I shall argue that in Gregory of Nyssa’s *In Illud: Tunc et ipse filius* the anti-“Arian” polemic against the Son’s subordination to the Father is in close relation to the doctrine of ἀποκατάστασις and that Gregory’s arguments entirely derive from Origen, probably also passing through thinkers such as Marcellus of Ancyra and Eusebius. Gregory’s dependence on Origen moreover confirms that Origen was not the forerunner of “Arianism,” as he was depicted in the course of the Origenistic controversy and is still portrayed, but the main inspirer of the Cappadocians, and especially of Nyssen, in what became Trinitarian orthodoxy.¹

Nyssen uses 1Cor 15:28 to support ἀποκατάστασις, especially in *De anima et resurrectione* and, even more, in *In illud: Tunc et ipse filius*.² The latter is devoted to an exegetical and theological reflection on this passage, announcing the eventual submission of all creatures to Christ and of Christ to God, who will be “all in all.” This is precisely one of the main biblical passages with which Origen buttressed his doctrine of ἀποκατάστασις.³ Indeed, Origen’s influence upon Gregory, which

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¹ Discussion of this point, however, cannot be included in the present study, due to its extensiveness; it will appear as an essay of its own in Vigiliae Christianae under the title, “Origen’s Anti-Subordinationism and its Heritage in the Nicene and Cappadocian Line.”


is evident in many aspects of Nyssen’s thought—more than it is commonly assumed, but to demonstrate this it is first necessary to completely recover Origen’s true thought—is particularly clear in *In illud: Tunc et ipse filius*. Here, Gregory follows Origen very closely, even with verbal echoes. It is worth remarking that this is an exegetical treatise: Ayres rightly insisted on the connection between pro-Nicene theology and biblical exegesis—and certainly among pro-Nicene theologians we should list not only Nyssen, but, of course ante litteram, also Origen who was his main inspirer.

For both Origen and Gregory, Paul’s eschatological prophecies were particularly authoritative. Origen highlights Paul’s rapture to paradise (2Cor 12:2) and it is in *In illud: Tunc et ipse filius* (GNO III/2, 3,9–15 Downing) that Gregory likewise warns that Paul’s words are weighty because he learnt the ineffable mysteries, obviously during his rapture, and thus Christ spoke in him (2Cor 13:3). For this reason, as I argued elsewhere, both Origen and Gregory continually use not only philosophical arguments for the ἀποκατάστασις, but also Biblical quotations and interpretations, especially from Paul.

In *In illud: Tunc et ipse filius*, the core issue for Gregory is to interpret 1Cor 15:28 in such a way as to refute its “Arian” subordinationistic interpretation, based on the Son’s eventual submission to the Father. Gregory claims that Paul’s statement indicates, not the Son’s inferiority to the Father, but the salvific submission of all humans, which constitute “the body of Christ”. It is Christ’s humanity that will submit to the Father, not Christ’s divinity.

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6 Cf. Eun. I 308 (GNO I, 118,1f. Jaeger); Cant. (GNO VI, 85,21 Langerbeck).
