



## St. Symeon the New Theologian and Orthodox Tradition

Hilarion Alfeyev

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## The Patristic Basis of Symeon's Anthropology

Hilarion Alfeyev

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### Abstract and Keywords

Before surveying Symeon the New Theologian's doctrine of the nature and destiny of man in its relation to the traditional teaching, this chapter notes that the anthropology of the church Fathers has its roots in both the Bible and Greek philosophy. In particular, the patristic doctrines of the creation of man, of man's fall and redemption are totally based on biblical revelation. On the other hand, such concepts as that of man as microcosm, of the four elements of the human body, or of the three parts of the soul, are all borrowed from ancient Greek philosophy and medicine. Some features of patristic anthropology have joint roots, deriving from both sources: for example, the notion of the image and likeness of God in man. In Symeon's anthropology, we also find concepts deriving from Greek philosophy side by side with biblical ones. Those concepts of ancient philosophers that Symeon employed must have been borrowed by him either from earlier Fathers or from his educational background, but not directly from primary sources.

*Keywords:* Symeon the New Theologian, man, destiny, dual nature, anthropology, Bible, Greek philosophy, revelation, God

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Before surveying Symeon's doctrine of the nature and destiny of man in its relation to the traditional teaching,<sup>1</sup> some preliminary remarks should be made. First of all, it should be noted that the anthropology of the church Fathers has its roots in both the Bible and Greek philosophy. In particular, the patristic doctrines of the creation of man, of man's fall and redemption are totally based on biblical revelation. On the other hand, such concepts as that of man as microcosm, of the four elements of the human body, or of the three parts of the soul, are borrowed from ancient Greek philosophy and medicine. Some features of patristic anthropology have joint roots, deriving from both sources: for example, the notion of the image and likeness of God in man.<sup>2</sup>

In Symeon's anthropology also, we find concepts deriving from Greek philosophy side by side with biblical ones. This by no means implies that Symeon was learned in philosophical literature. On the contrary, one thinks that his knowledge of it was very restricted, since nowhere does he refer to any ancient thinker or show any adherence to Greek philosophy.<sup>3</sup> Those concepts of ancient philosophers that (p.176) Symeon employed must have been borrowed by him either from earlier Fathers or from his educational background, but not directly from primary sources.

### 1. The Dual Nature of Man

Symeon gives his most distinct and laconic anthropological definitions in his 'Chapters':

God from the beginning created the two worlds, visible and invisible, and one king of the visible, who bears the characteristics of the both worlds in his visible and intelligible [natures]...Unique among all visible and intelligible things, man has been made twofold by God. He has a body formed of the four elements...and an intelligible, immaterial and incorporeal soul, which is united with them [the elements of the body] in an inexpressible and undetectable way, and is blended with them without mixture or confusion [*ἀμίκτως καὶ ἀσγχύτως*]. So this is man, a single animal, mortal and immortal, visible and invisible, sensible and intelligible, overseer [*ἐποπτικόν*] of the visible creation and knower [*γνωστικόν*] of the intelligible.<sup>4</sup>

In this passage, all the ideas and terms are traditional. The notion of man as king of the earth is a commonplace in the Fathers.<sup>5</sup> The concept of man as 'animal' derives from Greek philosophy and early patristic thought, where 'a rational animal' (*ζῶον λογικόν*) is a standard definition of man.<sup>6</sup> The notion of the body as consisting of four elements, is also a commonplace of both Greek philosophy and (p.177)

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patristic literature.<sup>7</sup> The apophatic expression *ἀμίκτως καὶ ἀσυγχύτως* ('without mixture and confusion') reminds us of similar expressions used in the epoch of Christological arguments (fourth to sixth centuries) with reference to the union of the humanity and divinity in Christ.<sup>8</sup> The concept of man as an 'overseer' (*ἐπόπτης*), that is, judge or lord of visible creature, as well as the general idea of the duality of human nature, was developed, among other writers, by Gregory Nazianzen who used the same expressions which we meet in Symeon:

The Creator...wanting to produce a single animal [consisting] of both, I mean the invisible and visible natures, creates man...as an overseer [*ἐπόπτην*] of the visible creation and an initiator [*μύστην*] into the intelligible...a king of all on earth...who is earthly and heavenly, temporal and immortal, visible and intellectual...at the same time spirit and flesh.<sup>9</sup>

According to Gregory, man is a 'double being',<sup>10</sup> the one who consists of two different and opposite elements, body and soul,<sup>11</sup> or spirit and flesh.<sup>12</sup> By his soul man is an image of God, whereas by his body he is 'blended with the mud' of the visible earth.<sup>13</sup> Gregory's attitude to the body is dual: it is both friend and enemy, friend as a companion of the soul, enemy as an obstacle in ascetical struggle.<sup>14</sup> The soul, on the contrary, is highly estimated by Gregory: it has divine origin, being a breath of God,<sup>15</sup> a part of God,<sup>16</sup> 'a piece broken off the invisible deity'.<sup>17</sup>

The same anthropological dichotomism we encounter in many Fathers both before and after Gregory. Maximos the Confessor, in particular, spoke of man as a 'composite being' (*φύσις σύνθετος*),<sup>18</sup> (p.178) who consists of body and soul.<sup>19</sup> Sometimes Maximos speaks of three elements of human nature: body (*σῶμα*), soul (*ψυχή*) and intellect (*νοῦς*);<sup>20</sup> or even of four elements: body, soul, spirit (*πνεῦμα*), and intellect.<sup>21</sup> The triple division of the human nature, when the intellect is treated not as a part of the soul, but as an independent element, is less frequent in patristic tradition than the double one; however, it also occurs quite regularly in the Fathers.<sup>22</sup>

