

## Some traces of an ancient Latin compilation of Origen's *Commentary on Genesis*<sup>1</sup>

### I. – THE AUTHOR OF THE SO-CALLED *TRACTATUS ORIGENIS*

After P. Batiffol had discovered and, in collaboration with A. Wilmart, published in 1900 twenty Latin homilies which were passed on under the name of Origen (*Tractatus Origenis de libris sacrarum scripturarum*),<sup>2</sup> a heated scholarly debate ensued for years concerning the authorship of the work. Some believed that the *Tractatus* represented a work of Origen translated by Victorinus of Poetovio; some argued for their Latin origin. One group of the most eminent scholars of the age attributed the work to Novatian, the famous Roman schismatic of the third century, while the other group was convinced that it must have been written in the fifth or even at the beginning of the sixth century.<sup>3</sup> It seems that in 1957 the question of authorship was solved. In a Visigothic codex, A.C. Vega found a reference by an author of the ninth century to an interpretation occurring in the sixth "Origenian" *Tractatus*. The reference begins with the words: *Sanctus Gregorius Eliberritanus episcopus dicit* and then some sentences occur which are undoubtedly taken from the "Origenian" treatise.<sup>4</sup> This finding reaffirmed G. Morin's suggestion that the work was written by Gregory of Elvira, a Spanish bishop of the fourth century.<sup>5</sup> V. Bulhart regarded

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2. P. Batiffol and A. Wilmart, *Tractatus Origenis de libris SS. Scripturarum*, Paris, 1900. The *Tractatus* were preserved in two manuscripts, both of which bear this same title.

3. For a summary of the controversy, see E.C. Butler, "The So-Called *Tractatus Origenis* and Other Writings Attributed to Novatian," *JThSt* 1905, No. 2, pp. 587-598.

4. A.C. Vega, *España Sagrada*, vol. 55, Madrid, 1957, p. 145.

5. G. Morin, "Autour des *Tractatus Origenis*," *Revue Bénédictine* 19 (1902), pp. 225-245; P. Lejay, "L'héritage de Grégoire d'Elvire," *Revue Bénédictine* 25 (1908), pp. 435-457.

the arguments to be satisfactory for identifying the author, and edited the text in the series of *Corpus Christianorum* as an authentic work of Gregory.<sup>6</sup> Since that time the authorship of the *Tractatus* has not been questioned.

Nevertheless, when one looks for a more or less exact date of the treatises, some doubts may arise as to whether Gregory of Elvira could have been their author. One of the most crucial problems is that of the relationship between the third *Tractatus* and Rufinus' translation of Origen's seventh homily on Genesis. In the treatise, a quite long passage occurs which is in evident literal agreement with Rufinus' translation of Origen's interpretation of the story of Sarah and Hagar, especially that of the game of Isaac and Ishmael (Gen. 21:9-10).<sup>7</sup> Naturally, questions arise regarding which text depends on the other or whether both texts go back to a common model. H. Jordan, who attributed the twenty homilies to Novatian, assumed that Rufinus and the author of the *Tractatus* used a common homiletic source.<sup>8</sup> According to P. Batiffol, the Tractator had translated the passage from Origen, and Rufinus incorporated this early Latin translation into his version.<sup>9</sup> The same thing happened, argued Batiffol, to a paragraph of the ninth treatise which reoccurred in a sermon of Gaudentius of Brescia (see, *Serm.* 3.21 and *Tract.* 9.10-12). Taking an opposing view to Jordan and Batiffol, Butler summarised the most solid arguments for the view that the writer of the *Tractatus* was the plagiariser of Gaudentius and Rufinus.<sup>10</sup> This position was accepted by D. De Bruyne who re-examined the parallels and, on a firm ground, rejected both Jordan and Batiffol's hypotheses.<sup>11</sup> He also scrutinised other pieces of the *Tractatus* and came to the conclusion that since it was the author of the *Tractatus* who depended on Gaudentius and Rufinus, and since the *Tractatus* were used by Caesarius of Arles, the work must have been composed later than 400 or even 410, but earlier than 542 or even 525. De Bruyne also hypothesised that the *Tractatus* were written in North-Italy.<sup>12</sup> Some years later P. Lejay assumed that the *Tractatus* were written by Gregory, the Spanish bishop. The dependence of Gregory on Rufinus' translation did not seem conclusive for Lejay, who assumed that both authors may have used an early Latin translation of Origen's homily.<sup>13</sup>

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6. *Gregorii Iliberritani episcopi quae supersunt*. CCL 69 (ed. V. Bulhart, 1967), pp. 5-146.

7. Gregory of Elvira, *Tractatus* 3.7 and 3.13-16; Origen, *Homiliae in Genesim* 7.2 and 7.3.

8. H. Jordan, *Die Theologie der neuentdeckten Predigten Novatians: eine dogmengeschichtliche Untersuchung*, Leipzig, 1902, p. 206.

9. P. Batiffol, "Où en est la question des 'Tractatus Origenis'?", *Bulletin de littérature ecclésiastique de Toulouse* 1905, pp. 307-323, esp. p. 322.

10. E.C. Butler, 1905, pp. 590-594.

11. D. De Bruyne, "Encore les *Tractatus Origenis*", *Revue Bénédictine* 23 (1906), pp. 165-188, esp. pp. 171-173.

12. *Ibid.* p. 188.

13. P. Lejay, 1908, pp. 444-445.

Concerning the authorship of the *Tractatus Origenis*, one can cautiously formulate the following hypothesis: if the *post quem* of the twenty *Tractatus* is dependent on the date of Rufinus' translation, then their author must have been someone other than Gregory of Elvira. According to the generally accepted chronology, Rufinus translated the homilies on Genesis around 404. While this date is rather hypothetical, it is certain that all of his translations must be dated after 397;<sup>14</sup> consequently, the *Tractatus*, too, should be dated after 397. However, although we know almost nothing about the life of Gregory of Elvira, it is certain that in 397 he was in his late eighties, if he still lived at all. In *De viris illustribus* written in 393,<sup>15</sup> Jerome tells of Gregory: *Gregorius. Baeticus, Eliberi episcopus usque ad extremam senectutem diversos mediocri sermone tractatus composuit et de fide elegantem librum hodieque superesse dicitur*.<sup>16</sup>

Gregory was "extremely old" in 393. What do we know about his biographical data? He is said by Faustinus to have been *rudis episcopus* when Ossiis of Cordova died.<sup>17</sup> The exact date of Ossiis' death is unknown; probably he died before the spring of 359, possibly in the winter of 357-358.<sup>18</sup> At the same time, the epithet "*rudis*" does not give specific information about Gregory's age of life. He is said to have been a freshly elected and inexe-

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14. C.P. Hammond, "The Last Ten Years of Rufinus' Life and the Date of his Move South from Aquileia," *JThSt* 28 (1977), pp. 372-427, esp. p. 393 n. 1. Hammond's argument for this date is solid: "I have assumed, following Rufinus' statement in Apology against Jerome, i.11: 'Nullum ... me usum huiusmodi operis habuisse, et ad Latinum sermonem tricennali iam pene incuria torpuisse' (cf. also Preface to *De Principiis*, Book I), that all his surviving writings are to be dated after his return to Italy."

15. P. Nautin, "La Date du *De Viris Illustribus* de Jérôme, de la mort de Cyrille de Jérusalem et de celle de Grégoire de Nazianze," *Revue d'Histoire ecclésiastique* 56 (1961), pp. 33-35.

16. Jerome, *De viris illustribus* 105, *PL* 23, c. 742.

17. Faustinus, *De confessione verae fidei* 10.34, *CCL* 69, 1967, pp. 368-369: *Interea fama in cognitionem rei cunctos inquietat et frequens sermo populorum est "quinam est ille Gregorius, qui audet Osio resistere?" Plurimi enim et Osii praevaricationem adhuc ignorabant <et>, quinam esset sanctus Gregorius, nondum bene compertum habebant. Erat enim etiam apud eos, qui illum forte noverant, rudis adhuc episcopus, licet apud Christum non rudis vindex fidei pro merito sanctitatis*. When Ossiis of Cordova wanted to depose Gregory from the bishopric so that Clemens, the pagan *vicarius Hispaniarum* could pronounce the sentence of exile against him, the bishop of Cordova suddenly died: *Et cum multo invidiosius et sanctius Deum verbis fidelibus interpellat, ecce repente Osius, cum sententiam conatus exprimere os veritit, distorquens pariter et cervicem de sessu in terram eliditur atque illic expirat vel, ut quidam volunt, obmutuit, inde tamen effertur ut mortuus*, *ibid.* 10.38, pp. 369-370. It belongs to this legendary story, which is clearly without historical value, that in that time Ossiis must have been roughly 100 years old. Gregory, at all events, avoided the exile.

18. V.C. De Clercq, *Ossiis of Cordova: A Contribution to the History of the Constantinian Period*, Washington, 1954, p. 529. For the possible date of birth of Ossiis (c. 256 AD), see *ibid.* p. 52.

rienced bishop, who had courage to resist the powerful and extremely old Ossius. Our source, Faustinus, does not mention the fact that Gregory was a young man in the time of his controversy with Ossius, although such a motif could have coloured his amazing narrative on the Spanish "David and Goliath." It is, therefore, mere speculation to date Gregory's birth to about 330.<sup>19</sup> The only reliable piece of information is the expression used by Jerome: *extrema senectus*. This expression "designates 90, 86, 85, 78, 77 and seldom 70 years of age" in such authors as Cicero, Tacitus, Cornelius Nepos and Jerome himself.<sup>20</sup> The date of Gregory's birth therefore should be put before 323. In addition, Jerome's account reveals that Gregory was "extremely old" not in the time when Jerome composed his *De viris illustribus*, but when Gregory was working on treatises which Jerome later judged to be poor in style. These *Tractatus* thus must have been written years before 393. All these indicate that Gregory may well have been born in the first decade of the fourth century. Since his name does not appear in the list of the bishops who were present at the Council of Toledo in 400, one may date Gregory's death before 400.<sup>21</sup> This would mean that the *Tractatus Origenis* has been erroneously ascribed to Gregory of Elvira.

