

CHAPTER 26

THEORIAE OF THE RETURN IN
JOHN SCOTTUS' ESCHATOLOGY

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This paper¹ treats various speculations, *theoriae*, that John Scottus put forth, changed, and rejected developing his eschatological views in what concerns the human soul, its earthly body and the body of resurrection². This is an important issue in many of John Scottus' writings: from his early commentary *Glosae Martiani*, which reflects the influences of such pagan Latin authors as Martianus Capella, Virgil, Servius, Macrobius, and Varro, through the treatise *De divina praedestinatione*, where Christian *theologia naturalis* of Augustine and insular authors prevails, and finally, to the eschatology of the *Penphyseon*, which is rich in the Greek theological ideas derived from Origen, Gregory of Nyssa, Gregory of Nazianzus, and Maximus the Confessor. According to John Scottus, the return of the human nature and all the visible world begins from the resurrection of the human body. As John himself puts it: if a man discusses the Return of the sensible creature, he must also deal with the resurrection of the body, for the Return and the Resurrection are one and the same thing, and the resurrection from the dead is the reversion of human nature to its natural state³. Since John Scottus' conceptions underwent a substantial evolu-

1 I am grateful to Prof James McEvoy for his help with improving my English

2 On the *reditus*, as the key concept for John Scottus' eschatology see T. Gregory, *L'eschatologie de Jean Scot*, in R. Roques (ed.), *Jean Scot Engène et l'histoire de la philosophie*, Paris (Éditions du CNRS), 1977, 377-384, É. Jeuneau, *Le thème du retour. Résumé des cours donnés à Rome et à Genève en 1982*, in Jeuneau, *Études éngéniennes*, Paris (Études augustinienes), 1987, 367-394, D. Moran, *The Philosophy of John Scottus Eriugena. A Study of Idealism in the Middle Ages*, Cambridge – New York (Cambridge University Press), 1989, 178-184. In Eriugena, *theoria* is a synonym of *contemplatio* and *doctrina* (cf. *Origenem in theoria tunicarum pelliciarum*). John Scottus was fond of this multivalent word and speaks of *theoria physica, naturalis (naturae conditae, primordialium causarum)*, *intellectualis, prophetica (diuinae uentatis)*, it also can be *intima, quaternaria, multiplex*, or simply *alia*. *Theoria* has its *acies, altitudo, gradus* and *capacitas* (*altitudo theoriae, juxta capacitatem theoriae*), its *leges* and *forma*.

3 *PP* V, 979C-D. Cf. Gregory of Nyssa, *Dialogus de anima et resurrectione* (PG 46), p. 148, 1-2, 156, 30-33, *De opificio hominis* XVII (PG 44), p. 188, 40-42. Quoting John Scottus I use the translation of M. Brennan (for *De praedestinatione*), J.J. O'Meara

tion, and likewise his understanding of the return, we will dwell on several points of his changing approach to the relation between the corporeal and the incorporeal throughout his career.

Glosae Martiani

Besides the evident Christian framework, earlier eschatological views of John Scottus reflect his knowledge of pagan Latin doctrines such as that of Virgil presented in *Aeneid* VI and its interpretation by Servius. There are 77 inscriptions in the margins of MS Bern, Bürgerbibliothek 363 (hereafter **B**) that establish links between some Servius' philosophical explanations on Virgil and the relevant discussions in John Scottus' works⁴. J. Contreni shows that a number of references made by "the Bern master" pertains to the theory of the return and the body-soul relationship⁵. For example, in **B** we find marginal note "ioh(annes) de inferno" opposite the Servian comment (*in Aen.* VI. 127) *inferorum regna ne posse quidem esse...* The reference "Ioh(annes) q(uestio)" appears twice in the margins of Servian comment on the need for the soul's purification of bodily taints⁶. Very plausibly, the evidence of John Scottus' reading of Servius are traceable in a paragraph of the *Glosae Martiani*⁷ which has surprisingly many correspondences with Servius' comments in *Aeneid* VI:

[Secundum] sectam platoniam antiquissimorum Grecorum de lapsu et apostrophia animarum⁸. Qui ueluti omnes animas simul conditas ante corpora terrena in celestibus stellarum aditis delirantur,

3. (Continued) (*Periphyseon*); for Bede's *De temporum ratione* the translation of F. Wallis, for Origen's *De principiis* that of G.W. Butterworth.

4. Edited and commented in J.J. Contreni, *The Irish in the Western Carolingian Empire*, in H. Löwe (ed.), *Die Iren und Europa im früheren Mittelalter* II, Stuttgart (Klett-Cotta), 1982; reprint. J. Contreni, *Carolingian Learning, Masters and Manuscripts*, Hampshire (Variorum), 1992, chapter IX, 774-798. See also J. Savage, *Two Notes on Johannes Scotus*, in *Scriptorium*, 12 (1958), 229; H. Hagen, *Codex Bernensis phototypice editus*, Leiden, 1897.

5. Contreni, *Op. cit.*, p. 771.

6. Servius, *In Aen.* VI, 724 (Thilo).

7. John Scottus, *Glosae Martiani* 13, 5-18, in É. Jeuneau, *Quatre thèmes Érigéniennes*, Montreal-Paris (Institut d'Études Médiévales – J. Vrin), 1978, p. 130-132.

8. Servius, *In Aen.* VI, 752, 1-2: *dixerat Anchises ante dicta de reuersione animarum...* Cf. John Scottus, *Annot.* 13, 1 (Lutz, p. 22, 10): *de apostrophia, id est de reuersione animarum in alia corpora*.

quae uelocitatem caelestis sphaerae⁹ non uolentes nec uolentes consequi, tarditatem uero Saturni eligentes¹⁰,... per diuersos planetarum circulos usque ad terrena corpora cadere compulsae sunt, in quibus delictorum diuersis sordibus pollutae iterum ab eis resolui coguntur et ad inferna descendere, hoc est ad illam uitam¹¹ quae carnis mortem sequitur. Et quoniam extra mundum nihil putabant esse, ad eosdem planetarum meatus...redire putabant... Quoniam uero corporalibus maculis pollutae sine purgatione quam ΑΠΟΘΕΩΣΙΝ appellabant¹², id est redificationem... illuc peruenire non poterant, in ipsis planetarum meatibus purgari estimabant... Et meatum quidem Saturni Stigem uocabant, hoc est tristitiam¹³... Quoniam uero amoris corporum, quibus nascentibus adiunctae sunt neque in purgationibus neque in quietibus oblitae sunt, etiam purgatae redire iterum ad corpora quaedam quidem appetunt¹⁴, quaedam uero spreis omnino corporibus suas naturaliter adeunt stellas, uidelicet ex quibus lapsae sunt.

9. Gregory of Nyssa, *De imagine* XXVIII (Cappuyns, p. 254, 25-27): *secundum grecum errorem in quadam malitia grauatas animas, cum uiuerso circum uoluptas per inpotentiam concurrendi cum uelocitate caelestis motus in terram cadere*. This is not the only parallel to the vocabulary of the *De imagine*: see *Glosae Martiani* 13, 2-4 (Jeuneau, p. 122, 24-28) for the quotation (*ad sensum*) from *De imagine* XXVIII (Cappuyns, p. 254, 21-27); and compare *Div. praed.* (Madec) 19, 2, 26-28 (436D): *elementa mundi inter se quasi quodam naturalis amoris uinculo complexa inseparabiliterque coniuncta*, with *De imagine* XXVIII (PL 67, 394B), transl. by Dionysius Exiguus: *cum naturali uinculo atque charitate circa corpus suum quod inhabitauit anima detenta sit*. The same passage in the translation ascribed to John Scottus is slightly different: *naturali enim quadam coniunctione ac delectatione cohabitationem ad corpus anima disponente* (Cappuyns, p. 250, 30-31). On John Scottus' early acquaintance with Gregory's work see H. Liebeschütz, *The Place of the Martianus Glossae in the Development of Eriugena's Thought*, in J.J. O'Meara – L. Bieler (eds.), *The Mind of Eriugena*, Dublin (Irish University Press), 1973, 54-55.

10. Servius, *In Aen.* VI, 714, 11: *cum descendunt animae trahunt secum torporem Saturni*.

11. *In Aen.* VI, 127, 2-11: *Lucretius ex maiore parte et alii integre docent inferorum regna ne posse quidem esse... ergo hanc terram in qua uiuimus inferos esse uoluerunt*.

12. *In Aen.* VI, 745, 2-7: *post purgationem opus est tempore, ut perseueret [anima] in purgatione et sic redeat [iterum] ad corpora – V.P.] et quaeritur utrum animae per apotheosin... possint mereri perpetuam uocationem. quod non potest fieri: merentur enim temporis multi, non perpetuitatis, et quae male uixerunt statim redeunt, quae melius, tardius, quae optime, diutissimo tempore sunt cum numinibus*.

13. *In Aen.* VI, 134, 18-20: *Styx maerorem significat, unde ΑΠΟ ΤΟΥ ΣΤΕΓΕΡΟΥ, id est a tristitia Styx dicta est*. Cf. *Annot.* 6, 2 (Lutz, p. 8, 14): *Stix uero tristitia*.

14. *In Aen.* VI, 724, 2: *quare animae uelint reuerti ad corpora?*; 724, 59: *quia potant, inquit, obliuia*. Cf. *In Aen.* VI, 127, 19-20: *bene uiuentium animas ad superiores circulos id est ad originem suam redire*; this passage again bears inscription 'ioh' in **B**.

I. THEOLOGIA NATURALIS IN THE *DE DIVINA PRAEDESTINATIONE*

It is difficult to say what was the real attitude of John Scottus to such pagan theories. The first coherent and, above all, plain-spoken and explicit statement of Eriugena's eschatological views appears in his *De divina praedestinatione*. Eschatology is the issue of chapters 16, 17, and 19 of this short treatise. Most of these theories are developing the views of Augustine and can be summarized as follows:

Every nature that is made from God is good, it knows no sin, it is eternal and incorruptible¹⁵. Sin is not from nature, otherwise it would follow that it comes from God, sin has no substance, it is accidental, being perverse motions of evil will¹⁶, sin is a defect of the good or delight in lower things, or the imperfection of the soul¹⁷. Accordingly, when it comes to punishment for sin, it has nothing to do with natures. No nature is punished by another nature or by God, although He is often said to have carried out the punishment¹⁸.

It is a wicked personal will and conscience, the inventions of pride, that undergo punishment which is of a special kind¹⁹: a wicked will – either of a human being or of a fallen angel – suffers no corporal punishment from without, it tortures itself from within, punishment is meted out to each one by his own sin²⁰. What is this punishment? It is said to differ. Ultimately, punishment is the absence of blessed happiness. Each man by nature possesses the notion of happiness, and some will be tortured by the inability to grasp what they strive for²¹. Those who desire ephemeral carnal things cannot reach them too and grasp in thoughts nothing but the phantasm, falling into despair and impotent rage.

15 *Div. praed.* 16, 4, 120–21 (420C–421A), 16, 5, 161 (421D) (= *De vera religione* XVI and XX (PL 34, 135, 138)), 17, 6, 107–111 (428B) (= *De vera religione* XXIII (PL 34, 141)).

16 *Div. praed.* 16, 4, 127–29 (421A), 16, 2, 56–60 (419A).

17 *Div. praed.* 16, 4, 123–24 (421A), 16, 5, 140–61 (421BD) (= *De vera religione* XX (PL 34, 138)), 16, 5, 202–04 (422D–423A) (= *De vera religione* XII (PL 34, 132)), 17, 6, 117–18 (428C) (= *De vera religione* XLI (PL 34, 156)), 17, 6, 104–06 (428B) (= *De vera religione* XXIII (PL 34, 141)).

18 *Div. praed.* 16, 1, 30–31 (418B), 16, 2, 52–55 (418C–419A), 16, 6, 212–15 (423A), 17, 1, 5–10 (426A), 17, 9, 194–96 (430C), 16, 4, 102–03 (420B).

19 *Div. praed.* 16, 2, 41–43 (418B–C), 16, 3, 91–94 (420A), 16, 4, 97–98 (420A).

20 *Div. praed.* 16, 6, 224–31 (423B) (= *Enarrationes in Psalmos* 7, 16 (PL 36, 107)), 16, 6, 236–38 (423C), 16, 7, 251–54 (424A).

21 *Div. praed.* 16, 1, 4–5 (417C), 19, 3, 40–44 (437B–C), 16, 1, 6–8 (417C).

Punishment may be the tortures of one's conscience which recalls its former crimes²².

Almost all these ideas are borrowed by John Scottus from Augustine directly and without substantial change. The works of Augustine are the source for the theory that each created substance is good and incorruptible²³, sin punishes the sinner²⁴ (this statement is backed by a quotation from Gregory the Great, and later, in the *Penphyseon*, John Scottus will quote from Ambrose²⁵), the punishment consists in the phantasms of carnal things²⁶, the devil now possesses an aerial body²⁷, the eternal fire is corporeal²⁸ (in the *Penphyseon* there would appear a theory of the earthly body which was added to man after his fall²⁹).

1.1 Eternal fire

Other eschatological constructs of the *De praedestinatione* are less orthodox and need explanation, for example, John Scottus' conception of eternal fire that awaits each one after the Judgment day.

Since everything made by God is good, John Scottus states, the eternal fire is good too. It is only called evil and punishment since the wicked will be placed in it³⁰. But the eternal fire has been created not for

22 *Div. praed.* 16, 8, 283–87 (424C), 16, 9, 304–07 (425B) (= Gregory, *Moralia* XI, 9 (PL 75, 959A–B)).

23 Cf. Augustine, *De Genesi ad litteram* (hereafter *De Genesi*) XI, 13 (PL 34, 436). There is something good even in the devil. *De Genesi* XI, 13 (436), XI, 21 (440).

24 Augustine, *Enarrationes in Psalmos*. In Ps VII, 16 (PL 36, 107), quoted in *Div. praed.* 16, 6, 224–29 (423B). *De vera religione* XII (PL 34, 132), quoted in *Div. praed.* 16, 5, 195–210 (422D–423A).

25 Gregory the Great, *Moralia in Job* XI, 9 (PL 75, 959A–B), quoted in *Div. praed.* 16, 9, 304–06 (425B), Ambrose, *Expositio Evangelii secundum Lucam* VI, 46 (PL 15, 1680B), quoted in PP V, 928B.

26 *De vera religione* LIV (PL 34, 168), quoted in *Div. praed.* 16, 8, 269–87 (424B–C). Cf. Augustine, *De vera religione* XX (PL 34, 139). See J.-C. Foussard, *Apparence et appanion. La notion de «phantasia» chez Jean Scot*, in R. Roques (ed.), *Jean Scot Erigène et l'histoire de la philosophie*, 337–348.

27 Augustine, *De Genesi* XI, 21–22 (PL 34, 440), quoted in *Div. praed.* 16, 2, 43–46 (418C).

28 Augustine, *De civitate Dei* XXI, 10 (PL 41, 725), cf. XXI, 9. John Scottus states that according to Gregory the infernal fire is incorporeal, but this is not exact. Gregory admits both the corporeal fire and internal spiritual suffering, cf. *Moralia* XV, 29 (PL 75, 1098C–99B), XIV, 7 (PL 75, 1044C). Prudentius of Troyes pointed to this inaccuracy of Eriugena (PL 115, 1291B–C).

29 Augustine, *De vera religione* XV (PL 34, 134).

30 *Div. praed.* 17, 8, 153–61 (429C).

punishment but for the completeness (*integritatem*) of the universe. God does not punish but He arranges certain ordered positions in the world in which the wicked suffer the consequences of their sin³¹. Such a position is the eternal fire. This fire is corporeal, it is one of the four world elements³². Although the fire is not intended to punish bodies, they suffer being placed in it. Physical pain comes as the effect of the corruption of spiritual health and the fire merely adds exterior pain to the inner tortures of the wicked³³. The corporeal fire does not directly influence the spirit, but the bodies that men will receive at the resurrection feel its heat differently. The ethereal bodies of the saints cannot be consumed by the fire but the aerial bodies of the ungodly suffer from it.

The idea of the eternal punitive fire is unacceptable to John Scottus. Later he says that if the eternal fire has the property of a sensible object, it must mean that part of this world shall be reserved for the perpetual damnation of the damned, and therefore it shall not be entirely drawn up into the consummation of the Return into its Causes³⁴.

The statement that after the resurrection all the risen bodies, those of the saints and those of the wicked, will be found in one eternal fire seems to be another invention of John Scottus³⁵. Some of his predecessors did say that everybody must pass through the fire, but that this fire was a purificatory one. This opinion was advanced, for instance, by Ambrose, who was influenced by Origen³⁶. Alcuin too writes about the purgatorial fire of the Judgment day through which both the righteous and the ungodly are to pass. According to him, this fire simultaneously tests the soul and absolves it from minor sins. From this fire the impious go directly to the flame of Gehenna and the purified saints are graced with blessedness³⁷.

31. *Div. praed.* 17, 7, 135–41 (429A–B); 17, 4, 65–68 (427B); 17, 8, 152 (429B). Cf. Augustinus Hibernicus, *De mirabilibus sacrae Scripturae* (PL 35, 2153): *Quando ergo prae paratus est ille ignis, nisi in perfectione creaturarum omnium? Nisi forte dicamus post sexti diei perfectionem Deum aliquid creasse: quod absit, ne mendacem Scripturam, imo nosmetipsos faciamus.*

32. *Div. praed.* 17, 8, 149 (429B); 19, 1, 3–6 (436C); 17, 7, 135–38 (429A); 19, 1, 8–11 (436C).

33. *Div. praed.* 17, 7, 125–26 (428D); 17, 8, 158 (429C); 16, 5, 204–06 (422D–423A) (= *De vera religione* XII (PL 34, 132)); 19, 1, 15–17 (436D); 19, 3, 48–51 (437C).

34. *PP* V, 935C.

35. *Div. praed.* 19, 1, 15–16 (436D–437A); 17, 8, 161–62 (429C).

36. Ambrosius, *Expositio in Ps. CXVIII* 20, 12 (PL 15, 1487B–D). Cf. Origen, *Homiliae in Jeremiam* II (PG 13, 281A), ch. 3; *Homiliae in Ps. 36* III, 1, 46–52.

37. Alcuin, *De fide* 21 (PL 101, 53A–D).

Although the question of the soul's purification from bodily taints was discussed in the *Glosae Martiani* and in Servius' commentary, John Scottus makes no mention of the purgatorial fire in the *De praedestinatione*. Obviously, other issues engaged him here. He would speak of the purgatory in the *Periphyseon*³⁸.

Augustine and Gregory the Great spoke about the one fire for all impious men, the fallen angels and demons³⁹. Besides, Gregory writes about the eternal fire of Gehenna which is one for all the sinners, while the depth of their misery depends on the gravity of their guilt⁴⁰. The spirit and the context of this passage are close to John Scottus' reasoning and could have influenced his thought. However, the one eternal fire for both the righteous and the impious is the invention of John Scottus.

To clarify the meaning of the eternal fire in the *De praedestinatione* we need to examine the overall view of the physical world that stands behind Eriugena's eschatological constructs. When it comes to visualizing the universe John Scottus obviously turns to contemporary scientific thought and we can get necessary evidence from the relevant sections in hexaemeral works (Basil, Ambrosius, Augustine), in seventh-century Irish texts with the scientific approach (*De ordine creaturarum*, *De mirabilibus sacrae scripturae*), and in the computistical works of Bede (*De natura rerum*, *De temporum ratione*).