Symeon occasionally employs a threefold scheme of human nature, as in *Eth.* 15, where he interprets the 'three tabernacles' as a symbol of body, soul, and intellect,<sup>23</sup> or in *Cat.* 25, where he speaks of the changes that occur in the mind, soul, and body.<sup>24</sup> Much more systematically, however, Symeon speaks of the doubleness of man, perceiving the intellect as a part of the soul: 'I am not threefold, but twofold as a man; my soul is connected with the flesh in an unspeakable

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manner.<sup>25</sup> This doubleness was revealed in the very act of the creation of man, whose body was made 'from the mud of the earth' but who received from God 'the breath of life, the intelligible soul' (Gen. 2: 7).<sup>26</sup>

As a twofold being, man stands between God and the created world, being higher than all other creatures because 'he alone among the creatures knows God'.<sup>27</sup> This idea is clearly expressed by Symeon in 'Hymn 53', where he speaks in the person of God, so it is God Himself Who, interestingly enough, uses the anthropological vocabulary of Pythagoras and Philo:

I call you a rational animal [ζῷον λογικόν],  
A double man [ἄνθρωπος διπλοῦς], made from two natures  
In an inexpressible manner...  
O paradoxical wonder! [You are] among...the creatures,  
Both immaterial and material:  
The material are the things that you see,  
And the immaterial are angels.  
Thus, among them are you  
The living man, the double one:  
Immaterial among the sensible [creatures],  
And sensible among the immaterial ones.<sup>28</sup>

(p.179) Speaking in such terms, Symeon develops the traditional patristic concept of man as a mediator between God and the created world: this concept, which we encounter already in Philo,<sup>29</sup> might have been borrowed by him from Gregory Nazianzen<sup>30</sup> or Maximos.<sup>31</sup> Symeon also employs the notion of man as 'microcosm', or 'second world', directly referring to Gregory: 'Each of us is brought by God into this world as a certain second world, the great within this small and visible, as the Theologian testifies together with me.'<sup>32</sup> The notion of man as 'microcosm' derives from Greek philosophy<sup>33</sup> and is a commonplace in patristic anthropology. In Gregory, however, as later in Symeon, it has been deliberately reversed: man is not a small world within the great universe, but, on the contrary, 'the great within the small'.

As far as the relations between the body and soul within the human person are concerned, Symeon makes some interesting anthropological observations in *Cat.* 25, which is entitled 'On the changes of soul and body, some of which happen to us from air, some from the elements, and some from the demons'. Symeon says here that both the soul and the body constantly undergo many changes and movements, but the first willingly, whereas the second involuntarily:

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The soul is unchangeable by its nature and essence, and so is the mind...both of them being moved by free choice...The body, however, is by nature subject to change because it is composite...being a mixture or a compound of mutually opposite elements. Its essence is composed of hot, cold, dry, and moist, as those who are competent in these matters say, and this is true. As such the body has neither liberty nor will...<sup>34</sup>

It is not the body itself that desires sexual intercourse, eating, sleep, and other things that are commonly regarded as required by the body, Symeon suggests: it is the soul that seeks pleasure by (p.180) means of the flesh.<sup>35</sup> The body does not even have any motion of its own, being driven by the soul, and none of the changes that take place in the body are the consequences of its own will. Illnesses, for example, are caused by a temporary imbalance among the elements of the body, 'when any of the four elements becomes excessive or deficient, that is, when one prevails over the others or is dominated or suppressed by them, and thus arise fluxes, mutilations or perhaps even the corruption of the whole organism.'<sup>36</sup> Symeon also describes how natural changes take place in the body by reason of illness, excess in food and drink, too cold or too hot weather, and so on.<sup>37</sup>

Some of these observations must have been taken from nature,<sup>38</sup> but generally Symeon in his anthropological ideas adheres to the teaching of preceding Fathers (and through them to the Greek philosophers). If we look at the writings of Nemesios of Emesa, Maximos the Confessor, and John of Damascus, we will find there all the anthropological notions expressed by Symeon in *Cat.* 25, namely that: 1. the soul is moved by free choice;<sup>39</sup> 2. the soul acts by means of the body;<sup>40</sup> 3. the body is changeable by nature;<sup>41</sup> 4. it does not have its own motion;<sup>42</sup> 5. it consists of the four elements;<sup>43</sup> 6. illnesses are caused by the imbalance of these elements.<sup>44</sup> It is, therefore, no mere chance that Symeon refers here to 'those who are competent in these matters'.