It also contradicts the attribution of the *Tractatus* to the bishop of Elvira that the author does not use the term *substantia*, or *essentia*, in the sense of divine essence. He does make use of the term *substantia*, but in a different meaning:

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19. M. Simonetti (introduction, text edition, translation, commentary), *Gregorio di Elvira, La fede*, Torino, 1975, p. 10: "... Gregorio ancora *rudis* intorno agli anni 357-359: egli allora doveva essere sulla trentina, età minima per essere eletto vescovo, sì che intorno al 405 potrà avere avuto circa 76-77 anni ... ." E. Schulz-Flügel (introduction, text edition, commentary), *Gregorius Eliberritanus, Epithalamium sive explanatio in Canticis Canticorum*, Freiburg, 1994, p. 21: "Gregor um das Jahr 360 herum nicht viel älter als dreissig Jahre war; vor erreicherung dieses Alters hätte er nicht Bischof werden können." Ibid. p. 22: "Als Summe dieser knappen Notizen ergibt sich, daß Gregor um das Jahr 330 geboren wurde und im Jahr 393, also über sechzigjährig, noch am Leben war." That a person who was appointed bishop must have reached the age of thirty was by no means a general rule in the first five centuries. The *Constitutiones apostolicae* 2.1.1 (*SC* 320, p. 144) mandates 50 years of age; Siricius prescribes 45 years, *Epistolae et decreta* 9.13 (*PL* 13, c. 1142-1143). This same was rigorously followed by Caesarius of Arles who did not appoint a person even deacon who was not thirty years old, cf. C. J. Hefele, *Histoire des Conciles*, Paris, 1908, vol. 2, p. 989. Pope Zosimus (417-418) also followed Siricius' prescriptions, see his *Epistula* 9.3 (*PL* 20, c. 672-673). The age of a possible bishop was often between 45 and 50 years. These canons, however, do not betray anything of the practice of the local Churches, partly because their leaders sometimes did not know the canons, and partly because they also followed local traditions. The Canon 17 of the *Concilium Agathense* (held in 506) prescribes 30 years for a bishop. This became, indeed, a general practice from the sixth century on, cf. *Dictionnaire de Droit canonique*, vol. 1, c. 321. The canons thus do not assist in determining the age of a fourth century bishop.

20. P. Hadot, *Marius Victorinus. Recherches sur sa vie et ses œuvres*, Paris, 1971, p. 24. See the references in the footnote, *ibid.* p. 24, n. 11. Concerning Jerome, see e.g. his *De viris illustribus* 101 on Victorinus, and 80 on Lactantius.

21. Mansi III. 998 and 1002. Cf. M. Simonetti, 1975, p. 8.

the term refers to the nature of a being.<sup>22</sup> By contrast, Gregory of Elvira, a rigorous defender of the Nicene Creed, applied an accurate post-Nicene Latin terminology in his *De fide orthodoxa contra Arianos*.<sup>23</sup> He repeatedly used such expressions as the Greek *homoousion*, or the Latin *trinitas unius substantiae*; *tres personae unius substantiae*; *substantiae unitas*; *pater et filius unius substantiae* etc.<sup>24</sup> None of these expressions appears in the *Tractatus*, even though there are clear allusions to the Nicene dogma.<sup>25</sup>

Most recently, Eva Schulz-Flügel attempted to re-establish the hypothesis that the parallels between the third *Tractatus* and Rufinus' translation of the seventh homily on Genesis may be accounted for by a common source. The new factor in her assumption is that the common source may have been a Latin compilation of Origen's *Commentary on Galatians*, for the parallel texts include the interpretation of the game of Isaac and Ishmael which Origen explains on the basis of Saint Paul's comment in Gal. 4:22-31, principally in 4:29.<sup>26</sup> Some elements of the interpretation appear in Jerome's *Commentary on Galatians* that he professed to compose under the influence of Origen's commentary on the same Epistle. Schulz-Flügel stresses the well-known fact that while translating Origen's works, Rufinus occasionally inserted particular passages from other Origenian writings so that the explanation might be more complete. The same may have been the case for the homilies on Genesis.

This hypothesis seems to be fragile for at least three reasons:

1. There is no indication in Rufinus' translation of the seventh homily on Genesis that the passage in question is an interpolation.
2. It is not demonstrated that any other Latin author of the fourth or fifth century would have used a Latin compilation of Origen's *Commentary on Galatians*. *Unus testis non est testis*.

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22. *Tract.* 2.22, 17; 14.21, 111; 16.14, 119; 17.11, 125; 17.16, 126; 17.17, 126; 17.18, 126; 17.21, 127; 17.24, 128; 17.30, 129; 19.18, 141.

23. In the course of the centuries the variants of *De fide* were attributed to Ambrose, Gregory Nazianzen, as one of his treatises translated by Rufinus, and Phoebadius. Its attribution to Gregory of Elvira depends to a great extent on the difficult question of Gregory's corpus. Gregory is nowadays considered to be the author of the *Tractatus in cantica canticorum*, a *Tractatus de arca Noe*, a brief *Expositio de psalmo XCI*, and two fragments on Gen. 3:22 and 15:9-11. A comparative study of *De fide*, *In Canticum* and *Tractatus Origenis*, may provide surprising conclusions.

24. See, M. Simonetti, 1975, pp. 219, 223 and 226.

25. For instance, *Tractatus* 3.34, p. 27: *Ac proinde et angelus propter obedientiam paternae uoluntatis dicitur et deus secundum naturam patris, quia uere deus est, nuncupatur; filius etenim dei, deus uerus de deo uero, unigenitus ab ingenito non potest alius esse quam deus*. *Tractatus* 6.35, p. 50: *Sicuti enim ex leone leo nascitur, ita deus de deo et lumen ex lumine procedere dicitur*. See also, P. Lejay, 1908, pp. 448-450.

26. E. Schulz-Flügel, 1994, pp. 256-267.

3. Jerome and Augustine were eager to cite authorities in favour of their interpretation of Gal. 2:11-14. Augustine admitted his ignorance of Origen's commentary on Galatians and Jerome did not call his attention to a Latin version: neither of them was aware of such a compilation.<sup>27</sup>

One can assume that Rufinus used Latin translations if such existed, but it is not necessary to think of a translation or compilation of the *Commentary on Galatians*. I would not exclude that Rufinus may have incorporated an ancient Latin version of Origen's seventh homily on Genesis into his own. Possibly, the Tractator also used this early translation.<sup>28</sup> In this case there is no chronological obstacle to attributing the work to Gregory of Elvira. The question, however, remains: why don't the *Tractatus* reveal the well-elaborated post-Nicene terminology which is so characteristic in Gregory's *De fide*?

Whoever and wherever composed the *Tractatus Origenis*, the author of the work definitely relied on Latin sources.<sup>29</sup> He does not seem to have known Greek.<sup>30</sup> In addition, he sometimes followed his sources almost slavishly. This fact facilitates in looking for traces of the *Origenes latinus* in the work.

## II. – THE ORIGENIAN BACKGROUND OF THE FIRST *TRACTATUS*

The scope of the present inquiry will be limited to the first *Tractatus*. I will argue for the assumption that its author did make use of an ancient Latin compilation of Origen's *Commentary on Genesis*.

The first section of the first *Tractatus* includes an interpretation of Gen. 1:26. The author quotes the verse and makes a false understanding of it known. The

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27. Cf. Augustine, *Epistula* 82.23.

28. Cf. C. Vona, *Gregorio di Elvira: I Tractatus De libris sacrarum scripturarum. Fonti e sopravvivenza medievale*, Roma, 1970, pp. 31 and 89. An *argumentum ex silentio* for this surmise may be the fact that there are no further textual parallels between the twenty *Tractatus* and the Latin *Homilies on Genesis*, although not only the third, but also the second, fourth and fifth *Tractatus* deal with topics exactly those commented by Origen in the fourth, third and fifteenth homilies on Genesis. Even though the Tractator preferred Origen's exegesis, as is clear from the parallel between the third treatise and Origen's seventh homily and from other indications, for these three treatises he did not use the *Homilies on Genesis*, probably because they were not available for him.

29. C. Vona, 1970, pp. 26-35; M. Dulaey, "Grégoire d'Elvire pasteur: La pédagogie du prédicateur dans le sermon sur l'hospitalité de Mambré (Gen. 18)," *Studia Ephemeridis Augustinianum* 58. *Vescovi e pastori in epoca teodosiana*, 1997, vol. 2, pp. 743-762.

30. Hippolytus' influence, for instance, on the *Tractatus* comes via Victorinus of Poetovio, see M. Dulaey, "Grégoire d'Elvire et le *Commentaire sur la Genèse* de Victorin de Poetovio," *Augustinus* 149/151 (1993), pp. 203-219.

so-called Anthropomorphites believe that Gen. 1:26 involves the corporeality of God. They cite a series of verses from the Old Testament to prove that God looks like man. This portion of the homily can be paralleled with two texts which could have served as models for the Tractator.<sup>31</sup> I quote Origen, Novatian and the Tractator's texts in their integrity. The sentences printed in boldface indicate the parallels between *Tractatus* 1. and Novatian's *De Trinitate*, whereas the underlined sections aim to contour the relationship of the *Tractatus* and a catena-fragment which probably comes from Origen's *Commentary on Genesis*.

<p>Origen, <i>Selecta in Genesim</i><sup>32</sup></p> <p>Καὶ εἶπεν ὁ Θεός·  <u>Ποιήσωμεν ἄνθρωπον</u>  <u>κατ' εἰκόνα ἡμετέραν καὶ</u>  <u>καθ' ὁμοίωσιν</u>  (Gen. 1:26).  Προδιαληπτέον πρότερον,  ποῦ συνίσταται τὸ κατ'  εἰκόνα, ἐν σώματι ἢ ἐν  ψυχῇ. Ἰδῶμεν δὲ  <u>πρότερον οἷς χρώνται οἱ</u>  <u>τὸ πρῶτον λέγοντες</u>: ὧν  ἔστι καὶ Μελίτων  <u>συγγράμματα</u>  <u>καταλελοιπῶς περὶ τοῦ</u>  <u>ἐνσώματον εἶναι τὸν</u>  <u>Θεόν. Μέλη γὰρ Θεοῦ</u></p> <p><u>ὀνομαζόμενα</u>  <u>εὐρίσκοντες, ὀφθαλμοῦς</u>  Θεοῦ ἐπιβλέποντας τὴν  οἰκουμένην (cf. Zach.  4:10), <u>καὶ ὧτα αὐτοῦ</u></p>	<p><i>Tractatus Origenis</i> 1<sup>33</sup></p> <p>1. Multi sunt <u>ineruditi</u>  <u>homines expertes caelestium</u>  <u>litterarum, qui cum audiunt</u>  <u>dixisse Deum: faciamus</u>  <u>hominem ad imaginem</u>  <u>et ad similitudinem</u>  <u>nostram</u> (Gen. 1:26),</p> <p><u>putant corporeum Deum</u>  <u>et membrorum compositione</u>  <u>constructum intellegi</u>  <u>oportere</u>, praesertim  cum et prophetae  caput et capillos  domini nominant et  oculos et aures et nares et os et  labia et linguam et pedes, cum  dicitur: caput eius et capilli ut  lana alba tamquam nix  (Dan. 7:9), et: <u>oculi domini</u>  <u>super iustos</u></p>	<p>Novatian, <i>De Trinitate</i><sup>34</sup></p> <p>6.1. Et licet <b>scriptura</b>  <b>caelestis</b> ad humanam  formam faciem divinam  saepe convertat, dum dicit:</p> <p><b>oculi Domini super iustos</b>  (Ps. 33:16),</p>
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31. The parallels were disclosed and explained by E.C Butler, "The New *Tractatus* Origenis," *JThSt* 1900, pp. 113-121 and 1901, pp. 254-262. A more recent *Quellenforschung* of the *Tractatus* is found in C. Vona, 1970, pp. 41-67.

