Gregory (e.g., Eugenio Corsini, “Plérôme humain et plérôme cosmique chez Grégoire de Nysse,” in *Écriture et culture philosophique dans la pensée de Grégoire de Nysse*, éd. par Marguerite Harl [Leiden: Brill, 1971], 111–126) is precisely such a reading of *Op. hom.* in light of *Tunc et ipse*. However, my approach is not completely innovative. D. B. Hart, e.g., has persuasively juxtaposed Gregory’s accounts in *Op. hom.* and *Tunc et ipse*: David Bentley Hart, “The ‘Whole Humanity’: Gregory of Nyssa’s Critique of Slavery in Light of His Eschatology,” *SJT* 54 (2001): 51–69, 56–62.

<sup>35</sup> Corsini is absolutely right when affirming the parallelism between Gregory’s anthropogenesis and cosmogenesis: “La doctrine grégorienne de la création du «plérôme» humain est donc le parallèle exact de l’explication philosophique que Grégoire donne de l’origine du monde” (Corsini, “Plérôme humain et plérôme cosmique,” 121).

ation as “instantaneous and non-dimensional” (τὸ ἀκαρές τε καὶ ἀδιάστατον) since in the term ἀρχή, no “idea of dimension” (διαστηματικοῦ νοήματος) is involved.<sup>36</sup> And Gregory immediately makes it clear that he is talking about a certain *potentiality* of the creation since “the all-inclusive foundation of beings,” in which “all is said to be united,” actually belongs to God’s *power*.<sup>37</sup> In other words, it is not some kind of potentiality *within* the created order. On the contrary, in the following discussion, it becomes even clearer that Gregory means not the creation’s coming into being but purely *God’s* creative will or impulse (ὁρμή).

Creation “in the beginning” does not concern the creatures’ *real* coming into existence, but it means that “God laid down instantly in sum the occasions, the causes and the potentials of all things.”<sup>38</sup> The locus of this ideal coming into being is God’s ὁρμή.<sup>39</sup> This realm of the ideal included “all things that were perceived by God’s eye.”<sup>40</sup> Thus, the subject of this discussion is creation as it exists in God’s will. It is also evident from another passage that as far as God’s ὁρμή is concerned, no single individual thing was in actual existence.<sup>41</sup> Gregory reaffirms this point by saying that all the physical qualities (αἱ ποιότητες) were absent from the creation.<sup>42</sup> But without qualities, at least in Gregory’s system, there cannot exist even matter.<sup>43</sup> Thus, at this point, there is *no material creation*, but only God’s idea of it that embraces the whole created order and all things that would eventually come into existence. The latter is, in fact, *another* reality, namely the gradual and ordered appearance of all things that “followed” the reality in God’s foreknowledge<sup>44</sup> (not temporally, of course, but logically since the “first” creation is *atemporal*).

In *Op. hom.*, we have seen the same structure. In particular, when Gregory describes the first human creation in *Op. hom.*, he refers to the same concept of cre-

<sup>36</sup> *Apol. Hex.* (GNO IV.1), 17.

<sup>37</sup> *Apol. Hex.* (GNO IV.1), 18.

<sup>38</sup> *Apol. Hex.* (GNO IV.1), 18: πάντων τῶν ὄντων τὰς ἀφορμὰς καὶ τὰς αἰτίας καὶ τὰς δυνάμεις συλλήβδην ὁ θεὸς ἐν ἀκαρεῖ κατεβάλλετο.

<sup>39</sup> *Apol. Hex.* (GNO IV.1), 18.

<sup>40</sup> *Apol. Hex.* (GNO IV.1), 18: ἂ τῷ μὲν θεῷ ὁφθαλμῷ πάντα καθεωρᾶτο. Here Gregory also finds evidence in Dan 13:42, where God is said to know all things “before they come into being” (πρὸ τῆς γενέσεως αὐτῶν), that the ideal creation is God’s vision of the creation to come.

<sup>41</sup> *Apol. Hex.* (GNO IV.1), 27: τῇ μὲν δυνάμει τὰ πάντα ἦν ἐν πρώτῃ τοῦ θεοῦ περὶ τὴν κτίσιν ὁρμῇ [...] ἐνεργεῖα δὲ τὰ καθ’ ἕκαστον οὐπω ἦν. “All things were potentially in God’s first impulse to creation [...], but in actuality there existed no particular things yet.”

<sup>42</sup> *Apol. Hex.* (GNO IV.1), 27.