The component part of natural philosophy in the theological reasoning of Antiquity and the early Middle Ages is not a small one. Cicero said in a paraphrase of Aristotle: "we can have a clear notion of what soul is if we are good in physical sciences"⁴¹. It is illustrative that the discussion of the Judgment Day makes up one of the final chapters of Bede's *De temporum ratione* which is a computistical treatise. Moses, who wrote the Book of Genesis, is called the divine Cosmographer in the *Periphyseon*. And Abraham, according to Eriugena, knew God not through the letters of Scripture, which had not yet been composed, but by the revolutions of the stars⁴². Physics was a term of wide compre-

38. *PP* IV, 5083–92 (858A–B). After the death till the Day of Judgment the soul is incorporeal: *PP* V, 915C.

39. Augustine, *De civitate Dei* XXI, 10 (PL 41, 724); Gregory the Great, *Moralia* IX, 66 (PL 75, 916A–B).

40. Gregory the Great, *Dialogi* IV, 43 (PL 77, 401B–C).

41. Cicero, *Tusculanae disputationes* I, 71: *in animi autem cognitione dubitare non possumus, nisi plane in physicis plumbei sumus*. Cf. Aristotle, *De anima* I, 1, 403 a 27–28.

42. *PP* III, 3789–90 (710C); III, 4357–59 (724A). Cf. Philo, *De cherubim* 4, 3–5, 1; Clement, *Stromata* V, 1.

hension: in Aldhelm it covers *arithmetica, musica, astronomia, astrologia, mechanica*, and *medicina*⁴³. Significantly, John Scottus even defines ethics as a branch of physics. It is the discipline which investigates the motions of natures⁴⁴.

On the whole, the cosmography that makes the background of the *De praedestinatione* is of an Augustinian type. As shown by M. Smyth, it was adopted early in Ireland and gained prominence there. From the seventh century on, interest in the physical world and discussion of cosmological matters became a characteristic feature of Irish scientific thought in contrast with continental scholarship, with its tendency to give the spiritual the preference over the scientific⁴⁵.

We have already said that the cosmography of the *De praedestinatione* can be reconstructed from the works of Augustine, particularly from *De Genesi ad litteram*, which John Scottus called *Hexaemeron*, thus considering it a scientific work⁴⁶. The same doctrine is reproduced in the *De ordine creaturarum* (680–700)⁴⁷. According to the *De ordine* the space between the firmament and the earth is divided into two parts. The upper space (*excelsus spatium*) is the purest and the lightest; it once had been the habitation of the apostate angels and their prince before they fell. The Scripture calls this realm the heavenly paradise. The souls of the saints awaiting the future resurrection have their temporal rest here⁴⁸. The apostate angels were thrust down from this superior and purer realm into the lower space of our air. Now they possess aerial bodies and live in

43 Aldhelm, *Letter to Heahfrith* (PL 89, 93D) *non solum artes grammaticas atque geometricas his temasque omissas physicae artis machinas*, cf. his *De virginitate* (PL 89, 133C) which might explain the meaning of the “physics” *consummatis grammaticorum studiis, et philosophorum disciplinis, quae VII speciebus dirimuntur, id est, arithmetica, geometrica, musica, astronomia, astrologia, mechanica, medicina*

44 PP III, 3367–69 (700B) *Physica siquidem substantiales naturae rationes, ethica uero rationabiles ipsius uel irrationabiles motus considerat*. Cf. Aristotle, *Ethica Nicomachea* II, 4, 1106 a 4–6

45 M. Smyth, *The Physical World in Seventh-Century Hiberno-Latin Texts*, in *Pentia* 5 (1986), 233 [201–234]

46 See esp. *De Genesi* III, 9–10, that provide Christian variant of Varro’s *theologia naturalis* (cf. *De civ. Dei* VII, 6). On the influence of the *De Genesi* on John Scottus’ thought see J. J. O’Meara, *Enugena’s Use of Augustine’s ‘De Genesi’ ad litteram in the ‘Periphyseon’*, in T. Halton (ed.), *Studies in Augustine and Enugena*, Washington, D.C. (The Catholic University of America Press), 1992, 269–286

47 M. C. Díaz Y. Díaz, *Liber de ordine creaturarum. Un anónimo irlandés del siglo VII* (Monografías de la universidad de Santiago de Compostela 10), Salamanca (Santiago de Compostela), 1972. Hereafter cited as *De ordine*

turbulent and cloudy air⁴⁹. It is said that some sins can be purged by the fire of the Judgment Day and some should be absolved by the eternal fire. The eternal fire is the corporeal place where the bodies of the sinners will be tortured. However, unlike the *De praedestinatione* of John Scottus, the Irish treatise locates hell beneath the earth and not in the air⁵⁰. All the other details are precisely the same as in John Scottus.

Bede too frequently speaks of the aerial habitation of angels, for instance in a scientific work *De natura rerum*. There are several important points in his discussion: 1) the air is a vital spirit; the fallen angels are thrust down into it; 2) the flood and the world conflagration are not plagued from outside, this is a process of the interchange of the elements; 3) angels can put on aerial bodies of various quality according to their merits⁵¹. A Hiberno-Latin alphabetical hymn *Altus prosator*, attributed to St. Columba of Iona, gives the same picture (stanzas G and H), speaking of the fall of the devil together with his servants, who are now bound in the bonds of their prisons so that the air is choked by a wild mass of invisible spirits⁵². Remarkably, this poem was known to Carolingian

48 *De ordine* VI, 5, 37–38 *illud spatium primum angelis qui lapsi sunt cum suo principe adserunt ad habitandum fuisse destinatum*, VI, 6, 42–44 *hunc locum paradisum caelestem scriptura pronuntiat*, VI, 9, 71–74 *humano generi eundem locum animarum sanctarum interim quieti, dum resurrectionem expectant futuram idem putatores opinantur, quem etiam caelestem paradisum autumant esse nominatum*

49 *De ordine* VI, 7, 51–58 *angelos, qui in superiore etiam aeris ipsius puriore spatio pecasse putantur, in inferiorem et ipsi aeris huius obscurioris et turbulentioris locum deturbati de superni et puri aeris suaeque dignitatis felicissima sede, dum aerea corpora habent et in aere nunc commorantur, non inconuenienter aestimantur etiam priorem suae beatitudinis sedem in aere sed puriore et subtiliore priorem habuisse*, VI, 8, 52–53 *[Satan] delectus, in inferiorem spatium, hoc est nebulosum ac brumum aeris huius, infelicem ac miseram habitationem destinatus est*

50 *De ordine* XIII, 1, 1–3 *sunt quaedam crimina quae igne iudicii purgan possunt, quaedam uero aeterni ignis poena complectenda sunt*, XIII, 7, 47–49 *De illius autem aeterni ignis loco, id est inferni ergastulo, multi dixerunt ut corporalis locus sit, ubi peccatorum corpora cruciabantur*, XIII, 8, 61–63 *perspicue patet hunc locum qualemcumque sub terra esse, qui infernus inferior et terra obliuionis uocatur*

51 Bede, *De natura rerum* 25 (PL 90, 244A–246A). On the importance of Bede’s works for John Scottus see V. Petroff, *The ‘De Templo’ of Bede as the Source of an Ideal Temple Description in Enugena’s ‘Aulae Sidereae’*, *Recherches de Théologie et Philosophie médiévales* 65, 1 (1998), 102–05

52 The Latin text, translation and commentary see in T. O. Clancy – G. Márkus (eds.), *Iona. The Earliest Poetry of a Celtic Monastery*, Edinburgh (Edinburgh University Press), 1997, 46–47 [39–68]

intellectuals; for instance, Hrabanus Maurus incorporated it into his *Rhythmus de fide catholica*⁵³.

The *De praedestinatione* states that the eternal fire is not a place of punishment for the reprobate, but merely the final state of the world after the Last Judgment which both the righteous and the wicked will endure. What happens to the world at the moment of the Judgment Day and after? Again we can find cosmological views related to this subject in Augustine, and in the insular texts which are influenced by him. It was a common belief that at the end of the world all the sensible cosmos except the upper ethereal heaven would perish in the universal fire. The direct source for this doctrine in John Scottus must have been book 20 of Augustine's *De civitate Dei*, which says that this world is to pass away in a conflagration, as once before the world was flooded with the universal water. By the world which is to perish we should understand earth, water, and the lower turbulent atmosphere, the air. The upper ethereal heavens will be kept intact in their integrity⁵⁴. During the conflagration the saints will be in the upper regions, that is in the ethereal heaven, into which the flame shall not ascend, as neither did the water of the flood; for they shall have such bodies that they shall be wherever they wish. Moreover, when they have become immortal and incorruptible, they shall not greatly dread the blaze of that fire, because "the qualities of the corruptible elements which suited our corruptible bodies shall utterly perish, and our substance shall receive such qualities as shall, by a wonderful *transmutation*, harmonize with our immortal bodies"⁵⁵. This Augustinian passage is the most plausible source for John Scottus' belief that at the moment of the Last Judgment the saints will be placed above the moon's orbit, in the ethereal region, "into which the flame of that fire shall not ascend"⁵⁶. We may assume that there their bodies will become ethereal too.

In his computistical treatise *De temporum ratione*, Bede refers to this book of *De civitate Dei* and draws a picture of the Judgment similar to that of Augustine, writing that: 1) the lower aerial heaven and earth will perish in the universal fire, while the ethereal heaven and the firmament

53. Hrabanus Maurus, *De fide catholica rhythmo carmen compositum* (PL 112, 1609A–1621A). On Hrabanus' plagiarism see F.J.E. Raby, *A History of Christian-Latin Poetry*, 2nd ed., Oxford (Clarendon Press), 1953, 179–183.

54. Augustine, *De civitate Dei* XX, 24 (PL 41, 697–98); XX, 18 (684).

55. *De civitate Dei* XX, 18 (PL 41, 684–85); XX, 16 (682).

56. We know about this from Prudentius of Troyes, see *below* n. 92.

will be preserved intact; 2) the resurrection of all the dead and the place of the Last Judgment will be in the air, since it is said that the saints will be caught up to meet the Lord in the air (1 Thess 4:15); 3) it is not clear whether the reprobate as well will be lifted above the earth to meet the Judge, or whether their deserts will weigh so heavily that even though they have immortal bodies they will be incapable of rising on high. It seems, Bede says, they will await the Judge's verdict standing on earth and surrounded by fire; 4) the world-wide conflagration will not harm the perfect servants who are caught up to meet the Lord in the air⁵⁷. Elsewhere Bede says that only the two lower elements will perish in the world conflagration while the two upper ones will pass into a better quality⁵⁸.

The meeting of the Lord in the air is depicted in the *Altus Prosator* (stanzas T and Z) too:

T Tuba primi archangeli strepente admirabili
erumpent munitissima claustra ac poliandria
mundi praesentis frigora hominum liquescentia
undique conglobantibus ad compagine ossibus
animabus aethralibus eisdem obviantibus
rursumque redeuntibus debitis mansionibus...

Z Zelus ignis furibundus consumet adversarios
nolentes Christum credere Deo a Patre venisse
nos vero evolabimus obviam ei protinus
et sic cum ipso erimus in diversis ordinibus
dignitatum pro meritis praemiorum perpetuis
permansuri in gloria a saeculis in saecula⁵⁹.

57. Bede, *De temporum ratione* 70: De die iudicii (PL 90, 575A–76D). Cf. Bede, *Commentarii in Pentateuchum* (PL 91, 198B–D); *Super epistolas Catholicas* (PL 93, 82A–D). Cf. Augustinus Hibernicus, *De mirabilibus sanctae Scripturae* III, 8 (PL 35, 2197): *resurrectionis corpora in tantum levigabuntur, ut non solum crassa aqua, sed etiam nubibus et aere sustineantur, ut Apostolus ait, "Rapiemur ad occurrendum Christo in aera"* (1 Thes 4:16).

58. Bede, *Super epistolas Catholicas*. In *secundam epistolam Petri* III (PL 93, 82B–D).

59. *Altus Prosator*, p. 50–52. Cf. Hrabanus Maurus, *De fide catholica carmen* (PL 112, 1618D): *Tuba primi archangeli... / Surget homo a tellure... / Animabus aethralibus / Eisdem obviantibus, / Certant sancti cum munere / Christo Regi occurrere*; 1619C–D: *Zelus ignis furibundus / Consumet adversarios, / Nolentes Christum credere / Deo a Patre venisse, / Retro ruunt perpetui / In ignis flammas impii. / Ubi habentur tenebrae / Vermes et dirae bestiae, / Ubi ignis sulphureus / Ardet flammis edacibus, / Ubi rugitus hominum, / Fletus et stridor dentium etc.*

Alluding to 1 Thes 4 17, the hymn says that at the time of resurrection, while the raging fire will devour the adversaries, the righteous men will fly off to meet Christ in the air. Remarkably, the saints will become ethereal souls returning back to their deserved dwelling places. The words *enimus in diversis ordinibus* seem to signify that men will be ranked among the angels⁶⁰

Thus, the doctrine of the eternal fire in the *De praedestinatione* goes back to the traditional conception of the world conflagration found in Augustine and insular authors (most plausibly, in Bede). This explains why John Scottus, who obviously sympathized with the theory of spiritual infernal tortures (he will retain this conception in the *Penphyseon*), speaks about the corporeity of the eternal fire. Only in the *Penphyseon*, the cosmology of which he would try to change, would John Scottus (who came to the conclusion that ultimately all sensible reality is to become incorporeal) reject the concept of corporeal hell implied in the theory of corporeal fire, because such a corporeal nether-world must perish together with space, time and the sensible universe (the *Penphyseon* says that hell is neither body nor spirit)⁶¹

1.2 Ethereal and aereal bodies

Another statement of the *De praedestinatione* that needs explanation is the thesis that after the resurrection the bodies of the righteous will become ethereal and the bodies of the impious, aereal⁶². Apparently, John Scottus proceeds from two assumptions. First, the words of apostle Paul *seminatur corpus animale, surget corpus spirituale* (1 Cor 15 44) said about the risen body were authoritative. John Scottus understands the *spirituale corpus* as the aereal or ethereal body, because he considers *spiritus* to be the air or the ether⁶³. Indeed, not once does he compare genuine human nature to spirit⁶⁴. On the contrary, the air and, all the more, the ether are spiritual⁶⁵. Thence, spiritual bodies are identical with the aereal and ethereal ones

60 Cf. *Altus prosator*, B. *Bonos creavit angelos ordines et archangelos / principatum as sedium potestatum virtutum*. Cf. Gregory of Nyssa, *De imagine* (in *MS Vatican Regimensis* 195, f 61v-62r) (Cappuyns, p. 205-206, n. 1).

61 PP V, 971A

62 *Div. praed.* 19, 2, 18-22 (437A) *corpora sanctorum in aetheream mutabuntur qualitatem, impiorum uero corpora in aeream qualitatem transitura*

63 PP II, 727-728 (549C) *Inferior enim pars a terra usque ad lunam aer dicitur (hoc est spiritus), superior uero aether (id est purus spiritus)*. The bodies in the proper sense are water and earth (PP III, 3165-68 (695B)). Augustine believes that the devil's spirit and perhaps his body were aereal (*De Genesi* XI, 13 (PL 34, 436))

The spirit here is not the incorporeal *pneuma* of Christian religion but the corporeal one of the Stoic philosophy. When John Scottus comes to the conclusion that everything will be changed not into a spiritual body but into incorporeal soul⁶⁶ and then pass into the pure spirit, he makes a special remark: *and not into that spirit which is called ether, but into that which is called Mind* (PP V, 987A-B). But the rudiments of the earlier approach remain even in the *Penphyseon*.

The second John's assumption is that human beings and angels are connatural and, surely, in the resurrection men will not differ from the angels⁶⁷. Indeed, Christ himself told that in the resurrection the righteous would be *sicut angeli* (Mt 22 30, Mk 12 25) or *aequales angelis* (Lk 20 36). And although nothing was said of connaturality of men and angels, this is the way John Scottus interprets the Savior's words applying them to all men and not to the righteous only. This allows him to extrapolate on the men what the tradition taught about the angels. After the resurrection the righteous will join the faithful angels, and the impious will go to the place of imprisonment of the fallen angels. Accordingly, if the faithful angels possess the bodies of the ether and the apostate ones the bodies of the air, then the same will happen to the human bodies of the righteous and the reprobate. Each body will be adapted to the appointed place of its habitation.

Such an approach had no parallel in the Latin Christian tradition. By postulating the connaturality of men and angels John Scottus (under the influence of Origen⁶⁸) goes a great deal further than Augustine, who

64 Cf. PP V, 948AB *humanam naturam in regeneratione ejus omnino in spiritum conuersa, diuersarum tamen qualitatum capacem fore. Ut enim aer iste, ex quo similitudinem quandam humanitatis accepimus, aethereos desuper splendores deorsum uero concretas ex terra et aqua recipit fumigationes*

65 PP V, 947B *spiritualis natura aeris*, 947C *aer enim dicitur, id est spiritus, ideoque simplex ac spirituale corpus a physicis uocatur*, cf. 947A

66 PP V, 951A *nostra corpora non solum in spiritualia, uerum etiam in animas nostras, ut Gregorio placet transibunt*, cf. 952C

67 PP II, 1532-36 (575A) *Quod enim post resurrectionem omnium generaliter de omnibus hominibus dominus dicit "Erunt sicut angeli Dei in caelo" non de condignitate naturae intelligendum arbitror. Primum namque hominis conditionem ante peccatum in paradiso, hoc est in caelesti beatitudine, aequalem angelis ac ueluti connaturalem fuisse, non incongruum credere (I think we should trust vers. III in which "non" was erased by r¹). Cf. PP V, 994A, 1005A-D, IV, 1556-78 (780A-B), III, <34> 197-99 (723C) (r¹, vers. I-II), and also III, 4787 (733B)*

68 Cf. Origen, *De prinap.* I, 8, 4, 146-149 (in H. Crouzel - M. Simonetti (eds.), *Origene. Traite des Prinap.*, (SC 252, 253, 268, 269), tt. I-IV, Paris, 1978-1980), *Com. in Matthaeum* XVII, 30, 58-59 (Origenes Werke X. Die Griechischen Christlichen Schrift-

raised the question of such a relationship but added that he had never found such a statement in canonical books⁶⁹. And Gregory the Great clearly states that the nature of angles greatly differs from that of men⁷⁰.

1.3. *The elements*

A cornerstone principle of the eschatological speculation in the final chapters of the *De praedestinatione* is the doctrine of the nature and transmutation of the primal elements⁷¹. As always, the ether cannot be neatly built into the traditional fourfold scheme. Sometimes John Scottus identifies it with one of the superior elements, the air or the fire, sometimes he considers it to be a quality, the purest state that a substance can obtain. Thus, John Scottus writes that the ether is only called incorporeal, whereas it is the fourth part of bodily creation⁷², and at the same time, the ether is not an element, it is the highest corporeal state⁷³ that can be consumed by no other quality, although it can transmute into itself the lower qualities⁷⁴. By the natural law the superior elements melt the lower ones and absorb them. Hence, the fire cannot influence an ethereal body, but it consumes and burns an aerial one. The aerial bodies of the reprobate burn in the fire of the world conflagration, not because they

68. (*Continued*) steller der ersten drei Jahrhunderte (hereafter – GCS), p. 671, 10; = PG 13, 1568C–69A). Cf. Gregory of Nyssa, *De imagine* XVIII (Cappuyns, p. 239, 41): *Sed et resurrectione nobis in angelicam uitam subostensa...*

69. Augustine, *De Genesi* VII, 23 (PL 34, 368); X, 5 (411).

70. Gregory the Great, *Moralia* IX, 66 (PL 75, 916A–B): *angelorum atque hominum longe sit natura dissimilis*.

71. On the transmutation of the elements and their qualities in Origen see D.G. Bostock, *Quality and Corporeity in Origen*, in H. Crouzel – A. Quacquarelli (eds.), *Origeniana secunda*, Roma (Edizioni dell'Ateneo), 1980, 323–337.