32. *CCG* 15 (ed. F. Petit, 1986), pp. 73-74. The fragment, which in *PG* 12 is said to belong to Origen's *Selecta in Genesim*, was preserved in the *Catena Romana*, manuscript Mosq 385. Vat. Barb. Gr. 569.

33. *CCL* 69 (ed. V. Bulhart, 1967), pp. 5 and 7.

34. *CCL* 4 (ed. G.F. Diercks, 1972), pp. 19-20.

εἶναι εἰς δέησιν δικαίων  
(Ps. 33:16) ἐπινενευκότα,  
καὶ, Ὡσφράνθη Κύριος  
ὀσμὴν εὐωδίας:  
(Gen. 8:21) καὶ, Τὸ στόμα  
Κυρίου ἐλάλησε ταῦτα  
(Is. 1:20),

καὶ βραχίονα Θεοῦ,  
καὶ χεῖρας,  
καὶ πόδας,  
καὶ δακτύλους,

ἀντικρυς φάσκουσι ταῦτα  
οὐχ ἕτερόν τι διδάσκειν  
ἢ τὴν μορφήν τοῦ Θεοῦ.  
Πῶς δὲ, φασὶ, καὶ ᾤθη ὁ  
Θεὸς τῷ Ἀβραάμ, καὶ  
τῷ Μωσῆ, καὶ τοῖς  
ἀγίοις, μὴ μεμορφωμένους:

Μεμορφωμένους δὲ κατὰ  
ποίησιν χαρακτῆρα ἢ τὸν  
ἀνθρώπινον:

et aures eius ad preces eorum  
(Ps. 33:16), et:

odoratus est dominus

odorem suavitatis

(Gen. 8:21),

et: os domini locutum est ista

(Is. 1:20 cf. 58:14); et: quae  
procedunt de labia mea non  
faciam irrita (Ps. 88:35), et:  
lingua mea calamus acutus (cf.  
Ps. 44:2), et: sabbata uestra  
odiuit anima mea (cf. Is. 1:14),  
et: conuerte domine faciem  
tuam et salui erimus (Ps. 79, 4,  
8, 20), et: dextera domini fecit  
uirtutem (Ps. 117:16), et:  
nonne manus mea fecit haec  
omnia? (Is. 66:2; Act. 7:50) et:

digito Dei tabulae legis

lapideae scriptae moysi

traduntur (Deut. 9:10; cf. Ex.

31:18), et: caelum mihi sedis

est, terra autem scabillum

pedum meorum (Is. 66:1), et:

manu ualida et excelso

brachio domini populus

liberatur (Ps. 135:12; cf. Sap.

5:17) et: caelum palmo

mensus est et terram omnem  
pugillo concludit (Is. 40:12).

2. Haec ergo membra corporis

cum legunt uel audiunt, ita

credunt, ut iam dixi, quasi

corporeum Deum et

membrorum esse distinctione

compositum. Denique haeresis

ipsius homines graeco

uocabulo homines graeco

uocabulo antropomorfiani

dicuntur, eo quod Deum ad

uicem hominis compactum

atque formatum adserunt.

Proinde admonenda fuit  
dilectio uestra, ne aliquis  
uestrum horum uerborum  
subtilitate capiatur. 3. Aiunt  
enim: 'si haec membra, quae  
in deo diuinae scripturae  
commemorant, non ita essent  
credenda, ergo fefellerunt nos  
prophetae, qui et caput et

aut dum odoratus est

**Dominus Deus odorem**

bonae fragrantiae

(Gen. 8:21),

aut dum traduntur Moysi

tabulae scriptae digito Dei

(Deut. 9:10; cf. Ex. 31:18),

aut

dum populus filiorum Israel  
de terra aegypti manu ualida  
**et brachio excelso** (Ps.

135:12; cf. Sap. 5:17)

**liberatur,** aut dum dicit: **Os**

**enim Domini locutum est**

**haec** (Is. 1:20), aut dum

**terra scabillum pedum Dei**

esse perhibetur (Is. 66:1), aut

dum dicit: Inclina aurem

tuam et audi (4Reg 19:16),

sed nos qui dicimus quia lex

spiritalis est (Rom. 7:14),

**non intra haec nostri**

**corporis lineamenta**

**modum aut figuram**

**diuinae maiestatis**

**includimus,** sed suis illam

interminatae magnitudinis, ut

ita dixerim, campis sine ullo

fine diffundimus.

2. Scriptum est enim: Si  
ascendero in caelum tu ibi  
es; si descendero ad inferos,  
ades; et si assumpsero alas  
meas et abiero trans mare, ibi  
manus tua apprehendet me et

καὶ συναγοῦσι μυρία  
ῥητὰ, μέλη ὀνομάζοντα  
Θεοῦ. Πρὸς οὐς  
ἀγωνιστέον πρῶτον ἀπὸ  
τῆς λέξεως·  
ἀντιπαραβαλοῦμεν δὲ  
ῥητὰ τοῖς πλέον τοῦ  
γράμματος μηδὲν  
ἐπισταμένοις,  
ἐναντιούμενα αὐτῶν τῇ  
ὑπολήψει·

ἐκ μὲν τοῦ Ζαχαρίου, ὅτι  
ἑπτὰ ὀφθαλμοὶ Κυρίου οἱ  
ἐπιβλέποντες ἐπὶ πᾶσαν  
τὴν γῆν (Zach. 4:10). Εἰ δὲ  
ἑπτὰ ἔχει ὀφθαλμοὺς ὁ  
Θεός, ἡμεῖς δὲ δύο, οὐ  
κατ' εἰκόνα αὐτοῦ  
γεγόναμεν. Ἄλλὰ καὶ  
ἡμεῖς μὲν οὐκ  
ἐπτερυγώμεθα, περὶ Θεοῦ  
δὲ λέγει ἐν τῷ  
ἐνενηκοστῷ ψαλμῷ, ὅτι  
ὑπὸ τὰς πτέρυγας αὐτοῦ  
ἐλπείς (Ps. 90:4). Εἰ δὲ  
ἐκεῖνος μὲν πτέρυγας  
ἔχει, ἡμεῖς δὲ ἐσμεν ζῶον  
ἄπτερον, οὐ κατ' εἰκόνα  
Θεοῦ γέγονεν ὁ  
ἄνθρωπος. Πῶς δὲ ὁ  
σφαιροειδῆς οὐρανὸς καὶ  
ἀεὶ κινούμενος θρόνος  
εἶναι ὡς ὑπολαμβάνουσι  
δύναται τοῦ Θεοῦ; Ἄλλὰ  
καὶ ἡ γῆ πῶς ὑποπόδιον  
τῶν ποδῶν αὐτοῦ  
ἀπαγγελλέτωσαν ἡμῖν  
(Is. 66:1; Matth. 5:34-35);

capillos et oculos et aures et  
nares et os et labia et  
linguam et manus et pedes  
et cetera membra domini  
nominarunt, quem hi  
scirent incorporeum Deum  
et nihil horum penitus  
indigere, sed et ipse Moyses,  
qui hoc in loco refert  
dixisse deum: faciamus  
hominem ad imaginem et  
ad similitudinem nostram  
(Gen. 1:27).  
(...)

**11.** Quid, quod septem oculi  
domini leguntur (Zach. 4:10  
cf. ibid. 3:9; Apoc. 5:6.) et  
homo duos oculos habet? Et  
ubi est haec imago et  
similitudo Dei in homine?  
Non enim ulla similitudo est  
eius qui duos oculos habet et  
eius qui septem habere  
perhibetur.

dextera tua detinebit me  
(Ps. 138:8-10).

Two general hypotheses have been proposed concerning the relationship of the three texts quoted above:

1. The *Tractatus* was written by Novatian who in *De Trinitate* used Origen's text and quoted himself later in the *Tractatus* or, in reverse, he used his *Tractatus* for this passage of *De Trinitate*.

2. The author of the *Tractatus* relied on both Novatian and Origen, but Novatian was independent of Origen, because he used some work of Melito (which is lost today), in which the anthropomorphic passages were collected.

There are still more possible explanations.

3. Novatian and the Tractator used Origen's text. This can be divided into further sub-possibilities:

A. Both independently used the Greek text of Origen.

B. Both independently used a Latin translation of Origen's text.

C. The Tractator used Novatian's *De Trinitate* and Origen's Greek text.

D. The Tractator used Novatian's *De Trinitate* and the Latin translation of Origen's text.

The first possibility can be excluded. The assumption that Novatian was the author of the *Tractatus Origenis* has been refuted by Butler, Bruyne, and Lejay. As noted, the series of the *Tractatus* were written after the Nicene Council. Pointing out Novatian's dependence on Origen's anti-Anthropomorphite arguments, one can refute the second possibility, according to which Novatian was independent of Origen.<sup>35</sup> The A. and the C. sub-possibilities of the third hypothesis, including the surmise that the Tractator could have worked on Greek texts, can also be eliminated. The author of the *Tractatus* demonstrably did not know Greek.

Two reasonable possibilities remain and both include the assumption that a Latin translation of the Origenian explanation must have existed. Since the topic is of crucial importance, I am gathering some arguments for this thesis. It is necessary, therefore, to re-examine the relationship between the first *Tractatus* and the Origen fragment, on the one hand, and that between Novatian's text and the *Tractatus*, on the other.

### III. – DOES THE FIRST *TRACTATUS* DIRECTLY DEPEND ON A LATIN TRANSLATION OF ORIGEN'S TEXT?

For Butler, the *Tractatus*' dependence on the Origen fragment is clear from the common use of Scriptural quotations: "whereas the order of the Scripture texts in Novatian and in the Tractate is different, the second, third and fourth in Tractate are precisely those given by Origen, and in the same sequence.