Symeon's concepts of the soul and of the intellect are also based upon the patristic anthropology. He adheres to the tripartite division of the soul: the latter is, according to him, 'an intelligible workshop, in the middle of which you should imagine the intelligence [λογισ-τικόν], as a heart, and inside the intelligence, the desire [ἐπιθυμητικόν] (p.181) and the incensive power [θυμικόν]'.<sup>45</sup> The intelligence, Symeon says, discerns between good and evil and suggests to the desire what should be chosen, whereas the incensive power co-operates with both of them, 'like a good servant'.<sup>46</sup> Symeon also follows the traditional teaching on

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the single initial sense (*ἀίσθησις*) of the soul, which is divided into five senses when acting in the body.<sup>47</sup>

With regard to the intellect (*νοῦς*), Symeon says that it is immaterial and bodiless,<sup>48</sup> is always in motion (*ἀεικίνητος*) and cannot remain inactive.<sup>49</sup> The intellect is the highest part of the soul: it is the intellect that is capable of ascent to heaven and contemplation of the divine mysteries.<sup>50</sup> Through the intellect (*κατὰ νοῦν*), man is able to know and see God.<sup>51</sup> As a mystical capacity of the soul, the intellect is called by Symeon ‘the eye of the heart’ or ‘the eye of the soul’.<sup>52</sup>

## 2. Image and Likeness

The notion of the image and likeness of God in man was fundamental for the anthropology of the Greek Fathers.<sup>53</sup>

In the patristic tradition there were several interpretations of the image of God in man. For the majority of the Fathers, especially within the Alexandrian tradition, God’s image in man was perceived in the human soul (*ψυχή*),<sup>54</sup> or, more specifically, in its highest part—the (p.182) intellect (*νοῦς*).<sup>55</sup> Some authors perceived God’s image in the freedom, or self-determination, of the human soul.<sup>56</sup> Many Fathers also made a distinction between God’s ‘image’ and ‘likeness’ in man: the ‘image’ is what was given to man in the very moment of his creation, whereas the ‘likeness’ is what should be achieved by him as a result of his moral advance.<sup>57</sup> John of Damascus summarizes the patristic view as follows:

...God created man with His own hands, from visible and invisible natures, in His image and likeness; for the body He formed from the earth, whereas the intelligent soul He gave him through His own breath: this is what we call the divine image. For the expression ‘in the image’ refers to the intelligence (*τὸ νοερόν*) and the free will (*τὸ ἀυτεξούσιον*), whereas ‘in the likeness’ means likeness in virtue, as far as this is possible for man.<sup>58</sup>

Alongside this basic conception, some authors perceived God’s image in the dominant position of man in the universe,<sup>59</sup> as well as in his immortality<sup>60</sup> and creative ability.<sup>61</sup> One specifically Christian notion, which has no roots in the Hellenistic tradition, must also be pointed out—the understanding of the human person as an image of the divine Trinity. This was developed, in particular, in the work ascribed to Gregory of Nyssa, which perceives three aspects in this trinitarian interpretation of God’s image: 1. the first human family (Adam, Eve, and their son) is the image of the Father, the Spirit, and the Son; 2. the spiritual part of the human nature consists of the soul (*ψυχή*), reason (*λόγος*), and intellect (*νοῦς*), which correspond to the Hypostases of the

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Trinity; 3. the three powers of the soul (intelligence, desire, and incensive power) signify the Trinity.<sup>62</sup> For us, the second aspect is important as it will be reflected in Symeon: it is clear, (p.183) the author of the work in question asserts, that our soul, its intellectual reason (*νοερὸς λόγος*), and the intellect (*νοῦς*) are the image of the Holy Trinity: the soul as unbegotten and having no cause of its existence is the type of the Father, the reason as begotten from the soul typifies the Son, whereas the intellect as proceeding from the soul is the image and likeness of the Holy Spirit.<sup>63</sup>

Symeon devoted to the discussion of the notion of God's image and likeness in man his 'Hymn 44', which is entitled 'What is meant by "in the image", and in what sense should man be considered as an image of the Prototype'. The theme of the hymn is the progression of the human person from 'image' to the perfect 'likeness' to God. Symeon begins with an outline of several possible interpretations of divine image in man, which are all based on the patristic tradition:

In the image of the Word [*Λόγου*]  
We are given the reason [*λόγος*],  
For we are [created] rational [*λογικοί*] by the Word...  
Indeed, in the image [of God] is every man's soul,  
The rational image of the Word [*λογικὴ εἰκὼν τοῦ Λόγου*]...  
64  
God the Word is from God—  
He is coeternal with the Father and the Spirit.  
In the same manner my soul is in His image,  
For it has intellect [*νοῦς*] and reason [*λόγος*],  
And it maintains them by nature  
Undivided [*ἄτμητα*], without confusion [*ἀσύγχυτα*]  
And consubstantial [*ὁμοούσια*]:  
The three are unified in one,  
But are distinguished.<sup>65</sup>

Just as the Father causes the Holy Spirit to proceed, so the soul causes the intellect to proceed, Symeon continues. Just as the intellect gives birth to the word (*λόγος*), so does the Father to the Son.<sup>66</sup> However, one will never understand this image (*εἰκὼν*) unless one first purifies one's own image from passions. When one is purified by one's good deeds, one becomes godlike and 'the perfect image of the Prototype'. Then the Holy Spirit is sent to man:

He will illumine, enlighten and remake you, transforming what is corruptible into incorruptible, and will renew...the house of your

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soul...and will (p.184) make your entire body incorruptible, and will make you god by grace, like to the Prototype.<sup>67</sup>

Thus, we find in Symeon's 'Hymn 44' several notions: 1. the reason is the image of God the Word; 2. the soul of every human person is the image of God; 3. the soul is the image of the Trinity; 4. the likeness of God is what must be achieved through virtuous life. In his other writings Symeon also develops the idea that the image of God in man consists of his dominant role in the universe.<sup>68</sup> All these notions are borrowed from preceding Fathers and reflect the traditional approach to the theme of God's image and likeness in man.