<sup>43</sup> On matter as “the combination of the qualities” in Gregory, see: Anna Marmodoro, “Gregory of Nyssa on the creation of the world,” in *Causation and Creation in Late Antiquity*, ed. Anna Marmodoro and Brian D. Prince (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2015): 94–110.

<sup>44</sup> *Apol. Hex.* (GNO IV.1), 18.

ation of the totality in a moment. Thus, I believe that in *Op. hom.*, Gregory presents an anthropological model which goes in parallel to the cosmological one from *Apol. Hex.* Just as the whole creation was pre-conceived in God's will, so was the human being. Someone may argue that such an approach is inconsistent since, in *Op. hom.*, the main issue is God's foreknowledge of *sin* that conditions the particularities of the second human creation, while in *Apol. Hex.*, this question is not raised. However, since sin is a specifically human complication, it is for obvious reasons that it is not discussed in *Apol. Hex.* A key for figuring this all out can be found in *Cant.*, from which we learn that the second human creation and the salvation history are one and the same thing. This will be discussed below, but in any case, even if the second human creation is considered in *Op. hom.* within the context of sin, the first creation (untouched by sin) in both treatises – *Op. hom.* and *Apol. Hex.* – must point to the same reality.

Now I turn to *Cant.* 15, where (just as in *Op. hom.*) the human creation after the image is directly linked to what can be called the eschatologically-based speculative creation. Thus, I suppose that in *Cant.* 15, we find a precise parallel to *Op. hom.* 16. In *Cant.* 15, however, before setting forth his anthropological observations, Gregory – in a manner very similar to his exposition in *Apol. Hex.* – generally discusses the instantaneous creation, in which the end coincides with the coming into being.<sup>45</sup> The reason for this is that “for all that are brought from non-being into being, the perfection emerges simultaneously with the beginning.”<sup>46</sup> So, in all things that were created, their end (πέρας), that is, their perfection, cannot be abstracted from their beginning. There is no interval between them so that the coming into existence and the completion of all things (in other words, reaching destiny) happen simultaneously. Therefore, the creation is brought to its end and thus is fully completed and perfected from the very moment of its existence. Nothing can be added to it, and it has no way to move, being absolutely static. And since everything happens ἀδιαστάτως, no created space and time are involved here.

<sup>45</sup> *Cant.* 15 (GNO VI), 458–459: ὅτε μὲν γὰρ κατ’ ἀρχὰς διὰ τῆς θείας δυνάμεως ἡ τῆς κτίσεως ὑφίσταται φύσις, ἐφ’ ἐκάστου τῶν ὄντων ἀδιαστάτως τῇ ἀρχῇ συναπηρτίσθη τὸ πέρασ. “For when at the beginning, the nature of the creation was laid down by God’s power, it was for each of the beings that the end was completed together with the beginning without any interval” (translation by R. Norris is modified when necessary: *Gregory of Nyssa: Homilies on the Song of Songs*, trans. Richard A. Norris [Atlanta: Society of Biblical Literature, 2012]). The “second” creation, in its turn, is presented here as a *re-creation*: “it is not in the same sequence and order that the beings are created and created anew” (οὐ μετὰ τῆς αὐτῆς ἀκολουθίας καὶ τάξεως κτίζεται τὰ ὄντα καὶ ἀνακτίζεται).

<sup>46</sup> *Cant.* 15 (GNO VI), 459: πᾶσι τοῖς ἐκ τοῦ μὴ ὄντος εἰς τὸ εἶναι παραγομένοις ὁμοῦ τῇ ἀρχῇ συνανασχούσης τῆς τελειότητος.

Next, Gregory says that human nature (ἡ ἀνθρωπίνη φύσις) was among all other things in that instantly perfect creation.<sup>47</sup> An indication of this, according to Gregory, is found in the biblical affirmation of the creation in the image.<sup>48</sup> Since human creation is as instantaneous as the rest of creation, there is no progress (προαγωγή) in it, and, as totally static, it is already there where it is destined to be.<sup>49</sup> Thus, the highest good possible is already fulfilled in this creation. And then Gregory sums up what the first human creation is: “in the case of the first creation, then, the end appeared together with the beginning without any interval, and the nature began its existence from the perfection.”<sup>50</sup> The expression “ἀπὸ τῆς τελειότητος ἡ φύσις τοῦ εἶναι ἤρξατο” is one with a quite paradoxical sense: the human nature *began* from its *completion* despite that τελειότης literally means what things must *end* with. But from this statement, we can draw a crucial theological conclusion: the ontological (not chronological) beginning of all things is nothing else but their “final perfection” (τελειότης). The end is, in fact, the genuine beginning so that all speculations regarding the ἀρχή can be only eschatologically grounded.<sup>51</sup>