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35. E.C. Butler, 1900, p. 116: "there is no reason in the nature of things why Novatian should not have directly depended on Origen." Since Butler did not find common points in the refutations of Origen and Novatian, he assumed that they independently used a work of Melito from which they quoted the array of verses.

Moreover Origen's grotesque argument based on Zach. iv 20 is reproduced by the Tractator, but is not found in Novatian. These traces suffice, I think, to establish the fact that the first Tractate goes back quite independently to the Origen fragment, as well as to Novatian's *de Trinitate*.<sup>36</sup> The first part of Butler's conclusion can be confirmed: "the first Tractate goes back quite independently to the Origen fragment."

The logic and the structure of the Origen fragment and the first section of the *Tractatus* is the same: Gen. 1:26 reveals that man is made in the image of God. Does it mean that God has human shape? There are those who think so and believe in a corporeal God composed of human limbs. They believe they can glean arguments from the Scriptures. Importantly, Novatian's explanation in *De Trinitate* is not connected to Gen. 1:26. He does not even explicitly refer to Anthropomorphites.

Consider, first of all, the Scriptural quotations and allusions in the Tractator and Origen:

Tractator: **Gen. 1:26**; Dan. 7:9; **Ps. 33:16**; **Gen. 8:21**; **Is. 1:20**; lips (Ps. 88:35); tongue (Ps. 44:2); soul (Is. 1:14); face (Ps. 79:4); right hand (Ps. 117:16); **hand** (Is. 66:2); **finger** (Deut. 9:10); **feet Is. 66:1**; **arms** Ps. 135:12; Is. 40:12.

Origen: **Gen. 1:26**; Zach. 4:10; **Ps. 33:16**; **Gen. 8:21**; **Is. 1:20**; **arms, hands, feet, fingers**; Zach. 4:10; wings (Ps. 90:4); **feet Is. 66:1**.

Except for Dan. 7:9 and Zach. 4:10, both authors start their explanation with the same Scriptural verses and quote them in the same order. The sequence is the following: Psalm 33:16, Gen. 8:21 and Is. 1:20. The Tractator quotes a series of the verses which also refer to God as if He has human features: lips, tongue, soul, face, hands, fingers, arms. Finally, like Origen, he summarises the Anthropomorphites' argument: the prophets enumerate God's features: head, hairs, eyes, ears, nose, mouth, lips, tongue, hands and feet (*caput et capillos et oculos et aures et nares et os et labia et linguam et manus et pedes et cetera membra domini nominarunt*).

In the Origen fragment, there are no mentions of lips and face, but there are those of arms, hands, feet, fingers (καὶ βραχίονα Θεοῦ, καὶ χεῖρας, καὶ πόδας, καὶ δακτύλους).

Novatian cites the Scriptural verses in the following order: Ps. 33:16; Gen. 8:21; Deut. 9:10; Ps. 135:12; Is. 1:20; Is. 66:1; 4Reg. 19:16, that is to say, he also quotes Ps. 33:16; Gen. 8:2 and Is. 1:20, but this latter quote is preceded by Deut. 9:10 and Ps. 135:12. Both verses appear in the *Tractatus* as well, but in a different order. Moreover, Novatian cites the first clause of Psalm 33:16, whereas Origen, or the Catenist, the second clause, and Gregory the whole sentence.

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36. Ibid. p. 117.

The parallel sentences between *Tractatus* 1.1-3 and the Origen fragment are thus as follows:

*Ineruditi homines expertes caelestium litterarum,*  
 ῥητὰ τοῖς πλέον τοῦ γράμματος μηδὲν ἐπισταμένοις

*qui cum audiunt dixisse deum: faciamus hominem ad imaginem et ad similitudinem nostram* (Gen. 1:26), *putant corporeum deum et membrorum compositione constructum intellegi oportere,*

Καὶ εἶπεν ὁ Θεός· Ποιήσωμεν ἄνθρωπον κατ' εἰκόνα ἡμετέραν καὶ καθ' ὁμοίωσιν (Gen. 1:26). ... συγγράμματα καταλελοιπῶς περὶ τοῦ ἐνσώματον εἶναι τὸν Θεόν. Μέλη γὰρ Θεοῦ ὀνομαζόμενα εὐρίσκοντες ... φάσκουσι ταῦτα οὐχ ἕτερόν τι διδάσκειν ἢ τὴν μορφήν τοῦ Θεοῦ.

*oculi domini super iustos et aures eius ad preces eorum* (Ps. 33:16), *et: odoratus est dominus odorem suavitatis* (Gen. 8:21), *et: os domini locutum est ista* (Is. 1:20; cf. Is. 58:14)

ὄφθαλμοὺς Θεοῦ ἐπιβλέποντας τὴν οἰκουμένην (cf. Zach. 4:10), καὶ ὧτα αὐτοῦ εἶναι εἰς δέησιν δικαίων (Psalm 33:16) ἐπινενευκτότα, καὶ, Ὡσφράνθη Κύριος ὄσμὴν εὐωδίας· (Gen. 8:21) καὶ, Τὸ στόμα Κυρίου ἐλάλησε ταῦτα (Is. 1:20)

*et: caelum mihi sedis est, terra autem scabillum pedum meorum* (Is. 66:1)

Πῶς δὲ ὁ ... οὐρανὸς ... θρόνος εἶναι δύναται ... τοῦ Θεοῦ; Ἄλλὰ καὶ ἡ γῆ πῶς ὑποπόδιον τῶν ποδῶν αὐτοῦ (Is. 66:1; Matth. 5:34-35);<sup>37</sup>

*Haec ergo membra corporis cum legunt uel audiunt, ita credunt, ut iam dixi, quasi corporeum deum et membrorum esse distinctione compositum.*

Μέλη γὰρ Θεοῦ ὀνομαζόμενα εὐρίσκοντες ... φάσκουσι ταῦτα οὐχ ἕτερόν τι διδάσκειν ἢ τὴν μορφήν τοῦ Θεοῦ.

*eo quod deum ad uicem hominis compactum atque formatum adserunt.*

φασί, ... μὴ μεμορφωμένους; μεμορφωμένος δὲ, κατὰ ποῖον χαρακτήρα ἢ τὸν ἀνθρώπινον

*manus et pedes et cetera membra domini nominarunt*

χείρας, καὶ πόδας, καὶ δακτύλους ... φάσκουσι ... καὶ συνάγουσι μυρία ῥητὰ μέλη ὀνομάζοντα Θεοῦ

*Quid, quod septem oculi domini leguntur* (Zach. 4:10; cf. *ibid.* 3:9; Apoc. 5:6) *et homo duos oculos habet? et ubi est haec imago et similitudo dei in homine? non enim ulla similitudo est eius qui duos oculos habet et eius qui septem habere perhibetur.*

ἐναντιούμενα αὐτῶν τῇ ὑπολήψει· ἐκ μὲν τοῦ Ζαχαρίου, ὅτι Ἐπτὰ ὄφθαλμοὶ Κυρίου οἱ ἐπιβλέποντες ἐπὶ πάσαν τὴν τῆν γῆν (Zach. 4:10). Εἰ δὲ ἑπτὰ ἔχει ὄφθαλμοὺς ὁ Θεός, ἡμεῖς δὲ δύο, οὐ κατ' εἰκόνα αὐτοῦ γεγονάμεν.

The parallels clearly indicate that the author of the *Tractatus* depends on Origen's text. In addition, we have to take into consideration the lamentable fact that the Origen fragment is preserved in a catena. It is probable that the editor of

37. Cf. Origen, *Commentarii in evangelium Joannis* 6.202.

the catena simplified and abbreviated the original explanation, as well as, omitting a couple of Scriptural quotations from the long passage that Origen probably cited from one of Melito's works. The traces of this method are visible in the section after the quotation of Is. 1:20 where the list suddenly interrupts and the editor replaces the verses with a brief summary: καὶ βραχίονα Θεοῦ, καὶ χεῖρας, καὶ πόδας, καὶ δακτύλους. It seems also reasonable that the clause, Μέλη γὰρ Θεοῦ ὀνομαζόμενα εὐρίσκοντες, also represents an abbreviation. The word μέλη may have been inserted in the place of such list of human limbs as appears in the parallel text in the *Tractatus*. This means that in the paragraph the *Tractatus* may have conserved the original version better than the catena. We will see instances that the Tractator almost slavishly follows his model text. He seems to proceed in this manner while quoting the Scriptural testimonies referred to by the Anthropomorphites. The most remarkable evidence of the direct relationship between Origen and the Tractator's texts is the citation of Zach. 4:10 as an ironic counter-argument. The verse appears in the section of the *Tractatus* in which the arguments are collected against the Anthropomorphites. This section is preceded by another one (Tract. 1.5-8), in which the author argues that man consists of three parts, spirit, soul and body; that is to say, man is considered to be composite whereas God is elemental. After having stated this, the Tractator comes to refute the Anthropomorphite understanding of the Scriptural verses.

#### IV. – DOES THE FIRST *TRACTATUS* DEPEND ON NOVATIAN?

As Butler observed, "there is in this place a very intimate connexion between the Tractator and Novatian. This is shown by the words *traduntur* and *populus liberatur*, used in connexion with Ex. xxxi 18 and Psalm cxxxv (cxxxvi) 12 respectively, by both writers, though the actual wording of either phrase is not to be found in the Bible anywhere near in the contexts; and by the changes in construction they involve."<sup>38</sup>

It is plausible that the Tractator depends on Novatian, but it is less certain that he relied on Novatian's *De Trinitate*.<sup>39</sup> The connection between Novatian and *Tractatus* 1.1-3 is indicated by two facts: the use of the similar expressions: "*caelestes litterae*" and "*scriptura caelestis*," and the Scripture version they

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38. E.C. Butler, 1900, p. 116.