As is clear from 'Hymn 44', the final likeness of God in man is nothing else but deification, the climax of one's spiritual advance. Symeon returns to this idea many times, putting it into a Christological context. He emphasizes that every Christian must imitate Christ in order to become like Him.<sup>69</sup> Those who imitate Christ, he says, will finally become 'like Him, men by nature, gods by grace'.<sup>70</sup> Through the participation of His flesh in the Eucharist 'we become like Him...being counted worthy to see Him Who became like us, and being seen by Him as those who became like Him.'<sup>71</sup> The vision of God, the likeness to God and deification are, therefore, the same: 'Being Your sons by Your grace, we become like You—gods, who see God.'<sup>72</sup>

In such affirmations Symeon is again close to the traditional view of the Eastern Fathers. 'The likeness of God and the extreme limit of the desirable is to become god,' Basil the Great says.<sup>73</sup> According to Dionysios, 'deification is, as far as possible, likeness to God and unity with Him.'<sup>74</sup> The theme of deification is one of the central motifs in Symeon: we will return to it in a special section. Meanwhile, let us point out that for Symeon the likeness of God in man is realized in man's mystical union with God and deification. The fullness of God's image, which is given to humans as a pledge at the moment of creation, is also achieved in the final deification, when the entire man becomes 'the true icon of the Creator'.<sup>75</sup>

### (p.185) 3. The Destiny of Man

According to Maximos the Confessor, who reflects the characteristic ideas of earlier patristic tradition, man from his creation was predestined to 'become a god'.<sup>76</sup> In other words, deification was the goal of the creation of the human being:

[God] made us so that we might become 'partakers of the divine nature' [2 Pet. 1: 4] and sharers of His eternity, and so that we

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might come to be like Him [cf. 1 John 3: 2] through deification by grace.<sup>77</sup>

To this glorious aim the first humans were to have ascended through the observance of God's commandment not to eat from the tree of the knowledge of good and evil, which was 'productive of death' (*θανάτου ποιητικόν*)<sup>78</sup> They, however, transgressed the commandment, being enticed by the Devil with the false hope of deification (cf. Gen. 3:5), and were dragged 'from natural stability into the realm of sensual pleasure'.<sup>79</sup> Since that moment, all generations have been 'under the tyranny of pleasure [*ήδονή*], and so subject to justly deserved sufferings and...the death which they engender'.<sup>80</sup>

The Fall is, therefore, a turning point in the destiny of man. Among the consequences of the Fall there were not only sufferings and death, which affected humanity from outside; the Fall radically damaged the very nature of man, including all its elements: the intellect, the soul, and the body. The intellect forgot the luminosity it possessed in its initial state;<sup>81</sup> its true dignity was obscured;<sup>82</sup> it lost its integrity and simplicity, having become to some extent divided against itself.<sup>83</sup> The soul lost its natural dominant position within human nature and became ruled by sensual pleasures.<sup>84</sup> The contamination of the (p.186) intellect and soul meant the loss of the 'image and likeness of God'.<sup>85</sup> The body was also affected by the Fall, becoming subject to corruption.<sup>86</sup> The contrasting elements of human nature, initially intended to coexist in harmony, found themselves in a state of opposition to and war between each other: the body-flesh became an enemy of the soul and the intellect.<sup>87</sup>

Man in his fallen state is dominated by sin,<sup>88</sup> which is not part of human nature,<sup>89</sup> but is rather a deviation from man's natural state, illness of nature<sup>90</sup>, and 'death of the soul'.<sup>91</sup> Both the body and the soul of fallen man are affected by passions (*πάθη*), which are, according to John Klimakos, also alien to man's true self;<sup>92</sup> however, in the opinion of some other Fathers, they are impulses originally placed in man by God, but in the fallen state distorted by sin.<sup>93</sup> For man after the Fall, the way to God inevitably presupposes struggle against sins and passions; by means of this struggle one hopes to regain the lost paradise.

The radical disintegration of human nature made it impossible for anyone to find the way to freedom from the tyranny of sin and passions, from the sufferings and death that affected the whole of humanity.<sup>94</sup> This is why God became fully man, with a nature constituted from body, soul, and intellect, but without sin, and deliberately accepted the consequences of sin—sufferings and death, in order to destroy death

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and liberate man from its tyranny.<sup>95</sup> Christ had to pass through all stages of human life in order to deify them: from Irenaeus onwards, the life of Christ is perceived as a 'recapitulation' of the original divine plan of man's salvation. For Adam's disobedience Christ pays with His obedience; the Devil's lie is destroyed by God's truth; human sin is rectified by the punishment of the Only- (p.187) Begotten.<sup>96</sup> In order to redeem man fully, Christ pays for each of his debts separately.<sup>97</sup> Redemption, or salvation, is equivalent to deification, which was the aim of man's creation: in the person of Christ human nature is already deified,<sup>98</sup> and through Christ the hope of deification is newly open to everyone who believes in Him.<sup>99</sup>

These are the basic views of the church Fathers on human destiny. We can assert that the destiny of man is conditioned by the three key moments in his history: his creation after God's image and likeness, his fall, and his redemption through the Incarnation of God. How is this doctrine reflected in the writings of Symeon?