In contrast to the “first” creation, the “second” (re-)creation is accomplished in a different way because human nature “acquired a kinship with death by its inclination toward evil and so ceased to abide in the good.”<sup>52</sup> So, the second creation takes place as a *slow process* or, to be more precise, as a process of a certain *correc-*

47 *Cant.* 15 (GNO VI), 458: οὐδὲ αὕτῃ καθ’ ὁμοιότητα τῶν ἄλλων ἐκ προαγωγῆς προελθοῦσα ἐπὶ τὸ τέλειον, ἀλλ’ ἀπὸ τῆς πρώτης ὑπάρξεως συμπλασθεῖσα τῇ τελειότητι. “[The human nature] did not, like the others, go forward to perfection by progress, but from the first coming into existence, it was formed simultaneously with its perfection.”

48 In *Cant.*, there is no notion of the *imago Dei* in the account of the second creation, so the notion is reserved solely to the description of the first/ideal creation, which was immediately brought to its completeness (the same pattern is found in *Op. hom.*).

49 In light of Gregory’s famous doctrine of *epektasis*, according to which the end is never reached by a created being that finds itself *ever* in progress, it becomes even more apparent that in this passage, no actual/real becoming can be implied.

50 *Cant.* 15 (GNO VI), 458: ἐπὶ μὲν οὖν τῆς πρώτης κτίσεως ἀδιαστάτως τῇ ἀρχῇ συνανεφάνη τὸ πέρας καὶ ἀπὸ τῆς τελειότητος ἡ φύσις τοῦ εἶναι ἤρξατο.

51 In this context, the ἀρχή can also be understood as “source” and even “foundation.” Things originate *from* and exist *because of* this ἀρχή. And here, we can see a clear link between the first speculative and the second actual creation because not only in the realm of potentiality but *also* in their actualisation, things exist *because of* their ἀρχή and originate (metaphysically) from it. Thus, Gregory’s claim “ἀπὸ τῆς τελειότητος ἡ φύσις τοῦ εἶναι ἤρξατο” is applicable to both creations and serves here as a bridge between his descriptions of them (even if Gregory does not make this explicit).

52 *Cant.* 15 (GNO VI), 458: τῷ θανάτῳ διὰ τῆς πρὸς τὴν κακίαν σχέσεως οἰκειωθεῖσα τῆς ἐν τῷ ἀγαθῷ διαμονῆς ἀπερρύν. Cf. Wis 2:23–24.

tion.<sup>53</sup> Therefore, Zachhuber is right to note that here the second creation indicates *salvation*. But I cannot easily agree with him that, because of this, the second creation in *Cant.* 15 has a meaning different from what Gregory depicts in *Op. hom.*<sup>54</sup> On the contrary, it must be a strictly parallel text because in *Op. hom.*, the whole history of humanity is also presented as the salvation history. According to *Op. hom.*, “God himself created the ‘fallen’ state in anticipation of the Fall,” as Zachhuber formulated it.<sup>55</sup> In short, the human being is created to be saved (a very Irenaeian idea indeed!). Otherwise, an actual individual human being created in a *perfect* state could hardly fall at all. Here it is also important to note that the reason that Gregory gives in *Cant.* 15 for the principal difference between the two creations is very close to what he writes in *Op. hom.* The reason is, in fact, God’s foreknowledge of our *inclination* (προσπάθεια) to the opposite (τὰ ἐναντία).<sup>56</sup> Thus, what one finds in *Cant.* and *Apol. Hex.* can confirm to a substantial degree my reading of *Op. hom.*