72. *Div. praed.* 19, 1, 6–8 (436C): *incorporeus... solemus dicere aethereum spiritum, cum quarta pars sit corporalis creaturae*.

73. *Div. praed.* 19, 3, 33 (437B): *suprema omnium corporum qualitas, quae est aetherea*. Of the same concept of ether in Origen see H. Crouzel, *La doctrine origénienne du corps ressuscité*, *Bulletin de Littérature Ecclésiastique* 81 (Toulouse, 1980), 191–95, repr. in Crouzel, *Les fins dernières selon Origène* (Collected Studies Series 320), Aldershot (Variorum), 1990, ch. VI; L.R. Hennessey, *A Philosophical Issue in Origen's Eschatology: The Three Senses of Incorporeity*, in R.J. Daly (ed.), *Origeniana quinta*, Leuven (University Press – Peeters), 1992, 377; D.G. Bostock, *Quality and Corporeity in Origen*, 332.

74. *Div. praed.* 19, 2, 19–21 (437A): *aetheream... qualitatem, quae ab alia qualitate consumi non potest, cum inferiorum corporum qualitates in se mutare possit*; 19, 3, 34–36 (437B): *aetherea [qualitas] inferiores qualitates et intra se ambiendo coartat et in se, prout lex naturarum sinit, commouere non desinat*.

are punished by it but because the superior fiery quality by its natural force seeks always to transfuse into itself the qualities of the inferior elements, as a kind of nourishment for itself⁷⁵. John Scottus insists that this is a natural process, painful for the sinners only due to their inner corruption. The transformation into the superior quality which is the joy of the natures becomes torture for evil wills⁷⁶. Again, when the bodies of the wicked men and angels suffer the eternal fire, their nature and substance knows no pain and punishment, its integrity in no way perishes, their beauty in no way fails. The only punishment meted out to them consists in the deprivation of happiness, which comes not from nature but from grace⁷⁷.

Remarkably, the stress laid by John Scottus upon the interconversion of the elements gives the eschatological discussion of the ether and the eternal fire a twist of natural philosophy. John Scottus is traditional in this: Augustine himself in his *De Genesi* incorporated angelology in the framework of physical science, explaining that the two active elements prevail in angels and demons, namely fire and air, but not the two passive, earth and water. The heavenly bodies of the apostate angels have been turned into aerial quality so that they may suffer pain from fire, which is a superior element⁷⁸.

This scientific approach to theological questions was not unique. Significantly, it makes a distinct tradition in seventh-century Irish thought. M. Smith shows many instances of the use of the doctrine of the four elements in such texts as *De ordine creaturarum*, *De miraculis sacrae scripturae*, and occasionally in the two commentaries on the Catholic epistles⁷⁹. It is implied in these treatises that the general structure of the universe corresponds to the natural ordering of the elements, and natural phenomena are explained in terms of the possible transformations of the elements, or by the presence of some elements, or simply by the nature of the individual elements. D. Ó Cróinín also points out the intention to rationalize biblical miracle-stories in the *De miraculis sacrae scripturae*, when some miracles are explained by the transformation of the elements: for instance, when God wished to turn Lot's wife into a pillar of salt He

75. *Div. praed.* 19, 2, 30–32 (437B). Cf. *PP* V, 879A.

76. *Div. praed.* 19, 2, 25–29 (437A–B); 19, 3, 36–38 (437B); 19, 3, 45–48 (437C).

77. *Div. praed.* 19, 3, 38–45 (437B–C).

78. Augustine, *De Genesi* III, 9–10 (PL 34, 284–285).

79. M. Smyth, *The Physical World in Seventh-Century Hiberno-Latin Texts*, *Peritia* 5 (1986), 215.

simply spread the salt, which was present in a human body as a small part of it, through the whole⁸⁰.

According to Augustine, Bede, and John Scottus the elements interchange and do not replace each other in the physical circumstances of the Judgment Day and in the transformation of the bodies of men and angels. The flood and the conflagration do not come from without but one element changes into another. By the same natural force the lower bodies and elements change into superior ones⁸¹. John Scottus declares his knowledge and adherence to this ancient scientific view⁸².

To conclude, almost all the eschatological principles of John Scottus (except the idea of the connaturality of men and angels⁸³) derive from the earlier Latin tradition. For the most part his sources are scientific passages in Augustine and insular authors. In the *De praedestinatione* John Scottus admits the existence of the sensible cosmos only, beyond which there is no incorporeal reality. After the resurrection men will receive subtle

80 D. Ó Cróinín, *Early Medieval Ireland 400-1200*, London – New York (Longman), 1995, 187-188. See *De miraculis sacrae scripturae* I, 11 (PL 35, 2161-62). Cf. the explanation of the turning of water into wine I, 18 (2164-65), and the discussion of the properties of the elements in II, 31 (2189-90).

81 On the Judgement Day Augustine, *De civitate Dei* XX, 24 (PL 41, 697-698) *aer iste uentosus conuersus fuerat in humidam qualitatem*, Bede, *De natura rerum* 25 (PL 90, 246A) *aer turbulentus esset conuersus in undas*, Bede, *Commentarii in Pentateuchum* (PL 91, 198B-D) *in aquarum natura pinguiore huius aeris qualitate conuersa*, on the bodies of human beings and angels Augustine, *De civitate Dei* XX, 16 (PL 41, 682) *ipsa [nostra] substantia eas qualitates habebit, quae corporibus immortalibus mirabili mutatione conueniant*, Augustine, *De Genesi* III, 9-10 (PL 34, 283-285) *coelestia corpora conuersa sunt ex poena in aerem qualitatem, ut jam possint ab igne, id est ab elemento naturae superioris aliquid pati*, John Scottus, *Div. praed.* 19, 2, 18-22 (437A) *corpora sanctorum in aetheream mutabuntur qualitatem*, *impiorum uero corpora in aeream qualitatem transitura*, PP V, 948A *humanam naturam in spiritum conuersa*, on the elements John Scottus, *Div. praed.* 19, 2, 19-21 (437A), 19, 2, 30-32 (437B), 19, 3, 34-36 (437A), PP III, <20> 140-41 (696B) (i¹ vers I-II).

82 PP III, 3881-82 (712D) *multi philosophorum, teste sancto Augustino, affirmant ignem et aera agere, aquam uero et terram pati*. Cf. Origen, *De princip.* IV, 4, 6, (33), 236-238 *ignem, aerem, aquam terramque mutari in semet ipsa inuicem ac resolui aliud in aliud elementum mutua quadam consanguinatione docuimus*.

83 This view was known to belong to Origen. See Jerome, *Ad Avitum* Ep. 124, 4 (PL 22, 1063) *ad extremum sermone latissimo disputaui, angelum, siue animam, aut certe daemonem, quos unus adserit esse naturae, sed diuersarum uoluntatum, pro magnitudine negligentiae et stultitiae inuentum posse fieri* (but cf. his *Contra Joannem Hierosolymitanum* 17 (PL 23, 369A) *Nec Origenes umquam dixit ex angelis animas fieri, cum ipsos Angelos nomen esse officii doceat, non naturae*), Bede, *In Evangelium S. Marci* I (PL 92, 134D) *Angelus uocatur Joannes, non naturae societate iuxta haeresim Origenis, sed officii dignitate*.

bodies and will remain within the ambit of the ethereal part of this sensible world. In this aspect, John Scottus' teaching in the *De praedestinatione* inherited a characteristic he himself noticed in the theories of the "Platonists". *Et quoniam [platonici] extra mundum nihil putabant esse, ad eosdem planetarum meatus per quos animas ad corpora lapsas machinabantur easdem redire putabant, pristinam ueluti naturae sedem repentes*⁸⁴. It seems that according to the *De praedestinatione* there is nothing beyond the sensible universe: no spiritual heavens above the firmament supposed by Christian cosmographers⁸⁵. Souls ascend to the ethereal heaven; there they are to abide forever within the upper part of the eternal cosmos, being enclosed in the corporeal. The absence of spiritual heavens in John Scottus did not escape notice. Prudentius of Troyes criticized him for this⁸⁶. It is now time to turn to some aspects of this criticism.

1 4. Criticism by Prudentius of Troyes

The *De praedestinatione* of John Scottus appeared in the fall of 850 or the spring of 851. Immediately, the theses of the treatise were sent to Troyes to bishop Prudentius (†861), who was asked to collect a dossier of the opinions of the Church Fathers to answer unorthodox statements of John Scottus. Prudentius did not restrict himself only to the extracts from John Scottus: he started seeking, acquired and examined the whole treatise⁸⁷. In the fall of 851 Prudentius completed his own *De praedestinatione*, consisting of 315 excerpts from authoritative texts to oppose John Scottus.

Prudentius' criticism of John Scottus' views, as they are formulated in the *De praedestinatione*, is interesting in several respects. First, Bishop Prudentius was a contemporary of John Scottus. Moreover, before he was appointed Bishop of Troyes, in 846⁸⁸, he had lived at the court of

84 *Glosae Martiani* 13, 5-18 (Jeuneau, p. 130, 15-19). Cf. Augustine, *Sermo* 240, 4, 4 (PL 38, 1132), *Sermo* 241, 4, 4 (PL 38, 1135). On Augustine's account of metempsychosis see Jean Pépin, *Théologie cosmique et théologie chrétienne*, Paris (Presses universitaires de France), 1964, 434-41.

85 Cf. Bede, *De natura rerum* 8 (PL 90, 201A-202A) *Aquas, firmamento impositas, coelis quidem spiritualibus humiliores, sed tamen omni creatura corporali superiores*.

86 Prudentius, *De praedestinatione contra Joannem Scotum cognomento Engenam* 17 (PL 115, 1294D-95A) (hereafter *De praedestinatione*).

87 Prudentius, *De praedestinatione*. Praefatio (PL 115, 1009C-11B). See the translation of this passage in M. Brennan, *Materials for the Biography of John Scottus Erigena*, *Studi Medievali* 27, 1 (1986), 424.

88 J. Contreni argues for an earlier date of 843 or 844, see his *Introduction* in J. J. Contreni – P. P. Ó Néill (eds.), *Glossae divinae historiae: The Biblical Glosses of John Scottus Erigena*, Firenze (SISMEL – Edizioni del Galluzzo), 1997, 77.

Charles the Bald. He says that at one time John Scottus was his “cherished friend and one especially dear” to him⁸⁹. Thus, with the help of Prudentius we can have a glimpse of what John Scottus left unspoken, because Prudentius knew the topics which John Scottus was interested in five years before, which must have been discussed orally in a narrow circle, perhaps even in private.

Prudentius was an educated man who did not have the genius of John Scottus, being at that time more lettered and experienced in the Scriptures, more learned in patristic literature⁹⁰. We may with good reason call Prudentius the founder of Eriugenian studies: indeed he is the first critic of John Scottus known to us, the first hunter for his sources. He attempts to trace authoritative tradition which John Scottus follows or rejects, he seeks the existence or absence of parallels to Eriugena's statements in the Fathers; sometimes he speaks of John Scottus' sources and possible logical consequences of his assumptions. Once Prudentius provides us with information on the methods John Scottus used when working with his sources: John picked up needed pagan cosmological theories of Varro from Augustine's *De civitate Dei*, where they were quoted as the object of criticism. Later, in many instances, John Scottus took into account the criticism of Prudentius and reworked some of his earlier statements in the *Periphyseon*; moreover John Scottus would expressly speak of the errors of his youth, particularly meaning those that were criticized by Prudentius.

In a famous passage Prudentius speaks of John Scottus' cosmography and mentions several points of reproach. He affirms that according to John Scottus 1) there is no reality but the sensible cosmos; for instance, there is nothing above the firmament; 2) likewise, there is nothing beneath the earth (he means the nether world), but hell is placed in the space between the moon and the earth; 3) the angels, together with the souls of the saints and Christ in the flesh, abide in the ethereal space between the moon and the firmament. Besides, Prudentius states that 4) the damnable addiction to pagan theories John Scottus acquired from his studies of Martianus Capella⁹¹; 5) that these theories, for lack of the sources, were borrowed from anti-pagan writings of the Church Fathers

(for instance, Varro's opinions were taken from the *De civitate Dei* VII of Augustine)⁹².

On the whole, it can be shown that Prudentius gives an adequate account of views that John Scottus held in the beginning of his career and the method he practised. Indeed: 1) In the *Glosae Martiani* Eriugena states that according to “the Platonists” there is nothing beyond the world⁹³ (he means the absence of incorporeal spiritual reality beyond the visible universe). 2) The *De praedestinatione* suggests that the reprobate angels are imprisoned in the aerial jail, and the wicked men, having received aerial bodies after the resurrection, will join them there. At the world conflagration all the reprobate will suffer in that fire. In the *Periphyseon* hell is said not to be a place beneath the earth (although John would reject his earlier theory of aerial hell, leaving only spiritual tortures and criticizing himself and his Latin teachers, obviously Augustine⁹⁴). 3) Prudentius is precise saying that in the ethereal space there dwell the souls of the saints and the Lord bodily. Indeed, *De praedestinatione* treats the moment of the Last Judgment, but it is reasonable that even now, before the resurrection of the

91 H. Liebeschütz (*The Place of the Martianus Glossae*, p. 52) notes “Origen, whom the bishop mentioned in the introduction of his book, does not seem to have come to his mind in this context”

92 Prudentius, *De praedestinatione* 17 (PL 115, 1293C–94C) (1) *Memini siquidem me olim, quod etiam passim jam rumor aspersit, te ipso narrante audisse, quod ultra hoc visibile coelum, quod firmamentum Scriptura nuncupat, quodque Apostolus uelamen tabernaculi, quod erat oppansum ante oraculum, interpretatur* (cf. 2 Cor 3 15), *nihil esse, et infra terram nihilominus nihil esse, sed in hac quasi domo coeli et terrae ambitus contineri omnia*, (2) *esseque quem infernum dicimus a terra usque ad lunam, et deinde* (3) *paradisum uel regnum sanctorum usque ad firmamentum, ibique tam angelos sanctos, quam sanctorum animas, et ipsum Dominum nostrum Jesum Christum corpore commorari cum consulta Veritas atque auctoritas catholicae fidei aliud praedicat* (4) *Nam ille tuus Capella, exceptus alius, uel maxime te in hunc labyrinthum induxisse creditur* (5) *cum legeres Augustini ‘De Civitate Dei’ inuenisti eum posuisse ac destruxisse quaedam ex libris Varronis “Dicit ergo idem Varro, adhuc de naturali theologia prae loquens mundum diuidi in duas partes”* On this see H. Liebeschütz, *The Place of the Martianus Glossae in the Development of Eriugena's Thought*, 52, J. Préaux, *Jean Scot et Martin de Laon en face du ‘De nuptus’ de Martianus Capella*, in R. Roques (ed.), *Jean Scot Érigène et l'histoire de la philosophie*, 166, G. C. Schrimpf, *Johannes Scottus Eriugena und die Rezeption des Martianus Capella im karolingischen Bildungswesen*, in W. Beierwaltes (ed.), *Eriugena Studien zu seinen Quellen*, Heidelberg (Carl Winter Universitätsverlag), 1980, 135–48, D. Moran, *The Philosophy of John Scottus Eriugena*, 39–40.

93 *Glosae Martiani* 13, 5–18 (Jeauneau, p. 130, 16) *extra mundum nihil putabant esse* Afterwards John Scottus would accept Prudentius' criticism *qui ultra hunc mundum sensibilem nihil esse excogitant, promptiores sunt ad negandam quam ad confitendam uendicam naturarum speculationem* (PP V, 986C).

94 PP V, 954B–55A, 984C–85A, 986A–B.

89 Prudentius, *De praedestinatione* (PL 115, 1012D–13A).

90 On the treatise of Prudentius D. Ganz, *The Debate on Predestination*, in M. T. Gibson – J. L. Nelson (eds.), *Charles the Bald: Court and Kingdom* (2nd, rev. ed.), Aldershot (Variorum), 1990, 293–294, J. Marenbon, *John Scottus and Carolingian Theology: From the ‘De Praedestinatione’, Its Background and Its Critics, to the ‘Periphyseon’*, *ibid.*, 311–14.

bodies, the souls of the saints ascend to the ethereal realm. In the *Penphyeon* John Scottus would criticize Augustine's view that the Lord is in heaven as man, in his human form⁹⁵ 4) The importance of Martianus for the early thought of Eriugena is well known 5) Several times in the *Glosae Martiani*, John Scottus paraphrases the views of Varro, and each time he uses the text of Augustine⁹⁶ Remarkably, Augustine in his turn accepted with slight modifications the cosmological principles of pagan *theologia naturalis* and gave an account of it in the *De civitate Dei*. He accepts the idea that each element possesses its own *genus animalium*, that the reprobate angels abide in the air, that in the day of judgment the saints will possibly be in the ethereal realm⁹⁷

Prudentius puts various statements of John Scottus to the test of authoritative texts. He tries to be objective providing quotations *pro et contra*. For instance, after the quotation from Gregory the Great which states that *infernus* is placed beneath the earth, Prudentius adduces the contrary opinion of the same Gregory who says that in comparison with the loftiness of the sky the extension of this air can be called *infernus*⁹⁸. Against John's view that the saints abide in the ethereal heaven Prudentius uses a homily of Gregory who says that Elijah was taken up into the aerial heaven only, and not into the ethereal one, because his death was not completely called off but only suspended till the end of the world. And on the same pages Prudentius quotes quite the opposite view of Gregory who states that even before the common resurrection the souls of the perfect saints dwell in the celestial abodes together with Christ who is there bodily⁹⁹

95 Augustine, *Ep* 187, ch. 10 (PL 33, 835–36), ch. 41 (848). During the interval between the death and the Last Judgement the soul is incorporeal. *PP* V, 915C, cf. *PP* V, 895A. *Ipse est paradisus, qui sanctus promittitur, in quem ex parte, anima uidelicet, iam ingressi sunt, ex parte, corpore dico, extra adhuc sunt*, and 990D–91A.

96 *Glosae Martiani* 27, 5–8 (Jeauneau, p. 149, 15–6) 32, 5 (p. 156–57). See Augustine, *De civitate Dei* VII, 9 and 13. See H. Liebeschütz, *The Place of the Martianus Glossae*, 49–58.

97 *De Genesi* III, 9–10 (PL 34, 283–85). Cf. Marius Victorinus, *In epistolam Pauli ad Galatas* I, 4 (PL 8, 1180B): *quosdam daemones aëros uocent, rursus alii empirios, alii enydros, alii genios, id est terrenos, aquaticos, aëros, ignitos*. Prudentius himself (PL 115, 1290C–D) accepts and quotes *De civitate Dei* VIII, 22: *daemones esse spiritus qui in hoc quidem aere habitant, quia, de coeli superioris sublimitate dejecti, merito irregressibilis transgressionis in hoc sibi congruo uelut carcere praedammati sunt*. Cf. *De civitate Dei* XX, 18 (PL 41, 684–85).