First, Symeon clearly indicates that, according to God's eternal plan of salvation for humankind, all people are intended for deification: the grace of the Holy Spirit seeks to enkindle human souls, 'so that they may draw near to the fire and one by one, or, if possible, all of them together, may be enkindled and shine like gods...'<sup>100</sup> Our ancestors, by virtue of their free will, were called to observe God's commandments, through which they were to be brought to the 'perfection of the image and likeness of God', drawing near God from generation to generation.<sup>101</sup> Adam and Eve, as well as all subsequent generations, were called to live an incorruptible and immortal life, ascending to their final transfiguration and deification, when the soul of each would become radiant and the body would be transformed into the immaterial and the spiritual.<sup>102</sup>

Our ancestors, however, were 'enticed by the hope of deification' which was offered to them by the Devil.<sup>103</sup> Following him, they 'went out of their nature and revolted against their Creator, pretending to become gods'; they rejected the natural way to deification through humble fulfilment of God's commandment and fell into pride and arrogance.<sup>104</sup> After the transgression, God invited Adam to (p.188) repentance,<sup>105</sup> but neither Adam nor Eve repented, and so they were condemned to exile from paradise.<sup>106</sup> Our ancestors, being deprived of the blessing of paradise, bitterly lamented, for 'how could they not always and unceasingly weep, when remembering this gentle Master, that

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unutterable delight, the unspeakable beauty of those flowers [of paradise]...?'<sup>107</sup>

The Fall meant the loss of the integral knowledge of God: instead of divine and spiritual knowledge (*γνωσις*) man received 'fleshly knowledge'; having become spiritually blind, he began to look passionately with his bodily eyes.<sup>108</sup> Man after the Fall found himself in the state of slavery to sin, which is a wall between God and man: those who are behind this wall are in darkness and do not know even themselves—who are they and where they go.<sup>109</sup> The first man, through the transgression of God's commandment, became 'deaf, blind, naked, senseless, mortal, corruptible, and unreasonable'.<sup>110</sup> All people after Adam are also sinners, transgressors, slaves of sin, accursed, dead, and dominated by evil.<sup>111</sup>

In many of his writings, when expounding the history of humankind, Symeon lays special stress on the Incarnation of God as a turning point in human destiny. It was only God Himself Who was able to save mankind from slavery to sin; this is why He was incarnate and became man:

He wanted to restore man, whom He created with His own invisible hands in His image and likeness, not through someone else, but through Himself, so as to honour and glorify our [human] race by the fact that He became like us in all things and equal to us in our human destiny.<sup>112</sup>

In *Eth.* 1, 2, and 13, *Cat.* 5, 'Hymns' 44 and 53, Symeon speaks of the Incarnation in the context of the Pauline notion of Christ as the second Adam and of the Irenaean theory of Christ's life as 'recapitulation' (p.189) of the life of Adam. God becomes man and comes to us to share our destiny; in order to deify the whole of human life, Christ has to pass through all the stages of it:

He sanctified conception and birth and, as He grew up, little by little blessed every age...He became a slave and 'took on Himself the form of a slave' (Phil. 2: 7), and restored us slaves to the dignity of masters, having restored us as masters of [the Devil] who had been our tyrant...He destroyed altogether the curse of Adam. He died and by His own death He destroyed death. He has risen and annihilated the power and energy of the enemy, who had power over us through death and sin.<sup>113</sup>

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Elsewhere Symeon says that God lived through all the stages of human destiny in order to 'restore and renew that first man [Adam], and through him all who were and are born from him'.<sup>114</sup> The verb ἀναχωνεύω ('restore', literally 'smelt anew') is used by Symeon to emphasize that the question is about the total transformation of the whole of human nature through the Incarnation of God. Not only all that has been damaged by the fall of Adam is restored by Christ; in Him human nature itself receives its new beginning, new creation, new birth. As the first man was earthly, Symeon says referring to 1 Cor. 15: 47-8, all his descendants were born as earthly; and as Christ is heavenly, all who are born from Him in the Holy Spirit are heavenly: since the parent is God, they are also gods by adoption and sons of the Most High (cf. Ps. 81/82: 6).<sup>115</sup> Thus, in Christ the whole of human history receives its completion and justification: the initial aim of man's creation, namely deification, is now reached in Christ Himself and in those who are born from Him.

It is quite clear that Symeon's view on the destiny of man thoroughly coincides with the traditional one, as it appears in Maximos the Confessor and other church Fathers. Following them, Symeon also develops the teaching on the *συνέργεια* ('co-operation') of God and man in the accomplishment of the salvation and deification of man.<sup>116</sup> Salvation is not obligatory, but is given to those who deliberately choose Christ as their Saviour and God, says Symeon in 'Hymn (p.190) 43'. God never compels one to anything against one's will, but desires that people serve Him by their free will (*αὐτεξούσιον*) and free choice (*αὐτοπροαίρετον*). God is not king and guide of those who do not take up the cross and do not follow Him (cf. Matt. 16: 24), as they are children and slaves of the enemy.<sup>117</sup> Hence there arises the necessity for the observance of God's commandments, as well as for the struggle against passions and sins: these are the central themes of Symeon's asceticism.<sup>118</sup>

#### Notes:

(1) For a more comprehensive account of Symeon's anthropology, see Lascaris, *Liberation*, 47-118. For the general exposition of patristic anthropology see Wheeler Robinson, *Man*; Wallace-Hadrill, *Nature*; Jenkins, *Glory*. Cf. Wingren, *Man* (on the anthropology of Irenaeus). Cf. also Allchin (ed.), *Image*.

(2) Cf. Gen. 1: 26-7, and Plato, *Theaetetus* 176 ab (the concept of man as *ὁμοίωσις Θεοῦ*). For the biblical background see Lossky, *Image*, 127-35. For the Platonic background see Merki, *Ὁμοίωσις*, 1-7.