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53 *Cant.* 15 (GNO VI), 458: οὐκ ἀθρόαν καθ’ ὁμοιότητα τῆς πρώτης συστάσεως ἐπαναλαμβάνει τὴν τελειότητα, ἀλλ’ ὁδῶ τινι πρόεισιν ἐπὶ τὸ μείζον διὰ τινος ἀκολουθίας καὶ τάξεως κατ’ ὀλίγον ἀποσκευαζομένη τὴν πρὸς τὰ ἐναντία προσπάθειαν. “It does not receive back its perfection at once in the way of the first constitution, but with a certain method, it advances towards the greater in a particular sequence and order, slowly getting rid of the inclination to the opposite.” Below (*Cant.* 15 [GNO VI], 458–459), Gregory juxtaposes the two creations once more: “For when it was first created, since evil did not exist, there was nothing to prevent the nature’s perfection from concurring with its genesis, but in the second restoration the spatial-temporal extension accompanies those who are retracing their way toward the first good (ἐπὶ μὲν γὰρ τῆς πρώτης κατασκευῆς οὐδὲν ἦν τὸ κωλύον συνδραμεῖν τῇ γενέσει τὸ τῆς φύσεως τέλειον κακίας οὐκ οὔσης, ἐπὶ δὲ τῆς δευτέρας ἀναστοιχειώσεως ἀναγκαίως ἡ διαστηματικὴ παράτασις συμπαραμορφεῖ τοῖς πρὸς τὸ πρῶτον ἀγαθὸν ἀνατρέχουσιν).” Here the “first constitution” (σύστασις) is again totally different from the “empirical” way to the perfection that Gregory calls the “second restoration” (ἀναστοιχειώσις). In the former, all the perfection is given at once (ἀθρόαν) so that the perfection coincides with γένεσις, but in the latter, the progress is described by such terms as ὁδός, ἀκολουθία, τάξις. Within the second creation, the inclination to evil is overcome not otherwise but little by little (κατ’ ὀλίγον) or, in other words, through *time*, while in the case of the first creation, Gregory characterised the correspondence between γένεσις and τέλειον by the verb συντρέχω, which means that it is a *timeless* reality, without any motion or any διάστημα between γένεσις and τέλειον.

54 Zachhuber, *Human Nature*, 179.

55 Zachhuber, *Human Nature*, 186. Hans J. Oesterle also made some helpful observations: “Bei Origines ist der Fall der äußere Grund der Welt; bei Gregor ist die Welt der innere Grund des Falls” (Hans J. Oesterle, “Probleme der Anthropologie bei Gregor von Nyssa: Zur Interpretation seiner Schrift *De hominis opificio*,” *Hermes* 113 (1985): 101–114, 103) and “Die Sünde ist kein historisches Ereignis der Menschheitsgeschichte mehr, kein personaler Akt des Ungehorsams, sie ist vielmehr eine Seinsbeschaffenheit des real existierenden Adam” (Oesterle, “Probleme,” 113).

56 In *Cant.* 15 (GNO VI), 459, it is also characterised by Gregory as the *material* (ὕλική) inclination.

## 5 *Tunc et ipse*

In *Tunc et ipse*, the theme of *imago* is absent at first glance. But, in fact, this text is crucial evidence for the eschatological character of the image of God in Gregory's thought since here he envisages the formation of the human being as the growth of the *totus Christus*.<sup>57</sup> Gregory claims here that, to be united to God and to "have" God, one must become of one body with God (or even become a *body* for God). This ultimate unity of humanity with God can be actualised only because of Christ to whose body other human beings become united. Then Gregory interprets the subjection of the Son to the Father as meaning the subjection of his ecclesial body. Consequently, this subjection is a synonym for universal salvation.<sup>58</sup> In this context, Gregory writes about Christ's "building himself," that is, his own body. Christ does this by uniting the believers to himself until the growth of the body reaches "its own measure" (τὸ ἴδιον μέτρον).<sup>59</sup> Not only Gregory's allusion to Eph 4:13 ("εἰς μέτρον ἡλικίας τοῦ πληρώματος τοῦ Χριστοῦ") immediately becomes apparent, when one reads this, but also a surprisingly close similarity to what we have just seen in Gregory's discussions in *Op. hom.* And some lines below, Gregory cites Eph 4:13 verbatim, which is in itself a significant fact because, by this quotation, Gregory brings into his text the whole range of key terms that point to the fullness of humanity (namely, τέλειος, ἡλικία, πλήρωμα apart from just mentioned μέτρον). Thus, Gregory links nearly explicitly the present eschatological discourse with the "protological" one set forth in *Op. hom.*<sup>60</sup>

57 I have borrowed this language from von Balthasar (Cf. Balthasar, *Presence and Thought*, 168: "the perfect, eschatological *Image* that is the total Christ"). Hübner argued against the identification of the human beings' return to their original being in God's image, on the one hand, and the eschatological fullness of Christ's body, on the other (Hübner, *Einheit*, 47–51). However, as long as the first (potential) creation in the image is not a creation of an abstract notion of human nature but rather God's knowledge of the sum of *concrete* human individuals (all of whom will be joined to Christ at the end, according to *Tunc et ipse*), that identification is inevitable.