39. Ibid. p. 117: The Tractator "first reproduced the Scripture texts from Origen, and then he copied out the additional ones found in Novatian, inserting on his own account various other texts of the same kind; unless, indeed, it be supposed in regard to these latter texts that the Tractator also was directly using Melito – a possible but not very likely alternative."

quote. Firstly, the expression “*scriptura caelestis*” is very typical of Novatian.<sup>40</sup> Secondly, the Scriptural verses appearing in the two Latin texts are quoted or slightly paraphrased from the same Latin version of the Bible, possibly from the *Vetus Romana*.<sup>41</sup> The only exception seems to be Gen. 8:21, which Novatian cites according to his Bible version (*odoratus est Dominus Deus odorem bonae fragrantiae*), whereas the Tractator’s version is different (*odoratus est dominus odorem suavitatis*). Here, the expression ὄσμῆν εὐωδίας is thus rendered as *odorem suavitatis*. Nevertheless, at the end of the treatise the author uses the same Latin expression as Novatian: *quia orationes sanctorum in Apocalipsi timiama comparantur esse, quae per manum angeli in odorem bonae fragrantiae ut scriptum est domino offeruntur* (1.30, 12). The expression “*odorem bonae fragrantiae*” does not occur in Apocalypse 8:4. This suggests that the passage of the treatise depends on Novatian.<sup>42</sup> There is no need, however, to assume that in the first chapter of the *Tractatus* the author replaced the expression in Gen. 8:21 “*odorem bonae fragrantiae*” with “*odorem suavitatis*.” Why would have been it important for him? The European version of the *Vetus Latina* renders Gen. 8:21 as *Odoratus dominus odorem suavitatis*. The version was used in the age of Cyprian and Novatian,<sup>43</sup> that is to say, in another work, Novatian may have quoted the verse in the same form that the Tractator cites. So far one point has been clarified: regarding its style and Scriptural background, the Origenian passage of the *Tractatus* seems to depend on Novatian.

#### V. – DOES NOVATIAN DIRECTLY DEPEND ON ORIGEN?

The *De Trinitate* demonstrates that Novatian was familiar not merely with the Anthropomorphite’s argumentation, but also with its Origenian refutation, as well as with Origen’s allegorical interpretation of the verses quoted by Melito

40. The expression “*scriptura caelestis*” occurs in Cyprian of Carthage, *De lapsis* 23; Novatian, *De spectaculis* 1; 2; *De Trinitate* 19; 21; 23; 24; 30 and later in Ambrose, *Hexaemeron* 2.2.7; *De Cain et Abel* 2.6; *De Noe* 19.70; *De bono mortis* 5.20; *Explanatio in Ps.* 38, 15.3, etc. The “*caelestis littera*” appears e.g. in Chromatius of Aquila, *Tractatus in Matthaeum* 9.

41. A. d’Alès, *Novatien. Études sur la théologie romaine au milieu du III<sup>e</sup> siècle*, Paris, 1925, pp. 44-76; R.J. DeSimone, *The Treatise of Novatian the Roman Presbyter on the Trinity: A Study of the Text and the Doctrine*, Rome, 1970, pp. 44-46; E. Lupieri “Contributo per un’analisi delle citazioni veterotestamentarie nel *De Trinitate* di Novaziano,” *Augustinianum* 22 (1982), pp. 211-227; P. Mattei “Recherches sur la Bible à Rome vers le milieu du III<sup>e</sup> s.: Novatien et la *Vetus Latina*,” *Revue bénédictine* 105 (1995), pp. 255-279.

42. C. Vona, 1970, p. 43.

43. *Vetus Latina* (Freiburg, 1951-1954), vol. 2, p. 17. The Vulgate version is similar: *Odoratusque est Dominus odorem suavitatis*.

and his supporters. The following set of parallels is cited from *De Trinitate*, Theodoret's *Quaestiones in Genesim*, in which he probably summarises Origen's interpretation, and Origen's *De principiis*. The parallels are indicated by the underlined sentences.

Novatian *Trin.*

Origen in Theodoret *Quaestiones in Genesim* 1.20<sup>44</sup>

**6.1.** Et licet scriptura caelestis ad humanam formam faciem divinam saepe convertat, dum dicit: *Oculi Domini super iustos* (Ps. 33:16), aut dum *odoratus est Dominus Deus odorem bonae fragrantiae* (Gen. 8:21), aut dum tranduntur Moysi *tabulae scriptae digito Dei* (Deut. 9:10; cf. Ex. 31:18), aut dum *populus filiorum Israel de terra Aegypti manu valida et brachio excelso* (Ps. 135:12; cf. Sap. 5:17) liberatur, aut dum dicit: *Os enim Domini locutum est haec* (Is. 1:20), aut dum *terra scabellum pedum Dei* esse perhibetur (Is. 66:1), aut dum dicit: *Inclina aurem tuam et audi* (4Reg. 19:16).

**6.2.** Scriptum est enim: *Si ascendero in caelum, tu ibi es; si descendero ad infero, ades;* et si assumpsero alas meas et abiero trans mare, ibi manus tua apprehendet me et dextera tua detinebit me (Ps. 138:8-10). Rationem enim divinae scripturae de temperamento *dispositionis cognoscimus. Parabolis enim adhuc secundum fidei tempus de Deo prophetes tunc loquebatur, non quomodo Deus erat, sed quomodo populus capere poterat. Ut igitur haec sic de Deo dicantur, non Deo, sed populo potius imputetur.*

**6.5.**

*Et causas reddidit dicens: spiritus est deus; et eos ergo qui adorant in spiritu et veritate adorare oportet* (Jn. 4:24). *Efficaciae igitur ibi divinae per membra monstrantur, non habitus Dei nec corporalia lineamenta*

Τινές δὲ ὑπὸ πολλῆς εὐηθείας τὸ σῶμα τὸ ἀνθρώπινον κατ' εἰκόνα Θεοῦ γεγενῆσθαί (Gen. 1:26) φασιν· ἐπειδὴ τῆς θείας λεγουσῆς ἐπακούουσι γραφῆς· ἀνοιξον τοὺς ὀφθαλμοὺς σοῦ καὶ ἴδε, καὶ κλίνον τὸ οὖς σοῦ καὶ ἄκουσον (4Reg. 19:16), καὶ ὡσφράνθη Κύριος ὁσμὴν εὐωδίας (Gen. 8:21),

καὶ τὸ στόμα Κυρίου ἐλάλησε ταῦτα (Is. 1:20), καὶ ἐν τῇ χειρὶ αὐτοῦ τὰ πέρατα τῆς γῆς, καὶ ὅσα τοιαῦτα (Ps. 94:4).

καὶ οὐ συνείδον οἱ ἄγαν ἠλίθιοι, ὡς ἀνθρώποις δι' ἀνθρώπων διαλεγόμενος ὁ δεσπότης Θεός, τῇ τῶν ἀκουόντων ἀσθενείᾳ τοὺς λόγους μετρεῖ· καὶ ἐπειδὴ δι' ὀφθαλμῶν ὀρώμεν ἡμεῖς, τὴν ὀπτικὴν αὐτοῦ δύναμιν ὀφθαλμοὺς νομᾶζομεν· καὶ αὐτὴ πάλιν τὴν ἀκουστικὴν ὠτᾶ, ἐπειδὴ διὰ τούτων των μορίων ἀκούομεν· καὶ τὸ

πρόσταγμα, στόμα. Ἦδει δὲ αὐτοὺς μὴ τούτων μόνον ἀκούειν τῶν λόγων, ἀλλὰ καὶ τῶν ἀπερίγραφον

44. *Quaestiones in Octateucum*. Ed. N.F. Marcos and A. Sáenz-Badillos. *Textos y estudios "Cardenal Cisneros"*, Madrid, 1979, pp. 23-24.

ponuntur. Nam et cum oculi describuntur, quod omnia videat exprimitur. Et quando auris, quod omnia audiat proponitur.

**5.6.** Est enim simplex et sine ulla corporea concretionem, quicquid illud est totus quod se solus scit esse, quandoquidem spiritus sit dictus.

**7.1.** Sed illud quod dicit Dominus spiritum Deum (cf Jn. 4:24), puto ego sic locutum Christum de Patre, ut adhuc aliquid plus intellegi velit quam spiritum Deum. Hominibus enim licet in evangelio suo intellegendi incrementa faciens disputet, sed tamen et ipse sic adhuc de Deo loquitur hominibus quomodo possunt adhuc audire vel capere, licet, ut diximus, in agnitionem Dei religiosa iam facere incrementa nitatur.

**7.2.** Invenimus enim scriptum esse quod Deus caritas dictus sit (1Jn. 4:8), nec ex hoc tamen Dei substantia caritas expressa est, et quod lux dictus est (1Jn. 1:5), nec tamen in hoc substantia Dei est, sed totum hoc de Deo dictum est quantum dici potest, ut merito et quando spiritus dictus est, non omne id quod est dictus sit, sed ut, dum mens hominum intellegendo usque ad ipsum proficit spiritum, conversa iam ipsa in spiritu aliud quid amplius per spiritum conicere Deum esse possit.

**7.3.** Id enim quod est secundum id quod est nec humano sermone edici nec humanis auribus percipi nec Humanis sensibus colligi potest. Nam si quae praeparavit Deus his qui diligunt illum nec oculus vidit nec auris audivit nec cor hominis aut mens ipsa percepit (1Cor. 2:9), qualis et quantus est ille ipse qui haec repromittit ad quae intelligenda et mens hominis et natura defecit?

**7.4.** Denique si acceperis spiritum substantiam Dei, creaturam feceris Deum. Omnis enim spiritus creatura est. Erit ergo iam factus Deus. Quomodo et si secundum Moysen ignem acceperis Deum (cf. Deut. 4:24),

τοῦ Θεοῦ διδασκόντων· ποῦ, γάρ φησι, πορευθῶ ἀπὸ τοῦ πνεύματός σου, καὶ ἀπὸ τοῦ προσώπου σου ποῦ φύγω; ἐὰν ἀναβῶ εἰς τὸν οὐρανόν, σὺ ἐκεῖ εἶ, ἐὰν καταβῶ εἰς τὸν ἄδην, πάρει, καὶ τὰ ἐξῆς (Ps. 138:7-8). Καὶ τῇ σαμαρείτιδι ὁ Κύριος ἔφη: πνεῦμα ὁ Θεός, καὶ τοὺς προσκυνούντας αὐτὸν ἐν πνεύματι καὶ ἀληθείᾳ δεῖ προσκυνεῖν. (Jn. 4:24) εἰ δὲ πνεῦμα ὁ Θεός, ἄπλοός ἄρα καὶ ἀσύνθετος καὶ ἀσχημάτιστος.

Origen *Princ.* 1.1.1, 90

Scio quoniam conabuntur quidam etiam secundum scripturas nostras dicere deum corpus esse, quoniam inveniunt scriptum esse apud Moysen quidem: Deus noster ignis consumens est (Deut. 4:24), in evangelio vero secundum Iohannem: Deus spiritus est, et eos qui adorant eum, in spiritu et veritate oportet adorare (Jn. 4:24). Ignis vero et spiritus non aliud apud eos quam corpus esse putabitur. Quos interrogare volo, quid dicant de eo quod scriptum est, quia deus lux est, sicut Iohannes in epistola sua dicit: Deus lux est, et tenebrae non sunt in eo. (1Jn. 1:5) (...)