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(3) Symeon's estimation of 'external wisdom' was generally sceptical; he uses the word 'Hellenic' in a pejorative sense, speaking out against 'philosophers and those who learn Hellenic books': cf. *Hymn* 21. 55-6. We should not forget, however, that all Byzantine schoolboys were provided with a certain Hellenic background, and so everyone who studied at school must have accumulated a certain amount of philosophical education. In particular, Aristotelian logic was studied, as well as Greek poetry and prose. In spite of this, the general attitude of Byzantines to Greek philosophy was negative: Platonic and Neo-Platonic ideas were regarded as especially dangerous for Orthodoxy and interest in them was limited to a very narrow circle of intellectuals: see Meyendorff, *Hesychasm*, p. viii, 54-5; idem, *Byz. Theol.*, 72-3; Browning, 'Enlightenment'. This negative attitude towards Greek philosophy was crystallized on a dogmatic level by the Council of 1082 (against John Italos), which produced a special anathema against 'those who study Hellenic sciences and do not take them as tools of instruction only, but follow their futile theories and accept them as true': see Gouillard, *Synodikon*, 56. In the history of Byzantine civilization a negative attitude towards Greek philosophy always coexisted with a positive one, but in monastic circles the former predominated: see Meyendorff, 'Trends', 53 ff. Symeon, therefore, followed monastic tradition when rejecting the validity of 'secular wisdom'.

(4) *Cap.* 2. 23.

(5) Cf. Gregory Nazianzen, *Disc.* 38. 11. 16 [126]: 'king of the earth'. Cf. also Makarios of Egypt, *Hom.* 26. 1. 8 [206]: 'man was the lord of the heaven and earth'. Cf. Symeon's *Hymn* 53. 120 ff.: 'I made him...the lord and master of all visible [creatures], having submitted all visible [creatures] as servants to him alone.'

(6) Cf. Pythagoras [*Fragm. Pre-Socr.* i. 99]; Sextus Empiricus, *Hypotyp.* 2. 26 [i. 70]. Cf. in the *AP. Const.* 7. 34. 6 [428]: 'The summit of creation is a rational animal'; Justin, *Fragm.* [1585 B]: 'What is man if not a rational animal, consisting of soul and body?'; Athanasios, *Defin.* [533 C]: 'Man is a rational animal, mortal, intelligent, and capable to knowledge'; Nemesios, *Nat. Man* 1 [11]; Symeon in *Hymn* 23. 69-71: 'Which animal do I mean? Indeed I speak of man, rational among dumb [animals]'.

(7) See note 43 below.

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(8) Cf. *Symb. Chalc.*, ACO 2. 1. 2 [129]. Symeon's suggestion that the soul is blended and united with the body 'without mixture and confusion' reminds us of the following passage from Pseudo-Theodore of Edessa's *Theor.* [329]: 'The intelligent soul is conjoined with an animal-like body...Without change or confusion, and with each acting in accordance with its nature, they compose a single person, or hypostasis, with two complete natures.'

(9) *Disc.* 38. 11. 8-19 [124-6]. Cf. John of Damascus, *Exp.* 2. 12. 7 ff. [75 ff.].

(10) *Disc.* 40. 8. 1 [212]. Cf. Ellverson, *Nature*, 17 ff.

(11) *Disc.* 2. 17. 15 [112]; *Disc.* 2. 18. 12 [114]; *Disc.* 38. 11. 10-12 [124].

(12) *Disc.* 38. 11. 19-20 [126].

(13) *Disc.* 14. 6-7 [865 A].

(14) *Ibid.* [865 B].

(15) *Poes. dogm.* 8. 1 [446 A]; cf. *Disc.* 38. 11. 11-12 [124].

(16) *Disc.* 14. 7 [865 C].

(17) *Poes. dogm.* 8. 73 [452 A].

(18) *Ep.* 12 [488 D].

(19) *Myst.* 7 [684 C].

(20) *Myst.* 4 [678 B].

(21) *Myst.* 4 [678 BC].

(22) On dichotomism and trichotomism, see Nemesios, *Nat. Man* 1 [1].

(23) *Eth.* 15. 50-1.

(24) *Cat.* 25. 50-61.

(25) *Hymn* 13. 24-5.

(26) *Eth.* 13. 31-2. Cf. also *Cat.* 26. 140-5 ('twofold man must have twofold food').

(27) *Hymn* 23. 74-5.

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(28) *Hymn* 53. 102–19. Cf. *Hymn* 23. 69–79 (the same concept is also expressed in God’s person).

(29) *De virt.* 9 [v. 286 ff.].

(30) Cf. the passage from *Disc.* 38. 11 quoted above.

(31) See *Ambig.* 4 [1305 A]; cf. Thunberg, *Man*, 80 ff. Cf. also Clement of Alexandria, *Strom.* 2. 81 [155].

(32) *Eth.* 4, 799–801. Cf. Gregory Nazianzen, *Disc.* 38. 11. 13–14 [124–6]: ‘God placed man upon the earth as a second world, the great within the small’. Cf. Origen, *Horn. Lev.* 5. 2 [336]; Gregory of Nyssa, *Man* [177 D]; Nemesios, *Nat. Man* 1 [15]; John of Damascus, *Exp.* 2. 12 [79].

(33) Cf. Democritus [*Fragm. Pre-Socr.* i. 153]; Aristotle, *Phys.* 252b; Philo, *De post. Cain.* 58 [ii. 13]; *Quis. rer. div. heres.* 155 [iii. 36].

(34) *Cat.* 25. 55–69.