98 Gregory the Great, *Moralia* XIII, 48 (PL 75, 1040B–C), quoted in Prudentius (PL 115, 1298A–C). This sophisticated concept of hell derives from Origen.

99 Gregory the Great, *Homilia in Evangelia* 29, 5–6 (PL 76, 1216B–17C), quoted in Prudentius (PL 115, 1295D–96A). Gregory, *Dialogorum* IV, 25 (PL 76, 356D–57B) quoted in Prudentius (PL 115, 1296C). This is the passage popular among medieval

Concerning the angels, Prudentius quotes Augustine who believed that the demons were spirits living in the lower air as in a prison and that they had been condemned to dwell in this element as the just reward for their transgression¹⁰⁰. However, Prudentius remarks, the apostles and prophets have never said that the Creator made ethereal or aerial bodies. Since the ether is itself the fire, the reprobate angels rather would suffer in their original ethereal body, and there would be no need for them in the infernal fire¹⁰¹. The angels, being spirits, were created not in the ether but above the firmament, nonetheless, they dress in ethereal and aerial bodies when descending to men¹⁰². Therefore, according to Prudentius, beyond the sensible cosmos there is a spiritual realm which is not suggested by John Scottus.

Speaking about the risen bodies of men John Scottus said that the earthly bodies would *turn* into the better ones¹⁰³. On the contrary, the aerial body of the devil is said to have been *added* to him after his fall¹⁰⁴. Prudentius remarks on this by saying that he was astonished to read of an added (*copulatum*) aerial body: it would be just if the devil suffered in the body in which he had sinned, and Florus of Lyon likewise criticized the doctrine of the adjunct body of the reprobate¹⁰⁵. Perhaps such an alarm reaction was due to the fact that in the proposition of the “adjunct body” Prudentius and Florus recognized some unorthodox teaching: paganism¹⁰⁶, Gnosticism¹⁰⁷, or Origenism¹⁰⁸.

authors, see Bede (?), *Aliquot quaestiones* 11 (PL 93, 464D–65B), Julian of Toledo, *Prognosticon* II, 8 (PL 96, 478C–79A), Haimo of Auxerre, *De uarietate librorum* (PL 118, 883A–B).

100 Augustine, *De civitate Dei* VIII, 22, quoted in Prudentius (PL 115, 1290C–D).

101 Prudentius (PL 115, 1289D).

102 Prudentius (PL 115, 1290B–C). On angels who receive bodies to descend and appear to men see Bede, *De natura rerum* 25 (PL 90, 244A–46A). John Scottus says, that this opinion belongs to Augustine. *PP* V, 762C–D.

103 John Scottus, *Div. praed.* 19, 2, 18–22 (437A), *PP* V, 948A.

104 John Scottus, *Div. praed.* 17, 7, 146–47 (429B): *corpus mentis suis condignum ipso [diabolo] nolente copularetur*, 19, 2, 24 (437A): *adiunctum est ei [diabolo] inuito aereum corpus*.

105 Prudentius (PL 115, 1289D–90A), Florus of Lyon, *Sub nomine ecclesiae Lugdunensis* 17 (PL 119, 223A–B).

106 For instance, Macrobius wrote that the soul on its way from the sky to earth puts on ethereal envelopments. *In Somnium Scipionis* (Willis) I, 11, 12. Cf. Aristides Quintilianus, *De musica* (Winnington-Ingram) II, 17, 20–38.

107 Cf. Tertullian, *Adversus Valentianum* 24 (PL 2, 578A): *Interim carnalem superficiem postea aiunt choico [homini] supertextam, et hanc esse pelliceam tunicam obnoxiam sensui*.

108 Augustine, *De civitate Dei* XI, 23: *De errore, in quo Origenis doctrina inculpatur* (PL 41, 336–337), Jerome, *Contra Joannem Hierosolymitanum* 16 (PL 23, 368A).

Prudentius is the first to point out the kinship of some principles of the eschatology in the *De praedestinatione* with the teaching of Origen. The general accusation in the *amentia Origenis* was made by Prudentius already in the preface to his work, but further on he is more specific. Thus, speaking of John Scottus' view that after the resurrection "the bodies of the saints will turn into the ethereal quality", Prudentius says that this is absolutely contrary to the Catholic faith, since the ether is not flesh:

*you agree with the opinions of Origen, who multifariously dissenting on the resurrection, many times speaks of the resurrection and glorification of bodies, but [the resurrection] of flesh he either completely denies or craftily hides beneath the name 'body'*¹⁰⁹.

In this passage Prudentius refers to Jerome's polemics against the Origenists¹¹⁰ and says that to make the discussion more competent one should first find out what the ether is (*proinde prius quaerendum videtur, quid sit aether, ut consequenter caetera competentius pertractentur*). Among other Fathers, Prudentius quotes Gregory who believes that if it is the subtle bodies that rise at the resurrection it will be not he the individual but somebody else who will rise, because there is no true resurrection without the resurrection of true flesh¹¹¹. Next, Augustine is quoted who, commenting on 1 Cor 15:54, notes that the Apostle does not say "I take off an earthly body and put on an aerial one, or an ethereal one," but "this corruptible shall have put on incorruption, and this mortal shall have put on immortality"¹¹². Therefore, Prudentius concludes, all the Fathers agree that at the resurrection the bodies of men will be not ethereal, not aerial, but those of flesh¹¹³. Significantly, Hrabanus Maurus criticized as the doctrine of Origen the opinion that at the resurrection it is rather the case that the bodies are transmuted than that the flesh rises¹¹⁴. Later, in the *Periphyseon*, John Scottus openly quotes Origen's idea that the nature of our present body may be developed by God into the quality of the most subtle and splendid body¹¹⁵.

109. Prudentius, *De praedestinatione* 19 (PL 115, 1323B-D).

110. Jerome, *Ad Pammachium* 25 (PL 23, 375C); 27 (379A); 27 (379B).

111. Gregory the Great, *Moralia* XIV, 55 (PL 75, 1077B-C), quoted in Prudentius, *De praedestinatione* 19 (PL 115, 1327A).

112. Augustine, *Sermo* 256, 2 (PL 38, 1192), quoted in Prudentius, *De praedestinatione* 19 (PL 115, 1331A-B).

113. Prudentius, *De praedestinatione* 19 (PL 115, 1334D-35A).

114. Hrabanus Maurus, *De universo* IV, 10 (PL 111, 97C): *caro ergo nostra in ueritate resurgit, sicut in ueritate cadit: et non secundum Origenem immutatio corporum erit, id est, aliud nouum corpus pro carne*.

The second point on which Prudentius accuses John Scottus of Origenism is the thesis according to which the infernal tortures of the sinners are the tortures of their conscience. In the *De praedestinatione* this theory is presented as the opinion of Augustine and Gregory the Great. Without mentioning the names of Augustine and Gregory, Prudentius twice returns to that thesis insisting on the Origenism of this theory, and he is obviously right¹¹⁶. The third time he touches this point ironically, noticing that when John Scottus states that the eternal fire is corporeal he departs from Origen, whom he had been following in other instances, because it is Origen who thought that the fire of the wicked was "the conscience of the crimes committed"¹¹⁷.

II. THE ORIGENISM OF JOHN SCOTTUS

2.1. Origen in the circle of John Scottus

What can be said concerning the Origenian aspect of Prudentius' criticism? It has indeed solid grounds. Origen had an important place in Carolingian intellectual world¹¹⁸. The sources accessible to John Scottus

115. In PP V, 929C-30B John Scottus quotes Origen's interpretation of 1 Cor 15:44 and 2 Cor 5:1 (in *De princip.* III, 6, 3-4): *Apostolum Paulum mentionem spiritualis corporis fecisse inuenimus... Non autem dubitandum est, naturam corporis huius nostri uoluntate Dei... usque ad illam qualitatem subtilissimi et purissimi ac splendidissimi corporis posse a Creatore produci...*

116. Prudentius, *De praedestinatione* 10 (PL 115, 1225C-D; 1132B-C). On the Origenian influence on early Augustine see R.J. Teske, *Origen and St. Augustine's First Commentaries on Genesis*, in R.J. Daly (ed.), *Origeniana quinta*, 179-85.

117. Prudentius, *De praedestinatione* 19 (PL 115, 1338B-C); here Prudentius quotes Jerome (*Apologia aduersus libros Rufini* II, 7 (PL 23, 429B)).

118. On knowledge of Origen in the early Middle Ages and in the circle of John Scottus see: H. de Lubac, *Exégèse médiévale. Les quatre sens de l'écriture* I, 1, Lyon (Aubier), 1959, 221ff.; J. Contreni, *The Cathedral School of Laon from 850 to 930: Its Manuscripts and Masters* (Münchener Beiträge zur Mediävistik und Renaissance-Forschung 29), München (Bei der Arbo-Gesellschaft), 1978, 115-117, 128-129; C. Bammel, *Insular manuscripts of Origen in the Carolingian Empire* (1991), in: C. Bammel, *Origeniana et Rufiniana*, Freiburg im Breisgau (Herder), 1996, ch. IX, 5-16; on Origen and John Scottus: A. Brilliantoff, *The Influence of Eastern Theology upon Western in the Writings of John Scottus Eriugena* (St Petersburg, 1898), reprint. Moscow (Martyrs), 1998, 101-103, 119-120, 322-323 (in Russian); H. Liebeschütz, *Western Christian Thought from Boethius to Anselm*, in A.H. Armstrong (ed.), *The Cambridge History of Later Greek and Early Medieval Philosophy*, Cambridge (Cambridge University Press), 1967, 582-6; J. Pépin, 'Myseria' et 'Symbola' dans le commentaire de Jean Scot sur l'évangile de Saint Jean, in J.J. O'Meara - L. Bieler (eds.), *The Mind of Eriugena*, Dublin (Irish University Press), 1973, 20-21; É. Jeauneau, *Introduction*, in Jean Scot. *Homélie sur le Prologue de Jean* (SC 151), Paris (CERF), 1969, 38-39

contained many references to unorthodox theories of Origen. For instance, Bede blamed Origen for the theory according to which men are connatural with angels¹¹⁹. Haimo of Auxerre reproached those who, like Origen, interpreted the word *creatura* in the *omnis creatura ingemescit* (Rom 8:22) to signify not only the animals but the sun, the stars and the angels (here Haimo quotes Augustine's *Contra Priscillianistas et Origenistas*, and Gregory the Great)¹²⁰. The Origenian belief in the ultimate salvation of both the righteous and the reprobate, including the apostate angels and the devil, was criticized by Bede, Hrabanus Maurus, and later by Remigius of Auxerre¹²¹. In a special chapter of *De civitate Dei* Augustine blames Origen for the doctrine that the apostate souls in proportion to their various sins merited different degrees of debasement from heaven to earth and diverse bodies as prison-houses criticizing the view according to which the only cause for the creation of the world was the restraining of evil. Following Augustine, Hrabanus Maurus criticized as heresy the doctrine that the souls were cast down from heaven to earth because of their sins, that they deserved different bodies as fetters, and that this is the cause of the creation of the world¹²².

118 (Continued) (reprint Jeaneau, *Etudes origénienne*, 42-43), Jeaneau, *La division des sexes chez Grégoire de Nysse et chez Jean Scot Érigène*, in W. Beierwaltes (ed.), *Erugena Studien zu seinen Quellen*, Heidelberg (Carl Winter), 1980, 50 (reprint *Etudes origénienne*, 360), R. D. Crouse, *Origen in the Philosophical Tradition of the Latin West: St. Augustine and John Scottus Erugena*, in R. J. Daly (ed.), *Origeniana quinta*, 565-69, D. Moran, *Origen and Erugena: Aspects of Christian Gnosis*, in T. Finan – V. Twomey (eds.), *The Relationship between Neoplatonism and Christianity*, Kill Lane, Blackrock, Co. Dublin (Four Courts Press), 1992, 27-53.

119 Bede, *In Evangelium S. Marci* I (PL 92, 134D). Cf. Jerome, *Ad Avitum*, Ep. 124, 4 (PL 22, 1063), but cf. his *Contra Joannem Hierosolymitanum* 17 (PL 23, 369A).

120 Haimo of Auxerre, *In epistolam ad Romanos* VIII (PL 117, 432A-433C). Haimo quotes Augustine, *Contra Priscillianistas et Origenistas* VIII, 11 (PL 42, 675-676) (cf. idem, *De diversis quaestionibus* 83, 67, 5 (PL 40, 68)) and Gregory the Great, *Homiliae in Evangelia* II, 29 (PL 76, 1214A-C) (cf. idem, *Moralia* VI, 16 (PL 75, 740 B-D)). Cf. Origen, *De princip.* I, 7, 5, 151-169, *Homiliae in Leviticum* 5, 2 [GCS VI, p. 336, 19-24] (the latter work was in the cathedral library of Laon).

121 Bede, *Super parabolas Salomonis expositio* I, 2 (PL 91, 948A), *In Matthaei Evangelium expositio* IV, 25 (PL 92, 110A), *In Evangelium S. Marci* I, 3 (PL 92, 164C), Hrabanus Maurus, *Expositio in proverbialia Salomonis* II, 11 (PL 111, 716A), *De universo* (PL 111, 98A-B), Remigius of Auxerre, *Commentaria in Isaiam* II, 24 (PL 116, 833C-D).

122 Augustine, *De civitate Dei* XI, 23. *De errore, in quo Origenis doctrina inculpatur* (PL 41, 336-337), Hrabanus Maurus, *De clericorum institutione* II, 58. *De haeresibus variis* (PL 107, 374D).

Carolingian libraries possessed quite a number of Origen's works. The catalogue of Bobbio (late IX c.) indicates, among the books presented by Dungal, Origen on Genesis, on Romans and on the *Canticum canticorum* I¹²³. In the circle of John Scottus interest in Origen was especially strong. In the personal library of Wulfad, an old friend of John Scottus, there were six works of Origen¹²⁴. As shown by J. Contreni, Martin the Irishman, a colleague of John Scottus and master of the cathedral school of Laon, assiduously studied Origen¹²⁵. Origen was the most important Greek author in Laon's library. Three manuscripts, MS Laon 298 and 299, Berlin, Philipps 1832, contain Origenian homilies on the *Canticum canticorum*, on Prophets, Leviticus, Numbers, and Kings¹²⁶. Contreni notes that it was rare for a ninth-century library to have such a collection. These Laon manuscripts bear the traces of intense reading.

John Scottus himself quotes Origen's *On First Principles* and *Commentary on Romans*, and he obviously knew other works of Origen. He applies to him magnificent epithets in the *Periphyseon*. Nevertheless Erugena's knowledge of Origen was not on all occasions certain and sometimes it was at second-hand. For instance, he once makes a guess as to whether Ambrose's conception of paradise as human nature goes back to Origen, although modern scholarship believes this interpretation stands closer to Philo¹²⁷. Elsewhere, his reading of Epiphanius' *Ancoratus* made him believe that according to Origen paradise is placed in the third

123 C. Bammel, *Insular manuscripts of Origen*, 11.

124 See M. Cappuyns, *Les Bibli. Wulfadi et Jean Scot Érigène, Recherches de Théologie ancienne et médiévale* 33 (1966), 138. *Origenis in epistulis pauli ad romanos / Item in genesi in exodo / in leuitico in lucam / in thesum filium naue*.

125 J. Contreni, *The Cathedral School of Laon*, 115-117, 128-129.

126 According to Contreni (*The Cathedral School of Laon*, 182). *Hom. in Canticum* I-II (PG 13 37-53), *Hom. in Ezechielem* I-II (PG 13 665-87), *Hom. in Isaiam* I-IX (PG 13 219-54), *Hom. in Leviticum* I-XIV (PG 12 405-574), *Hom. in Ieremiam* I-XIV (PG 13 255-76, 534-42, 454-62, 335-47, 347-58, 367-75, 358-67, 378-98, 398-403, 403-27, 438-51, 278-82, 283-94), *Hom. in Numeros* I-XXVIII (PG 12 955-1012), *Hom. in Regum* (PG 12 995-1012).

127 PP IV, 3133-35 (815C). *nul aliud esse paradisum nisi ipsum hominem manifestissime astruit, omnino, ut aestimo, Origenem sequens, quamvis eum aperte non nominant* (the words *ut aestimo* are inserted in vers. I-II by 1²). Cf. Philo, *De opificio mundi* 165, 3-4 and *De cherubim* 57, 1-2. On this see Jeaneau (ed.), *Iohannis Scotti Erugena Periphyseon liber IV*, Dublin (Dublin Institute for Advanced Studies), 1995, 324, n. 223. Although, John Scottus might be thinking of Origen's *In Genesim* available to him in Wulfad's library (*Hom. in Genesim* I, 15 (PG 12, 158C)). *Videamus etiam per allegoriam quomodo ad imaginem Dei homo factus masculus et femina est. Interior homo noster ex spiritu et anima constat. Masculus spiritus dicitur, femina anima potest nuncupari*.

heaven, although in the Origenian system it is rather in the second heaven¹²⁸ (it is Gregory of Nyssa who frequently says that the paradise is situated in the third heaven¹²⁹). However, Eriugena considered his own conception of paradise which is human nature to derive from Origen¹³⁰. And he thought the same about the doctrine of “coat of skins”, the theory of the soul creating its earthly body, etc. John Scottus was not afraid of accusations of Origenism, and he consciously exploited Origen’s ideas, adapting them to fit his own system.

2.2. Origenism in the *De praedestinatione*

What can be said about the Origenism of the eschatological principles in the *De praedestinatione*? They obviously go back to those of Origen. In the writings that could be known or accessible to John Scottus, Origen states that:

1) Every nature created by God is incorruptible. What was made to be cannot be destroyed¹³¹. Even the destruction of the last enemy is to be understood not as if his substance, which was formed by God, is to perish, but rather that his hostile will, which came not from God but from himself, is to be destroyed¹³². In other words, God, who is a *consuming fire* (Deut 4:24; Heb 12:29), does not consume his own creation, which is according to *the image and likeness* (Gen 1:26), but some increments, the accumulated *hay, wood, and stubble* (1 Cor 3:12)¹³³,

2) The difference between angels, demons and men is not substantial all of them share the same nature but differ in their will¹³⁴;

3) The abode of the saints and the purest beings is located in the non-wandering sphere, called by the Greek *ἀπλανή*. This world is incorruptible but corporeal. Origen says that the nature of this present human body may be developed by its Creator into the quality of an exceedingly refined and pure and splendid body. This is the realm of the ether, which

128 PP IV, 3266–79 (818B–C), 3935–37 (832D–833A). Cf. Epiphanius, *Ancoratus* 54, and also Origen, *De princip* II, 3, 6, 274–294.

129 In *Ecclesiasten* V (PG 44, 685A), *Apologia in Hexaemeron* (PG 44, 121D), *Contra Eunomium* I, 23 (PG 44, 345D).

130 PP IV, 4179–80 (838A), 3592–93 (825C), V, 895A.

131 Origen, *De princip* III, 6, 5, 143–148, quoted in PP V, 930C–D.

132 Origen, *De princip* III, 6, 5, 132–140, quoted in PP V, 930C. This view was adopted by Augustine: see *De Genesi* XI, 21 (PL 34, 440).