**1.1.5,** 96-98: Omni igitur sensu, qui corporeum aliquid de deo intellegi suggerit, prout potuimus, confutato, dicimus secundum veritatem quidem deum incomprehensibilem esse atque inaestimabilem. Si quid enim illud est, quod sentire vel intellegere de deo potuerimus, multis longe modis eum meliorem esse ab eo quod sensimus necesse est credi. ... Quid autem in omnibus intellectualibus, id est incorporeis, tam praestans omnibus, tam ineffabiliter atque inaestimabiliter praecellens quam deus? cuius utique natura acie humanae Mentis intendi atque intueri, quamvis ea sit purissima mens ac limpidissima, non potest.

creaturam illum esse dicendo institutum expresseris, non institutorem docueris.

7.5. Sed haec figurantur potius quam ita sunt. Nam et in veteri testamento ideo Deus ignis dicitur, ut peccatori populo metus incutiatur, dum iudex ostenditur, et in novo testamento spiritus esse profertur, ut refector et creator in delictis suis mortuorum per hanc bonitatem collatae credentibus indulgentiae comprobetur.

Novatian and Theodoret of Cyrhus seem to have drawn on the same passage of an Origenian work from which the above-quoted Catena-fragment also comes. In Theodoret, three verses appear which are omitted from the Catena-fragment, but are quoted by Novatian: 4Reg. 19:16, Ps. 138:7-8 (in Novatian, 138: 8-10) and Jn. 4:24. The first two belong to the Anthropomorphites' arguments, but Jn. 4:24 already represents the core of the counter-argument. This counter-argument undoubtedly goes back to Origen. Both Novatian and Origen (Theodoret) cite the whole verse of Jn. 4:24 to prove that God is entirely elemental, not composite in nature. The Greek sentence: εἰ δὲ πνεῦμα ὁ Θεός, ἀπλοῦς ἄρα καὶ ἀσύνθετος καὶ ἀσχημάτιστος, is almost translated by Novatian in chapter 5.6: *Est enim simplex et sine ulla corporea concretione, quicquid illud est totus quod se solus scit esse, quandoquidem spiritus sit dictus*. The term ἀπλοῦς is rendered as *simplex*, the ἀσύνθετος is circumscribed as *sine ulla corporea concretione*, and ἀσχημάτιστος is explained in 6.5 as *nec corporalia lineamenta ponuntur*.<sup>45</sup>

On the other hand, Novatian emphasises the point that Jn. 4:24 should not be taken to refer to God's being corporeal. God is spirit, but if the word *spiritus* signifies some corporeal creature, then God is more than spirit. Similarly, God is said to be love (1Jn. 4:8), light (1Jn. 1:5) and fire (Deut. 4:24), but the statements like these are to be understood allegorically (*sed haec figurantur potius quam ita sunt*). In the Scriptures God measured his words to the human capacity. He addressed humans with human words in order to lead them to the knowledge of God. The passage is full of echoes of Origen:

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45. Cf. *Tractatus Origenis* 1.10-11, p. 7: *Et quia spiritus dictus sit, sicut scriptum est: deus inquit Spiritus est (Jn. 4,24), qui ergo spiritus est, simplex et uniformis est. Alioquin si in membrorum diversitate constructus esset, iam immensus et infinitus non est, quia metiri et definiri poterit aestimatione membrorum*. Origen, *Homiliae in Genesim* 3.2 (SC 7bis, p. 118): *Simplex namque est illa substantia et neque membris ullis neque compagibus affectibusque composita, sed quicquid divinis virtutibus geritur, hoc ut homines possint intelligere aut humanorum membrorum appellatione profertur aut communibus et notis enuntiatur affectibus*.

Novatian:

*Parabolis enim adhuc secundum fidei tempus de Deo prophetae tunc loquebatur, non quomodo Deus erat, sed quomodo populus capere poterat. Ut igitur haec sic de Deo dicantur, non Deo, sed populo potius imputetur. ...*

*Hominibus enim licet in evangelio suo intellegendi incrementa faciens disputet, sed tamen et ipse sic adhuc de Deo loquitur hominibus quomodo possunt adhuc audire vel capere, licet, ut diximus, in agnitionem Dei religiosa iam facere incrementa nitatur.*

Origen in Theodoret:

καὶ οὐ συνείδον οἱ ἄγαν ἡλίθιοι, ὡς ἀνθρώποις δι' ἀνθρώπων διαλεγόμενος ὁ δεσπότης Θεός, τῇ τῶν ἀκουόντων ἀσθενείᾳ τοὺς λόγους μετρεῖ<sup>46</sup>

In fact, the human limbs attributed to God stand for divine powers:

Novatian:

*Efficaciae igitur ibi divinae per membra monstrantur...<sup>47</sup>*

Origen in Theodoret:

καὶ ἐπειδὴ δι' ὀφθαλμῶν ὁρώμεν ἡμεῖς, τὴν ὀπτικὴν αὐτοῦ δύναμιν ὀφθαλμοὺς ὀνομαζοῦμεν· καὶ αὐτὸ πάλιν τὴν ἀκουστικὴν ὠτα, ἐπειδὴ διὰ τούτων τῶν μορίων ἀκούομεν· κ.τ.λ.

No one can grasp the divine essence in itself, argues Novatian, since it is beyond human words, human concepts and understanding: *id enim quod est secundum id quod est nec humano sermone edici nec humanis auribus percipi nec humanis sensibus colligi potest*. This is what the Apostle teaches: *quae praeeparavit Deus his qui diligunt illum nec oculus vidit nec auris audivit nec cor hominis aut mens ipsa percepit* (1Cor. 2:9).<sup>48</sup>

46. Cf. Philo, *De somniis* 1.234-237. Clement of Alexandria, *Stromata* 2.16.72.4: οὐ γὰρ ὡς ἔχει τὸ θεῖον, οὕτως οἶόν τε ἦν λέγεσθαι· ἀλλ' ὡς οἶόν τε ἦν ἐπαίειν ἡμᾶς σαρκὶ πεπεδημένους, οὕτως ἡμῖν ἐλάλησαν οἱ προφήται συμπεριφερομένου σωτηρίως τῇ τῶν ἀνθρώπων ἀσθενείᾳ τοῦ κυρίου. Origen, *Homiliae in Jeremiam* 18.6, 198: οὐκοῦν ὅταν μὲν αἱ γραφαὶ θεολογῶσι τὸν θεὸν καθ' αὐτὸν καὶ μὴ ἐπιπλέκωσιν αὐτοῦ τὴν οἰκονομίαν τοῖς ἀνθρωπίνους πράγμασι, λέγουσιν αὐτὸν εἶναι οὐχ ὡς ἄνθρωπος. ... ὅταν δὲ ἐπιπλέκηται ἀνθρωπίνους πράγμασιν ἡ θεία οἰκονομία, φέρει τὸν ἀνθρώπινον νοῦν καὶ τρόπον καὶ λέξιν.

47. *De principiis* 2.8.5 (SC 252, p. 350): *Quia sicut omnia, quae corporaliter de deo dicuntur, id est vel digiti vel manus vel brachia vel oculi vel os vel pedes, dicimus non haec humana membra, sed virtutes eius quasdam in his corporeorum membrorum appellationibus indicari*. Cf. *Commentarium in evangelium Matthaei* 17.17; *Homiliae in Ezechielem* 6.6; *Fragmenta in evangelium Joannis* 51; *Homiliae in Numeros* 23.2; *Homiliae in Jeremiam* 18.6.

48. Importantly, Novatian's explanation of 1Cor. 2:9 involves that the "things that God has prepared for them who love him" is the vision of the divine essence. This anticipates Augustine's teaching.

Parallel explanations occur in Origen's extant writings of which I quoted two paragraphs of *De principiis* 1.1.<sup>49</sup> Here Origen is concerned with the literal and spiritual understanding of Jn. 4:24, 1Jn. 1:5 and Deut. 4:24, the three verses that also appear in Novatian's work. Explaining them, Origen argues against any corporeal conception in regard to God's essence. It is *ineffabilis, inaestimabilis* and *inconprehensibilis* that who and what God is in Himself. In the passage Origen does not quote 1Cor. 2:9, but the threefold negation does call to mind the verse.

The fragments of Origen's interpretation of Gen. 1:26 show that the understanding of this verse and the refutation of anthropomorphic ideas were closely linked. Moreover, it is capable of proof that in his *Commentary on Genesis*, Origen completed the argumentation with an explanation of Jn. 4:24, 1Jn. 1:5 and Deut. 4:24, and that the argumentation could have been similar to that of *De principiis* 1.1. In a section of *ComJn.* 13, the anti-Anthropomorphite arguments are, indeed, connected with the explanations of the three celebrated verses.<sup>50</sup> There are good reasons, therefore, to assume that Novatian borrowed his explanation, including that of 1Cor 2:9, from Origen's *Commentary on Genesis*, although it cannot be excluded that he used *De principiis* as well.

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49. V. Loi noticed the similarity between Novatian's *De Trinitate* 7 and Origen's *De principiis* 1.1.1; *Commentarii in evangelium Joannis* 13.123 ff.; *Contra Celsum* 6.70, see his *Novaziano, La Trinità*, Torino, 1975, p. 226.

50. *Commentarii in evangelium Joannis* 13.123-131: "Many have produced lengthy discussions of God and his essence. Some have even said that he has a bodily nature which is composed of fine particles and is like ether. Others have said that he is incorporeal and is of a different essence which transcends bodies in dignity and power. For this reason it is worthwhile for us to see if we have resources from the divine Scriptures to say something about God's essence. In this passage it is stated as if his essence were spirit, for it says, "God is spirit." But in the law, it is stated as if his essence were fire, for it is written, "Our God is a consuming fire." In John, however, it is stated as if he were light, for John says, "God is light, and there is no darkness in him." If, then, we should listen to these words literally, making no inquiry beyond the letter, we would have to say that God is a body. ... But because we do not see the consequences if we attribute a body to God when we say, even on the basis of Scripture, that he is some such body as spirit, or consuming fire, or light, unless we accept the conclusions that necessarily follow these assertions, we will disgrace ourselves as foolish and contradicting the obvious. For every fire is subject to extinction because it needs fuel, and every spirit, even if we take the spirit to be simple, because it is a body, admits of change to what is coarser in its own nature. In these matters, then, we must either accept so many absurd and blasphemous things about God in preserving the literal meanings, or, as we also do in many other cases, examine and inquire what can be meant when it is said that God is spirit, or fire, or light. First we must say that just as when we find it written that God has eyes, eyelids, ears, hands, arms, feet, and even wings, we change what is written into an allegory, despising those who bestow on God a form resembling men, and we do this with good reason, so also must we act consistently with our practice in the case of the names mentioned above. Now, this is clear indeed from the following assertion that seems more drastic to us. "For God is light," according to John, "and there is no darkness in him." Translated by R.E. Heine, *The Fathers of the Church*, Washington, 1983, pp. 93-95.