(35) *Cat.* 25. 75–82.

(36) *Cat.* 25. 126–30.

(37) *Cat.* 25. 122–55.

(38) In particular, Symeon says that some people, namely those who have a ‘warm complexion’, are heated to excess and ‘become weak and useless for any activity and motion’ when the weather becomes too hot: *Cat.* 25. 138–44. Any European who has ever visited Istanbul (Constantinople) in the mid-summer, when the temperature is often above 40°C, would understand the whole truth of Symeon’s observations.

(39) Maximos, *Soul* [357 D]; John of Damascus, *Exp.* 2. 12. 49–52 [77].

(40) John of Damascus, *Exp.* 2. 12. 46 [77].

(41) Nemesios, *Nat. Man* 1 [7]; John of Damascus, *Exp.* 2. 12. 86–90 [77].

(42) Cf. Maximos the Confessor, *Love* 3. 31 [81]: ‘By nature all bodies lack a capacity of motion; they are given motion by the soul.’ Cf. *Soul* [356 AB].

(43) Maximos the Confessor, *Love* 3. 30 [94]: ‘Physical bodies...are made up of opposites, that is, of earth, air, fire, and water.’ Cf.

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Nemesios, *Nat. Man* 1 [7]; 4 [44-5]; John of Damascus, *Exp.* 2. 12. 59-62 [78]. The teaching derives from the Pythagorean school: see *Fragm. Pre-Socr.* i. 449.

(44) Nemesios, *Nat. Man* 1 [9].

(45) *Eth.* 4. 392-4. Cf. Maximos the Confessor, *Love* 1. 79 [81]; 2. 12 [94] etc.; Nemesios of Emesa, *Nat. Man* 15 [72]; John of Damascus, *Exp.* 2. 12. 94-106 [79-80]. For the explanation of these three terms see *Philokalia* (English) 2. 380.

(46) *Eth.* 4. 403-11.

(47) *Eth.* 3. 152-71. Cf. Nemesios of Emesa, *Nat. Man* 6 [56]; John of Damascus, *Exp.* 2. 18. 1f. [83 ff.].

(48) *Eth.* 15. 98-9. Cf. Maximos the Confessor, *Quest. Thai.* 65, scholium 1 [307]: 'the intellect is formless'.

(49) *Cat.* 10. 94-5. Cf. Nemesios of Emesa, *Nat. Man* 2 [29].

(50) *Theol.* 1. 412-14 and *Eth.* 6. 252-5. Cf. Dionysios, *Div. Names* 7. 1 [194] (the capacity of the intellect to apprehend divine realities).

(51) *Hymn* 23. 74-8.

(52) Respectively, *Eth.* 1. 12. 420 and *Cap.* 1. 38. Cf. *Cat.* 33. 53-61 (interpretation of Luke 11: 34: 'the eye as the light for the body' means the intellect). Cf. Makarios of Egypt, *Hom.* 7. 8. 85-7 [76] ('the intellect...is the eye of the soul').

(53) This notion is based on Gen. 1: 26: 'Let us make man in our image, after our likeness.' Among the scholarly studies of this notion there are: Cairns, *Image*; Burghardt, *Image*; Wingren, *Man*, 14-26 (deals with Irenaeus); Sullivan, *Image* (deals mainly with Augustine).

(54) Cf. Gregory Nazianzen, *Poes. dogm.* 7, 4 [447 A]; Maximos the Confessor, *Theol. Chapt.* 1. 11 [1088 A]; *Myst.* 7 [684 D]. John Chrysostom emphasizes that the body is not God's image: *Hom. Gen.* 8. 3-4 [72 ff.].

(55) Cf. John of Damascus, *Exp.* 3. 18. 20-2 [157-8]: 'What is "after the image" if not the intellect?' Cf. Philo, *De opif. mundi* 69[I. 23].

(56) Maximos the Confessor, *Theol. Chapt.* 1. 11 [1088 A].

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(57) Irenaeus, *Her.* 5. 6. 1 [77]; Clement of Alexandria, *Strom.* 2. 22 [186]; Origen, *Princ.* 3. 6. 1 [280]; Diadochos, *Chapt.* 89 [149-50]; Maximos the Confessor, *Love* 3. 25 [154]0

(58) *Exp.* 2. 12. 16-21 [76].

(59) John Chrysostom, *Hom. Gen.* 8, 3 [72]; Cyril of Alexandria, *Anthropomorph.* [1068 C-1072 A].

(60) Tatian, *Orat.* 7: man is created in 'the image of God's immortality'; cf. Cyril of Jerusalem, *Catech.* 4. 18 [477 B].

(61) Theodoret, *Quest. Genes.* 1. 20 [105 C]; Anastasios of Sinai, *Quest.* 89 [716 C-717 A]; Photios, *Amphiloch.* 253 [39-40].

(62) *Image* [1329 C-1340 C]; cf. Anastasios of Sinai, *Image* I. 1. 58-82 [9-11]. On the trinitarian interpretation of the image of God in patristic thought see Sullivan, *Image*, 165-95.

(63) Gregory of Nyssa, *ibid.* [1340 AC]; cf. Anastasios of Sinai, *ibid.*, I. 3. 45-90 [19-21].

(64) Cf. *Hymn* 53. 107-9.

(65) *Hymn* 44. 30-50. Cf. *Theol.* 1. 218-39; *Theol.* 2. 63-130.

(66) *Hymn* 44. 74-92.

(67) *Hymn* 44. 93-165.