133 Origen, *Hom. in Jeremiam* 16, 6, 7–10 (ed. E. Klostermann, GCS III).

134 Origen, *De princip* I, 8, 4, 146–49, *Com. in Matthaeum* XVII, 30, 58–59 (PG 13, 1569A). Cf. Jerome, *Ep.* 124, 4 (PL 22, 1063), 14 (1071–72).

signifies the nature of living beings that dwell there and the purest state that can be reached by corporeal nature¹³⁵;

4) There is no incorporeal reality outside this sensible world. Origen states that the word *mundus* can signify this universe which is bounded by heaven and earth, and of which Paul says: *the fashion of this world will pass away* (1 Cor 7:31). There is a certain other world besides this visible one, of which the Saviour says: *I am not of this world* (Jn 17:16) and where the saints will go. This is not the world of certain images which the Greeks call “ideas”, and it is not the world of the incorporeal. For Origen, this other world will be superior to ours in glory and quality, but nevertheless it will be confined within the limits of our world¹³⁶;

5) The bodies of the heavenly luminaries and the angels are ethereal; the bodies of the demons are subtle and thin as if formed of air (the air is filled with spirits)¹³⁷. The resurrected bodies of the righteous will become similar to the bodies of angels: they will be ethereal and luminous. After the resurrection and the ascension of Christ, his body became such as it was proper for a body to be which had its abode in the ether and the regions above it¹³⁸. In the end every bodily substance will be so pure and refined as to be like the ether, and of celestial purity and clarity¹³⁹. Then, the bodily substance, being changed into an ethereal condition in proportion to the quality or merits of those who assume it, will shine forth in splendor, according to the Apostle’s words: *we also shall be changed* (1 Cor 15:52). At the end of all things we all will return to the heavenly Jerusalem¹⁴⁰;

6) Infernal tortures are remorse of conscience. This, Origen’s conception, influenced, among others, Ambrose¹⁴¹, Augustine, and John

135 Origen, *De princip* II, 3, 6, 295–324, III, 6, 4, 100–125, quoted in PP V, 929C–930B). Cf. Origen, *De princip* II, 9, 3, 63–65, I, 6, 4, 182–185, Jerome, *Ep.* 124, 9 (PL 22, 1067).

136 Origen, *De princip* II, 3, 6, 234–256.

137 Origen, *De princip* Praef. 8, 164–167. On the subtle bodies of the demons see Tertullian, *Apologia* XXII, 5. Origen considers the bodies of the angels to be “ethereal, luminous shine”, *αιθερια και αυγοειδες φως* (*Com. in Matthaeum* XVII, 30 (PG 13, 1569A)), only the Trinity is incorporeal. *De princip* I, 6, 4, 175–82, II, 2, 2, 24–32, IV, 3, 15 (27), 493–496. Cf. Origen, *Hom. in Ezechielem* IV, 1, 85–86. *Aer quoque animalibus plenus est*.

138 Origen, *Com. in Matthaeum* XVII, 30 (PG 13, 1568C–69A), *Contra Celsum* III, 41, 17–42, 10 (ed. M. Borret, SC 136).

139 Origen, *De princip* I, 6, 4, 182–185, Jerome, *Ep.* 124, 4 (PL 22, 1062), 5 (1064), 10 (1069). Cf. Clement, *Stromata* V, 14.

140 Origen, *De princip* II, 3, 7, 324–343, Jerome, *Ep.* 124, 11 (PL 22, 1069).

141 Ambrose, *Expositio Evangelii secundum Lucam* VII, 205 (PL 15, 1754B–C), quoted in PP V, 936C–D.

Scottus. In a passage that would fit well a treatise on physiology and medicine, Origen says that every sinner kindles for himself the flame of his own fire. Of this fire the fuel and the food are his sins. And as abundance of food breed fevers in the body, so when the soul has gathered together an abundance of sins against itself, all that assembly of evils boils up to punishment, and is set on fire to chastisements. The mind itself, or conscience, receiving into the memory all those things of which it had stamped on itself certain signs and forms at the moment of sinning, will see exposed before its eyes a kind of history of all the unholy deeds which it has done; then the conscience itself becomes an accuser and a witness against itself. Around the substance of the soul certain tortures are produced by the hurtful affections of sins themselves¹⁴². Origen speaks not once of the fire of conscience¹⁴³. This internal fire, which arises from within, is more grievous and painful than an external fire. It is always with a man and no one can escape it, for the sinner carries it about everywhere in himself¹⁴⁴.

7) At the resurrection, on one's way to God, every man will have to walk through the fire, that fire being a testing or purificatory one. This is the *consuming fire* (Heb 12:29) for the sinners, and the *light* (1 Jn 1.5) for the righteous and the saints¹⁴⁵. Every man's work will be revealed by fire (1 Cor 3:13), and every one should pass through it, be it Paul or Peter. But if it can be said about the Apostles, *when you walk through the fire, you will not be burnt* (Is 43:2), then the sinner, like Origen himself, will walk through the fire too, but will not pass it over like Peter and Paul. Methodius of Olympus influenced by Origen says: "when all things are overwhelmed by fire, the bodies which are endowed with chastity and righteousness shall pass through it as though it were cold water"¹⁴⁶;

8) The heavens are to be changed but they will not perish. If the fashion of the world passes away, it is by no means an annihilation or destruction of its material substance, but a kind of change of quality and

142 Origen, *De princp* II, 10, 4, 124-156

143 Origen, *Hom in Ps* 38, ch 7, 61-69 (ed E Prinzivalli, SC 411), Jerome, *Ep* 124, 7 (PL 22, 1065)

144 Origen, *Hom in Jeremiam* 20, 8, 48-67 (GCS III) Cf Clement, *Quis dives salvetur* (GCS 17), ch 25, 3, 2 - 5, 1

145 Origen, *Hom in Jeremiam* 2, 3, 14-16 (ed P Nautin, SC 232, = PG 13, 281A), and also *Com in Canticum* II, 2, 21 (SC 375, p 312)

146 Origen, *Hom in Ps* 36 III, 1, 46-52 (ed E Prinzivalli, SC 411) Cf *Hom in Ps* 36 (Fragmenta Graeca) Fr 14 (SC 411, p 420), Methodius, *De resurrectione* apud Photius, *Bibliotheca Codex* 234, 298b, 37-40 (ed R Henry (Les Belles Lettres, 1967), t V, = PG 103, 1128C-D)

transformation of appearance¹⁴⁷. In the *Contra Celsum*, to which John Scottus was unlikely to have access, Origen states that one should not depreciate the doctrine of a conflagration of the world, held by certain of the Greeks who have treated the subject in a philosophic spirit. It is a purificatory fire which is brought upon the world, and probably also on each one of those who stand in need of chastisement by the fire and healing at the same time. It burns, but does not consume, those who are without a material body which needs to be consumed by that fire¹⁴⁸. Elsewhere, Origen states that hell is placed in the air. "by Hades is meant the air (*τὸν ἀέρα*)... as was said by Origen. . For, he says, whatever is composed and consists of pure air and pure fire, and is of like substance with the angelic beings, cannot have the nature of earth and water; since it would then be earthly. And of such nature, and consisting of such things, Origen has shown that the body of man shall be which shall rise, which he also said would be spiritual (*πνευματικὸν*)"¹⁴⁹.

Does all this mean that John borrowed the eschatological theories of the *De praedestinatione* directly from Origen? Apparently not. Although, most of them clearly go back to Origen¹⁵⁰ (and such contemporaries of John as Prudentius and Hrabanus Maurus were able to recognize this), the theories could be taken as well from Latin intermediaries, especially from Augustine and Bede. All these views that had a strong taste of Origenism were "in the air" at that period, and this is why John does not trouble himself to explain the propositions of his eschatology. They were well known, being at the same time idiosyncratic and unorthodox, belonging rather to pagan philosophy and science than to Christian doctrine. On the whole, the *De praedestinatione* shows a rather poor selection of the sources: there are several works of Augustine which John uses as launching-points for his eschatological reasoning and which he closely follows. The treatise itself seems to be written by a newcomer: it bears an air of freshness and audacity of thought which sometimes becomes provocative, it also shows a lack of reading and considered opinion, and a tendency to simplification¹⁵¹. As usual with John Scottus,

147 Origen, *De princp* I, 6, 4, 163-167

148 Origen, *Contra Celsum* V, 15, 1-13 (ed Borret, SC 147)

149 Methodius, *De resurrectione* apud Photius, *Bibliotheca Codex* 234, 299a, 5-15 (= PG 103, 1129A), Pamphilus, *Apologia pro Origene* 134 (R Amacker - É Junod, eds), SC 464, p 216

150 Cf D Moran, *The Philosophy of John Scottus Erigena*, 33

151 See Prudentius, *De praedestinatione* (PL 115, 1111B) *Animatus orationumque instantissima puntate scribens*, Florus of Lyon admits that the views of John Scottus

he stresses in Augustine the most bright and bold ideas, which are those that go back to Origen. The works of Augustine that have just been discussed – *De Genesi ad litteram* (401–414), *De civitate Dei* (413–427), *Contra Priscillianistas et Originistas* (415) – are obviously influenced by Origen, and were written after Rufinus translated the *Peri Archon* in 398. Actually, Prudentius too knows that John Scottus quotes Augustine; the aim of his accusations is merely to indicate the original source of these ideas. Prudentius would not have missed the opportunity to reveal John's fondness for Origen in the 840s, as he had done with John's dependence on Martianus.

2.3. Origenism in the *Periphyseon*

Processio: the spiritual body and the superadded body

It seems, that the conscious assimilation and adaptation of Origen's theories began only in the *Periphyseon*. Significantly, the treatise is dedicated in a friendly manner to Wulfad, while other John's works – *De praedestinatione*, translations of Dionysius and Maximus – were commissioned. John Scottus' main philosophical work ends with a personal note:

*hoc opus primo omnium Deo... subinde dilectissimo tibi, frater in Christo Wulfade, et in studiis sapientiae cooperatori, et examinandum offero, et corrigendum committo. Nam et tuis exhortationibus est inchoatum, tuaque solertia, quoquo modo sit, ad finem usque perductum*¹⁵².

The *Periphyseon* seems to be John's personal enterprise. Its creation must have taken years of work. We may expect some feedback: the theories could have been tested during lectures, and perhaps in discussions with such colleagues as Wulfad, Winibertus and Martin, and then modified. Anyway, Wulfad, whose personal library possessed a good supply of Origen's writings (very likely those very books that John Scottus himself read), knew very well of John's indebtedness to Origen.

It seems that Origenian influence can be discerned in John Scottus' teaching on the soul that creates its own earthly body. Apparently this conception is a modification of Origen's views. John must have begun to

explore this topic while working on the *Periphyseon*, for the subject of the *De praedestinatione* is the inverse one: there, the final transformation of human bodies into the bodies of resurrection was the main issue. Significantly, it is the paragraphs of the *Periphyseon* dealing with the creation of earthly body that bear traces of heavy correction by the hands i¹ or i².

The teaching of Origen on the relation between the incorporeal and the corporeal can be summarized as follows. Only God is an incorporeal unity, while the rational creature is always a corporeal multiplicity¹⁵³. Origen tends to use the word 'incorporeal', not in its strict sense to refer to the soul's complete independence from body, but only to indicate the absence of an earthly body¹⁵⁴. Rational nature is changeable and convertible by the very condition of its being created. Although it is 'incorporeal', it makes use of bodies¹⁵⁵. God had foreknowledge of the differences that were to arise among souls, and made a bodily nature capable of changing by an alteration of qualities into everything that circumstances might require¹⁵⁶. So, each rational being, in proportion to its merits, may wear a different bodily covering of this or that quality. Significantly, all rational creatures are of one nature, they possess goodness or badness as an accident and not as part of their essence, and diversity in the world does not exist apart from bodies¹⁵⁷. The creation of the corporeal world was a consequence of sin. Thus, the nature of bodies is not primary, it was created on account of certain falls that happened to rational beings, who came thus to need bodies. When their restoration is perfectly accomplished these bodies are dissolved into nothing¹⁵⁸.

The inverse movement, that is the transformation of the earthly body into an 'incorporeal' state, is a gradual process. The bodily clothing

153. See *De princip.* II, 2, 1–2.

154. A. Scott, *Origen and the Stars. A History of an Idea* (Oxford Early Christian Studies), Oxford, (Clarendon Press), 1991, 154. Cf. *De princip.* II, 3, 6, 316–320 where Origen discerns *ea quae non uidentur* (the subtle bodies which virtually possess the property of being seen) and *invisibilia* (which does not possess the property of visibility, and is called by the Greeks ἀσώματα, that is incorporeal in the strict sense).

155. Origen, *De princip.* IV, 3, 15 (27), 489–493.

156. Origen, *De princip.* IV, 4, 8 (35), 320–326; cf. Methodius, *De resurrectione* apud Epiphanius, *Panarion* 64 (ed. Holl, II, p. 424, 4–11).

157. Origen, *De princip.* II, 5, 4, 133–134 : *Unius namque naturae esse omnes rationabiles creaturas*; IV, 4, 8 (35), 315–320: *intellectualem naturam... nec substantialem habet uel uirtutem uel malitiam, sed accidentem...*; II, 1, 4, 93–94: *mundi diuersitas sine corporibus subsistere non potest*.

158. Jerome, *Ep.* 124, 10 (PL 22, 1068); 5 (1063–64). Cf. *ibid.* 14 (1071) and *Frag.* 40 (Koetschau) from Justinian, *Ep. ad Mennam* (Mansi IX, 532).

151. (Continued) sometimes are similar to those of Augustine, but that the latter expresses them more cautiously: *Sub nomine ecclesiae Lugdunensis* 17 (PL 119, *passim* in 222B–223B).

152. *PP* V, 1022AB.

cannot be escaped immediately: this is a process of gradual disappearance of the material nature¹⁵⁹. Right away after its separation the soul receives a form similar in appearance to its gross and earthly body. This is why the departed appear to the living in the form [σχήμα] which they once had in the flesh. The soul's body is understood in astral terms. Even before the resurrection, at the very moment of separation, the soul receives a certain body¹⁶⁰, which is a luminous [αὐγοειδές] body (like the bodies of the angels that are ethereal and luminous light¹⁶¹).

Jesus, when He appeared to his disciples, had his body in an earlier stage of evolution, and so it still had its physical wounds to which Thomas was a witness (Jn 20:19–28). Later His body received the condition “of a soul uncovered by an [earthly] body”, His flesh exchanged its qualities and became such as it was proper for a body to be which dwelt in the ether and the regions above it¹⁶².

The resurrection bodies of human beings are described as ethereal, heavenly, or luminous. The bodies that rise again are our own dissolved animal bodies, but they are transmuted into a spiritual condition¹⁶³. There is a conflict of evidence in the sources concerning Origen's views on the properties of the spiritual bodies (perhaps each text accounts for a different stage of the evolution of the spiritual body). Methodius once noted that according to Origen the appearance [σχήμα] of the risen bodies will lose anthropomorphic form [τὸ ἀνθρωποειδὲς τοῦτο] (indeed, the *De principio* states that the spiritual body possesses no shape (*habitus*) or outline (*descriptio*))¹⁶⁴.

According to Origen's interpretation of Gen 1:26 and Gen 2:7, man has a two-fold nature consisting of an *interior man*, made to the image of God, and an *exterior one*, fashioned from the dust of the ground¹⁶⁵. The

interior man is immortal, incorruptible, invisible and incorporeal, but the exterior one is subject to decay. It is the soul or mind that is the interior man¹⁶⁶. Man, who by his true nature is incorporeal, would have remained immortal if he had not fallen into sin. Because of the fall, man robed his divine nature in “the coats of skin” (Gen 3:21)¹⁶⁷. Philo and the Gnostics interpreted the coats of skin as earthly bodies¹⁶⁸. In his extant writings Origen is more cautious: he says that the allegory of the skin tunics symbolizing corporeity is plausible and attractive, but he is not sure whether it is true¹⁶⁹. H. Crouzel argues that it is only after Epiphanius that this doctrine was attributed to Origen, although he himself had interpreted the coats of skin only as mortality and the consequence of sin¹⁷⁰. According to Procopius of Gaza, the followers of Origen believed that Gen 1:26 tells about the creation of the soul; Gen 2:7 speaks of the creation of the subtle luminous body which deserves living in Paradise; and Gen 3:21 says of the clothing of man expelled from Paradise into a mortal flesh which is called “the coats of skin”¹⁷¹.

In spite of the contemporary criticism against Origenian theories John Scottus accepts without reservation the interpretation of the coats of skins as earthly bodies, saying that “almost all authors, Greek and Latin, follow Origen in his *theoria tunicarum pelliciarum*”¹⁷². John Scottus says that in the first man human nature puts on tunics of skin, that is to say, mortal bodies, and in the second man she has the tunics of skin taken from her. they were added to her as a punishment for disobedience, after the trans-

166 Origen, *Com in Romanos* VII, 4 (PG 14, 1110BC), *ibid* 1110C, *Hom in Genesim* I, 13 (PG 12, 155D) Cf G Bostock, *Origen's Philosophy of Creation*, in R J Daly (ed.), *Origeniana quinta*, 260–261

167 *Contra Celsum* IV, 40, 20–24 (ed M Borret, SC 136)

168 Philo, *Quaestiones in Genesim* 1, 53 Concerning the Gnostics see Clement, *Stromata* III, 14, Irenaeus, *Contra Haereses* I, 5, 5 (PG 7, 501), and also Tertullian, *Adversus Valentinianos* 24 (PL 2, 578A) See J Pépin, *La tradition de l'allégorie de Philon d'Alexandrie à Dante*, II *Études historiques*, Paris (Études augustiniennes), 1987, 146–165

169 Origen, *Selecta in Genesim* (PG 12, 101)

170 H Crouzel, *Les critiques adressées par Methode et ses contemporains à la doctrine origénienne du corps ressuscité*, *Gregorianum* 53, Rome, 1972, 708–09, reprint in H Crouzel, *Les fins dernières selon Origène*, ch VII Cf Origen, *Hom in Leviticum* VI, 2 (GCS VI, p 362, 14), *Contra Celsum* IV, 40, 20–24 (ed M Borret, SC 136)

171 Procopius of Gaza, *Comm in Genesim* (PG 87/1, 221A) See also M Simonetti, *Alcune osservazioni sull'interpretazione origeniana di Genesi 2 7 e 3 21*, *Aevum* 36 (1962), 370–381

172 *PP IV*, 3279–87 (818C–819A) See Epiphanius, *Ancoratus* 62, 1, 1–3, 1 (ed Hall, GCS 25)

159 Origen, *De princip* II, 3, 3, 111–129 On the risen body in Origen see D G Bostock, *Quality and Corporeity in Origen*, in H Crouzel – A Quacquarelli (eds.), *Origeniana secunda*, 323–337

160 Methodius, *De resurrectione* apud Photius, *Bibliotheca Codex* 234, 301a, 11–15 and 22–25

161 Origen, *Contra Celsum* 2, 60, 12–15 (ed M Borret, SC 132), *Com in Matthaeum* 17, 30, 48–59 (ed Klostermann, GCS X, p 671)

162 Origen, *Contra Celsum* 2, 62, 7–10, 3, 42, 8–10 (ed M Borret, SC 132, 136)

163 Origen, *De princip* II, 10, 1, 31–42

164 Methodius, apud Photius, *Bibliotheca Codex* 234, 299a, 16–18, Origen, *De princip* 2, 10, 2, 47–49

165 Origen, *Com in Romanos* II, 13 (PG 14, 912D–913A), cf John Scottus, *PP IV*, 3228–33 (817C) See also Origen, *Hom in Genesim* I, 13 (PG 12, 155C), I, 11 (PG 12, 154C)

gression and therefore outside Paradise¹⁷³

Under the influence of Origenism John Scottus develops the following doctrine. The Creator made the souls and bodies all at once and together in paradise¹⁷⁴ but these bodies we should understand to be celestial and spiritual ones, such as they will be after the resurrection (800A-D). After the fall, the mortal and corruptible body was superimposed [*superadditum*, *superadiectum*] upon man, which therefore takes its origin not from nature but from sin¹⁷⁵. Thus, John Scottus discerns two bodies of man: the spiritual one, and the mortal one which has been added after the transgression.