58 *Tunc et ipse* (GNO III.2), 18. In this interpretation, Gregory, of course, repeats Origen's argumentation for whom 1 Cor 15:28 was the biblical cornerstone for the doctrine of universal restoration. Gregory also quotes Col 1:24–25 and 1 Cor 12:27 and paraphrases Eph 4:15–16 as evidence that the body of Christ is the church. What is interesting here is how Gregory envisages the bond between Christ and the church. The latter is no less than Christ's *own* body (τὸ ἴδιον σῶμα) to which he has the most intimate relation: he is "mingled" with it (ἀνακεκραμένον). This language of mingling is usually used by Gregory to describe the manner of the incarnation so that one may argue that the church is the humanity (or human nature) of the risen Christ. On this point, see my other article in this volume.

59 *Tunc et ipse* (GNO III.2), 19.

60 *Tunc et ipse* was composed later than *Op. hom.* (in 385 and 378–379, respectively). Cf. Pierre Maraval, "Chronology of Works," in *The Brill Dictionary of Gregory of Nyssa*, ed. Lucas F. Mateo-Seco and Giulio Maspero, trans. Seth Cherney (Leiden: Brill, 2010): 153–169, 155, 157.

In the course of Gregory's exegetical elaboration on 1 Cor 15, it becomes even clearer how he understands the church's being Christ's body (or, even more simply, Christ). If Christ "builds" his own body, then he "builds" no less than "himself" (ἐαυτὸν οἰκοδομεῖ). Thus, when Christ is in all, and all are in Christ, what we have is *one corporate* body with many members (according to 1 Cor 12:20).<sup>61</sup> Certainly, Gregory perceives here Paul's concept of Christ's body not in a metaphorical way. Moreover, the body of Christ consists only of *other* human beings (αὐτοῦ σῶμα οἰκοδομεῖ διὰ τῶν αἰεὶ προστιθεμένων συναρμολογῶν) united to Christ who, in his turn, is the head that has no other body except this one.<sup>62</sup> Gregory proceeds with his exegesis on 1 Cor 15 while interweaving his interpretation with the topic of death and life. For Gregory, the destruction of death (1 Cor 15:26) and the subjection of the Son are one and the same thing since the non-existence of death means nothing else but the universal entering into life.<sup>63</sup> And this life is Christ himself, through whom (δι' οὗ) all of this happens. Here again, Gregory repeats his main point that the body of Christ is "the whole human nature with which he has been mixed" (πᾶσα ἡ ἀνθρωπίνη φύσις ἣ κατεμίχθη).<sup>64</sup> And according to *Op. hom.*, πᾶσα ἡ φύσις was what God foreknew (or, to use another set of theological vocabulary, elected and predestined) as the whole humanity made in Christ after the image of God.

Therefore, the archetypal human being that exists as God's idea, or God's vision of us, is nothing else but the *totus Christus*. It is God's eternal contemplation of the concrete end of his creative project. Consequently, the *ideal* human being as a *protological* concept is, in a sense, *secondary* to its *actual realisation*. And if it is indeed so, then what we see here is, plausibly, a reversal of Platonism: for Gregory, it is not the real becoming that reflects the ideal, but on the contrary, it is the ideal that reflects the real. For us, then, this πᾶσα ἡ φύσις made in the beginning by God is the *telos* of our creation that, by theological speculation, we can envisage as our true origin, which we fall from and return to as long as we live under the shadow of time. In short, Gen 1:26–27a announces the goal of human beings' existence, namely their being one body of Christ, fully raised at the end of time.

<sup>61</sup> *Tunc et ipse* (GNO III.2) 19–20.

<sup>62</sup> And to reaffirm all this, Gregory expresses an idea (a rather unexpected one) that Christ is like a soul indwelling his body, church (*Tunc et ipse* [GNO III.2], 20).

<sup>63</sup> *Tunc et ipse* (GNO III.2), 21.

<sup>64</sup> *Tunc et ipse* (GNO III.2), 21. Moreover, all of this turns out to be closely connected with the role of the Holy Spirit. By receiving the Spirit, the flesh, now commixed with the Word, becomes what the Word is (*Tunc et ipse* [GNO III.2], 22).