(68) Cf. *Hymn* 33. 18: 'The man, whom He created after His image and likeness...dominates over the earthly [creatures]...and over passions—this is what is meant by "in the image"'. Cf. *Euch.* 1. 1-13.

(69) *Cat.* 27. 324-6.

(70) *Eth.* 10. 730-3.

(71) *Eth.* 1. 3. 90-5.

(72) *Hymn* 15. 107-8.

(73) *Spirit* 9 [109 C].

(74) *Eccl. Hier.* 1. 3 [66].

(75) *Hymn* 44. 143-4.

(76) *Quest. Thal.* 22. 28-30 [137].

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(77) *Myst.* 43 [640 BC].

(78) *Quest. Thal.* 43. 24 [293].

(79) *Var. Cent.* 1. 11 [1181 D-1184 A]. The 'Various Centuries' are not an authentic work of Maximos the Confessor but an anthology from his writings made by a later compiler: see *Philokalia* (English) 2. 49-50. Most of the chapters are taken from Maximos' *Quest. Thai.*; however, chapters 1. 1-1. 25 are not identified: see Disdier, 'Œuvre', 164.

(80) *Quest. Thal.* 61. 34-41 [87]. On patristic doctrine on fall and original sin see Williams, *Fall*, 167-314.

(81) Cf. Elijah the Presbyter, *Gnom. Anth.* 89 [297].

(82) Maximos the Confessor, *Quest. Thai.* 1. 13 [47].

(83) Gregory Nazianzen in *Poes. hist.* 45 [1358 A] distinguishes two intellects in the fallen man: one good and another evil (according to the variant reading: ἔστιν ἐμοί διπλοῦς νόος).

(84) Theodore of Edessa, *Chapt.* 7 [305]; Diadochos, *Chapt.* 78 [135].

(85) Makarios of Egypt, *Hom.* 12. 1. 2-5 [107-8].

(86) Diadochos, *Chapt.* 78 [135-6].

(87) Cf. Gregory Nazianzen, *Poes. hist.* 46 [1378 A-1381 A].

(88) Maximos the Confessor, *Quest. Thal.* 61. 80-1 [89].

(89) Maximos the Confessor, *Var. Cent.* 1. 11 [1181 D-1184 A].

(90) Cf. Cyril of Alexandria, *Hom. Rom.* [785 A].

(91) Cf. Gregory Nazianzen, *Disc.* 37. 23. 11 [316].

(92) *Ladder* 26 [1028 A]; cf. Clement of Alexandria, *Strom.* 2. 13 [145]. As K. Ware shows, the sharply negative attitude to passions which is characteristic of many church Fathers has its roots in Stoics: 'Pathos', 317-18.

(93) Cf. Isaiah the Solitary, *Texts* 1 [30]. On this more positive understanding of passions see Ware, 'Pathos', 319-22.

(94) Maximos the Confessor, *Quest. Thal.* 61. 36-41 [85-7].

(95) *Ibid.* 61. 61-76 [87].

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(96) Irenaeus of Lyon, *Her.* 5. 19. 1 [249–51]. The notion of Christ as New Adam derives from Paul (1 Cor. 15: 22, 47–9).

(97) Cf. Gregory Nazianzen, *Disc.* 2. 25 [122–4].

(98) Maximos the Confessor, *Quest. Thal.* 22. 28–49 [137–9]; cf. *ibid.* 40, scholium 2 [275].

(99) Cf. Maximos the Confessor, *Theol. Chapt.* 2. 25 [1136 BC].

(100) *Cat.* 34. 235–41.

(101) *Eth.* 10. 36–48.

(102) *Eth.* 1. 1. 53–63.

(103) *Eth.* 13. 60. Cf. the same idea in John of Damascus, *Varl.-Joas.* 7 [908 B]: the devil enticed Adam and Eve ‘by the hope of deification’. Cf. Photios, *Amphiloch.* 72 [74].

(104) *Theol.* 1. 357–66. Cf. Philotheos of Sinai, *Chapt.* 14 [278]: ‘Adam fell through pride.’

(105) Cf. *Cat.* 5. 175–9.

(106) *Cat.* 5. 216–70.

(107) *Cat.* 5. 286–9. The theme of Adam’s lament is traditional for the liturgical worship of the Orthodox Church. Cf. the *Stichiron* of the vespers of the Sunday of Forgiveness: ‘Adam was cast out of paradise... Seated before the gates he wept, lamenting with a pitiful voice and saying: “Woe is me, what have I suffered in my misery...O paradise... pray that once more I may take pleasure in thy flowers...”’ [*Triodion*, 170].

(108) *Cat.* 15. 14–19.

(109) *Theol.* 1. 257–61.

(110) *Eth.* 13. 64–6; cf. *ibid.*, 89–97.

(111) *Cat.* 5. 406–13.

(112) *Eth.* 10. 67–72.

(113) *Cat.* 5. 415–32.

(114) *Eth.* 13. 86–9.

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(115) *Hymn* 44. 256-70.

(116) The nucleus of this teaching is the idea that the interaction of God and human free will is necessary for deification. The saints, according to John of Damascus, are gods by divine grace, but it is by their own free choice (*προαίρεσις*) that they 'were united with God... and became by grace what He is by nature': *Exp.* 4. 15. 13-18[205].

(117) *Hymn* 43. 30-56.

(118) For a comprehensive account of Symeon's teaching on passions and the struggle against them, supplied with many patristic parallels, see Völker, *Praxis*, 129-32.



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