Our true body is immortal and incorruptible, spiritual, natural, invisible and essential¹⁷⁶. This first incorruptible body lies hidden until now in the secret recesses of human nature, but in the age to come it will appear when this mortal body will be changed (*mutabitur*) into it¹⁷⁷. The spiritual body clings *always* to the soul and forms one *composite* entity with it; it is either like or identical with that which we shall possess after the resurrection¹⁷⁸. After the resurrection our bodies will be spiritual, they will lay aside every earthly characteristic and become inapprehensible to mortal sense and free from the limitation of space. They will not be defined by the features of their corporeal shapes or qualities or quantities. Significantly, John Scottus sometimes speaks indiscriminately of the spiritual body and the spirit. It seems that *mutatio* into pure spirit does not imply the dissolution of the spiritual body. In spite of the absence of the form which delineates it, it continues to be a body (indeed, liquid bodies do not have form either)¹⁷⁹.

173 PP IV, 4121-27 (836D-837A)

174 Cf PP V, 884C

175 PP II, <127> 520-23 (571CD) (i², vers I-II) Cf PP IV, 3202-08 (817A), 2501-06 (801C), 3219-27 (817C). On the two bodies PP IV, 729-38 (760A-B). On the term *superadditus* which corresponds to the Greek *ἐπεισαχθεῖς* see É. Jeuneau, *L'influence des traductions érigéniennes sur le vocabulaire philosophique du Moyen Âge* simples remarques, in J. Hamesse – C. Steel (eds.), *L'Élaboration du vocabulaire philosophique au Moyen Âge*, Turnhout (Brepols), 2000, 168-169

176 PP V, 884C, IV, 2446-47 (800B), V, 872D, IV, 2468 (800D), II, 1418-19 (571A)

177 PP II, <151> 609-13 (584C) (i¹, vers I-II), II, 1795-1814 (582A-B) (i¹, vers I-II), IV, 4835-37 (852C)

178 PP IV, 2446-69 (800B-D) *Illud corpus, quod in constitutione hominis primitus est factum, spirituale et immortale crediderim esse, ac tale aut ipsum, quale post resurrectionem habiturum sumus. Illud spirituale et naturale animo semper adhaerens ac sibi concretum discernitur*

Unlike the incorruptible body, the earthly one was not made out of nothing but out of clay (P IV, 775D-776A); it stays outside the true human nature (*extra naturam*); it was superadded to it (*additus*, i¹) as a punishment after sin (571AB); it has grown on (*adoleuit*) to our nature in consequence of sin (571D). God creates only the incorruptible, and the mortal body cannot be directly made by Him. Hence, after the Fall, the first man is permitted by God to create for himself a mortal habitation: the defective and mortal bodies are said to be created by our soul, by “the first man” or by “the trinity of our nature”¹⁸⁰. The soul creates for itself a body by gathering together the incorporeal qualities and taking quantity as the substrate for them (580B). But although the material body was created, and is daily being created, by the action of the soul, it should be remembered that every action of the creature should be referred to its Creator¹⁸¹. At the end of the world everything that was superadded will perish and will pass into that which was created in the beginning (571D-572A).

In answer perhaps to the former criticism by Prudentius and Florus of the *duplex corpus*, John makes a special remark that he does not teach that there are two natural bodies in man. There is only one body, by whose fitting together with the soul man is made. The material body, which has been added to it, should be regarded not as a true body but as a kind of

179 PP V, 901D-902A *De spiritualitate siquidem et illocalitate omnium generaliter humanorum corporum post resurrectionem, quando humana natura, quae corpore et anima constat, aequalis erit angelis. Corpora in caelestem qualitatem conuersa, omneque terrenum uniuersaliter deponentia, sensibus mortalium incomprehensibilia, omniue locali circumscriptione libera, V, 902B resurrectionis corpora ultra omnem sensibilem qualitatem ascendentia, omni mole et localitate absoluta, et, ut ita dicam, in spiritum omnino conuersa. super omne, quod sensus corporeus potest attingere, ineffabili sua spirituali subtilitate exaltati, V, 995B-C quod uero immortalia et spiritualia corpora nullis corporalium formarum lineamentis, uel qualitibus, uel quantitibus circumscribuntur, propter ineffabilem eorum spiritibus incircumscriptis adunationem indiscretamque simplicitatem, beatum Gregorium Theologum, sanctum quoque Ambrosium, nec non et Maximum uenerabilem magistrum certis rationibus approbare saepe diximus, and also PP II, <33> 173-77 (538C) (i², vers I-II), V, 902A, II, 1010-13 (539A) (i¹, vers I-II) Cf PP V, 896B-C. *Nunquid angelos ex intellectu et spirituali corpore constare credimus? Omni tamen circumscripta forma eos carere non dubitamus. Si ergo angeli omni forma circumscripta carent, quid mirum, homines, dum aequales angelis fuerint, omni sexu et formarum circumscriptione carituros?* V, 896C. *Quaedam namque corpora sunt liquida ac spiritualia, circumscriptis formis carentia*, II, 288-89 (535A), II, 343 (536C)*

180 PP II, 1718-25 (580A-B), II, 1846-53 (583B-C). See D. Moran, *The Philosophy of John Scottus Erigena*, 176-177

181 PP II, 1819-27 (582C), IV, 2522-23 (802A) *et illud exterius a deo est factum et superadditum*

garment of the true and natural body¹⁸² John Scottus insists that this is a process of the adding of a second body, not of the changing of the first one. The first body, being spiritual, is unchangeable and cannot be made a corruptible one, as Gregory of Nyssa asserts in *De opificio hominis*¹⁸³. Elsewhere, Eriugena notes that only the upward movement of natures is possible when material things turn into spiritual¹⁸⁴.

The concept of the “added” frequently occurs in the pages of the *Periphyseon* and the discussion of the interrelation between the essential and the accidental becomes an important topic. Significantly, when John Scottus speaks of an incorporeal essence which receives accidents as a kind of garment from which it will be purged in due time, he uses the same vocabulary as when speaking of the spiritual body that receives a covering of the flesh¹⁸⁵. John applies the concept of the *added* to the whole universe. He states that in comparison with the true world of incorporeal spiritual substances, this visible world is accidental: it emerges when, from the recesses of nature, sensible accidents go forth, produced by irrational movements of will. The sensible world is a conglomeration of incorporeal qualities, quantities, and other accidents, “appropriately termed affections by the learned”. But God does not create accidents, therefore, the sensible world, which is a commingling of accidents, is either made by man, or permitted to be made on account of his sin¹⁸⁶.

Reditus: the mechanics of the resurrection

When John Scottus treats the process of the soul’s reunification with its dissolved earthly body, he explains it by means of a theory that goes back indirectly to Origen. According to Origen, each human material body on the one hand is fluid like a stream, while on the other hand, it has the *essential* form [*εἶδος*] which serves as the principle of its unity and

development, of its existence and individuation. This principle – *εἶδος σωματικόν* – guarantees both the permanence of the material body during the earthly life and its identity with the glorious body¹⁸⁷. The philosophical meaning of this term varies: it combines features of the Platonic and Aristotelian form while keeping some distance from both of them. This *εἶδος* is corporeal [*σωματικόν*] and mortal by nature¹⁸⁸. God will change it into a better one at the resurrection. Sometimes Origen speaks of the same entity in terms of the Stoic *λογος σπερματικός*. He uses *εἶδος* to denote a specific reality that survives the changes of the body’s material alterations, and Methodius was wrong to assume that such an *εἶδος* was a qualitative form, or the equivalent of external appearance [*σχῆμα*, *habitus*] or shape [*μορφή*]¹⁸⁹.

Under the influence of Origen¹⁹⁰, Gregory of Nyssa uses the same

187 See H. Crouzel, *Les critiques adressées par Methode*, 690–692. Cf. Methodius, *De resurrectione* apud Epiphanius, *Panarion* 64 (ed. Holl, II), p. 423, 9–424, 2, 424, 4–11 and 13–23, 426, 7–18, *Contra Celsum* V, 23 (GCS II, p. 24, 1). See also L. G. Patterson, *Methodius of Olympus: Divine Sovereignty, Human Freedom, and Life in Christ*, Washington, D. C. (The Catholic University of America Press), 1997, 171–73; H. Chadwick, *Origen: Celsum, and the Resurrection of the Body*, *Harvard Theological Review* 41 (1948), 83–102; H. Crouzel, *Origen: The Life and Thought of the First Great Theologian*, trans. A. S. Worall, London (T & T Clark), 1989, 155–57.

188 Origen in Methodius, *De resurrectione* apud Epiphanius, *Panarion* 64 (GCS II, p. 423, 13–14) *τὸ εἶδος τὸ σωματικόν*; 426, 7–18 *τὸ σωματικόν εἶδος τῇ φύσει θιγέται οὐ*.

189 Origen, *Selecta in Psalmos* (in Ps 1, 5) (PG 12, 1097C), Epiphanius, *Panarion* 64, 16, 7 (GCS II, p. 426, 19). Cf. *De princip* II, 10, 3, 102–114: *nostra corpora uelut granum cadere in terram putanda sunt, quibus insita ratio ea, quae substantiam continent corporalem, quamuis emortua fuerint corpora et corrupta atque dispersa, uerbo tamen dei ratio illa ipsa, quae semper in substantia corporis salua est, erigat ea de terra et restituat ac reparaet, sicut ea uirtus, quae inest in grano frumenti, post corruptionem eius ac mortem reparaet ac restituit granum in culmi corpus et spicae. Et ita his quidem, qui regni caelorum hereditatem consequi merebuntur, ratio illa reparaendi corporis, quam supra diximus, dei iussu ex tereno et animalis corpore corpus reparaet spirituale, quod habitare possit in caelis*, and also III, 6, 5, 147–163. Cf. Pamphilus, *Apologia pro Origene* 130–4–12 (SC 464, p. 210–212): *ea ratio quae continet Pauli substantiam* – *Pauli autem nunc dico corporalis* – *salua permanet et cum uoluerit Deus per illam ipsam substantialem rationem quae salua permanet de terrae puluere resuscitantur a mortuis ex omnibus locis hi quibus ratio illa substantiae corporalis in ipsis corporibus permanebat quae in terram prolapsa Dei uoluntate iterum suscitantur*; Methodius, *De resurrectione* apud Photius, *Bibliotheca*, codex 234, 299a, 36–40: “Origen thinks that the same flesh will not be restored to the soul but that the qualitative form of each [*τὴν ποίαν μορφήν*], according to the *eidōs* shall arise stamped upon another spiritual body”.

190 Cf. Methodius, *De resurrectione* apud Photius, *Bibliotheca* Codex 234, 299b, 1–6: “For he says, the material body being fluid, and in no wise remaining in itself, but

182 PP IV, 2562–64 (803A)

183 PP IV, 2446–60 (800B–C)

184 Cf. *Expositiones* (Barbet) II, 3, 686–691 (159B): *Naturaliter quippe materialia omnia in spiritualia transferri appetunt, spiritualia uero ad materialium humilem uilissimamque extremitatem inclinari nolunt, quoniam impossibile est. Possibile namque est inferiora ad superiora ascendere, descendere uero superiora ad inferiora naturali transmutatione, impossibile*.

185 PP III, 1932–39 (665C–D), 1945–48 (666A)

186 PP V, 885D–886A, II, 1878–81 (584A). The idea that the corporeal is produced by the affections of the Soul belongs to the Gnostics, see Irenaeus, *Adversus haereses* I, 1, 8, 50–52, I, 1, 9, 1–2, I, 1, 10, 1–2 (ed. W. W. Harvey), Clement, *Excerpta ex Theodoto* 46, 1–2 (ed. F. Sagnard, SC 23, p. 156), Plotinus, *Enneads* VI 3, 16, 38–43 (eds P. Henry – H.-R. Schwyzer).

term to refer to both spiritual and physical structure of the body¹⁹¹, to some unchangeable constituent parts of our being which are stationary and unaltered by constant material flux¹⁹². He modifies this idea, regarding the εἶδος as a seal that takes its pattern from the combination of bodily elements which have been grouped together under it. The εἶδος is marked by this combination and leaves an impression of itself upon the soul. Thus, at the resurrection the soul is enabled to recognize and recall the elements of its dissolved earthly body¹⁹³. However, Gregory makes a cardinal change. In Origen the εἶδος itself preserves its identity at the resurrection, even if being changed into a better one. There is no continuity in its substrate – the material body – which is radically altered: an earthly body yields place to a spiritual one. For Gregory, just the contrary is the case: the εἶδος only provides the means for the reassembly of the former body's material atoms. Dennis notes: "He uses an argument of Origen's to support and explain something which Origen denied"¹⁹⁴ – the restoration of the former material or flesh. The relevant discussion in Gregory is obscure and the corresponding Latin translation by John Scottus inherits the ambiguity of the Greek text¹⁹⁵. Eriugena quotes the corresponding discussion of Gregory in the *Penphyseon* (P IV, 801A–C)

190 (Continued) wearing out and being replaced around the *eidos* [περι το εἶδος] by which its form [τῇ μορφῇ] is distinguished, and by which the appearance [το σχῆμα] is marked, it is necessary that the resurrection should be only that of the *eidos*", and Gregory, *De officio hominis* XVII, 3 "the body is on the one hand altered by way of growth and diminution, changing, like garments, the vesture of its successive statures, while the *eidos* [το εἶδος], on the other hand, remains in itself unaltered through every change, not varying from the marks [σημείων] once imposed upon it by nature, but appearing with its own tokens of identity in all the changes which the body undergoes"

191 This was noted by John Scottus in PP IV, 800C

192 See L G Patterson, *Methodius of Olympus*, 190–91, J Laplace – J Daniélou, *Gregoire de Nyse La Creation de l'homme*, Paris (Cerf), 1943, 209, n 1, T J Dennis, *Gregory on the Resurrection of the Body*, in A Spira – C Klock (eds), *The Easter Sermons of Gregory of Nyssa Translation and Commentary*, Philadelphia (Philadelphia Patristic Foundation), 1981, 58–60

193 The interpretation of this passage see in W Moore – H A Wilson, *Select writings and letters of Gregory, Bishop of Nyssa*, vol 5 (1893), p 418, n 5

194 Dennis, *Gregory on the Resurrection*, 59

195 Cf Dennis, 59 "At this point his [Gregory's] language is compressed to the point of obscurity, a clear sign that he is grappling with an original idea which he has not fully worked out" The translation of Dionysius Exiguus (*S. Gregori De imagine XXVII* (PL 67, 394C–395A)) is more articulate than that of John Scottus (*De imagine XXVII* (Cappuyns, pp 251, 5 – 252, 3))

providing, in his turn, a further interpretation and modification of this theory (801C–803A). We will not go into details of his doctrine¹⁹⁶. We confine ourselves to a few remarks relevant to our present discussion.

In Origen, εἶδος σωματικόν was the essential form of an individual human body – the body of Peter or Paul, and it was distinct from spiritual body. John Scottus, on the contrary, understands this 'form' as the universal 'spiritual form' that lacks all individuality and abides indiscriminately in all human bodies, being the same in every one. This spiritual form is the spiritual body itself, made in the first creation of man. This spiritual body receives the covering of the exterior mortal body, which like the seal [*signaculum*] stamps upon it the specific appearance of the flesh¹⁹⁷. When the material body is dissolved into the elements, the interior body abides without change in its principles, according to which it was constituted with and in and through the soul (802B). At the time of the resurrection the soul will collect all the parts of the broken seal [*signaculi*], that is of the exterior body, according to the impression [*species*] stamped upon spiritual body (802D–803A). The soul cannot ignore the elements of its former material body, since God had descended even into that which was superadded to human nature after sin¹⁹⁸. However, in spite of cardinal changes introduced by the successive reinterpretations of Methodius, Gregory of Nyssa, and John Scottus himself, traces of Origen's genuine doctrine are still discernible in the *Penphyseon*¹⁹⁹.

III. TRANSCENDING CORPOREITY

Significantly, John Scottus avoids any explicit criticism of Origen. Nevertheless, sometimes the object of his polemics is clear. For instance, Origen described the resurrected bodies of human beings as similar to

196 On this see the paper by C. Steel in this book

197 PP IV, 2518–19 (802A), 2557–59 (802D–803A) The diversity of earthly bodies does not proceed from nature but from the defect and diversity of places and times, of lands, waters, and diets, of birth and breeding PP II, <21> 121–26 (533A–B) (i², vers I–II) Cf Servius, *In Aeneidos* VI, 724, 20–32 Cf also PP II, <32> 168–71, 538B (i², vers I–II), IV, 2508–11 (801D), and Boethius, *De trinitate* 1 (PL 64, 1294D) *sed numero differentiam accidentum uarietas facit nam tres homines neque genere, neque specie, sed suis accidentibus distant*

198 PP II, 3327–34 (572A) (i², vers III), IV, 2522–26 (802A), 2542–47 (802C)

199 Cf John Scottus, PP V, 994A *Inest siquidem unicuique hominum occulta corporis sui ratio, in quam resurrectionis tempore hoc terrenum mortaleque mutabitur, et in qua angelicus corporibus assimilabitur, quando homines aequales angelis erunt* Cf above n 189

stars²⁰⁰ (although, elsewhere he states that the spiritual body of the soul has a higher dignity than that of the brightest heavenly luminaries²⁰¹) In some points John Scottus – directly or indirectly – is indebted to this tradition too in *Periphyseon* II and III he says that celestial luminaries, the sun, the planets, and the stars are ethereal and, thus, spiritual²⁰² This raises the question what kind of relation exists between the spiritual bodies of the saints placed in the ethereal realm and the stars?

