B. CHRISTIAN TRADITION
In recent years the question of whether Christian belief is reconcilable with scientific fact or whether the two spheres are not rather mutually exclusive has been the subject of vivid discussion. This is without doubt a consequence of the great advances of science in the last two centuries. However, it would be wrong to believe that the tension between faith and reason is a modern phenomenon. When Christianity became a mainstream religion in Late Antiquity it was already confronted with a set of concepts that were considered to be incontrovertible scientific facts. One of these concepts was the so-called perishability axiom, derived from the teachings of Plato and Aristotle, which stated that whatever comes into existence in time must also perish in time. In this article I will investigate how Christian authors dealt with this axiom when they set out their views on created being and in particular how they applied it to the human soul, which according to Scripture had been infused into Adam on the sixth day of creation. I will first define the parameters within which the discussion took place through analysis of selected passages by authors from the late fourth and early fifth centuries, and will then devote the bulk of the article to a study of the writings of two authors from the late fifth and early sixth centuries, Aeneas of Gaza and John of Scythopolis, where the question is given greater prominence than in most other Christian texts of the time.

When in the second half of the fourth century Basil of Caesarea in his *Homilies on the Hexameron* made an attempt at developing a coherent Christian cosmology that could satisfy the expectations of an educated audience he included among his topics the question about the status of created being.1 Quoting Genesis 1:1 “At the beginning God made…”

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