VI. – DOES THE FIRST *TRACTATUS* DEPEND ON ORIGEN'S TEXT  
TRANSLATED BY NOVATIAN?

In the last section of the *Tractatus*, the author re-examines the problem raised by the anthropomorphic and anthropopathic descriptions of God and discloses the spiritual meaning of the verses he quoted at the very beginning of the work. It is worth juxtaposing this whole passage and a selection from Novatian's *De Trinitate*.<sup>51</sup>

*Tractatus Origenis* 1

28. Verum quod ad membra pertinet, quae quasi humana in Deo deputantur, non proprietates membrorum, sed efficaciae divinorum operum indicantur, ut homines, qui spiritaliter deum verum et vivum videre et intellegere non poterant, saltem secundum suam naturam aliquid de deo vivo sentirent.  
29. Non enim lex et prophetae sic de deo loquebantur quomodo deus erat, sed quomodo homo capere poterat, ut proinde secundum suum sensum unusquisque deum vivum possed (sic!) agnoscere,

quod et oculos haberet unde videret et os unde loqueretur et animam unde neomenias et sabbata Iudaeorum odiret, et manus unde operaretur.

30. Ceterum quoniam adhuc spiritalem sensum expectatis: cum caput dei dicitur, quod ipse initium rerum omnium sit indicatur; cum autem capilli ut lana alba tamquam nix, quod semper antiquus sit nominatur; cum oculi dicuntur, quod omnia videat,

cum nares, quod orationes sanctorum quasi boni odoris perceptio sit aperitur, quia orationes sanctorum in Apocalypsi timiama comparantur esse, quae per manum

Novatian *De Trinitate*

6.5. Efficaciae igitur ibi diuinae per membra monstrantur, non habitus dei nec corporalia lineamenta ponuntur.

7.1. Hominibus enim licet in euangelio suo intellegendi incrementa faciens disputet, sed tamen et ipse sic adhuc de Deo loquitur hominibus quomodo possunt adhuc audire uel capere, licet, ut diximus, in agnitionem Dei religiosa iam facere incrementa nitatur.

6.5. Nam et cum oculi describuntur, quod omnia uideat exprimitur. Et quando auris, quod omnia audiat proponitur. Et cum digitus, significantia quaedam uoluntatis aperitur. Et cum nares, precum quasi odorum perceptio ostenditur.

51. Cf. C. Vona, 1970, pp. 61-67.

angeli in odorem bonae fragrantiae ut scriptum est domino offeruntur.

**31.** Cum vero os domini dicitur, quod ipse totus sermo sit explicatur; cum vero lingua ipsius ut calamus acutus scribitur, quo per spiritum, quem calamus dixit, bipertita priscae legis et evangeliorum praecepta perscripta sunt Indicatur; cum manus nominatur, quod omnia ipse sit operatus, cum brachium, quod universa ipse contineat, cum digitus dei, quia per ipsum omnis significatio divinae voluntatis aperitur.

**32.** Totus enim oculus est, quia totus vidit, totus auris, quia totus audit, totus os, quia totus sermo, totus lingua, quia totus loquitur, totus pes, quia totus ubique est, totus manus, quia totus ubique operatur, totus brachium, quia

totus omnia continet et universa gubernat. Et quicquid de eo dixeris, efficientiam operum suorum et dispensationes

Et cum manus, quod creaturae sit omnis auctor probatur. Et quando brachium, quod nulla natura contra robur ipsius repugnare possit edicitur.

Et quando pedes, quod impleat omnia nec sit quicquam ubi non sit deus explicatur.<sup>52</sup>

**6.6.** Neque enim sunt ei aut membra aut membrorum officia necessaria, ad cuius solum etiam tacitum arbitrium et seruiunt et adsunt omnia. Cur enim requirat oculos, qui lux est? Aut cur quaerat pedes, qui ubique est? aut cur ingredi uelit, cum non sit quo extra se progredi possit? Aut cur manus expetat, cuius ad omnia instituenda artifex est et silens uoluntas? Nec auribus eget, qui etiam tacitas nouit uoluntates. Aut propter quam causam linguam quaerat, cui cogitare iussisse est?

Necessaria enim haec membra hominibus fuerunt, non deo, quia inefficax hominis consilium fuisset, nisi cogitamen corpus implesset, deo autem non necessaria, cuius uoluntatem non tantum sine aliqua molitione opera subsequuntur, sed ipsa statim opera cum uoluntate procedunt.

**6.8.** Ceterum ipse totus oculus, quia totus uidet, et totus auris, quia totus audit, et totus manus, quia totus operatur, et totus pes, quia totus ubique est.

Idem enim, quicquid illud est, totus aequalis est et totus ubique est. Non enim habet in se diuersitatem sui quicquid est simplex.

...

**6.2.** Rationem enim diuinae scripturae de temperamento dispositionis cognoscimus.

52. Cf. Origen, *Fragmenta in librum primum Regnorum* (PG 12, c. 992): "Ὡσπερ ἐπ' ἀνθρώπον μὲν χεῖρ καὶ ποὺς καὶ ὀφθαλμὸς καὶ οὖς καὶ εἴ τι τοιοῦτον ὀνομάζεται σημαντικὰ τῶν μελῶν τοῦ ἡμετέρου σώματός ἐστιν, ἐπὶ δὲ θεοῦ χεῖρ μὲν τὸ δημιουργικόν, ὀφθαλμὸς δὲ τὸ ἐποπτικόν, καὶ οὖς μὲν τὸ ἀκουστικόν, ποὺς δὲ τὸ τῆς παρουσίας ὅταν ἐνεργῇ τι·"

sacramentorum ipsius nominabis, non tamen ipsum qualis et quantus sit poteris explicare. 33. Tunc enim existimatur (aestimatur) deus, cum inaestimabilis, incomprehensibilis et inenarrabilis ubique totus et unus est, quantum humana mens aestimare, comprehendere et definire non sufficit.

...

7.3. Id enim quod est secundum id quod est nec humano sermone edici nec humanis auribus percipi nec humanis sensibus colligi potest. Nam si quae praeparavit Deus his qui diligunt illum nec oculus uidit nec auris audiuit nec cor hominis aut mens ipsa percepit (1Cor. 2:9), qualis et quantus est ille ipse qui haec repromittit ad quae intellegenda et mens hominis et natura defecit?

The obvious parallels between the *Tractatus* and *De Trinitate* seem to confirm the assumption that although the Tractator used a translation of Origen's anti-Anthropomorphite argumentation, he also had before him Novatian's *De Trinitate*. However, the close relationship can be elucidated with another assumption as well: both authors independently used the same Latin translation of the Origen passage.

The arguments for this solution are as follows:

1. I take it to be proven, as the result of the previous analysis, that Novatian's explanations in *De Trinitate* 6.5 on the spiritual powers and the spiritual meanings of the limbs, and in 7.1 on God's adjustment to human capacity, are directly influenced by an Origenian work, most probably, his *Commentary on Genesis*.

2. *Tractatus* 1.28-29 also goes back, directly or indirectly, to Origen (see Origen in Theodoret, quoted above).

3. *Tractatus* 1.30-32 contains integral explanations of limbs which do not occur in *De Trinitate*.

4. Although *Tractatus* 1.31-32 contains sentences being in literal harmony with *De Trinitate*, this paragraph includes independent spiritual interpretations as well: *os domini ... totus sermo sit; lingua ipsius ... evangeliorum praecepta* (cf. Origen in Theodoret: καὶ τὸ πρόσταγμα, στόμα); *totus os, quia totus sermo, totus lingua, quia totus loquitur; totus brachius, quia totus omnia continet et universa gubernat*.

However clear the verbatim dependence of some passages on *De Trinitate*, one has to be careful with the conclusion that the Tractator took *De Trinitate* and then completed the missing spiritual interpretations from other Latin sources, or from his own.<sup>53</sup> I would not like to underestimate the Tractator's potential of

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53. It is unlikely that the Tractator invented such spiritual explanation of the limbs. For example, Zeno of Verona, *Tractatus liber 1, Tract. 37*, also comments on Psalm 44:2 in this way: *Sed et David hanc calamum nuncupavit, dicens: lingua mea calamus scribae uelociter scribentis. Calamus fissus est, fratres, duosque uertices gerit in unius acuminis tenuitate digestos, unam litteram utroque conficiens; cui si unum adimas, alterius inanis est usus. Vnde*

making compilations, but in the above-quoted passage, his text is so consistent and integral that one might suppose the author is copying a model, rather than combining different sources.

In fact, the closing section of the *Tractatus* (30-32) includes the interpretations of the verses quoted in the opening section (I). In this way, the author grants an amazingly well-elaborated framework to his work.<sup>54</sup> After having laid down the principle of the spiritual exegesis, highly Origenian in its nature and wording (cf. *quomodo homo capere poterat; spiritalem sensum expectatis*), the Tractator reiterates the features he already listed in the opening paragraph in connection with particular Scriptural verses. He reiterates and briefly comments on *caput, capilli, oculi, nares, os, lingua, manus, brachium, digitus*. The opening and closing sections are thus mutually and closely dependent. As pointed out, the opening section—that is, the array of the Scriptural verses—is much richer in quotations than its parallel in Novatian's *De Trinitate*, and, in addition, it stands closer to the catena fragment of Origen's work than to Novatian's *De Trinitate*. We do not know how Origen explained the anthropomorphic verses he quoted in his work, but it is certain that Novatian and the Tractator follow his explanations.<sup>55</sup> However, the Tractator, like Origen, quoted many more verses referring to God's limbs than did Novatian, so he offers a more extended spiritual interpretation of these limbs. Consequently, if the opening section of the *Tractatus* independently goes back to a Latin translation of the Origen passage, which is probable, then this is also true of the closing section.