John Scottus knows that Origen taught the passing away of the earthly human body into the spiritual, that is the ethereal body²⁰³, and that Origen interpreted the Apostle's words in 1 Cor 15 40–41 to signify that the spiritual bodies of the saints would differ from each other²⁰⁴ In *Periphyseon* V Eriugena criticizes the both statements saying that it is wrong to think that the righteous will have ethereal bodies and that these bodies will be different John states that it is not enough for an earthly body to be changed into a subtle and ethereal one All the corporeal must pass away into incorporeal spirit (987B) Speaking on the diversity of ethereal bodies, one should not refer to 1 Cor 15 40–41 and think that after the resurrection the human bodies will shine in the ethereal realm in

200 See, for instance, Origen's allegorical interpretation of Gen I, 16–19 in *Hom. in Genesim* I, 7 (PG 12, 151B) *Sicut etiam 'stella ab stella differt in gloria', ita etiam sanctorum unusquisque secundum magnitudinem suam lumen suum fundit in nos* Cf A. Scott, *Origen and the Stars: A History of an Idea*, Oxford (Clarendon Press), 1991, 150, and *Ibid.* 157 “Origen followed the tradition of contemporary Jewish literature in referring to souls shining after death There are different degrees of brightness in heaven so there are different states of righteousness, and he writes that he hopes to be compared only with a dimmer star and not with the moon or one of the brighter stars, since the latter comparison would make him look bad” *Hom. in Ezechielem* 9, 4 (8, 412, 8–19 B), *Hom. in Ps* 147 (*Analecta sacra*, ed. PITRA, 3, 359)

201 *De princ.* III, 6, 4, 113–117, quoted in *PP* V, 930A

202 *PP* III, 3254–55 (697C), 2521 (680B), II, 734–36 (549D)

203 In *PP* V, 929A–930D John Scottus quotes *De princ.* III, 6, 3–5, which says that, according to the Apostle, all perfected souls and the whole creature is to dwell in the spiritual body which is invisible and eternal It should be “the most subtle and pure body” and not the pure, incorporeal spirit Cf Origen, *De princ.* II, 2, 1, 14–32, I, 6, 4, 175–182

204 Origen, *De princ.* II, 9, 3, 63–69 *quaedam dicuntur esse supercaelestia, id est in habitationibus beationibus posita et corporibus caelestionibus ac splendentioribus indita, et in his ipsis multae differentiae ostenduntur, sicut, uerbi causa, etiam apostolus dixit quod “alia sit gloria solis, alia gloria lunae, alia gloria stellarum, stella enim ab stella differt in gloria” (1 Cor 15 40–41), II, 10, 2, 68–72 uolens apostolus describere, quanta esset differentia eorum, qui resurgent in gloria, id est sanctorum, comparationem caelestium corporum sumpsit dicens “Alia gloria solis, alia gloria lunae, alia gloria stellarum”*

such a way that the degree of brightness of each will correspond to the worthiness of his earthly life²⁰⁵ John Scottus insists that the spiritual body of every one will be the same²⁰⁶ because this body is natural and essential, and all men share the same nature The glory of the righteous will consist not in the brightness of their bodies, but in the grace of the resurrection and in the purity of the contemplation in which they shall see God face to face (987D–988B)

In the *De praedestinatione* John Scottus accepted the theory of the earthly body transmuting into the subtle and ethereal one The reading of Gregory of Nyssa's *De opificio hominis* and a passage from Gregory of Nazianzus incorporated in Maximus' *Ambigua* changed his *theoria reditus* Now Eriugena admits the existence of the incorporeal spiritual reality²⁰⁷ (this can be interpreted as a reaction on Prudentius' criticism) and goes beyond the sensible cosmos, saying “Those are wrong *qui ultra hunc mundum sensibilem nihil esse excogitant*”²⁰⁸ The teaching of Augustine (which goes back to Origen) loses the power of persuasion for John Scottus He rejects the notion of the earthly bodies changing into the subtle ones after the resurrection, and states that according to Ambrose, Gregory the Theologian and his commentator Maximus, the change is not from an earthly body into a heavenly one, but a complete passing away into pure spirit²⁰⁹ John asserts that the sensible bodies and forms of men will not receive the resurrection, but they will pass away into the spiritual nature which cannot be confined by space and time²¹⁰ Even the preferred terminology of John Scottus is changed Now, he speaks not of individual souls and bodies, but of human nature and the stages of its return into God

205 *PP* V, 987C–988A

206 *PP* V, 995B, II, <33> 173–77 (538C) (I', vers. I–II), see also V, 902A

207 Although ‘spiritual’ still means both ‘ethereal and of subtle body’ and ‘incorporeal’ Cf L.R. Hennessey, *A Philosophical Issue in Origen's Eschatology: The Three Senses of Incorporality*, in R.J. Daly (ed.), *Origeniana quinta*, 373–74 On different types of *σώματα* in Porphyry see J.J. O'Meara, *Eriugena's Use of Augustine in His Teaching on the Soul-Body Relationship*, in T. Halton (ed.), *Studies in Augustine and Eriugena*, Washington, D.C. (The Catholic University of America Press), 1992, 262–263

208 Remarkably, the explanatory word *sensibilem*, added here, is absent in the *Glosae Martiani* (see above n. 93) Cf *PP* V, 986C, 989B, 921A–B

209 Cf *PP* V, 990D *beatus Augustinus in ultimis 'De ciuitate Dei' libris non ipsa mundi corpora transitura, sed eorum qualitates in melius mutandas uideatur docere*, V, 986D–987A, 951A, 987B–C, 951A

210 *PP* V, 914B, II, 304–305 (535B), 2101–102 (590C), V, 884A–B, 879A, 874B

3.1. The intermediary *corporale*

The most difficult task then was to provide rational arguments for the theory of the earthly body which is changed into incorporeal spirit. First, John Scottus makes a survey of different opinions on the question. He says that Augustine denies any possibility of the transfusion of bodies into soul and quotes *De Genesi ad litteram*²¹¹. Boethius too declares that body and soul cannot be changed into one another, since there is no common substance between them²¹². But Gregory the Theologian and his commentator Maximus the Confessor teach that the body will be wholly absorbed into the soul and will be with her one soul, one mind and one God²¹³. And Ambrose asserts that we may obtain the communion of body, soul and spirit at the resurrection, and that later we, who are now composite, shall be one, and shall be transformed into a single substance²¹⁴. Even before this survey John Scottus declares that in his teaching on the return of nature he is going to follow Gregory the Theologian, Maximus and Ambrose²¹⁵. Origen is not mentioned there, but elsewhere John Scottus quotes *De principis* III, 6, 3 where Origen interprets 1 Cor 15:44 and 2 Cor 5:1 as the teaching on the transformation of the earthly body into the ethereal one²¹⁶. Later, John Scottus criticizes such a theory saying that the great theologians spoke of heavenly bodies while taking into account the thinking of the simple

211 In PP V, 877A John Scottus quotes *De Genesi* X, 4 although it says only that no soul can be changed into the body

212 PP V, 877B quotes *De persona et naturis duabus* VI (PL 64, 1350C-D) Cf *Ibid* 1349C-D *neque corporea in incorpoream, neque incorporea in eam quae corpus est, mutari potest, 1350B Corporea uero in incorporea nulla ratione poterunt permutari, quoniam nulla communi materia subjecta participant, quae susceptis qualitatibus in alterutram permutetur omnis enim natura incorporeae substantiae nullo materiae nititur fundamento, nullum uero corpus est, cui non sit materia subjecta* Apparently, the attempt to introduce such an intermediary substance in PP V, 882C is the reaction to the words of Boethius

213 This passage from Gregory's *Oratio* VII is quoted by Maximus, see *Ambigua ad Iohannem* XVII, 164-173 (Jauneau, p. 141) (=Gregory of Nazianzus, *Oratio 7 Funebris in laudem Caesari fratris* 21 (PG 35, 781-784) John Scottus cites it in PP V, 877C-D There, Maximus explains Gregory's words *tempore resurrectionis absorbebitur caro ab anima in spiritu, anima uero a Deo*, quoted in PP V, 877D-878A) Cf PP V, 951A-B and 952C-D

214 Ambrose, *Expositio Evangelii secundum Lucam* VII, 192-194 (PL 15, 1751BD), quoted in PP V, 878B-D) Nevertheless, Erugena continued to consider the angels to consist of spirit and spiritual body, and therefore to be composite beings (see below n 231) We may conclude that since men will be like angels after the resurrection they will be composite too

215 PP V, 876C

faithful who could not imagine that all bodies would be totally done away with; and the Apostle had the same motive in mind in 1 Cor 15:44²¹⁷.

But John Scottus does not confine himself to referring to authorities. He tries to provide rational arguments for the theory of the transformation of body into spirit. Apparently in response to Boethius, he tries to introduce a mean term between the body and the incorporeal. He arranges a triadic schema by postulating the existence of body, the bodiless, and something between the two which is called *corporal*. This triad is called *termana proportionalitas*, and its mean term, accordingly, *proportionabilis medietas*²¹⁸. The latter, being neither corporeal nor incorporeal, is perceived only in association with bodies (*circa corpora intelliguntur*, 882C). For instance, the body is a physical object or a geometrical figure²¹⁹; the bodiless has no spatial extension (such as life, soul, the causes of the created things)²²⁰; the corporal is some attribute of bodies, some quality (like color, shape, light²²¹), or the primal elements²²² (which, in turn, are produced by the four qualities of heat, cold, dryness and wetness), or the rays from the eyes. The corporal as the ethereal and incorporeal can penetrate other bodies and everything that lies within its sphere²²³. Perhaps John Scottus here is influenced by Gregory of Nyssa,

216 PP V, 929C-930B Cf *De principis* II, 3, 7, 334-37 *ipsa quoque substantia corporalis optimis ac purissimis spiritibus sociata pro assumentium uel qualitate uel mentis in aetherium statum permutata, secundum quod apostolus dicit 'Et nos immutabimur' (1 Cor 15 52), refulgebit, Jerome, Ad Avitum Ep 124, 5 (PL 22, 1064) omnis substantia redigetur in optimam qualitatem, et dissoluatur in aetherem, quod purioris simpliciorisque naturae est*

217 PP V, 986D-987B

218 PP V, 882C *In natura rerum tria rationabilis inquisitio inuenit Omne enim, quod est, aut corpus est, aut incorporeum, aut medium, quod corporale dicitur*, III, 3151-76 (695A-C)

219 PP V, 882C

220 PP V, 882C, 885A-B, III, 1818-21 (663A), III, 1793-98 (662C) There is a peculiar statement of John Scottus in PP V, 881A *si tamen aliqua substantia est praeter Deum, quae siue intelligibili siue sensibili corpore careat (cf Origen, De principis II, 2, 2, 30-32 numquam sine ipsa [materiale substantia] eas [rationabiles naturas] uel uixisse uel uiuere solius namque trinitatis incorporea uita existere recte putabitur)* From this one can conclude that a human soul has body too, the idea acceptable for Origen, but impossible for later thought of John Scottus PP III, 4639-40 (730A) *anima spiritus est per se omni corporea crassitudine carens*, III, 4691-92 (731B) *in se ipsa simplex omnique corporali quantitate localibusque spatibus anima carens*

221 PP V, 882C-D

222 PP III, 3168-76 (695B-C), V, 896D-897A, III, 3419-20 (701B) Because the elements are closely akin to the spiritual nature, the soul could control the parts of its body dissolved into the elements (730A-B)

223 PP V, 902A-B

who wrote that the corporeal is a combination of incorporeal qualities²²⁴. However, John does not refer to Gregory because the latter thought that such qualities (color, heaviness) are absolutely incorporeal²²⁵.

John provides examples of the passing away of the incorporeal into the body and back again: the elements flow forth from the spiritual reasons, the bodies are composed of the elements. The inverse movement is possible: the bodies are dissolved into the elements which, in their turn, pass away into the reasons. Bodies themselves can pass into each other and can be free of any limitation of form²²⁶. However, the doctrine of the corporal was left unfinished and some inconsistency remains. Sometimes John says that colors and qualities are incorporeal²²⁷.

John Scottus' terminology and thought are not clear on this point, he does not distinguish the incorporeal spirit and the spiritual body. Spiritual bodies which lack any qualities, quantities, and form are undistinguishable from spirit, but still they must be bodies, as is the case of the bodies of men after the resurrection and the resurrected body of Christ²²⁸. Here, Eriugena obviously tries to bring the Neoplatonic theory of the universal *reditus* into conformity with orthodox Christian doctrine, according to which man is always soul and body²²⁹. This is why, having said that according to Gregory and Maximus the earthly body will be completely changed into pure spirit, John Scottus continues to consider them to be bodies²³⁰, emphasizing that such objects are not limited by

224 Gregory, *De imagine* XXIV (Cappuyns, p. 245, 20–23) Cf Origen, *De pñncip* II, 1, 4, 110–114 *Qualitates autem quattuor dicimus calidam, frigidam, aridam, humidam Quae quattuor qualitates ὑλη, id est materiae, insertae diuersas corporum species efficiunt* D G Bostock, *Quality and Corporeity in Origen*, in H. Crouzel – A. Quacquarelli (eds.), *Origeniana secunda*, 323–337

225 *De imagine* 24 (Cappuyns, p. 245, 27–35), quoted in PP I, 2576–88 (502B–C)

226 PP III, 3187–90 (695D–696A), III, <20> 138–39 (696B) (i¹, vers I–II) Bodies can be changed into each other III, <20> 139–41 (696B) (i¹, vers I–II), bodies can be free of form V, 896C–D

227 PP III, 1797–98 (662C) *formae atque colores in numero rerum incorporearum computantur*, III, 1818–19 (663A) *quantitates siquidem et qualitates per se sint incorporeae*

228 Man is called pure spirit and mind PP II, 288–290 (535A), 343 (536C), but John also speaks about spiritual bodies PP V, 901D *spiritualitas et illocalitas omnium generaliter humanorum corporum*, 945B *impu phantastice patiuntur in inferno, spiritualibus corporibus suis receptis* *E contrano autem iusti patientur receptis corporibus* Finally, he writes about bodies that are spirits PP V, 902B *resurrectionis corpora ultra omnem sensibilem qualitatem ascendentia, omni mole et localitate absoluta, et, ut ita dicam, in spiritum omnino conuersa* It is possible to remain spiritual body and be beyond the limitation of place and time PP II, <33> 173–76 (538C) (i², vers I–II), and 902A On the risen body of Christ see V, 894C–895A

space, time and form And, since men will be like angels, the angels too are not pure spirits (on which Prudentius insisted): they consist of mind and spiritual body²³¹ Besides, inconsistency and ambiguity remains regarding the heavenly luminaries, which move in the ethereal realm, and the universal elements: they are spiritual and not spiritual at the same time²³².

229 PP III, 4618–32 (729C–730A) *Ipsa etiam solutio, quae mors corporis dicitur, nostris sensibus et materiae solutio est, non ipsi naturae* *Homo autem corpus et anima est* *Si autem semper homo, semper igitur anima et corpus relationis siquidem ratio nunquam potest penne quod corporeo sensui uidetur segregari, aliorum rerum speculatione semper simul et inseparabiliter subsistere necesse est*

230 PP V, 995B–C *Quod uero immortalia et spiritualia corpora nullis corporalium formarum lineamentis, uel qualitibus, uel quantitibus circumscribuntur* *beatum Gregorium Theologum, sanctum quoque Ambrosium, nec non et Maximum uenerabilem magistrum approbare saepe diximus*

231 PP V, 993C–D *Non enim [angeli] materialia, ex qualitibus mundi huius elementorum composita possident corpora, sed spiritualia, intellectibus suis coadunata, in quibus, quando, et ubi, et quomodo uolunt, humanis sensibus ad tempus apparent, nec tamen phantastice, sed ueraciter*, IV, 831–34 (762C–D) *sanctus Augustinus summos angelos spiritualia sua corpora, in quibus saepe apparent, non solum habere non denegat, uerum etiam confirmat*, IV, <21> 112–15 (773B) (marg in MS Rheims, Bibl mun 875) *Dum enim spiritualia sua corpora et inuisibilia in formas uisibiles transmutant, ita ut mortalium sensibus uisibiliter, localiter, temporaliter possint apparere, non hoc eis accidit propter semet ipsos, sed propter homines, quibus praesunt et diuina mysteria declarant* Cf *Expositiones* II, 3, 692–708 (159B–D) *Et si quis dixerit uidetur itaque beatus Dionysius angelicas uirtutes omnino carere corporibus predictis rationibus docere, cui breuiter respondendum terrena materialiaque corpora mortalia, corruptibilia, membrorum compositionibus distincta, sensibilibus formis localibusque spatibus circumscripta, temporibus mutabilia seu horum omnium imagines, siue interius in phantasiae memorie, siue exterius in sensuum impressione, diuinos animos habere penitus denegat* *Spiritualia autem corpora simplicia, nullis formarum sensibilibus lineamentis coartata, ipsis diuinis animis simillima et conuenientissima possidere eos non solum non denegat, uerum etiam affirmat* *In quibus, celestibus uidelicet subtilissimis suis corporibus, humanis obtutibus sepe uisibiliter apparere, ut Abraham et Tobie, transmutantes inuisibiles et incircumscriptas suorum spiritualium corporum qualitates in quascumque formas uisibiles, in quibus hominibus se manifestare uelint*, PP V, 896B–C *Nunquid angelos ex intellectu et spirituali corpore constare credimus? Omni tamen circumscripta forma eos carere non dubitamus* But see V, 993C *angelicos spiritus ultra omnem corpoream creaturam subsistere, et ultra omnem locum illocaliter moueri*

232 PP III, 3426–30 (701B–C) *illa quae caelestia uel aethera dicuntur corpora, quamuis spiritualia et incorruptibilia uideantur esse, necessario tamen, quoniam per generationem et compositionem inchoauerunt fieri, ad finem suae solutionis et corruptionis peruenient*, III, 3244–46 (697B) *solares radii per aethera spatia diffusi non ardent, in sublimissima enim ac spirituali natura ardenti matrem non reperiunt*, III, 5153–57 (742A) *sub firmamento caeli uolatilia fieri iussa sunt, hoc est, in uicinia purissimorum ac paene incorporearum elementorum qualitatibus* *Sub firmamento itaque caeli uolatile creatur, hoc est prope, infra tamen spiritualium corporum leuissimam exilitatem*, V, 902A *subtilitatem ac ueluti quandam incorporeitatem [elementorum]*

3.2 *Cosmography changed*

The doctrine of the subtle bodies abandoned, John Scottus had to change his cosmography and cosmology. Under the guise of the *Alumnus*, he criticizes the theories of Augustine and Bede, and likewise his own views from the *De praedestinatione* period (after some point the criticism is continued by the *Nutritor*)²³³. The context of his polemics suggests that he argues with Augustine and Bede rather, than with Origen, who is the primal – although indirect – source of these theories. Regarding the destiny of the universe, John Scottus now believes that the sensible world is to pass away into pure spirit. The *Nutritor* criticizes “those” who believe that only the aerial heavens will perish in the flame as they were overwhelmed in the waters of the flood (649A)²³⁴. Indeed, to say that the ethereal heaven will survive the world conflagration is to acknowledge the eternity of the sensible creation, the visible universe. Here John Scottus again alludes to Bede, citing his definition of the universe from the *De natura rerum* (648A–B). Those are wrong, John says, who think that the substance of the world will remain the same and only the qualities of the world will be changed into something better, since it is written, according to them: *there shall be a new heaven and a new earth*²³⁵. More than once John Scottus speaks of the reality that exists beyond this sensible world²³⁶ and each time his criticism seems to be directed against Augustine and Bede.

Now Eriugena abandons the doctrine of the ethereal paradise and the aerial hell implied in the *De praedestinatione*. Some think, the *Alumnus* says, that the expanses of the air and the ether are destined to be allotted, those of the ether to the eternal possession of the blessed angels and *men who resemble them*, and those of the lower air to the eternal prison and the

eternal flames whose burning is the local and visible torment of the apostate angels and the impious men *who resemble them* (649A–B)²³⁷. Most plausibly, John Scottus is here criticizing his own theories of the *De praedestinatione*, for all the sources known to us teach only the *temporal* dwelling of the saints in the ether (for instance, *De ordine creaturarum*), and the *temporal* imprisonment of the apostate angels in the aerial prison till the time of the judgment (with Augustine and Bede). John alludes to Augustine saying that “according to holy Fathers”, the upper, ethereal regions of this sensible world are allotted to the bodies of the saints, which will be changed into spiritual qualities that resemble ethereal ones. “When I read of such things in the books of the Holy Fathers”, John says, “I stagger amazed and horror-struck” (986B). Now Eriugena calls such views “false” (649B)²³⁸, although “they were held by the most reverend authorities of the Church”. John Scottus confesses:

I cannot deny that I was at one time deceived by the false reasoning of human opinions that are far from the truth, for deceived I was. For whilst still uninstructed I gave assent to all these, or almost all, seduced by some likeness to the truth, and by the carnal senses. But now, following in the footsteps of the Holy Fathers, and recalled from my errors and those of others by the ray of the Divine Light, and brought into the right way, I retract a little. There is no worse death than ignorance of the truth.²³⁹

The depreciatory reference to himself as “still uninstructed” seems to be not merely a figure of speech. We can see the evolution of John Scottus’ eschatological views since 851. The Eriugena of the *De praedestinatione* period is not very learned in the writings of the Fathers. Instead we saw the freshness of approach, the audacity and sharpness proper to a newcomer. This accords with the evident progress of his proficiency in Greek. Eriugena seems to be about thirty in 850, and the earlier than 840 dating for the beginning of his career on the continent seems less probable²⁴⁰.

237 Cf. PP V, 984C, 985A, 986A–B.

238 Cf. PP III, 3426–30 (701B–C), V, 891A–B.

239 PP III, 1292–1304 (649D). Cf. Origen, *De princ.* II, 10, 8, 261–265. *Sed et exteriores tenebras, ut ego opinor, non tam aerem aliquem obscurum et sine ullo lumine intelligendum puto quam de his, qui profundae ignorantiae tenebris immersi extra omne rationis et intelligentiae lumen effecti sunt.*

240 J. Contreni suggested the 820s–830s as the beginning of John Scottus’ career on the continent, see J. J. Contreni – P. P. O’Neill (eds.), *Glossae divinae historiae*, “Introduction”, p. 81.

233 In PP III, 1230–1308 (648A–649D) and V, 984B–989A.

234 Cf. Augustine, *De civitate Dei* XX, 18 (PL 41, 684), XX, 24 (697–98), Bede, *Commentarii in Pentateuchum* (PL 91, 198B–D), *Super epistolas Catholicas* (PL 93, 82A–D).

235 PP III, 1245–1263 (648D–649A), V, 984C. Cf. Augustine, *De civitate Dei* XX, 24 (PL 41, 697–98), Bede, *Super epistolas Catholicas* (PL 93, 82B–D). *Unde in sequentibus dicitur: “Nouos uero coelos et nouam terram”. Non dixit alios coelos et aliam terram, sed ueteres et antiquos in melius commutandos. Praeterit enim figura huius mundi, non substantia, sicut et carnis nostrae non substantia perit, sed figura immutabitur, quando quod “seminatur corpus animale, surget corpus spirituale” (1 Cor 15 44). Cf. John Scottus, PP V, 990D. *beatus Augustinus in ultimus de Ciuitate Dei libris non ipsa mundi corpora transitura, sed eorum qualitates in melius mutandas uideatur docere*, V, 992D–93A. *in uicesimo de Ciuitate Dei libro, tredecimo capitulo [Augustinus ait] “mutatione namque rerum, non omnimodo intentu transibit hic mundus”. Unde et Apostolus dicit: Praeterit figura huius mundi. ” Figura ergo praeterit non natura.* Cf. Origen, *De princ.* I, 6, 4, 156–67.*

236 PP V, 989A–B, 984B–C, 986C.

Regarding the place of the Judgment, John Scottus rejects the opinion, shared by certain Carolingian intellectuals, according to which the second coming of Christ is to be expected in the air. He does not believe that the Judge and his angels will descend physically, *localiter et corporaliter*, from some place in the upper parts of sensible nature. “Some believe”, he says in *PP V*, 996C, alluding, perhaps, to the political visions of Audradus Modicus (well-known in his circle²⁴¹), that the seat of the Judgment will be on the frontier between the aerial and ethereal realms, *in confinio aeris et aethens*, which the “physicists” (he refers to the scientific texts of Bede here)²⁴² describe as the sphere of the moon (*lunarem circulum*). According to John Scottus, the words *He shall come to judge both the living and the dead*, should not be interpreted as meaning that He moves through space, but that each man, good or evil, shall behold His coming in himself, in his own conscience. Perhaps this will be the flame that shall come at last and spread through all the world and consume it, but this is not the corporeal universal fire, but the manifestation of the Word of God in every creature. This is the flame, John Scottus declares, of which It itself says *I am a consuming fire*²⁴³.

241 Cf. Audradus Modicus (†after 853), *Liber revelationum VIII* (PL 115, 23D) *Et ecce descendens Dominus, et cum eo omnes sancti. Et sedit in confinio aethens et aeris. Tunc tribus sol obscuratus est continuus diebus, et luna tribus eisdem noctibus* (concerning events of 850–851). Audradus was questioned about his visions at the council that met at Saint-Médard of Soissons in 853. The people from “the circle of Erigena” were present there: King Charles, Queen Ermentrude, Hincmar of Rheims, Pardulus of Laon. Were Wulfadus and Erigena there too? On the vision, see P. E. Dutton, *Politics of Dreaming in the Carolingian Empire*, Lincoln – London (University of Nebraska Press), 1994, 143–145, 150, 154, on Audradus. P. E. Dutton – H. L. Kessler, *The Poetry and Paintings of the First Bible of Charles the Bald*, Ann Arbor (The Univ. of Michigan Press), 1997, 11ff., on Wulfadus and Erigena in Saint-Médard. P. Dutton, *Evidence That Dubtach’s Priscian Codex Once Belonged to Erigena*, in H. J. Westra (ed.), *From Athens to Chartres: Neoplatonism and Medieval Thought. Studies in Honour of Édouard Jeuneau*, Leiden – New York – Köln (E. J. Brill), 1992, 25–28. Bishop Pardulus too identified himself at Soissons (MGH *Consilia* 3.277, 20).

242 This expression is the coinage of Bede. Cf. Bede, *De natura rerum* 25 (PL 90, 244A–46A) *Nam supra lunam, quae aeris aethensque confinio currit, omnia pura ac diurnae lucis sunt plena*, *De temporum ratione* 7 (PL 90, 323A) *umbram noctis ad aeris usque et aethens confinium philosophi dicunt exaltant*, 26 (PL 90, 409B), and also *De ratione computi* 4 (PL 90, 582C), *In Evangelium Marci* 4, 13 (PL 92, 265A) (= *In Ev. S. Lucae VI* (PL 92, 590D)), *Hom. subditivae* 25 (PL 94, 322B)). Cf. Hrabanus Maurus, *De universo* X, 6 (PL 111, 291B), Walafrid Strabo, *Ev. sec. Marcum* 13 (PL 114, 228B), Hincmar of Rheims, *De divortio Lotharii et Tetbergae VI Responsio* (PL 125, 663D) (= *Epistolae* 25 (PL 126, 162B)).

243 *PP V*, 997B–D.

Having abandoned the Augustinian concept of corporeal eternal fire, John Scottus preserves exclusively the Origenian spiritual interpretation of the infernal tortures. The torments of the wicked will be of a spiritual nature (939B), it is in his own conscience that each man either receives reward or suffers punishment (978B)²⁴⁴. As in the *De praedestinatione*, the hell, the everlasting fire, and the undying worm represent merely a lamentable condition of the sinners, and Holy Scripture employs all these expressions allegorically. Hell is unsubstantial, it is neither body nor spirit²⁴⁵. The impious suffer in their spiritual bodies²⁴⁶. *Periphyseon* retains the conception that any nature is good, incorruptible, and cannot be punished, and evil comes from irrational movements of the will. Now, in support of this theory John Scottus quotes, besides Augustine, Origen and Dionysius²⁴⁷.

3.3 The Return

The Alumnus confesses that he has never read or heard of any text teaching the return of human nature and of all things contained within it into the eternal reasons, although here and there among holy books and the writings of the Holy Fathers the outline of such a doctrine is frequently discernible²⁴⁸. Doubtless, his wise tutor is aware of such doctrines and quotes, elsewhere in the *Periphyseon*, Origen²⁴⁹ and Maximus the Confessor²⁵⁰ who speak of God as of the final cause of all

244 Cf. *PP V*, 967A, 944D, 978C (cf. 936A–B, 939B). The devil and his members will be tortured within the confines of their own evil will, this follows from Augustine, *De Genesi ad litteram XI*, 21 (PL 34, 440), quoted in 928B, and from Ambrose, *Expositio Evangelii secundum Lucam VII*, 205 (PL 15, 1754BC, quoted in 936C–D).

245 *PP V*, 971C, 935C.

246 *PP V*, 945B–C, 949D.

247 *PP V*, 978B, 927C. Origen, *De princip.* III, 6, 5, 143–148, quoted in *PP V*, 930C (cf. *V*, 931A *audisti Origenem affirmantem, diaboli substantiam nunquam perturam, sed eius solummodo malitiam*), Augustine, *De Genesi XI*, 21 (PL 34, 440), Dionysius, *De divinis nominibus IV*, 23, quoted in *PP V*, 931B–C.

248 *PP V*, 862A.

249 *PP V*, 929A–B *audi magnum Origenem, diligentissimum rerum inquisitorem, in tertio libro περὶ Ἀρχῶν de consummatione mundi, hoc est de summo bono, ad quod universa ratio nabilis natura festinat*. “*finis ad principium reparatus, et rerum exitus collatus initus, restituet illum statum, quem tunc habuit natura rationabilis, cum de ligno sciendi bonum et malum edere non egebat*” (= Origen, *De princip.* III, 6, 3, 78–81).

250 *PP I*, 3102–05 *Nam, ut alibi docet idem Maximus, causa omnium eadem et finis omnium est. Deus enim et principium (id est causa) omnium creaturarum est et finis, quoniam ab ipso et accipiunt et incipiunt esse et ad eum moventur ut in eo quiescant* (= Maximus, *Ambigua ad Iohannem III*, 111–114 (Jeuneau, p. 25)), Maximus, *Ambigua ad Iohannem III*, 114–116.

being and the universe itself.

In the strict sense, the Return is non-essential. It is not a return of the substances (for these remain immutably and eternally in their causes), but the return of the qualities, quantities and other accidents which of themselves are unstable and transient. Everything is truly contained in the Divine Mind²⁵¹. The visible things that constitute the sensible world should not themselves be regarded as truly substantial existents but as transitory images and verifications derived therefrom, just like the echoes of voices and the shadows of bodies. However, through intelligible intercourse with one another, the accidents generate this world when they proceed from the causes to which they will return in due time, being there free from the quantitative changes conditioned by spatio-temporal relations²⁵².

The Return proceeds gradually, in eight stages which were thought up by John Scottus after he accepted the teaching on the passing away of the corporeal into the incorporeal. The starting point of the Return of nature is when the body dissolves into the four elements of the world. The second stage of the Return is fulfilled at the resurrection, when each shall take his own body out of the common fund of the four elements. The third, when body is changed into soul. The fourth, when soul will revert to its primordial causes, and the fifth, when the spirit together with its causes is absorbed into God²⁵³. Here (876B), John notes that the substance of physical nature will not perish, but will be changed into something better. He repeats verbally the opinion of Augustine and Bede criticized earlier (648D-649A; 984C). The crucial difference lies in the understanding of the nature of the final state of the changed universe. Augustine and Bede are thought to teach of the ultimate change into spirit which is the ether, but John now considers it to be a completely intelligible substance. Moreover, the consummation of nature will be reached when all the intelligible will turn into its causes, and the causes into God²⁵⁴.

250 (Continued) (Jeauneau, p. 25) *Ex ipso enim et absolute moueri nos ut a principio, et quoquomodo moueri ad se ut ad finem est* (quoted in PP I, 3135-37), XIX, 11-15 (Jeauneau, p. 147) *Una igitur omnis utcumque existentis et moti secundum naturam ut principium et finis causa, per quam et est et mouetur omne, quod est et mouetur. Actiua namque subsistens potentia et facit facta diuinitus, ut principium, et praemittit et attrahit mota, promde ut finis et finit* (quoted in PP V, 870D-871A)

251 PP V, 885C, 925A

252 PP V, 914A-B, 886C-D, 885D-886A

253 PP V, 875C, 876A-B

Elsewhere, John Scottus arranges these stages in a different way. First come the five steps of ascent that lie within the limits of nature: the earthly body, the vital movement, the senses, the reasoning, the mind. Then follow three more stages: the knowledge of all things which come after God, the wisdom or contemplation of the truth, and supernatural merging into God Himself. Ultimately, the ascent leads beyond nature and being, into God Himself (PP V, 1020D-21B). John hereby completes his treatise on natures by postulating the ultimate transcending of any nature and any limit, when indeed *God will be all in all*.

APPENDIX

There has been paid much attention to John's peculiar translation of the Greek *ἀτεχνῶς* as *ualde artificialiter* in Dionysius' *De coelesti hierarchia*²⁵⁵. We have excellent analysis and profound discussion of this question by R. Roques and É. Jeauneau, who argue that this translation was a deliberate choice and a considered opinion of John Scottus, based on his understanding of the relation between the liberal arts and Scripture, and on his belief that the Greek alpha can have not only a privative meaning but also an intensive one²⁵⁶. I would like to point to a piece of evidence which, without disposing of the arguments of Roques and Jeauneau, gives one more motivation of Erigena's choice. In his translation John Scottus seems to follow a scholion to this word which

254 PP V, 991C

255 Dionysius, *De coelesti hierarchia* II, 1 (*Corpus Dionysiacum* II, 10, 9-12, Berlin (Walter de Gruyter), 1991, = PG 3, 137A-B) *Και γὰρ ἀτεχνῶς ἡ θεολογία ταῖς ποιητικαῖς ἱεροπλαστίαις ἐπὶ τῶν ἀσχηματιστῶν νοῶν ἐχρησάτο, τοῖν καθ' ἡμᾶς, ὡς εἶρηται, νοῦν ἀνασκεψαμένη, καὶ τῆς οἰκείας αὐτῷ καὶ συμφυοῦς ἀναγωγῆς προνοήσασα, καὶ πρὸς αὐτὸν ἀναπλασάσα τας ἀναγωγικὰς ἱερογραφίας*. Cf. John Scottus, *Expositiones* II, 1, 124-28 (Barbet, CCM 31, p. 23) *Etenim, ualde artificialiter theologia factitis sacris formationibus in non figuratis intellectibus usa est, nostrum, ut dictum est, animum reuelans, et ipsi propria et connaturali reductione prouidens, et ad ipsum reformans anagogicas sanctas scripturas*. Cf. Dionysius *Areopagita secundum translationem quam fecit Iohannes Scotus Erigena De coelesti hierarchia*, in Ph. Chevalier (ed.), *Dionysiaca. Recueil donnant l'ensemble des trad. latines des ouvrages attribués au Denys de l'Aréopage*, Bruges (Desclee de Brouwer), 1951, 743.

256 R. Roques, 'Valde artificialiter' *Le sens d'un contresens, École pratique des Hautes Etudes, V^e Section (Sciences religieuses)*, 77 (1969-70), 31-72 [repr. in idem, *Libres sentiers vers l'engénisme*, Rome (Edizioni dell'Ateneo), 1975, 45-98]. É. Jeauneau, *Artifex Scriptura*, in G. Van Riel - C. Steel - J. McEvoy (eds.), *Iohannes Scottus Erigena. The Bible and Hermeneutics*, Leuven (Leuven University Press), 1996, 357ff.

offers several interpretations *Μεγαλως η παντοιως αληθως η απλωως*²⁵⁷ and chooses the first meaning – *μεγαλως*

It is plausible that John knew the scholia, at least some part of them. The fact that the scholia to *De coelesti hierarchia* were available to Eriugena can be proven by other instances of their direct influence on Eriugena's thought. Thus, he comments on the same paragraph of the *De coelesti hierarchia*

As the art of poetry composes for the exercise of human souls moral and natural doctrine by means of invented fictitious stories and allegorical likeness (for it is the method of heroic poets, who celebrate the deeds and characters of brave men in various figures of speech), so theology, just like a poetess, modifies the Holy Scripture with false imaginings according to the capacities of our mind²⁵⁸

The idiosyncratic parallel drawn by Eriugena between pagan heroic poetry and the Scripture is obviously based on another scholion to *De coelesti hierarchia*, which says that the Scripture uses the poetic imagery to guide human thought which otherwise cannot grasp its profound doctrine. Here the scholiast compares the heavenly symbols with those of the poets famous among the Greeks – Homer, Hesiod and others²⁵⁹

Modern scholarship claims to have solved the problem of separating the scholia of Maximus from those of John of Scythopolis (who

257 Scholion in *ΑΤΕΧΝΩΣ* (PG 4, 36C). Cf. Scholion in II, 3 (PG 4, 41C): *ουτω και επι των ουρανιων δυναμεων αι μετα Θεον εισι τεχνικως εποιησαν οι θεολογοι μηδεν των νοητων αυτας ομοιωσαντες*

258 Cf. *Expositiones* II, 1, 142–151 (Barbet, p. 24): *quemadmodum ars poetica, per fictas fabulas allegoricasque similitudines, moralem doctrinam seu physicam componunt ad humanorum animorum exercitationem – hoc enim proprium est heroicorum poetarum, qui uirorum fortium facta et mores figurate laudant – ita theologia, ueluti quaedam poetria, sanctam scripturam fictis imaginationibus ad consultum nostri animi et reductionem a corporalibus sensibus exterioribus, ueluti ex quadam imperfecta pueritia, in rerum intelligibilium perfectam cognitionem, tanquam in quamdam interioris hominis grandaeuitatem conformat*. On this see P. Dronke, *Theologia ueluti quaedam poetria*. *Quelques observations sur la fonction des images poetiques chez Jean Scot*, in R. Roques (ed.), *Jean Scot Engue et l'histoire de la philosophie*, 242–52.

259 Scholion to *Ποιητικαῖς* (PG 4, 36C–D): *Ὅτι και ποιητικαῖς [τισι] πλασεσιν εχρησατο η Γραφη προς χειραγωγιαν της ανθρωπινης διανοιας αλλ ως ου δυναμειης την των μειζουων παραλαβειν διδασκαλιαν εοικεναι γαρ τα ουρανια συμβολα τοῖς παρα ποιηταις φανταζομενοις ως ο ιερος ανηρ ουτος φησι (ποιητας δε νοησον η τους παρ Ελλησι θαυμαζομενους οιον Ομηρον Ήσιοδον και τους εξῆς) η ποιητικαῖς ωσανει πλαστικαῖς υποτυπωσεν*

composed them between the years 537 and 543)²⁶⁰. The scholion on poetic imagery is attributed to John of Scythopolis. Significantly, it is believed that the exemplar from which all Greek manuscripts of the Dionysian corpus descend was augmented with John's *Scholia* so that "subsequent generations did not read the Areopagite, they read the annotated Areopagite"²⁶¹. It may mean that Eriugena had the scholia at hand while translating the Dionysius. Since the translation *valde arteficialiter* is present not only in the *Expositiones* but already earlier, in the translation, we may assume that the scholia were available to John Scottus rather early, perhaps even before Anastasius the Librarian sent them to King Charles.

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260 B. R. Suchla, *Die sogenannten Maximus-Scholien des Corpus Dionysiacum Areopagiticum*, *Nachrichten der Akademie der Wissenschaften in Göttingen* 1 (Philologisch-historische Klasse) 3 (1980), 31–66, P. Rorem – J. C. Lamoreaux, *John of Scythopolis and the Dionysian Corpus. Annotating the Areopagite* (Oxford Early Christian Studies), Oxford (Clarendon Press), 1998, 2.

261 P. Rorem – J. C. Lamoreaux, 2.