Finally, the surmise that in *De Trinitate* 7.3, Novatian probably rephrased a passage which contained Origen's interpretation of 1Cor. 2:9 can be corroborated. The Tractator is also familiar with the interpretation; moreover, his terminology is identical to that which Origen (Rufinus) also used. In contrast to Novatian, the Tractator does not cite 1Cor. 2:9, the Scriptural evidence for the interpretation, but he applies the three apophatic adjectives which appear in *De principiis*. The Tractator and Origen say that God's essence is inestimable, incomprehensible and unspeakable. Novatian delivers the same teaching (*nec humano sermone edici nec humanis auribus percipi nec humanis sensibus*

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*recte testamenta sunt duo, quae similiter duobus capitibus unam litteram fingunt, id est sacrae legis duobus edictis unum christum dei filium spiritali temperamento conscribunt.* It is not necessary to infer a direct relationship between the Tractator and Zeno. The arguments in C. Vona, 1970, pp. 102-103 for Gregory's dependence on Zeno are not convincing, both authors may well have drawn on common sources, M. Dulaey *Victorin de Poetovio, premier exégète latin*, Paris, 1993, vol. 1, p. 351 and vol. 2, p. 18,1 n. 97.

54. See also the first chapter including the Anthropomorphites' arguments: *Prophetae caput et capillos domini nominant et oculos et aures et nares et os et labia et linguam et pedes* etc., and chapter 29, which starts with the answer: *Non enim lex et prophetae sic deo loquebantur* etc.

55. See Origen, *Fragmenta in librum primum Regnorum* (PG 12, c. 992) quoted above n. 52, and Origen in Theodoret *Quaestiones in Genesim* 1.20, quoted above.



humanae mentis intendi  
atque intueri, quamvis ea  
sit purissima mens ac  
limpidissima, non potest.

Origen's remarks in the *Homily on Numbers* and *De principiis* make it probable that his explanation of 1Cor. 2:9, followed by Novatian in *De Trinitate*, may well have contained the Greek counterparts of such expressions as *qualis* and *quanta* (viz. "*quae praeeparavit*"); *inaestimabilis* (viz. "*oculus non vidit*"); *inenarrabilis* (viz. "*nec auris audivit*"), and *incomprehensibilis* (viz. "*nec in cor hominis ascendit*").<sup>59</sup> That the Tractator amended Novatian's text on the basis of Rufinus' translation of *De principiis* does not seem a convincing surmise. On the contrary, it is much more plausible that he found the terms and the whole passage in the Latin translation of the anti-Anthropomorphite section of the *Commentary on Genesis*, in which Origen offered a well-elaborated concept of the incorporeal God against the Anthropomorphites' theory.<sup>60</sup> In the *Commentary on Genesis*, Origen may have expounded the doctrine again with a terminology and arguments similar to those in *De principiis* 1.1.<sup>61</sup>

The final conclusion of the present analysis is that the intimate connection between Novatian's *De Trinitate* and the first *Tractatus Origenis* may be due to a common source. The parallel passages seem to independently go back to an Origenian work, insofar as the Tractator and Novatian used the same Latin compilation of Origen's *Commentary on Genesis*. But who translated Origenian texts into Latin? Who could make a compilation of the *Commentary on Genesis* as early as the middle of the third century? Two candidates appear: Victorinus of Poetovio and Novatian. According to Jerome, Victorinus, who did not know Latin as well as Greek, abundantly profited from Origen's exegetical works.<sup>62</sup> However, it is not logical to suppose any dependence on the part of Novatian

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59. Cf. Origen, *Homiliae in Numeros* 17.4.

60. The phrase "*Tunc enim existimatur [aestimatur] Deus, cum inaestimabilis*" echos Minucius Felix, *Octavius* 18.8: *sic eum digne aestimamus, dum inaestimabilem dicimus* which may have been inserted in the text either by the Translator or by the Tractator. Cf. C. Vona, 1970, p. 66.

61. In *De principiis* 1.2.6 (SC 252, p. 120) Origen alludes to the fact that he just began to write his *Commentary on Genesis*: *Puto ergo posse priori quidem exemplo aptari eum, qui ad imaginem et similitudinem dei factus est, hominem, de quo diligentius deo favente, cum locum ipsum in Genesi exponere coeperimus, videbimus*. The two works were written simultaneously, cf. H. Crouzel and M. Simonetti in SC 253, p. 40. n. 33.

62. Victorinus' Latin was weak: Jerome, *De viris illustribus* 74; *Epistula* 58.10; 70.5; *In Isaiam, Prologus* (CCL 73, p. 3). He followed Origen's exegesis: Jerome, *In Ecclesiasten* 4.13-16 (CCL 72, p. 290); *Epistula* 61.2; *Apologia adversus libros Rufini* 3.14.8. Jerome's remarks do not indicate that Victorinus would have translated Origenian works, cf. M. Dulaey, *Victorin de Poetovio*, vol. 1, pp. 16-18.

upon Victorinus. Certainly, the Pannonian bishop was a younger contemporary of the Roman presbyter,<sup>63</sup> and his Latin was far less eloquent than the celebrated rhetor's. Novatian spoke Greek as well as Latin; he was not reduced to using Latin translations or compilations. It can be hypothesised, therefore, that Novatian, the first Roman theologian writing in Latin, was also the first Latin "translator" of Origen. Presumably, he had made a compilation of Origenian texts he found to be important and useful for the exegesis of difficult passages, and when composing *De Trinitate*, he used, with the typical freedom of the author, his own translation. Later on, the compilation was used by the author of the *Tractatus Origenis*, who, according to his custom, closely followed his source. This can explain why the first *Tractatus* indicates, in certain cases, closer relationship with Origen's texts than with Novatian's *De Trinitate*, in spite of the fact that, even in these cases, there is connection between Novatian's work and the *Tractatus*.

Very little is known about the Latin translations of the third, fourth and fifth centuries. If Augustine had not devoted a half-sentence to the fact that Marius Victorinus had translated certain *libri platoniorum*,<sup>64</sup> we could only guess about the source of some Plotinian and Porphyrian ideas occurring in Augustine's writings. But even in this case, the make-up of the collection remains obscure. Why did Victorinus translate Plotinus, if he did so at all?<sup>65</sup> Why did not anybody else refer to Victorinus' translation? Moreover, Augustine's *De civitate Dei* is the only source for identifying a Latin version of one work by Porphyry called *De regressu animae*.<sup>66</sup> Was this also translated by Marius Victorinus? Further questions: who translated Philo's *Quaestiones in Genesim* into Latin, and when? And Origen's *Series in Matthaeum*; Irenaeus' *Adversus haereses*, the first version of the *Vita Antonii*? On the other hand, we are informed about translations which did not survive: Hilary translated Origen's explanations of Psalms<sup>67</sup> and homilies on Job;<sup>68</sup> and Eusebius of Vercelli translated the Psalm-commentaries of Eusebius of Caesarea.<sup>69</sup>

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63. The *De Trinitate* was probably composed between 240 and 250. See H. Weyer, *Novatianus De Trinitate: Über den Dreifaltigen Gott*, Düsseldorf, 1962, pp. 14-15; R.J. DeSimone 1970, pp. 43-44; for the date of Victorinus' activity (the second half of the third century), see M. Dulaey, *Victorin de Poetovio*, vol. 1, pp. 11-13.

64. *Confessiones* 8.2.3, cf. *ibid.* 7.9.13.

65. Plotinus' books mentioned in *De beata vita* 1.4, are to be distinguished from the books of Platonists. The latter may have contained treatises by both Plotinus and Porphyry. According to P. Hadot, Victorinus' theology reveals a strong influence of Porphyry, not that of Plotinus, P. Hadot, *Porphyre et Victorinus*, Paris, 1968, vol. 1, pp. 79-143; *idem*, *Marius Victorinus*, Paris, 1971, pp. 203-204.

66. *De civitate Dei* 10.32.

67. Jerome, *Epistula* 61.2 and 75.6

68. Jerome, *Apologia adversus libros Rufini* 1.2; *De viris illustribus* 100.

69. Jerome, *Epistula* 61.2 and 75.6; *De viris illustribus* 96.

Let us return to Marius Victorinus, the translator. His mysterious *libri platonicorum* unexpectedly emerge at Milan in the 380s and no trace is found of it later. Jerome, who otherwise knew even those of Victorinus' works which had been written by the still-pagan orator,<sup>70</sup> nowhere mentioned these translations. Considering these circumstances, it is not surprising if a compilation of Origenian works made by a man who became schismatic and who for this reason was neglected by the most influential theologians of the Church, has never been mentioned. Nevertheless, this is no more than a hypothesis.

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70. Jerome, *Apologia adversus libros Rufini* 1.16; *Commentarii in Ezechielem* 13. *Praefatio*; *Commentarii in Epistulam Pauli ad Galatas*, Prologus.

ABSTRACT : When composing his first *Tractatus Origenis*, Gregory of Elvira seems to have used a Latin compilation of Origen's *Commentary on Genesis*. In fact, Gregory is clearly indebted to Origen for a lengthy anti-Anthropomorphic interpretation of Gen. 1:26, in spite of fact that he demonstrably could not read Greek, and always relied on Latin sources. It is true that the same anti-Anthropomorphic section of the *Tractatus* is also dependant on Novatian, as is shown by a comparison with *De Trinitate* 6, but there are independent textual parallels between the section of the *Tractatus* and an Origenian *catena*-fragment as well. It is very probable, however, that in *De Trinitate* 6-7, Novatian also followed Origen. The Origenian passages in the first *Tractatus* and in *De Trinitate* 6-7 are thus partly diverge and partly converge. A plausible explanation of this fact can be that Novatian made a Latin compilation of Origen's text and when writing his *De Trinitate*, he used his own compilation. Later on this same compilation was used by the author of the *Tractatus Origenis*.

RÉSUMÉ : Lorsqu'il composa son premier *Tractatus Origenis*, Grégoire d'Elvire semble avoir utilisé une compilation latine du *Commentaire sur la Genèse* d'Origène. En fait, Grégoire est clairement redevable à Origène d'une interprétation largement anti-anthropomorphite de Gen. 1, 26, en dépit du fait qu'il ne pouvait certainement pas lire le grec, et qu'il fut toujours lié aux sources latines. Il est vrai que la même section anti-anthropomorphite du *Tractatus* dépend également de Novatien, comme le révèle une comparaison avec le *De Trinitate* 6, mais il y a aussi bien des parallélismes textuels indépendants entre cette section du *Tractatus* et un fragment de la *catena* origénienne. Il est très probable, toutefois, que Novatien, dans le *De Trinitate* 6-7, suive également Origène. Les passages origéniens, dans le premier *Tractatus* et dans le *De Trinitate* 6-7, sont ainsi en partie divergents et en partie convergents. Une explication plausible de ce fait peut être que Novatien fit une compilation latine du texte d'Origène, et qu'il l'utilisa lorsqu'il rédigea le *De Trinitate*. Bien plus tard, cette même compilation fut exploitée par l'auteur du *Tractatus Origenis*.